

Anglophone picturebook shared reading in Chinese families
—A mixed method study exploring parents' motivation and parent-child
interaction patterns

Ying Zou

Doctor of Philosophy

University of York

Education

February 2020

Abstract

This study aims to probe the motivations of Chinese parents who read Anglophone picturebooks to their children, and to explore parent-child interaction patterns during the shared reading event. This study is the first to probe this new educational phenomenon in the Chinese context and in parenting culture.

Data collection consisted of a questionnaire, with 565 parent respondents followed by qualitative research focusing on seven families, through ethnographic observation of the shared reading event and interviews with a parent from each family. This study applies a grounded theory approach in order to describe and analyse this new educational trend.

Results show that parents' motivations for reading Anglophone picturebooks are driven by English picturebooks' linguistic, literary and educational value rather than by aims such as nurturing book lovers or consolidating the parent-child bond. Parents and children tend to choose different English picturebooks and value different characteristics of English picturebooks. These tensions between parents' and children's choices and values of picturebooks are negotiated and resolved according to my data.

I developed a typology of foreign language parent-child shared reading with five foci to reveal the diverse parent-child interaction process:

1. Literal focus: parents and children are engaged in exact translation;
2. Literacy focus: parents and children are engaged in developing reading skills;

3. Literary focus: parents and children are engaged in the pleasure of reading;
4. Exploratory focus: parents and children are engaged in knowledge and discovery;
5. Digital focus: parents and children are engaged in interaction with technology.

Using these foci, I compared Chinese parents' shared reading in English with their shared reading in Chinese and found that there are more similarities than differences when they read in a different language, which demonstrated that the most important factor that influences parents' shared reading approach was their attitude and motivation towards shared reading.

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Table of Contents	4
List of Tables	10
List of Figures	10
Acknowledgements	11
Declaration	12
Chapter 1 Introduction and the research gap	13
1.1 Introduction and background	13
1.1.1 The beginning of the journey.....	13
1.1.2 The reasons behind the phenomenon of Anglophone picturebook reading	14
1.1.3 Research questions	21
1.1.4 Study design	22
1.1.5 Structure of this thesis	24
1.2 The research gap.....	25
1.2.1 The research gap in shared reading studies	25
1.2.2 Studies about English picturebooks read by the non-Anglophone world	28
1.2.3 The bigger gap of shared reading studies about Chinese families	29
1.2.4 Statement of the question to be investigated	31
Chapter 2 Literature review	33
2.1 The influence of foreign children’s books in China.....	33
2.1.1. The influence of foreign children’s books before the May Fourth Movement of 1919	34
2.1.2 The influence of foreign children’s books during the May Fourth Movement period	38
2.1.3 The selection of foreign children's books for political purposes during the Republican era	41
2.1.4 The isolation period and its problems.....	43
2.1.5 Foreign children’s books contribute to the shared reading boom	44
2.1.6 Foreign children’s books inspired the original Chinese children’s books.....	46
2.1.7 Summarising the influence of foreign children’s books in China.....	47
2.2 Why shared reading is important and how it fits into the context of globalisation and digitalisation	48
2.2.1 Shared reading promotes the emergence of children’s literature	49

2.2.2	The importance of the home literacy environment.....	50
2.2.3	Why shared reading improves literacy skills.....	53
2.2.4	The other benefits of shared reading	56
2.2.5	Can shared reading improve print knowledge?	58
2.2.6	Shared reading and bilingual or multilingual education.....	62
2.2.7	Digital reading plays a large part in foreign language shared reading	64
2.3	Reader-response theory in shared reading studies	67
2.3.1	Reader-response theory — the emphasis on readers rather than texts	67
2.3.2	Applying reader-response theory to shared reading	68
2.3.3	Previous studies about children’s responses during shared reading.....	71
2.3.4	Categorising different children’s responses	73
2.3.5	Autobiographical intertexts or semiotic intertexts — how children connect text with life.....	75
2.3.6	The struggle between pictures and words during parent-child shared reading	77
2.3.7	Pictures play a more important role for bilingual children’s understanding of picturebooks.....	81
2.4	Dual readers and different book choices for parents and children.....	83
2.4.1	Dual readers of picturebooks shared reading	83
2.4.2	Adults’ power over the choice of picturebooks.....	85
2.4.3	Different interpretations of picturebooks for parents and children	86
2.4.4	Adults’ and children’s different book choices.....	88
2.4.5	Multi code-switching and more gaps in foreign shared reading events	91
2.5	What we know about parent-child reading interaction	93
2.5.1	The mysteries of shared reading interactions	93
2.5.2	Previous studies about shared reading interaction — ARICI and DRI.....	94
2.5.3	Parents’ questioning behaviour during shared reading interactions.....	102
2.6	Picturebooks as educational tools	106
2.6.1	Children’s books and didacticism are inseparable	106
2.6.2	Picturebooks in literacy and language acquisition use	109
2.6.3	Picturebooks as fulfilling pedagogical functions.....	111
2.6.4	The changing definition of didacticism in the west.....	113
2.6.5	The different meaning of didacticism in China.....	114
2.6.6	The importance of reading for pleasure.....	115
2.7	Chinese parenting and cultural capital	119

2.7.1 “Authoritative” or “Authoritarian” models cannot explain Chinese parenting styles	119
2.7.2 Traditional Chinese parenting and the new image of Chinese parenting	120
2.7.3 Contemporary stereotypes of Chinese parenting	124
2.7.4 The concept of “Guan” and “training”	126
2.7.5 Parenting and social class	127
2.7.6 Cultural capital	129
2.7.7 Transnational cultural capital	131
Chapter 3 Methodology	133
3.1 Research methodology	133
3.1.1 My epistemological and ontological standpoint	133
3.1.2 Why mixed methods?	134
3.1.3 My stance in this study	137
3.1.4 Approaches to address the three sequential research questions	139
3.2 Procedures	140
3.2.1 Context, range and definition of terms	140
3.2.2 Ethics and pilot study	142
3.2.3 Data collection — questionnaire stage	145
3.2.4 Observation sampling strategy	152
3.2.5 Data collection — observation stage	154
3.2.6 Data collection — interview stage	157
3.3 Research Participants	158
3.3.1 Who are the participants?	158
3.3.2 Participants’ home literacy environment	161
3.3.3 Children from observational families	162
3.4 Coding and Data Analysis	167
3.4.1 Pre coding — organizing and transcribing data	167
3.4.2 Coding approach and strategy	168
3.4.3 Open coding	170
3.4.4 Axial coding	172
3.4.5 Selective coding	174
3.4.6 Conclusion — what would I do differently during data collection?	175
Chapter 4 Parents’ motivation for reading picturebooks in English	177
4.1 Parents’ motivations and expectations of Anglophone picturebook reading	177

4.2 Does English picturebook reading equal English language learning?	178
4.2.1 English learning motivation is reflected in the data	178
4.2.2 Why do parents think reading English picturebooks improves English language level?.....	181
4.3 The popularity of graded level books reflects the motivation of mastering the English language	186
4.4 Parents’ other motivations and expectations.....	189
4.5 What elements influence and reflect parents’ motivation?	192
4.5.1 Parents who have a higher educational level read to their children in English more often.....	192
4.5.2 The number of English picturebooks at home is a good predictor for many variables.....	194
4.5.3 The more frequently parents read to children in English, the more the children like to read in English.....	196
4.5.4 Entertaining children is not an important factor when choosing English picturebooks.....	197
4.5.5 The absence among parents of childhood memories of shared reading.....	198
4.6 Summarize parents’ motivation	198
Chapter 5 Book choices	200
5.1 Whose favourite book?.....	200
5.1.1 Where do parents get information from?.....	200
5.1.2 Books are mainly chosen by parents	202
5.1.3 Parents’ preferences	203
5.1.4 Children’s preferences in terms of book choices.....	209
5.2 Comparing parents’ and children’s favourite book titles.....	212
5.2.1 Books welcomed by parents and children.....	214
5.2.2 The different book choices for parents and children	219
5.3 Summary about parents’ and children’s book choices	220
Chapter 6 Findings — Interaction patterns and children’s responses.....	221
6.1 General parent-child interaction features	221
6.1.1 Communicate in mixed languages.....	221
6.1.2 Parents initiate more interaction questions.....	223
6.1.3 Reading was interrupted because of language barrier	223
6.1.4 Most parents listen to children about book choices.....	224
6.1.5 Categorisation of the question types.....	225

6.2 Five foreign language shared reading interaction patterns.....	226
6.2.1 Literal focus: Parents and children are engaged in exact translation	228
6.2.2 Literacy focus: Parents and children are engaged in developing reading skills....	236
6.2.3 Literary focus: Parents and children are engaged in reading pleasure	251
6.2.4 Exploratory focus: Parents and children are engaged in knowledge and discovery	268
6.2.5 Digital focus: Parents and children are engaged in interaction with technology ..	279
6.3 Summary of five shared reading foci	291
6.4 The difference between English and Chinese shared reading foci.....	295
6.4.1 General comparison.....	295
6.4.2 Comparison of shared reading foci when reading in different languages	296
6.4.3 Families used a similar focus when they undertook shared reading in both languages	298
6.4.4 Families who applied a different focus when they did shared reading in different languages	311
6.4.5 The importance of reading in Chinese.....	315
Chapter 7 Discussion	318
7.1 Parents’ motivation and Chinese Parenting	320
7.1.1 Parents’ motivation and stereotypes reflect Chinese parenting.....	320
7.1.2 Chinese parenting in the competitive society	322
7.1.3 “Pushy parent” or “ideal parenting”?	324
7.1.4 The new parenting image reflected in shared reading	325
7.2 The further gap of the social class in English shared reading.....	327
7.3 Are there “right” books for English shared reading for Chinese families?.....	331
7.4 Is there a “right” focus of English shared reading for Chinese families?	337
7.5 Didactic English shared reading and reading for pleasure.....	340
7.5.1 The didactic English picturebook shared reading.....	340
7.5.2 Children’s resistance to didactic reading.....	344
7.5.3 The challenges of reading for pleasure in China	345
7.5.4 Reading for pleasure is possible in foreign language shared reading.....	347
7.5.5 Breaking the boundary of didactic reading and reading for pleasure.....	351
7.6 Digital resources can be beneficial in foreign language shared reading	354
7.6.1 Digital reading can be combined with paper reading in shared reading	354
7.6.2 Parents’ involvement is vital for digital shared reading	355

7.6.3 The need for more digital technology designed for English shared reading	356
7.6.4 Digital resources for English picturebook reading	357
7.7 Summary	358
Chapter 8 Conclusion and implications	359
8.1 What was learned from this study? The answers to the research questions.....	359
8.2 Limitations and future study	360
8.3 Strengths of this study	363
8.4 Implications of this study	366
Appendix 1 The questionnaire	368
Appendix 2 The interview questions	378
Appendix 3 Example of coding process	381
Primary source	382
Secondary source	386

List of Tables

Table 1 ACIRI (Adult-Child Interactive Reading Inventory).....	97
Table 2 DRI categories.....	100
Table 3 General information relating to the seven observed families.....	163
Table 4 Top 20 Favourite English Picturebooks Titles.....	213
Table 5 Question Types.....	226
Table 6 The interaction foci of the seven families in English and Chinese....	296

List of Figures

Figure 1 Family Income.....	160
Figure 2 What kinds of English picturebooks do you buy or borrow for your children?	190
Figure 3 The relationship between the number of English picturebooks at home and other variables.....	195

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank all the parents and families who answered the questionnaire, were interviewed and observed in this study. Without their time and effort, this study would not have been possible.

Thank you to my supervisors from the bottom of my heart — Dr Clementine Beauvais and Dr Sarah Olive. I would like to thank you for guiding me every step of the way and showing me your professionalism and enthusiasm as a scholar. You are my role models in many ways. It was always a mystery to me how you can handle so many things at the same time and remain efficient, intelligent and inspirational; how could you respond to my writings so quickly and how could you always find the good points in my writing? In my times of self-doubt, you were always there with me and gave me tremendous encouragement. I was lucky to meet both of you.

I would also like to thank my family, only with your support, did I have the chance to find and pursue what I am passionate about, to know who I am. I would especially like to thank my two children, who are inspirational and challenging, and always make me a better person. I'd like also to thank my peers in the Education department, I always benefitted from our inspirational talks and communication.

This was a precious journey for me and the time passed so quickly. When I realized it, it was nearly the end of my PhD life. What I learned was not only related to academic life, but I also learned to stick to my determination, gain pleasure from what I am doing, reach my goals step by step, and, most importantly, always be honest to myself. With so much love and support I received, I feel emotionally rich and recharged.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Ying Zou

Chapter 1 Introduction and the research gap

1.1 Introduction and background

1.1.1 The beginning of the journey

With two preschool-age children myself and being a former editor and translator for both adults and children's books in a commercial publishing house, it felt "natural" for me to start reading with my children from the moment they were born. My interest in Anglophone picturebooks began from my personal observation. In my friends' daily personal posts on WeChat (the most popular social media in China), I noticed that among the picturebooks that parents shared, many of them were not Chinese, but English language picturebooks. When I visited libraries (most of them private) in Beijing, I found that parents choose not only Chinese picturebooks but also English picturebooks to bring home; the story-telling sessions in the libraries are not only in Chinese but in English; children's librarians enthusiastically told me why these picturebooks in English are good, mainly because of their perceived superior aesthetic quality; I came across bookstores which specialized in English picturebooks and talked with the staff, and I was told that not only parents of children in international schools, but also an increasing number of parents of children from state schools, are purchasing these picturebooks in English. All of these incidents raised my interest to explore this phenomenon, which, it seemed to me, was quite new.

Although it felt “natural” for me to read to my children, when I reflect on it, I realize it is actually not so. Personally, I have no memory of being read to in either Chinese or English when I was a child, and such was the case, too, for many other people of my generation growing up in the late 1980s and 1990s in China. My parents could not speak any words of English, let alone read picturebooks in English to me. This is not an exception: 6 out of 7 parent interviewees had no memories of shared reading nor being read to in English by their parents. Within one or two generations, parenting practice has changed rapidly, which further aroused my interest to look into the reasons. If reading to children feels “natural” for me, reading picturebooks in English is definitely a new and nurtured experience. My reasons were similar to other parents’, which I will reveal in the findings part, for example, for fun, and to learn English naturally. Because these cultural and social reasons fascinated me, it led me to look into the reasons and parents’ motivation behind this phenomenon.

1.1.2 The reasons behind the phenomenon of Anglophone picturebook reading

This new phenomenon of reading picturebooks in English is growing with the increasing availability of picturebooks and picturebooks in translation in general. In the past decade, which is called “The golden age of children’s books” by mass media in China, the quantity and quality of children’s books have experienced an unprecedented development. Their value in children’s lives or

education has been recognized since the 1990s. At the same time, publishers and policymakers have emphasized the importance of publishing indigenous Chinese children's literature (either the author or illustrator comes from China, in most cases it is the author). According to data from Openbook (openbook.com.cn), children's book sales increased 28.6% in 2016 compared to 2015, and for the first time it became the biggest category of all literature categories. The highest earning authors in general on the list are Cao Wenxuan, Yang Hongying (whose books sold more than 50 million copies in total), and Shen Shixi; all of them are children's writers. There are around 570 publishers in China, more than 520 have published children's books and 35 of them only publish children's books (data at the end of 2017). Every year there are more than 40,000 titles of children's books published in China, and the total print amount is more than 6 billion (data at the end of 2017).

Wang Quangen (2011) summarized some reasons for the boom in picturebooks: the influence of reading campaigns in other countries; the reform of literacy in primary schools; and marketing strategies developed by publishers. I will add more reasons based on this study — the tremendous economic boom that occurred after the 1990s, the rise of public and private children's libraries and the increasing number of "Reading Promoters," and well-educated young parents growing up in one-child families.

There are also historical reasons. I would hypothesize that following the suppression of both children's and adults' needs for story-telling in the ten-year

Cultural Revolution in China, during which period almost all cultural activities were banned, the boom in reading can be found in many places. Nowadays, in almost every big department store in big cities and other children's educational centres, there are many private libraries (owned by private, readers who pay around 100 to 200 pounds per year to borrow books), or a bookshelf wall with many picturebooks. The term of "Picturebooks Library" (HuiBenGuan) has become familiar to parents; the reading promoters' books (about recommending picturebooks) are popular among parenting books (e.g. *Feed your children with books* by Wang Peiting, in Chinese (title translated by me); *100 best books for Children* by Anita Silvey, translated into Chinese by Wanglin; *1001 Children's Books: You Must Read Before You Grow Up* by Julia Eccleshare, translated by Chen Xiaoqi among others).

The message that mass media, institutions, publications and educational experts seem to be giving in China is that reading to children is the "right" thing to do as a parent. This boom in picturebook-reading reflects the growing popularity of reading in recent years; at the same time, it also demonstrates the lack of shared reading customs in the past and even now. I was also aware that this new phenomenon is a social class practice as the reason I noticed this phenomenon is probably because I am close to or belong to this group.

When I looked into the boom in picturebook-reading, I found two distinct features by doing a quick search on the internet. Firstly, parents and children in China read more translated picturebooks than original Chinese

picturebooks. The best-selling children's books list Dangdang.com for the year 2016 shows 75 translated children's books among the top 100 (more than half are picturebooks), and 17 books among the top 20 are translated books. It has been said that in the past 20 years, Chinese publishers have brought in almost all mainstream picturebooks published in other countries, mainly Anglophone and European picturebooks during the last 100 years because of their presumed better quality than Chinese equivalents (Yan, 2019). If these are translations, many parents who have foreign language abilities may tend to use the original language picturebooks — a phenomenon articulated by parents during the interview, which I will discuss in chapter 5.

The newly burgeoning field of children's books, firstly in translation, now in English or in translation, became accessible with the steady economic growth of Chinese families. The other reasons for the increase in English picturebooks are globalization and information technology, the globalized children's book market, the improved ability of the current generation to speak the English language compared to the previous generation, the expectation of improving children's English language and the desire for upward social mobility, the accessibility of Anglophone picturebooks in bookshops, libraries and the internet, and the presumed higher quality of English picturebooks compared with Chinese ones.

I also found the influences of some English picturebook promoters among parents. Jim Trelease's book *The Read-aloud Handbook* (2006) became

a bestseller parenting book in China, directly contributing to the national family reading promotion. It lists many reasons why shared reading is essential for family relationships and educational achievements. Once I began to turn my attention to this phenomenon, I found many parents I know are talking about the booklist books by reading promoters Jim Trelease, Tadashi Matsui, Wang Peiting, Liao Caixin or Wu Minlan. They are “ardent advocates of books” in Peter Hunt’s words (1994:187), from the USA, Japan, and Taiwan. People in parenting forums are discussing and comparing the differences, arguing about which one is better for their specific child. More reading promoters and parenting books that inclusively introduce either award-winning picturebooks or what they have read or enjoyed reading are emerging, and the list is long. It seems parents want to know first how to choose books for their children.

When facing this new phenomenon, this study has sought to gain a better understanding of not only what it is, but enquire why and how it happens. Using a scholarly lens to look at this phenomenon, I realized it is a profoundly interdisciplinary study area. I have to look beyond the field of picturebooks and shared reading, and seek my position in various debates and concepts in related fields that can give me a broader view of how it works. When I embarked on this study, I had an interest in many perspectives. First of all, it is about shared reading, so studies and issues within shared reading studies inspired me to consult reader-response theory and take children’s responses as precious data. Secondly, reading in English means it is about foreign language reading and

literacy skills in general, so I looked at literacy studies and second language acquisition theories. Because of the language barrier, how to make the reading interaction possible is a pedagogical issue. Thirdly, shared reading is a typical parenting practice — why parents choose to do this is in the scope of the sociology of parenting and how Chinese parents are motivated to do this is another cultural and educational issue. Fourthly, as an important part of a shared reading event, both children and parents' book choices are noteworthy. Finally, reading Anglophone picturebooks is an expensive investment in China, which makes it a social and economic question.

With such broad possible approaches, I narrowed down the questions. I decided to focus on the parents' motivation which is connected to parenting practice, parents' and children's book choices, and most importantly, with the former two questions as background information, I decided I would look at their shared reading scene and discover how they actually interacted. I hoped to capture reciprocal effects of children's and parents' responses. Since little previous literature has focused on foreign picturebook shared reading and such a broad possible theoretical lens, I decided to take a grounded theory approach and dive into this phenomenon without any particular scholarly boundaries. The scope of this study, therefore, has not been restricted to shared reading. As a witness of numerous radical changes in parenting practice in China, I have developed a growing interest in exploring shared reading or literacy development of general parenting practice and social class reflection.

Thus, to extend this goal, besides the aim of shared reading and how it works, this study also aims to make statements about Chinese parenting practices more generally, using the evidence from shared reading observation. At the same time, I was inspired by many ethnographic studies about the researcher's position and how to conduct natural observation. I did not consider the practice of digital reading at first. However, after the pilot study, I found this is an inseparable part of their shared reading practice as almost every family was using digital resources and it played a more significant role in comparison with first language shared reading, so I decided to add a digital aspect into my observation.

Therefore, my starting point is to solve the puzzle of what is happening with Chinese parents reading English picturebooks to their children. Shared reading in a foreign language context at home provokes an interdisciplinary approach. Parents' involvement and the home literacy environment are critical in children's literacy development. Positive parent-child interaction is thought to improve children's interest in books. Children and parents may have different choices in terms of their favourite picturebooks, although mostly it is the parent who decides which book to purchase, at least in the Chinese context. Therefore, when Chinese parents choose to read Anglophone picturebooks to their children, what is their motivation and what are the children's responses when they read the books selected by their parents? Without other English language interactions in their lives, how do Chinese parents interact with each other and how do

children respond to foreign language reading? What kinds of English picturebooks do the parents and children prefer? Most parents read Chinese picturebooks and English picturebooks during the same reading time. Are there any differences when they read in different languages?

1.1.3 Research questions

In summary, this study was motivated by a desire to understand parents' choices of, attitudes towards, and beliefs about Anglophone picturebook reading. A further aim is to observe the parent-child interaction, adult influences and children's responses while the dyads are reading picturebooks in English. In the background of Chinese parenting and foreign language reading, I would like to explore this burgeoning field in terms of these three major questions:

- (1) Why do Chinese parents choose to read English picturebooks to their children? What are their motivations?
- (2) How do parents choose English picturebooks for their children? What kinds of books do parents choose? What kind of English picturebooks do children like?
- (3) How do parents guide their children during shared reading and how do they interact? What are children's responses to these different interaction foci?

1.1.4 Study design

This study is based on three different types of data. First, a questionnaire, to gather participants' demographic data and general reading practice. Second, naturalistic observations of seven families' shared reading scenes with children from toddlers to preschool age. These seven families were selected from a larger sample pool of 565 families who answered the questionnaire. And third, the interviews with the parents of these seven families. The first stage of recruiting the large pool of families was not a hard task. After repeatedly adjusting the questionnaire and pilot study, I was amazed by parents' willingness to participate. My plan was to access 100 to 200 families in the space of a one-month period; after some reasonable efforts, within two weeks, my goal was reached. After one month, despite the length of the questionnaire, I had collected data from 565 families, and stopped recruiting. The strong engagement achieved in the first stage of data collection was not due to my personal influence or extra hard work. It seems that it was principally due to parents' engagement with this topic, that is parents' motivation and interest toward shared reading and children's education. As it was such a long questionnaire (see appendix 1), without motivation, the parents had many reasons to give up, but most did not.

I then selected seven families for the shared reading observation stage. From the results, these seven families are all from middle-class backgrounds. The second stage was an ethnographic observation of shared reading over a six-

month period. I developed a typology comprising five foreign language parent-child shared reading foci, to reveal the diversity of parent-child interaction processes:

1. Literal focus: parents and children are engaged in exact translation;
2. Literacy focus: parents and children are engaged in developing reading skills;
3. Literary focus: parents and children are engaged in reading pleasure;
4. Exploratory focus: parents and children are engaged in knowledge and discovery;
5. Digital focus: parents and children are engaged in interaction with technology.

I then compared Chinese parents' English shared reading with their Chinese shared reading using these shared reading interaction foci. I hope these foci on second-language shared reading can also start a conversation with first language shared reading studies and the field of second-language acquisition in general.

The last stage, which involved interviews, gave me more insight into parents' shared reading practices. I listened to parents' childhood reading experience and their families' educational approach. I found many common experiences and differences among parents. I will present the details of the research methodology and research procedures in later chapters.

1.1.5 Structure of this thesis

Following the introduction and rationale of this study, the thesis consists of eight chapters. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of this study, this thesis involves considerable interdisciplinary scholarship.

Chapter 1 sets the stage by introducing the origin and background of the study and describing the research gap.

Chapter 2 is the literature review which provides a separate approach in each sub-section. I consulted literature and empirical studies in the fields of the history of translated children's literature in China, shared reading studies, reader-response theory, reading choices and motivation, shared reading interaction, educational studies, picturebook studies, Chinese parenting and cultural capital theories. These studies from different disciplines seem independent but integrated within this new phenomenon. This chapter is the stepping-stone to the analysis section in chapter 6 and 7.

Chapter 3 explains the methodology, the procedures of this study, and unveils the 565 participants from the data. I also demonstrate the coding process in this chapter. I will introduce the basic information of these seven observation families one by one in this part.

Chapters 4 to 6 explain the findings. The primary data is presented according to the questions I want to explore. The results and finding section proceeds by devoting a chapter to answer each main issue of this phenomenon: chapter 4 answers the first research question about parents' motivation and what

factors may influence it; chapter 5 is about the second research question related to book choice; chapter 6 presents interaction patterns by combining the data from different sources. By doing this, it is not the sequence of each family's story. However, I will link the behaviours to families repeatedly and we will see more common practice and differences among families. In chapter 6, I start to construct my own typology of shared reading interaction foci fit for foreign language shared reading interaction. I applied the interaction foci to analyse their Chinese language shared reading and improved the interaction theory by expanding its explanatory and analytical power in a broader context. An in-depth comparison between shared reading in English and Chinese in terms of parents and children's foci takes place in later part of this chapter.

Chapter 7 moves away from empirical findings to theoretical inquiries and develops the findings outlined in the previous chapters at a deeper level.

Chapter 8 draws the conclusion and summarizes the implications of this study.

1.2 The research gap

1.2.1 The research gap in shared reading studies

Since picturebooks are seen as the most important literary texts for young children before primary school age, with the globalization of the children's picturebook market, the emerging generation of young Chinese parents who are

well-educated and predominantly the only child in their families, regard Anglophone picturebooks as a new educational competition field. I asked parents whether they read English picturebooks to their children, 86% of parents said yes and 76% of parents said they read to their children at least once a week. Compared with the popularity of the practice, this leaves a significant research gap in this cross-disciplinary phenomenon.

It should be noted that the large volume of long-standing research into shared reading and home literacy environment is focused on monolingual children's first language development and its correlation to literacy and cognitive development (Lyytinen, Laakso & Poikkeus, 1998; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002; Hamilton, 2013; Baker, 2013; Niklas, Tayler & Schneider, 2015). Few studies have examined the relationships between the home literacy environment and children's second language abilities. For example, Kalia's study (2007) relies on parental reports of their home literacy practice rather than direct observation of parent-child interaction in India. There is other limited research (Zhang & Koda, 2011; Li & Flear, 2015) so far conducted into bilingual children's language acquisition and Heritage Language (HL) development through the parent-child interactions in literacy events such as family shared reading.

However, there is a lack of studies exploring family shared reading in a second language. I feel that with empirical evidence, findings on first language shared reading should not be simply generalised to second language or foreign

language shared reading. Shared reading in English as a second language or foreign language is an under-researched area which deserves complete investigation. In these few research studies concerning second language shared reading at home, the focus is on how shared reading influences children's second language acquisition (Chow, McBride-Chang & Cheung, 2010; Zhang & Koda, 2011).

Even fewer studies are about shared reading in a foreign language context. In general, Chinese students learn English as a foreign language mainly through formal instruction in the classroom setting. They rarely use English as communication language in daily life. Given Chinese children's limited exposure to the English language and printed media in their school and daily life for preschoolers, the home literacy environment presumably serves a more critical role. Most of the foreign language shared reading research has featured reading by teachers in the classroom and other institutional settings rather than in a home setting (Sheu, 2006; Lau & Warning, 2007; Mourão, 2016). With the prevalence of Anglophone shared reading rising, aesthetic, narrative, and educational (linguistic, cognitive) values of English language picturebooks are widely discussed among parents, English teachers and practitioners, and it also raises the question of what and how parents read to children. From my observation, most Chinese parents read Chinese picturebooks and English picturebooks at the same reading event. How exactly foreign language shared reading happens at home and how parents and children interact when reading

English picturebooks is not well understood and has not yet been thoroughly investigated.

1.2.2 Studies about English picturebooks read by the non-Anglophone world

Although an increasing number of studies focus on immigrant children's reading practice in a host country, notably absent from the available literature are discussions of reading foreign language picturebooks in children's native countries (Boyce et al., 2004; Zhang & Koda, 2011). The family shared reading studies of African Americans (McNair, 2012) and Greek families (Natsiopoulou, Souliotis, Kyridis, & Hatzisavvides, 2006) could be adopted for reference.

These studies tested the notion that the home literacy environment was associated mainly with the economic circumstances of the family. The more books the family own, the better literacy ability the children have. When we look into English picturebook reading outside the Anglophone world, Singapore and Malaysia can be taken as examples. These countries have authors who write in English and the content of Anglophone picturebooks focus on social and ethnic issues. English is the official language in Singapore and "a wealth of international children's literature in English is available from the excellent public library system and in numerous bookshops (Williams, 2006:104)".

Williams (2006) introduces the development of children's literature in Singapore; children's literature is finding its voice in the background of post-

colonial, tight political control, and a materialistic society. Desai (2006) analysed several English literature books published in Malaysia to explore how children's books reflect national identity in a diverse society. Most of the books have the didactic purpose of showing the harmony between different ethnic groups under the Malay leadership. However, the situation is different from China. Apart from English picturebooks from Anglophone countries, there are also English picturebooks written by Malaysian and Singapore writers. In contrast, no such writers exist in China.

1.2.3 The bigger gap of shared reading studies about Chinese families

Shared reading among Chinese parents is another under-researched area. To date, scholarship in Europe or North America explores the latest literary theories — from poststructuralism to posthumanism, from psychoanalysis to gender theory, or the semiotic and narrative functions of images in children's picturebooks. In contrast, Chinese children's literature research tends to “present the big picture by theorizing trends important within Chinese children's literature as a whole” (Nelson & Morris, 2016:2), especially from a historical perspective and content analysis, rather than a single author, category or reader's motivation or response (Nelson & Morris, 2016). Alternatively, Chinese children's literature research focuses on closely analysing the content of the book, the author or structures of the text, rather than on the reader.

There are few studies about the response of Chinese children as readers. A few studies (Zhang & Koda, 2011; Guo, 2013) in the English academic field focus on Chinese immigrant families outside China. Chinese parent-child shared reading has not been explored extensively especially against the background of the reading campaign with the new generation of parents. In this sense, the results of this study will add to the study of contemporary Chinese children's literature by opening it up to a new area — the field of reader motivation and parent-child interaction. In DeBruin-Parecki's (1999) research, it was mentioned that Asian families in western society have "little exposure" to picturebooks; most of them are academic books which lack exciting stories. In order not to use "Asian families" as another stereotypical label, in this study, the ideological thoughts, the value system of Chinese parenting, ideological approaches and the Chinese parent-child relationship will be synthesized. The political and social origin of Chinese parenting will also be explored within this issue.

In China, the status of children's literature research in higher education has not yet been fully recognized, and investigation into picturebooks is a relatively new academic area. There are few studies which look into Anglophone picturebook reading; a few Anglophone picturebook research studies are focused on using English picturebooks as a tool to learn the English language (Bai, 2012; Sun, 2012; Zhang, 2016). Meisel's (2011) psychological study shows that there is a "critical period" or "immersion" in second language

acquisition; so young children learn a new language more efficient than older children or adults. In Anglophone academia, in terms of Chinese children's literature and readership, a few scholars are introducing and analysing what kinds of books have been published in China in the past few years. The information is not up-to-date due to the rapid pace of new titles becoming available each year. The dearth of research among Chinese children is noteworthy. Studies examining shared reading practice with preschool-aged Chinese children are severely lacking, leaving a gap both in academia and in the information available for designing home reading intervention programmes. This study is an attempt to visit a field that has remained relatively untouched, to probe what is behind shared Anglophone picturebook reading in the new context and to add a more international dimension to the study of shared reading, as most current relevant studies examine shared reading that is rooted in the Western social context.

1.2.4 Statement of the question to be investigated

This current study attempts to extend past research by filling many research gaps in four ways. Firstly, to my knowledge, it is among the first studies to look into parent-child shared reading in a language that is foreign to the parents. Secondly, it is also one of the first studies to compare the interaction patterns in two languages. Thirdly, it extends the scope of shared reading from linguistic impact to social, cultural, and parenting aspects. Fourthly and lastly, rather than

relying on parents' reports, it has investigated the motivation of parents and observed the interaction between parents and children. The findings of this study might enhance our understanding of home literacy activities in a foreign-language context and reflect on the first language shared reading practice.

Chapter 2 Literature review

Because of the interdisciplinary and complex nature of shared reading interaction, to better understand the Anglophone picturebook reading phenomena among Chinese families, literature and previous studies were reviewed through several theoretical lenses. I will firstly introduce Chinese children's literature by explaining how it has been influenced by foreign children's literature. Previous literature will be then be explored at the intersection of literacy studies, children's literature, sociology of Chinese parenting and childhood studies. To be more specific, these ideas and questions are considered using a number of different theoretical approaches simultaneously — encompassing second language acquisition and literacy studies, reader-response theory, Chinese parenting, reading practice and pedagogy for interdisciplinary investigations and parents using Anglophone picturebooks as pedagogic tools. This is not to suggest that these different perspectives are isolated from each other, these theories are integrated by a unifying theoretical approach of taking foreign language shared reading as a social construct.

2.1 The influence of foreign children's books in China

Reading foreign children's books, from the Anglophone world especially, in translation or in their original language, has had a tremendous influence on

Chinese children's literature and Chinese parenting culture at large. The past ten years have been called the "The Golden Age of Picturebooks" in China by media and publishers. If we take into account the history of children's literature and picturebooks in China, we can see it is not a spontaneous development. The most important reason behind this boom is the translation and introduction of foreign children's books into China. In this part, I will synthesise the influences of Western children's books from the beginning of the influx period to date. The historical trace and background of this new Anglophone picturebook reading phenomenon will be mapped. It is important and relevant to look back at the history of the influence of foreign children's books in China, which will help to understand its position in families' parenting practice in the current time.

2.1.1. The influence of foreign children's books before the May Fourth Movement of 1919

The May Fourth Movement in 1919 is often viewed as the beginning of China's contemporary period and the beginning of Chinese children's literature. Despite the long history of continuous civilisation rich in the arts, humanities and literature, it is generally believed that China had no distinctive and independent literature especially for children until the first decade of the 1900s (Ho, 1997). Before the year 1919, foreign children's books had come to China sporadically. *Aesop's Fables* was translated and introduced by Ricci and other Jesuits in 1608; The first magazine for children — *The Child's Monthly*, was sponsored by

Shanghai Christian Qing Xin Academy and edited by the missionary J.W. Farnham in 1875 (Ban, 2016). These books and magazines were circulated and distributed within religious schools, charity organisations and intellectuals but were not accessible to ordinary parents. The Late Qing dynasty in the late 19th century also witnessed the flourishing of literary translation, including children's literature in China. As Li (2004) summarises, the main purpose of these translated books was to enlighten and encourage people including children to fight against the feudal regime and foreign invaders, and to support social change with the intention of achieving a more prosperous and democratic society. Major politicians like Liang Qichao advocated translating political texts in order to drive social reform. However, many such translated works were written in the Wenyan style (the archaic and poetic Chinese written language) rather than the more accessible and child-oriented Baihua (colloquial and based on everyday spoken language) which is used today, so the influence of these works were limited to the intellectual circle.

During the same period, the market for children's books in the late 19th and early 20th century in Britain and other European countries was flourishing. The number and range of books published inclusively for children in Britain increased from the 1740s (Grenby, 2015). In Britain, the period from 1760 to 1845 was the time that "children's literature began to flourish: a much wider variety of books were published in much greater numbers" (Grenby, 2015:464). Then from the late 19th century to the early 20th century, described by Peter

Hunt (1994) as the “maturity” period, saw the Golden Age of children’s books in Britain, as the philosophy towards childhood and children had changed, and much of what we call classical children’s literature emerged during this period. If we move forward along the timeline to the beginning of the 20th century, people in Britain read well-written picturebooks like *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (first edition published in 1902 by Beatrix Potter), which is still popular today.

However, back in China, compared with the golden age of children’s books in the late 19th century and early 20th century in Britain, children’s reading materials in China before the New Cultural Movement were not even regarded as “children’s literature” by today’s standards. Children’s reading materials were either in oral transmission such as folk tales and poems, or traditional Confucian classics at that time. Zheng Zhenduo (1989/1936) closely analysed children’s reading materials in the feudal period and found the most widely-read children’s reading materials were *The Three Character Classic* (Sanzijing) and *The Thousand Character Classic* (Qianziwen). Both of these books are the most traditional Confucian texts, which tell children the correct ways to achieve virtue, benevolence and righteousness (Li, 2004). There are also texts especially intended to educate girls, such as *Instructions for Girls*, which taught them how to be obedient to their father and husband. Confucian Classics is a canon of writings teaching Confucius philosophy. Among the Confucian ethics reflected in the classics, the moral principle about family life is “Li”, which describes the key concepts: ruler to subject, father to son,

husband to wife, and elder to younger. It states that if people obey this worship order, each of these relationships will be harmonious. It points out that the father had absolute power over children and the younger child should obey and respect their older siblings. Individualism was relentlessly oppressed by Confucianism. Through a modern lens, these reading materials are not authentic children's literature in that these texts are aimed at educating children to become obedient adults in feudal China.

Traditionally in China, there was a view that there was no reason to write books especially for children. With such concepts about children and childhood, it was difficult to produce children's books in a real sense. Only when people began to realise the different characteristics between adults and children, was the need for children's books identified. Scholars, such as Zhu (2014), argue that genuine children's literature only began with the modern child-centric childhood philosophy after the discovery of "childhood", when children's needs were legitimately recognised. Shavit (2013) noted that the notion of childhood is an indispensable precondition for the creation of children's books. I generally agree with this point. Consequently, it is not hard to imagine how fresh and inspiring these foreign children's books seemed when Chinese intellectuals first read foreign children's books, which included romantic, carefree or humorous children's texts. It opened a new window on how to regard children, children's books and parenting for intellectuals and Chinese parents at that time.

2.1.2 The influence of foreign children's books during the May Fourth

Movement period

Foreign children's books played a more important role during the May Fourth Movement period. The creation and translation of children's books in the modern sense did not emerge until 1919 — the year of the beginning of the New Culture Movement in China (Li, 2004). During the New Culture Movement period, which promoted individual freedom and nationalism, western literature including children's books had a tremendous influence on the Chinese parenting culture and brought about the writing of original children's literature in China. The movement brought in Western cultural, literature, political and scientific knowledge in order to revolutionise Chinese culture (Xu, 2013). Foreign children's books mainly in English and other European languages or Japanese language books and their translations generated the emergence of Chinese children's literature and more well-educated Chinese parents firstly began to read these children's books for themselves and then to their children.

In the first three decades of the 20th century, the newly-established publication of children's books experienced an unprecedented boom in the translation of foreign children's works such as the fairy tales from The Grimm Brothers' and Hans Christian Andersen, *Aesop's Fables* and the *Thousand and One Arabian Nights*. Among them, many intellectuals were involved in

translating children's books. Andersen's *The Emperor's New Clothes* was translated by Ye Shengtao, *Millions of Cats* was translated by Chen Bochui in 1928, Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was translated by Zhao Yuanren in 1922, and *The Adventures of Pinocchio* was translated by Xu Diaofu in 1928. They were all influential major scholars not only in children's literature but also in the scholarly and public world. These translated works inspired many writers and intellectuals to start creating children's books. These translators, who were also the earliest children's writers themselves, shaped the origin of contemporary Chinese children's literature.

Concepts relating to childhood also changed during this period due to the introduction of foreign children's books and parenting philosophy books. The introduction of western thought in the new literature also introduced the novel notion of "children as center" (Dewey, 1902) and gradually children and childhood were finally "discovered" (Zhou, 2012). During this period, China began to be exposed to John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Dewey and other western philosophical ideas on childhood, education and children's literature firstly introduced by major intellectuals (Xu, 2013). Many Chinese intellectuals went abroad to encounter and study these works. On their return to China, they imported and translated them. With the coming of foreign literary works, a "particular view of the innocent and imaginative child was influenced by Western Romanticism" (Xu, 2013:229). Between them, Rousseau's claim that children's status should be valued in its own right, and not merely as a

preparatory stage for adulthood, has been widely credited by pioneering scholars in China. John Dewey's educational philosophy was symbolically influential in many countries but especially in China, as he disseminated his educational and democratic ideas in China from May 1919 to July 1921. His monographs were translated into Chinese and he became an influential public figure during that time in China. His child-centred educational philosophy and the child-centred curriculum were adopted by Chinese intellectuals and adapted to the local context (Xu, 2013). Influenced by Dewey's and his belief in the intrinsic value of childhood, scholars like Zhou Zuoren adapted his view of children's natural growth and argued that education and literature should "meet children's needs and enrich their lives" (1998/1920: 683). These new educational thoughts were vitally inspirational for the translation of children's books and eventually brought about the creation of Chinese children's books.

Originals and translations of these children's books from Europe or Japan, together with the construction of a distinct notion of childhood during that period, was only introduced to Chinese readers during the May Fourth period and became the most important origin of Chinese children's literature. Many scholars (Xu, 2013; Li, 2004) agree that in China it was the translation of foreign literary works that enabled the formation of indigenous children's literature. The beginning of Chinese children's literature is Ye Shentao's *Scarecrow* (1923/2015) — the first Chinese fairy tale intended for children. Farquhar (2015) mentions that this work has some traits from Andersen and

Oscar Wilde's work, which shows great empathy for the poor. Shen Congwen and Chen Bochui adapted Chinese Alice stories — *Alice's Adventures in China* (Shen, 1928/2014), and *Miss Alice* (Chen, 1931/1928). At that time, many commercial publishing houses and children's periodicals were established. Zhou Zuoren (1920) published his seminal articles in the journal "Literature of Children" which originally had the Chinese title "*Er tong Wen xue*". It was these periodicals that first published translations of children's works. It was the first time that Chinese readers "had access to reading materials with a wide range of subjects, setting, themes, including animal characterisation" (Ho, 1997:130), rather than moral didacticism.

2.1.3 The selection of foreign children's books for political purposes during the Republican era

After the Republic of China, from 1919 to 1949, the availability of foreign children's books and translated books gradually became selective and the influence of foreign children's books became limited. From the 1920s to 1949, although the imperial rule within China had ended, China experienced a perpetual civil war, the Sino-Japanese War, and was "deeply troubled by occasional monarchist movements, prevailing warlordism, and intensified foreign invasion" (Xu, 2013:229). The creators of early modern Chinese children's literature were convinced that their epic mission was to save China by saving the children — the future of the nation. Children were no longer

merely the obedient possession to the adults, rather, “as symbols to the nation’s future and its potential, they were to be cherished” (Nelson & Morris, 2016:33). Children’s literature was intended to assimilate children into society. Literary works during this period, no matter whether adults’ or children’s, shared a common goal: to ensure that children understood that the future of the nation was linked to every citizen of the country (Bi, 2013). From this time, children’s literature in China became more or less serving a didactic function and was expected to take the responsibility for transforming China. Therefore, the choices of foreign children’s books became selective for this purpose.

In 1942, at the Yan’an Forum on Literature and Art, Mao Zedong further emphasised that art and literature were now seen as artistic power and ideological weapons. Children’s literature and literature in general, was forced to shoulder the utmost responsibility of facilitating social reforms and ideological function. Consequently, for example, from Ye Shengtao’s *Little White Boat* (1921) to *Scarecrow*, the didactic writing betrays the adult’s nostalgia toward childhood from Western Romanticism and foreign children’s books. Under the adults’ severe surviving problems, it is nearly impossible to write about children’s “carefree” childhood (Xu, 2013). For translation from foreign children’s books, texts of ideological, revolutionary or didactic themes were selected. Consequently, after a burgeoning period during the May Fourth Movement, children’s books, concepts of childhood and parenting tradition

during the Republic of China, turned away from Western themes and the carefree childhood model.

2.1.4 The isolation period and its problems

The establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 provided an ideological infrastructure for social and family life and foreign children's books in the Socialist era were no longer available. The suspension blocked the way for the entry of other countries' children's literature. The flow of children's literature between the western world and China at the time is largely unilateral with the only import route from the Soviet Union due to political reasons.

Consequently, when we look back at Chinese children's literature during that period, due to the social revolution and strictly censored environment, after 1949, Chinese children's literature was used as a dictatorship tool by the Communist party with strong political and moral themes (Bi, 2003). 1950-1966 was a period in history when there was little interaction in terms of children's literature between China and other parts of the world, especially western countries. The ten-year catastrophic Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) banned foreign children's books and children's books in general. The turbulence of this era caused the stasis of many industries, including the writing of children's books, not to mention the import and translation of foreign children's books. However, during these decades, high quality and what are now been regarded as "classic" children's books, especially picturebooks, were created in the Western

world, for example, in Europe and the USA. Parents in China were completely isolated from these books. This caused the creation of children's books in China to largely lag behind other countries and shared reading was rarely seen in families (Sheng, 2015).

2.1.5 Foreign children's books contribute to the shared reading boom

After the chaos of the above-mentioned period, 1978 marks the first year of "Reform and Opening Up" after the international isolation — the transition of the national focus moved from class revolution to re-entrance into the global capitalist market. In recent decades, the re-entry and translation of foreign children's books are the most important accelerator of the children's reading boom. China opened the door to other countries' books and there was a "return to what was advocated seventy years ago in the New Culture movement — 'love', eternal and universal" (Bi, 2003:65).

After 1978, and especially in the new century, the remarkable phenomenon of the Chinese children's picturebook market has been universally globalised. Many western children's books have been introduced into China. It has evolved into a large-scale cultural phenomenon in the 21st century in China. When Chinese readers were exposed to foreign children's books, they were amazed to see the books which had been written during the isolation years. As a result, tremendously popular picturebooks from all over the world were translated into Chinese. One example is from the award-winning introduction

book of children's picturebooks: *Picturebooks: Reading the Classics* written by Peng Yi (2006), who introduced nearly 100 classic picturebooks to professionals and parents, but none of them was from China. Another example is from Gu Aihua (2014). She chose six picturebooks in order to explore the response of primary school students. She did not mention she would only choose translated picturebooks, however, I found all of the six picturebooks are by foreign authors. We can also see the influence of translated picturebooks from several statistics. If one goes to the book selling website of any bestseller children's books online, it can be seen that most of them are translated. Parents, educational and publishing practitioners, and children's book writers are being educated as to what "good" picturebooks look like, based on books which were tested in the market in the Western world. Wei (1995) observed a similar phenomenon in Taiwan. He found that children in Taiwan know more about European tales and Japanese comics than about Chinese tradition and culture (Wei, 1995).

As I mentioned before, the first translation boom was in the early 20th century around the May Fourth Movement period. Nearly 100 years later, the early 21st century saw the second children's books translation boom. The experience of the mother of one of my observation families illustrates this new boom. Weiwei's mother has two daughters; she said that when her first daughter was born around 2000, she did not know what a picturebook was and never bought a book for her; when Weiwei was born in 2013, she found picturebooks

were everywhere. With the influx of foreign children's books, concepts related to childhood have gradually changed, or have gone back to the spirit of the New Culture Movement. The standards for choosing books have also changed. Children's literature used to concentrate on adults' will and educational aims during the long period of unstable social change, but now it concentrates more on serving the target group of children's literature-the children who read it. From then on, due to the influence of the influx of foreign children's books, a child-oriented view has gradually embodied the fundamental transformation of children's literature over the last three decades.

2.1.6 Foreign children's books inspired the original Chinese children's books

Finally, foreign children's books inspired the original Chinese children's books once again from the New Culture Movement in the new century. The modern Chinese children's literature was not indigenous products, for the formation, creation skills, childhood philosophy embedded in the books were all influenced and learned from foreign books. Foreign children's literature, has in many respects wielded important and continuing influence on the creation of Chinese children's literature. Chinese children's literature is a hybrid product as Li points out "without the introduction of foreign children's works there would have been no such Chinese children's works" (Li, 2006:101). In summary, foreign children's books in the Chinese market facilitated Chinese children's

literature in different times in history; when foreign children's books were being restricted, the development of Chinese children's literature was also hindered.

However, in general, although an increasing number of indigenous Chinese children's books have been published in the last 10 years and policymakers and practitioners are appealing for more children's books by Chinese authors, there is still a big gap in the quality (physical or aesthetic quality) and quantity between the translations and Chinese children's books. That is one reason why many parents currently tend to choose translated or English language picturebooks.

2.1.7 Summarising the influence of foreign children's books in China

In conclusion, Western children's books in China had different roles at different times. In the early 20th century to 1949, foreign language children's books were read by intellectuals and translated by them, introducing and educating people about the children-centred philosophy and they helped to establish Chinese children's literature, but this gradually moved to the revolutionary and political form. From 1949 to 1978, books from the Soviet Union in the socialist era supported the dictatorship and were used as an ideological tool. After 1978, western children's books expanded people's horizons and set the models of what children's books should look like. In the new century, the influx of western children's books inspired Chinese children's writers to catch up quickly and join the communication with other counterparts. Now many children and

parents are familiar with foreign children's books. On the other hand, apart from children, many intellectuals and university students read children's books, mainly young adult novels as part of their liberal education. Many adults also read English language children's books for language acquisition or leisure.

With the prevalence of reading picturebooks in general, now many parents read Anglophone picturebooks to children. China has experienced a huge social transition in the past 100 years, which has influenced reading materials, parenting styles and every aspect of social and cultural life. Foreign children's books are used as an agent of socialisation, cultural reproduction, social subversion and change (Li, 2004; Li, 2006). With these influences of foreign children's books and with the Chinese context in mind, in this study, I am going to explore this new phenomenon: Anglophone picturebooks shared by Chinese parents and children.

2.2 Why shared reading is important and how it fits into the context of globalisation and digitalisation

It is an established concept that people benefit from reading in all aspects of contemporary society. For preschoolers, shared reading is the main source through which children gain literary experience. Nowadays, shared reading happens in the new context of globalisation, for example, shared reading in English and with digital facilitators. Shared reading is also an area that has attracted a great deal of academic attention. In this part, I will point out that

shared reading has caused the emergence of children's literature and emphasises the importance of the home literacy environment. There is a consensus that shared reading improves literacy skills. I will analyse the reason why shared reading has this function; I will summarise the other benefits of shared reading that previous literature frequently demonstrates. However, I will argue that shared reading does not directly improve every aspect of literacy skills as many people think, as it depends on how parents read to children. I will then look at foreign shared reading and bilingual education and lastly emphasise the role of digital reading in foreign language shared reading. These are all the elements I will measure and analyse in my own study.

2.2.1 Shared reading promotes the emergence of children's literature

Historically, when we look at the origin of children's literature in the late 18th century in Britain, children's books were created by middle class mothers for shared reading or informal teaching use in the UK. At that time, the mothers from the emerging British middle class saw educating a child and reading to a child as an investment like many Chinese middle class mothers do today.

Writing private educational books for their children or children very close to them is one of the origins of English children's literature (Grenby & Immel 2009). Barbauld's *Lessons for Children* (1778/2015) imagines a class-specific female — teaching audience whose main work is child nurturing. She emphasised that a woman's at-home teaching role was rewarding, even

necessary, for a mother, child, and society. Moreover, the ongoing power of that paradigm is reflected in the continuing popularity of her teaching texts among middle-class readers throughout the nineteenth century (Robbins, 1993). These are not exceptional examples; it became a standard requirement for maternal education among the middle classes in the late 18th century (Grenby & Immel, 2009).

From this point, the original implied readers of children's literature were parents. This is also because at that time, being schooled at home was common and there was a relative scarcity of elite boarding schools and state-sponsored institutions, so parents tried to create study and reading materials themselves. Children's literature during late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was primarily to serve the growing home education market (Grenby, 2015). In other words, in the UK, shared reading at home promoted the emergence of children's books. In this regard, shared reading is synonymous with home education and education in general. In China nowadays, similarly, shared reading as an educational parenting practice promotes the preponderance of children's books.

2.2.2 The importance of the home literacy environment

There is a consensus that the home literacy environment plays a vital role in children's literacy progress and reading skills, especially for children of preschool age. The home literacy environment is a multifaceted concept which includes storytelling, providing an ample number of children's books in the

home, the frequency of parent-child book reading, library visits, singing rhyming games and other literary stimulation. It is also a term to indicate the “literacy-related interactions, resources, and attitudes that children experience at home” (Hamilton, Hayiou-Thomas, Hulme, & Snowling, 2016:2). Previous studies have found that the difference in the home literacy environment is important variation in children’s literacy development (Lyytinen et al., 1998; Zhang & Koda, 2011; Hamilton et al., 2016). The researchers named above have looked into the impact of a variety of factors on shared reading and literacy development, such as parents’ socioeconomic status, educational background, the frequency of visiting libraries, the number of books in the home, parents’ reading behaviour, and parent-child interaction. All these elements are important, and I am also going to measure these elements in this study.

Children bring varied skills when they start formal schooling, including oral language, phonological awareness and early literacy; these pre-reading skills are critical and largely influenced by the home literacy environment in the preschool years (Storch & Whitehurst, 2002). Some studies even claim it is more important than the parents’ income level (Levy et al., 2006; Niklas et al., 2015; Hamilton et al., 2016). Previous literature shows the home literacy environment helps to explain the individual differences in children’s early literacy; has a significant bearing on a children’s learning experience at school (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002; Aram & Aviram, 2009); and can predict a broad

range of children's literacy outcomes for children at high-risk of dyslexia (Hamilton, 2013). Other studies constructed an instrument to measure the home literacy environment (Neuman, Koh & Dwyer, 2008).

Studies highlight the role of parents and carers in contributing to children's literacy development. Among all the factors within the home literacy environment, existing research suggests that parents' attitudes towards shared reading is the most important one in that it can decide many aspects of reading practice (Martini & Sénéchal, 2012). This is why I foreground exploring parents' motivation, attitude, and practice of reading. The notion that the parent is the child's "first teacher" is the premise of many family literacy intervention programmes (McKee & Rhett, 1995). Ideally, they are frequent readers themselves, reading with children early and often. They suggest that children's early development is enhanced by interaction with people within the family. A study of primary school students in Hong Kong suggested that parental involvement is highly correlated with children's active reading habit (Lau & Warning, 2007).

However, these previous studies heavily rely on parents' reports and do not include the parent-child negotiation process (for example, who decides what to read). In the current study, I am going to not only investigate the home literacy environment including the demographic data, the number of books in different languages, the frequency of book reading and visits to the library as I mentioned earlier, but also the shared reading interaction and especially the

parents' role and children's responses, in other words, the home literacy environment as a whole.

2.2.3 Why shared reading improves literacy skills

The importance of shared reading has been recognised by many cultures, and many parents start to read to their children at a very early age. In the American context, the multinational publishing house—Scholastic's report (2019) shows that nearly 50% of parents said they read to their children before the age of three months; 43% of parents said their child was read to from birth; 77% of parents with children under five said shared reading started essentially before their child turned one (Scholastic, 2019). Moreover, in recent years, investigations have focused on training and learning even before birth, and an extensive emphasis is now placed on experimenting with prenatal interventions for babies inside the womb, such as reading to them (Kleindorfer & Robertson, 2013; Partanen et al., 2013). *The American Academy of Pediatrics' Guidelines* encourages parents to read to their children from birth, claiming it enhances parent-child bond and prepares babies' brains for later language and literacy development (Scholastic, 2019). In China, the number of parents who read to their children is growing rapidly. The policymakers, reading promoters, and educational practitioners are making efforts to persuade parents that literacy education is not only about learning Chinese textbooks but also broader reading, for young children this is from shared reading. This change starts from the

Chinese test of university entrance exam (Gaokao), which is the most important exam for Chinese students. Compared with the long-standing traditions of bedtime and shared reading in some western countries, In China, there is still a big gap which many reading promoters and policymakers are trying to bridge.

Over the two decades, mass media and academic research have both confirmed the benefits of shared reading with young children. The importance of sharing reading at home cannot be underestimated for many reasons. The first, which has been widely recognised, is it improves children's literacy skills. There are broad or narrow meanings of literacy skills; here I take Bainbridge's (2019) narrow meaning. Literacy skills are the skills of reading and writing, which consist of sound awareness, vocabulary, print awareness, the connection between letters and sounds, spelling and comprehension (Bainbridge, 2019).

During the past 30 years, a growing amount of research has concluded that parent-child shared reading directly contributes to a child's literacy skills and indirectly promotes children's positive views towards or interest in books (Lyytinen et al., 1998; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002; Aram & Aviram, 2009). Children are often first introduced to books at home before school. Hannon (1995) even argued that much of children's literacy learning takes place mainly at home — before school or out of school.

Compared with the consensus that shared reading improves literacy skills, there are relatively few studies concerning why shared reading plays such an important role in the development of literary skills. The main reason is that

shared reading provides a rich input of language, which aids language acquisition by exposing children to different word distributions and uncommon words not encountered in daily life or in everyday child-directed conversations. As Snow (1983) observed, parent-child reading exposes children to a broad vocabulary that they rarely encounter in their immediate physical world and everyday conversation with parents and peers. In other words, they are exposed to more sophisticated communication when reading than they encounter in daily conversation. Sim and Berthelsen (2014) agree with this and emphasise the novel language or exotic vocabulary, and a more complex syntactic structure from picturebook reading. Montag and his colleagues' study (2015) provide further quantitative support for Snow's early study. He constructed a corpus of 100 children's picturebooks, compared the language with words used in conversation and found that shared reading results in a greater variety of vocabulary. It shows that "different books sample the words in the language more broadly than do different conversations" (Montag, Jones & Smith, 2015:1494). This study reveals that conversation can be repetitive and contains fewer unique words, while the picturebooks contain more unique and diverse word types than the conversation of the same sample size. This demonstrates that the text of picturebooks is a source of vocabulary input for children, and the results reveal a mechanism of language acquisition theory and the benefits of reading to children.

This concept has often been promoted and is well recognised by many English picturebook reading promoters in China who state that the more parents read to their children, the more diverse English words their children will learn. This also relates to Chinese parents' anxiety about not having a broad English vocabulary themselves so reading Anglophone picturebooks to children is a good way to compensate for their lack of ability in English. Spread by social media like WeChat, this anxiety has turned into parents' motivation to read to their children in English, which I will explore in chapter 4.

2.2.4 The other benefits of shared reading

Aside from literacy acquisition, shared reading appears to positively contribute to children's meta-literary skill, offers exposure to emergent literacy, and aids in developing a sense of story structure and narrative which again relates to children's early literacy (Phillips & McNaughton, 1990; Kümmerling-Meibauer, 1999). Very young children can learn skills and knowledge from how to hold the books to written language and they can internalise, and construct strategies used during shared book reading sessions. Moreover, as Kümmerling-Meibauer (2013) states, picturebooks contribute to meta-linguistic acquisition and other meta-literary abilities; she gave examples of the comprehension of metaphor and irony, the appreciation of intertextuality and interpictureoriality. Shared book reading also provides opportunities for children to establish other habits such as the ability to focus and improve their attention span, which is essential when

reading a book and other literary activities later on (Landry et al., 2012). In my observation, although none of the children in this study had started school, their attitudes towards books began to differ because of their different shared reading experiences. On the other hand, to encourage reluctant readers or other children who are experiencing potential reading difficulties, parental input in the form of shared reading at an early stage is the most important factor in preventing reluctance to read (Earl & Maynard, 2006).

From a broader perspective, for young children, picturebooks decontextualize book language and provide opportunities to label or describe objects and actions in pictures and form children's early cognition towards the world. Through these early concepts about the world, shared reading provides a way for children to connect with their families, their communities and the world at large: in other words, by applying these concepts from books, to connect, explain and distinguish the complexities of the world and to make sense of the world. The additional benefits of shared reading identified in previous studies include: generating complicated dialogue from book talk (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997); improving social emotions (Aram & Aviram, 2009); developing critical thinking skills, acquiring knowledge and future academic success (Heilman, Blair & Rupley, 1998); as well as nurturing a love of reading for pleasure (Elkin, 2014) and consolidating the parent-child bond (Scholastic, 2019).

Shared reading is a highly interactive experience—children choose books from the shelf, parents and children ask questions and respond to each other, they become physically close, turn pages and punctuate the reading process with sound effects (Scholastic, 2019). This interaction serves to solidify vocabulary input and to establish a joint attention between parents and children which fuels the parent-child bond (Evans & Saint-Aubin, 2005). Shared reading is not only a cognitive stimulation activity, it also a relationship-building activity, a special and inclusive time with each other. However, the premise of a solid parent-child bond through shared reading means it is an enjoyable activity for parents and children. In this current study, there is some evidence to show that if shared reading is not an enjoyable experience any more or is seen as homework or a burden, it may hurt the parent-child bond and become a source of frustration.

2.2.5 Can shared reading improve print knowledge?

Although shared reading has many above-mentioned benefits, that does not mean shared reading or a rich home literacy environment can directly improve all aspects of reading and literacy skills. The expectation to assist their children to be academically competitive is one of the reasons why adults read to children. However, it is far from conclusive to assert that shared reading can be a major direct way to develop children's understanding of orthography or knowledge of the conventions of print. As Evans and Saint-Aubin (2005) claims, “the

literatures on shared book reading and orthographic development remain largely separate” (p.913). Studies related to the relationship between print awareness and shared book reading reveal little empirical evidence that supports the assertion that children attend to print when they are read to (Evans & Saint-Aubin, 2005). From my observation, preschoolers are more likely to look at the pictures rather than the words when reading with a parent. Eye-tracking research demonstrates that the correlations between shared book reading and print awareness are questionable (Evans & Saint-Aubin, 2005). Previous research suggests a relationship between shared reading and vocabulary building, however, little association has been found between shared reading and reading skills (Sénéchal, Lefevre, Thomas & Daley, 1998; Evans, Shaw, & Bell, 2000). Similar results from classroom setting confirm that it was not shared reading but teachers’ teaching time which had an impact on children’s print knowledge (Meyer, Stah, Wardrop & Linn, 1994).

Other studies reveal that print and decoding skills depend more on which books parents and children shared together and how parents read to children. For example, Leseman and de Jong (1998) divided utterances made during shared reading into high-level (explaining, evaluating and extending text) and low-level (labelling, focusing on pictures and repeating text) distancing utterances. They found that low-level distancing utterances can improve children’s reading skills. Martini and Sénéchal’s study (2012) confirms that many parents have the habit of using storybooks, alphabet books and words

found on familiar items at home (e.g., cereal boxes, t-shirts, etc.) to teach children, which can improve children's print awareness. In the short term, if the primary purpose of shared reading is to orient children's attention to print knowledge then, children's print awareness can increase in a relatively short period of time (Justice & Ezell, 2002; Justice, McGinty, Piasta, Kaderavek, & Fan, 2010). Chow and his colleague's study (2008) again confirmed that pointing to words while reading with children may be an effective strategy to enhance children's print awareness. When Chinese parents read to their children, because of their limited English language skills and their lack of confidence in English compared to Chinese, they tend to use low-level distancing utterances and mostly follow the words in the book or point to the words; this may contribute to children's print awareness.

Similarly, Sénéchal and Lefevre's research (2002) distinguishes between a narrow and a broad view of the home literacy model. They make a distinction between 'informal' and 'formal' home literacy activities. In informal literacy activities like shared reading, the printed text is not the primary focus, but the story is; whereas formal activities or so-called "parental teaching" indicate adults directly teaching children print and literacy skills (e.g., points to and labels alphabet letters; writing the child's name) and predicts "code-related" skills, including alphabet or print knowledge and decoding skills (Martini & Sénéchal, 2012; Hamilton et al., 2016). Informal literacy activities such as shared reading may directly relate to children's spoken language but not literacy

skills or written language, whereas formal activities such as parent teaching directly contribute to early literacy skills or written language but not spoken language. I can find more evidence of this from my current study; in some interaction patterns, parents tend to do formal teaching and aim to immediately improve children's decoding skills.

These different associations have also been confirmed in many longitudinal home literacy studies (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002; Sénéchal, 2006; Hood, Conlon, & Andrews, 2008). Among these studies, the home literacy environment is conceptualised as two separate dimensions, storybook exposure and parental instruction (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). Three studies conducted by Sénéchal and LeFevre (2002), Sénéchal (2006), and Silinskas et al. (2010) confirmed that parents teaching explained unique variances in children's early literacy skills; while Hood and his colleagues (2008) argued that a combination of alphabets teaching and reading was associated with children's early literacy.

In my sample, some parents view reading as simply decoding or blending, or other skills which encourage them to do more activities normally seen as teaching activities. I observed some Chinese parents' practices, which focused on literacy skills, are similar to "low-level distancing utterances" or a "formal literacy model". Formal literacy interactions at home have received much less attention in academia even though in reality many Chinese parents report that they often perform formal literacy activities with their children. They stated that simply reading to children was a "slow" method for children to gain

the phonic skills and vocabulary, that is partly the reason why these parents tend to point to the words, ask children questions about pronunciation, meaning and other direct teaching activities to ensure children gain solid print knowledge.

Nevertheless, shared reading may not immediately lead to children becoming literate and being able to read, it does have a facilitative effect on children's accumulation of early literacy skills. Shared reading has profound effects that appear to centre on "meaning, comprehension, and the rhythms and patterns of language" (Evans & Saint-Aubin, 2005:919). Hearing stories read aloud is crucial and is the way children's literary awareness is forged. Evans et al. (2004) found the amount of time that parents shared books with their children correlated with the frequency they involved their children in teaching activities such as decoding the words. That means the more parents read to their children, the more likely it is that parents tend to coach their children with print knowledge deliberately or spontaneously, which again contributes to children's decoding skills.

2.2.6 Shared reading and bilingual or multilingual education

The above-mentioned numerous studies mainly focus on monolingual children and have established the importance of shared reading and the home literary environment, and have provided us evidence of how home literacy practices contribute to children's language acquisition and literacy skills. However, as Anderson et al. (2012) suggests, shared reading is "viewed not just as a set of

cognitive and linguistic skills transferable from one context to another but as complex social and cultural practices that vary contextually” (p.1140). There is a paucity of studies that have been conducted on the shared reading practice of bilingual children.

Limited research has been conducted into bilingual children’s language acquisition in countries which have many immigrants. These studies show that shared reading promotes both mainstream language and heritage language development. Sénéchal and his colleague’s study (1996) found that storybook knowledge is a significant predictor of monolingual children’s English language skills and researchers extended this claim to a bilingual sample. Boyce et al. (2004), Uchikoshi’s (2006) and Caspe (2009)’s studies looked at Latin American mothers and their children’s shared reading in the USA. These findings demonstrate that exposure to English books is associated with these bilingual children’s spoken language and general literacy skills in English. I will further examine whether the home literacy environment has similar influences on children’s first and second language shared reading in my study.

A limited number of foreign language shared reading studies have shown that foreign language shared reading contributes to foreign language ability. Introducing new vocabulary during English storybook reading in the classroom could increase English vocabulary skills and has been found among Portuguese preschoolers (Collins, 2005). Kalia’s (2007) study from India confirmed the impact of parents’ English shared reading practice on their

bilingual children's spoken language and literacy development in English. Lau and Warning (2007) conducted shared reading research in Hong Kong and emphasised the importance of English reading at school for their English learning. These foreign language shared reading studies are mainly focused on linguistic aspects rather than how they actually share the books together. In the current study, I will look at shared reading in the mainland Chinese context and examine shared reading interactions both in the English and Chinese language.

2.2.7 Digital reading plays a large part in foreign language shared reading

Digital resources have profound influences on foreign language shared reading. Smartphones and tablets have a great effect on which texts children have available and choose to read. Educational publisher Scholastic's (2019) mission statement says at the beginning: "Connecting kids with stories they love, in whatever format they prefer—from physical books to digital books". From this, we can see digital books are considered an essential part of children's reading. From my observation and interviews with seven families, it is not hard to find that digital reading is part of most families' reading routine. It is not an exceptional phenomenon in China. According to Ofcom figures in the UK, the 2015 Ofcom survey (2014) reported that 39% of three and four year old children in the UK now use a tablet device at home and 11% of 3 to 4 year olds even own their own devices.

Many parents show their distrust of digital reading, just like the last generation's fear of TV when it came out (Postman, 1985). Parents' worries include their fear that tablets provide too many distractions; destroy children's imagination; do not have the space to develop children's understanding and empathy with characters, the plot, and the emotion in the book and so on (Dredge, 2015). There is no consensus about paper vs screen reading. Most academic studies in this field are preliminary, and leave more questions unanswered and always end with the conclusion that more research is still to be done, or on a larger scale, a longitudinal study is required or a different age cohort sample is needed. Despite these uncertain aspects of digital reading, from the existing literature (Shamir, Korat, & Fellah, 2012; Takacs, Swart, & Bus, 2014) and my own data, parents generally show a positive attitude towards digital resources. I would like to argue that in the context of foreign language shared reading, digital devices could even be helpful.

Despite the worries stated above, digital reading has more advantages when it is used by Chinese families for their foreign language shared reading. Scholastic's (2019) report shows that 71% percent of children agree that technology has made it easier for them to find books they would like to read, and 70% of children who have listened to an audiobook agree that it has encouraged them to read more. The internet, digital resources and audiobooks are easier for Chinese readers to obtain than paper editions.

Contrary to many people's views, research has found that digital books have advantages in terms of words and story comprehension. Multimedia stories have a significant advantage on story and vocabulary comprehension when children read a print story without support from adults (Shamir et al., 2012; Takacs et al., 2014), which is meaningful if Chinese parents do not have a good vocabulary and comprehension ability in English. Takacs and his colleague's study (2014) gave an example that animated illustrations are more formative in explaining words like "fanning" or "appearing" than a picturebook with static pictures. When it came to English shared reading among Chinese parents, they were able to link the word with pictures rather than the translation, which is more powerful and direct. These findings indicate that multimedia elements like interactive illustrations, sound effects have a similar function for children's comprehension as adult scaffolding during shared reading. This is more important for Chinese families when parents lack the English ability to assist their children. Families in my study use reading pens, CDs, cartoons, interactive applications, and digital books to assist their English shared reading. Other benefits are well-recognised and valued by Chinese parents, such as standard pronunciation and the lower cost. Thus, when digital resources are used in foreign shared reading, there are many advantages compared with paper reading, which I will demonstrate in the findings part of this thesis.

2.3 Reader-response theory in shared reading studies

2.3.1 Reader-response theory — the emphasis on readers rather than texts

Traditional literary theory focused on the author's intention and textual analysis rather than on the qualities of the readers, and did not explain how readers may reach different interpretations when reading the same book. However, reader-response criticism, sometimes used interchangeably with "reception theory", was rooted in the 1960s and 1970s but was foregrounded by Louise Rosenblatt's (1938/1995) key theory named "transactional theory of reading". Rosenblatt (1978) claims that a reader must move through from an "efferent stance" where the text has a purpose and intention to an "aesthetic stance" that emphasises the reader's experience with the text. Reader-response theory has been processed and underpinned by Fish (1980) and Iser (1987), and emphasises that the reader brings to the work personal characteristics, experience, preoccupations, a particular emotion of the moment, and the physical condition. Reader-response theory suggests literary analysis is not the centre of literary understanding but encourages a more personal and emotional response. Reader-response theory also suggests that the reader actively and subjectively constructs meaning, so reading is a creative art (Johnston, 2011).

In reader-response theory, the centre is on what the reader brings to the text including character, literary experience, training and educational background, world view and socio-cultural background that affect meaning

(Johnston, 2011). Johnston points out that there are three basic components in the reading process: a writer, a reader, and a text. The more important foci are readers and contexts. Readers and texts are bilateral — that readers bring their own experiences to interpret texts and readers again use these texts to understand the world. From this perspective, As Sipe (2000) explains, the text becomes a playground for the reader’s innovative capabilities, and readers may have infinitely varied interpretations without paying attention to what the author may have intended to say.

Because readers “bring different experiences to a text, assume different stances toward it, and understand it through their own unique cultural and psychological filters, reader-response theory assumes a rich diversity of response” (Sipe, 2000:256). In my study, I am not only focusing on the books the parents and children are reading, but also give credence to the dual readers — both parents’ and children’s responses and analyse why they like or dislike these English picturebooks. I value both parents and children’s opinions and attitudes, that is parents’ motivation, and the book choices of parents and children rather than concentrating on the possible interpretations of the books.

2.3.2 Applying reader-response theory to shared reading

Reader-response theory is widely applied in children’s literature and shared reading research. With its clear focus, reader-response theory has had a profound influence on studies about children’s reading response and

interactions with literature. It has become an important part of the theoretical foundation in terms of children's responses to literature research. Children have their own understanding of books and choose their preferred books according to their book experience; after gaining reading experience, it will influence their book choice per se. However, reader-response theory does not suggest that the reader's response is arbitrary. Fish (1980) believes that personal response is learned from the social group to which readers belong. That means readers from similar groups share similar experiences and may show similar interpretation strategies. That is the reason why people from a similar background may share a similar focus during shared reading in my study.

The reader's identity is an important indicator of readers' response in that culture and language is the way of thinking. Children's responses are not simply transferable from one context to another but shaped by social and cultural practice. Sipe (1999) summarises that "researchers and practitioners who focus on literary response are thus in a position to trace children's sense of identity, purpose, and common humanity" (p.127). He synthesises four areas of interest in reader-response research: authors, texts, reader, and context; and argues that the sequence is in ascending order. Brooks and Browne (2012) developed a grounded culturally-situated reader-response theory to explain children's responses to literature. Apart from ethnic group, community, family and peers, they focus on "interests and motivations, skills and interpretive strategies, cognitive development, approaches to a text, creativity, and

imagination, ways of assimilating knowledge and visual processing” (Brooks & Browne, 2012:83). This culturally situated reader-response theory explains why children from similar background might share similar or have very different interpretations to the same storybook (Brooks & Browne, 2012). The context of children’s response, including children’s cultural backgrounds, their families and community, popular culture, and mass media continue to receive close investigation.

Despite the accumulating research on literacy activities at school, there is a paucity of research into children’s responses to books at home setting (Sipe, 1999). Investigating children’s responses at home rather than school context would “provide additional knowledge about the range of literary response and the influence of social context on response” (Sipe, 1999:126). Readers and context are an important part of this phenomenon and profoundly influence Chinese children’s responses to English picturebooks. In addition, parents reading to children in different languages stimulates children to react to the languages, thus evoking the acquisition of metalinguistic abilities and potentially different responses in different languages.

Reader-response theory inspires and generates much empirical research into children’s responses. My current study is one of them. In my study, I want to see Chinese parents as a group, that is, to articulate their common practices and characteristics in my study. I will also comment on the differences between parents’ and children’s responses and discuss why such differences exist.

Moreover, parents and children are not merely passive givers and recipients when they read picturebooks. In shared reading events, parents and children bring their own experience and knowledge, which influences their choice of books and interaction patterns. At the same time, parents and children who have similar experiences and motivation may have similar choices and interaction patterns. In the current study, I will look at what kind of books Chinese parents and children choose to read, but more importantly, I will also look at both parents' and children's responses and how they interact and construct meaning during the activity of foreign picturebook shared reading.

2.3.3 Previous studies about children's responses during shared reading

A considerable number of studies into empirical readers' responses explore young reader's responses from different approaches. As Grenby and Reynolds (2011) summarise, some studies explore what texts do to activate particular kinds of responses; others examine what readers do with the texts in the reading process — the broad range of readers' responses, the strategies they employ and the literary experiences they bring to create meaning. The emphasis in Golden and Rumelhart's (1993) study is on what must be filled in by the active reader. Those studies that focus on readers' responses generally involve research methods such as observations, focus group, interviews perhaps over a prolonged period or focus on a particular age range. For example, Arizpe and Hodges (2018) edited a book focused on young adults' responses to literary works of

different contexts and different genres. Whether these readers are individuals or from certain groups, they are often asked to describe how they reacted to a text or think more broadly with other books or life experiences.

Other studies investigate the largely unconscious reading processes of young children during shared reading situated in the home, preschool or in the primary school. Compared to verbal expression, the creation of copying action, music, dance or physical response, and art creation as responses have received less attention. In one naturalistic study of children's responses to picturebooks in the classroom, Hickman (1981, 1983) recorded a variety of responses, including talk, various types of writing, dramatic play, painting, drawing, and music. Rowe (1998) also looks into the spontaneous dramatic play of literary response. In Arizpe and Styles's (2004) study into exploring primary school children's responses to pictures in picturebooks, they asked pupils to draw pictures as well as verbalise their feelings and understanding. In general, studies of oral and written responses have dominated research in this area. In this study, I will not only look at what the children say, but also look at what they are doing, for example, their physical responses, facial expressions, actions or gestures, as part of their responses towards books.

All of these responses suggest the possibility of pleasures that children experience when they read a book (Sipe, 1999). Sipe (1999) points out culture matters because children's responses to literature and their understanding of cultures can enrich literary communication. However, children's responses

which are complex and open-ended acquisitional processes are still not well understood, and most importantly, a comprehensive model allowing for plausibly putting together the pieces of the puzzle is still lacking. Furthermore, previous studies about shared reading are primarily qualitative, though the collection of data may include a questionnaire; while my study also includes quantitative data, such as correlation figures to add pieces to this puzzle.

2.3.4 Categorising different children's responses

Many scholars have tried to categorise children's responses during shared reading. McGee (1992) notes three types of talk structures and breaks the boundaries of reader-bound to text-bound statements: (a) mucking about (sharing ideas that were seemingly unconnected), (b) weaving through (children returned to a previous idea in non-successive conversational turns), and (c) focusing in (children continued to talk about the same idea). According to Halliday's (1975) language functions, Kiefer (1993) develops four types of responses: informative, heuristic, imaginative and personal. Madura (1998) takes Kiefer's framework into account and groups responses into three categories: descriptive, interpretive and the identification of thematic trends.

Sipe (2000) develops literary understanding interrelated by Stance (how children situate themselves in relation to the text), Action (what children do with texts) and Function (the various ways in which texts may be used). He further examines the three basic literary impulses — hermeneutic impulse,

personalising impulse and aesthetic impulse (Sipe, 2000). Gu (2014) synthesised six patterns of children's responses to picturebooks which I can find evidence of in my study: responding to text with personal experience; communicating with peers; expressing reading experience; finding picture and word clues; moving from text to life and showing interest in details.

These different categorisations provide me with analytical tools and important lenses to look at children's responses and behaviour during shared reading. I use these findings as coding labels if it fits with the behaviours I observed. I found Sipe's categories are particularly useful because he points out the "aesthetic impulse", which can explain many children's non-verbal behaviour. I did not use anyone's categories entirely but used coding labels from these categories to describe children's responses.

Other research focuses on how children understand and interpret some complicated literary concepts, such as irony, empathy or lies through exploring children's responses (Kümmerling-Meibauer, 1999). Increasingly research has focused on the elements such as both children's and adults' gender and social class which have influenced young readers (Evans, 1996; Anderson, 1998; Anderson, Anderson, Lynch, & Shapiro, 2004). Johnston (2011) is suspicious of children's competence and says young readers or young children are not in a relatively stable state as adults are. I would say that children may not have sufficient vocabulary to express themselves or recognise the intertextual references, but this does not necessarily affect the reader-text dynamic between

picturebooks and young readers. They may not be able to “read” in the way adults predict, but they are reading as a reader in a different way to adults and they may not be able to express themselves. Evidence from this study will show that children’s responses are associated with parents’ shared reading pattern.

2.3.5 Autobiographical intertexts or semiotic intertexts — how children connect text with life

As the categorisation above points out, much previous literature found that both parents and children react to literature by connecting it to their own life when sharing books together. Wolf and Heath’s (1992) longitudinal study records Wolf’s two daughters’ rich literary experiences over nine years. Wolf and Heath assert that literature integrates with children’s lives in three ways: connecting stories with reality; using their creativity in interpreting ordinary life from stories; thinking critically both in terms of fact and fiction. The data in Torr’s (2007) study identifies two qualitatively different types of intertextuality: semiotic intertexts refer to other semiotic texts such as picturebooks and television; while autobiographical intertexts refer to children’s life experiences.

I think Torr’s categorisation makes children’s intertextual responses clearer to researchers. As Sipe (2000) summarises, “an intertextual perspective suggests that any given text may be interpreted within the matrix of other texts: stories and other arrays of signs like television programs, paintings, advertisements, and videos” (p.260). For example, reading different versions, or

from different countries of the story *Little Red Riding Hood* no doubt contributes to many semiotic intertextual connections the children make. Autobiographical intertexts involve relating the story to the readers' own experiences, and the ways in which readers construct meaning by connecting what is missing in the text. Children are able to make connections between the story of their lives and the story they are reading, by personalising stories and comparing with their own lives (Sipe, 1999). Torr's study (2007) contributes to our understanding of how children "draw on their own fledgling experiences with written and visual texts, and their everyday lives, to interpret the meanings they encounter in unfamiliar picture books" (p.78). In my study, I frequently found children and their parents use stories in the books to interpret or understand events in real life. Text becomes a platform where the children can create and play, and picturebooks are seen as a collection of various experiences. During my observation, these two types of text-life connections have frequently been found. However, in previous literature, there are clear differences between these two types of intertext. In Torr's (2007) study, he demonstrated that autobiographical intertexts were far more common than semiotic intertexts in that the ability to make semiotic intertexts requires considerable literary experience.

Because of the social nature of intertextuality, we may assume different readers from different social backgrounds apply intertextuality differently. In my current study, I am curious to see how children show semiotic intertext or

autobiographical intertext during English shared reading because their language is limited. I assume it is more evident than in the previous literature that autobiographical intertext is more common than semiotic intertexts.

2.3.6 The struggle between pictures and words during parent-child shared reading

Children's responses are sometimes out of adults' expectation. I frequently notice parents are accustomed to seeing words in a book while children tend to look at the pictures and children can find something parents would not notice. One of the undesirable consequences of the visual era we live in today is that people skim rather than read; their eyes notice large numbers of pictures instead of reading and thinking about the characters (Pantaleo, 2020). Children are growing up with these visual messages. There are some attempts to ask children in terms of their understanding of visual art known as "visual literacy", it is generally believed that preliterate children take visual clues as important narrative parts (Arizpe, 2013).

Based on Bader's (1976:19) definition, a picturebook is an art form which "hinges on the interdependence of pictures and words"; Nikolajeva and Scott (2001) further point out that picturebooks combine "the imaginary and the symbolic, the iconic and the conventional, have achieved something that no other literary form has mastered"(p.262). The central notion or the appeal of picturebook research lies in the dynamic between images and words. However,

adults, on the other hand, lost the ability to appreciate picturebooks as children do, because they focus on the plot and regard the illustrations as merely decorative (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001; Arizpe & Styles, 2004). Another study conducted by Arizpe (2009) with immigrant children confirmed that pictures in picturebooks empowered immigrant children to have deeper engagement with the text and meaning.

Previous literature has demonstrated that young children and adults have a different focus when they share picturebooks together. The visual part is as important as the written language during transactions with readers in creating meaning. Some authors give more agency to children, arguing that children may find some details or key information through the pictures that are ignored by the print-oriented adults. Recent eye-tracking research suggests that young children spend little time focusing on print words in the picturebooks during shared reading (Evans & Saint-Aubin, 2005). Responses of children during shared reading interaction are affected not only by the words they hear from parents, but rather, and very significantly, by the pictures.

This phenomenon has been observed during this current study. Parents are educated to read words and Chinese parents especially tend to focus on words because the picturebook format is a relatively new phenomenon for Chinese readers. Chinese parents and readers, in general, have a strong tradition of reading words not pictures. Some parents hold the opinion that picturebooks are expensive because they have “only a few words”. As picturebooks, in the

modern sense, are new for ordinary parents, most Chinese parents do not have a memory of being read picturebooks when they were children, but children's novels have established a long history and tradition in the field of literature, so many parents' still use the standard of children's novels to judge and choose picturebooks (Zhou, 2015).

However, Kress (2003) argues that words can no longer be considered the sole or dominant means for representing and communicating ideas and concepts, and he points out that written words in isolation fail to provide full meaning and potential in multimodal media like picturebooks. Literary understanding of picturebooks also includes knowing how words, pictures and peritextual features used to make meaning together (Sipe, 2000). Other scholars who give much credit to pictures including Mitchell (1994), Barry (1997), Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), Salisbury (2010), Nikolajeva and Scott (2001), and Scott (2013), emphasise the equal or more important role of pictures in picturebooks. Therefore, reading aloud and literary discussion should also include understanding pictures. Parents or teachers who read to children can prompt personal connections and responses to pictures, and also be attentive to children's comments on the visual parts of stories (Cuperman, 2013). In my current study, I paid close attention and recorded whether parents or children were looking or pointing at the pictures or words, which was an important feature of their interaction pattern.

With a semiotic stance, Nodleman's (1988) study attempts to develop theoretically informed strategies for reading picturebooks by integrating other theories of semiotics, visual art, film, narrative, reader-response, phenomenology, and cognitive science. He demonstrates that the narrative aspects of illustrations in children's picturebooks are important and challenges the idea that the images in picturebooks do not require knowledge of visual codes. For very young children, reading pictures is a learned skill just like we learn to read written language, for example, the distinction between figure and background, the comprehension of "negative space", the recognition of lines, points, and colours (DeLoache, Strauss & Maynard, 1979; Nodelman, 1988). Children must incorporate these two sign languages, switching from one sign system to another in the process of transmediation (Suhor, 1984; Sipe, 1998). Visual literacy studies inspired a number of empirical studies. A trend in recent picturebook reader-response research has been to focus on picturebook illustration, visual aesthetic understanding or children's understanding of the relationship between images and words (Arizpe & Styles, 2004). The practice of taking the picturebook as a complete, aesthetic product is becoming more common and more empirical research focuses on the visual aspect of meaning-making in picturebooks.

2.3.7 Pictures play a more important role for bilingual children's understanding of picturebooks

Pictures can engage young readers in the direct way than words, allowing children to access the meaning of the books and gives them further interpretations and connections (Cuperman, 2013). This is more important when the readers are bilingual or multilingual children. The lack of exposure to the English language puts Chinese children at a disadvantage of engaging in authentic literacy practices and language acquisition from English picturebooks, while pictures can compensate for some of this disadvantage.

Children, regardless of their first language, have knowledge and curiosity about the world around them by interpreting the visual signs. There are relatively few studies on the role of pictures in bilinguals' reading practices. Early (1990) has identified that pictures have three main applications: (1) generative — to promote book-related talk, (2) explanatory — to increase book understanding, and (3) evaluative — to increase language understanding. Similar to Early's summarisation, Moses (2015) developed the four comprehensively used literacy functions of images to support the meaning construction involved when viewing an image: "as access to meaning and content; as a prompt for discussion; as a catalyst to seek access to written language and as a multimodal complement to written language "(p.82). Other researchers (e.g. Yatvin, 2007; Echevarria, Short, & Vogt, 2008; Herrera, Perez, & Escamilla, 2010) come from a second language learning perspective and state

that pictures assist in meaning construction and language acquisition by linking the meaning and words, that is to make words comprehensible for bilinguals. According to Guccione (2001), images in informational picturebooks can enhance meaning-making for first-grade bilinguals, and Moses (2013) emphasised that pictures can be used as a cultural tool for bilinguals to participate in classroom communities. Arizpe and Style's (2004) research on the responses of children who read pictures in picturebooks reveals that even bilingual children who are still struggling with the everyday English expressions had a surprising understanding of complex pictures on literal, visual, emotional and metaphorical levels.

Such empirical studies about children's responses to pictures draw from theories of semiotics, visual aesthetic, schema, cognitive and reader-response theory. In my study, these functions of images are clearer than in mother tongue shared reading. Pictures play a more important role for comprehension and initiating book talk when Chinese parents and children share English picturebooks together in that they lack the fluency in the foreign language. I can see the clear power struggle between pictures and words, parents and children, which I will present later in the findings part.

2.4 Dual readers and different book choices for parents and children

2.4.1 Dual readers of picturebooks shared reading

At the centre of reader-response theory, there is a “gap” in the text which must be filled by the active reader applying their understanding and experiences.

Rosenblatt (1995) and Iser (1978) focus on this literary gap — texts, plot, story, while Nikolajeva and Scott (2001) examine the gaps in picturebooks between words and images and readers’ understanding of them. Nikolajeva and Scott (2001) argue that young readers and adults actually do not read the same picturebook as they go deeply into its meaning constructed by words and images. Arizpe and Styles (2004) also emphasise the gap between text and reader. Because of personalities and potential, parents and children fill the gaps differently. Beauvais (2015) calls this “readerly gap” the “didactic gap”. She doubted the simple contrast that children are better “gap-fillers” but emphasised that the gap did not entirely exist in the iconotext, but within the didactic transaction between adults’ power and children’s freedom.

The notion of the implied reader and hidden adult (Nodelman, 2008) suggests the reader is inscribed in and evoked by the text regardless of the author’s intention, rather than the real reader who actually approaches the text. The implied readers of picturebooks are children as well as parents. Positive parent-child interaction will improve children’s interest in books because parent and child are dual readers of picturebooks (Bullen & Nichols 2011). There can

be inherently more crossover with picturebooks than other forms of children's literature because in picturebook reading, adults and children can fill in verbal and visual gaps differently (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001). The concept of "dual reader" has been frequently mentioned when we talk about parent-child shared reading. Shavit (2013) points out the most notable feature of children's literature is this "double attribution". As Grenby and Reynolds (2011) explain, picturebook shared reading is not merely the combination of author, text, child reader, but frequently there is a mediating adult who is reading the book and giving the text meanings by their interpretation.

Very young children usually need adults to read picturebooks to them. Some picturebooks aim for a dual readership of adults and children from the beginning. Some authors who have been recognised as "children's writers" say they actually write for everyone, not just for children. Ommundsen (2011) analysed a picturebook called *Johannes Jensen føler seg annerledes* [John Jensen feels different] (2011). This book was written for adult and child readers as all-ages-literature, and published in different formats and sizes (Ommundsen, 2011). A similar phenomenon can be seen in the two different covers but the same content of the *Harry Potter* series, which is aimed at child readers and adult readers respectively.

2.4.2 Adults' power over the choice of picturebooks

Adults' influences are ubiquitous in picturebook creation, consumption and shared reading activities. Commercially, children's publishers must draw the attention of adults first. Each children's book is firstly read and judged by adults. Children's books must look for adult approval from editors, parents, and school gatekeepers to secure its physical existence. After all, it is the adults who determine which picturebook to publish, evaluate and distribute (Beach, 2015). If adults do not approve of certain books, the author may find it difficult to reach an audience and to be published (Shavit, 2013).

Shavit (2013) refers to this as the "double attribution" of children's books, being aimed at children but which are written, published, and distributed by adults. After the book has been put on the shelf, it is usually parents again who decide which book they would like to buy for their children. From this aspect, picturebooks can be seen as an adult to adult business. This is especially evident in Anglophone book reading in China, due to the lack of English bookshops for children to browse around, most parents buy books from the internet, which is mostly an adults' world. Book series has been named such as "*Forming a Good Habit series*" and it is this kind of purposeful creation which is welcomed by some parents. However, the value of adults as implied readers is more than imposing moral intention. More importantly, it makes children's literature have long-lasting appeal for all ages for different reasons. This echoes to Barthes's (1974) concept of a "cultural code", which refers to adults could

access the cultural and social knowledge unconsciously while reading. For example, children's literature can teach adults how to be a "good" parent: in many bedtime books, telling a story before bed is shown to be routine in Anglophone picturebooks.

2.4.3 Different interpretations of picturebooks for parents and children

Because picturebooks are defined by the complementarity between pictures and words, adult and child readers insert their own interpretation as a way of constructing meaning, however, that does not suggest that adult and child readers are always equal readers. Children and adults as dual readers of picturebooks, fill the gap of picturebook reading in different ways. In the previous readers' response section, I summarised that adults were more oriented to words and children were more oriented to pictures. Evans and Saint Aubin's (2005) eye-tracking study confirmed this and found that when children read picturebooks, they "almost never fixated on the text, and when they did, the isolated fixations did not follow a coherent pattern" (p.916). Similarly, Gu Aihua (2014) found that children can find more details in pictures, which are often ignored by adults. Guo Enhui (1999) further investigated the different responses when adults and children read picturebooks and found that children show more affective response than adults.

Adults can be analysts, readers and participants of picturebook reading while children can only be readers or participants. Scott (2013) analysed two

picturebooks — *Looking for Atlantis* and *The Red Thread* in detail in her study of dual readers. She found that it is the adult reader who understands the intention and sophistication, and adults control, entertain, instruct children. This is what the adults can bring into the shared reading but young children lack. On the other hand, while the young children simply enjoy it; the older child would question it (Scott, 2013). From this point, adult readers are not only inevitable but also indispensable. Adults and children are not simply the providers and consumers of children's literature, rather, they are seen as dynamic and interactive relationship. Compared to other types of literature, picturebooks, Scott (2013) claims, empower a collaborative but equal relationship between children and adults.

Smith (2013) calls the picturebook (with its text and illustrations), the child listener, and the adult reader the “Vibrant Triangle”. He emphasizes a Vibrant Triangle picturebook must be a collaboration between the words and the images (Smith 2013). These mediating adults or parents are not only readers, but also “readers to”- adults have their own responses and feelings and pass that responses on to the children (Johnston, 2011). Therefore, there is another “gap” which lies in the difference between adults and children reading picturebooks. Children's literature addresses children, but also “an additional addressee — the adult, who functions as either a passive or an active addressee of texts written for children” (Shavit, 2013:83). That is the reason I also value parents' opinions and book choices in terms of picturebooks in my study.

2.4.4 Adults' and children's different book choices

Although children and adults are dual readers of children's literature, the evidence is accumulating that suggests a significant divergence between children and parents' book choices. Among all the Anglophone picturebooks on the market, the reasons why parents and children read certain books but not others also deserve attention. Theoretical picturebook studies confirm that children's responses to picturebooks, distinct from adults' anticipation, is related to their experience of books and their own lives (Baird, Laugharne, Maagerø, & Tønnessen, 2015).

Studies into monolingual children's English picturebook preferences show what children like to choose when the picturebooks are in their mother language. Some quantitative research provides a detailed list of what constitutes the children's books they like and explains age, gender, family background, television and computer exposure are all elements that influence children's reading preferences (Coles & Hall 2002). Clark and Foster (2005) investigated 8,000 primary and secondary students in the UK and found that most students enjoy reading adventure, comedy, and horror/ghost stories. Another UK study (Clark, Torsi & Strong, 2005) suggests that primary students like reading animal-related stories, war/spy stories and sports-related fiction. On the other hand, children prefer series books with entertainment, closer to family life and recreational topics, rather than global issues or school subjects (Beach, 2015).

According to Maynard and his colleagues' (2008) large scale study, the majority of the KS1 children (4-7 years old) in the UK said that they often choose books on the pictures, the most frequent choice was "you like the pictures inside". "Having seen the book on TV or video" (31.5 percent of the girls and 28.9 percent of the boys) was another reason for often choosing books in the same study. When children choose books to read, they want stories that make them laugh. However, humour is not everything, as a Scholastic report (2019) finds children not only want entertaining books, but also like books that help them make sense of the world or connect them to the world (Scholastic, 2019).

Another study (Maynard, Marckay & Smyth, 2008) shows that children's choices depend on their age and are influenced by parents or family members. On the other hand, some children show resistance to stories (Sipe & McGuire, 2006; Earl & Maynard, 2006), which is worth further investigation. For example, Sipe and McGuire (2006) conducted videotapes and analysed 74 transcripts of children's response to picturebooks to identify a typology of six types of resistance (Intertextual; Preferential or categorical; Reality testing; Engaged or kinetic; Exclusionary; Literary critical) among Kindergarten to second grades. Earl and Maynard's (2006) article seeks to reveal what makes a child a reluctant reader, the reasons include a negative relationship with reading. In my study, I value children's positive and negative responses (engagement or resistance) equally during shared reading and try to reveal the reasons by identifying their interaction patterns.

Most of the above children's book choice studies did not compare children's choices with adults' choices. According to the Scholastic's reading report (2019), the characteristics of children's books that parents now prefer include learning about the lives of others (48%), exploring different places and worlds (46%), and making their child think and feel (51%) (Scholastic, 2019). A study by Beach (2015) reveals that adults tend to choose educational books to teach child readers, to challenge them, to broaden their world view and to connect with school curriculum links. A limitation of Beach's research which we need to take into account is, just as Beach himself noted: "teachers and parents are significant groups of adults not represented in this study, and they may hold opinions closer to those of the children" (Beach, 2015:31). Indeed parents may have a similar preference to their children than children's literature scholars and librarians. We will look into parents and children's choices during picturebook reading in my study.

Parents' and children's attitudes toward award-winning books also differ. Schlager (1978) gave an example of 2 Newbery prize books, one is *Dobry*, the other is *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, the latter has the highest circulation, whereas the former was not popular in the market. According to Schlager's (1978) point of view, the differences lie in whether a book demonstrated children's characteristics. Beach (2015) also finds that adults think highly of award-winning books, but they seldom appear on the children's favourite list. Beach (2015) analysed two annual lists of the "best" children's books in the

United States and discovered that rather than an expected 50% overlap in titles (the books were chosen by both adults and children), in average, there was only a 4.36% overlap over a thirty-year period.

A concern here is if parents and children have different opinions about picturebooks, should we just listen to what the children's choices are or should adults make the "right" choice? Many parents held the opinion that for early age readers, it is the job of adults not only to please them, but also to guide and challenge them. In my study, I value parents' and children's choices equally, and I will compare their choices in the findings section.

2.4.5 Multi code-switching and more gaps in foreign shared reading events

Comprehensive discussions concentrate more on the gap between adult authors' intentions and children's understanding, that is to say, they focus on the content of "What they read." Schlager (1978) states, "When dealing with children and their books, the question of 'what' children read has taken almost exclusive precedence over the question of 'why' children read certain things and not others" (p.136). He reasoned that this was a matter not only of children's literature but also about childhood and children's development which demonstrated that studies related to shared reading are indeed interdisciplinary.

When Chinese parents and children read Anglophone picturebooks, there are more gaps which we can be aware of. The adult author and adult reader who speak different languages, the adult reader and the child reader, the

gap of understanding a foreign language, and the cultural differences are all gaps we need to consider. From a psychological perspective, reading multilingual picturebooks also involves hemisphere switching (Kokkola, 2013). Reading picturebooks will involve not only the areas of the brain that are associated with visual processing (mostly right hemisphere) but also those parts of words and language processing. Studies of bilinguals' brains reveal that hemisphere switching is more common for bilinguals than it is for monolinguals (Kokkola, 2013).

For shared reading in the situation of more than one language, there involves more levels of code-switching. Code-switching takes place on these levels: “between different languages, variable visual codes, and between text and pictures” (Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2015:259). Visual codes that might be divided into basic codes, universal codes, and cultural codes, require a specific capacity that complies with the linguistic model of code-switching (Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2013). For multilingual shared reading, the gap between pictures and text, different languages, adults and children are even bigger gaps, which are supposed to be completed by the reader, requiring the ability to decode the underlying visual and linguistic codes and “jump” between the languages. However, as Kümmerling-Meibauer (2013) points out, how this code-switching exactly functions and what abilities are required to comprehend such picturebooks has not been thoroughly investigated and not well understood

yet. All of this multi code-switching makes adult-child foreign language shared reading interaction more complicated.

In summary, parents and children are dual readers of picturebooks; parents are not only the mediators between authors and children, but are also readers in their own right. The hypothesis here is that Chinese parents, with their own interests, educational and cultural background, and didactic purpose, influence children's reading interest and interaction process. Considering the lack of studies into why parents and children choose certain books and parents' influence on picturebook shared reading, this study will discuss this parental role and its influence in the shared reading event.

2.5 What we know about parent-child reading interaction

2.5.1 The mysteries of shared reading interactions

Compared to the abundant research that reinforces the importance of the parents' role and the home literacy environment, there is no consensus about exactly how they interact during the shared reading process. Little is known about what goes on in parent-child interactions during shared reading because the act of reading is mysterious, internal and invisible. Most of the time during shared reading, parents' and children's comments, opinions, and responses go unnoticed or are taken for granted. Parents can not write down or record all that is said and, therefore, interaction and responses are often not analysed. Reading

a book is not a linear process, rather, it is bringing together language, thoughts and experiences, emotion, physical condition, to the process of constructing the meaning every time. Children's responses in these literary activities are in the moment for that particular book, sometimes read with a particular person. Thus, there is not a common pattern about generalising readers' reading practice that explains the unique experience of a single reader or a single reading session.

Therefore, every shared reading event is idiosyncratic. Neuman (1996) claimed that children derived benefits from exposure to print through shared reading no matter the type of interaction behaviour. In my study, I will challenge Neuman's claim, deconstruct the shared reading interaction, and link the interaction pattern with children's responses which helps to better understand their practice.

2.5.2 Previous studies about shared reading interaction — ARICI and DRI

In the current study, I focus on shared reading rather than book reading, that means I am not only interested in how much and what parents read to their children, but about all the activities parents and children do together with books. There are several studies about shared reading interaction that I took as a reference. Some researchers conducted internal eye-tracking studies (Evans & Saint-Aubin, 2005) to examine readers' meaning-making process, most of them from the linguistic discipline. Other studies (Roser & Martinez, 1985; Resnick

et al., 1987; Morrow, 1990) developed some tools or categories to assess the shared reading process which I found useful.

Both Roser and Martinez (1985) and Resnick and his colleagues' (1987) studies developed tools to observe parents', especially maternal behaviour during shared reading. Roser and Martinez (1985) analysed four parents' dialogues when they read to their children at home, attempting to gain insight into the adults' role during shared book reading. They found that an adult tends to serve as a co-responder, or an informer-monitor, or a director during shared reading. Each of the parents' roles provided opportunities for scaffolding and modelling of the meanings of the story. Resnick and his colleagues' (1987) evaluation tool consists of four categories: mother's body management, management of the book, language proficiency, and attention to affect. In the subcategories list, there are a total of 56 behaviours in these four categories. There are some common behaviours that were mentioned by other studies (Morrow, 1990) such as labelling, praise and encouragement, description, and making the text relevant to life, which I also observed in my study. Compared with Roser and Martinez's study, Resnick and his colleagues' research emphasised physical proximity, which I also pay close attention to.

DeBaryshe and Binder (1994) categorised parents' behaviours through quantitative data using Likert scales of one to four and explored parents' opinions behind shared reading behaviours with preschool children. This study compared parents' beliefs with their actual behaviour in the observation and

found that parents' scores on the belief inventory correlated with scores on their actual reading behaviour. The scores from two different types of data were highly correlated, suggesting that parents' opinions towards reading do affect their reading behaviour. This also supports my research design about the validity of asking parents about their behaviour in the questionnaire. One limit of this study is they focused only on parents' behaviour, not on the corresponding children's behaviours which I am going to observe in my study.

Another instrument relating to the parent-child interaction system includes PARCHISY (Deater- Deckard, Pylas, & Petrill, 1997), which is used for measuring interaction warmth. However, the most prevalent interaction tools are ACIRI (Adult and Child Interactive Reading Inventory) and DRI (Dialogic Reading Inventory). The former tool was constructed by Debruin-Parecki (1999, 2004, 2007). It is an observational reading behaviour instrument and used for assessing and evaluating interactive storybook reading behaviours for both adults and children. It evaluates parent and child literacy behaviours allocated to 12 items separately, and grouped into three main categories: enhancing attention to text, promoting reading and supporting comprehension, and using literacy strategies (Debruin-Parecki, 1999). Each of the 12 items is scored on a 0 to 4-point scale with 0 indicating that the behaviour never happened and four indicating that the behaviour occurred frequently in the interaction. I found these items, which describe both adults' and children's behaviour, useful and used many of these items as my coding labels, so I

present the original 12 items of ACIRI (Debruin-Parecki ,1999, 2004, 2007)

here:

Table 1 ACIRI (Adult-Child Interactive Reading Inventory)

	ADULT BEHAVIOUR	CHILD BEHAVIOUR
I . Enhancing Attention to Text	1. Adult attempts to promote and maintain physical proximity with the child.	1. Child seeks and maintains physical proximity.
	2. Adult sustains interest and attention through use of child-adjusted language, positive affect, and reinforcement.	2. Child pays attention and sustains interest.
	3. Adult gives the child an opportunity to hold the book and turn pages.	3. Child holds the book and turns pages on his or her own or when asked.
	4. Adult shares the book with the child (displays sense of audience in book handling when reading).	4. Child initiates or responds to book sharing that takes his or her presence into account.
II . Promoting Interactive Reading and Supporting Comprehension	1. Adult poses and solicits questions about the book's content.	1. Child responds to questions about the book.
	2. Adult points to pictures and words to assist the child in identification and understanding.	2. Child responds to adult cues or identifies pictures and words on his or her own.
	3. Adult relates the book's content and the child's responses to personal experiences.	3. Child attempts to relate the book's content to personal experiences.
	4. Adult pauses to answer questions that the child poses.	4. Child poses questions about the story and related topics.
III. Using Literacy Strategies	1. Adult identifies visual cues related to story reading (e.g., pictures, repetitive words).	1. Child responds to the adult and/or identifies visual cues related to story him - or herself.
	2. Adult solicits predictions.	2. Child is able to guess what will happen next based on picture cues.
	3. Adult asks the child to recall information from the story.	3. Child is able to recall information from the story.
	4. Adult elaborates on the child's ideas.	4. Child spontaneously offers ideas about the story.

The results showed that there were significant correlations between the parent's and child's ACIRI scores in all the three major ACIRI categories (Debruin-Parecki, 1999). This is inspirational for my own study to link parents' behaviour with children's behaviour. The other aim of ACIRI is to assist reading intervention programmes like Even Start in America and enable parents or guardians to improve shared reading skills, which means to identify which behaviours can enhance children's interest and engagement in reading and how parents' reading behaviours can contribute to children's literacy development. Debruin-Parecki's (1999) original application of ARICI found that it was a useful evaluation instrument for teachers in school setting. This tool makes the unconscious shared reading interaction process more visible and measurable.

The results inspired other researchers and practitioners to use the ACIRI as an instrument to measure shared reading sessions (Brickman, 2003; Kelley, 2003; Boyce et al., 2004; Barnyak, 2011). Kelley (2003) applied the ACIRI to examine the intervention of dialogic reading techniques with parents. Brickman (2003) applied the ACIRI to conduct her research on dialogic reading with Spanish families. Boyce and his colleagues' (2004) study used the ACIRI to examine low-income, Spanish-speaking, Latin mothers and tested 47 of 3 to 7-year-old children's shared reading behaviours and related it to their children's vocabulary. The value of Boyce and his colleagues' study is related to what parents were doing with their children when they shared books without intervention, and how these interactions were related to the children's early

literacy development. Another qualitative study was carried out by Barnyak (2011) to investigate the interactions during parent-child shared reading and found that the interview data of parents were in alignment with the observation data.

Another effective shared reading interaction assessment tool is the Dialogic Reading Inventory (DRI) developed by Whitehurst et al. (1988) and adapted by Dixon-Krauss and his colleagues (2010). “Dialogic Reading” refers to the process in which shared reading is supported by adults encouraging children to verbalise their experiences. The concept of adult-child dialogic reading has been tested in many shared reading studies (Whitehurst et al., 1988; Whitehurst et al., 1994; Fielding-Barnsley & Purdie, 2003; Anderson et al., 2004). The advantage of dialogic reading is for improving learning and engagement (Reese & Cox, 1999); for nurturing a love of reading (Bus, 2001); for increasing children’s vocabulary and expressive vocabulary in particular, compared to typical shared reading (Mol, Bus, de Jong, & Smeets, 2008).

Dialogic reading consists of three principles: evocative techniques (e.g. asking questions or responding to a child’s ideas about the story); parental feedback (e.g. expanding, modelling, correcting, praising), and progressive change (Arnold & Whitehurst, 1994). The principle of progressive change is based on Vygotsky’s (1978) zone of proximal development, indicating that an adult can support the child to accomplish the work within children’s “proximal zone” — just slightly difficult than a child could achieve alone. Developed from

ARICI, the DRI contains 17 items of adult-child literacy behaviours in four categories (Dixon-Krauss, Januszka & Chae, 2010) for both adults and children. I only list the children’s behaviours below, if children’s behaviour is described as “locate book parts”, equivalently, adults’ label of behaviour is “ask children to locate book parts”.

Table 2 DRI categories

DRI main categories	Subcategories
Print awareness/Alphabet knowledge	Locate book parts (front, back, bottom, or top)
	Find where the story begins
	Identify a letter or a word
Phonological awareness	Identify rhyming words in the story
	Recognize syllables in words
	Identify initial or ending sounds in words
	Repeat words or phrases
Comprehension/vocabulary	Respond to open-ended questions or make predictions
	Points to pictures and words
	Recall information from the story
	Ask questions
	Elaborate on or rephrases ideas
	Relate the story to real life
Attention to text	Sit near together
	Respond to storytelling voice/animation
	Redirect attention to the book
	Hold book, touch book, or turn pages

DRI also inspired other studies to apply it to shared reading intervention and demonstrated the improvement on children’s expressive and receptive vocabulary (Hargrave & Sénéchal, 2000). Chow and his colleagues (2008)

conducted a 12-week intervention involving 148 Chinese-speaking kindergarten children. The children from DRI group performed significantly better than children from other groups on receptive vocabulary. Sim and her colleagues' study (2014) of 80 children's eight-week home reading interventions provided converging evidence for this intervention based on DRI. From their conclusions, we learn adults' support that emphasises enhancing comprehension and interest rather than the correct reading of each word appears to be more effective in promoting increased literacy skills in children.

DRI and ARICI have some overlapping characteristics, both emphasise the dialogic shared reading interaction. However, the DRI suggested reliability across components and tested "the split-half coefficient, Cronbach's alpha, and interrater reliability, whereas the ACIRI only tested reliability across components through the use of interrater reliability" (Dixon-Krauss et al., 2010:274). It has also been reported the DRI is a more viable tool for assessing adult-child reading behaviours than ARICI base on the reliability calculations, content validity process, and factor analysis (Dixon-Krauss et al., 2010). Nevertheless, both of these detailed skills guide parents to involve their children in storytelling by prompting questions, expanding children's verbal expressions, linking the text to life or other book experiences and giving praise (Valdez-Menchaca & Whitehurst, 1992).

Data and experience from intervention studies can be applied to my study to see what kind of behaviour is connected to children's specific

development and what kind of behaviour discourages children. I expect that experiences from dialogic reading intervention in first language shared reading could enhance second language shared reading in similar ways. In my study, the coding categories to describe both parents and children's interaction behaviours are basically developed from DRI and ARICI categories, which I will reveal in chapter 3.4 and I give an example in Appendix 3. As the background of ACIRI and DRI tools are developed from mother language shared reading, in contrast to the context of this study, many coding categories which relate to translation and foreign shared reading are missing. I will add other codes to describe parents' and children's translation-related behaviours, and adapt codes in order to measure the warmth of parent-child shared reading interaction. I will explain my coding process and strategies in the next chapter.

2.5.3 Parents' questioning behaviour during shared reading interactions

There are many aspects to parents' interactions with children during shared reading; here I focus on how parents ask questions to children. More recent studies focus exclusively on extra-textual talk or how parents ask children questions in a shared reading event. When children grow older, the dialogic reading situation is dominated by a question-answer structure in that questions are clues to starting a communication process and help parents to assess, evaluate, and integrate the interaction process.

Van Kleeck and his colleagues' study (1997) found that parents tended to engage in low cognitive demand interaction with their children because this could give children a feeling of success. This is similar to parents in my study in that they were reading in foreign language. Their study also reminded me to link parents' questions with the cognitive level, which I will present in a table in Chapter 6. In my study, it was easy for parents and children to become frustrated while reading in a foreign language, so a low cognitive demand interaction can at least give children the motivation and the feeling of achievement to continue.

At present, there is a lack of studies about the relationship between questioning during shared reading and children's early literacy skills. Horner (2004)'s observational study suggested that children who asked letter-related questions during shared reading did not know more letters than children who did not. Therefore, there was no significant relationship found between the questions asked during shared reading and children's early literacy skill. Anderson and his colleagues' study (2012) investigated the types and frequency of questions that 40 parents asked during shared reading. It also explored the relationships between the types and frequency of questions that parents asked and the children's early literacy knowledge. Firstly, they found that there were relatively few questions asked during the shared reading; secondly, parents asked four times as many questions as children did; thirdly, similar to result that Van Kleeck and his colleagues' study found, these questions appeared to have

low cognitive demand and there is a relative dearth of cognitively demanding questions (Anderson et al., 2012).

Earlier studies also show that parents from different social groups interact with their children differently and ask questions differently. Lareau's study (2011) into class-related differences shows the way in which social class influences family life and the language they use. One of the earlier studies examining questions was Ninio (1980), who investigated parent-child interaction during storybook reading in Israel, 20 middle class families and 20 lower class families. The most frequent questions were "What's that?" and "Where is X?" in both groups. However, the lower social class status mothers asked fewer questions, provided less varied labels and they asked more "where" questions. In contrast, the middle class mothers asked more "what" questions than did the lower class mothers. She found that lower-class mothers adequately interacted with children within their current level of cognitive development, but middle-class mothers elicited more challenging questions in children's "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1978). Consequently, students from the lower class have less productive vocabularies than students from the middle class (Dixon-Krauss et al., 2010).

However, the socioeconomic background cannot explain everything about the interactions in shared reading. Martini and Sénéchal's study (2012) points out that the effects of social background factors such as socioeconomic status, ethnicity are mediated by home literacy practice. This study

demonstrates that parents' teaching activities, parents' expectations and children's interest each explain unique variances in children's early literacy after controlling for family's socioeconomic status and children's nonverbal intelligence. It is not demographic characteristics that directly determine children's literacy development; rather, it is the types of literacy experiences children had made a big difference. Heath's (1983, 1986) large ethnographic shared reading study with families from different social backgrounds demonstrated that it is not shared reading itself but interactions during shared reading that may make a big difference in children's literacy development. In the school context, various storybook reading styles have been found across teachers (Martinez & Teale, 1993); and specific shared reading styles are more powerful on students' later literacy skills (Dickinson & Smith, 1994). Heath's ethnographic approach inspired other shared reading studies, including my own. In my study, the seven observational families are all from middle-class backgrounds. However, their shared reading practice varies significantly. Although I looked into parents' demographic data as basic information, I will demonstrate in a later section that, rather than their family income, what they actually do during shared reading makes the difference.

2.6 Picturebooks as educational tools

2.6.1 Children's books and didacticism are inseparable

Didacticism is an important aspect when we explore children's books. Gruner (2009) says that didacticism is "one origin of children's literature, and that learning and pedagogy continue to be important in much of the literature we provide for children today" (p.216). Consonant with didacticism as one origin of children's literature is Grenby's (2009) characterization of didacticism as the DNA of children's literature. Lerer (2008) traces the roots of children's literature in the didactic tradition. Joy (2019) argues, "children's literature is inherently, but regrettably, didactic" (p.6) and "Children's Literature has a unique association with it." (p.8)

From the speaker's perspective (who is usually the author), there are specific intentions in exposing an ideological message in the hope that it will convince the addressee or reader to adhere to it. This is consistent with what Hollindale (1988) calls "active ideology" when he talks about ideology in children's books. In the UK, historically, the intention of children's literature before the eighteenth century was primarily to teach children moral lessons. Stephens (1992) claims picturebooks can never exist without a social or educational intention and children's books are saturated with worldviews and implicit ideologies. He confirmed that parents have a tendency to choose educational books or books which relate to the school curriculum rather than

interesting storybooks. Peter Hunt (1994:3) claims that “it is arguably impossible for a children’s book not to be educational or influential in some way; it cannot help but reflect an ideology and, by extension, didacticism.” The debate about whether children’s books should or should not carry didactic or educational goals, continues to be at the centre of children’s literature criticism in children’s literature scholarship. Some Chinese scholars hold that the educational function should be the primary purpose of children’s literature (Wen & Wang, 2010).

From the reader’s perspective (both adults and children), didacticism implies that the mode and content of the communicative event make it impossible for the addressee to engage critically with it or leave “little to the imagination” (Latimer, 2009). Similarly, as Joy (2019) points out, didacticism tends to carry a single message, in a way that makes the addressee unable to respond with critical distance. This type of picturebook has a long history. For instance, Johann Amos Comenius’ *Orbis sensualium pictus* (1658), displays pictures of everyday objects in order to convey encyclopaedic knowledge of the world to children. This is also about how adults and children engage with books, for example, formal teaching or free talk; whether for educational purposes or reading for fun. Similar to a didactic text, being didactic in shared reading means too much control by parents during parent-child shared reading. As Joy (2019:8) claims, originally the adult author straightforwardly passed on to, even imposed on, the child reader. The delivery of knowledge is “bound up with

power: it entails an act of giving (or abuse) on behalf of the powerful (the knowledgeable) to the powerless (the ignorant)”.

Furthermore, didacticism means to exclude parallel viewpoints and give little possibility to a plurality of voices, that means a monological, instructional and single perspective. Evidence can be found in many political children’s books in China before the 1990s. Didacticism in children’s literature is fundamentally concerned with the power which shapes the field of children’s literature — “the particular characteristic of Children’s Literature is its focus on child/adult power hierarchy” (Nikolajeva, 2010:8). The history of didactic children’s literature is also the history of the parent-child power relationship. Children’s literature from the beginning to the mid-19th century is didactic in that it is often written by a knowledgeable adult to educate a child who is less knowledgeable and less experienced. This power hierarchy reflects differently in each shared reading scene.

Many scholars expressed the inseparable relationship between picturebooks and educational intention. Children’s literature, including picturebooks has mostly been characterised as a predominantly didactic vehicle that serves educational purposes. Educational intention is easily changed into a didactic voice or the reading of a text in a didactic manner. In educational research, the picturebook’s educational function, including its moral, aesthetic and language aspects, are emphasised. English picturebooks are used to gain knowledge, learn the alphabet, enhance reading skills (Nowak & Evans, 2012),

improve linguistic skills (Williams, Chapman, & Martin-Huff, 1982), give children's agency (Short, 2012), teach social manners, mathematical concepts (Anderson, Anderson, & Shapiro, 2005) and aesthetic skills in different studies. Silvey (1992) describes this trend as the "new didacticism." In Martini and Sénéchal's study (2012), questionnaires data about home literacy revealed that many parents adopted a didactic role in their children's early literacy development and parents tended to have high expectations about their children's development of literacy skills through picturebooks prior to school. The seventh edition of the Kids & Family Reading Report by Scholastic (2019) says they produce materials that "educate" and inspire. Picturebooks and education are always related and inseparable.

2.6.2 Picturebooks in literacy and language acquisition use

I discussed the importance of shared reading in children's literacy development and it might have previously been considered as one effective instrument in language and literacy development. Scholars working in children's literature, particularly in Europe, which has various languages, notice the significant contribution of picturebooks for language acquisition, narrative competence, metalinguistic awareness, and intercultural learning (Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2013). Kokkola (2013) discusses the implications of multilingual literacy, particularly paying attention to the significance of multilingual children's books within literacy development.

Studies about Home Literacy Model show that parents teach both basic alphabet knowledge and reading words during picturebooks reading (Sénéchal, 2006; Hood et al., 2008; Silinskas, Leppanen, Aunola, Parrila, & Nurmi, 2010). The articles in the journal *Children's Literature in English Language Education* provides much evidence on improving English language ability through picturebook reading in the classroom (Kovač, 2016). Many parents start to read to their babies shortly after birth as an important source of linguistic input (Sénéchal & LeFevre; 2002). Repetition in picturebooks, rhymes, language games and children's stories foster children's language acquisition, regardless of whether they are first-language or second-language learners, and this has been tested in many linguistic studies (Sheu, 2006; Bland, 2013a).

Not surprisingly, most studies about Anglophone picturebooks in China investigate the language learning role of Anglophone picturebooks in kindergarten or family shared reading (Bai, 2012; Sun, 2012; Zhang, 2016). A study examined the impact of dialogic reading in English as second language with 51 kindergarteners at Hong Kong (Chow et al., 2010). The result highlights the potential benefits of English picturebooks reading in English as a second language; more importantly, it demonstrates the “possibility of linguistic transfer from parent-child reading in English as a second language to Chinese as a first language” (p.284). The role of picturebooks is emphasised in terms of learning English because English continues to be one of the most important subjects in the University Entrance Exam and also in the job market. From the

questionnaire data, I found that Chinese parents tend to choose wordless or nearly wordless picturebooks as their starting point when it comes to Anglophone picturebook reading at home. As Arizpe (2013) observes, wordless or nearly wordless picturebooks are “considered ideal medium for investigating language development, storytelling” (p.164). From my questionnaire data, parents in China take the linguistic function as the main reason of choosing English picturebooks that I will present and discuss in findings part.

2.6.3 Picturebooks as fulfilling pedagogical functions

The pedagogic value in picturebooks has been recognised by many scholars (Lurie, 1990). Besides being seen as the tool of language learning I discussed above, picturebooks and picturebook-related activities such as storytelling and singing nursery rhymes also serve the function of accumulating early concepts and cognition development in children. Children’s literature can “construct possible worlds through various modes, and how readers are encouraged to use their cognitive skills to make sense of these worlds” (Nikolajeva, 2014:49). Kümmerling-Meibauer and Meibauer’s study about baby’s first books (2005) reveals that these simple books, so-called early concept books or concept books have the cognitive underpinnings of this book type which support the child’s acquisition of an early lexicon, for instance, colours, numbers and shapes. For school-age children, Pringle and Lamme’s (2005) study provided convincing evidence that picturebooks can tell an animal story and can also be used as the

resources of science curriculums because the accurate information in text and illustration which would draw readers into the content with the storyline. Kaser (2001) points out the role of children's informational picturebooks as connecting readers with nature.

From a pedagogic perspective, teachers can use picturebooks to “address these themes of possibility, about characters who have approached challenges differently and persevered through difficulties to achieve their goals” (Enriquez, Clark & Della Calce, 2017:713). Teachers can also incorporate picturebooks for a dynamic learning frame, diversity, growth mindset, and social justice development into children's learning activities (Enriquez et al., 2017).

With a broader social perspective, children's literature helps in children's aesthetic education and teaches readers the value of life and how to take responsibility for their actions (Sipe, 1999). Picturebooks have the power to show the potential in the world around them. As Brown (2009:207) says, “the ultimate goal of early children's literature was to construct an ideal child reader who would accept the values inscribed in the text and respond in the appropriate manner.” For foreign language reading, it is an excellent medium to orientate the reader to a different world with different cultural traditions. These functions of picturebooks and English picturebooks are frequently mentioned and recognised by parents in the current study.

2.6.4 The changing definition of didacticism in the west

The field of children's literature study has been familiar to apply the characterisation of "didactic" into certain kinds of literary text. Generally, to call a children's book didactic is to accuse it of trying to impart a "message", generally of religious or moral instruction. Didacticism in children's literature criticism is often synonymous with authoritarian, moralising, totalitarian or propagandist (Beauvais, 2020). Since *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Lewis Carroll, 1865) set the new standard for the anti-didactic voice, children's books that are too overtly instructive is commonly regarded as being didactic because "it can get in the way of other non-cognitive pleasures proper to literature" (Repp, 2012:272). Didacticism in children's literature has sometimes been criticised as "bad taste", lacking in aesthetic quality, and is increasingly perceived as defective rather than quality writing.

However, in the past 15 years, there has been an academic trend in researching and writing about politically "radical" or "committed" texts with clear didactic dimensions (Mickenberg, 2006; Reynolds, 2008; Mickenberg & Nel, 2010; Beauvais, 2015; Rosen, Reynolds, & Rosen, 2018). In the trade picturebook market or award-winning children's book collections, there has been an increase in series of books such as feminist icon books, books with the theme of diversity in many senses, LGBT topics or refugee experiences, which also have clear didactic intentions. It shows that books with clear didactic intentions are not necessarily reducing the books' aesthetic merits or readerly

pleasure. Like “radical” or “political”, didacticism is becoming more of a descriptive genre rather than a polemic.

2.6.5 The different meaning of didacticism in China

However, we also need to be aware of the different concepts of “didacticism” between Chinese parents and western parents. The situation in China, where children’s education has been taken extremely seriously, was that children’s books were not seen as an important part of literacy in the past. Traditional education in China inherits traits of didacticism. It promotes a formal, authoritarian educational environment, where the teacher is seen as a symbol or authority of knowledge which is passed on to the students. The students passively absorb what is provided, and belief that such knowledge is necessary for their future.

The old Chinese saying of “Wen Yi Zai Dao” (writings are for converting truth) which reflects the responsibility of writers, are the major ideas of the Confucian literary concept. Since books have been used to convey moral principles for thousands of years in China, in the eyes of the general public, it would seem “normal” to educate children “for their own good”. In this context, advocacy of explicit ideology in children’s literature would be taken for granted as being natural by people in China. This kind of responsibility in Chinese culture is echoed in Peter Hunt’s (1994:3) argument that “all books must teach something, and because the checks and balances available to the mature reader

are missing in the child reader, the children's writer often feels obliged to supply them". Cao Wenxun (2016) emphasises that children's writers should not blindly cater to children's dispositions and calls for that it is their responsibility as children's writers to guide children by embedding moral values into the stories. As a result, didacticism in children's books would not be as obvious to the Chinese eye compared to China watchers in the West. It would either not be noticed by a Chinese eye or would not elicit any objection (Bi, 2013).

Ho (1993) points out that when parents choose books, they prefer assessment books, exercise books, or books related to school curriculum, rather than purely imaginative children's literature. This explains why there is a large proportion of Anglophone picturebooks about the alphabet, phonics and reading skills books on Chinese families' bookshelves, as I found. On the other hand, more and more Chinese scholars nowadays call for contemporary Chinese children's literature to move away from the tradition of moral theme or didactic writing to reflect children's own life and views (Zhang, 2006; Nelson & Morris, 2016).

2.6.6 The importance of reading for pleasure

Rather than seeing picturebooks as an educational tool, Sipe (1999) emphasises the notion of "pleasure" during shared book reading. Reading for pleasure means voluntary reading, and readers choose what to read, during their free time

or at school, most importantly, any reading that is primarily for enjoyment without any specific purpose. Many teachers and educational researchers tend to use “reading motivation” instead of “pleasure”. Reading for pleasure is the only way of nurturing a love for reading and the importance of reading for pleasure has been recognized by many parents in the UK. In Audet, Evans, Williamson, and Reynolds’ study (2008), parents chose “enjoying books” or “being with the child” as more important reasons than “fostering reading” and “promoting development”. In the UK, advocacy by Book Trust and the government Department for Education report (2012) means that reading for pleasure is also acknowledged by the National Curriculum. Book Trust’s Bookstart programme has been funded by the UK Government since 2000. It helps children discover the enjoyment of books and reading stories before formal schooling.

Time and again, both academic studies and educational reports show the importance of reading for pleasure. In the short term, there is accumulated evidence showing that children’s academic success benefits from reading for pleasure. Findings made by the OECD study (2002) show that a love for reading is a more important factor for children’s academic success than these families’ socio-economic status. A previous study shows a child’s interest in books explains the unique variance in children’s alphabet knowledge after controlling for the variable of the frequency of parent teaching (Frijters, Barron, Algire, Humphries, & Vander Zwaag, 2001). Twist and his colleagues’ study (2007)

shows there is a definite link between positive attitudes towards reading and the good results on school reading assessments.

In the long term, reading for pleasure during childhood will contribute to literacy at a higher level in later life. The amount that children read for pleasure and for school is a major contributor to children's later reading achievement (Anderson, Wilson & Fielding, 1988; Cox & Guthrie, 2001). Reading for pleasure also spurs children's imaginations and encourages them to develop their own thoughts and pose questions. Based on his research, Krashen (2004) concludes that the time spent on free reading, without specific purpose, has a positive effect on reading attitude and behaviour. Clark and Rumbold (2006) summarise other benefits of reading for pleasure including: breadth of vocabulary; grammar; emotional and social consequences; story comprehension; reading enjoyment in later life; and increased general knowledge.

However, young people's reading enjoyment significantly declines with age, and the proportion of children rating themselves as "enthusiastic" readers decreases as children become older (Clark & Douglas, 2011; Scholastic, 2019). Besides, not all children enjoy reading. The National Centre for Children's Literature 2005 survey (Maynard et al., 2008) showed that, in total, 23.4 percent of KS1 (Key Stage 1, UK school system, Early years and Year 1, 4-6 year olds) pupils rated themselves as reluctant. A substantial proportion of pupils in Clark, Torsi and Strong's study (2005) agrees with the statement that "reading is boring and they only read at school".

Parents' behaviours during shared reading may contribute to forming a reluctant reader. The reason for children's reluctance may lie in didactic activities such as parent teaching. A key aspect of DeBruin-Parecki's (1999) argument is that it does not necessarily mean that parents will help to improve children's reading interest and literacy ability through reading activities. Despite reading at home contributing to children's emergent literacy in general, Kim's (2009) study from Korea demonstrates the frequency of parent teaching was negatively associated with many aspects of children's literacy skills- phonological awareness, vocabulary, word reading and pseudoword reading in Korean. Furthermore, some parents will deter children from reading, by using children's literature as an educational tool, which is easy to see in Asian origin parents in the mass media.

As Martini and Sénéchal (2012) suggest, shared reading study needs to be broadened to include parents' teaching activities, their expectations about children's early literacy skills, and their child's interest or their reason for no interest in books, which I will explore in my study. My hypothesis here is that a high proportion of didactic activities will distance children from reading for pleasure and decrease children's enthusiasm towards books even in foreign language reading. However, young children have the instinct and ability to choose the books they feel close to. Beauvais (2020) comments on Nodelman's (2000) work and claims that young readers might "read against, around, or even alongside the didactic elements and still gain pleasure from the text". I will

draw evidence from data and discuss didactic reading, reading for pleasure and children's resistance in chapter 7.

2.7 Chinese parenting and cultural capital

Shared reading is one of the important parenting practices which reflects parents' parenting philosophy. In this section, I will briefly examine parenting styles, from the Chinese parenting tradition to contemporary stereotypes and the new image in literature. Then I will move to the socio-economic background and examine the role of "cultural capital" in children's education. With this background in mind, it helps to understand Chinese parents' educational and shared reading practice.

2.7.1 "Authoritative" or "Authoritarian" models cannot explain Chinese parenting styles

The most notable western parenting theories are authoritative-authoritarian parenting framework by Baumrind (1971, 1978) and the parental acceptance-rejection paradigm (Baumrind, 1989). In the original study, Baumrind categorised eight families in terms of their parenting styles and claimed 75% of families were included in her research with 133 families (1971). Therefore, most families have either an authoritative or authoritarian parenting style, and each style has a typical parenting practice. She developed Parental Authority Instrument (PAI) to measure authoritarian versus non-authoritarian attitudes as

these attitudes predicted parental behaviour. This study was embedded in the European-American context.

However, scores higher on the “authoritarian” end of the spectrum may not have the same meaning in a Chinese context. Feng and Yu (2005) analysed parenting studies conducted by Chinese scholars and suggested that Chinese parenting was between authoritative and authoritarian, more close to authoritarian, but none of them could describe Chinese parenting. A study conducted by Chao (1994) suggests that this binary concept of authoritative and authoritarian is “somewhat ethnocentric and does not capture the important features of Chinese children child rearing, especially for explaining their school success” (Chao, 1994:1111). I agree with Chao’s claim, compared with the active discussion in the media, we need more parenting theories or evidence to explain Chinese parents’ educational practices.

2.7.2 Traditional Chinese parenting and the new image of Chinese parenting

In order to gain a general image of Chinese parenting styles, firstly we look into the historical change in the parenting culture in China. There are some similar trends due to the history and influences of foreign children’s books I summarised earlier in this chapter in that both parenting and children’s books are part of social reflection.

Wang Quangen (2016) points out that Confucian principles and values deeply influenced traditional Chinese parenting and the concept of “childhood” from these aspects: Father Guides Son (one of The Three Cardinal Guides in Confucian culture); The Elder Worship; and the concept of “Education is the Pathway to Success.” Similarly, one of the fundamental Confucian values that ensure integrity is Xiao (filial piety), which is taken as the first step towards moral virtue. These core principals have a fundamental influence on family life and parent-child relationships even today. The biggest goal of educating a child in the past was to succeed in The Imperial Examination (KeJu), based on Confucian Classics in order to enter into the higher ranks of the social hierarchy and gain fame and fortune. For ordinary people, KeJu was usually the only way to achieve this. This exam took place for more than 1300 years in feudal society and was only abolished in 1905. These are the roots which influenced traditional Chinese parenting. The elder has the responsibility to govern, and to teach and discipline the younger, even corporal punishment is allowed as a method of discipline.

During the long years of hierarchical and patriarchal feudal China before the 1910s, children were regarded as adults in miniature, subordinates or possessions, even slaves of their parents rather than independent human beings with their own thoughts (Huang, 1986; Bi, 2013). Children’s individuality, their own needs and rights were largely neglected. Like Ho (1997) concludes, children were often treated as miniature adults, doing adult labour and

shouldering adult responsibilities. Confucius says that young people are not human; children were seen as incomplete human beings who needed education and cultural training to become fully human. Confucian culture stresses the importance of education, not only as a means of governing citizens to ensure a stable society, but also as a means to achieve upward social mobility and family reputation (Lau, 2009).

There are several key social events that challenged the traditional parenting in China in the 1910s and 1920s. With the transition from Imperial Rule to the Republican Era in the early twentieth century, the concepts about childhood and children in China were changed by child-centred educational philosophy proponents such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. There was a profound revolution in gender and parent-child relationships during this period. Among those childhood philosophies, Dewey's Pragmatism thought of education had an enormous impact on parenting culture and educational practice. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Dewey is one of many philosophers of education to propose child-centred ideas about education. The new concept of childhood valued children's interests and needs, which was radically different from the Confucian ethics of childhood.

After the civil war in 1930s and 1940s, from the 1950s the newly-founded socialist society "continued to challenge Confucian family ethics, discouraging parental authority and promoting female labour-market participation" (Li, 2018:2). In order to maximise human resources, women were

encouraged to enter employment and physical labour work. Consequently, the traditional family bonds and values were yielded to national construction.

Adults devoted themselves to national construction and had little time for family life; family life and emotional attachment within family members were considered as a distraction (Li, 2018). Parenting is more likely the practice of “natural growth” — as long as parents provide food and safety, their children will survive and grow.

China’s re-entrance into the global economic market in the late 1970s, together with the implementation of the One-Child Policy (1978-2015), made the child the “only hope” (Fong, 2004) of their parents and grandparents, again reshaping parent-child and gender relations. It is not hard to imagine the sudden transition. China had always been a country where children were not highly valued while at this time, the only child was highly prized and cherished by six adults (parents and four grandparents). Chinese parenting took a dramatic turn from a rigid, emotionally reserved, strict patriarchy to an equal relationship of warmth, support, and intimacy (Li, 2018). On the other hand, as Lemos (2012) points out, the “One-Child Policy” also meant that many parents now had a single child to depend on, which also put pressure on that child to achieve academically, including in English, and in the job market. This policy has had a tremendous impact on modern society and every single family, again reshaping family life, the parent-child relationship and children’s lives. It also reformed childhood culture and children’s literature in China, and still influences it today.

Li (2018) conducted a study on five elite Chinese fathers' family letters and autobiographical writings. These five fathers were from Qing Dynasty 200 years ago to contemporary China; it clearly demonstrated the change of parenting culture from feudal China to contemporary times. Contemporary fathers made considerable efforts to build close relationships with their children, and they invested enormously (financially and in terms of time) and therefore held high expectations for their children's academic performance (Li, 2018). In contemporary China, the struggle of being a warm parent and having high expectations for children is still enduring.

2.7.3 Contemporary stereotypes of Chinese parenting

In contemporary literature and the mass media, Chinese parenting, which is still labelled as “controlling”, “authoritarian,” and “pushy” by western standards, has been discussed in public, social, and educational domains both in China and the western world. Bestselling books contribute to this stereotype of the “Asian mum” or the “Chinese mum”, for example, *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* and *Lang Lang: Playing with Flying Keys*. This stereotype, which describes ambitious parents who strive for their children's achievement, not only in terms of the school curriculum, but also in art and music, tends to be excessively strict, demanding and ambitious for their children's future. They enrol their children in various organized activities that dominate family rhythms and create enormous amounts of work. This is endless responsibility, fuelled by the commercial

market, provoked by the education system and social competition (Vincent & Ball, 2007). In competitive Chinese society nowadays, especially for the newly-named “middle class” parents, “parenting anxiety” is a new label often indicates extensive parental activity and consumption on their children (Zhang, 2017). The implementation of the One-Child Policy (1978-2015) made the only child the only recipient of the family resources. From another perspective, it has also been claimed that “parents may also use their children as surrogates for their own ambitions, getting them to chase the success they never enjoyed” (Freeman, 2010:60).

These stereotypes may not accurately describe this group. Traditional Confucian values have been challenged by western ideologies in the rapidly changing society. Lu and Chang (2013) report semi-structured interviews with 328 Chinese parents in terms of their parenting beliefs and behaviours with their only child. They are first-year primary school children who live in one of the most developed cities in China-Shenzhen. They found that the parenting of the only child in their family in urban China was predominantly authoritative rather than authoritarian. The results reveal that contemporary Chinese parenting style is not as traditional as depicted in some of the previous literature (Lu & Chang, 2013).

The parenting strategies become child-centred rather than control-oriented; Chinese parental beliefs are “highly consistent with the reported beliefs of Western parents” (Lu & Chang, 2013:338). Li and Jankowiak’s study

(2016) demonstrates the considerable warmth of Chinese parents during parent-child interactions. The findings challenged the stereotyped beliefs about Chinese parenting and behaviours about child socialisation. In my study, there is more evidence from shared reading scenes which support the new warm trend of the parent-child relationship as recent studies show.

2.7.4 The concept of “Guan” and “training”

The alternative concept of “Guan” (to govern) is comparable to the “training” concept, and explains Chinese children’s school success in the west, as a complement to the authoritative or authoritarian binary. Wu (2012) claims the parental control in Chinese families, known as “Guan” behaviour, is actually a contributing factor to children’s academic achievement and the quality of the relationship. Zhu (1999) also connects children’s academic achievement with Chinese parents’ daily involvement of “Guan”. As Zhu (1999) describes, parents make educational achievement the top priority of parenting, their attitudes to arts and physics are also functional. He gave the example that during school holidays, parents send children to diverse art schools to learn a musical instrument or skills in order to obtain an advantage in the competition for higher education, which has made “carefree” childhood impossible.

In order to understand Chinese child-rearing practices, we have to understand the concept of “Guan” or “training”. Chinese parents were found to take “training” seriously after controlling their children’s education and their

scores on standard measures in Chao's study (1994). This may explain the paradox of Chinese school success because Chinese parenting was labelled as an authoritarian parenting style, which is correlated with poor academic achievement in the European-American context, while Asians including Chinese had the highest grade-point average (Chao, 1994). As far as picturebook reading is concerned, whether Chinese parents see it as a kind of "reading training" will be examined in the current study.

2.7.5 Parenting and social class

Parenting activities, such as shared reading, have always been linked with specific social classes in different social contexts. Previously, I presented several studies about parents from different social classes who ask questions differently during shared reading. The assumption that all families have equal time and ability to be involved with educational resources and every child stands a fair chance of academic success, is highly classed. Adams (1990) found that before children entering first grade, students from low class families had an average of 25 hours of picturebooks shared reading, whereas students from middle class families had between 1,000 to 1,700 hours of shared reading.

In Lareau's ethnographic study (2011), she observed that many middle-class parents maximised the social advantage intentionally or unintentionally by optimising the educational success of their children-pressured their children to achieve, interfered in the school system, negotiated with the school to put their

child into a gifted programme. Nodelman recalls his childhood and realises his lack of contact with picturebooks in childhood had to do with money therefore with class (Nodelman, Hamer, & Reimer, 2017). He says that picturebooks have traditionally defined their readers as middle-class, and most likely white consumers. However, Nodelman's son's generation took picturebooks for granted like "shoes or dinner" (Nodelman, Hamer, & Reimer, 2017:8). It is similar in China in that picturebooks only came into Chinese families in abundance less than two decades, and because of their relative sumptuousness, the target is more affluent families.

Therefore, parenting activities like reading picturebooks are closely related to social class. There are children who are left behind (their parents go to big cities to earn a living, and the children are left with their grandparents) in China and who are separated from their parents and have nobody to read to them. Bookshops and libraries are more likely to be found in cities where more affluent families live in rather than in villages. Picturebooks are expensive for many families. The readers value picturebooks not only because of the reading skills they may bring but also as consumer goods. Since many parents view picturebooks as an English learning tool, the motivation for learning English is also related to socio-economic factors (Kormos & Kiddle, 2013). Kormos and Kiddle (2013) surveyed the motivation of learning English of 740 secondary school students who belong to different social classes at Santiago, Chile. The results show a moderate correlation between motivational factors and social

class, and self-efficacy beliefs being the most strongly influence factor by students' social background (Kormos & Kiddle, 2013).

2.7.6 Cultural capital

Since parenting is closely correlated with social class, this difference between different social backgrounds is reflected as “capital”. Bourdieu (1984, 1986) distinguishes between “economic capital” (income and wealth) and “cultural capital” (skills and educational attainment) and “social capital” (social networks). Parents' massive investment of time, money and emotional commitment has been “harnessed to maximum cultural capital” (Bourdieu, 2004:19). Taking Bourdieu's (1986) theory of capital in another direction, Lareau (2011) specified that those parents utilise these educational activities on purpose. Middle class parents usually adopt a “concerted cultivation” parenting style, consistently stimulating their children's social and cognitive development through organised activities and encouraging communication and reasoning with adult professionals. Working class parents, in contrast, use an “accomplishment of natural growth” style with their children, giving them more freedom but less support. Consequently, in this way, as Lareau (2011) argues, parenting practice contributes to the inter-generational transmission of cultural capital, and finally, to the replication of social class. If we see Chinese parents who read English picturebooks this way, we can find that these parents are

using a similar “concerted cultivation” practice, which requires parents’ intense labour and economic demands.

From a social class perspective, a semi-structured interview project conducted by Vincent and Ball (2007) explored children’s daily routine either at home or in another care setting. It highlighted the enthusiasm of parents for enrolling their preschool children in enrichment activities. These middle class mothers were making efforts to make sure their children within the middle class reproduction, starting it early “without delay, without wasted time” (Bourdieu,2004:19). In my study, I also observed that middle class Chinese parents put enormous efforts into children’s extra-curricular activities; some parents took shared reading as the same activity or related it to English language activities. Parents’ efforts have a very clear goal: to excel in social competition and preserve their “cultural capital”.

Another study using semi-structured interviews (Carlson, Gerhards, & Hans, 2017) explored whether and how families from different social groups empower or discourage their children from spending a school year abroad. For upper middle class families, this practice is embedded in their child-rearing practices. Lower middle class families seem difficult to acquire “transnational cultural capital” (Carlson, Gerhards, & Hans, 2017). This echoes with parents’ attitudes towards English picturebooks among Chinese families, which is a practice of gaining transnational cultural capital. For Chinese parents, reading

in English to children may be seen as a good approach to add to their “transnational cultural capital”.

However, these findings of social capital are “neglecting the fact that globalisation has significantly altered the basic parameters of social reproduction” (Carlson, Gerhards, & Hans, 2017:751). The nature of the social competition has changed profoundly in the last three decades because of globalisation and the internet. Consequently, a number of adjustments to Bourdieu’s terminology have emerged — such as “mobility capital” (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002), “cosmopolitan capital” (Weenink, 2008) or “intercultural capital” (Pöllmann, 2013)

2.7.7 Transnational cultural capital

Among all the labels above focus on specific aspects of cultural capital, I choose to use Carlson, Gerhards and Hans’ (2017) more comprehensive term ‘transnational cultural capital’. Foreign language skills and familiarity with other cultures, affect the global competition between classes. Globalisation has made “transnational cultural capital” more important than the past. It has been pointed out that in its embodied form, transnational cultural capital refers to foreign language, mainly the English language skills, intercultural competence, knowledge and openness to other cultures (Carlson, Gerhards, & Hans, 2017).

Transnational cultural capital can be gained in different ways: for example, from bilingual school and other language courses, media exposure,

study abroad for a period of time, communicating with people from other cultures, or reading in English as the parents in my study did (Carlson, Gerhards, & Hans, 2017). The phenomenon of shared reading of foreign language picturebooks in my study is a reflection of this “transnational cultural capital”. Studies (Díez Medrano, 2014; Stöhr, 2015) indicate that transnational cultural capital, for example the foreign language ability and openness to other cultures, leads to positive returns with potential and socioeconomic position. Since reading Anglophone picturebooks involves foreign language skills and cultural understanding, it will certainly add this “transnational cultural capital”. In this study, I would argue that Anglophone picturebook reading events in China is related with parenting style and class capital, but compared with “Economic Capital”, it is more closely related to “Cultural Capital” or “transnational cultural capital”. I would like to probe the issue of whether lower income families have the opportunities to be involved with Anglophone picturebook reading or whether it is economically restricted.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Research methodology

3.1.1 My epistemological and ontological standpoint

This study was grounded in the notion that “all knowledge is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of the interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (Crotty, 1998:42). My epistemological and ontological standpoints are largely rooted in this social constructionist perspective. I do not see it is possible to achieve knowledge of the world solely through direct observation or measurement of the phenomena, and although it also depends on the discipline of the knowledge, I tend to think knowledge is dialectical and hermeneutical in nature which depends on how people interpret it using their own standpoint and cultural traits. I cannot see that there is one single truth waiting for a researcher to find; I assume there are many possible truths waiting to be constructed, interpreted and viewed through the lens of prior experiences, knowledge and expectations. Because human beings construct their understanding of the world by the interaction in terms of language, one way of understanding parents and children’s social behaviour is to analyse their interaction and language with the person closest to them (in this study, parent-

child shared reading). The goal of this study is to interpret the complex social phenomena in natural shared reading events.

Starting from the social phenomenon of foreign language shared reading, rather than applying a particular research paradigm, the research design was driven by a pragmatic approach. I consider that decisions about methods and design should not involve philosophical debates but be driven by aims, objectives, research questions and by considering which is the best way to answer the research questions. As Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggest, driven by a constructivist paradigm, rather than approach the data with rigid theoretical expectations, researchers build a grounded theory based on what they construct from the data. After defining my research questions, I started to design my mixed methods research according to these questions and also consulted the grounded theory and ethnographic research approaches.

3.1.2 Why mixed methods?

As a reflection of the ontological and epistemological standpoint I mentioned above, I designed a mixed method research plan. The main reason why mixed methods were chosen was because I would like to explore the meaning of this new phenomenon from more than one perspective and corroborate findings with different methods, known as the process of triangulation (Newby, 2014). The mixed-method design aims to generate a more accurate and comprehensive picture of social phenomenon than using only one of these approaches. Muijs

(2004) points out that a dichotomous vision of educational research (quantitative or qualitative approach) is not always helpful, and every method has its limitations, therefore, different approaches can be complementary. Mixed methods allow me to take full advantage of each method's strengths and compensate for each method's weakness.

Quan-Qual exploratory sequential mixed methods (questionnaire, observation, interview) were used in this study. The quantitative data were used not only to gain a comprehensive picture of this phenomenon and filter my observation focus and interview questions in the later stage, but also to select observation and interview participants. In order to avoid choosing observation families by chance or ending up with homogeneous families as far as I could, I chose to conduct the questionnaires first, not the other way around, to gain the respondents' demographic data first to enable me to choose observation families from different income groups. Johnson et al. (2007) have suggested that the mixed-methods research "combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration" (p.123). So different methods which integrate qualitative and quantitative data are used to study this phenomenon within this single project, to explore the meaning of the phenomenon from more than one perspective.

Mixed-methods research entails the characteristics of a combination of "qualitative" and "quantitative" approaches. I used quantitative data to inform,

develop and recast questions for another method. I also aimed to gather quantitative data to generate causal explanations of social phenomena, and qualitative data to strengthen the explanatory power of the study. In order to identify this phenomenon, I tried to interpret parents' motivation and interaction patterns with insights from the quantitative part of the data. In order to further improve the dependability and reliability of this study, I attempted to answer each research question from different data sources, tested the validity of data across different research methods and tried to present the parent-child interaction scenes in detail.

Considering foreign language shared reading as a new social phenomenon, the paucity of previous quantitative data drives me to consider that combining two types of data might be a more fruitful option than a single data source. I integrated qualitative and quantitative data within a single project, and the "mix" occurred at the stage of design, development of instruments, data analysis and interpretation. Due to the lack of research, especially using a quantitative approach on this new phenomenon, I firstly used quantitative data to identify it. Qualitative data was gained from observation and interview. Evidence stemming from these two types of data can enhance the validity and strength of research findings. Although to a certain extent, the two different data parts were collected on equal terms, I assume that the qualitative part of the project was slightly dominant in that the overall aim of this study was to deepen the understanding of foreign language family shared reading interaction and

generate an interpretive understanding rather than a causal explanation. The quantitative data part includes interviews as well as observations because I can then explore why parents do what they do. It is not only necessary to know what happens during a shared reading activity, but also to see why it happens, and how parents and children feel about what happens. Qualitative data were analysed inductively; codes and themes emerged from the original data source during the coding process.

3.1.3 My stance in this study

Firstly, questionnaire data was collected online. Then ethnographic observational methods or a so-called “micro-ethnographic” approach (Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto, & Shuart-Faris, 2005) was applied to explore these research questions. To better know the participants and not draw too much attention from the children in recorded reading sessions, I visited the families, played with the children and talked with the parents several times intensively during a six-month period. I also participated in several routine activities with these families, such as picking up the child from kindergarten. In order to keep an analytical distance and catch the natural reading scenes, I did not interfere in the reading process (non-participant observation). The unstructured observation was conducted in a naturalistic setting, and I was a complete observer most of the time and occasionally a participant observer under certain circumstances.

However, my social stance as a Chinese parent who has a similar background and similar practices as the participants brings me advantages as well as issues connected with the ethnographic observation. As an “insider”, I know general background and access is likely to be quick and direct; it is easy to build trust and working relationships with the participants; I share many parents’ concerns and feel comfortable talking to parents and children. However, I may take many situations for granted and not be sensitive to the participants’ behaviours. In order to avoid this and take a critical view, which is vital to the research, I read many previous shared reading studies to locate their practice in a bigger picture and wrote down observation points to remind myself. I also took very detailed observational notes and video recorded the reading scene. However, researchers are not simply collecting or recording data, but rather interpreting the data through their own subjectivity and knowledge of the world (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994), so understanding and accepting my own stance is vitally important.

After collecting the observational data, aiming to approach the question from different angles and in further depth, a semi-interview format was chosen because “people’s knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences, and interactions are meaningful properties of the social reality which your research questions are designed to explore” (Mason, 2002:63). Part of grounded theory is applied to develop measures such as coding categories

and reading patterns. The aim is to record parent-child interactions in a new context and try to develop existing parent-child interaction patterns.

3.1.4 Approaches to address the three sequential research questions

With my constructive and pragmatic approach, mixed methods research questions are used to answer the three research questions I mentioned in the introduction chapter. Mixed methods research is methodological triangulation where I use multiple methods to study a single phenomenon with different but relevant research questions. My research questions include three aspects: to explore parents' motivations; summarize parents' and children's book choices; and to identify any interaction patterns or trends of parent-child shared reading and children's responses towards it. For the first research question, I wanted to explore parents' motivations from the parents' reports, analyse their book choices, which reflects their motivation, and observe their reading process and discuss it in the interview to build a relatively stereoscopic understanding of it. In terms of the second research questions of book choices, firstly I would like to directly summarize from their open answers in the questionnaire about their favorite books; and observe their book choices in an authentic reading scene and also ask parents in the interview. For the last research questions about interaction foci, the data are generated on the basis of empirical data, mainly from observation scenes, and I supplement that with the parents' reports and interviews. Although each research question emphasizes a specific type of data,

more importantly, these three parts of data are interwoven together to make a comprehensive answer for each research question.

3.2 Procedures

3.2.1 Context, range and definition of terms

Firstly, basic background knowledge helps set the stage and context for this study. This study was situated in a specific social context (shared reading in English among Chinese families), thus understanding the context was important for understanding the phenomenon. The research participants were Chinese parents (mothers and fathers) who read Anglophone picturebooks to their children in mainland China. In order to choose the initial participants, the children's age was not used to restrict participation in the questionnaire part provided that they still read picturebooks with the help of parents rather than alone (as explained in the cover letter of the questionnaire), but data showed the range was from 0-12 years old in the Chinese context.

There is some research about immigrant Chinese children's reading and language development; however, I excluded overseas Chinese participants because their situation was much closer to immigrant or EFL issues, which has a different social context compared with mainland Chinese parents. However, I could find some similarities between Chinese immigrant parents and bilingual children's shared reading studies in previous studies in terms of Chinese parents'

educational practice and thoughts (Moses, 2015; Zhang & Koda 2011). There were other children who were educated in the increasing number of English international schools in big cities in China, and I also excluded this group of children because they were immersed in the Anglophone culture and education system, and they were not from typical Chinese families, which I would like to focus on in this study.

The parents' and children's main language was Chinese, their English levels varied from beginner to fluent speakers, who learnt English as a second language. The children were learning English solely by reading Anglophone picturebooks, attending private English language schools or having English lessons at nursery school.

It is crucial to clarify the range of picturebooks. Children's picturebooks here refer to mainstream trade picturebooks available in libraries, bookshops or online bookshops in China, including picturebooks without words, nursery rhymes, storybooks, pop-up books or toy books (for example, train books, bath books, books in special shapes, etc.), and fiction and non-fiction picturebooks in English. These were not only story books, "early concept" and "concept" picturebooks aimed at teaching children to identify objects or other educational picturebooks: books teaching phonics, reading and math concepts were also included in this study. I did not set any limitation on what books parents should read to their children when I went to their home, however, from the results, the books they shared were within this range. I will point out graded level books or

guided reading books in detail when I discuss parents' motivation in the findings. Graded level books are also called guided reading books, which are normally series of books closely matching a child's reading skills, such as the well-known *Oxford Reading Tree*, *I can read* series. There are broad concept graded level books and narrow concept graded level books. Broad concept graded levels books, such as Lexile levels, include most trade picturebooks and measure them according to the Lexile level on its website. Here I only take traditional narrow Graded Level series of books, which normally have a level number on the cover such as the *Oxford Reading Tree* series, *Step into Reading* series, and the *I Can Read* series.

Because in a natural shared reading scene, most parents in this study read in both languages to their children, I will discuss their use and reading practice of Chinese picturebooks as a comparison.

3.2.2 Ethics and pilot study

Considering the possible ethical issues and potential problems about working with children, I mainly used the traditional frameworks of duties, rights or harm-benefit frameworks to be critical about working with children (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). I thought about the possible benefits against the possible harms of the study, and tried to avoid intruding into the families' free time so as not to arouse too much anxiety (Clark & Moss, 2001). The most important thing is informing children and adults honestly, asking for their consent, and

respecting their refusal (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). Research ethics is also about taking account of the local context, for example, the understandings of childhood and children, the parent-child power relationship, how parents treat children and how children are expected to behave in daily life.

When these frameworks of duties, rights and harm–benefit were applied to the research design, several ethical concerns became clear. The first ethical consideration was in addition to parents' consent, whether and how to gain the children's assent. Because the children's age of the seven observation families ranged from one year old to pre-primary school age, having the same consent form for all the young participants was difficult because of their different cognition levels. Therefore, the consent form was only given to the parents. However, as I explained in the consent form for parents, the young person's willingness was carefully considered, and careful judgment was used, data were only generated from both adults and children who wished to join the study. I made it clear in the consent form that both parents and children had the right to withdraw from the research. During the observation part, if children showed any signs of discomfort due to the filming, the parents would have the right to judge whether to stop or continue. If a child expressed his or her unwillingness to continue, the research would be stopped, and the researcher would take it up at another time, or withdraw the family entirely from the research. The other consideration was how to protect the family's privacy since it was a private reading environment. The parents and I agreed on only using images which did

not show the face of the participants, either by blurring out that part of an image or using angles where the face was obscured.

Finally, ethical clearance and formal approval for the study was obtained from the University of York in the spring of 2017. Two separate consent forms for questionnaire data collection, observation and interview data collection were approved during the ethical approval process.

A pilot study was conducted in June of 2017 before the main data collection. The questionnaire was piloted with five parents to ensure that the language and expressions were clear and easy to understand. I selected the pilot participants through my personal contacts with parents who have children at the age of picturebook readers. I sent the questionnaire link to them and asked them to complete it independently and discuss it later with me. After analysing these five copies of questionnaires and one observation and interview data, I asked them if there were any questions which were unclear and checked the answers to see if there were any unexpected answers. All five sets of parents in the pilot showed a clear understanding of the questions being asked. I refined several questions after piloting, for example to include a second child's information if they had a second one; and I added options to judge the parents' English level. I found the academic category of picturebooks such as fiction/non-fiction was not effective; the physical category such as board book, pop-up book worked better for parents. In terms of asking parents about their income, I eventually used an income range rather than asking for the exact income figure. The pilot study

was a valuable learning experience and I learnt the average time to complete the questionnaire and interview questions; I gained experience in how to make myself as unobtrusive as possible (e.g., silent reading by myself); and how to stimulate conversation with the parents. Through the pilot study, I also became familiar with technical issues such as how to set up the camera and how to upload the questionnaire online correctly. The data from the pilot study was transcribed and discussed firstly to gain experience about what counts as data and secondly to learn how to code the data.

3.2.3 Data collection — questionnaire stage

Formal data was collected from July 2017 to April 2018 in a 10-month's period. The questionnaire was carried out during the months of July and August of 2017, which took around 40 days. Firstly, I uploaded the questionnaire onto a website (Wenjuan.com) and created a link to it. I was totally aware of the advantages of the online social questionnaire such as low cost, better data accuracy and fewer unanswered questions; I was also aware of the disadvantages of a low response rate, respondents being restricted to the online population, and a higher level of motivation being required (Newby, 2014). Since I asked the parents sensitive questions such as their income and personal contact information, online questionnaires receive higher response rates on sensitive questions according to Newby (2014). After comparing the advantages

and disadvantages, I decided to continue with the online questionnaire, mainly due to the advantage of easy access and instant data processing.

Internet users generally tend to be better educated, wealthier, younger, and not representative of the total population. However, WeChat is reported to have more than 1 billion users in the Chinese market, which covers the majority of the Chinese population. Considering WeChat has become the main communication platform in China in recent years, participants were easy to reach through this platform. I sent a link to several online WeChat parents groups. WeChat is a close social network application; users can only search for a person's mobile number or username and see other people's profile only once they have been accepted as a friend. The online parents groups I first approached included a group of parents whose children were in a class at kindergarten; a chat group run by an advisor who give advice on where families can go for trips; a group of parents initiated by a parenting blogger; and a group of parents and English teachers, some of them were librarians who were enthusiastic about English picturebooks and story telling. I then asked the members in the groups to forward the link to as many parents as they could. In order not to be mistaken for a "virus", I asked the group administrator's permission; in some groups, the administrator sent my link on my behalf. Finally, all the participants were compensated for their time with a small incentive (from 1 RMB to 10 RMB randomly, which equaled 10 pence to 1 pound each) in the form of an online lucky draw.

In order to reach as many participants as possible, I used combined methods to find my sample, including convenience sampling, typical-case sampling, and snowball sampling. Practical considerations such as time, travel distance, accessibility and cost precluded true randomization. I recruited participants through library contacts, internet groups, personal contacts, and several influential bloggers among parents. Finally, during the 40 days, the initial sample recruited for the study consisted of 565 parents. Considering completing this questionnaire (See Appendix 1) took around 20 minutes (statistics data from Wenjuan.com) and contained several open questions, the number of participants was beyond my expectations. The combined sampling strategies worked well.

Although efforts were made to broaden the diversity of participants from various groups and locations including approaching different parents groups (kindergarten groups or sports groups, in different cities), from the results of the quantitative data, which I am going to discuss in detail in the next chapter, it was found that this specific group was highly educated and economically privileged compared with the national demographic data. There are some reasons why it was difficult to make the data sample more representative of all Chinese parents. Firstly, people tend to answer surveys only about topics that interest them or if the topic is relevant to the person. In my case, without obligation and with only a small incentive, most participants volunteered for the study, so the survey attracted parents who were passionate and interested in

reading to their children. Secondly, due to the time restriction (40 days of questionnaire data collection) and the limitation of access to technology for some of the population, the survey was not accessible to every Chinese parent. Thirdly, the main distribution platform — WeChat was a closed rather than an open friend-inviting system; it was easy to attract people who had a similar background or similar demographic characteristics (for example same gender, age group, living in the same city).

I was also aware of the limits of my sample design because of my own position, and identity — for example, gender (I had more contacts with mothers); language (I have higher English proficiency), children's age (the children were similar to the age of my own children); and profession (it was easier to reach educational practitioners' group). Therefore, the final participants tended to be homogenous in many ways. The sample was not randomly selected, so the data have limited generalizability in terms of the whole Chinese population, therefore some caution is needed to generate the data for the wider population. However, the research targets of this study were exclusively families who read English picturebooks to their children rather than the whole population who had young children, therefore, generally speaking, the final participants were representative of this group. From the results, most of them were from middle class background. Middle class parents are at the forefront of social changes and trends, and they often become role models for the wider public. The goal of this study was not to generalize the findings to the

entire population; it was to explore within this population who read picturebooks to their children, what their motivations, beliefs and behaviours are.

The online questionnaire link was distributed to find out about the characteristics of these parents and their reading habits, which provided me with a clearer image of the reading backgrounds and interests of these families. However, the response rate could not be obtained because of the online survey trait. The questionnaire (see Appendix 1) includes a consent form at the beginning and three sections:

1. Parents' and children's background, demographic information and other attached status (for example age, education, socioeconomic status, income, English level);
2. Parents' and children's interest in reading and reading habits, which relates to my first question about parents' motivation (this includes attitudes towards reading on a 5-point scale, their preferred reading materials, who decides what to read, who reads to the children, the frequency of shared book reading, an estimate of the amount of children's books they have at home, the frequency of library visits, and where and why they choose a particular book);
3. Literacy practices which relates more to my third research question about interaction patterns (the reading routine, how they interact, and which language they use).

Parents' reported English levels were defined (which is in accordance with the categories in the questionnaire) from beginner to advanced level: limited or total beginner; simple conversation level; CET level 4 passed; CET level 6 passed; proficient or majored in English; IELTS test taken with band score; TOEFL test taken with score. The CET (The College English Test) level 4 or 6 exam is the most common English exam for Chinese university students. The CET certificates have been one of the graduation requirements of almost all undergraduates and postgraduates in most universities in China for more than 20 years. In 2017, nearly 10 million people took CET4 and CET6 exams. I used these two exams as options as most young parents have taken these exams before. Parents had various experiences and have experienced language attrition since their last qualification, so to judge their English level was not easy. There were two more options — “Lived in an English-speaking country before. If so, specify for how long?” And “Other, please state briefly”.

The children's English levels could not be defined by any exam; so I relied on parents' report — from beginner to advanced (as noted in the questionnaire): Just listens, can't say anything; Just listens, but can respond using several words; Speaks several English words; Can use simple conversation and words; Daily conversation; Fluent speaker, but not an independent reader; Fluent speaker and independent reader. There was only one more open option — “Other situation, please state briefly”.

I used all this information to judge parents' and children's English levels. From the pilot study, I found that participants had no difficulties with understanding and choosing their or their children's English levels. During the observation, I also observed parents' and children's English levels and compared with their reported levels. I found their actual English ability highly accorded with their reported ones. That is probably due to so many different resources and routes to learn a foreign language nowadays, in the past, options were limited to standard textbooks, standard tests, few private English language training schools, and fewer overseas learning experiences. Therefore, English levels were relatively easy to judge according to a recognized standard.

There were single choice questions and multiple-choice questions on the questionnaire, and I set a limit of choosing at most three relevant answers. My concern about setting the limitation here was in case parents choose the answers without thinking carefully. The limit here forced them to consider which ones were relevant and also most important. Another reason was the experience from the pilot study, without limitation, the answers seemed dispersed and the important ones did not stand out.

In the final part of the questionnaire which was directly related to my second research question about book choices, parents were asked to list their favourite English picturebooks; consider what they thought of their children's favourite English picturebooks and what English picturebooks they had shared recently. The questionnaire also covered a mock book choosing activity (see

details in Appendix 1). Part of the questionnaire includes open-ended questions to encourage the parents to add their personal answers or explanations. At the end of the questionnaire, participants were asked if they would like to join the later stages of the research, the interview and observation. If they did, their personal contact details were collected. The purpose of this questionnaire was two-fold: to discover the family's general and English reading practices; and to select the participants for the next two stages.

3.2.4 Observation sampling strategy

Because 565 parents' answers were successfully gained from the first stage of data collection, it allowed me to develop a strategy for selecting the observation and interview families. I divided all participants who said they were willing to participate in the follow-up research into 5 different income groups (except one group, 60 out of 565 parents who were "not willing to state their income"). I tried to select families with the widest range of incomes (from the lowest income group to the highest income group). Although 426 out of 565 parents agreed to participate in further research and left their contact details, not surprisingly, only a few parents were from very low income groups or very high income groups. Considering the travelling distance, there were not so many participants to choose from these two groups, so I started to contact parents from these two groups to invite them to arrange the observation and interview schedule. After the schedule of parents from these two extreme groups was

decided, I moved to the other groups with many participants to choose from. If I had many choices in one group, I chose the participants who lived within a convenient radius for me to travel to (for example, cities which had a direct train service from big cities like Beijing, Shanghai or my home city) and I balanced their children's gender, age, and attempted to choose participants from diverse backgrounds. Although most participants wanted to participate originally, due to their free time and my intense schedule, most participants could not commit to at least two observations and one interview. Nevertheless, I tried to go for a maximum variation among the parents who agreed to continue to the next stage. Finally, three families from big northern cities, two families from a large southern city and two families from a small city in southern China were selected. These seven families were selected to participate in the following observation (about two or three observations for each family) and semi-structured interviews with video and audio recording. Separate consent forms for the survey, interview and observation were obtained from all adult participants. The purpose of the research, the children's privacy protection, and how the data would be stored was noted in the consent forms. When I visited these families, I brought a book-related gift (mostly a book and a soft toy of a book character, for example, a *The Snowman* soft toy from the book of the same name, a soft toy puppy from *Dear Zoo*) for each family as a way of thanking them. There were no other incentives.

3.2.5 Data collection — observation stage

In order to obtain data in a natural setting, I asked the participants to read the books in a location where they felt comfortable, so the settings and surroundings were familiar to the participants. Reading and related activities happen most frequently before bedtime or nap. The living room, bedroom and libraries were frequently chosen by parents and children. Half the parents chose bedtime reading and the other half preferred other environmental settings.

Except for bedtime reading, library reading, study table, cosy chair or sofa reading were other popular shared reading sites. Parents were requested to share the books as they normally would with their child, and I asked them not to worry about entertaining me as only in neutral, and more relaxed environments, will children tend to say exactly what is on their minds with little hesitation. Parents in this study were not trained in how to interact with children, so all responses and interactions during the shared reading were spontaneous.

For the specific reading event, it was the parent, either the mother or father, who normally would read with their child who participated. It was generally the mothers rather than the fathers who read with the children (only 49 out of 565 fathers involved in the questionnaire and 3 out of 20 reading sessions were taken by the father; fathers in 2 out of 7 observation families read to their children in my observation sessions). At least in China, women are still responsible for the majority of childcare duties including education-related roles. Since most families read Chinese and English books during one reading event in

real life, in order to record as natural a scene as possible, I did not exclude the shared reading of Chinese books.

Although I did not request it, all the books the parents and children read were picturebooks in Chinese or English except for one family who also read a traditional Chinese text without pictures. I, as the non-participant researcher normally left the room, with a camera positioned to capture the parent-child dyad's verbal and nonverbal (physical intimacy, facial expressions) interactions. As Golden and Gerber (1990:204) observe, parents and children use "a variety of paralinguistic, kinesthetic and proxemic cues" as they construct meaning in shared reading event. If it was not appropriate to leave the room, I stayed in the corner of the room, mostly reading silently to myself.

Both parents and children knew there was a camera in the corner. The camera was set up before the observation and I sometimes adjusted the position after parents and children settled down. Some children became curious about the camera, but sooner or later, most of them forgot its existence. Compared with the children, parents tended to be more aware of the camera and some parents mentioned it to the children during the shared reading. My presence changed the parent-child dynamics at first, in order to catch the natural behaviour, I played and talked with the children for around 30 minutes until the children were no longer curious about the camera and became used to my presence. I played with the children to become familiar with the family members and reduce the observer effect, known as the "Hawthorne Effect"

(McCambridge, Witton & Elbourne, 2014). By doing this, I tried to engage meaningfully and ethically with the participants involved in the research. The other purpose of playing with the children was to assess the children's English and Chinese language ability and gain general knowledge about children's attitudes towards books.

Some children or parents asked me to read to their children during the reading session, I did not refuse to do so and took it as an opportunity to become better acquainted with the family members, however, I did not count these as observation sessions. My role was principally as an observer, my function shifted to participant-observer when I read to the children. As I mentioned before, partly because they treated me as a "reading expert" or fluent English speaker and partly because being read to by a stranger would arouse the children's curiosity and interest in reading. Each time before or after the observation, I wrote detailed field notes and a researcher reflection journal.

Parents and children were observed in their ways of shared reading, their attitudes and behaviour during the picturebook reading. All the book-sharing episodes were transcribed in their entirety. I also took some pictures of the reading environment as part of the micro-ethnographic observation. As Cohen and his colleagues (2011:457) claim, the researcher can gain information about the physical setting (the bedroom or living room); the human setting (the characteristics of family relationships), the interactional setting (the verbal and

non-verbal interactions in the class); the program setting and their reading routine during observation.

Observation data collection occurred over two or three sessions depending on the children's circumstances; each session was of approximately 30-40 minutes duration. Ambady and Gray (2002) indicate that even the segments of behaviour, called "thin slices" can be used to make accurate evaluations about people's social behaviours. From the results, 30 minutes was the duration of one typical shared reading event. Together a total of 20 parent-child dyads videotaped sessions were collected, averaging about three observational videos for each family.

3.2.6 Data collection — interview stage

After the parents and children had completed the shared reading session, other information was collected in a semi-structured interview (see interview questions in Appendix 2). This was the last stage of data collection. Interviews lasted on average 90 minutes and only parents were interviewed.

I conducted interviews first to identify the parents' reading behaviour, book choice and general educational practice. The key dimensions of the interview questions were: their personal shared reading and reading experience, what their book preferences were, who influenced parents and children's book choices, how they selected what to share, where they bought the books, their reading-related activities, and so on. Through these questions, I wanted to

explore families' child rearing approaches — how parents shaped children's recreational and educational experiences; what general educational practice parents embedded in shared reading experience and their child's attitude towards books. Parents' reading history and English learning experience were also talked about. Parents' knowledge of children's books was checked during the interview. Some interview questions were similar to the questionnaire questions as I wanted to compare the difference in the data, and ask the reason behind it and go deeper in the interview. It felt very natural talking with parents about children's lives and every aspect of childcare before and after the interview. This may have been due to my position as a mother with children of a similar age and similar experience. On the other hand, the parents treated me as a "reading expert" and asked me several questions about reading practice when, at the end of the interview, I asked them if they had any questions. During the interview, after initial chatting, I set up the videotape and told parents about the length of the recording and the conversation became a little more formal. The interview data were audiotaped and transcribed in their entirety.

3.3 Research Participants

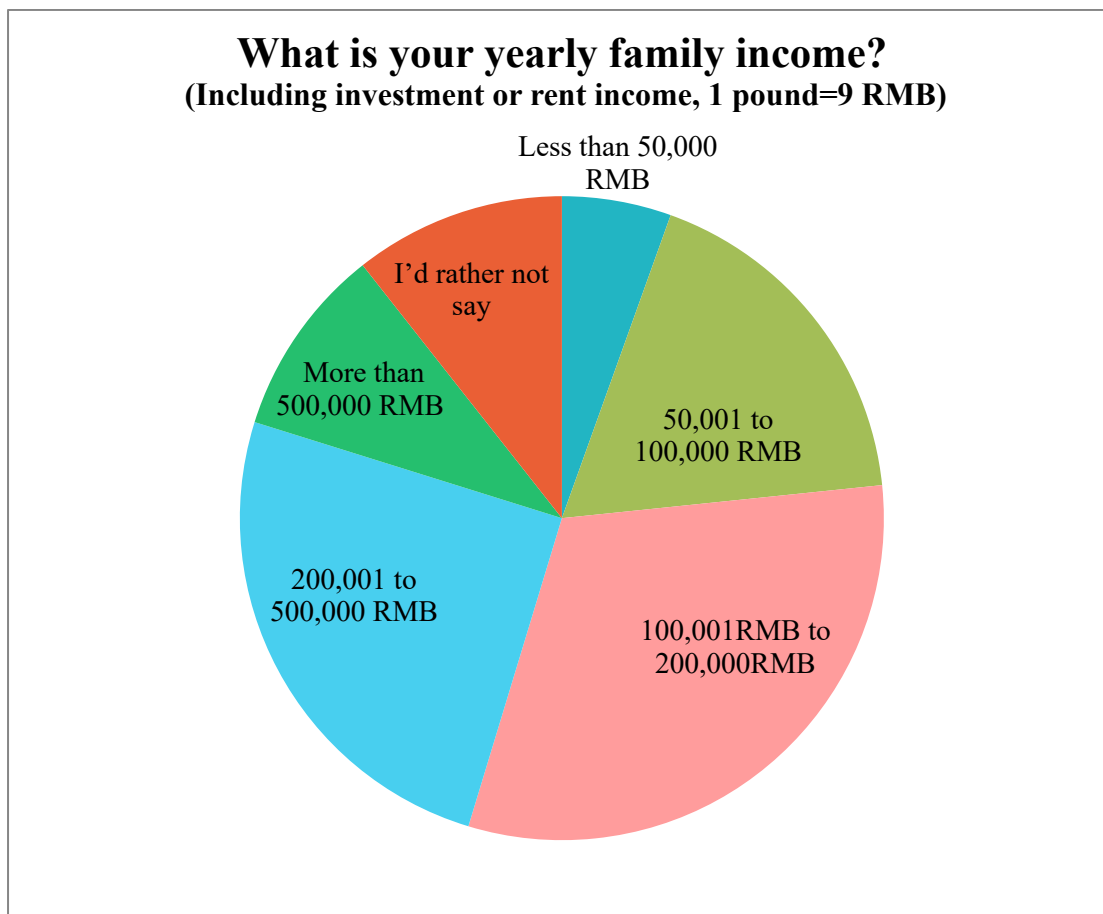
3.3.1 Who are the participants?

The first purpose of this study was to identify the parents who were reading English picturebooks to their children. We could locate this group from the

demographic data. Firstly, from household income, we can see from the diagram below that more than two-thirds of these families earned more than 100,000 RMB (£11,000) per year, and more than one-third of these families earned more than 200,000 RMB (£22,000) per year. The average income was well above the national average but was representative of salaries in the larger cities such as Beijing or Shanghai (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020).

The data shows a disparity among lower and higher income middle class families. Families who were involved with this study were more likely to come from the urban areas; most of them were from the eastern part of China, which was where the relatively affluent cities in China are located. From quantitative data, the mean parents' age in this study was 33.8 years old, the mean age of children was 4.5 years old, so the age of giving birth to their first-child in my sample was 29.3 years old. It was significantly higher than the national average, which was 26.8 years old in 2017 but similar to the data in Shanghai (29 years old) in the same year (National Bureau of Statistics, 2018). This confirms much social science research that middle class parents have children at a later age compared with the national average (Haines, 2017; He et al., 2019).

Figure 1 Family Income



The majority (94%) of participants reported having obtained a bachelor's degree. Among them, 27% of these parents had gained a master's degree and 3% of participants had a doctoral degree. Again, the educational attainment was higher than the national level and somewhat higher than the average figure for big cities. Compared with the national data, which shows that the entrance rate into Higher Education in China is now 42.7% (2016). Entrance rate into HE in big cities or in eastern China is higher than the national average, we can still surmise that this is a well-educated group. Most families (75%) had only one child, around one-quarter of families had two children or more (the One-Child Policy ended in 2015).

From the results, 27% of parents' self-rated reading proficiency in this study showed they could only speak simple English words; another 27% of parents stated they had passed CET4(College English Test); 29% of parents reported they had passed CET 6, which was the biggest group; 19% of parents stated they were fluent in English. Only a few of them (6%) were complete beginners (35/552), and fewer than one-tenth of parents had lived in an English-speaking country before. Most of the children (81%) from these families could speak at least several words or could have a simple conversation in English. Because of the university admission system in China, English carries considerable weight in the core three compulsory subjects (the others are Chinese and Math), so the English level is closely connected to an academic degree. Data from this study also showed the higher the education level was, the higher the English level was. That partly explains why all parents' highest degree in the "Secondary School diploma" group had little English or a limited level of English. It also demonstrated parents' concept of the relationship between English and a good education and why parents put so much effort into English learning.

3.3.2 Participants' home literacy environment

The participants' home literacy environment was also evaluated. More than one-third of families had more than 100 English picturebooks at home, more than two-thirds of families had at least 20 English picture books at home and

6.7% of families owned more than 500 English picturebooks. Half of the families read more Chinese picturebooks than English picturebooks; only one-tenth of the families read more in English than Chinese; the rest read a similar number of Chinese and English picturebooks. Some 57% of parents said they did not go to a library to borrow books while the rest said they did.

3.3.3 Children from observational families

In my study, the seven observational families were all from middle class backgrounds and at least one parent had a profession; the children lived in a secure home and parents invested in their children's education. Pseudonyms were used for all participants. The age range of the children from these observation families was from 1 to 6 years old. Given that preschool children were not able to read independently, this was reflected in the age range of the main English picturebook market in China. There were four girls and three boys in this study; other information is in the table below:

Table 3 General information relating to the seven observed families

Family	Xiaoxia	Xiaotian	Anna	Qiqi	Yueyue	Weiwei	Xiaohu
Age and gender	2 years and 9 months old, girl	4 years and 4 months old, boy	4 years and 2 months old, girl	4 years and 1 month old, girl	18 months old, boy	4 years and 10 months old, girl	5 years and 11 months old, boy
City	Northern big city	Northern big city	Northern big city	Southern big city	Southern main city	Southern small city	Southern small city
siblings	no	no	no	no	no	One sister (21)	no
English picturebooks at home	200-500	More than 500	20-100	20-100	101-200	101-200	Less than 20
Frequency of reading English picturebooks	2-4 times a week	Almost every day	2-4 times a week	Once a week	Once a month	Almost every day	Almost every day
Parent's education level (degree)	Bachelor	Master's	Bachelor	Bachelor	Master's	Bachelor	Bachelor
parent's self-reported English level	Fluent Speaker	Fluent Speaker, Lived in UK for 2 years	Fluent Speaker	College Level 4	College Level 6	Simple conversation	College Level 4
Children's self-reported English level	Simple conversation	Simple conversation	Simple words	Simple conversation	Learning to talk	Simple words	Simple conversation

Xiaoxia was the first child I visited. She was a 2 year 9-month-old girl and lived with her parents in the suburb of a big northern city. Like many Chinese families, she was also looked after by her grandparents and lived in her grandparents' apartment almost every week. I was impressed by the number of books and English picturebooks on her bookshelf, which was children's size.

The family owned more than 200 English picturebooks, and they formed the majority of their books. Xiaoxia was free and could easily access the books by herself. Xiaoxia had good Chinese verbal ability and spoke some words and sentences in English. Her mother spoke fluent English and worked as an English teacher before childbirth.

Xiaotian was aged 4 years and 4 months and went to kindergarten by bus every day, which took 30 minutes. His mother carefully chose the kindergarten for him despite the distance. Xiaotian's mother said she liked the natural way the new kindergarten provides for the children, for example, simple wooden toys and the kindergarten is not overly-protective. She was especially satisfied with the learning log the new kindergarten provided. He was a bright boy who liked to smile and asked lots of questions. I went to pick up Xiaotian from kindergarten with his mother one day. They talked about "24 Jieqi" (24 solar terms to record the time and created in ancient China to direct the agricultural and farming activities), and Xiaotian could tell which Jieqi that day was on the way home, which I thought was very advanced knowledge for his age. His mother could speak good English because she had studied in the UK previously. Xiaotian came from an extremely rich literacy environment and his parents valued literature and read a great deal to him. The first impression when I entered the living room was an enormous high bookshelf which contained more than 2000 books. It contained more books than several private children's libraries I had visited. All the books were well organized according to English

or Chinese, and by the physical format of the book. There were many popular parenting books I could recognize. His mother was the only parent who had memories of picturebooks when she was a child. Xiaotian's family reported the lowest family income range and yet owned the most books.

Anna was a 4 year old girl who had a busy schedule. During the interview, her mother mentioned that Anna was involved in more than 10 extra-curricular activities at that time and said it was definitely not an exception among her friends. Anna went to a famous elite private kindergarten called Eton (named after the famous British boarding school) near her apartment. Her grandparents and her mother took care of her and sent her to many activities. Anna's mother had read many parenting books. Anna's family belonged to the highest income group in this study and Anna's father did children-related business.

Qiqi was a 4 year and 1 month old girl who liked painting. Her mother used the resources of the public and school libraries very often and regularly brought books home. Qiqi was the centre of her extended family. The family lived in a large southern city and all her extended family were local. Her 4 grandparents lived nearby and were frequently involved with childcare. Qiqi and her parents also often walked to her grandparents' house for dinner.

Yueyue was only 18 months old. He showed many signs of emergent literacy. His mother owned a small children's private library in an early childcare centre, where he frequently played. He was at the stage of learning

early literacy skills (such as how to hold the book properly, and how to sit still and listen). During the observation sessions, he seldom sat still and listened to stories. However, his mother sent me some extra videos that showed he can concentrate well during bedtime story time. When I talked about the difference with Yueyue's mother, she said perhaps it was not the best reading time and environment for him when I was there, and he probably became excited because a stranger was there.

Weiwei was a 4 year 10 month old girl, who read Chinese and English picturebooks and traditional Chinese books with her mother. Her mother was fascinated with traditional Chinese culture and texts. Reading traditional Chinese classics was the routine for her family, and Weiwei went to a traditional school (Sishu) which emphasizes learning traditional Chinese classics. Her mother allowed her to leave her first mainstream kindergarten nearby and join this traditional school which was 30 minutes away by bus. Together with the long-distance of the traditional school, daily traditional Chinese classics reading occupied their family time. After reading in English, Chinese picturebooks and traditional Chinese text every day, they felt they did not have enough time to do other activities.

Xiaohu was soon to become 6 years old (he was 5 years and 11 months old) and went to an English language school twice a week in a small southern city. This English language school gave him homework every week. His father was a high school teacher and his mother was a local government civil servant.

They put a great deal of time and resources into his education and Xiaohu's mother said she tried to maintain a good relationship with his kindergarten teacher. Xiaohu's parents were trying to move Xiaohu into a primary school in the city centre, which they said was a better school than the one in their catchment area. Xiaohu read Pinyin and English phonics at the same time.

Compared with the custom in the UK of calling another parent directly by their name, for parents in China, it is more natural to call each other in the way of "XX's mother" or "XX's father". In this study, I did not make pseudonyms for every parent, instead I call the parent "XX's mother" or "XX's father" which follows the tradition of communication between parents in China.

3.4 Coding and Data Analysis

3.4.1 Pre coding — organizing and transcribing data

I received 565 copies of the questionnaire with several open questions, conducted 20 observation sessions and had data from 7 interviews. Several research journals, observational field notes and the pictures I took were also part of the data. I gathered all the data and imported it into the Nvivo software, which acquainted me with the range and scope of the raw data.

I then categorized, calculated, transcribed, translated and coded all the data, and developed it into a whole picture to answer the research questions. I tried to use some software to help me to transform the audio such as the parents'

interviews into text. However, because the parents spoke Chinese and sometimes used English words, the change in language could not be detected by the software, which meant I had to translate it manually, so I decided to dictate all the interview and observation raw data myself. The process of personally transcribing everything made me engage with the data in detail and I gained a general impression of what the data was about.

At the pre-coding stage, after I had collected, transcribed and translated all the data, I read through it all and obtained a general sense of what the participants were saying or doing. I wrote down my general thoughts of my first impressions. I did as Dörnyei (2007: 250) suggested: “reading and rereading the transcripts, reflecting on them, and noting down our thoughts in journal entries ... and memos ... These pre-coding reflections shape our thinking about the data and influence the way we will go about coding it.” Although this process was very time-consuming, it also helped me in terms of organizing my initial coding thoughts and making sense of my first impressions. For example, the focus on learning English and the fact that many families read a large number of graded level books immediately stood out from the data at this stage.

3.4.2 Coding approach and strategy

Questionnaire data was analysed using SPSS 24; I will report the results in the findings section. Questionnaire open data, observation and interview data were synthesized and coded in Nvivo12 as a whole project.

For the interview data, I mainly transcribed the parent's verbal content, there were very few physical gestures or voice changes, while for the observation data, the parent-child's reading and talking, their gestures, the physical setting, the reading environment, the voice changes, and the facial expressions were all transcribed with descriptions and coded. These visual elements were a part of the shared reading event. I wanted to report an authentic voice during the shared reading sessions, so their complete communication (nodding, pointing, words, tone, emphasis, gestures, mannerisms and so on) was transcribed (Bailey, 2008).

Qualitative data (open data in the questionnaire, observation and interview data) were analysed according to the threefold process — open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 2008; Charmaz, 2006; Dörnyei, 2007) with a grounded theory approach. Grounded theory is an inductive approach that uses the coding process as a means of extracting the information from data (Newby, 2014). Mackey and Gass (2005) claim that coding is grounded in the data rather than pre-decided. The grounded theory approach is the bottom-up process of sifting primary data and it builds up the interpretation from the data itself. Dörnyei (2007) applied this grounded theory approach to coding and called it a threefold coding process.

3.4.3 Open coding

The initial coding stage was open coding. The questionnaire open data, the observation data and the interview data were coded using the same process. I firstly identified data units and described them with a code by highlighting and tagging descriptive labels which best described their main points where it was broadly relevant to my topic, such as “parent’s reading experience”, “reading routine”, “parents’ English learning experience”, “extracurricular activities” and so on. There were further codes to describe people’s social and educational background, family culture, reactions, talking, physical gestures, attitude and beliefs relating to educational practice and book reading.

I also consulted codes and categories derived from previous studies mainly from DRI (Dialogic Reading Inventory, Dixon-Krauss et al., 2010), ARICI (Adult and Child Interactive Reading Inventory, Debruin-Parecki , 1999, 2004, 2007), DPICS-R (Dyadic Parent–Child Interaction Coding System-R, Robinson & Eyberg, 1981) and other research about children’s responses to texts, which I mentioned in chapter 2.

I maintained some of the original DRI labels and a few labels were adapted from ARICI, with the addition of other interaction research (Robinson & Eyberg, 1981) to code the interaction process. I found those categories useful, as analytical tools or a way of corroborating my findings, sometimes existing codes required refinements to capture the new context. I only used the existing codes which fit the description, for example, I used the codes of “Asks child to

recall information”, “Parents pause to answer child’s questions”, which were used in DRI. I used the existing codes only on this basis. I then developed most codes from my own data, which were successively modified through further analysis. I sought to find patterns in the data, not impose a specific framework upon it.

During the stage of open coding, initial descriptive codes were assigned then constantly adapted, suggesting the continuous interplay between the proposed hypotheses and checking them against the data (Erikson, 1986). Firstly, all communicative behaviours were divided into two categories: adult and child. Then interaction labels were added to the coding system to label parents’ utterances relating to book reading, for example, labels like “voice intonation or change”, and “physical proximity” were used. Several more codes were added to describe the parents’ and children’s reading in a new context such as “adults ask children to translate”, “children ask the meaning of foreign language”. I will reveal the process and give more details in Appendix 3. In the open coding of the observation data, I asked the following questions partly as Dörnyei (2007: 260-261) suggested: “What is this data an example of? What principles underlie these actions/statements? What do they actually mean? Is there a similar pattern I have met before?”

I coded these on a line-by-line basis. At this stage, I approached the data without any expectations or pre-conceptions, I just reacted to the data on its own terms and the codes closely reflected and represented the data. As more data

were coded, I explored the emerging categories and investigated potential connections among categories. My research questions helped me to determine what I was looking for when coding. Open coding was also the beginning stage of conceptual analysis. The aim here, for this stage, was not to generate categories but to produce a set of labels from which categories could be derived.

3.4.4 Axial coding

Upon completion of the open coding, I began second level coding: axial coding. During this stage, many initial codes were developed and categorized. I put these codes which were related to each other into broad categories. By doing these, I tried to perceive patterns as well as to define the core categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I also started to detect some codes that had features in common or had overarching themes. There were some closely related categories, which could be clustered together under a broader label, for example, I put “translate to Chinese” and “ask children to translate” into “translation and meaning confirmation” code; then put “children ask the meaning of foreign language” and “children respond to the words in Chinese” under this same code. In this way, I used the umbrella term “translation and meaning confirmation” as a category. I began to see the start of a pattern emerging.

If these codes occurred in one family’s reading session, I categorized this reading episode as a “Translation and Meaning Confirmation” reading pattern. In this way, I categorized five patterns to describe the reading

interaction event. These main coding structures emerged from the data. Most descriptive codes were categorized into these five interaction patterns.

The five types of interaction foci which emerged from the open coding were: Literal focus; Literacy focus; Literary focus; Exploratory focus; and Digital focus. I found 90% of the original codes had been put into these five reading pattern umbrella codes. There were other codes I did not put into any reading foci umbrella code. Instead, I put the codes under categories according to the broad meaning. For example, under the umbrella “Book Choosing” code, there were “Adults asked children’s opinion on books choosing”, “Adult suggested books to read” and “Adult brought attention to book reading” codes. Codes and categories stemmed from the data as long as it seemed productive. At this point, I also looked back at the codes that were linked to the broader categories formed in this stage and to decide whether the new labels applied to the existing categories or whether some needed to be recoded.

Except for these five interaction foci, during the process of axial coding, these open labels were then grouped into sub-categories to add evidence of parents’ motivation and book choice. Besides, many codes were “organized in larger conceptual categories by making connections between a category and its sub-categories” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:97). The links between the categories were also identified, as either parallel, causal or procedural interdependence. In addition, each of the codes was classified as belonging to the parents’ or children’s category. These labels were no longer descriptive, rather, they

summarized the central concept of several similar or related codes into a higher level. Axial coding was used for identifying specific recurring literacy practices.

The result of axial coding was the emergence of five broad patterns that were the abstract descriptions of the foreign language shared reading foci among Chinese families. The frequency and reading time during one reading session were counted to identify the most commonly observed literacy practice. I also considered aspects such as the range of variation within each category. After these two steps, I gained a general picture of how to answer the research questions regarding parents' motivation, and book choice and put these codes into the groups which could directly answer the research questions. The emphasis was on stimulating conceptual concepts, so the categories are summative rather than descriptive.

3.4.5 Selective coding

The final layer of coding was selective coding. After open coding and axial coding, my coding scheme was achieved, which became the analytical tool and a means of corroborating my findings, and also the basis of selective coding. This stage, as the word indicates, was selective, and involved selecting the codes related to core themes and concepts. I decided what should and should not be included. I looked more closely at the dialogue of interaction which could fit into above five interaction patterns. Codes were then deleted, added, or revised to reflect current shared reading patterns. Lastly, with the research questions

and categories in mind, I checked again and selected some details to support my answers to these research questions. The five reading patterns were further analysed and tested during the selective coding process. The final results of the selective coding generated a grounded theory of foreign language family shared reading interaction foci that will be presented in chapter 6.

These three coding stages were not a linear process; I revised several times throughout the process as I successively refined categories and modified my thinking in the process. I used selective coding to refocus and to rethink about my codes, categories and constantly considered the interrelationship between them. It was during the selective coding stage that the conceptual categories for the parent-child interaction patterns were related and linked. The process sought to find a link between categories that will bind them to a core idea. The final step in the data analysis was to interpret the meaning of the data. I give an example in Appendix 3 to illustrate the process of threefold process of coding.

3.4.6 Conclusion — what would I do differently during data collection?

During data collection, I found the process worked effectively within my time and economic limits. Although the transcription stage was extremely time-consuming, I found I did not use several data I coded eventually, I took it as an unavoidable process and used it to become familiar with the data. If I were to

run a similar study in the future, I would put more time and energy into listening to the children's voices, interview the children and talk to them more often.

With various means of assessment, the study evaluates parents' motivation, book choices, and how parents and children interact during the shared reading process. Adult guidance and children's freedom need to be further explored when parents and children are choosing, reading, and discussing picturebooks. Further findings will be presented in the following chapters.

Findings

Chapter 4 Parents' motivation for reading picturebooks in English

4.1 Parents' motivations and expectations of Anglophone picturebook reading

In this chapter, I will present the major findings and discuss parents' motivation, and the reasons why Chinese parents choose to read English picturebooks to their children. How Chinese parents view Anglophone picturebooks is associated with their motivation and will be explored in this part. Davydov (1999:43) states that "motives...are forms of needs...motives are consistent with actions. Actions are based on motives, and acting is possible if certain material or sign and symbol means are available." Dörnyei (2001) points out that motivation suggests why people choose an activity, how long they can persist at it, and what efforts they are willing to invest in it. Kormos and Kiddle (2013) summarize Dörnyei's three components of motivation as goals, the initiation and maintenance of the learning efforts. For Chinese parents, reading English picturebooks to their children is a continuous investment activity in terms of their time, energy and money. Probing into parents' motivation will enable a better understanding of this new phenomenon. I will also look at the elements which influence or reflect parents' motivation. For this part, evidence is mainly from questionnaire and interview data.

Motivation reflects parents' beliefs about their responsibility and expectations concerning their children's development. LeFevre, Clarke, and Stringer's study (2002) suggests that parental expectations may be identified in their behaviours. Okagaki's (2001) research confirms that parents' view and value of education, and their educational expectations have influences on children's learning activities. Family practices such as shared book reading indicate parents' demands and their motivations in terms of shared reading. In the current study, parents who reported that they read more English picturebooks also tended to have high expectations about what their children would gain from it. It may be those expectations, as a significant motivating factor, that motivate parents to share English picturebooks with children, and that enable parents to decide how much effort they will put into it. Data from this study reveals that Chinese parents expect their children to improve their language, knowledge, and also to value the aesthetic quality of English picturebooks. Their motivation was also largely aroused by their social group and network, and their ambition for their children's education and future.

4.2 Does English picturebook reading equal English language learning?

4.2.1 English learning motivation is reflected in the data

Most children in this study generally showed a high level of interest in English language picturebook reading. In the questionnaire, there were two scales for

parents to describe children's interest in Chinese picturebook reading and English picturebook reading. The scales ran from 1 to 5, where one was the lowest and 5 was the highest. Despite evidence in this study that children showed a little less interest in English picturebooks (4.01/5) than Chinese picturebooks (4.69/5) (reported by their parents), most parents were keen on reading to their children in English. Questionnaire data also shows the frequency of parents reading to their children in English. 39% of the families read English picturebooks every day, and another 22% of families reported that they read English picturebooks between two and four times a week. In terms of the reading time, 30% of families read for at least 20 minutes to their children each time. Two-thirds of families (341/516) read for more than 10 minutes each time. Apart from reading to children, many families also allow children to listen to CDs or watch a cartoon of these English picturebooks.

These Chinese parents have invested a great deal in terms of choosing, purchasing and reading English picturebooks. In most English speaking countries such as the UK, the most popular places to access books are from the school library or the local library (Maynard et al., 2008), Chinese parents in this study purchased most books (regardless of whether they were English picturebooks or Chinese picturebooks) from bookshops, online bookshops or WeChat group buying (the WeChat group leader not only recommends the books, but also purchases large quantities of certain books, usually in the hundreds at a lower price, to sell them in the group). Due to the lack of libraries

in many areas and the unavailability of English picturebooks in the library, more than half of the parents said they bought most of the books for their children. Apart from the monetary investment, motivated behaviour usually consists of effort and persistence (Gardner, 1985, 2006), therefore book reading is indeed a large investment both in terms of time and money for Chinese parents.

We can see from the data that many parents are enthusiastic about reading English picturebooks to their children, and it has become part of their reading or parenting routine. Data shows the English language expectation was the strongest point in parents' motivation. In this study, the motives for improving their child's English language ability were captured through examining the questionnaire data, shared reading interactions and interviews with the parents. From the questionnaire data, an overwhelming majority (95%) of parents, when asked why they chose English picturebooks rather than Chinese ones for their children, stated they chose English picturebooks "in order to learn English". Most parents answered the same question in the interview in the same way. Xiaohu's and Weiwei's family were passive English picturebook readers; both sets of parents were urged by the English learning centre to begin reading English picturebooks in order to consolidate their children's learning of English. This was also in line with my findings in the interview. When purchasing an English picturebook, the most popular reason parents gave was that they "would consider whether this book is suitable for his or her English

level”. Among parents involved in this study, 30% of them chose this reason, more than the second popular reason — “friends or internet group’s recommendation” which was chosen by 20% of parents.

4.2.2 Why do parents think reading English picturebooks improves English language level?

In Chapter 2, I briefly summarised the studies which showed that shared reading promotes children’s literacy, including second language acquisition. Parents’ own experiences enable them to find a better approach for their children’s English learning, and reading picturebooks is one of them. Almost all of the parents mentioned the problems of English learning methods when they were at school. For parents, learning language can act as a significant driving force and as a vision of future achievement (Dörnyei, 2009), either preparing their children to study abroad like Xiaoxia and Qiqi’s mother mentioned in the interview, or by organising a detailed plan of learning English. Another consideration is that English proficiency is currently not only one of the measures in the academic degree as I mentioned before, but also one of the most important qualifications for many jobs, even when this job does not directly require the use of English. Many professional opportunities take applicants’ English ability as a prerequisite.

In the interview, most parents mentioned that they learned English at school using the traditional method of focusing on grammar and translation, and

they felt it was the reason why they were not confident when communicating in English. When it came to their children, parents wanted them to avoid their unsuccessful experiences. Xiaoxia's, Qiqi's, Xiaotian's and Anna's mother said they learned English "only from the textbook and memorizing the text." Anna's mother and Xiaohu's mother also mentioned they "did lots of English worksheets." Qiqi and Xiaohu's mother emphasized that they "forget the English language when they did not need to use it anymore." Xiaotian's mother studied in the UK, and she stated that, although she was already an English major in a Chinese university before she went to the UK, she mainly learned written English. When she went to the UK, she found that the textbooks did not represent the way people normally talked in real life. She could not understand what native speakers were talking about.

About the parents' university experience, many parents said they only aimed to pass the CET test, which was the most popular English test among college students that I mentioned in Chapter 3. CET-test-oriented teaching was another severe problem in universities in China which mentioned by many parents. Bandura and his colleagues (1996) confirmed that parents' self-efficacy beliefs and the academic expectations towards their children were important factors on children's academic self-efficacy beliefs. Therefore, after parents found they could not use English in daily life, as a parent said, they preferred to let their children learn English from picturebooks because picturebooks provide a real example of actual language use.

Parents also expressed a broader view of their motivation for English language learning. English language, as a lingua franca in the world, has become an international language. Consequently, language learning is not only about learning a foreign language, it is also about instrumental goals or associated utilitarian values such as international posture which includes being “integrated into the global world”, “willingness to go overseas to study or work”, and a “non-ethnocentric attitude towards diverse cultures” as my questionnaire data shows. “In order to know the western culture, and gain international communication skills” was the second popular option (chosen by 42% of parents, after “in order to learn English”) when asking parents why they read English picturebooks to children. This non-language benefit reflects the cultural capital that parents provide for their children through learning a language and reading books from other cultures as I discussed in Chapter 2.

Another reason which motivates parents to read to their children in English on a continuous basis is children’s verbal responses; and many parents believe children understand what they read. Anna’s mother gave an example of the book *Pete the Cat*; she said Anna understood what happened to the cat and what colour the shoes were every time. Anna’s mother said Anna understood these books although she did not ask Anna directly. Other parents did not doubt whether their children could understand what the books say; they gave a similar reason that children understand the books through linking the sound with pictures.

Parents were asked whether they had obstacles when reading to their children in English. In my sample, parents said one obstacle was that they “had limited English knowledge” or “they thought their children are too young to learn English” which showed that parents took English picturebook reading as “English learning”. When parents were asked “do you read any English picturebooks to your child?” some parents associated “English picturebooks” with “English Learning” and answered “It is too early for children to learn English.” All of these pieces of evidence show that Chinese parents read English picturebooks in order to improve their child’s language ability as a primary reason. When I asked in the interview “Why not send children to an English training class?”, Xiaoxia’s mother told me “one or two hours per week is not enough, language learning needs substantial input”. She believes that parents’ continuous language input is better than any training class. Xiaotian’s mother told me “sitting there in the class will destroy children’s interest in a new language because it is ‘formal study’”. These reasons made parents decide to read the books to their children instead of sending their child to “formal study” in an English class.

From a language acquisition perspective, there are many best-seller parenting books promoting the idea and introducing parents’ personal experience of improving their child’s English language ability through reading English picturebooks to their children. It shows parents that the best way of learning a foreign language is to link the concept (for example the picture) with

sounds in an authentic context; the concept of “understandable input” become a popular phrase for this practice. Because of parents’ personal experience and lack of confidence in the traditional learning methods they experienced, they are looking for new language learning methods. On the other hand, the role-models are promoting their “successful practice”. Reading English picturebooks brought these two ideas together, which provides parents with a new solution. Parents said information about “early start” or “English immersion” are mainly from social media, educational experts and the WeChat group they joined. In the mass media, “reading experts” and commercial English language centres also emphasize that this kind of input should happen earlier in children’s lives.

In the interview, Xiaotian and Xiaoxia’s mother stated that there is a great deal of benefit in exposing children to foreign languages as early as possible to give their children a “headstart” in English learning. This is similar to parents belonging to “concerted cultivation” groups in Lareau’s (2011) category. Yueyue’s mother emphasized that an “early” start is vital. She told me another mother’s story. A mother in her library told her that her 4-year-old child asked her to translate every sentence she read in English, while her 2-year-old child did not, but listened to whatever her mother read. From this point of view, an “early” start to read in English to children is easier for mothers. Like Xiaoxia’s mother mentioned in the interview, “If children start to become immersed into a language earlier, they will take it as natural as ‘acquisition’ rather than learning. So I think the earlier, the better.” Both Xiaoxia’s mother

and Qiqi's mother said in the interview that they regretted that they did not read to their children in English from infancy, as Anna's mother did. Anna's mother said she spoke to Anna in English before she was 1 year old and Xiaohu's mother said Tuesday or Wednesday was their English speaking day although both of them stopped for different reasons. Qiqi's mother thought the reason why Qiqi did not refuse to read in English was because they started at an early age, but other children may not because Chinese became their dominant language. The concepts of "constant input" and "critical period" encourage parents to read to children in English, and as early as possible.

4.3 The popularity of graded level books reflects the motivation of mastering the English language

Parents' book choice also reflected the motivation of language learning. Regardless of the questionnaire data or the actual reading scene in these families, I found many parents read English graded level books to their children. When parents were asked to write down their three favourite English picturebooks, in the Top 10 list, *Oxford Reading Tree* series and *I Can Read* series were on all the lists. Furthermore, when parents were asked what books they had shared recently with their children, the *Oxford Reading* series was in the Top 2 only after the *Peppa Pig* books, and another graded level series — *Pearson Leveled Reading* was also in the Top 10. Children progress through these levels as their phonics and reading skills develop, so English graded level books are frequently

used in the school curriculum of English speaking countries for systematically improving English phonics and reading decoding skills.

The differences between graded level books and trade picturebooks mainly lay in their purpose. Graded level books which are normally designed for children to read by themselves are aimed at improving language and decoding skills, so the words used are controlled to ensure they are not outside the children's decoding range. Many graded levels have a "fully decodable" sign on their covers. Trade picturebooks are normally shared by children and parents, teachers or carers; the word choice is more flexible. Another difference is related to cognitive understanding and complexity. As Nikolajeva and Scott (2001) summarize in their widely-used book, the richest relationship of pictures and words are complementary and contradictory relationships which we can see from many popular trade picturebooks. Children like to find the "irony" picture detail which contradicts the words that they hear from their parents. For example, the words in *Rosie's Walk* book only has 60 words, if we focus on the words, the story seems boring; but children can find clues in the pictures, which are contrary to the words and so it becomes a very exciting and funny story. While in Graded Level books, because of the purpose, rather than contradictory, most pictures give clues to decode the words. The word-picture relationship of Graded Level books is more symmetrical; when children look at the pictures, the meaning is immediately apparent reinforcing understanding of the words. However, for many trade picturebooks, there are more additional visual

storylines and a great deal of information in the pictures is missing from the words. Therefore, trade picturebooks generally require a higher cognitive ability to read the meaning created by pictures and words. Generally speaking, Graded Level books tell the story using words while many trade picturebooks mostly tell the story using the pictures. Considering these series of books normally include tens or even hundreds of books in one series, it is not hard to imagine that Graded Level books make up a large proportion of these families' bookshelf.

Data from observation also reflects parents' motivation in improving language skills through reading Graded Level books. Among these seven observation families I briefly introduced in the last chapter, what Anna (whose family comes from the highest income bracket and who has a busy schedule), Qiqi (the 4 year 1 month old girl, whose four grandparents live nearby and who is the center of her extended family) and Weiwei (the 4 year 10 month old girl, who also reads traditional Chinese classics) read were mostly Graded Level books in either the paper or digital version. During one session of Xiaohu's (5 year 11 month old boy, who goes to English language school twice a week) reading observation, he was only read Graded Level Phonics books. When I observed the families' interaction process, if they were reading graded level books, parents and children tend to fix on the print knowledge (spell, print, word) rather than the pictures. In addition, during observation sessions, both parents and children who read many Graded Level English picturebooks liked

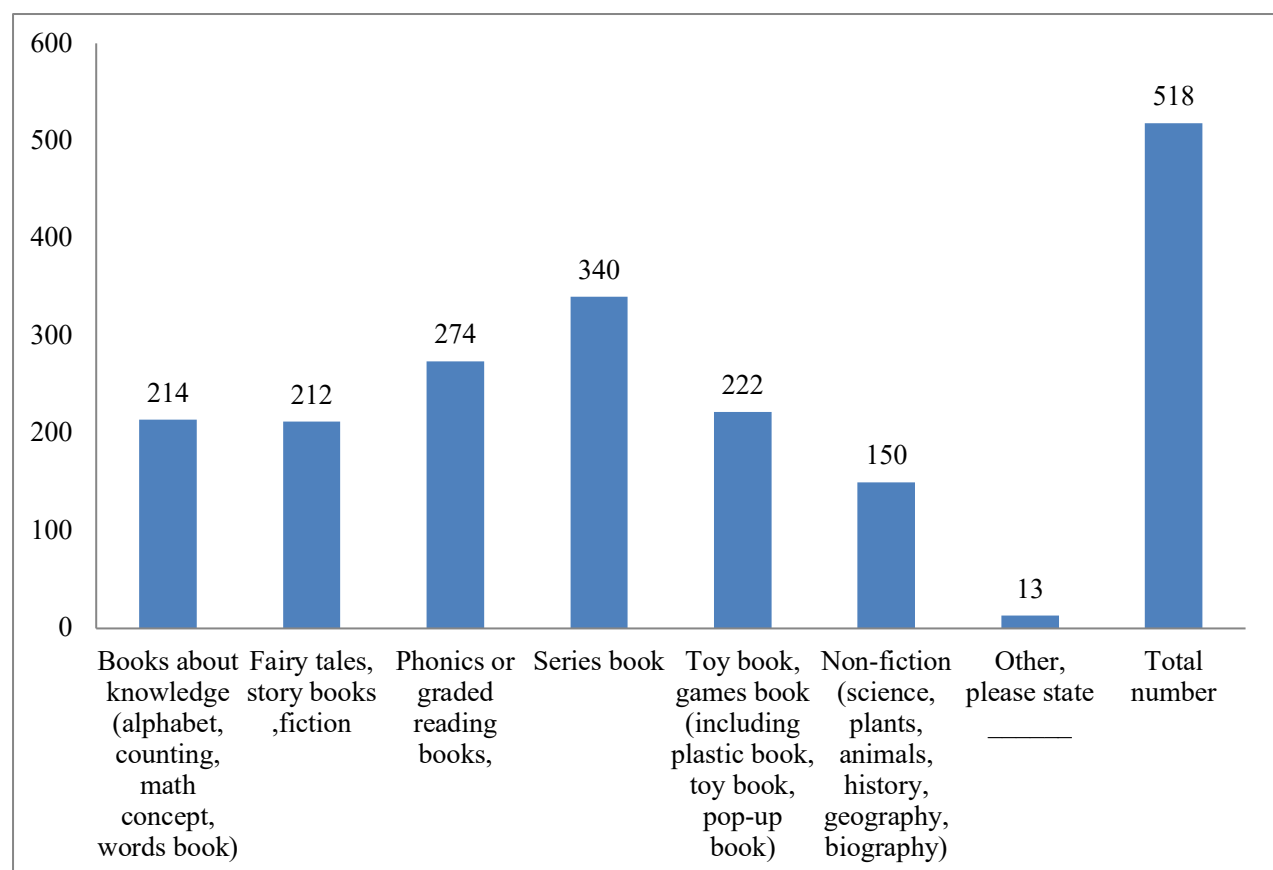
to point to the words. Anna and Weiwei liked to point to the words by themselves. Qiqi and Weiwei's mothers got used to pointing to the English words when reading as well. This pointing action reflected their emphasis on the words rather than pictures during reading and their expectation of mastering phonics skills through reading.

4.4 Parents' other motivations and expectations

More than one parent in the interview mentioned that they could also learn the English language through reading to their children in English. Qiqi's mother said: "children's books are interesting and easy to start, and I don't have any other chance to learn English". Apart from narrow or broad English language expectations, parents also expect their children to gain knowledge (numbers, shapes, science, animals, facts) from picturebooks, or gain both English language and knowledge through the medium of English picturebooks. This confirms what I discussed in chapter 2 that the pedagogical functions of picturebooks are valued by parents. Non-fiction or informational books full of facts are fit for this purpose. In the mock book choosing in the questionnaire, there are 10 books to choose from. More than half of the parents (265/517) chose non-fiction books — for example, the *National Geographic Kids* animal magazine. English picturebooks are generally seen as an expensive investment; however, Xiaotian's mother thinks differently. She said it is the cheapest investment compared with many extra-curriculum costs, "I can use the book as

a music lesson, an art lesson, role-play drama, and learning the English words like in an English lesson. It is multi-functional, and I can use it many times, so it is a wise and cheap investment”. Some parents also valued other aspects of English picturebooks in the questionnaire. They mentioned the English picturebooks’ physical quality, the better aesthetic value of pictures and various interactive gadgets were other reasons why they chose English picturebooks as their shared reading resource.

Figure 2 What kinds of English picturebooks do you buy or borrow for your children?



The pleasure during shared reading that parents and children gained also motivated parents. I frequently experienced laughter, discussion and other

affective moments during foreign language reading among many families.

Questionnaire data also shows children generally have a positive attitude toward English picturebook reading. What I found in the data is that parents like reading with children and find it interesting and enjoyable. At the same time, parents were motivated by the improvement in their children's language ability. Different families have a different priority which plays a bigger part; these two aspects fit the motivation theory — intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

Intrinsically motivated parents engage in the shared reading because of their enhancement experience; extrinsically, they are aiming for language improvement and other benefits.

The wider social factors also have a considerable impact on motivational shared reading behaviour. With regard to extrinsic motivation, influence from the social network was also in this constituent of motivation. Both Xiaohu's and Qiqi's mother mentioned that their first English picturebooks were gifts from friends, which initiated their English picturebook reading routine. Friends or internet group opinions and discussions motivated parents to choose to read English picturebooks. It is not difficult to find evidence from other educational practices. This kind of information sharing among parents is reported to increase anxiety among parents. Several social science studies (Vincent & Ball, 2007; Zhang, 2017) have put forward the issue that the social reproduction of the middle class is no longer secured and the anticipation of future is fraught with anxieties. Middle class parents are afraid of being "left out", so they

attempt to maintain their social status to make sure they can pass it on to the next generation. Now, this anxiety has also spread to parents' motivation for English picturebook reading. Parents' interview data reveals that all of these observation families chose several extracurricular activities and Anna's mother arranges more than 10 extracurricular activities for her and this is also the evidence of this anxiety and competition. Middle class' parenting practice in China corresponds with what Lareau (2011) calls "concerted cultivation", which we discussed in chapter 2.

4.5 What elements influence and reflect parents' motivation?

When we discuss parents' motivation, another important issue that arises is what elements influence or relate to this motivation? I present here how parents' education, English level, family income and other related factors influence various components of motivation and reading behaviours from my data. The motivating factor and relevance of this behaviour suggest great variation according to parents' cultural, linguistic and social context.

4.5.1 Parents who have a higher educational level read to their children in English more often

From survey data, when compared with the parents' English level and the frequency they read in English to their children, generally speaking, the higher the educational level, the more frequently they read to their children in English,

namely they had higher motivation to read to their children in English. As I explained before about the Chinese higher education system, a higher educational level also relates to a higher English level in general. Parents who answered that they read English picturebooks “only a few times” or “never” in the questionnaire mostly had limited English abilities. Almost all parents who took the TOEFL test in this study (the group who have a relatively higher English level in this study) read English picturebooks to their children at least once a week. However, there were exceptions, in my data, 11 “beginner” English level parents and 43 “could only speak simple words” English level parents read to their children every day. We will explore how these families, whose parents have a limited English level, read to their children with technology and other resources in chapter 6.

On the other hand, from my data, the higher the English level parents have, the more likely they read English picturebooks rather than Chinese language picturebooks to their children. In each parent’s English level group, the largest number of parents who answered “I only read from Chinese picturebooks” are from the “English level-simple” group; whereas, the largest number of parents who answered “always English” are from the “English level-proficient” group. For the groups in between, there is no clear tendency.

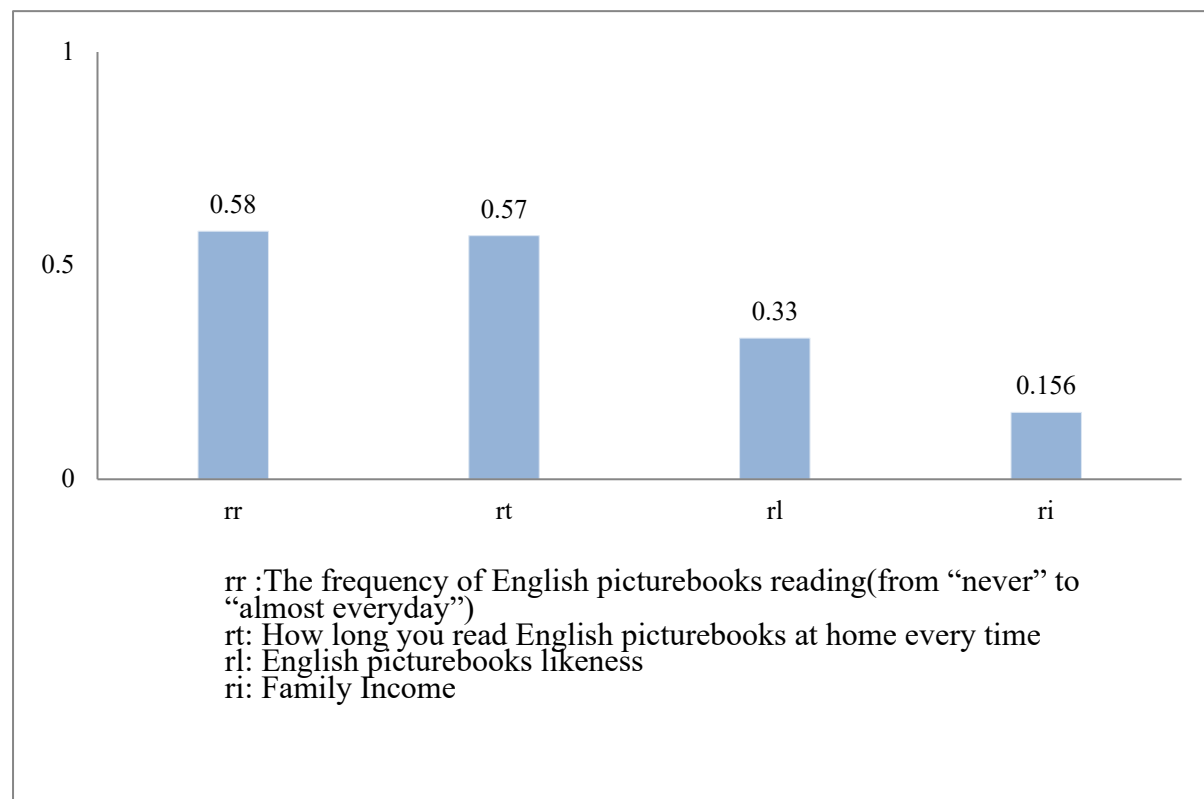
4.5.2 The number of English picturebooks at home is a good predictor for many variables

From several bivariate analyses we can see the relationships between variables. Owning how many English picturebooks is a direct mediator which reflects parents' motivation for English picturebook reading and also was a good predictor for many other variables. From the comparison table below, we can see the Spearman's correlation reveals a strong positive correlation between the number of English picturebooks owned at home and the frequency of English picturebook reading ($r = 0.58, p < .01$). The Pearson correlation coefficient revealed a strong positive correlation between how many English picturebooks were owned and how long parents read English picturebooks to their children ($r = 0.57, p < .01$) each time. Together this means the more books the family owns, the more often parents read to their children, and the more time the parents spend reading to their children each time.

However, the relationship between how many English picturebooks the family own and English picturebook enjoyment scale show a moderate correlation, the Pearson correlation is $r = 0.33, p < .01$. In other words, English picturebooks enjoyment is not strongly determined by how many books they own. Family income (Spearman's $\rho = 0.156, p < .01$) had a smaller explanatory power in terms of the number of English picturebooks owned at home. We can also see evidence from seven observation families. Xiaotian's family reported the lowest family income while owning the most English picturebooks (more

than 500). Anna’s family belonged to the highest income group in this study but owned the second lowest number of English picturebooks (20-100 English picturebooks) among the seven families. This demonstrates what I mentioned in chapter 2 that economic capital could not explain everything, sometimes we also need to consider cultural capital or other elements which may influence a family’s educational practice.

Figure 3 The relationship between the number of English picturebooks at home and other variables



4.5.3 The more frequently parents read to children in English, the more the children like to read in English

From children's perspective, the enjoyment of English picturebook shared reading and its relationship to English language levels are demonstrated from the data. The Pearson correlation coefficient revealed a moderately positive correlation between the reported frequency of English picturebook reading and children's English picturebooks enjoyment ($r = 0.47, p < 0.01$). That means, the more frequently parents read to their children, the more the children like to read English picturebooks. Data also reveals that the more frequently parents read to their children, the higher the English levels the children are likely to have.

Children's English level from "can speak simple conversation" to "independent reader" are mostly from the groups of parents who read "Almost every day" or "2-4 times a week". Most parents think their children like English picturebook reading. Those who think their children do not like English picturebook reading (likeness =1) are mostly from the low English level group. To summarize, the more they shared together, the better the children liked to read English picturebooks; the more they shared together, the better the children's English ability. However, there are a few children, although their English is at a high level, whose parents think they do not like English reading.

4.5.4 Entertaining children is not an important factor when choosing English picturebooks

Other additional factors that may impact motivation emerged from the data.

When choosing an English picturebook, out of 518 parents, as we mentioned earlier, 153 parents prioritized “English level”, 103 parents chose “friends or internet group’s recommendation”, however, none of the parents chose “I think this book is funny” as their first choice (multiple choice, 2 out of 518 parents chose it as a second choice). When choosing English picturebooks, Chinese parents in this study regarded recreational characteristics as the least important reason. Comparing them with several UK studies, we can see clear differences. In one study (Heath, 1982), when parents talk about books, adults take “learning to love books”, “learning what books can do for you”, and “learning to entertain yourself” as important reasons. Another study (Audet et al., 2008) demonstrates that many parents do not agree that the purpose of shared reading is to learn how to read, they take “enjoying books” and “being with the child” as more important factors than “fostering reading” and “promoting development”.

Furthermore, Chinese parents who read English picturebooks to their children seldom mention comic books while in a UK study (Maynard et al., 2008), “cartoon-style funny comics”, “cartoon-style funny” books or “comics related to TV shows” were the most popular kind with all three children’s age groups and for Key Stage 1 children (from early years to Year 2 in the UK, 4-6 years old) as many as 71% of pupils read comics.

4.5.5 The absence among parents of childhood memories of shared reading

Another difference lies in the memories of parents. In this study, parents do not choose an English picturebook because of personal memories of or attachment to it. Most Chinese parents have few picturebook memories from when they were children, few parents chose “because I liked this book when I was a kid”. This was also confirmed by seven parents’ interviews, when I asked about their picturebook memories in their childhood, only Xiaotian’s mother mentioned she read similar picturebooks, the *Little Golden Series*, when she was a primary school student. Other parents said they did not have any memories of being read to.

4.6 Summarize parents’ motivation

To summarize, I gathered evidence to show that Chinese parents are motivated by the expectation that their children will improve their language ability; be competitive in future academic and job markets; and they would gain knowledge from English picturebooks and other benefits such as enjoying the aesthetic quality of the books. Their motivation was also largely aroused by their social group and network. Motivational factors, parents’ expectations and reading behaviour might be influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic social and educational factors; however, entertaining children is not included. A family’s literacy environment (frequency, how many books they own at home.) reflects

parents' motivation towards shared reading and the effort they make in terms of reading.

Chapter 5 Book choices

5.1 Whose favourite book?

This chapter explores how parents choose books for their children and compares parents' and children's favourite English picturebook choices from my data.

Many parents' and children's favourite books are similar, but there are still some differences, between parents and children, or between the parent and the child in the same family. The chapter will also probe into issues behind these differences.

5.1.1 Where do parents get information from?

Questionnaire data shows where parents get their information about English picturebooks from. First of all, the parents' primary source of information is from friends or WeChat groups' recommendations. The questionnaire data shows 70% of parents said they choose an English picturebook because it was recommended by a friend or an Internet group. 72% of parents have joined Internet reading groups and follow at least one WeChat public platform to gain information about books. Anna's mother said she mainly bought books from Ivy Daddy's recommendation and his online shop. Some 55% of parents considered book or magazine recommendation lists. About half the parents did online searches when they looked for an English picturebook, while none of the

parents had memories of being read to English picturebooks when they were kids or chose the answer “I liked this book when I was a kid”.

Data (Maynard et al., 2008) from the UK indicates that when asked who chose their books, the majority of KS1 children chose “someone in a shop”, followed by “I chose it by myself”. However, from my questionnaire data, only 27% of parents would go to a bookshop to buy an English picturebook, most of them purchased English picturebooks online. English picturebook purchasing in China shows greater reliance on parents’ social circles rather than the professionals in bookshops.

During the interview, parents confirmed that they follow some reading expert online to choose books; however, both Xiaoxia’s mother, Anna’s mother and Weiwei’s mother mentioned that they do not blindly listen to them, this was just a starting point. Weiwei’s mother said “If I don’t have anything in mind”, then she would consider the recommendation. That means when Weiwei’s mother has no idea what to buy, then she will take a reading expert’s advice. However, parents claimed that they made their own decisions. They check for publication information and also other people’s reviews. Xiaoxia’s mother gave an example: once she checked a book series recommended by a famous blogger, but those books made her feel that “the books are just like a textbook to teach English and I don’t like this kind of books”, so she decided not to buy them. Xiaoxia’s mother said she usually checks what the publication house is and often looks for award-winning books.

Parents also consult many reading book recommendation lists, which I mentioned before. These books introduce classic or popular English picturebooks with a short introduction for each book, mostly based on the author's personal experiences. People who write these books are mothers, rarely fathers, English teachers, or reading promoters, and an increasing number of people from academia. For example, among the seven families, Xiaoxia's mother said she bought the whole set of 100 picturebooks that an English picturebook promoter from Taiwan- Liao Caixin recommended. Xiaotian's mother also mentioned that she would consult the popular Liao Caixin or Wu Minlan's book lists when she wanted to buy some books.

5.1.2 Books are mainly chosen by parents

In the literature review, I stated that the picturebook market is full of adults involved in the process of creating, marketing, purchasing and choosing books. Regarding who chose English picturebooks for their children and what kinds of books they chose, there was evidence from my questionnaire data. As I mentioned earlier, instead of borrowing an English picturebook from a library, most of the Chinese parents in this study purchased books through an online bookshop. That means parents were the primary final decision maker about what books to purchase.

In the UK, school and public libraries were the dominant sources of books that gave British children more opportunity to choose a book by

themselves since there was no additional cost. In China, it is a financial decision which parents felt they could not hand over to children.

Overwhelmingly, children in the UK said they chose books mainly by themselves and mothers and other adult females were important figures who decided which books to purchase (Maynard et al., 2008). However, in the same study, although mothers and other family members play a vital role, children reported that they prefer to read the book they chose themselves.

In my study, when parents and children chose a book to read from a bookshelf, about half of the parents (247/516) considered children's interests but picked the books by parents. Some 18% of parents reported that they would let their children choose. Some 12% of parents directly chose what they thought would be appropriate books for their children without asking children's opinions. As already mentioned in the literature review in chapter 2 relating to didacticism, I would like to argue in the discussion section that although some parents let children choose and did consider children's interests, book choice and interaction is still a didactic process.

5.1.3 Parents' preferences

Questionnaire data reveals that parents (66%) like to buy series of books in my study. Series of books are a group of similar books with familiar characters. Frequently mentioned are the *Peppa Pig* series, the *Thomas the Tank Engine series* and the *Maisy* series. Once children are familiar with a character, they

tend to ask for more; parents feel they can save time on book searching by buying many series of books for their children. A survey conducted by NCRCL (Maynard et al., 2008) found a similar level of popularity of series of books. It showed that in each age group, the majority of children said that the reason they chose these books was because they were part of a series at least “sometimes”. It shows that series of books were popular with children of all ages, and the popularity increased as these respondents got older (Maynard et al., 2008). In China’s English picturebook market, I observed as a marketing strategy, that online bookshops always put the advertisement of series of books in the most prominent place on the website to tempt parents to buy the whole series and spend more. Another reason was choosing a series of books saves time spent on book searching. It was convenient for Chinese parents who are not as familiar with English picturebooks as native speakers are.

The second and third popular options were phonics or graded reading books (53% parents), toy or pop-up books (43%) and early concept books (the alphabet, counting, mathematical concepts, word books) (40%). I will reveal the titles of these books in the favourite books lists later. I found Anna and Weiwei’s family had some phonics picturebooks on their bookshelves. Yueyue’s mother said she had some phonics books in her private library, and some older children’s parents asked for this type of book.

Parents, in the interviews, also stated that they like to choose factual, information books to enrich their children’s vision and to help them to gain

encyclopedic knowledge. Anna's mother said that, when choosing what to buy, she considered the themes and topics first, to see if these were some topics missing at home and, if so, she would then buy them to expand her collection. She hoped Anna could gain knowledge from different areas. Xiaoxia's mother said she liked to purchase such books from the publisher, Scholastic. Xiaoxia's mother and Weiwei's mother emphasised that they had more storybooks than informational books, and Weiwei's mother added that storybooks already include many facts and information such as animals, and sea creatures. Xiaoxia, Anna, Weiwei and Yueyue's families all have some books about numbers, the alphabets, shapes and colours.

The parents of the interviewed families value the English picturebooks' aesthetic and physical appearance. They can recognise the painting style of the pictures and have their own artistic preferences and appreciate the richness of the illustrations. Xiaoxia's mother said, "Oil painting, watercolour, collage and Chinese brush drawing are all visual stimulation to children, I think it is flourishing in the children's minds and will sprout out someday". Xiaoxia's mother pays close attention to the visual message. She mentioned that in the book *Sophie gets Angry*, the red colour represented "angry". She also liked the exaggerated way of representing letters of the alphabet, for example, "F is for flower" and the full page is the flower. She said everyone is different, and some people learn from visual messages as visual learners, which showed her knowledge about VARK (Visual/Auditory/Read or Write/Kinesthetic) learning

styles (Fleming & Mills, 1992) and she respected these differences. Both Xiaotian's mother and Yueyue's mother mentioned that they liked beautiful pictures and pictures that make people feel warm. Xiaotian's mother said she liked the "watercolour" feel. Weiwei's mother said that she liked "beautiful" books as well and wanted Weiwei to be edified by beautiful pictures. It seems parents have a strong sense of the importance of an aesthetic education.

Many parents emphasised that the books they choose for their children must be connected to children's lives and fit the children's cognitive and linguistic levels. Qiqi's mother firstly checked whether the English picturebook had many words. She would not choose an English picturebook with many words in it. Xiaohu's mother mentioned that they read English picturebooks when Xiaohu was already familiar with the Chinese versions. She said it would be an easy start since Xiaohu already knew the story. Yueyue's mother's opinion was a little different. She thought the cognitive level was more important than the language level. She said if children understand much of the story, even if the language was challenging, parents could still read with their children, it all depended on finding something children would have an interest in. Some parents liked interactive picturebooks and rhyming books particularly. Yueyue's mother gave several titles as an example of this type, such as *I am the Music Man*, *Brown Bear, Brown Bear*, *What do You See* and *Five Little Monkeys*. She said these are books her daughter can play with. She also mentioned that Yueyue liked the English rhyming words that would be lost in

translation; which was the reason she chose English picturebooks rather than translations.

Several parents choose books because of their children's "needs" and developmental stage. For example, Anna's mother bought books which encouraged children to brush their teeth carefully, and Weiwei's mother and Qiqi's mother said they would look for such books as well; Yueyue's mother had such books about brushing teeth, potty training, going to sleep and getting dressed and she thought these books could set good examples for children. Xiaohu's mother emphasised that these books can enable children to learn common sense and to understand some social rules. Interestingly, when talking about the book, *No David*, Xiaohu's mother said it would make children learn the rules and realise what "bad" behaviours were; however, Xiaoxia's mother said the opposite — she worried that this book would encourage children to copy the "bad" behaviours. Nevertheless, they all admitted that picturebooks had an influence on children and considered the possible impacts carefully.

Some parents said they like affective stories and stories that made them think about the meaning of life. Qiqi's mother thought it might be too profound for children. She said she once shared a book about death with Qiqi which moved her, but Qiqi had no discernible response to it. Xiaohu's mother said that she also liked heart-warming stories. Parents said they liked picturebooks that educated them on how to be a good parent. Xiaoxia's mother mentioned two books, one is *Sophie Gets Angry* and said that she understood children's

emotions, and every child needs to express themselves. *Mr. Grumpy's Outing* impressed on her how to treat children.

Finally, parents frequently mentioned their favourite author. Qiqi's mother said Eric Carle while Xiaotian's mother said John Birmingham and David Shannon were her favourite authors. Some parents search for books by a specific author.

Compared with the previous literature about parents' preferences in terms of books which I summarised in chapter 2, my study confirms some results from previous literature. For example, from my study, I can see parents like educational books, award-winning books, informational books, and books which reflect children's lives. However, we can see more new findings from my study, such as Chinese parents like series books, phonics books, graded level books and books that suit children's "needs". These findings will add more dimensions to understand parents' and children's book choices. Furthermore, looking back at the data about parents' reading motivation from chapter 4, the parents' book choices I summarised here, again confirmed parents' motivation. For example, phonics and graded level books reflected their motivation related to English learning. On the other hand, parents liked to choose books which suited their children's developmental period, facts and informational books confirmed that parents like their children to gain knowledge from books.

5.1.4 Children's preferences in terms of book choices

There is some overlap between children's and parents' book choices, although the reason was slightly different from my study. Firstly, children judge books primarily by the covers and pictures rather than the words and parents consider the aesthetic value of picturebooks. Similar to previous literature that I mentioned in chapter 2, almost all of the parents in the interviews confirmed that their children liked vibrant and colourful pictures. Xiaoxia's mother gave an opposite example of Dr. Seuss's books, and she said Xiaoxia thought the pictures were too simple so she did not like that book.

Secondly, both children and parents liked interactive books and repeating rhymes that they could have fun with. Yueyue was the youngest child among the observation families, and Yueyue's mother particularly loved this kind of book. She mentioned Yueyue liked the books of *Pat the Bunny*, *Peek a Book* which was very interactive. Xiaotian's mother said Xiaotian treated English picturebooks as toys, Xiaotian liked the pop-up books and liked to play with them. Xiaoxia's mother mentioned Xiaoxia liked *Peppa Goes Swimming* and *The Napping House* because these were "predictable" and could bring children a "sense of security". Children also liked some activity books, for example, Xiaoxia and Weiwei liked maze books, and the *I Spy* game book, while their parents did not seem to count these as "books".

Thirdly, some children liked to play with early concept books (numbers, the alphabet, shapes, etc.). Xiaotian's mother said Xiaotian liked to count the

numbers in English picturebooks and he was not “reading” but “counting”. Yueyue’s mother said some older children in her library liked this kind of book as it was like “playing” games. However, although parents considered it important to gain knowledge from books, children seldom think this way. Yueyue’s mother thought parents’ encouragement was important so that children could gain a sense of achievement.

Fourthly, similar to parents’ preference of thinking about children’s cognitive and linguistic level, from the parents’ interviews, it seems children only liked the books they could understand to some extent so that they did not feel frustrated. Anna’s mother said if she read too many words in an English picturebook, Anna would quickly turn the pages. Qiqi’s mother said Qiqi showed a bored face if one English picturebook was beyond her language level. Weiwei’s mother added Chinese explanations when they read the *Peppa Pig* book together, otherwise “she would not listen to” it.

Children in the interviewed families also showed some differences from their parents’ preferences as I mentioned previously. For example, parents in this study liked to buy series of books, however, Xiaotian’s mother said Xiaotian usually only liked one or two of them; no children among the interviewed families showed an interest in phonics and graded levels books; developmental needs were not considered by the children; according to the parents’ interviews, children found it hard to express which book moved them.

Few children mentioned their favourite author in our study, but parents in the interviews did mention their favourite author of English picturebooks.

On the other hand, children had other book preferences that were seldom mentioned by parents in my study. Firstly, children liked to read books about popular characters, either cute, smart, heroic or funny, mostly very gender oriented ones — the books they perceive to represent their own gender, for example *Peppa Pig*, *Paw Patrol*, *Frozen*, and *Maisy* books. Parents did not mention these. If they did, they chose these because the “children like them”. Children sometimes were obsessed with a particular theme in books. Xiaoxia is fascinated by rabbits, and Xiaohu was interested in any train books, Anna bought many books about fairies and princesses, and Xiaotian liked bugs, monsters or hero books. This confirmed what I mentioned in the literature review in Chapter 2, indicating that many children choose books because they have seen the book on TV or video; this also suggests that TV and film adaptations might encourage reading. Data from this study confirmed this preference for children’s book choices. Secondly, from my data, children liked adventure stories, humorous stories and animal stories which is also consistent with previous literature that I summarised in chapter 2. Anna liked books that made her laugh; Xiaotian liked the exciting stories. If it were a “boring and ordinary” story, he would not read it. Thirdly, children liked to read a book again if they liked it or would refuse to read a book if they did not like it. Xiaotian’s mother said Xiaotian refused to read many books at home which he

had only read once, while other books, Xiaotian read repeatedly. Because there were many new books Xiaotian had only read once or had not read yet, her mother “wasted a lot of money”.

5.2 Comparing parents’ and children’s favourite book titles

Parents’ familiarity of book titles and the authors of storybooks is an indicator of children’s exposure to books (Zhang & Koda, 2011). In this study, parents were asked to write down their favourite English picturebooks, what they think their children’s favourite books are and which books they have shared recently. Table 4 gives the top 20 parents’ and children’s favourite books, and provides full details (the last three rows have the same counts, so I put 21 titles for each category).

Table 4 Top 20 Favourite English Picturebooks Titles

	Parents' favourite books	How many parents mentioned it	Children's favourite books	How many parents mentioned it	The books they have recently shared	How many parents mentioned it
1	<i>Peppa Pig</i>	112	<i>Peppa Pig</i>	119	<i>Peppa Pig</i>	99
2	<i>Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See</i>	60	<i>Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See</i>	66	<i>Oxford Reading Tree series</i>	53
3	<i>Oxford Reading Tree series</i>	45	<i>Oxford Reading Tree series</i>	33	<i>Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See</i>	29
4	<i>Dear Zoo</i>	40	<i>The Very Hungry Caterpillar</i>	28	<i>Maisy series</i>	25
5	<i>The Very Hungry Caterpillar</i>	38	<i>Dear Zoo</i>	27	<i>No, David</i>	24
6	<i>No, David</i>	28	<i>No, David</i>	23	<i>Dear Zoo</i>	23
7	<i>Five Little Monkeys</i>	24	<i>Elephant and Piggie series</i>	18	<i>Five Little Monkeys</i>	17
8	<i>I Can Read series</i>	23	<i>Maisy series</i>	18	<i>The Very Hungry Caterpillar</i>	16
9	<i>Guess How Much I Love You</i>	19	<i>Thomas the Tank Engine series</i>	17	<i>Pearson Leveled Reading</i>	14
10	<i>Goodnight Moon</i>	17	<i>Five Little Monkeys</i>	16	<i>From Head to Toe</i>	11
11	<i>Elephant and Piggie series</i>	16	<i>Spot series</i>	14	<i>Thomas the Tank Engine series</i>	11
12	<i>Magic School Bus</i>	15	<i>I Am a Bunny</i>	10	<i>Elephant and Piggie series</i>	11
13	<i>Maisy series</i>	14	<i>The wheels on the bus</i>	10	<i>I Can Read series</i>	10
14	<i>Spot series</i>	13	<i>I Can Read series</i>	10	<i>Magic School Bus</i>	10
15	<i>Mother Goose</i>	12	<i>Honey English</i>	6	<i>Heinemann Reading series</i>	10
16	<i>Pearson Leveled Reading</i>	11	<i>Pat the Bunny</i>	5	<i>Goodnight, Moon</i>	9
17	<i>Pete the Cat</i>	11	<i>Go away, Mr. Wolf</i>	5	<i>I Am a Bunny</i>	8
18	<i>Thomas the Tank Engine series</i>	10	<i>Litter Critter series</i>	4	<i>My Mum</i>	8
19	<i>I Am a Bunny</i>	9	<i>Snow White</i>	3	<i>Mother Goose</i>	8
20	<i>Little Critter series</i>	9	<i>Three Little Pigs</i>	3	<i>Spot series</i>	7
21	<i>My Dad</i>	9	<i>Dora the Explorer</i>	3	<i>The Berenstain Bears</i>	6

5.2.1 Books welcomed by parents and children

There are some overlapping titles in all three categories, several of the same books tended to come up several times for all three categories. The *Peppa Pig* series overwhelmingly occupied the top position for all categories. By many picturebook scholars' standards, the *Peppa Pig* series are commercial products, which does not have the aesthetic quality that good picturebooks have. This corresponds to what was mentioned earlier that parents prefer series of books and children like cute, funny characters. Nevertheless, the character read most by Chinese families is *Peppa Pig*. Weiwei's mother read several *Peppa Pig* picturebooks to her during the observation sessions. When I asked the reason, the parents mentioned "My kid likes this character" and "I think it is not too difficult". The *Peppa Pig* series has the characteristics that children like and parents also feel confident to read them.

Children seem to like child-like animal characters (Nodelman, Hamer, & Reimer, 2017). Children like characters who they want to be like, either smart or brave, to face and overcome challenges, and who are similar to them. Nodelman (Nodelman, Hamer, & Reimer, 2017) observes that these kinds of books are the books that people felt most comfortable with. He discovers that a large proportion of "picture books on the best-seller lists provided by newspaper, book-trade organs, and online booksellers in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada were about animals that talked and acted like human children" (p.6). Nodelman links it with "avoiding the depiction of the races of

completely human children” (Nodelman, Hamer, & Reimer, 2017:7). Animal characters are more “universal” than children’s characters who unavoidably have ethnic features in the way they are drawn and written. These anthropomorphic characters “translate” more readily than pictures of children from other countries where people look different and this overcomes any cultural differences. I agree with this because children think child-like animals are like themselves, and so it is natural to put themselves into the characters’ position and arouse the children’s empathy. The depiction in *Peppa Pig* is the story children are familiar with, for example, going to nursery school and playing hide and seek. Another plausible reason is that the *Peppa Pig* books are stories told from a child’s perspective and successfully represent children’s feelings and thoughts. For example, in one book, the animal children like to jump in muddy puddles or get excited when Peppa could get a plaster.

From the list, *Dear Zoo*, *Five Little Monkeys*, the *Elephant and Piggie* series, the *Maisy* series and *I Am a Bunny* book all belong to this type which has child-like animal characters. As I mentioned before, *Peppa Pig* is popular also because it is accessible on TV. If these stories also appear on TV or the Internet, parents can read these books to extend their children’s book-related experiences. From the parents’ interviews, it seems that children are interested in characters they have already established a relationship with; they like characters that are shown across various media.

The Very Hungry Caterpillar also has children's characteristics — the caterpillar is addicted to eating and is playful. *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See* is another top-tier book mentioned by parents on the list. Similarly, Mourão's study (2015) found the most popular picturebooks used in primary foreign language classes were *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See*. This is not by chance. Firstly, these titles correspond with the theme or vocabulary of early English programmes, as Mourão (2017) summarises, for example, they include colours, animals, days of the week, food and life cycles. Secondly, these titles contain rhyming narrative, which is easy for children to chant to. For example, *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed* is a rhyming, anthropomorphic narrative. Thirdly, these books have repetitive and predictable texts. The repeated rhymes are easy to follow even for English as a second language children, which enables children to predict and begin to join in the reading (Trelease, 2006). In classroom setting, Mourão (2016) summarises that predictability and repetition in picturebook texts is the reason why language teachers select them as a classroom resource. Some parents may choose to repeatedly read a narrow range of books to scaffold children's language development in that "repetition" is essential for language learning. The *Five Little Monkeys* series also has repetitive text patterns, which is welcomed by both parents and children. These reasons why these titles were selected as classroom and family shared reading resources are similar.

The *Oxford Reading Tree* is another series welcomed by parents and children, and it seems to be read frequently at home. I analysed why parents like to read graded level books previously, data from this list and observation confirms parents' motivation. One of our observation families — Weiwei's family (4 years and 10 month old girl, who reads traditional Chinese classics) — read more than five books from the *Oxford Reading Tree* series at one shared book reading session. Although the books in this series are graded level books which are aimed at teaching phonics and reading skills, it has amusing plots with main characters who have magic power. It is an excellent example of books which have a good balance of entertainment and educational purpose.

The list also shows that children like unique designs like pop-up books and flip-flap books. *Where's Spot* and other Spot stories are books with a cumulative plot text pattern and a flip-flap design. This corresponds to parents' answers in the questionnaire.

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, earlier studies show that many native English speaking children love to read comics, while this is not the choice for Chinese parents. I found few comic titles in my data. It confirms that parents did not show any interest in entertaining children through books and children did not have the freedom to choose those comics that may have interested them.

When compared with the most popular English picturebooks from English speaking countries, we can see the differences. Julia Donaldson's books,

which are popular in any children's bookshop in the UK, did not appear on this list. The reason is probably the language barrier — as the vocabulary use and the rhymes are difficult for a second language learner to understand. I take Montag and his colleagues' study (2015) from the United States as another reference. He analysed the corpora of children's picturebooks and chose the 100 most popular ones. These titles are from librarians' recommendations, the bestseller books on Amazon, and the circulation statistics from the Infant and Preschool sections (0 to 60 months) of the Monroe County Public Library. When I compare this list and the list in this study, I can find that about half of the books on my list also appear on Montag's list. These are:

1. *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin Jr.
2. *Dear Zoo* by Rod Campbell
3. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle
4. *No, David!* By David Shannon
5. *Guess How Much I Love You* by Sam Mcbratney
6. *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown
7. *Elephant and Piggie* by Mo Willems
8. *Pete the Cat* by James Dean
9. The *Maisy* series by Lucy Cousins

Montag's list is an American- based list; it has many of the American author Dr. Seuss's books on it while my list does not. My list also has many UK-based authors, for example, Antony Browne's books and *Thomas the Tank*

Engine series, while Montag's list does not. Nevertheless, this comparison shows children's reading materials are highly globalized.

5.2.2 The different book choices for parents and children

There are some differences between these three categories. Three graded level series of books (the *Oxford Reading Tree* series, the *I Can Read* series and *Pearson Levelled Reading*) are mentioned by parents' as their favourite book titles, while children only mentioned one — the *Oxford Reading Tree*. This shows that parents value picturebooks' educational potential more than children do, which also confirms parents' motivation for their children to gain language abilities through English picturebook reading that I discussed in chapter 4.

From this list, we can also find that parents tend to choose picturebooks which have a limited number of English words on each page and with simple word-image relationships. Parents with a relatively low English ability may find engaging with the linguistically rich picturebooks challenging. Children seem to have no sense of the difficulty of the language and the length of a book. From observation, I found that mother of Weiwei (4 years and 10 month old girl, who read traditional Chinese classics) and mother of Xiaohu (5 years and 11 month old boy, who goes to English language school twice a week) refused to read two books, for the same reason — “this is too long” or “this is too difficult.” When I asked them what the obstacles were of reading English picturebooks,

the parents answered that their child stopped reading when he or she found “It is difficult to understand because of the language”.

As I discussed previously, children’s book choice is controlled by parents to some extent. Qiqi’s mother said she liked all the books at home because she bought them. However, from the parents’ interviews, many parents said their preferences for books were influenced by their children, so the influences were mutual. Xiaoxia’s mother analysed the reason, “because if I like a book, I will read it with passion, so Xiaoxia will like it as well”. Xiaotian’s mother said she liked beautiful picturebooks while Xiaotian liked books about “poo” or “monsters” and she has to read such books with Xiaotian.

5.3 Summary about parents’ and children’s book choices

To summarise, I have made many comparisons in this section between parents and children’s book choices; previous studies and my data; booklist from my data and lists from other previous studies. It further demonstrates that parents’ motivation in chapter 4 is reflected in their book choices in this chapter. After understanding these similarities and differences, I will further argue in chapter 7 that there are no “right” books or “right” choices for English shared reading.

Chapter 6 Findings — Interaction patterns and children’s responses

In this chapter, I present how parents and children shared English picturebooks and explore their interactive behaviour patterns. I will also look into children’s responses to these reading patterns and compare the English language shared reading with their Chinese shared reading interaction. The data is mainly based on observations of seven families, and some supporting evidence is from parents’ interviews and questionnaires.

6.1 General parent-child interaction features

6.1.1 Communicate in mixed languages

Firstly, I would like to give some general data about English picturebook shared reading from the quantitative data. It shows what the parents’ primary communication language is, why they were interrupted or distracted during reading, and who decides which book to read.

From the data of 565 parents, variances in shared reading tend to have been more significant in the foreign language than in their first language shared reading possibly because of the higher variations of English language environment at home and parents’ varying English levels. When these parents read an English picturebook to their children in this study, the questionnaire

data shows that 72% of families read English with Chinese explanations while 12% of parents only read in English. Most children (63%) responded to their parents in Chinese and English; 20% of children only responded in Chinese, the remaining children responded in English. There is an overlap between my study and Brickman's study (2003) on Spanish families' English picturebook shared reading. In Brickman's study, the parents also read in English and mostly gave explanations in their mother tongue-Spanish. In my study, children who responded only in Chinese or gave no response were from the "English level beginner" group or the "can only say a few words" group, in other words, those children who spoke limited English. Children who had a limited English ability tended to only respond in Chinese even while reading English picturebooks. This data from the survey was also confirmed in my observations. Among observation families, most parents tended to read the picturebooks in English and ask questions and give explanations in Chinese. From observations of the seven families, I found that only Xiaoxia's (2 year 9-month-old girl) family read English picturebooks almost all in English, Xiaotian's (4 years 4 month old boy) and Anna's (4 years 2 month old girl) families responded to English picturebooks mostly in English. Qiqi (4 years 1 month old girl), Weiwei (4 years 10 month old girl), and Xiaohu (5 years 11 month old boy) who have a lower English speaking level (reported by their parents in the questionnaire) tended to respond more in Chinese. Yueyue (18 months), who was just starting to talk, responded using both Chinese and English words.

6.1.2 Parents initiate more interaction questions

Overall, in all the observational reading sessions, parents initiated more questions and communication than the children. Parents reported that when they shared a book with their children, they were most likely to ask children to point to characters, places and objects (47%); other parents encouraged children to imitate actions or words (41%); 30% of parents liked to ask children if they understood or not by asking “Wh-” (Why? Who? When? How?) questions. There were several parents (24%) who said they did not ask any questions, only read the English picturebooks to their children and fewer parents (12%) would ask their children for a Chinese explanation. There are variations of interaction questions for different families, I will present the seven families with their different interaction focus separately and how they asked different types of questions, later in this chapter.

6.1.3 Reading was interrupted because of language barrier

Apart from parental reasons, from the questionnaire data it can be seen that during English picturebook reading, the children stopped or were distracted because of these reasons: finding details in the book (37%); asking parents the Chinese meaning of a word or sentence (28%); pointing out something related to their own life or showing no interest in a book; or children finding it challenging to understand because of the language and saying they would like to

read it in Chinese. However, according to parents, for the lower English level group (beginning level to simple conversation level), English picturebook reading was more likely to have been interrupted by language problems: the most common reasons were “My children find it difficult to understand because of the language” and “Children ask me the Chinese meaning of a word or sentence”. Therefore, the language barrier is the main reason that parent-child shared reading was interrupted. Except for the general data above, we will see the details and more variations of interaction patterns when we look into the interaction processes of the seven families.

6.1.4 Most parents listen to children about book choices

Parents may have more power when deciding which book to buy but have less control over which books to read at home. The selection of which book to read is an important process to observe. I asked “Who chose the picturebooks each time” in the questionnaire. The results show 48% of families said parents and children decided together; 32% of families reported that, on the whole, it was the parents who chose the books to read and another 19% of families stated that the children chose the books to read each time. During the observation, I found a similar situation — most of the parents discussed the book choice with the children. Xiaotian’s mother said Xiaotian refused to read the books she chose for him, so she let him pick out the books.

6.1.5 Categorisation of the question types

Finally, in this part, to better understand the interaction patterns in the following section, I present the categories of question types here with a full list and give some examples from my data. I consulted Anderson and his colleagues' study (2012) about question types during shared reading but added new categories according to my observation. The standard of the cognitive level is to see the distance from the information that books can directly provide. I also consulted Ard and Beverly's (2004) standards relating to questions in shared reading. If children can find the answer directly from books or by repeated reading, I categorise this as "low" cognitive level, for example, confirmation literacy and management questions are classified as low cognitive demand questions; clarification or prediction, comprehension, association and aesthetic questions were classified as high cognitive demand questions. For the high cognitive level, I describe these questions as "complicated" or "cognitively demanding" questions in the following part.

Table 5 Question Types

Question type	Examples from my study	Cognitive demanding level
Confirmation (ask for agreement or disagreement, solicit Yes/No answers, mostly Yes)	“He doesn’t like rain, does he?” “They are looking out [of the window], aren’t they?”	Low
Literacy (about decoding, phonics skill or the meaning in another language)	“Can you read this part? Which words?” “What is the third one? Pack, right? What is the fourth one?”	Low
Management (draw attention, turn the page, discipline, negotiate book choice)	Will you tell me which book we’re going to read first? Can you sit up?	Low
“Wh” questions (what, where, when, who, why, about knowledge and facts)	“See who is inside this box?” George is sad. Why?	Medium
Completion, reasoning, and explanation (ask to complete the story or elaboration), ask to mimic the action	“We are going to catch a-” “The Mama called the doctor, the doctor said-” Can you shake your head?	Medium
Clarification or Prediction (information about the characters and events, guess the plot or ending)	What is she looking at? Do you think George is smart now?	High
Comprehension (how, and other)	What does “disappointed” mean?	High
Association (connect to personal experience or other books)	What should you do if you think someone is great? What makes you angry?	High
Aesthetic (attitude, feelings about book)	What do you think of this book?	High

6.2 Five foreign language shared reading interaction patterns

Data from my study again demonstrated the diversity in shared reading across families. The general features above provide us with the bigger picture of the English picturebook shared reading scenes in Chinese families. In previous

studies (Shapiro, Anderson, & Anderson, 1997; Anderson et al., 2012) about family shared reading, there was considerable diversity across the parent-child dyads even within relatively homogeneous samples. This diversity has also been demonstrated in this study. After categorising the coding from qualitative data (see appendix 3 for an example of the coding process), five foreign language shared reading foci emerged from the data:

1. Literal focus: Parents and children are engaged in exact translation;
2. Literacy focus: Parents and children are engaged in developing reading skills;
3. Literary focus: Parents and children are engaged in reading pleasure;
4. Exploratory focus: Parents and children are engaged in knowledge and discovery;
5. Digital focus: Parents and children are engaged in interaction with technology.

I follow the sequence of children's engagement levels (Literal focus is least engaged and Exploratory focus is most engaged) during shared reading based on what I observed. It is also the sequence of moving from close reading or reading skills to an emotionally responsive reading. For each focus, I will firstly (1) explain the general features of each interaction focus; (2) point out what kinds of books parents and children usually choose; (3) what language parents and children speak during the reading process; (4) how they negotiate the book choices; (5) point out their physical proximity; (6) what questions they

ask during shared reading and give examples to support these key features and summarise at the end. To evaluate the children's responses and enjoyment of books, I judged from their general engagement, cooperation and book interest from my observation.

6.2.1 Literal focus: Parents and children are engaged in exact translation (Xiaohu's and Weiwei's families)

The Literal focus of English picturebook shared reading among Chinese families means parents and children are engaged in exact translation and meaning confirmation. When a parent reads an English picturebook, this parent becomes accustomed to translating the words or sentences into the mother tongue immediately. Parents generally translate it themselves and sometimes they ask the children to translate. Just like eating, sitting or playing, ways of talking about books are as much a part of learned behaviour. Children internalise what is learned from these reading experiences. Sometimes children learn the habit of translating every sentence or word after their parents read it. Children have a keen sense that English shared reading is to translate and confirm the meaning. The Literal focus is to confirm the meaning of the words in their mother tongue. By making sure children understand the meaning of English picturebooks, in the interview, as Weiwei's mother reported, parents feel that their reading is "effective and useful".

Families who follow this pattern like to choose a large number of graded

level books. When they select trade picturebooks like *No David*, or the *Elephant and Piggie* series, they use these for the purpose-translation and confirming the meaning. However, what picturebook scholars value — the counterpoint, irony, words and interplay are ignored in this reading pattern. For example, when Xiaohu's father shared the book *No David* and the *Elephant and Piggie* book, they continuously focused on translating every sentence and sometimes he asked Xiaohu (5 years 11 month old boy) to translate it. Parents in these families tended to speak little English and more Chinese during reading, so children receive more Chinese input. Generally, parents tend to restrict book-related talking while concentrating on the print word in the books. In Xiaohu's and Weiwei's (4 years 10 month old girls) families, their parents or teachers picked up the picturebooks for them. In one reading session, Xiaohu's teacher gave him homework to read several books, focusing on phonics; in another session, Xiaohu's father picked up the books for him, which made the negotiation simpler. Physically, parents and children kept a certain distance to keep a basic level of discipline. Parents tended to ask for confirmation, management questions and literacy questions. Children showed boredom and reluctance to read at most times. Here I will further present the details and obvious features of this interaction focus.

6.2.1.1 Translating after every page

For this interaction pattern, parents liked to translate themselves or asked the children to translate sometimes. Children gained the habit of translating and

sometimes translated the book by themselves without waiting for their parents' request. Xiaohu went to an English language school twice a week and his father was a high school teacher, and their shared reading was very typical of this pattern.

For all the dialogues in this study, the transcription is to be read as follows: words in bold signal my translation into English of dialogue held in Chinese by the participants. Words in regular font are a transcription of the English used by the participants in the original discussion. Words between inverted commas are quotations from picturebooks. Words in brackets signal my comments or descriptions of non-verbal information. This marking system is consistent all through the coding data. Here is a typical reading dialogue of the reading of one of the *Elephant and Piggie* books:

Father — “Ready to play outside? Yes they are. We are going to do everything today. We are going to run.” **What does “run” mean?**

Xiaohu — **I don't know.** (Dad does the action of running.) **Run.**

Father — “We are going to skip.” **Skip.** “We are going to jump.” **Jump.**
“Nothing can stop us.” **Nothing can stop us.**

As we can see from the dialogue, after Xiaohu's father read the sentence from the book, he tried to translate it into Chinese, sometimes he translated the whole sentence and sometimes only the keywords. We can also see this pattern from another example:

Father — “Today we are flying.” **Today we are flying.** “No, you are not

flying.”

Xiaohu — **You are not flying.**

We can see that after his father read “Today we are flying”, he translated it immediately. Then his father continued to read “No, you are not flying.”

Parents like to ask the child to translate the words or sentence into their mother tongue. Xiaohu was asked to translate or say the Chinese words. For example, his father read “But one little monkey spoiled it,” and asked, “**But one little monkey, did what?**” Xiaohu’s father was expecting Xiaohu to say the Chinese meaning or the word “spoil”. Xiaohu’s father sometimes asked the Chinese meaning more directly. He asked “But my birthday is tomorrow. **What is tomorrow? What is run?**”

Weiwei’s mother did a similar thing. She asked straightforward questions, such as “**How do you say that in Chinese?**” or “**What do you think it means? Look and guess what it is.**” or “**Do you know the meaning of this?**” The parents seemed to expect the children to know the Chinese meaning of each word. Those translations are mostly literal. Some words are not easy to translate; it also requires the children’s Chinese ability to make verbalisations. If it is difficult, parents continue to give children lots of examples or other words with similar meanings to inspire the children. Parents seemed to know where the balance was, they knew their children’s ability and did not mean to frustrate them. Sometimes I felt some words were quite tricky, but in most situations, the children could complete the task. The reason why parents positively engage in

translation activities is probably from the parents' own experience when they were at school. In the English class they were asked to do many of these tasks as an important foreign language evaluation standard.

Consequently, children gained the habit of translating straightaway after reading. When Anna (4 years 2 month old girl) read a sentence from an English picturebook, she said: "**That means in the summer, I like to lay in the sun and watch**" in Chinese. She sometimes began with "**that means**" and said the Chinese translation by herself. Xiaohu understood his father's expectation and translated the word into Chinese. He seemed familiar with this pattern and sometimes translated it by himself before his father asked him to do so. When he correctly translated, he gained a sense of achievement and frequently received praise from his parent. Children tended to translate the words or sentences into Chinese by themselves proudly after the parents' English reading. After his father's reading, Xiaohu said: "**That means letting him be quiet.**" After hearing the English word "run", Xiaohu responded in Chinese "**run**". This translation sometimes was bidirectional. After Weiwei's mother said the Chinese word or sentence like "**Friday, Dad**", "**it is a monster**", Weiwei translated it into English immediately without hesitation.

Not every child liked their parents to translate. Weiwei liked to read without translation. When her mother started to explain the words in Chinese, Weiwei said: "**No, just read it.**" So children may not always want parents to translate. Instead, Weiwei seemed to want to enjoy the flow of the words and

the story, but her mother became used to translating it.

6.2.1.2 Parents like to point to the word and ask children to read

For this shared reading pattern, parents point to the words rather than the pictures most of the time while reading. Except for meaning confirmation, decoding or recognising the words is another purpose of this reading pattern. Sometimes Xiaohu's father pointed to the words and let Xiaohu read. Xiaohu's father pointed to the words of "No, David" and asked, "**What is this?**" When Xiaohu read another graded level book on a smartphone, Xiaohu used his fingers to follow almost every single word.

"Shared reading" means mostly reading by parents. However, in this reading pattern, parents like to ask children to read by themselves or read after the parents. By doing this, parents wanted to check whether their child could decode the words or know the meaning of what they had read. Xiaohu's father said: "**Can you say it after me? 'No David'**", pointed at the words and let Xiaohu read. Weiwei's mother did a similar thing but more directly. She said: "**OK, say it in English**"; "**OK, what colour is it? Say it in English**" or "**I'll point to the colours, can you say the names in English?**" In this way, parents encouraged children to speak in English. Parents did not seem to consider the ambiguity of those words, and they usually had a prescriptive answer in mind.

6.2.1.3 Ask for confirmation and other low cognitive questions

Consequently, children frequently asked for confirmation and some management or literacy questions in order to comprehend the text being read.

For example, in this pattern, questions usually ended with “Right?” and their parents expected their children to answer “Yes” or “No” or already have an answer in mind. Xiaohu’s father kept asking confirmation questions all through the reading process. It was the most frequent questioning type for this reading pattern. When they read the *Elephant and Piggie* book, he confirmed Xiaohu’s understanding with questions like these: “**He doesn’t like rain, right?**”, “**They are poor, right? They are playing games, right?**”, “**He doesn’t believe it; he wants to have a try, right?**” In another book, Xiaohu’s father asked “**It is the elephant’s nose, right? It is the end, he is sitting on his head, right?**”; “**He wants to try again, right?**” Weiwei’s mother also asked a few confirmation questions: “**They are looking outside, right?**” or “**Orange means orange the fruit, and the colour, right? Ok. Let me ask you another colour.**” Xiaohu’s father also asked Yes or No questions, for example, he asked: “**Does he like the rain?**”, “**Is it raining now?**”

On the other hand, children liked to ask the Chinese meaning of the words in the English picturebooks. Xiaohu often asked “**What is this word?**” and expected his parent to tell him the Chinese meaning. Parents ask the same literacy questions, for example, “**What is this word?**”, or management questions to maintain discipline, for example, “**Can you sit properly?**” but they seldom asked complicated or open questions.

6.2.1.4 Children’s responses: reluctance and boredom

In this reading pattern, I observed that both the children and parents seemed to

regard reading English picturebooks as a kind of “study” or “homework”, mostly sitting at a table rather than on the bed or the sofa. For this Literal focus, the consistent translation impulse and parallel data from questionnaire shows that 72% families read English with Chinese explanation causing more code-switching in languages and possibly cause more of a mental burden for the children. Although the general data from the questionnaire told us that most children showed a great deal of interest in reading English picturebooks (4.01/5), for this pattern, I did not see a great deal of interest in English shared book reading from the children. Children from these families who belong to this reading pattern showed they were reluctant to read English picturebooks. Xiaohu was sometimes unwilling to continue reading and checked how many pages were left or what the time was. He frequently complained the chair was not working, or the table was wobbly. He also stated “**I want to write words**” to bring an end to the reading. Xiaohu had other excuses for not reading English books, for example, “**I want Daddy to read to me**”, or saying “**but this one has many pages**”, or he directly refused by saying “**I don’t want to read**” several times during one reading session.

Xiaohu’s father also seemed to regard it as homework. He realised Xiaohu’s frustration too. He tried to encourage Xiaohu to continue to read. He said: “**This one is easy, shall we read this one? This is our last book, OK?**” or “**We will soon finish this book.**” They carried on reading and finished all the reading “tasks” (by Xiaohu’s father) on that day although a very short book

took them nearly an hour. Parents seemed relaxed after finishing all the reading, but they did think this was the parents' "responsibility" or "investment".

Another girl, Weiwei's response was similar; she sometimes wanted to stop reading and showed her dance skills during shared reading; sometimes she paid attention to the scenery outside the window. Their one reading session of five books lasted 45 minutes with many distractions.

6.2.1.5 Summary

For this reading pattern, parents like to point to the words and translate after every word or sentence. Children's interest in English picturebooks is not observably as high as parents reported their children's general interest was toward English picturebooks from the questionnaire data. Although parents confirmed children's understanding of books, this kind of understanding is literal understanding by translation, different from the comprehension pattern we are going to discuss later in other interaction foci.

6.2.2 Literacy focus: Parents and children are engaged in developing reading skills

(Weiwei's, Anna's and Qiqi's families and Xiaohu with his mother)

This pattern is the most prevalent among the families I observed. In this pattern, children's attention towards the printed text was deliberately attracted by their parents, which is opposite to many mother tongue, shared reading empirical studies. In the mother tongue context, Evans and his colleagues' (2008) study

shows that children (aged between 3 and 5 years old) spend most of their time looking at pictures rather than at the words printed in books. However, shared book reading in this pattern focuses on knowledge of letters, numbers, phonic skills and the names of essential items given in the text rather than in the pictures or the narrative story of the book. In the current pattern, the parents' focus is obviously on the words. Children sometimes look at the details in the illustrations to confirm the meaning of the words rather than explore the details of the pictures.

Families using this pattern also like to choose a large number of graded level books and low linguistic level English picturebooks, which are easy for the children to read compared with the mainstream trade picturebooks in English speaking countries. Parents in these families tended to speak both Chinese and English equally, and parents sometimes translated and explained in Chinese. Parents did not elaborate on the story but concentrated on the printed words. Families using this focus selected the picturebooks for the children to choose from. When they chose the books before reading, they spent time negotiating how many books they would read for the reading session and which books were too "difficult". Parents and children kept a certain distance, both sitting at a table, which looked like a formal "study". Parents liked to ask children some confirmation questions, literacy questions about pronunciation, and how to decode the words. They tested children's phonics skills during reading and also the meaning of the words. Children sometimes showed

frustration during the reading and were not willing to continue.

6.2.2.1 Reading skills focused reading

From my observation, I found that the parents' goal was to improve decoding skills and orthographic or phonics knowledge. Accordingly, parents tended to choose books that attracted the children's attention and initiated conversations about the printed word (e.g. alphabet books, phonics books) or engaged in activities that drew the children's attention to the printed words during reading. Families who focused on reading skills during shared reading tended to read a large number of graded level books without entertaining narratives since these books are not designed for this purpose. These graded level books were words centred within a simple narrative story. A typical sentence in the book Xiaohu's reading was:

“What's this? It is a cat. What's this? It's a kite.”

And some more quotes from Weiwei's reading book:

“Go away, floppy, we are skipping. Go away, floppy. We are painting.”

“Come, look at this. Come, look at this. It is a monster. Come, look at this. It is a big dinosaur. Come, look at this, is it a big giant? No, I am Dad.”

We can see the storyline is not as exciting as a narrative storybook as in other trade picturebooks. In this interaction pattern, the parents' focus was on the decoding skills; they chose lots of graded level books and used picturebooks with a lower linguistic requirement for this purpose. Pronouncing or decoding

the words was the goal of this reading pattern. Weiwei's mother asked Weiwei to copy the actions of the book, for example jumping. Sometimes they both did the actions. Her purpose was to confirm whether Weiwei understood the meaning of the word.

The reading process in this reading pattern is the children read first, and parents provide assistance. When Xiaohu was decoding the digital graded level book, he read almost all the content. When children were struggling with recognising words, parents liked to read it out, then ask children to read after them, point to the words or help the children to decode the English words. Xiaohu's father frequently asked Xiaohu to read after him like this:

“Let's practise. Read after me, OK? Back.”

“Let's read it together, OK? Let me teach you first.”

Sometimes he corrected Xiaohu's pronunciation: “No, it is a dock. O is ooo.” When Xiaohu was frustrated with reading, he helped to point to the words and said:

“I point, you read, OK? This is B, back. Ready?”

When Xiaohu stopped, his father continued to offer help:

“Which ones can't you read? This is b, back, p, pack.”

Xiaohu's mother and Weiwei's mother also helped their children to decode the words. When Weiwei's mother started to read, Weiwei sometimes joined her mother and they read together. Here is a quote from my observation:

Mother- **Shall I read to you?** “This is a mud pie.” (both read together)

Weiwei-“Putting water, messing sand, tip it out, pat it flat, this is a mud pie. Not a hat.”

Weiwei’s mother would wait for two or three seconds if Weiwei could not decode and whispered the word in a low voice. Xiaohu’s mother did the same. Anna’s mother helped Anna to turn the pages. Most often, Anna read the words, sometimes the parents and children read together. When Anna was struggling, her mother read it out and Anna repeated.

The reading process also depended on what kind of book they were reading. When Xiaohu and his father shared the traditional picturebooks rather than the graded level books, his father read most of the book and sometimes asked him to read. When they read the book *No, David*, Xiaohu only read the easily decoded part, “No David. No. Come back. Here, David.” or “Get down.” Sometimes he struggled to read. When they shared graded level books, his father asked Xiaohu to read by himself from the beginning.

6.2.2.2 Focusing on words and encouraging children to read

Families belonging to this reading pattern liked to point to the words rather than the pictures most of the time because their focus was predominantly on the words. Parents liked to point to the words when reading and some children formed the habit of using their finger to trace the words when reading. Qiqi got used to pointing to the words all through her reading, no matter whether it was a Chinese picturebook or an English picturebook, Weiwei’s mother pointed to the words when she read. Here is a reading scene of Weiwei and her mother.

(Mother read without pointing or looking at the words, Weiwei looked at the pictures. Mum read a long paragraph for another two minutes, Weiwei looked at the pictures and waited, Weiwei sometimes turned to the next page and back.)

Weiwei — **I know the words already.**

Mum — OK. **Read the words to me.**

In this reading scene, Weiwei clearly knew her mother's expectation. Evans and his colleagues' study (2008) shows that during shared reading, when children's focus was drawn to the print words in the book, the time that they spent looking at the words increased. Clay's studies (1982, 2000) show that as children's understanding of letters/sounds/words increases, then they turn to the text rather than the pictures. In general, focusing on words will discourage children from looking at the pictures.

Children's natural focus is on the pictures and children constantly resist reading the words. When Weiwei's mother suggested reading an English picturebook, Weiwei said: "**I don't want to read, I just want to see the pictures**", or "**I want to see (pictures), not reading.**" Weiwei often noticed some details from pictures, for example, the lip colour and lipstick in a *Peppa Pig* book. Here is another quote from Weiwei when she was not willing to read the words after her mother and she turned her attention to the detail in the pictures in a *Peppa Pig* book:

"No, No! I won't. I want to tell the story. Look at her boots. She is

jumping in the muddy puddles. Red, yellow and purple.”

“You see, here is the cloud (tracing the shape of cloud). Here is a little messy.”

“Look, her glasses have fallen down. Then, George put her glasses.”

In this reading pattern, parents and children kept negotiating and engaging in a power struggle. Parents constantly drew attention to the words while children looked at details in the pictures whenever possible.

6.2.2.3 Asking literacy questions but less interaction

I observed that for this shared reading pattern, parents like to ask children literacy questions about how to decode the words, test children’s phonic skills or ask confirmation questions. On the other hand, children like to ask questions about pronunciation, how to decode and the meaning of the words, which is different from first language shared reading. In first language shared reading, Yaden, Smolkin and MacGillivray (1993) found that 3 to 6-year-olds asked less than 10% of the questions concerning print conventions and forms during shared reading. However, a previous study (Anderson et al., 2012) revealed that “children who had observed a model asking print-related questions asked more of such questions than children who had not seen this modelling” (p.1142). This is similar to what I observed in this pattern that asking print-related questions is a learned behaviour. Xiaohu’s father liked to test his child’s phonics skills and correct his pronunciation. He pointed to the words and asked:

“What is the third one? Pack, right? What is the fourth one?”

Xiaohu's father also pointed out that Xiaohu mixed English words with Chinese Pinyin letters (Pinyin is the system of transcribing the sounds of Chinese characters using the Roman alphabet, but it is pronounced slightly differently):

“Good, the problem is some ‘a’ sounds. Sack, back, you pronounce like Pinyin, A (ahh), right?”

Weiwei's mother often asked her to say some Chinese words in English: **“You can say red in English, say the name of the colour again.”** She sometimes taught Weiwei first and asked her to repeat it. Children ask similar questions about pronunciation and meaning. Qiqi (4 years and 1 month old girl) asked what “super” meant when her mother read the word.

Parents following this reading pattern tended to continually encourage the children to read by themselves. Parents liked to ask children to read it aloud or repeat it after the parents. Xiaohu's father tried to encourage Xiaohu:

“Tell me first what you can't read. I think you can read it all. Cake, pack, back. You can do it by yourself. Do you want to earn 100 points?”

Sometimes Xiaohu's father tried to increase his motivation by sending the reading to his teacher and aiming for 100 points (Xiaohu's parents would send Xiaohu's reading recording to his teacher by smartphone. If he read it all correctly, his teacher would give him 100 points in the class). Xiaohu's father constantly encouraged him during the reading process: **“Very good, you can do**

it all, right? Can you read this part? Which words? You can see it first. At least you know this bit by yourself.”

Weiwei’s mother did the same thing. She said to Weiwei: **“You can read this one, right?”** Or **“I remember you can read this one. Try.** (They changed to another book) **You can read this one well.”** Weiwei’s mother did not like to interrupt Weiwei’s reading and said: **“I won’t say anything, read by yourself.”** However, although Weiwei’s mother let her read, Weiwei did not want to read by herself. She said to her mother: **“I want you to read this one to me”**, asking her mother to read to her instead. Although when Weiwei read in Chinese, she still pointed to the words and read by herself, she seemed more confident with Chinese picturebook reading (or reading the Chinese characters) in that she knows a large number of Chinese characters for her age.

Generally speaking, in this pattern, children were not encouraged to ask lots of questions; children were discouraged from asking wide-ranging questions and the questions that parents asked appeared to have a low cognitive demand. When Qiqi asked her mother what “disappear” meant, she simply gave one equivalent Chinese word to her without explanation. Weiwei had many comments about the books they were sharing. For example, she said, **“I like this team”**, **“I want to be her (points to a picture)”** or **“He is painting on the wall. Why are there some hands?”** but her mother did not elaborate on that and most of the time continued reading. Qiqi’s mother read the book *Papa, Please Get a Moon for Me* and another graded level picturebook. She often read

the text for more than a minute without any interaction, questioning, or adding her own words. When Qiqi's parent was interrupted by questions or requests for explanations, Qiqi was told: "**Just read**", "**Just go on**". Instead of discussing the story, their focus was reading through the text and solving the language problems. It seems parents discouraged the interaction in shared reading and children were expected to decode, listen and wait.

6.2.2.4 Spending a long time on book negotiating

When they chose books to read, parents firstly picked up several books and asked the children to choose from them. Parents asked many management questions. Their negotiating was focused on how many books they would read, or the children complained that some books were "difficult" to read. Weiwei's mother said: "**You can pick from these**" or she would choose some first and say: "**Shall we read these?**" Xiaohu's father would suggest one of the books already on the table. When Xiaohu was not willing to read, he suggested:

"Want to play? Just one more book, OK?" Xiaohu's father had a clear sense that this book was in English or in Chinese rather than focusing on the story itself by saying: "You can choose a book to read. A Chinese one," or "**Let's read an English picturebook, you have learnt one today, this one is about the favourite season. Shall we read that? Look carefully.**"

Xiaohu's father judged these English picturebooks by "easy" or "difficult" depending on the English language level, for example:

"This one is easy, shall we read this one?"

“How about this book? A little difficult.”

Weiwei’s mother also had the concept of “simple” or not, and she said: **“I will find a simpler one then we can read together”**. Their criteria seemed to relate to the number of words on each page. If the words took up more than two lines, Weiwei’s mother said it was “difficult”. Weiwei’s mother sometimes refused to read a book because:

“I can’t read this one. I need to study first”.

“This one is too difficult.”

Weiwei’s mother continually suggested books to read, but she would give some restrictions:

“Shall we read this one, *Kipper’s Diary*? Would you like to read this one? You can choose two. *The Mud Pie. Hook and Duck*. These have not been read yet.”

However, children had their preferred books, so they spent more than 10 minutes on book negotiation. Xiaohu sometimes said the name of the book and pointed out the book that he wanted to read. After Weiwei began to read a book, she started with "Tom..." then she put it down and said: **“No. I want to read...”**

After browsing through several books on the table, she chose a book from those:

“I have read this one and this one. (Still browsing the books). Not this one.

We will learn this one.” Although the parents had already selected some books for them to choose from, the children were not totally satisfied and negotiated with their parents on the choice of book. Here both Xiaohu’s father and

Weiwei's mother used the word "learn" instead of "read" when they chose a book, which echoes the attitude that parents in this pattern regard reading as a kind of "study" or "homework" as I am going to discuss next.

6.2.2.5 Strict parental discipline

According to this reading pattern, parents and children tend to regard English picturebook reading as a kind of "study" or "homework", and parents have an idea of how many books they need to "complete" each day. Weiwei's mother said "**We will learn this one**" instead of "read" at the beginning of a reading session. They were more likely to sit by a study table, rather than on a bed or couch, for a formal study session. Weiwei's family, Qiqi's family, Xiaohu's family all chose to sit by an appropriate children's study table to read these books. Parents tended to emphasise parental discipline. Parents set some restrictions on reading posture or sometimes used a negative tone of voice during reading, for example: "**Please sit well,**" or "**Sit on your chair.**"

Xiaohu's mother and Weiwei's mother reminded them many times to "**sit well**" or "**properly**". Xiaohu's father spent a considerable amount of time on discipline:

"Don't waste time. What time is it now? After reading this, only one book, we will finish. Are you biting your fingernails? This is the last time. Read by yourself, don't ask me."

Weiwei's mother told Weiwei not to move her legs, hold her book properly, not move and emphasised their task for that day. "**We should read all**

these books before bedtime, all of these.” During one of Anna’s reading sessions, I observed that when Anna was playing with her socks, her mother stopped her. Another time, Anna’s mother reminded her not to bite her fingernails while reading. This adds empirical evidence to the didactic reading process, which I discussed in chapter two. Namely, parents in this reading focus type adopt a didactic, expert role; they encourage children to decode rather than have a free story discussion and maintain discipline which can spoil the atmosphere.

6.2.2.6 Children’s responses: frustration and an unwillingness to continue

During this focus pattern, parents regularly help children to decode English words. However, this parental help sometimes causes children’s frustration. When Xiaohu struggled with reading sentences, he gradually lost his patience. Xiaohu wanted to get 100 points from his English teacher, and whenever he did not read well, he said: **“I can’t get 100 points, I can’t get 100 points again.”** The first time, he pretended to cry, later on, he started to cry, he was frustrated at not doing well. He was struggling with “Kite” and “Cat”, he said:

“I don’t know how to read it. I always want to read Kite instead of Cat.”

“Ahh. I read it wrong. I read Cat as Kite.”

He did not pay attention to what his father said and continued to try saying these two words many times: **“This doesn’t count, let’s do it again. Let’s start.”** Xiaohu’s father encouraged him to do it again and said: **“Let’s do**

it again. I can read to you first, OK? Once. This one? OK. Back, sack, neck.”

Xiaohu covered his face and pretended to cry (I asked Xiaohu’s mother if we should stop the reading session. However, she said this was a common occurrence and they did not need to stop). His father continued: **“Let me teach you once, OK? Just try, OK? What is this called? L, i, what is it?”** They carried on to the end although Xiaohu was very frustrated.

Children are not necessarily happy with their parents’ help. When Xiaohu decided to reread it, he was not pleased with his parent’s support and asked his father not to remind him anymore or to say the words quietly. Xiaohu reminded his mother: **“Sometimes, Daddy says words quietly.”** Their reading process is like this: “Cat, beginning letter is C, Kite, (mum whispers) beginning letter is K. (wait) (Mother whispers cat)”. Weiwei was the same. After her mother reminded her of the pronunciation, she said: **“Close your mouth”** and covered her mother’s mouth with her hands.

Consequently, in this reading pattern, children’s frustration caused their low motivation for English picturebook reading. As in this Literacy focus pattern, children also showed a low level of interest in shared reading. Weiwei expressed her opinion frankly saying: **“No, No! I won’t,”** Or **“I would like to read this one, why are these books so small? So small. I can’t read, I can’t.”** and walked away. When her mother called her back to read saying: **“Do you want to know the story? What is it talking about?”** Weiwei answered: **“I don’t want to know”**. Rather than reading, Weiwei wanted to play chess during

the reading time and showed me that she could play chess.

6.2.2.7 Summary

To date, as a shared reading strategy, research on print referencing (drawing attention to the printed words) has mainly involved teachers in a school setting (Justice et al., 2010). Parents or digital book designers use some strategies to encourage print-focused reading. Parents' praise, teacher's marks and rewards on the iPad were the primary motivators. Xiaohu read again and again, recorded it and sent it to the teacher to gain 100 points. Anna liked to read on the iPad because she could get a star reward if she read correctly. For Anna's mother, this pattern was welcome, **"Anna likes it, and I don't think it is a bad thing"** as she repeatedly says in the interview. But this expectation is far more instrumental and practical. Parent and child dyads belonging to this reading pattern were committed because they had clear expectations regarding possible benefits. They expected their child to improve their decoding skills, rather than using the occasion to construct meaning. Most of the books were elementary and scholastic but lacked exciting storylines. In this interaction focus, shared reading was seen as merely an exercise of acquiring reading skills. The parents' emphasis was on decoding or reading accuracy, not on comprehension.

To summarise, the contradiction of children paying attention to pictures and their parents' emphasis on the decoding of words caused the possible reluctance to read in this pattern. Because of the inconsistency, although there was no apparent conflict, the reading process seemed long and full of

negotiation. Parents regard picturebooks as word or character reading materials. The reading process is frequently interrupted by the children trying to recognise the words. Few parents or children discuss the storyline of the book, or the picturebooks they chose lack storylines. In this reading pattern, children often show no sign of prediction, comprehension and linking the story with their life or other books, and the adults make no effort to explore the story and the details in the pictures. Some families using this pattern ask children to read instead of the parents and the parents' role changes to that of facilitator. When children read the books, they frequently stop, and the stories are broken up into small bits of information and word clusters.

6.2.3 Literary focus: Parents and children are engaged in reading pleasure (Xiaoxia's family, Xiaotian's family, Yueyue's family)

The behaviour of this shared reading pattern is analogous to the first language shared reading, especially for reading to very young children who connect words and sounds naturally. Parents use physical and facial expressions, sounds, and pictures to help children understand the basic concepts. Parents pronounce sounds and turn them into "words" which connect to the pictures. Clay's seminal work (1982, 2000) on children's concepts about "print" reveals that young children rely on images to carry the message because they are not yet able to read the print. The parents direct the children's attention to the book and label items or read the sentences on the page. Sometimes parents repeat the

words and expand them into well-formed sentences in English or Chinese. If the content seems too complicated, parents tell the story in short sentences using simple language, frequently with what-explanations. In this reading pattern, parents regard enjoying books and consolidating the parent-child bonds as a priority. However, in the process, children gain linguistic input naturally.

Parents and children using this focus pattern read trade picturebooks, pop-up books, toy books, anything they find interesting. They seldom read graded level books. Parents are flexible with the book choice and, usually allow the children to decide which books to read although sometimes they choose the books in advance. They speak English together as often as possible, sometimes with quick and straightforward Chinese explanations. When they explain English words in Chinese, they do not use direct translation. Picturebooks at home are within reach of the children, and mostly children decide what to read. From the reading environment, I can see these families have a lot of child-friendly furniture and bookshelves, which allow children to choose the books for themselves. Their living rooms are full of books decorated with colourful and literary-based stimuli. Parents read the picturebooks to children and do not ask the children to read, which makes the reading process more relaxed. Children usually sit on their parent's lap, and both of them sit on a sofa, bed or in other relaxed places. Parents sometimes ask "Wh" questions to help children to engage with the story; they also like to ask completion and explanation questions, for example, they ask children to mimic the action or complete the

sentence. Generally, children seem to enjoy the shared reading process and it is full of positive interaction and laughter.

6.2.3.1 Enjoy the books-read with a lively voice and mimic the actions

Parents' focus in this pattern is natural language input, having fun with their children and cultivating a love of books, and most importantly, building the parent-child bond through shared reading. By observing these families, I found parents using lively, sometimes exaggerated voices to read. Xiaoxia's mother was typical. She read "I am scared. The thunder and lighting," and mimicked the sound of lightning and thunder. Her intonation and voice changed frequently according to the content of the book. Xiaoxia's mother showed a clear difference in reading voice and the speaking voice of characters in the book. When Xiaotian's mother read the *Peppa Pig* book to him, "Today, Peppa and George are very excited. They are going on holiday." She used a different voices for each character and sang a song from the book. Yueyue's mother read a baby book to him and played a Peek-a-boo game with him. She also mimicked a baby voice.

Parents like to mimic the actions of the book as well. Xiaohu's and Weiwei's parents occasionally mimicked the action when they shared the book. Xiaoxia's mother did this more frequently. She pretended to cry or yawn, did the action of "bite, open the door", almost all through the reading process. She emphasised the verbs such as "ripped" and "hopped". She also made the sound "tunk, tunk, tunk." Xiaotian's mother behaved in a similar way when she shared

the book with Xiaotian. Yueyue's mother constantly tried to attract Yueyue's attention during reading. She mimicked the eating sound when she read "dinner time." Their reading required more attention-catching efforts and performance since Yueyue was the youngest, which made reading a holistic experience. His mother did this:

"It's a bowl." (Yueyue walks away) "Banana (louder voice) **Yueyue. Look at the caterpillar.** (mimic the sound) **Caterpillar wants to have dinner, too.** Growl. If you see a lion (mum does the action)."

Parents also encourage the child to mimic the action or play with the book. Xiaoxia's mother asked:

"**Can you do peek-a-boo to the cat? Can you make a face like this?** (point to the picture) Can you make a funny face? (Mother models the action.) That's silly, can you do it? Can you play like this? Can you do this? Can you make him smile? His mouth is open. Say open wide?"

In this way, she asked Xiaoxia to mimic the action approximately ten times for each book. Sometimes she showed the action to her first. When they shared the *Peppa Goes Swimming* book, they did the swimming actions together, and they said:

"Yes. Trying to kick her legs. Good. Can you help her? Kicking her legs? Yes, good, that's great. Where is her float? Maybe this is her float. This is her float. You hold on to this float and kick her legs. Is that fun?"

Yueyue was 18 months old, and he had just begun to express himself

using words in both English and Chinese. However, his mother encouraged him to say or do the actions during the reading. His mother said: “This is a football. Can you say ‘football’? Would you kick? Open it, OK? Oh, Elephant.” Or asked Yueyue to lift the flap: “**What is here? Can you lift the flap?**” I observed once that Anna’s mother asked Anna to pretend to “pick the flowers” while reading, but this did not happen as frequently as with Xiaoxia’s and Yueyue’s mothers.

Like the first two foci, if parents use a specific reading strategy, children also learn it. Children learn to listen, waiting for the appropriate pause to show off their book knowledge. They have learned how to interact with books and just like what their parents do. Children regularly practise these learned interaction patterns in the dyadic situation. They like to mimic the action of the book characters or play with the book and sometimes use gestures with verbalisations. Xiaoxia liked to play the Peek-a-boo game, and she pretended to cry when her mother turned the pages when the book character was sad. Instead of allowing the child to cuddle herself, she sometimes let her cuddle a toy — a soft bunny to mimic the action of a book character and said: “Little rabbit does like this, Aah, aah.” or “Little rabbit does like this”. Yueyue, although he sometimes walked away when his mother shared the book with him, came back and mimicked some actions from the book. Yueyue and his mother had more interactions when they shared English picturebooks. Yueyue held the book and did the action of driving, making driving sounds; he also mimicked the action of brushing his teeth. His mother said “You can use your little finger” and Yueyue

pretended to brush his teeth using a pen.

6.2.3.2 Point to the pictures rather than to the words

In this pattern, parent-child dyads engage in a minimal exploration of the words in the books. This pattern suggests that the focus is rarely on the print knowledge; the focus is linking the sound with the pictures; words are only the format of sound or represent the pictures. Children rely on the image to construct meaning. Parents point to the pictures rather than the words for a pointing and naming game that functions as a language acquisition device. By doing this, young children understand many concepts which can be applied in real life, such as daily life experience, animal knowledge or social experiences.

When parents explain the English story to their children, Xiaoxia's mother and Xiaotian's mother explain it in English. Xiaoxia sometimes asked the Chinese meaning of some English words, such as **“What is this called?”** or **“What is this? What does it mean?”** Instead of translating the word, Xiaoxia's mother would explain it in a long sentence in Chinese rather than use Chinese equivalent words directly. For example, Xiaoxia asked: **“What is disappointed?”** Xiaoxia's mother answered using a Chinese explanation: **“Disappointed means if you want yoghurt, but you can't find it in your lunch box, you will feel ‘disappointed’ Do you understand?”**

Xiaoxia's mother also uses Xiaoxia's favourite soft toy to explain. When she explained “disappointed” another time, she said: **“If you want a rabbit to come to our home, it was a promise. But the rabbit didn't come. So you feel**

very dis-.” Yueyue’s mother read: “Now it’s dinner time” and instead of using the translation, she explained: “They are going to eat.” If we consult translation strategies, Xiaoxia’s mother’s translation strategy is foreignisation rather than domestication, free translation rather than literal translation (Venuti, 1995).

After explaining some words in Chinese, Xiaoxia’s mother remembered what she said, and used this word again. For example, she said: “The first one looks ‘**sha hu hu**’ (silly), right?” She had just explained “**sha hu hu**” to Xiaoxia 2 minutes previously.

Rather than explaining it in her own words, Xiaoxia’s mother pointed to the pictures while reading. When she read “Creepy carrots! In the shed!” she pointed to the picture of the “shed” and explained it in Chinese. Yueyue’s mother showed Yueyue in the picture what “Knock the door” and “Open the door” were. Pointing to the pictures while reading assisted the children to identify and understand the book content. In this reading pattern, the adult points to pictures more often, they pay little attention to decoding words. I did not see Xiaoxia’s or Yueyue’s mother pointing at words at all. Xiaoxia’s mother always pointed to the pictures all through the reading process. When they sang aloud: “See the tractor driver loading the trailer”, they sang it slowly, the mother and Xiaoxia both pointed to the vehicles in the picture. Children respond to parents and could identify visual clues related to the story, describing a story element or picture. Xiaoxia found that the character in a book was looking at his shoes and told her mother about this. Xiaoxia then found a little bird in the book

and discussed it with her mother. Xiaoxia often asked questions like “**What is he looking at?**”, “**Who is this?**”, or “**Whose little tongue is it?**” Their focus was on the story narrative and visual details.

6.2.3.3 Asking “Wh” questions about illustrations and story narrative

Parents’ questions tended to focus on the illustrations and story narrative.

Parents emphasised the story narrative and meaning, asking “Wh” questions, providing answers with more questions, and responding to what the child said.

The what-explanation was to pick out topic sentences, summarise the plot, and ask for simple predictions related to the stories, and so on. By asking questions, parents attempted to elaborate on the text and encourage the children using more sophisticated words in order to generate more talk. The majority of questions parents asked were knowledge, completion and explanation questions, with a few complicated comprehension questions, for example, Yueyue’s mother asked him: “See who is inside this box?” When Yueyue and his mother saw a baby’s face in a book, Yueyue’s mother said:

“There is a little boy, he wants mummy’s hugs. Where is mummy?

Mummy is here. Hug, mummy. There is a ball. Peek-a-boo. Ball. Kick the ball”.

Yueyue’s mother provided more information than the words in the book.

Parents also make simple requests for the children to label the items and sing the nursery rhymes with them. However, parents do not insist on a correct answer. When the children’s answer was unexpected, parents just kept the flow

of reading going and ignored the minor errors. Both parents and children accepted the book and book-related activities as entertainment. Children listened most of the time, looked at the pictures sometimes, and frequently answered questions. From the time the children started to talk, and responded to the content of the books, they showed knowledge of books. Most questions asked by children focused on the pictures, followed by questions about the story. Either the parents or the children constantly interrupted the story with questions and comments. Parents asked few questions about the print words.

Although Yueyue or Xiaoxia was the only child in the family, these parents sounded very professional dealing with children. This may relate to Yueyue's and Xiaoxia's mothers' jobs. Yueyue's mother was an editor and owned a private library. Xiaoxia's mother was an English teacher in a private education company and chose to do her job part-time after giving birth to Xiaoxia. As educational practitioners, these parents had an advantage when playing or educating their own children. When they shared picturebooks with their children, it was very natural for them to interact with them with pleasure while still offering guidance.

6.2.3.4 Children are freer to choose books

Parents and children spent quite a long time on their book choice before reading. Parents asked the children's opinion on the books and the children displayed initiative when selecting the books. The book choice was freer compared to the first two shared reading patterns. Xiaoxia's mother picked up some books from

the bookshelf and asked Xiaoxia's opinion on each book. They continued discussing before and even while reading. Xiaoxia's mother often asked: "**Will you tell me which book we're going to read first?**" or "**What shall we read next? You can choose.**" She encouraged Xiaoxia to get the book from the bookshelf by herself. When Xiaoxia's mother had some book titles in mind, she asked "**What do you think?**" and continually suggested a title after reading each book:

"Which one? Get it by yourself. How about *I am a Bunny*? We haven't read it for ages. Or these? How about *Papa and Moon*? (no) OK, choose for yourself. *Dear Zoo*? Choose one. Or *Little Lamb*? How about reading this one instead? *Into the Forest*? **Did He Meet a Wolf?**

And *We are Going on a Bear Hunt*. OK? (Xiaoxia nods).

How about *The Napping House*? OK. You can take one or two. *The Tunnel* or *Into the Forest*? Is that OK? Or *Five Little Monkeys*? Is that OK? Are there any other books you would like to read? How about the book about swimming?

What else? How about *Peppa Pig*? Or *The Napping House*? Or *The Tunnel*?

***We are Going on a Bear Hunt*. OK? How about *Down by the Station*? No? *Five Little Monkeys*?"**

So almost every book they read was a book that Xiaoxia had agreed with.

Yueyue was 18 months old and could not say very much, but his mother also asked him for his opinion on books: “**Shall we read from the beginning?** This one, caterpillar, which one? Piglet? Hug.” She consistently suggested book titles as well: “**Which one do you like best? This little baby? Little bear? Caterpillar? Gomi’s book?**”

Families belonging to this reading pattern chose from a wide range of picturebooks. They read popular trade English picturebooks most of the time. These books range from a single object on each page to picturebooks with narratives. A typical book consisted of numbers or letters, nursery rhymes or “real-life” stories about family life (for example, going to nursery, playing with pets and toys, or going on an outing). For younger children, like Yueyue or Xiaoxia, parents liked to choose books that children can participate in or interact with: books that children can respond to, answer questions about, point to objects, provide labels, make animal sounds and touch. Parents also like to choose a book that children can play with, such as a pop-up or flip-flop book or a sound book or toy books.

Children have their own opinions on the books. Xiaoxia often suggested book titles to her mother saying “**This one. Cat book.**” or “*Peppa Goes Swimming.*” She was familiar with her bookshelf and could reach the books she wanted from the bookshelf by herself. Although Xiaoxia’s mother also selected some books to read, they did not regard them as a “must”. Xiaoxia was free to choose from the bookshelf. Yueyue was only 18 months old, when his mother

asked what kind of books he would like to read, he said “bus”. Parents usually tended to read what their children chose.

Unlike the first two foci previously, parents in this pattern seldom choose graded level books or books which resemble an English textbook.

Xiaoxia's mother in the interview said:

I don't like the series of books a WeChat public platform recommended. They are like textbooks teaching English. I think they are not as interesting as storybooks. They may destroy children's interest in reading English picturebooks and the children might feel they are studying or being tested.

Xiaoxia's mother thought that to sustain children's interest in English picturebooks was more important than learning some English words. This concept influenced her own book choices, and therefore she did not set many restrictions on Xiaoxia's book choice.

6.2.3.5 Parents sustain children's interest and wait for children's responses

Parents tried to sustain their children's interest and attention while they patiently read by using child-adjusted language and expressions or by speaking as if they were a toy character or book character. Xiaoxia's mother often said: “Look at this,” or used confirmation comments such as “That's a good idea, right?” or “Everybody is happy, right?” She always looked at Xiaoxia and confirmed Xiaoxia's response. When Xiaoxia was distracted, she brought her attention back to the reading by saying “Little bunny says you read with

Mummy” and carried Xiaoxia back to the sofa. When Xiaoxia was distracted by the soft toy bunny, her mother said: “Little bunny is listening to the story carefully, just like you”, or “Little bunny is looking at the girl, right?” Xiaoxia’s mother used many engaging skills with her listener, which may be related to her professional experience as an English teacher previously, although she mainly taught teenagers and university students.

During the reading, Xiaoxia’s mother waited for and confirmed Xiaoxia’s response frequently. For example, after she asked: “What colour did his shoes turn into?” she waited for two seconds for Xiaoxia’s response. In the Literal focus pattern, I seldom saw this kind of patience, either the parents or the children translated straightaway. Parents continuously praised and encouraged their children when they answered questions or responded to the book. After Xiaoxia sang the tractor song, Xiaoxia’s mother said with a surprised voice: **“You can sing that! Great!”**

Yueyue was the youngest among the seven families. Yueyue’s mother needed to attract his attention. He often ran away, and she often brought him back to sit on her lap using these words:

“Come over, hug. Hug. Big hug. Ahh. (Yueyue came and embraced her, but wanted to walk away again). I am going to go through here. Look at the little mouse. (Yueyue walked back.)

Mummy hug you.

It’s time to eat. Would you turn the page?

Come here and help me to open it.

See what is inside this purple box. (Yueyue walked back and opened the flap).

Who is he? Little bear is building the blocks. Hug, come to mummy.

Little bear is hugging, hug me, OK? Little mouse's mummy said, come over, dear. What are the little mice doing? Let's read it together. Yueyue."

Yueyue's mother sometimes asked Yueyue to say hello to the baby in the book or play with the books. Yueyue's mother used a character from the books to attract his attention. When Yueyue wanted to walk away, his mother hugged him, sat back and said: **"This baby wants to play."** Or **"Let's stay with the caterpillar, the caterpillar wants to read a book, too. Look at this."** Then she started to mimic the eating sound.

I also observed that in this reading pattern, parents attempted to maintain physical proximity with the child. Rather than sitting at a table as in the two previous reading patterns, most parents tucked the children cosily in their arms. Xiaoxia naturally sat by her mother's side, sometimes she sat on her mother's lap. While reading, if Xiaoxia walked away, her mother brought her back again. Xiaotian (4 year and 4-month-old boy) was the same. He climbed onto his mother's lap before reading. Yueyue's mother invited him to sit on her lap: **"Would you like to sit on my lap and read this book? Come over, OK?"**

This shows, during this focus type, it is natural to build a parent-child bond and

promote physical proximity.

6.2.3.6 Children's responses — show interest in books and many interactions

I observed that children showed interest in books in this interaction pattern, and there were many interactions during reading. Children often asked parents to read books to them. I observed that Xiaoxia picked up a book and read it silently to herself when her mother was not reading to her, which I did not see happen in the first two foci. Children repeated their parent's words, did the actions, sang, pointed to the pictures and commented in words or short sentences. When Xiaoxia's mother explained to her what "disappointed" meant, she responded: "Disappointed is Wa ahh." Xiaoxia answered most of her mother's questions using words or short sentences and did the actions that her mother asked her to do. For example, her mother asked: "How do you sleep?" Xiaoxia then pretended to sleep. Xiaoxia sometimes pointed to the picture or did the action to answer her mother's questions. When her mother asked her what "under" meant, Xiaoxia pointed to the pictures to show her. When they shared the *Peppa Goes Swimming* book, she did most of the swimming actions. She kicked her legs, used her hands to make waves, and made a "honk, honk" sounds. Xiaoxia also joined her mother in singing the tractor song and *Down by the Station* song, and they pointed to the pictures together while singing. When Xiaoxia's mother said the first half-sentence and let Xiaoxia complete it, Xiaoxia naturally said it without hesitation. Xiaoxia could memorise the texts

and often knew when to turn the pages. She often held the book in her lap, started from the cover, and often read the title and showed that she was “reading”. Xiaoxia also frequently asked her mother questions, mostly “Wh” questions. She asked:

“What is the rabbit talking about? What is she looking at?

What did he say?

Who is this?

What is Daddy pig doing?”

Xiaoxia’s questions were about the understanding of the story. She showed great interest in the books and, by asking questions, she initiated many interactions with her mother.

Yueyue, who is 18 months old, is at the first stage of building a relationship with books. Yueyue was just learning to have a concept of books and develop reading etiquette (sit down, hold books properly). He was sometimes reluctant to continue reading or was easily distracted by other things, and often walked away during eading. His mother said: **“He is not in a reading mood.”** However, Yueyue started to express verbally; he could respond by pointing to the pictures. When Yueyue’s mother read: “Look at the baby,” Yueyue pointed at the baby’s face and waved to the baby. When they read the book *Dear Zoo* together, Yueyue shouted “Elephant!” When he saw the pop-up parts of the book, he lifted the flaps. He played Peek-a-boo games with his mother, put his fingers into the holes in the books and copied some words from

his mother, such as “snake”, “long long” or “lion”. Yueyue’s mother said in the interview that she was surprised that sometimes Yueyue took out the books and read by himself for more than two minutes without moving before he was even one year old. Yueyue was starting to build a positive relationship with books.

6.2.3.7 Summary

The children in this study have not started school yet and are expected to develop an emerging reading habit at home, and it is critical for them to build their first relationship with books. In contrast to the first and second shared reading patterns in which children were reluctant to read English picturebooks, both parents and children in this pattern have enthusiasm towards picturebooks reading. Children and parents’ questions in this focus pattern tend to focus on pictures and narratives with little attention to print knowledge. In this reading pattern, young children gain access to meaning and content, and become immersed in meaningful words and contexts in the books, and seek information from images as well as the spoken language. We can also see children paying great attention to the details of the book and they sometimes ask parents the Chinese meaning of a word or sentence. This reading pattern (followed mainly by Xiaoxia’s, Yueyue’s and Xiaotian’s family) is analogous to first language reading described in many previous studies or the mass media. Reading together is seen as a pleasant activity. I observed a great deal of interaction in this reading pattern and both the parents and the children were book lovers who paid less attention to the words.

6.2.4 Exploratory focus: Parents and children are engaged in knowledge and discovery

(Xiaotian's family, Xiaoxia's family)

I observed that this pattern was typical among the seven observation families when parents shared picturebooks with their children in Chinese, it was not so prevalent when they shared English picturebooks. Most of Xiaotian's and Xiaoxia's English reading activities were typical of this pattern. In this pattern, parents and children discuss the details of pictures, predict the plot, express their opinions towards characters and have complicated discussions. Observation of parent-child dialogue in this pattern shows a high cognitive engagement of children compared to other patterns. After introducing a book, parents sometimes asked the child to recall the story by asking "Remember XX?" to make "semiotic intertext" with other stories or authors. The focus of this reading pattern is comprehension and to gain direct or indirect pleasure from the reading. The purpose of this focus is similar to the principles of "reading for pleasure" which I discussed in chapter 2. In general, parents and children ask more complicated questions like clarification or prediction, and other comprehension, aesthetic and association questions.

In this interaction focus, parents usually choose various trade picturebooks, rather than graded level books. Parents are flexible in choosing English picturebooks and do not consider whether they are "difficult" or not.

They naturally discuss the book in English on most occasions. Sometimes when the discussion becomes deep and complicated, they discuss it in Chinese. Many families belonging to this focus pattern read more English picturebooks than Chinese ones. Parents give children more freedom to choose the books. Usually, children directly take the books from the bookshelf by themselves. The reading environment is usually inviting. An abundance of picturebooks of various types are accessible to these children in their homes. Xiaoxia's mother encouraged her to take books from the bookshelf by herself. Xiaotian seemed very familiar with the bookshelf. He took some books out and gave them to his mother naturally. Parents and children kept in close physical proximity, sitting on the sofa or bed and the atmosphere looked relaxed and joyful. Both parents and children were enthusiastic towards books and shared reading seemed a pleasant activity for them.

6.2.4.1 Reading for comprehension and exploration with rich details including pictures

In this reading pattern, parents like to elaborate on the text and pictures. They sometimes explain the content in English, encourage their child to think about the non-literal aspects of the story. "Jealous" is a complicated word for three-year-olds. When Xiaoxia's mother read the word "jealous", she explained it in great detail. She said:

"Is she jealous? Why? She is jealous of her brother, right? Her dad is hugging her brother. They are so scared and surprised. The little monkey

fell off his bed. He bumped his head.”

Parents also regard picturebooks as a toy and a plaything, becoming aware of multimodality and creating their own. When Xiaoxia shared a toy book with her mother, they spent a little while working out how to tie the shoelaces in the book:

“Step 1, 2, 3, 4, this is step 1, step 2, step 3, 4. OK, first, you are going to do step 1. Step 1, just like this. Mummy helps you. OK? (Mum helps) Step 1, and step 2, step 3, 4. (Saying and doing) Did you see it? ”

Xiaotian’s mother shared *Dear Zoo* with him when they read: “He was too jumpy,” Xiaotian’s mother added more information and said “**It jumped here and there. So the frog is jumping away from this book. Maybe to a pond, right?**”

Parents elaborate on the texts or pictures by connecting them to other books. Parents are familiar with different books and can connect books with intertextual talk. They make semiotic intertextual connections during shared reading. When Yueyue’s mother read a baby book, she sang another similar finger song naturally:

“**Shall I sing a song for you?** One little finger, tap, tap, put your finger up, put your finger down, put it on your head.”

Parents also relate the book’s content and children’s responses to personal experiences or made connections between the theme of the book to something which occurred outside the book. Yueyue’s mother connected the

book with Yueyue's personal experiences to help him understand. The books Yueyue shared with his mother had few words. However, Yueyue's mother explained the content with lots of details and connected it to their own experience. She said to Yueyue:

“Would you like to hug? (Yueyue turns the page) Little mouse's mummy is coming. What is he playing? Mummy is chasing. Mummy, hug me. What is this? Tree. The little mouse is two years old.”

When they read a book about food, Yueyue's mother asked him:

“What would you like to eat? Watermelon? Chocolate cake? Caterpillar eats so much. It's a bowl. Banana. Yueyue. Look at the caterpillar. (Mimic the sound) Caterpillar wants to have dinner, too”.

When Yueyue's mother invited Yueyue to read a baby book, she said:

“We just had breakfast, didn't we? Let's see what this baby has eaten, OK?” In this way, children naturally start to build the concept of intertextuality and self-identification.

Adults in this focus reward and encourage “book talk” to suspend reality, sometimes it is not even directly relevant to the book or the ongoing conversation. These dialogues may sound very familiar in first language shared reading talks. When Xiaoxia and her mother were reading the book *Creepy Carrots*, she said: “Little rabbit likes to eat carrots, not a biscuit, so you want to give a biscuit to mummy, right?” When they read the word “shy”, Xiaoxia's mother said to her: **“Are you shy? For example, when you meet someone you**

don't know. Are you shy? You are not shy, right? You are good at handling this." When she explained the word "jealous" from the book, Xiaoxia's mother connected it to Xiaoxia's own life. Xiaoxia's mother said: **"For example, I would like to eat a biscuit, you give that biscuit to the rabbit, not me, I feel jealous."** Xiaoxia also said when the character from a book came to their home, she would give him the truck. Children use the knowledge of what books or characters do to legitimise their behaviour.

Children in this focus can actively draw on their knowledge of other books, known as "semiotic intertext"; and use their life experiences to reflect on the story they encounter in a new picturebook, known as "autobiographical intertext" (Torr, 2007). Both Xiaotian and his mother could connect different books. When Xiaotian mentioned a book during shared reading, his mother said: **"It is that book about a caterpillar, every day it eats something, until one day...it became a cocoon, and it flew out. He is talking about that. Crawling for several days and flying away."** I gave a snowman soft toy to Xiaotian, his mother then spoke about the *The Snowman Story* book and recalled why the snowman melted at the end of that book. It seems that picturebooks and book talk are part of their daily life; parents may not have the clear intention to extend their children's literary and literacy ability. However, children internalise these easily through book talk.

This evidence confirms what I discussed in chapter 2 that children engage in both semiotic intertext or autobiographical intertext during English

shared reading (Torr, 2007). In the previous Literary focus, I also found much evidence of autobiographical intertext and autobiographical intertext occurs slightly more often than semiotic intertext; in this Exploratory focus, I found as many semiotic intertexts as autobiographical intertexts. Sipe (1999) emphasised that personal interpretations and responses are vital for children to learn “how to move through from the efferent to the aesthetic stages” (p.58). For these children, stories are a way to organise book experience and life experience by personalising connections. Xiaoxia demonstrated more autobiographical intertexts than semiotic intertexts while Xiaotian showed both because of his rich literary experience.

6.2.4.2 Free to alternate between words and pictures

For the first two foci, parents and children pay attention to words rather than pictures; for the Literary focus, parents and children pay more attention to the details in the pictures. In this focus pattern, parents and children’s foci are both pictures and words (mostly from listening to the words rather than decoding) as a whole to create the story and to facilitate the child’s comprehension of the story.

Children and parents freely talk about the characters, pictures, plot or feelings given in the book regardless of the language. Parents and children sometimes point to the pictures to draw attention to the details. Parents are free to alternate between pictures and words. With their rich book experiences, children have the linguistic and literary ability to do likewise. The parents’ and

children's goal is story comprehension and gaining pleasure from the book. So parents seem to be very flexible in terms of embracing any reading strategies but naturally engage in rich talk with their children.

6.2.4.3 What kind of questions do they ask

The Exploratory focus involves more complicated questions such as clarification or prediction questions, comprehension questions or a simplified retelling of stories, aesthetic questions about personal opinions and association questions linking to the reader's personal life and other books. In these reading episodes, both children and parents asked for more explanations or gave more effective commentaries. Parents' questions were more cognitively demanding. This pattern displays several characteristics of Dialogue Reading skills (Whitehurst et al., 1994) as I introduced in chapter 2.

Parents in the study frequently solicited predictions or asked the child to recall information or to complete the story. Although Xiaotian asked fewer questions overall than his mother, he tended to ask more complex questions such as comprehension questions. In contrast, his mother tended to ask about his understanding of what was being read. When Xiaoxia and her mother shared the book *We are Going on a Bear Hunt* together, for the repeating rhymes, Xiaoxia's mother let her complete the sentences. When Xiaoxia's mother said: "We are going on a-", "We got to go-", "we are going to catch a-", or "We can't go-", "What a beautiful day. We are not-", Xiaoxia finished the sentences correctly without hesitation.

The same pattern was observed when they shared the book *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed*. When Xiaoxia's mother said: "Five Little Monkeys brush their-" or "The Mama called the doctor, the doctor said-", Xiaoxia always completed the sentences. Parents ask children "Wh" questions (what, where, when, why, how, who) freely and discuss together accordingly. Xiaoxia's mother asked almost all types of Wh-questions, for example, "Her dad is hugging her brother. Who else is playing in the tree?", "George, where is George?", "Tell me what 'muddy tractor' is?" or "George is sad. Why?" Xiaotian's mother posed more challenging or open-ended questions such as "What is very heavy?" "So it is broken a little bit. Can you keep a snake at home?" or "Where is the spring? Let's find the spring. This one?"

Children often made comments and posed questions about the story and related topics, they took the initiative or asked adults to answer their questions. I found more cognitively demanding questions and more initial interactions from children in this pattern. Xiaoxia asked many questions when she and her mother shared English picturebooks. Xiaoxia asked most of the questions in Chinese, but it demonstrated that she could understand the stories in English very well. Her questions included: "**What is this cat looking at?**", "**What is this rabbit doing?**" "**Mummy, why doesn't Peppa Pig put one foot in?**" When Xiaotian saw a picture, he said: "**They will block the people behind them.**" He had his idea about the story and said: "**They can see outside the window.**"

Parents were patient with the children's questions and paused to answer

them. Parents made an effort to evaluate, expand, repeat, comment on the child's responses, elaborate on the child's ideas or offer open-ended questions. Xiaoxia's mother always encouraged interaction, and continually suggested books to read, but did not push her to read what she wanted to read. Xiaoxia asked her mother what the character in the book was talking about, and her mother answered patiently:

“What is he saying? He is saying I have many feelings, sometimes I am happy, sometimes I feel excited, sometimes I feel frustrated, sometimes I feel bored or scared. These are all feelings.”

When Xiaoxia asked what the character was doing, her mother explained: “She is checking whether someone is following him, whether someone is stealing the carrots.” I sometimes did not know what Xiaoxia or Xiaotian were talking about because it was not in the book, but their mothers responded immediately. Even if it was just a word, the mothers knew what they meant.

6.2.4.4 Children's responses: show great interest and be able to predict, pose questions and make comments

Children belonging to this interaction focus tend to request more information about the book or a similar book, or ask to reread the book. Xiaoxia asked to read the same book again or another book in the same series, and said the name of that book — **“I want that button one.”** Xiaotian asked to read more: **“and then these books, can we read another book?”** and did not want to finish

reading. It happened quite often that parents wanted to finish reading, but the children requested more. When Xiaotian's mother said: "**I feel miserable. This book is so long. There are three stories in this book. Shall we just read one story from this book?**" Xiaotian said: "**No, all the stories in this book.**" It shows that children are enthusiastic book lovers and regard shared reading as a pleasant activity.

Children belonging to this reading pattern are able to predict what will happen next, mostly based on visual clues. They can spontaneously offer ideas about the story. Children tend to ask questions about facts, pose clarification questions or enquire about the narrative elements like the setting, characters and plot. Children can recall information from the story. Xiaoxia could complete the sentences that her mother read. She sometimes turned to the previous page to double-check the details. When Xiaoxia's mother asked her why George did not jump into the pool, she answered: "Because he doesn't want to dive into the pool and swim." This was the information from the previous page. Xiaoxia recalled earlier pages and said: "**He stepped on this cat's water.**" Xiaoxia could also predict the plot and said: "**The little squirrel left. Go home.**" Xiaoxia was guessing what the character was doing and said: "**He is hiding.**" Xiaoxia pointed to the picture and said: "**His dad is sleeping there.** (Mum laughs) **After he wakes up, he will play with him.**" She guessed George's feelings and said George was sad. Similarly, during one reading session, Xiaotian said: "**It should be here,**" or "**He is lost**", predicting the plot.

Families belonging to this reading pattern have a rich knowledge about books and a rich knowledge from books. During free talking, his mother gave Xiaotian some facts. For example, she explained how the caterpillar became a butterfly. When we were coming back from the kindergarten, Xiaotian and his mother talked about the 24 solar terms in the traditional Chinese calendar, and Xiaotian knew a poem about it.

This suggests that children immersed in this interaction focus pattern are able to not only take meaning from books, but also to talk about them. In general, the parent-child talk was warm and cognitively enriching. Many skills and interactions were similar to descriptions in previous literature about first language shared reading. Halliday (1975) summarised four types of response in first language reading and I was able to find evidence of all of them in my study: (1) Informative response-children compared the pictures in the book with the real world; (2) Heuristic response- children think about the causes of the pictures and predict the outcomes from the pictures; (3) Imaginative response-children immerse themselves in the world of the book and use their own words to describe it; (4) Personal response-children connect their own experiences with the book, talk about the book and evaluate it.

6.2.4.5 Summary

This interaction focus usually develops from the previous focus — the Literary focus which is analogous to first language input reading pattern. Sometimes this transition is related to age; sometimes, it is about the accumulation of reading

experiences. Between my two observations of Xiaoxia, there was a gap of 3 months. The first session of Xiaoxia's reading was when she was 30 months old. The second one was when she was 33 months old. There is a significant difference between these two videos, Xiaoxia and her mother spoke more English in the second session, asked more complicated questions and there was a great deal of interaction. Immersion in the previous shared reading pattern, the Literary focus reading pattern, at a certain age and with more reading experience, children gradually become active participants in shared reading interactions. They speak more frequently, ask more questions, initiate more book talk, and then this exploratory focus pattern becomes natural.

6.2.5 Digital focus: Parents and children are engaged in interaction with technology

(Anna's family, Xiaohu's and other families)

The families I observed did not only exhibit one focus. I found that almost all families in the observation stage used digital learning resources and other technology to a greater or lesser extent to facilitate reading. Parents provided digital resources for their children. Resources provided by modern educational technology include a reading pen, digital books, apps on a tablet or smartphone, and CDs or videos. Strictly speaking, this is not typical "shared reading", however, from the questionnaires, observations and interviews, many parents mentioned that they used a reading pen, CD, app or video as part of their

English shared reading activity. Xiaohu's family used a smartphone, Anna was provided with an iPad to read by herself; and Xiaotian owned a reading Pad called TellyBear. Parents sit next to the children, helping the child when needed, sometimes praising them and encouraging them to interact with the devices.

The parents' focus is to cultivate independent digital users and intervene as little as possible. They seldom communicate the book contents, and children prefer to become immersed with the device and the content by themselves.

Some parents in these families have limited English levels and consider that these tools make up for the deficiency. Other parents have competent English ability. However, they say **"I am not confident with my pronunciation"** and also seek out digital tools. Parents expect digital resources to assist them to exploit the potential of language learning or reading and reduce the amount of effort they have to make.

6.2.5.1 A large disparity in the digital books they read

Anna likes to read digital English picturebooks on her iPad. Rather than read with her mother, she preferred to "read" by herself. These digitalised books are not only E-readers similar to Kindle, Anna uses a reading app which has an audio function. It also has the function of monitoring her pronunciation and asking her to repeat. When Anna pronounced a word correctly, the colour on the screen turned blue and she received a star award, and then Anna could turn the page. If the colour were black, she would reread the word until the screen turned blue. Anna sometimes became obsessed with it and continually repeated the

word until the colour changed. As her mother explained, there are also some simple interactions on this app. Anna showed great interest in doing this repeatedly, she played and interacted with the device in this way. Anna sometimes spoke to the iPad, and when she received the gold coin reward, she felt excited and showed what she had received to her mother. According to her mother, apart from the incentives on the iPad, her motivation was also derived from her sense of control — she could operate it by herself; turn the pages by herself and progress at her own pace. Anna wanted to improve her pronunciation this way because the iPad told her what was right or wrong. Her mother gave this app positive feedback and commented that Anna liked to play with it, and this was not a “bad” thing. Anna’s kindergarten also gave out English picturebooks with scanning codes on them, and they can scan them and read or listen to these digital books.

I observed that other families also used digital picturebooks and other reading apps. Every child’s digital device has different types of digital resources. Xiaotian’s TellyBear had more than 100 picturebooks on it. Xiaotian could click on the words and hear them read out in English or Chinese. It also had a touching pen to click on the screen. TellyBear could record the mother’s or father’s reading voice, and Xiaotian could read along with the pictures. Xiaohu’s digital English picturebook resources were mainly from his English teacher; most of them were graded level digital books. When I asked Qiqi’s mother what kinds of digital English reading or picturebooks she was using, she

answered that they were using an app called Dona English and said she thought the app is produced by a company called New Oriental, which is well-known in the English teaching field. Qiqi's mother downloaded an app with graded level books on it. However, she found it was too challenging for Qiqi and so she did not use it very often. Yueyue's mother also said she had some digital picturebooks on her phone and she plans to let Yueyue read them when he gets older.

On the other hand, from the results of the questionnaire, 11 parents, whose English level is beginner, and 43 parents, who can only speak “simple words”, read to their children every day. A parallel finding from the observations is that with digital resources, these parents could make shared reading in English happen.

6.2.5.2 Children listen to CDs or audio files

Parents allow children to listen to CDs or audio files regularly. Many parents in the interviews said their children spent more time listening than reading because the parents consider that listening is critical to obtain natural language input.

The concept of “Moerduo” (literally, ‘to grind the ears’, means learning from listening, originally from Stephen Krashen’s concept of comprehensible

language input) has been a widespread educational practice in relation to

language learning and is frequently mentioned by parents and the mass media.

This also echoes what I mentioned in chapter 1 that parents realise that there is a “critical period” (Meisel, 2011) for second language acquisition.

Anna's mother said: **"I let her listen to the audios of these books at home. I read less, but she listens a lot."** Xiaotian frequently listened to CD or audio recordings. When I asked his mother if she bought the English picturebooks with CDs on purpose, she admitted that she had, if the book came with an audio file. She usually downloaded it onto an MP3 player and played it every day for a few minutes. Yueyue's mother also mentioned that they listened frequently, more often than they watched a cartoon. Weiwei's English teacher sent audio files to Weiwei's mother and she encouraged Weiwei to listen as often as possible. Weiwei's mother said they spent more time listening than reading. Yueyue's mother agreed. Qiqi also listened to the audio version of book recordings and songs, such as Mother Goose and Christmas songs recommended by the WeChat platform. At bedtime, Weiwei's listening routine was as follows: they listened to the traditional Chinese classics, one or two stories told by the famous story-teller Uncle Kai, and two or three Oxford Reading Tree series recordings. Most children listened to these audio files without books, while some children liked to listen while looking at the books.

Almost all parents among these seven families downloaded several picturebooks or story-telling apps, or directly streamed picturebooks from their smartphone. Most of these apps originate in China and are aimed at language learners rather than native speakers. There are some digital stories based on books; others are original stories which only have digital versions. According to questionnaire data, parents joined several WeChat platforms to gain information

about reading or listening to stories provided by these WeChat platforms. Li's (2016) comparative study in China shows that parents from cities gain the parenting and educational information mainly from the internet and parenting books while parents in the countryside obtain information from the older generation and kindergarten. Similarly, in my study, app resources and WeChat platforms were the two primary sources parents obtained picturebook information from. Qiqi's mother used several of them. She also mentioned Jiligualala (a famous English learning resource app, downloaded 1 million times according to the company's report), which had lots of digital books on it. She joined the WeChat platform, for example, New Oriental English to obtain information about English picturebooks and English learning. Xiaohu relied on his teacher's knowledge about apps and received some recommendations but had not used any at the time of the study.

6.2.5.3 Reading pen

Xiaoxia's mother and Xiaotian's mother both mentioned the electronic Reading pen. The reader points it at the paper books (the books look like ordinary books, however, they have an invisible code printed on them) which allows the pen to read out the words. Each reading pen can only be used on certain books, for example, the same series, or books from the same publisher. After removing the top from the pen, the children point to the sentence on the paper and the pen will sing or read it out. According to the parents in the interviews, many popular picturebooks have been produced in the reading pen version (for example, many

Graded Level series, Anthony Browne's books, various versions of Mother Goose and nursery rhymes books) with the reading pen sign on the cover. Many of these versions of the picturebooks can only be found in the Chinese or East Asian market.

Xiaoxia had a green caterpillar-shaped pen, and her mother said she usually used it for the children's magazine *High Five*, which is from the USA, and a few books including a dictionary. Xiaoxia's mother bought another reading pen only for Pearson books, and she said it was not compatible with books from other publishers. Despite this investment, Xiaoxia's mother said they did not use the reading pen very often. Xiaotian's mother said she preferred the reading pen more than the CDs because when she became tired, she allowed Xiaotian to listen to nursery rhymes with the books and Xiaotian could do it without his parents' assistance.

6.2.5.4 Children watch book-related cartoons

Most families watched cartoons related to the books they were reading at the same time. Qiqi had read and watched *Dora the Explorer*, and the Mickey Mouse series; Qiqi's mother said Qiqi showed greater interest in the books if she had previously watched the cartoon. Xiaohu watched the cartoon of Peter Rabbit and also read the books. They listened to the cartoon when they were driving and repeated it many times according to his mother's interview. His mother said Xiaohu liked that and he could remember many of the words from these stories. Xiaohu's mother said that she found paper books were better than

cartoons for his eyes and more efficient for learning, so she did not allow Xiaohu to watch too much.

When I asked the parents whether they thought their children could understand the English language cartoons. Anna's mother told me that she found Anna could follow the plot. She gave me an example. One Mickey Mouse episode was about Mickey trying to find his lamb. There were four tools Mickey could use, and the children had to work out what kind of lamb it was and what tools they could use, where the lambs were and they had to solve other problems. Anna's mother sometimes watched the cartoon with her and said Anna could understand what was happening. However, Anna's mother also thought it depended on how difficult the language in the cartoon was. Anna's mother also observed that Anna did not understand several words in the Mickey Mouse cartoon. Weiwei's mother said that she thought Weiwei could understand the dialogue in English language cartoons. Weiwei read the *Peppa Pig* books and watched the Peppa Pig cartoon. She also liked the *Sophia* series and the *Little Pony* series.

Anna did not have any strong preferences in terms of the language choice of a cartoon. Anna's mother mentioned that when there was a choice of an English language cartoon or the Chinese version, she would say, she wanted to watch the Chinese version. If Anna's mother said they were going to watch the English one, Anna accepted her mother's decision. She would not refuse to watch an English cartoon because of the language. She liked several English

cartoons such as Paw Patrol, Frozen, which is also popular in English speaking countries. Xiaotian's mother was sure that Xiaotian could understand the English cartoons and said Xiaotian could translate them by himself. According to his mother, Xiaotian liked all the cartoons, from Peter the Wolf, which had only a few words, to Polly the Police Car, which had long dialogues. Xiaotian's mother was amazed that Xiaotian even liked the cartoons which he did not understand. Xiaotian watched the German version of The Story of the Mole, French Hanbang Dad and Japanese Astro Boy, he concentrated hard and seemed contented. Xiaotian's mother did not understand these languages; however, she was trying to give him a broad exposure to different languages. Xiaotian's mother said she did not know why he liked them and guessed that perhaps watching cartoons did not require him to “**use his brain**” so much or he relied on the pictures to understand the storyline.

From the interview, parents seemed to have a hierarchy of media in terms of its perceived usefulness for language learning or its educational function in general. Within popular culture, parents believed books were the best, and then audios for listening, then cartoons or videos, and finally, games. Parents allowed unrestricted time for books and audios but restricted the time children spent watching cartoons. Most parents controlled their children's screen time, as almost all parents in the interview worried about their children's eyesight if they spent too much time looking at a screen. Weiwei's mother did not allow her daughter to read digital books because she said it was bad for her

eyes; instead, Weiwei spent more time listening. This is a common worry in China. The hours that children spend in school are long and outdoor playtime is short. The need to protect children's eyes is promoted by schools and the mass media. Reducing screen time is one among many solutions suggested.

Other parents thought it was an age-related issue, and considered that, for children under the age of two, it was not advisable to allow them to access digital devices. In Weiwei's mother's opinion, there were other essential activities to do, such as playing with friends in the neighbourhood. Although Anna read from her iPad almost every day, her mother said she was also controlling the screen time. Xiaotian's mother said he could watch *The Octonauts* and *Paw Patrol* every day, but he could only watch two 23-minute episodes. Yueyue's mother downloaded several apps, songs or videos, but she said she only let him watch for 5 minutes per day because he was only 18 months old. Yueyue's mother thought book apps and watching cartoons on a smartphone were for older children.

Xiaoxia's mother did not allow her to watch cartoons for the reason given above — she was too young and it was detrimental to her eyesight. However, she said Xiaoxia could watch it when she became older. She also worried it was easy to become addicted to it and it was hard to stop once she started. Xiaoxia's mother stated that three years old was an appropriate age to watch cartoons.

6.2.5.5 Some parents prefer not to rely on digital resources

However, Xiaoxia's mother said she did not want to rely on CDs, professional recordings or digital picturebooks for shared reading. She said she only has two apps called Haibao and Jiliguala. She used Haibao most frequently and listened to songs or several audio recordings of picturebooks. She thought some book recordings by native speakers were very useful. Apart from Haibao, she said she only had the audio edition of Mother Goose and a few other books. She explained that whether or not an English language picturebook had an audio file did not affect her decision to buy the book. I asked the reason why Xiaoxia's mother did not use digital resources, and she mentioned that a CD is different from a mother's voice. She said that she had learned from several books that a mother's voice was the most beautiful voice for a baby. Rather than let Xiaoxia listen to them, Xiaoxia's mother said she used the audio files herself as study tools because when she was unsure of how to sing a song, she learned it from the audio file first and then sang it to Xiaoxia.

Parents using digital resources for fostering language learning or easing the parents' burden is frequent. Most parents, however, controlled the screen time; and some parents thought the child's parents' voices were more beneficial for their young children. I found there were some coincidences. Families which used the first and second shared reading pattern were more likely to rely on digital resources because they were more focussed on language skills; families which followed the third and fourth shared reading pattern relied less on digital resources because they also valued the physical bond and the reading pleasure

which they perceived could only be gained from traditional shared reading.

6.2.5.6 Children's responses: a sense of control and achievement

Almost all children like digital resources, some of them actively prefer to read digital versions rather than paper versions. Anna's mother said it was because Anna had a sense of control and achievement through reading and playing at her own pace on the iPad. She also mentioned that the instant reward was another reason. For example, Anna could win golden coins immediately after reading every sentence. Xiaotian's mother said it was because when they read or played on the iPad or smartphone, the children do not use their brain so much, so they feel more relaxed.

Besides, I found a similar physical posture as Yuill and Martin (2016) observed when parents and children read digital books. They explain that this is because digital books at the moment are not designed for shared reading but personal reading. As Yuill and Martin (2016) describe, when children read from a digital device, they hold the device in a "head-down" posture, similar to other solo activities such as playing video games or web browsing. In comparison, when parent-child read a traditional paper book, it seems natural that the parent opens the page to invite the child to join and "curve inwards and share". Therefore, when children read from the screen rather than paper, the warmth of the parent-child interactions decreased significantly: there was less laughter, less communication and fewer shows of affection.

6.2.5.7 Summary

To summarise, digital picturebooks used in the current study varied; most of these books are simply digitalised forms of the paper edition while some of them have more interactive functions. Most families used at least one type of digital resource. Children in this current study, in common with children in many other countries, used tablets or smartphones extensively. What they watched and read from digital resources confirmed that popular culture was highly globalised.

In the literature review, I stated that an increasing number of studies recently demonstrate that digital reading could be beneficial when there is a mediate adult to assist with story comprehension and vocabulary outcomes (Shamir et al., 2012; Takacs et al., 2014). From the data, we can see that Chinese parents take full advantage of digital resources to make up for their disadvantages in English language ability. However, some parents value the parent-child bond more than the possible benefits, so they do not rely on digital resources.

6.3 Summary of five shared reading foci

According to Lancy, Draper and Boyce's (1989) classification, parents are classified as either expansionist or reductionist. Comparing with my classification, parents who have a Literal focus or Literacy focus are reductionists in that these patterns have focused goals. The reductionists see reading time as an exercise or test and force children to use their skills in

decoding or error correction (Lancy, Draper & Boyce, 1989). Parents who have a Literary focus or Exploratory focus are expansionists. The expansionists emphasise parent-child collaboration and parents respond to children's responses, are in close physical proximity with their children, and involve children in the process of shared reading; while the reductionists discourage parent-child interaction and instead focused on specific reading skills. As I mentioned in chapter 2, according to Rosenblatt's (1978) and Sipe's (1999) concepts, Literal and Literacy foci are related to an "efferent stance" while Literary and Exploratory foci show the characteristics of what they call an "aesthetic stance". Additionally, I found consistency between parents' behaviour and children's learned behaviour and responses. Briefly, the parents' understanding of shared reading, to a large degree, determines how they interact with children.

Among these foci during English shared reading in this study, we can see from the features of the foci and the children's responses that several foci tend to discourage reading whereas some foci are associated with encouraging children to read. Lancy, Draper and Boyce (1989) also found that the expansionists' children were anxious to learn and enjoyed reading; however, children who have reductionist parents tended to finish the books quickly and did not find reading with their parents an enjoyable experience. These children's responses and behaviours were confirmed by this current study.

These five different foci have internal connections. Many families who belong to the Literal focus interaction type also belong to or become the Literacy focus type in that the parents' principles are similar. They regard literal understanding and literacy skills as a priority. The Literal focus could be found at any age for the children, while the Literacy focus was mostly found in older children who are more than 4 or 5 years old. On the other hand, the Literary focus often develops into the next stage, the Exploratory focus, because the principles of the parents belonging to both foci — reading is for pleasure. The Literary focus can be taken as the pre-stage or precondition of the Exploratory focus because it is also related to the children's age. With natural cognitive development, children who immersed themselves with parents in literary shared reading find it easy to go onto the Exploratory interaction focus when they become older. Further, parents with different foci have a different understanding of digital reading. Parents who adopt the Literal and Literacy focus pattern use more digital resources while parents who adopt the Literary and Exploratory foci rely less on digital tools.

Different concepts towards English shared reading are reflected by the parents' and children's choice of reading place. For the first two foci — the Literal and Literacy focus, the parent-child dyads chose to sit by a children's study table to read these books, while the families who follow the Literary and Exploratory interaction foci tend to be more relaxed, sitting on a sofa or bed and had a close physical attachment. Children's responses are different towards

these five foci. For the first two foci — Literal and Literacy-focused children tend to regard reading as a task and frequently show reluctance to read, while the families who follow the Literary, Exploratory and Digital interaction foci seemed to enjoy reading more and generally asked to continue.

The different patterns of the seven families and different patterns when they read in a different language echo to Golden and Gerber's (1990) description of shared reading as a semiotic event, which is shaped by the parents and children with a particular text. Although these five patterns have distinct characteristics, however, in a real reading scene, one particular family may show the features of more than one of these five patterns. It could depend on who reads to their children and sometimes it is because of the reading materials. For example, when Xiaohu and his father read graded level books, they mostly applied a Literal and Literacy focus and spent less time on the illustrations, while when they read the book of *No, David* and the *Five Little Monkeys* series book, which had a livelier story and vibrant illustrations, they were more likely to discuss the illustrations and what happened in the story. These seven families all belong to a broad range of middle-class families, none of them is struggling to survive and, to a greater or lesser extent, have the time and money to invest in their children's education and to provide educational resources. Children were exposed to books, and most of them owned many books. None of the parents approved of intensive learning at an early age, and several parents said they did not want to push their children too soon. Parents in this study perceived

themselves to be doing just what they thought was beneficial for their children. Sometimes there may be no clear-cut distinction, but we can see some typical characteristics of these patterns.

6.4 The difference between English and Chinese shared reading foci

6.4.1 General comparison

Exploring these foci of families' English language picturebook shared reading and comparing it to the families' shared reading in Chinese helps us to understand their general reading strategies and reading choices. Shared reading was estimated by children's comprehensive language and cognitive development, both Chinese and English in this study. Current practices were used to explore cross-language skills by identifying reading patterns across both languages. I applied the same features I described in each focus from the parents' and children's English shared reading behaviour and used these features to observe these families' Chinese shared reading. By allocating the families to these five foci, I found that when families read Chinese and English picturebooks, some families applied the same strategy and showed the same interaction focus, however, some families did not. Weiwei's mother concentrated on recognising the words in the picturebooks no matter whether they were in English or Chinese. Anna's father explored the details in the picturebooks and focused on Anna's comprehension when he read Chinese

picturebooks to her, while they focused on reading skills when they read English picturebooks. A comparison of all seven families is given in table 6 below.

Table 6 The interaction foci of the seven families in English and Chinese

Names	Focus of shared reading in English	Focus of shared reading in Chinese
Xiaoxia	Literary focus and Exploratory focus	Literary focus and Exploratory focus
Xiaotian	Exploratory focus	Exploratory focus
Anna	Literacy focus	Exploratory focus
Yueyue	Literary focus	Literary focus
Qiqi	Literacy focus	Literacy focus
Xiaohu	Literal focus	Exploratory focus
Weiwei	Literacy focus	Literacy focus

6.4.2 Comparison of shared reading foci when reading in different languages

Shared reading for most families in this study included two languages. Most of the families read in the two languages in the same session while some families read either only in Chinese or English. In real reading scenarios, it was very common that some families read picturebooks in two languages, or some families had separate Chinese and English picturebook reading times; or one parent read in English, and the other parent read in Chinese. For most of the

population in China, it is customary for more families to read in the mother language. On the other hand, in this study, there were some parents who only read in English (for example, in the same family, Xiaoxia's mother only reads to her in English, while her grandparents read to her in Chinese). Among the seven observation families, the amount of reading in the two languages also differed. Xiaoxia read overwhelmingly more English picturebooks than Chinese ones. Anna, Xiaotian, Qiqi and Weiwei read a similar number in both languages. Yueyue read slightly more English picturebooks, and Xiaohu read more Chinese picturebooks than English ones.

After comparing shared reading in Chinese and English for these families as table 6 suggested, I found that most families (Xiaotian's, Xiaoxia's, Yueyue's, Qiqi's and Weiwei's families) showed a similar focus both in Chinese and English picturebook shared reading, while some families (Anna's and Xiaohu's families) did not. Understanding these differences and similarities and looking further into the reasons will help us to better understand the parents' and children's behaviour and perceptions. I will present the families who read in a similar way below.

6.4.3 Families used a similar focus when they undertook shared reading in both languages

6.4.3.1 Parents' understanding of shared reading determines their behaviour no matter the language

These five families (Xiaotian's, Xiaoxia's, Yueyue's, Qiqi's and Weiwei's families) showed more similarities than differences during shared reading in different languages. The parents' understanding of shared reading and parenting had an influence on both languages. For example, Weiwei's and Qiqi's mothers regarded gaining literacy skills as the most important purpose of shared reading. I mentioned that their focus was a Literacy focus and they concentrated on word recognition when they read English picturebooks together. When Weiwei's mother read a Chinese picturebook to her, her goal was the same — to recognise words. She usually started like this when she shared a translated Chinese picturebook *Guess How Much I Love You* together:

“Let's read this book. *Guess How Much I Love You*. Let's see how many words you can recognise, OK?”

When Weiwei's mother read Chinese picturebooks to her, she would often ask: **“Do you know this character?”** or **“Can you recognise any character? Sit down and point, point to the words one by one carefully.”**

Weiwei's mother liked to ask Weiwei to read after her. Weiwei learnt this habit and asked her mother when she could not read the Chinese characters, **“Is this Shen?”** and she pointed to the Chinese character.

Qiqi and her mother's English shared reading also showed the features of a Literacy focus. This was the same for her shared reading in Chinese. Qiqi's mother sustained the pattern to allow Qiqi to remember the words when they read in Chinese. Her mother read: "**She is my little-** (then she waited for a response) **sister,**" and then she asked Qiqi: "**Who is she? She is my-**". Qiqi's mother hoped Qiqi would remember the Chinese words. Shared reading for Xiaotian, Xiaoxia and their parents showed characteristics of an Exploratory focus, which is reading for pleasure in both languages. They explored the details of the book, asked open and complicated questions, often connected the story to their lives and laughed during Chinese shared reading.

Yueyue's mother regarded picturebooks as playthings that she could use to play and interact with Yueyue. No matter whether in Chinese or English, she chose books that she could play with and make some exaggerated actions. Other parents were rather strict no matter which language they were sharing. Their body language was similar, regardless of the language. When Weiwei read books with her mother, she sat at a distance from the table. Her mother often reminded her: "**Move your chair** (Weiwei was too far away from the book.) **Come here,**" all through the reading session in both languages. Xiaotian and his mother took shared reading to be a pleasant interaction process and Xiaotian sat close to his mother throughout the reading session.

6.4.3.2 Children's attitudes and responses towards books are similar no matter the language

From the parents' answers in the questionnaire, children's enthusiasm towards or enjoyment of books in the two languages was similar among all the questionnaire participants. I asked parents to report children's enjoyment of Chinese picturebook reading and English picturebook reading on a scale of 1 to 5. Among the 516 parents who answered, only 6 children liked English picturebooks more than Chinese picturebooks. Almost all children liked reading Chinese picturebooks the same or slightly more compared to reading English picturebooks. The average difference from my data is 0.68 (the average Chinese picturebook enjoyment score was 4.69/5 points, the average English picturebook enjoyment score was 4.01/5). Among families who read English picturebooks, it was rare that children enjoyed reading in one language and did not like to read in the other language. It is easy to transfer this love of books between languages among young children. That means, to be an English picturebook reader, children have to be a book reader first. It seems that cultivating a love of books at an early age is easier in either language. Considering the children in my data were mostly preschoolers, some parents claimed that it would be hard to push their children to read in a foreign language if they had not done it when they were younger.

Xiaotian seemed to enjoy reading in both languages, preferring to read Chinese picturebooks slightly more than English ones. Qiqi's picturebook

enjoyment from the questionnaire was below average in both languages.

Weiwei's interest in books was also relatively low in both languages. From my observation, she preferred to watch cartoons rather than do shared reading.

Weiwei sometimes looked bored and looked at her watch or her nails, looked outside or tried to turn the page before her mother had finished reading it, no matter which language her mother was reading in. Weiwei's mother often read for two minutes without interaction while reading Chinese picturebooks.

Children do not necessarily like to read in their native language more; it depends on the content of the story. Anna did not insist on reading in Chinese, and she accepted her mother's explanation — **“Some stories happen outside China, so the book is in English”**. Yueyue did not yet understand the concept of a foreign language and his mother tongue. For him, it was just a book.

Weiwei's preference in picturebooks was Chinese picturebooks first, then English picturebooks and lastly traditional Chinese texts. Her mother's preference seemed to be the opposite. Weiwei generally had little enthusiasm for storybooks. When her mother asked her to read a storybook with her, regardless of the language, she preferred to solve the maze problem in an activity book. She liked to find the details in the pictures in an activity book rather than read with her mother. Her mother urged her: **“OK. Promise me. After we find this, we'll read a book, OK?”** Neither Weiwei's mother nor Weiwei regarded the activity book as a “book”. It does not necessarily mean that the parents and children had more interaction if they read in their mother

tongue either. Qiqi gave little response (she smiled or nodded) when her mother read Chinese picturebooks to her. Qiqi's mother and Qiqi had little interaction, no matter whether they were reading English or Chinese picturebooks.

In the interview, Weiwei's mother stated that learning traditional Chinese texts (Confucian classics, which I mentioned in chapter 2) was most important to do on a daily basis. **"That's what we lack"**, she said. When Weiwei played by herself or laid down on the bed, her mother continued to read by herself. Sometimes, noticing that Weiwei was not willing to read, Weiwei's mother said: **"Then I will read first."** Weiwei's mother also regarded this as work. She sent Weiwei to a traditional Chinese private family school (Sishu) to learn traditional Chinese texts daily. However, Weiwei consistently showed that she did not want to read the traditional texts. Weiwei's mother knew that Weiwei did not like to read the traditional texts. When she let Weiwei read English picturebooks, she said: **"Pick two English picturebooks. If you don't read these, we will read *Yi Jing* (the name of a traditional Chinese classic)."** She knew that Weiwei preferred English picturebooks to traditional texts. When they finished reading an English picturebook, Weiwei asked for more books. When her mother suggested reading *Yi Jing*, Weiwei said: **"No, I won't."** She had other excuses for not reading the traditional texts, for example: **"I want to practise dancing. (After a minute) I want to sit here,"** or **"I haven't had a rest yet"** (Weiwei lay on the bed), or sometimes Weiwei jumped from the chair to the bed. In the interview, I asked Weiwei's mother whether she thought

Weiwei could understand the traditional Chinese texts such as *The Three Character Classic*, Weiwei's mother said "No". However, Weiwei's mother said she would finally understand it and quote it when she grew up and would find it useful for her life, as her mother did.

From the observation, I noticed three possible reasons why Weiwei did not regard reading traditional Chinese texts to be an enjoyable activity. Firstly, there were no pictures; secondly, when they read traditional Chinese texts, they usually read for more than 2 minutes without any interruption or interaction; thirdly, Weiwei and her mother had separate but identical books, and they usually pointed to the text and read it together. Weiwei's mother often tested her on whether she could recognise the Chinese words, which made the reading process rather stressful. In the same reading session, if this stress continued, I found Weiwei began to refuse to read other books. From my observation, I could see that if children's interest in books is discouraged in one language, this may transfer to another language.

6.4.3.3 Reading or interaction processes are similar

For the five families I observed, the parents' reading habits or shared reading skills were similar when they read in different languages. Xiaotian's mother read in lively and diverse voices in both languages. She mimicked the sounds and voices of different characters while reading. She and Xiaotian laughed a great deal while reading. Xiaotian became excited when reading in either language. Qiqi's mother did not ask many questions when they read Chinese

picturebooks and there was little interaction. During a shared reading in both languages, Qiqi's mother asked some simple confirmation questions, such as: **"They are all beautiful, right? Do you like this pink star?"** or asked a few discussion questions: **"What do you think? What is this?"** Qiqi also asked a few questions during the reading session in both languages. Qiqi's mother would answer Qiqi's questions using short, simple words. For example, she explained why an animal was called a crocodile duck by saying: **"He is a crocodile, but he lives with ducks."**

As well as encouraging their children to read English picturebooks by themselves, Weiwei's and Xiaohu's parents also encouraged them to read Chinese picturebooks by themselves. When Weiwei's mother read Chinese picturebooks to her, she also liked to point to the words and ask: **"What is this?"** (She pointed to the words). Weiwei herself learnt the habit of tracing the character while she read Chinese picturebooks. She said: **"I can read another character."** She knew this fitted in with her mother's expectations.

Yueyue's mother read in a similar style when she read English or Chinese picturebooks to him. Yueyue's mother read in a casual manner. Sometimes it was hard for me to tell what her explanation was and what the words in the book were. She had the patience to keep introducing books to Yueyue. When Yueyue walked away from book reading and played for 20 minutes, his mother tried again and said: **"Shall we read a book now? Which one would you like? Would you like to choose by yourself? One, two, three."**

Choose from these.” She mixed English picturebooks and Chinese picturebooks and let Yueyue choose from them. It seemed that Yueyue did not have the concept of books in different languages, English or Chinese, he regarded them as the same and chose them randomly. Yueyue’s mother continued asking Yueyue questions such as:

“Where does little mouse want to go? Shall we go through together?

(Yueyue walked away)”, or “Is that a hat? (Yueyue shook his head).

Then what is it? Is that a sock?” (Yueyue shook his head again).

Yueyue walked away and came back, time and again, and he had no preferences in terms of the language of the books.

6.4.3.4 Families shared reading is similar in focus, but the details differ

However, as I pointed out before, every reading activity is different. For the five families who used a similar focus when they shared English or Chinese picturebooks, even if it was same child and the same home environment, the children’s responses could be slightly different depending on the book, the person who read it to them, or simply the children’s mood. Although their general shared reading focus was similar for these five families, regardless of which language they read in, the details were different. Firstly, I noticed many parents paid attention to the details when they read in Chinese but not in English. For example, Xiaotian’s and Qiqi’s mothers gave more books’ publication information to the children. For instance, Xiaotian’s mother gave him the publisher’s information when they read Chinese picturebooks:

“Caterpillar Train, written by Uchida, illustrated by Nishimura, translated by Xun Ying, published by Beijing Science and Technology Press.”

Qiqi’s mother read the publisher’s information as well when they shared Chinese picturebooks. I asked the reason why giving such information to the children was necessary. One parent told me some reading promoters do so to emphasise the author’s and illustrator’s names to allow children to build a concept of copyright. Xiaotian’s mother gave Xiaotian more time to discuss other details more freely when they read in Chinese, such as the map or the train timetable. They even discussed the names of train stations. When Xiaotian could not remember the station names, his mother reminded him with hints and they made up more names for train stations together. Although Xiaotian and his mother discussed details of the story in their English shared reading, it happened less often than in their Chinese reading. Weiwei and her mother also liked to give names to the characters in some books when they read in Chinese rather than in English.

In Chinese shared reading, Yueyue’s mother explained more of the content of the books and connected the storyline with other books or Chinese nursery rhymes, known as semiotic intertext which I found less often in their English shared reading. When she saw a bunny in a baby book, she sang a Chinese nursery rhyme about the bunny. Yueyue and his mother did the actions in this nursery rhyme, and both of them looked happy.

6.4.3.5 Parents asked more complicated questions when reading in Chinese

When these five families read Chinese picturebooks, most of them had more discussion than during English picturebook shared reading. Parents asked more complex questions, they were also patient and confident when answering the children's questions. Xiaotian asked her mother why mummy whale and daddy whale did not always need water in a book; she gave Xiaotian her answer:

“Because they are adults. They can live without water for a while.

Because the baby whale is sick, he needs more water. What do you think? See, I think warm water is not good for the baby whale.”

When they read the translation of the book *The Smartest Giant in Town* in Chinese, Xiaotian's mother asked:

“How did he walk into the shop? I doubt it seriously. He couldn't fit into the shop. What do you think? If you were George, how would you help this dog?”

She doubted that the giant could go into a little shop because of his giant body and asked Xiaotian's opinion on it. Xiaotian's mother asked more “Why” questions which needed to be answered using general knowledge rather than information from books:

“Why can he fly away? Do you know where tadpoles sleep?”

“What is on Locust's eyes? Why does he have such big eyes?”

(Xiaotian shook his head) **What is he doing?”**

“They are grown-up frogs. Tadpoles are babies. Is this their bed?

Why is it fastened to the tree?”

Xiaotian’s mother asked more questions when they read in Chinese.

Xiaotian’s mother encouraged him to predict the story and said: **“I think he brought something that can be used as a sleeping bag. Think about that.”**

When Xiaotian gave a similar answer to the book, his mother did not forget to praise him: **“He thinks the same as you. Oh, yes, there are socks!”** (In a

surprised voice). Xiaotian’s mother also asked Xiaotian something he may

know better than his mother and praised him afterwards: **“Right, you are right.**

They are staff.” Rather than giving a simple explanation, when Yueyue’s

mother read Chinese picturebooks to him, she asked relatively more questions

like this: **“After having some food, what does he want to do? He wants to go out and play. They go to find the little crocodile.”** These examples are many;

because of the lower language barrier for both parents and children, parents are

freer and more confident to ask more demanding questions when they shared

Chinese picturebooks together, although their interaction approach was similar.

6.4.3.6 Connecting to real-life experience

When these five families read Chinese picturebooks, they internalised and

connected with their life more often, compared with their English shared

reading. Both Xiaotian and his mother related the stories to their life naturally.

His mother said: **“He has more than one uniform, like your Daddy’s**

uniform. Usually, there are several uniforms for one person.” Xiaotian did a

similar thing, and he said: **“One day I saw a green and purple caterpillar. This is a big one. The green caterpillar is small.”** He also mentioned a glove in a book was similar to one he lost.

Weiwei and her mother’s shared reading in English and Chinese mainly focused on Literacy skills, while when they read in Chinese, I sometimes found they connected the stories to real life experiences. Weiwei read a book which talked about children not going with strangers. Her mother then discussed with her at length who could pick her up from kindergarten. Weiwei’s mother asked: **“Apart from Daddy and Mummy, in our family, without our permission, who can you go with after school?”** Weiwei gave some names. Her mother continued to set some rules such as **“Someone you know her or his name”** or **“Unless mummy tells you in advance”** and asked her:

“But I didn’t tell you in advance. Can you?” (Weiwei shook her head)

Right. No. Can you go with the guard in front of our building?

Although we see him every day, right? You must ask mummy’s permission. Your sister, uncle, aunt, grandpa, grandma is OK.”

They were not only reading books, they were also discussing life experience and preparing for the future.

6.4.3.7 Children’s responses — more questions and predictions when reading Chinese picturebooks

It is not surprising that children would ask more questions when they read Chinese picturebooks even for these five families who applied a similar

interactional focus. Weiwei asked slightly more questions when she read in Chinese with her mother, and she asked questions such as: **“How about the garden? Is it there?”** Or **“What is it?”** Xiaotian asked more complicated or open questions and he had his own understanding about the stories. He asked his mother: **“Who lives here? Why is the snail here? He has a big head, so he runs into the shop.”** When he saw a character wearing a uniform, he said: **“He is a postman.”** He noticed details like the clothes of the protagonist and said: **“He is still wearing the vest.”** On the next page, he said: **“He changed into another vest.”** When he read that two worms were sitting on a leaf, he made his own story for them: **“These two are dating. They are enjoying the moonlight. They are called sea worms.”** His mother asked then: **“How do you know they are called sea worms?”** They then had a discussion about the names of the worms.

Weiwei had a few confirmation questions when she read English picturebooks while she asked more complicated questions when she read Chinese picturebooks with her mother. Weiwei asked: **“Why is her bed so big?”** (She pointed to the pictures) **“Why does he want to kill him?”** Qiqi was the same, when she read in English, she had few questions; when she read in Chinese, she asked more. When they read a traditional Chinese tale *The Cowherd and the Girl Weaver* together, Qiqi asked: **“Why does he want to kill her? Why does Niulang carry his children in the basket?”** Then her mother

gave her thoughts about this traditional tale; their question eliciting pattern is bidirectional process.

6.4.4 Families who applied a different focus when they did shared reading in different languages

6.4.4.1 Different focus of shared reading in different languages

There are families who used distinctly different strategies when they read in different languages. Anna and Xiaohu's families had an evidently different focus. These families showed more differences than similarities when they read in the two languages.

Anna read Chinese picturebooks and English picturebooks differently. Anna's English shared reading focused on reading skills, as we discussed previously. Anna's Chinese shared reading showed the characteristics of the exploratory focus. When Anna and her father read Chinese picturebooks together, her father made the sound of animals or actions and tickled her sometimes. In Chinese picturebook shared reading, Anna's father paid little attention to identifying the Chinese characters as Weiwei's mother did. Anna's father often pointed to the pictures and did not emphasise the words as Anna's mother did when reading English picturebooks. Anna smiled most of the time. When they read the words: "**I love popcorn**", both her father and Anna pretended to eat. When they read: "**The aeroplane is taking off.**" they made the sound and used hand gestures. Obviously shared reading in Chinese was a

pleasant activity for them. Anna's father showed other advanced shared reading skills. He asked complicated questions and encouraged Anna to think about the answers. Anna's father often elaborated on the text and also challenged her. He always urged Anna to stand in the protagonist's shoes and think about what she would do if she were the protagonist. They discussed with each other what they would do if they faced the same problem. For example, Anna's father asked her: **"He found he is not tall enough, what he should do?"** Anna's father waited for a while for Anna's response. Here was another typical reading from her father:

"Yes, the smoke (make the sound). Do you know the reason? It has run out of oil. This little boy was left on the moon. What should he do? This is the earth, right? He found himself on the moon. What should he do? Scared and lonely. Soon, the battery in his torch will run out.' He's got a torch, but the battery will run out soon. What should he do? If the battery in the torch runs out, it will become totally dark."

This was a very typical exploratory focus as discussed in the English shared reading section. Anna's father frequently made connections with real life.

"So he put on his clothes, bags, glasses. Do his glasses look like your swimming goggles? I guess he is going travelling. (Looking at Anna) Or he's going to the kindergarten? Or Eton (the name of the kindergarten where Anna goes)? Let's see? OK, he is a big boy. He

likes the iPad.”

He mentioned Anna’s swimming goggles, the kindergarten’s name Anna goes to and the iPad that Anna is familiar with. I did not see these connections being made in Anna’s English shared reading. Anna liked to make the sounds of animals and do the actions too. During Anna’s Chinese shared reading, I found that she had a rich general knowledge. When her father said the aeroplane became a dot in the sky, Anna said: “**(Jindayuanxiao) The closer, the smaller, no, if the objects are closer, they look bigger; the further away, the smaller they look.**” She showed sophisticated physical imaging knowledge which I did not find in her English reading with her mother.

Xiaohu’s English reading focused on translation and reading skills while his Chinese reading also showed the characteristics of exploratory focus. Xiaohu’s mother asked complicated and open questions. For example, Xiaohu’s mother asked “**Does he think the sea is beautiful? What season is it?**” “**Yellow is the Yangtze River, right?**” She asked him some general knowledge questions like “**When the stars and the moon come out, what time is it?**” They also discussed whether frogs need to hibernate or not: “**Hedgehog needs a winter sleep, I remember. Frogs need winter sleep, too.**” She also encouraged Xiaohu to predict the ending to the story and often asked Xiaohu what would happen next. Xiaohu was a little bit frustrated when he read in English with his parents while when they read in Chinese, he showed a more positive attitude, talked more and there was more interaction.

6.4.4.2 Why the parents used different strategies when reading in different languages

These families who used different shared reading strategies tended to regard Chinese shared reading as a pleasure while English picturebook reading was regarded as “an investment”, “study” or “homework” similar to other extra-curricular activities in “concerted cultivation” (Lareau, 2011). For them, shared reading in English is not just the unconscious transmission of cultural capital as I discussed in chapter 2, it is a conscious educational activity with a specific purpose.

It was also partly because different parents had responsibility for the shared reading activities in the two languages and they had different approaches. In Anna’s case, her father mostly read in Chinese and her mother read in English; in Xiaohu’s case, his mother read in Chinese and both parents read to him in English. From my observation, I could see that a different person was more likely to have a different focus compared to being read to by the same person in different languages. That is why Anna and Xiaohu had different experiences of shared reading in the two different languages. The book choices were different too for Chinese reading. Both Xiaohu and Anna’s families chose relatively cognitively demanding Chinese picturebooks, while for both Niniu and Anna’s English shared reading, the books were either graded level books or trade picturebooks with a limited number of words. For cognitively demanding Chinese picturebooks, it was more natural for them to ask more complicated

questions and to have more in-depth discussions.

6.4.5 The importance of reading in Chinese

In the study of 565 families, most children were reported to like reading Chinese picturebooks more than English picturebooks. Even for Xiaotian, whose parents' focus was Exploratory and who did not have many obstacles in reading English, preferred Chinese picturebook reading. When his mother asked him which language he would like to choose, he said: "**Chinese, Chinese. I want to read Chinese books.**" His mother explained that maybe it was because he could gain more cognitive pleasure from Chinese picturebooks. He could read more exciting and sophisticated Chinese text than in the English ones. Xiaotian's mother gave the example of when he was reading *The Magic School Bus* in English, and he thought it was alright, while when he read *The Monster in the Forbidden City* in Chinese, he became excited about it. Since generally the children asked more questions and parents elaborated more when they shared Chinese picturebooks, reading in the mother tongue is essential for general language development and cultural belonging. Many children read English picturebooks after they have read their Chinese translations. Although the importance of mother tongue reading is beyond the scope of this study, as I demonstrated before, to be an English picturebook lover, children first have to love books generally.

6.4.6 Summary of parent-child interaction foci

In this chapter, I demonstrated that motivation drives book choice and the interaction process between children and parents. The book choice and interaction reflect the motivation. I attempted to answer the research question about parent-child interaction patterns and demonstrate how parents and children interact during English shared reading by categorising into five foci and describing what the children's responses were towards each reading focus pattern. After classifying the five different foci when parents shared English picturebooks with their children, I applied these five foci to their Chinese shared reading and studied the similarities and differences. The typology including these five foci of shared reading goes beyond foreign language shared reading. It not only applies to second language or foreign language shared reading, but also applies to general shared reading, although mother tongue shared reading is more likely to have a literary or exploratory focus.

Nevertheless, a Literal focus or Literacy focus in mother tongue shared reading can be found in some cultures or in some families, for example, in some families in China from my study. Despite these differences in detail, when parent-child dyads read in different languages, most families (5 out of 7) during my observation, their approach towards shared reading is similar. Parents' attitudes, whether they regard shared reading as a literacy learning tool or pleasure, determines which interaction focus they use.

Shapiro and his colleagues (1997) conducted a study in a relatively

homogeneous group. Considerable variation was found in the ways that different parent-child dyads shared the same picturebooks. The results in this study were similar. Every shared reading event in my study was a combination of factors, depending on the books, and the book knowledge or experiences that parents and children bring to the reading event. In the next chapter, I will discuss the further influences and implications when we look at English shared book reading foci and the link with parents' motivation, parenting styles and parents' and children's book choices.

Chapter 7 Discussion

In this chapter, I will discuss the pedagogical, social and philosophical aspects of foreign language shared reading based on the findings discussed in the previous chapters.

The findings to my first research question about parents' motivation were discussed in chapter 4. It shows that parents' motivation for reading picturebooks in English with their children is mainly because parents would like their children to learn the English language and to be competitive in the future in terms of their academic life and the future job market. I will link this motivation to the new image of Chinese parenting and the social gap reflected in shared reading in this chapter as this phenomenon of reading English picturebooks is part of a larger phenomenon in China of parents taking a scholarly interest in parenting.

My second research question is about parents' and children's book choices — how parents choose English picturebooks for their children and what kinds of picturebooks parents and children like. From the findings in chapter 4, we can see that parents are quite normative in their way of choosing books and what they believe about books and reading. They aim to find the “right” or “useful” books for their children, while children are different — resisting this power in their own ways. In this part, I will argue that there are no “appropriate books” or “right” books for foreign language shared reading.

In chapter 6, I presented five foreign language shared reading patterns and answered my third research question about how parents and children interact with each other during shared reading and what the children's responses are. Some of the interaction foci, for example the Literal focus and Literacy focus, in terms of parents' behaviour and children's responses, have been linked with didactic behaviour. On the other hand, the Literary focus and Exploratory focus are easily related to the characteristics of reading for pleasure. From my data, we can see that many families displayed more than one focus. Similar to "right books", I will argue in this part that, there is no single appropriate interaction focus. I will then explore didactic reading and reading for pleasure, and point out that there is no clear distinction between these two and the binary of "didactic" or "pleasurable" reading is problematic. "Reading for pleasure" in foreign language shared reading is also possible and fun. The other interaction focus from my data is the Digital focus. I will demonstrate in this chapter that digital reading is not something to be feared as parents first thought — at least for English language shared reading.

There are common characteristics in terms of which kinds of books parents or children like, as well as what kind of interaction behaviour is favoured by children. However, this study challenged many dichotomous categories about shared reading, such as "right" or "wrong" and "pleasurable" or "didactic". This new phenomenon in China demonstrates that shared reading is a personal experience, reflecting parents and children's holistic understanding

towards parenting, education and the world. As can be seen, there are more similarities than differences in parents' shared reading in different languages, and readers' fundamental need to gain pleasure from reading goes beyond language, culture and media.

7.1 Parents' motivation and Chinese Parenting

7.1.1 Parents' motivation and stereotypes reflect Chinese parenting

From the findings in chapter 4 about the first research question relating to parents' motivation, the data shows that although parents do value other characteristics of shared reading in English, their most significant motivation is aimed at their children's English language acquisition, and ultimately, giving them a head start in future competition. Accordingly, most parents among my observation families read graded level English picturebooks, used a Literacy focus which emphasises the learning of phonics or decoding skills from English shared reading. From my data, the most prevalent interaction focus pattern was the Literacy focus. Generally speaking, by choosing the most "useful" books and focusing on literal and literacy skills, parents want their children to be competitive in the academic field or in the future job market. To achieve this, parents attempt to acquaint themselves with the latest parenting or educational theories. According to my observation and interviews, parents are consciously

inculcating those values into their parenting practice, which again echoes with Lareau's (2011) "concerted cultivation" practice.

When Chinese parents read with children in English, most of them have a clear purpose and goal, and this motivation is easily related to other labels pertaining to Chinese parents. "Tiger mother" (Chua, 2011), "authoritative" (Baumrind, 1971, 1978), "pushy parent" (Beauvais, 2017), "intensive mothering" (Hays, 1996) are some labels that have frequently been linked with Asian parents especially the mothers. In journalist Didi Tang's (2019) words, China is "the land of tiger Mums and tiger Dads". It is consistent with the fact that overwhelmingly more mothers than fathers were self-selected to involve themselves in the study.

Parents attempt to broaden their children's horizons and develop their potential through exposure to as many valued organised activities as possible; sharing English picturebooks is one of these "concerted cultivation" activities (Lareau, 2011). The Literacy focus and these labels or stereotypes partly reflect extreme parental efforts and investments in children to excel in various domains, including the foundation of academic success — literacy and reading skills. Among the seven families in this study, parents spend an average of one hour every day with children on shared reading, not to mention the money they have invested in purchasing English picturebooks. Parents take this effort as "reading training" like any other "concerted cultivation" activities. Many parents started to learn English themselves in order to read to their children as Qiqi's mother

said in the interview. Other parents like Yueyue's mother checked the meaning of the words in the dictionary first; Xiaoxia's parents learned to sing the nursery rhymes first. As the famous "*Read to your bunny*" (Wells, 1999) poem describes, shared reading is about physical and emotional attachment between parents and children. When these two images — pushy parents and relaxed shared reading meet together, it is not surprising that parents with these labels in shared reading easily turn to more Literal or Literacy focused reading which is aimed at gaining reading and decoding skills.

7.1.2 Chinese parenting in the competitive society

Looking into the cultural origins of Chinese parenting will facilitate an understanding of parents' motivation and behaviour in shared reading. The Confucian influence states that children should obey their parent and is combined with the moral concept of filial piety. The rising new middle-class parents are afraid of their children "dropping out" or "falling" from the middle class (Ehrenreich, 1989). From a sociological perspective, the contemporary Chinese parent is a syncretic product — at the intersection of traditional Chinese parenting and contemporary "globalised middle class" parenting practices.

All seven sets of parents in my study were born under the "One-Child Policy" and experienced Gaokao (University entrance exam, reintroduced in 1978), most of them were the only child in their family. They had a good

education compared to their parents and have finally achieved a stable life. Parents owe their success to their education and triumphed over other peers in the school entrance exams, especially Gaokao. Due to their own experience, they would like to ensure their children have a good start in another generation of competition.

No matter parents' motivation, book choice and interaction focus, are all the reflections of their parenting philosophies. In my sample, most of the parents are urban middle-class parents. It might not be possible to modify parents' reading focus easily; after all, it is modifying their parenting concept. For example, parents who apply Literacy focus think gaining reading skills is the most important aspect for their children. In a highly competitive Chinese society due to the huge population, on the one hand, parents want their children to be competitive and ensure they obtain a job in the future; on the other hand, an increasing number of parents are educated to treat children equally and listen to their children's views. To be more competitive, parents put considerable parental investment into their children, emotionally and economically, as they do in shared reading. At the same time, parental attachment and encouragement of children's motivated behaviour has a significant effect on educational activities.

7.1.3 “Pushy parent” or “ideal parenting”?

However, the point here is that “pushy parenting” or “intensive parenting” is difficult to distinguish from ‘ideal parenting’ (Beauvais, 2017), the boundaries are blurred. In some cultures, some behaviours are prevalent and acceptable while in other cultures they are not. In Lareau’s (2011) study, parents who are engaging in “concerted cultivation” are expected to be closely involved with children’s school work, and this parenting style is usually thought of as “pushy”. According to Beauvais (2017), “pushy parenting” and “ideal parenting” are “two sides of the same coin. This distinction, of course, does not dwell outside of ideology and, like the term ‘pushy parent’, it cannot be disconnected from its sociocultural context and class implications” (p.6). As many parents did during shared reading in my study, we can see this parenting approach is intense but highly supportive. This struggle and its reflections in educational activities such as shared reading continues to attract my academic interest.

Parents want their children to achieve in a highly competitive society; at the same time, their parenting style is influenced by Western educational philosophy. In the interview, almost every parent mentioned several parenting books they have read. Xiaohu’s mother mentioned *Emile*; Anna’s mother mentioned the Montessori books, which are quite popular among Chinese parents, and the *American Parenting Encyclopedia*; Xiaotian’s mother even joined an educational reading group and she read almost all the popular or academic parenting books published in that year. These parenting books are

translated from English or mainly European languages and become part of modern Chinese parenting philosophy. Since the opening up reform in 1978, Western psychology including parenting books have become popular in China, and consequently, most parenting books in bookshops nowadays are translated ones. Influenced by these parenting books, Chinese parents have learned to balance emotional attachment and intensive parenting. The “One child policy” further generated a dramatic change in the parent-child relationship in China. As Li (2018) observes, traditional Chinese parenting has been continuously challenged and Chinese parents now increasingly demonstrate warmth during parent-child interactions such as in the shared reading event.

7.1.4 The new parenting image reflected in shared reading

Currently, Chinese parents struggle between their high expectations and motivation for their children’s academic success, and the new parenting philosophy to cultivate close bonds with their children or to give them a happy childhood. This struggle was reflected in Xiaohu and Weiwei’s reading scenes I presented in the previous chapter. The children were sometimes frustrated with and sometimes showed affection to their parents. Even for these two families, during the shared reading, parents were still patient, encouraging, and tried to listen to the children, and the children sometimes showed a sense of achievement. In my study, Xiaohu’s family shared reading interaction showed the characteristics of Literal focus and Literacy focus, which was very

academic-focused. However, Xiaohu's father kissed him before they started reading, which is quite a new image for a father compared to the last generation. Traditionally, the image of the father is of a strict, stern parent who seldom shows physical or emotional attachment to their children but with an emphasis on benevolence. It is quite different from the traditional Chinese fathers depicted in previous literature (Li, 2018). Many parents in previous generations believed a famous Chinese saying: "a tough father fosters a dutiful son, but a kind mother makes a wastrel" and hid their emotional attachment and a father kissing his children was rarely seen. At the same time, when Xiaohu was frustrated with reading in English and almost began to cry, his parents insisted on finishing the reading task even if they had already read more than five times that day. Parents feel this is their responsibility and know the process is emotionally intensive. During shared reading, most children showed a close relationship with their mothers and fathers, and they naturally sat on their parents' lap. Xiaoxia's mum hugged her before reading. Parents said "**I love you**", "**You are beautiful**" naturally during the reading sessions, which was not common in the past, especially for fathers. Anna did not see her parents as the authority; she corrected her mother's pronunciation of "bird", and her mother happily accepted it.

From observations of shared reading, we can see the traditional image and the stereotype of Chinese parenting is changing. Evidence from the current study confirmed the recent empirical research about new Chinese parenting (Li,

2007; Lu & Chang, 2013; Li & Jankowiak, 2016; Li, 2018). Unlike the stereotypes and mass media which demonstrate a traditional authoritative parenting style of Chinese parents, all parents in this study made considerable efforts to develop an emotionally intimate relationship with their children; they were willing to express their love through verbal or physical means; they were self-reflective, eager to learn whatever they thought good for their children, invested heavily in education and held high expectations for their children's academic achievement.

Maybe it is not easy or simple to label Chinese parenting as “pushy” or “ideal”, however, more importantly, my study on shared reading demonstrates that contemporary Chinese parenting is reflective parenting with a thirst for understanding and adjustment. Consequently, we cannot simply link parents' motivation, Literal focus or Literacy focus with “pushy parent” or “authoritative” labels. Chinese parents have strong motivation, and are purposeful during English shared reading, but still show love and emotional attachment.

7.2 The further gap of the social class in English shared reading

Parents' motivation to read picturebooks in English to their children in China is related to parenting style and class capital, but not only “Economic Capital”, it is also related to “Cultural Capital” or “transnational cultural capital” as I pointed out in Chapter 2. I would also like to discuss, from the evidence in my

study, whether lower-income families have the opportunity to be involved with Anglophone picturebook reading or whether it is economically restricted.

Parenting and interactional behaviour during shared reading are easily related to social class in previous literature, which was discussed in chapter 2 (Ninio, 1980; Heath, 1983, 1986; Vincent & Ball, 2007; Carlson, Gerhards, & Hans, 2017). I also mentioned that the home literacy environment is a better indicator than the parents' income of children's literacy development (Hamilton et al., 2016). However, the home literacy environment itself is also a class-related factor. Parents, who invest time or money in their children's educational attainment, including the shared reading activity, provide a pleasant home literacy environment and are mostly middle-class parents. In my study, all the parents I observed can provide resources, time or money, and a positive home literacy environment for their children. When children's literature scholar Nodelman (Nodelman, Hamer, & Reimer, 2017) looked back at his family's reading experience, it was evident to him how very middle-class his cultural assumptions and approach were. This study and I probably also use a middle class approach — the reason for this phenomenon drew my academic attention, my position or role in this study, and the participants I recruited.

Is reading English picturebooks a “class behaviour” in China? From the data collected in this study, despite the large variety in the sample, the families involved in this study and the seven observational families are homogeneous in terms of social, cultural and economic levels. Most of the families were

relatively well educated and affluent. Anna's kindergarten is named after "Eton", the most prestigious British boarding school, which is Anglophile and elitist. From my data, there is also a geographical gap, parents from cities and Eastern China read more English picturebooks to children than parents from other parts of China. We can see English picturebooks and digital books are highly classed. Most parents from my sample make an effort to read to their children in Chinese or English before they begin formal schooling. The unequal access to resources at home during a shared reading event and the reproduction or accumulation of advantage may enlarge the gap between the middle class and less privileged families.

In the questionnaire data, there were a few parents who said they almost never read English picturebooks to their children. The high cost of picturebooks, English picturebooks in particular, the lack of public libraries, parents thinking their children were "too young to read in English", and the lack of a person who was keen on reading to the children were the main barriers to English shared reading according to parents' answers in the questionnaire. According to Elley's (1996) study, parents with limited literacy skills are reported to be an obstacle to promoting shared reading to children. Some parents are not keen on reading to children, or they feel it is the school's responsibility to teach their children to read. Since libraries are the prime candidate for book borrowing, the private libraries (small scale, owned by individuals, most of them mothers who were passionate about children reading and where readers need to pay to borrow

books) in many cities as I have mentioned several times in this study are a positive supplement to the resources. Due to different reasons, including parents' work commitments and time constraints, many children do not have the chance to be read to by their parents so their main literacy education is at school (Earl & Maynard, 2006). Schools may offer alternative means of accessing books for those who do not own books at home. Schools can provide various picturebooks, not only curriculum-related books for children, which may decrease children's interest in reading (Krashen, 2004). It is vital for school teachers to raise awareness of shared reading patterns and identify the shared reading interaction patterns that children have gained and make pedagogical decisions accordingly in the classroom. The cumulative knowledge gained from family shared reading studies could facilitate the home and school partnership in terms of children's literacy education.

Digital books may seem one way of providing access to equal learning opportunities. However, I doubt that digital resources are the way to reduce this gap or the educational divide between different social classes from my observation. In foreign language reading, the situation becomes more complicated and may even exacerbate the gap. Firstly, quality digital resources, the devices and quality apps, are currently expensive. Secondly, digital resources, especially English picturebooks need to be filtered and chosen, which requires constant support, whereas socially-disadvantaged students are the same group who lack this resource or "cultural capital". Thirdly, digital reading itself

has its limitations, relying totally on it may cause other issues. Strategies are needed in order to address the new equality gap in terms of using technology.

However, “Economic Capital” or family income, from the Pearson correlation as we saw in chapter 4, was not the strongest indicator in this study. An example is from Xiaotian’s family. The family income is the lowest among the seven families and yet they owned the largest number of English picturebooks and read more often, displaying many positive shared reading skills. Xiaotian’s mother, had previously studied in the UK, spoke fluent English, and saw book reading to be an activity as natural as “eating”, and who had high “Cultural Capital” or “transnational cultural capital”. A study conducted by Chinese scholars (Wu, Huang & Huang, 2017) confirmed that Chinese middle class parents take advantage of “cultural capital” and use it to benefit their children’s education. Together with “Economic Capital” or social class, “Cultural Capital” and “Transnational Cultural Capital” are the background we need to probe into when we research shared reading. From a bigger social scope, this shared reading phenomenon is the reflection of the emergence of a globalised intellectual, plurilingual middle class or a middle class to-be.

7.3 Are there “right” books for English shared reading for Chinese families?

From the findings in chapter 5 in terms of my research question relating to parents’ and children’s book choices, we can see that parents and children have

different favourite books and parents have a certain control over book buying. On the one hand, children's literature scholars promote reading "real picture books", breaking the mould of thematic-based selection, and encouraging the reading of books for enjoyment and enrichment with no specific language teaching aim (Dunn, 1997, 2002). In the EFL classroom setting, using original unabridged children's and young adult (YA) literature in place of truncated artificial texts is encouraged (Bland, 2013b). On the other hand, in the interview and the WeChat parents' group, parents continuously ask what kind of books they "should" read to their children. Parents are afraid of reading the "wrong" books to their children and consult reading experts' recommendations: they are anxious about their book choices. The origin of children's literature is rooted in the religious view that reading good books might make children better people. Now, although this concept belongs to the past, the educational motivation still drives parents to look for the "right" books for children.

The Reading report (2019), by educational publisher Scholastic, begins with the words: "reading the **Right** (my emphasis) book can help every child feel seen and heard". This expression means educational publishers believe that there are "right" books for children and they believe in their standards and expertise to produce the "right books". This kind of half-academic half-marketing report is aimed at finding out what children and parents think "right" books are and responding to their needs. In general, this also shows that anxious parents want to find the 'right' way of parenting. From the parents' perspective,

“right” in terms of shared reading means books are “functional”, which enable children to gain literacy skills, correct children’s “bad” behaviour, or books children can learn something from. In my questionnaire data, none of the parents chose “I think this book is funny” as the main criteria for choosing books for their children; so instead of choosing the books that children would most likely enjoy, parents tended to choose books that they thought were “good” or “useful” for children.

Now, this belief is extending to Anglophone picturebook reading. The parents consulted reading experts and the Wechat platform, which resulted in the families having similar books at home. The parents asked me what kind of picturebooks they should read to their children; they also asked me during the interviews if they had done anything inappropriate during the shared reading. From the parents’ perspective in this study, that means choosing “useful” books and using the most effective way for English acquisition, or their children’s education in general, to ensure their children’s future. This anxiety related to educational competition is reflected in shared reading. This echoes what Oziewicz (2015) called “academic capitalism”. There are book lists created by authoritative, educational opinion leaders, “must-read” books listed by many reading promoters; there are books directly linked to school curriculum or are schoolwork orientated; there are also book categories according to age, themes and moral topics to maximise the benefit of reading like an profit-maximizing enterprise.

Looking for the right answer is probably rooted in the Chinese educational system (Yang, 2011; Song, 2016; Zhang, 2018). Yang (2011) points out that a Chinese college graduate would have taken 600 tests and completed daily worksheets during their school life. In the school system, to be competitive in the exams, parents as former students were trained to quickly find the right answer among three or four possible choices even for language or literature subjects, guessing the author's intention or "correctly" summarising the content of the text. However, reception-theory which values personal interpretation has already changed the tradition in many literature education systems. However, in China, children in the state school system are still expected to give the only "correct" answers: the accurate mathematical number, the precise name, the only "correct translation" in foreign language education. Parents want answers or instructions that leave little space for different options. All of these answers are subject to evaluations which still dominate in some areas. Here is another example. Inside almost all picturebooks published in China, there are many pages of supplementary materials — known as a reading guidebook, which is rarely seen in other markets, normally written by influential educational experts or reading promoters, telling parents how to read this picturebook or why this book is excellent, and the number of words in the reading guidebook considerably exceed the number of words in the picturebooks. On the one hand, it shows that parents believe in experts or

authoritative opinions; on the other hand, parents are afraid that their reading or explanation may not be the “right” interpretation according to the experts.

Consequently, children and their teachers frequently refrain from contributing different opinions. To find the right answer, to gain a better score is an effective way to be competitive (Li, 2007; Song, 2016). With their experience of being competitive, when these students grow up and become parents themselves, they want the most efficient answer and look for the most “right” book for their children (Song, 2016). However, picturebooks are varied and there are more than three or four choices unlike in the exam papers. In terms of “functional”, graded level books have their functions; series of books are loved by children who like these characters; traditional Chinese texts have deep cultural values and digital picturebooks have advantages that traditional books cannot compete with. Looking for the “right books” is not a simple task, rather it is an impossible task. Instead, children explore and make their own book choices.

Another concern here is parents emphasising the reading of one particular kind of book and taking this as the only “right” kind of book to read. This approach is questionable. Parents are sometimes unaware and are simply driven by the book advertisement, marketing or reading promoters, which is reflected in their book choices in my data. This means that children miss the chance to access different books and fail to find their real “right” books. Parents’ comments relating to one book were contradictory in my study. Xiaoxia’s

mother worried the book *No, David* would encourage children to copy the bad behaviour in the book so she was discouraged from reading the book to Xiaoxia while Xiaohu's mother thought this same book would remind children that this behaviour was unacceptable. I believe that looking for the "right book", for the single standard, is a myth, not only because children respond to books differently but also because parents read and interact with the same picturebook with children differently.

Further, if parents have a great number of graded level English picturebooks at home, they cannot afford other books and do not have time to read various trade picturebooks. From my findings, parents obtain information about books, especially English picturebooks, from WeChat groups or WeChat public platforms, which has a marketing or commercial aim. Parents' book knowledge is unavoidably controlled somehow. Considering the fact that many parents may have difficulty remembering or spelling the names of the English picturebooks, the range of English picturebooks still seems limited comparing with the number of picturebooks available on the market. Although there are educational mediators, who encourage reading a wide range of books, many of these WeChat public platforms urge parents to buy as many books as possible. Clearly, series of books or phonics series of books are ideal for this purpose. Because this generation of parents in China have seldom had the experience of being read to when they were children, they have no or few memories of the pleasure of encountering a "favourite book".

Who is deciding this “right” criterion and who is following this is a power struggle not only between parents and children, but also between different parenting philosophies. The importance of reading books, in general, is recognised by schools, the government, and many parents. However, there are still some limitations or controlling by adults on children’s book choices. My research question concerning parents’ and children’s book choices is indeed not only about books, but about the power struggle between parents and children, about parents’ parenting philosophy exerted on the children and the children’s agency to resist it. This power struggle in shared reading is continuously happening; it also gives children the chance to build their aesthetic sense and critical literacy towards books.

7.4 Is there a “right” focus of English shared reading for Chinese families?

My third research question concerning parent-child interaction patterns in shared reading was discussed in chapter 6. It is not only the book choice that affects children’s interest in books, as I demonstrated in chapter 6; how parents and children interact and how they mediate the text is also crucial. Data from chapter 6 also confirms what I discussed in chapter 2 about previous monolingual shared reading research (Whitehurst et al., 1988; DeBruin-Parecki, 1999; Hamilton, 2013). It shows that high quality parent-child interaction promotes children’s engagement in reading, helps the children to better understand the conventions of books and improves literacy skills.

From the observations I discussed in chapter 6, we can see the connection between parents' interaction focus and children's responses which make shared reading, to some extent, predictable. In the current study, some parents showed advanced interactional skills during shared reading; and some parents just read from the text and translated; some children enjoyed reading with their parents; while other children were reluctant to read. When I compared the interaction focus for Chinese families' during English and Chinese picturebook shared reading in chapter 6, it was clear that parents' understanding of picturebooks and shared reading, in general, determines their interaction focus. In Literal focus and Literacy focus reading patterns, parents read many graded level books, focus on confirming the meaning of words and reading skills, not children's reading interests but their reading "needs". If parents read trade picturebooks in this way, they select books for the topic or theme. The images merely provide visual support for the comprehension of the story. Parents seldom undertook foreign language reading for the pure joy of reading. Meanwhile for Literary focus or Exploratory focus shared reading, parents were more likely to see shared reading as an aesthetic pleasure and relationship bonding or pure joy, which is close to Rosenblatt (1978) and Sipe's (1999) promotion of reading for "aesthetic stance" or "literary literacy" (Lütge, 2012; Bland, 2013b) or Nikolajeva's "reading for meaning" (2014) that allows cognition affective engagement "for the reader to employ their cognitive skills" (p.181).

However, this does not mean there is a right or wrong interaction style, or a didactic style is necessarily worse. As I discussed in chapter 2, the definition of “didactic” is also changing. The families in my study showed more than one interaction focus in the current study. Literal focus or confirming the meaning is essential sometimes; otherwise, it will discourage children from reading if the children do not understand the main storyline of the book. Literacy focus or reading skills focused reading helps children to develop their decoding skills and vocabulary and is a way for children to progress from shared reading to independent reading. As DeBruin-Parecki (1999) summarises, it appears that basic interactive reading skills include:

Mutual questioning and responding, making stories relevant to the child’s life, giving praise and feedback, explaining, physically sharing the book, monitoring a child’s understanding, and adjusting mutual dialogue to acknowledge this understanding are all behaviors that enhance children’s literacy skills and comprehension (p.5-6).

From the observations of these seven families, some families in my study did apply these shared reading skills. This study confirms these shared reading skills in the previous first language shared reading studies (Arnold & Whitehurst, 1994; DeBruin-Parecki, 1999), which are also essential and beneficial in foreign language shared reading. My findings also show that there are overwhelmingly more similarities than differences in the response to a picturebook in a child’s first language or additional language.

Making parents aware of their interaction style and constantly adjusting it according to children's responses, interests and cognitive level is critical. Some parents do value the joy of shared reading but use a Literal focus or Literacy focus unconsciously. Parents can become aware of their reading behaviour and then make the best choices for their children and themselves. In addition, children's responses to different foci are important, not only for cultivating life-long foreign language readers but also to make the shared reading more efficient.

To summarise, although some foci may discourage children's interest in reading, there is no single "right" interaction focus or style for foreign language shared reading. According to children's own needs and responses, families tend to use a combination of different interaction foci. As in first language shared reading, for foreign language shared reading, it is also vital for parents to be fully aware of their reading behaviour then make their own choices.

7.5 Didactic English shared reading and reading for pleasure

7.5.1 The didactic English picturebook shared reading

I summarised the inseparable relationship and historical trait between didactic or educational intention and children's literature in chapter 2; this didactic intention is also found in shared reading activities. Although many parents stated they allowed their children to choose the books in this study, I would

argue that the shared reading interaction process is still a didactic process, surrounded and controlled by adults. I discussed in chapter 2 that adults hold the power to decide which book to read and data from my study further demonstrated this power.

Parents' power is more evident for picturebook shared reading in a foreign language. Most parents in this study buy English picturebooks from the Internet, which is mainly the adults' world. For families who show Literal and Literacy focus, at the beginning of the reading process, parents firstly tend to choose several books for children to choose from. From the results, we can see that families belong to these two foci and read many graded levels books, partly because of the publishers' marketing strategy and the parents' limited sources of information such as WeChat groups, and partly because there is no clear distinction between school materials and home reading materials for Chinese families. Graded level books are taken as typical school reading materials in many English-speaking countries. In my study, many parents regard graded level picturebooks as the same as picturebooks and some families only have graded level books at home, which leaves them with few financial resources to invest in other trade picturebooks.

During the interaction process, parents have a clear goal about what they want to gain from English picturebook reading, and they put this into practice by controlling the shared reading experience. Shared reading which shows characteristics of a Literal focus concentrates on understanding the meaning of

words. For a Literacy focus, parents frequently teach their child the alphabet, colours, or numbers during reading, which shows that shared reading is for improving reading and literacy skills. It indicates the fact that Chinese parents who take these two approaches tend to regard Anglophone picturebooks as language learning tools, and neglect other aspects of picturebooks such as the literature, or the aesthetic and cultural messages. This finding is consistent with growing evidence from studies relating to monolingual children, pointing out that parents tend to adopt a direct and didactic approach to promote their children's literacy skills at home (Evans, Fox, Cresmaso, & McKinnon, 2004; Evans & Saint-Aubin, 2005; Hood et al., 2008; Stephenson, Parrila, Georgiou, & Kirby, 2008; Silinskas et al., 2010). This English shared reading experience for children seems didactic, and parents are the dominant power when choosing, purchasing and reading English picturebooks among Chinese families.

However, many children's writers have expressed concerns about a decline in reading for pleasure when the focus is on children's literacy skills.

For example, Pullman (2003) said in *The Guardian*:

In a constant search for things to test, we're forgetting the true purpose, the true nature of reading and writing; and in forcing these things to happen in a way that divorces them from pleasure, we are creating a generation of children who might be able to make the right noises when they see print, but who hate reading and feel nothing but hostility for literature.

In Stuart Dredge's article (2015) in *The Guardian*, the bookshop owner De Guia criticises schools which mainly use the phonics system to teach reading; she is concerned that reading may merely seem like a chore to some children. She states that if children come from a family who enjoys reading at home, teaching reading skills could be dull. Giving too many of these reading materials, rather than giving children a choice to read what they want to read, may discourage children from reading voluntarily and dilute their original interest in reading (Krashen 1993, 2004). It has been found that there is no harm in these teaching sessions being short in duration and with a wide variety of learning contexts (Martini & Sénéchal, 2012), however in the current study, the same teaching activities often ran through the whole shared reading process and the children began to feel frustrated. There is a warning that as children grow up, their reading frequency, enjoyment and sense of the importance of reading decline (Scholastic, 2019), they gradually lose connection with reading and books. Parents seem to strive to achieve immediate results rather than long-term effects. In China, if children only read Literal or Literacy focused books, reading in English may become a burden or be seen as another piece of homework. While parents' specific goals may bring some instant results such as improving decoding skills, they may also deter children from reading picturebooks and they may see reading as boring and a chore. The children may struggle to find the incentive to read.

7.5.2 Children's resistance to didactic reading

However, in the west, traditional didactic education has progressed or been challenged by child-centred educational philosophy proponents such as John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Dewey and their arguments were finally taken to the policy-making level in both North America and Britain. Their ideas were taken up and experimented on by fellow theorists and practitioners and that dramatically altered the educational landscape. Anglo-American policymakers first began to take seriously some of the claims made by proponents of so-called progressive education. Therefore, the belief that education consists of a process of indoctrination wherein the older generation transmits information or experience to the younger generation has become an outdated one.

Child readers are not merely passive, or powerless victims of adult power. Sainsbury (2013:7) used the terms “liberty” or “positive didactic drive” meaning the freedom not to be overpowered. Scholars in children's literature have pointed out that young readers may have their agency and might read against the text (Nodelman, 2000). The shared reading scene is not a one-way, linear transaction, children are entitled to express themselves and read critically. It is consistent with Dewey's (1938) belief of children as questioners and active agents. From this shared reading study, the parents' parenting approach is changing, and children consistently resist this didactic or educational reading. In this study, children prefer to choose their own books, refuse some books, look at

the pictures rather than the words, show boredom when reading some books and ask to re-read others. They fight for their rights during shared reading.

Children's different responses and their resistance are one proof of this. Xiaoxia and Xiaohu resist during shared reading in their own way, sometimes by verbally refusing it and sometimes by suggesting something else to do. In the Literal and Literacy focus, parents continuously draw attention to words while children keep finding the details in the pictures; most children in this study would prefer to choose the books by themselves. They resist their parents' power in various ways.

7.5.3 The challenges of reading for pleasure in China

If the second language shared reading does not affect reading for pleasure, my next consideration concerns social context and educational tradition. Reading for pleasure has been challenged by my data in the Chinese social context, where the didactic teaching tradition is strong (Zhang, 2018).

Firstly, although things are changing, reading for pleasure is generally not supported by the educational curriculum in China (Sun, 2018; Zhang, 2018; Chen & Wang, 2019). It has been discouraged for several reasons — reading tests, resources, popular media and recreational activities such as computer games and television. In Henri, Warning and Angel's (2011) study about CY-SFF (The Chen Yet-Sen Family Foundation) projects — reading intervention projects on reading for pleasure in developing countries, the biggest obstacle

found by the researchers was that many people believe that rural China is arguably not the place to indulge in reading for pleasure and the policy-makers maintain that literacy education is to improve children's reading abilities. When these children enter school, their formal English study is mainly focused on one or two textbooks which are full of inauthentic situations as vehicles to teach grammar and structured sentences or dialogues. Some schools also provide picturebooks but these still focus on decoding and reading skills. The educational evaluation system for the English language is textbook and grammar oriented, which forces teachers only to focus on the English textbooks with poor quality literature (Bland, 2013b).

The second obstacle is that reading for pleasure is not widely understood and exploited by parents (Song, 2016). Reading for pleasure may also be discouraged by parents at home. Partly due to the heavy burden of homework, many parents regard homework or textbooks as a priority; they even forbid children to read other "leisure books" because this is not "study". An example of this is Weiwei's mother asking her to read a "book" rather than a maze book. In terms of foreign language shared reading, if it is not school-work oriented, some parents think it is a "waste of time" or inefficient, so parents focus on meaning and reading skills which are more measurable than free reading. In the current study, Xiaohu and Weiwei's reading is not a pleasurable experience as their parents consistently ask them to read or recognise the words.

However, in the data from the current study, in Chinese or English,

parents can use a pleasure-oriented reading — Literary or Exploratory focus during shared reading in the Chinese context, and children's responses are similar to mother tongue shared reading in English speaking countries. Wang's (2011) summary of the positive results of reading promotion activities during the first decade of the century further illustrates this. Other studies related to reading for pleasure in China provide possible solutions and strategies (Sun, 2018; Zhang, 2018). They demonstrate that although social practice or educational tradition may have influenced and put pressure on parents, shared reading interaction patterns are ultimately about personal choice and interpersonal relationships.

7.5.4 Reading for pleasure is possible in foreign language shared reading

I pointed out the importance of reading for pleasure previously in chapter 2. The concept of reading for pleasure is much more widespread when children are reading mother tongue picturebooks and reading at home rather than reading in a foreign language or classroom setting.

Many practitioners and parents doubt the benefit of reading for pleasure in a foreign language because of the efficiency, resources or language barrier (Dun & Cai, 2007). An overwhelming finding from this study is that children enjoy reading in English and Chinese. Most parents reported that their children think reading is fun and essential. There was a minority of children who felt shared reading did not interest them. I would argue that reading for pleasure is

still important when parents and children take part in shared reading in a foreign language. From my comparison of English and Chinese shared reading, there are parents who show the characteristics of a Literary or Exploratory focus when they read in English, while exhibiting Literal or Literacy focus when they share Chinese picturebooks. This again echoes my discussion in chapter 2 about Bland's (2013b) distinction between "general literacy", which is a more didactic approach of emphasising decoding and comprehension skills in any language, and "literary literacy", which emerges only from extensive reading and includes "visual literacy" and "critical cultural literacy" where picturebooks are the perfect medium to convey these, no matter the language.

My observations also show that reading in Chinese did not necessarily mean more interaction or discussion. Rather than the language barrier, the critical element which decides which reading approach or focus underlines parents' attitudes toward shared reading, or in general, is their parenting approach. No matter the language, parents who applied a Literal focus or Literacy focus did not take reading for pleasure as the first principle of shared reading. Data from this current study demonstrates that shared reading in a foreign language could be fun. In English picturebook reading among Chinese families, this is still the case. The Literary focus and Exploratory focus show that it is possible to enjoy shared reading in a second or foreign language. Developing "literary literacy" (Bland, 2013b) through shared reading in English is possible, as Yueyue's and Xiaotian's family demonstrated during my

observation. It also shows that reading in a foreign language is not only practice in a school setting or reading class, but is also possible at home. On the other hand, it can provide school teachers with some interaction patterns and evidence of foreign language reading interaction. Foreign language or second language shared reading can also use the principle of reading for pleasure and benefit from it.

The first principle of reading for pleasure in foreign language shared reading is allowing children to choose the book they would like to read. Parents should at least try to let children have the right to choose and get involved in book choosing. In English speaking countries, the National Literacy Trust's study in the UK shows children's reading material for leisure was freely chosen, based on the children's interests and the texts were ones that they felt competent to read (Clark, Torsi & Strong, 2005). This is in common with Scholastic's (2019) Kids & Family Reading Report, and one thing which remains constant in this report is: when children choose their own books, they read. Although "freely chosen" is questionable, in that children are still choosing books from the books someone has already selected for them, allowing children to feel "free" to choose is something that should be encouraged. According to the Clark, Torsi and Strong's report (2005), children feel free to choose from the bookshop, school and public libraries, or follow peers' or female family members' recommendations. Worthy, Moorman and Turner (1999) suggest that for primary school-age children in the UK, "there is an ever-increasing gap between

student preferences and materials that schools provide and recommend” (p.23) and children are not able to find what they like to read in school. Similarly, in my study, the books many parents choose are related to school materials such as graded level books.

Parents in these foci demonstrated that reading is not a burden but fun no matter the language. The second principle of reading for pleasure is to identify the interaction patterns and skills, for example, using the strategies and skills in the categories in this study, and apply the focus which has the characteristic of reading for pleasure. Although literary and exploratory foci need more parents’ involvement and patience, from children’s responses and the interaction between parents and children, foreign or second language shared reading can also benefit from reading for pleasure. Xiaoxia’s, Yueyue’s and Xiaotian’s families enjoyed reading in English and it encouraged the parent-child interaction through shared reading. The difference in children’s responses is clear: when a pleasure-oriented reading focus or a skills-oriented focus was used among these seven families in this study. I observed both parents and children who used a Literal focus and Literacy focus finished picturebooks as quickly as possible, and children did not find the reading enjoyable. While families in Literary focus and Exploratory focus were more likely to enjoy reading and have more interaction with the children; the children were more likely to ask to read more.

To summarise, the five interaction foci from the current study can be

used to identify parents' behaviour and make them aware of other ways of interacting with children in a foreign language context or shared reading in general. Similar to the first language shared reading intervention studies I mentioned in chapter 2 (Hargrave & Sénéchal, 2000; Chow et al., 2008; Sim et al., 2014), reading for pleasure is possible in foreign language shared reading as long as positive shared reading strategies are used, for example, parents could provide not only the books relating to the school curriculum but allow the child to choose their own reading book; read in a more relaxed way; use more stress-free interaction; show the pleasure of reading; add fun to reading and increase their child's motivation to read.

7.5.5 Breaking the boundary of didactic reading and reading for pleasure

Although children's literature and the shared reading process is didactic, I do not believe reading for pleasure is entirely contradictory to didactic instructional reading. In contrast to reading for pleasure, didacticism in shared reading means parents are reading with a specific or instructional purpose. Shared reading with purpose can be easily seen as a didactic activity.

However, if didactic or instructional reading means educational intention and purposeful reading, reading for pleasure also has its purpose. Reading for pleasure is a notion that sometimes can be misleading. "Pleasure" is not the ultimate purpose for "pleasure's" own sake. Many reading for pleasure studies (Clark & Rumbold, 2006; Clark & Douglas, 2011; Department for

Education, 2012) list the goals of reading for pleasure, for example, improving academic success and building a relationship with books and nurturing a life-long interest in reading. The difference lies in instant influence or long-term influence, the purpose of either one is to encourage children to read and love reading. From this point of view, these two are not contradictory in nature, instead they are complementary and positively reinforce each other. According to the evidence from this current study, parents combined different foci when they shared English picturebooks. Shared reading has an aesthetic demand for leisure or entertainment, and also has a pedagogical function, they are not mutually exclusive. Most adults who purchase books for children realise that the materials must teach as well as please, and echoes the slogan — “learning through playing” or “playing is learning”.

There is a pedagogical doubt that reading for pure pleasure in a second language prior to fluency. However, reading for pleasure and academic language study is not contradictory. Many linguistic studies (Day & Bamford, 1998; Krashen, 2004; Bland, 2013b) demonstrate the benefits of extensive reading in a second language. From my study, although Xiaotian, Xiaoxia, Yueyue did not know the alphabet, or how to spell or decode the printed words in books yet, there is no doubt that when they begin to learn these in a formal way, their earlier experience will provide them with a “head start” in many ways. Reading for pleasure in a second language and extensive second language reading provide the essential foundations of academic language studies, for

example, cultural awareness and general knowledge about the world, sufficient natural and comprehensible input, reader autonomy and reading efficiency, which are all critical for language or literature studies.

It has been said that children's literature has always been intended to instruct and to delight (Demers & Moyles, 1982) or in Rudd's (2004:29) words "instruction and entertainment". Rosenblatt (1978) suggests that aesthetic and efferent reading are not simple binaries and Emer O'Sullivan (2004:193) comments that "the literary and pedagogical" value in children's literature simultaneously exist. The same text read by a different person, or the same person reading but on different occasions could afford both kinds of reading. We can see many pieces of evidence from the current study which demonstrate this. We cannot say that reading with a Literary focus or Exploratory focus in shared reading did not teach anything, or reading with a Literal focus or Literacy focus in shared reading did not provide enjoyment. From the children's responses and my analysis in the previous chapter, we can see that many families show characteristics of more than one focus. Some parents try to make shared reading enjoyable while encouraging their children to gain literacy skills consciously or unconsciously, therefore, shared reading has more than one approach — for pleasure as well as for information. Didacticism is not necessarily a negative thing, especially in foreign language shared reading. Therefore, by discarding the strict dividing line between didactic reading and

reading for pleasure will make shared reading a more relaxed and tailored experience.

7.6 Digital resources can be beneficial in foreign language shared reading

In chapter 2, I discussed parents' fear of digital reading and pointed out some advantages of reading on digital devices, especially for foreign language shared reading. As one of the five interaction patterns, how parents and children engage with digital resources was further demonstrated in chapter 6. Digital reading is, and continues to be, a controversial topic; there are no easy answers to it. In the previous chapter, evidence from this current study shows that digital reading is an integral part of shared reading among Chinese families when they read picturebooks in English.

7.6.1 Digital reading can be combined with paper reading in shared reading

In chapter 2, I introduced the research that multimedia stories could be an effective way to scaffold children's reading (Takacs et al., 2014). From my observation, I found that digital tools and paper reading were not mutually exclusive. There are beneficial aspects of digital reading, so the parent can complement books rather than replacing them. For example, Xiaoxia's mother said she learned from digital resources, Anna's mother said Anna enjoyed reading from her iPad and also learned a lot. Many children in this study read a

book and then listened to the book recording many times; other children liked to use a reading pen to make a sound like playing a game. With the prevalence of digital reading, the concept of “reading” may change. Children are reading even when they are not explicitly reading the paper books, digital books or book apps on the devices (Dredge, 2015). We should be more open-minded, as long as we keep reading relevant. In this study, observation data reveals another way of reading — parents sit next to children, helping the child when needed, sometimes praising and encouraging them to interact with digital devices.

7.6.2 Parents’ involvement is vital for digital shared reading

Although studies show there are advantages of digital reading such as word comprehension, I found the differences between print reading and screen reading lie in other aspects.

The first difference is about physical posture. I compared the different posture when parent-child read from digital picturebooks or paper books. The former seems a solo activity; the latter is an engaging and affective experience. From my observation, when children were reading digitally, they adopted a curled-up position; consequently, they had less communication and interaction with parents compared with paper book reading. By also observing parents’ and children’s physical position when reading from a book and digital reading, I found digital reading results in the detachment of parents and children. When Anna was using her iPad, she preferred to read by herself; any interaction

seemed a distraction to her. Such behaviour and postures reflect both the physical characteristics of the device and the reading habits which relate to the devices. Reading digital books changes reading from a potentially shared event to a more individual activity (Yuill & Martin, 2016).

Secondly, from my data, when parents and children read on a digital device or from a paper book, their comments were different. Reading from a book was associated with the engagement of the children with the story or with maternal talk; while reading on devices elicited more mechanical or technical questions about reading.

If the cognitive measure of recall and story comprehension is similar for paper and digital reading, other aspects that I believe are significant to parent-child shared reading are also different: mother-child attachment and warmth, parents' comments, physical posture and habits tied to the use of technology and paper. Shared reading is not only about books, but also about parent-child attachment and social development, which is equally or more important. Since it has been said that digital reading is beneficial in many ways when parents are involved in the reading process (Dredge, 2015), parents should not rely on digital resources completely; their involvement is still important.

7.6.3 The need for more digital technology designed for English shared reading

Therefore, thinking about how digital technology can be used for sharing is

needed, as long as such digital books encourage connection to the social world, rather than detaching from it. The screen size could be changed, two screens could be used, and parents could become more involved in digital reading. Digital reading could be used for the same story but different roles could be assigned to parents and children. For example, Xiaotian's Tellybear can record his mother's voice and he could read with his mother in this way. For the issue of paper versus digital reading, co-reading may be the key to reconnect parents and children with this new device. The answer lies in how it is used.

7.6.4 Digital resources for English picturebook reading

Digital books could be used to positively facilitate less confident parents in shared reading as the Chinese parents did in this current study. From my interviews, due to their unfamiliarity with English, Chinese parents in this study thought that the English reading by a native speaker in on the iPad or audio files was better than their reading. Some parents believe these tools make up for their lack of language skills. Xiaoxia's mother had an alternative strategy — she learned from these native readings first and then read to Xiaoxia herself. English lessons taught by native speakers are another huge market in China now, online or in the classroom. Many parents in the interviews thought digital books read by a native speaker were efficient and saved money rather than taking English lessons. Digital tools lessen their physical and economic burden.

On a broader level, digital books offer the potential for much easier

production of international variations of the same book in the global market. Digital English storybooks can more effectively connect remote areas and disadvantaged children. In this study, parents from small cities stated they had equal access to these digital resources. Considering the benefits of digital resources in terms of improving comprehension, pronunciation, and motivation for English picturebook reading, digital resources are complementary; the point is always the person and how they use it.

7.7 Summary

In this chapter, by analysing the findings of the research questions from a pedagogical and metacritical approach, I tried to further deconstruct this new phenomenon of shared reading. Indeed, shared reading can be a learned skill and a conscious behaviour, either from parents' own childhood experience or training. Shared reading is also an unconscious skill; it is the reflection of parents' parenting philosophy and children's responses, no matter the language. It is also a personal combination determining readers' responses to a particular text, at a specific time, within a particular context and in different languages.

Chapter 8 Conclusion and implications

8.1 What was learned from this study? The answers to the research questions

In summary, chapters 4 to 6 presented the findings according to my three research questions respectively — about parents' motivation, parents and children's book choices and parent-child interaction patterns during shared reading. From the findings and further analysis, we have learned that Chinese parents' most significant motivation is for their child to learn the English language through English picturebooks; parents and children have different book choices when it comes to English picturebooks; parents are more likely to choose graded level books; children are more likely to choose the characters they are familiar with; different families have different priorities in terms of English picturebook reading; some focus on improving literacy skills, and some focus on enjoying the books in general; most Chinese families had a similar focus when they read English picturebooks and Chinese picturebooks, but the difference is the level of engagement and detail.

Chapter 7 tried to push further, to probe the social and pedagogical aspects behind these findings. We also learned that because of Chinese parents' motivation in terms of children's language learning and educational ambition, they look for the “right” books or “right focus” for children. I argued in chapter 7 that the “right books” or “right focus” was questionable. English

picturebook choices and shared reading in Chinese families are class related; many shared reading sessions show more than one interaction focus, so didactic reading and reading for pleasure are not necessarily contradictory. Foreign language reading can happen not only in the classroom but in families and also “for pleasure” according to the evidence of this study; and digital reading is an essential part of English shared reading for Chinese parents. The study demonstrated that shared reading is a culturally specific event; it has universal characteristics no matter the language or cultural differences. This new phenomenon also shows us the characteristics of Chinese parenting, which is not easy to label using existing literature; and picturebook reading and parenting are becoming globalised. All of these create a general picture of Chinese families’ Anglophone shared reading — a socially dynamic event.

8.2 Limitations and future study

My mixed-methods approach is certainly not the only rigorous or best way to study a new phenomenon. There are limitations to this current study that are noteworthy, and there are many possibilities for future research. Firstly, this study did not consider the genres of picturebooks, such as fiction and non-fiction, narrative or information books, which may bring different interaction behaviours as previous literature suggests in the first language shared reading research (Anderson et al., 2004).

Secondly, my observation samples were small, and only a few samples

were from each age range; I did categorise children and parents' gender and gained data, however, I did not measure age differences, gender differences, between mothers and fathers, and boys' and girls' in terms of book preferences and interaction patterns in this study. It is beyond the scope of this study. However, previous studies show children's gender may have much more influence on book choices when they get older (Clark, Torsi & Strong, 2005); and the differences between parents' genders in terms of book choices were statistically significant (Baker, 2013). These aspects of shared reading are still to be assessed. Since in this study, far fewer fathers than mothers took part, some caution is needed in the interpretation of these findings before generalising these results. Baker's (2013) study indicates that there were many differences between how fathers and mothers share books with children, an area that is worthy investigation. The complexity of gender in parenting and socio-cultural diversity in terms of book choices are also promising areas for future research, which I would like to continue investigating. In the follow-up analysis and study, I would like to consider further that these elements may have an influence on parent-child interaction patterns.

Thirdly, for future studies, from the perspective of methodology, another limitation of this study is the lack of information concerning whether parents' interaction patterns continue into later developmental periods or if they adapt to children's changing developmental period. Although this study used an ethnographic approach, due to the limited length of time and the range of

families from different backgrounds, more comprehensive data and longitudinal observation is needed to observe parents' changing patterns and the influence of that on children's long-term response and influences. It was also difficult to ascertain the reliability of parents' self-reporting of many behaviour during the shared reading of books with children, whether they allowed children to choose the book and other reported behaviour.

Fourth, more studies investigating from children's perspectives are also needed. For example, focus groups of children and parents, interviewing children, and allowing children to lead the research process would reveal more about children's attitudes to shared reading. In the long term, reading books about people from other languages and cultures certainly increases cross-cultural understanding and acculturation. Chinese children know about western festivals, family and social life from English picturebooks which convey cultural meanings. These possible influences deserve more attention from researchers. Further, taking this study as an example, shared reading research demands interdisciplinary cooperation from different scholarly perspectives.

Lastly, based on the data drawn from 575 Anglophone picturebook reading families, further discussion into social equality and social class reflection of Anglophone picturebook reading in China needs to be undertaken. The respondents in my study are homogeneous in many ways, so my study needs replications and further extensions with a more broad range of settings and groups. Future studies should broaden the scope of social, economic

backgrounds and disadvantaged children (for example, low-income families, children with learning difficulties or children with risks for developmental disorders).

8.3 Strengths of this study

I believe that the findings of this study are significant for several reasons. Firstly, this study investigated shared reading studies in the context of globalisation and digitalisation, which is the irreversible trend for all aspects of education and life. The present findings which focus on foreign language shared reading provides insight into shared reading and extends our understanding of shared reading in an increasingly globalised world and for a digital native generation.

Secondly, this study was among the first to explore family shared reading in a foreign language context, which addresses a significant research gap. The findings of this study could have reciprocal effects on second language reading and first language shared reading. Results from this study show that foreign language acquisition can also be gained from family shared reading when reading for pleasure.

Thirdly, this current study explored the motivation of parents as parents are also important participants in shared reading. This aspect was lacking in previous shared reading research. It extends the voluminous research on shared reading by focusing on parents' motivation and book choices. I compared parents and children's favourite books and further linked back to parents'

motivation to examine parents' practice. This research makes the connections between parents' motivation; the book choices involved in foreign language shared reading which places the understating of children's behaviours in a wider context.

Fourth, the study also extends and refines the previous shared reading studies by taking it to a broader and more comprehensive concept of literacy and reading; it draws from a wide range of picturebooks and interaction theories, parenting theories, and social capital theory.

Fifth, this study broke many binary boundaries. It questioned the dichotomy of didactic reading and reading for pleasure by showing that it could coexist in Chinese parents' English shared reading practices. It also challenged the binary category of parenting theory of "authoritative" and "authoritarian" by adding more parenting practice to demonstrate the complexity and richness of parenting. It also showed it is problematic to tell which picturebook is "right" or "wrong", or which interaction focus is "right" or "wrong" in shared reading practice.

Sixth, rather than a linear relationship, data from current study extended previous home literacy studies by demonstrating a more complicated relationship between shared reading interactions and children's literacy development. Shared reading has a different focus which may bring different results and different responses towards books. The significance of this study also lies in its comprehensive view of shared reading in a different social

context. The findings show the diversity in shared reading behaviour across different families, social contexts and languages. At the same time, many common characteristics about shared reading and children's responses are universal, regardless of the language.

Finally, but most importantly, it explored what constitutes shared reading and presents a new grounded theory that (a) synthesises and identifies parents' interaction patterns and (b) also focuses on young children's responses to these foci. I hope to develop a theoretic tool that could be flexible and updatable — that could be applied to understand and analyse various types of interaction in different contexts and that may stand the test of time. The present findings have extended our understanding of foreign language shared reading by showing that parents' interaction behaviour can be categorised along five dimensions, namely:

1. Literal focus: Parents and children are engaged in exact translation;
2. Literacy focus: Parents and children are engaged in developing reading skills;
3. Literary focus: Parents and children are engaged in reading for pleasure;
4. Exploratory focus: Parents and children are engaged in knowledge and discovery;
5. Digital focus: Parents and children are engaged in interaction with technology.

The major theoretical construct of this study is to reveal these foci of foreign language shared reading, which is part of shared reading interaction patterns in general, and compare them with their Chinese shared reading

practice to further identify family's shared reading practice. As in the example of using these foci to apply to Chinese children's mother language reading in chapter 6, these interaction foci go beyond second language shared reading; they can also be applied to first language shared reading or shared reading in general.

8.4 Implications of this study

Firstly, the results related to shared reading interaction patterns will add to the studies of contemporary Chinese children's literature, which currently focus on the history of that literature and a close analysis of texts, by opening it up to a new area: the field of reader motivation, reader's response and parent-child interaction.

Secondly, this study aims to contribute to Anglophone picturebook research in a second language context, which is currently lacking. By comparing English picturebook shared reading with Chinese picturebook shared reading, the differences could lead to additional questions about the similarities and differences of reading in a different language, which could bring insights and aid in developing a strategy for first and second language acquisition, or language acquisition in general.

Thirdly, there are implications for language teachers, parents and educational practitioners, who may gain insight from the study regarding home literacy in second language development. Evidence from home literacy practice

will also give clues and inspiration for school settings. It will assist school teachers to work more productively with parents and children to determine where to put efforts or resources into children's reading at school. Implications about Anglophone picturebook reading by Chinese children may expand into how to improve the interaction level. There are also implications for policy-makers to design and conduct early literacy intervention programmes; especially for children from disadvantaged background whose families may not have the awareness or resources to engage and support children in family shared reading events.

Appendix 1 The questionnaire

Questionnaire

Understanding the motivation and interaction of Anglophone picturebook-reading among Chinese families. (Tick one only except for the ones which are indicated as “multiple choice”)

Part 1 Personal and language background

1 Gender: Female Male

2 Age _____ 3 City _____

4 Child 1 (oldest) Date of birth _____

Gender: Female Male

Child 2 (If applicable)

Date of birth _____

Gender: Female Male

(If applicable) Do you have more than two children? If yes, please write down the date of birth and gender of your youngest child.

5 What is your current English level? (Multiple choice if applicable)

A. Limited or total beginner

B. Simple conversation level

C. Passed University level 4

D. Passed University level 6

E. Proficient or has majored in English

F. I have lived in an English-speaking country.

If so, specify for how long? _____

G, I have taken the IELTS test. Score; _____

H, I have taken the TOEFL test. Score; _____

I, Other, please state briefly _____

6 What is your children's current English level? (Multiple choice)

- A. They only listen, they can't say anything B. They can only say a few words
C. They can speak several words D. They can hold a simple conversation and
know several words
E. They can hold a daily conversation F. They are a fluent speaker, but not an
independent reader
G. They are a fluent speaker and an independent reader
H. Other situation, please state briefly _____

7 Which language picturebooks do you read at home to your children? (Multiple choice if applicable)

- A. Neither Chinese nor English picturebooks
B. Always Chinese C. We read more Chinese than English
D. Half English, half Chinese E. We read more English than Chinese
F. English as often as possible G. Other languages, please state briefly _____

Part 2 Reading and language habits

8 How often do you read English language picturebooks to your children?

- A. Almost every day B. 2-4 times a week
C. Once a week D. 2-3 times a month
E. Once a month F. Less than once a month
G. Only a few times until now H. Never (see below)

(If you chose H of Question 8, please go to question 9, then go to question 30 to finish).

9 If you chose H, why don't you read an English picturebook to your children? (Multiple choice, select as many as applicable)

A. We only read Chinese language picturebooks, I would like my children to read Chinese picturebooks first.

B. My English is poor.

C. I don't have any information about English language picturebooks.

D. I don't know how to choose English language picturebooks.

E. I don't have time.

F. My child is too small to read foreign language books.

G. other _____

10 Do you go to the library to borrow children's picturebooks?

A. No

B. Yes, how often? (For example, once a week, once every two weeks...) _____

11 How many English language picturebooks do you own at home?

A. Less than 20 B. 21-100 C. 101-200

D. 201-500 E. More than 500

12 How long do you read to your children each time?

A. Less than 10 minutes B. 11-20 minutes

C. 21-30 minutes D. 31-60 minutes

E. More than 1 hour

13 What are the main reasons for you to choose English language picturebooks, rather than

Chinese language picturebooks? (Multiple choice)

- A. To learn the language, to gain linguistic skills.
- B. English language picturebooks are of good quality (paper, ink, binding, print)
- C. English language picturebooks have more toy books, they look attractive and interesting to children (toy books, pop-up books)
- D. English language picturebooks have better illustrations and better aesthetics
- E. I don't trust translations, it will lose some meaning and features compared with the original edition
- F. To know western culture, gain international communication skills
- G. I like this book, but the Chinese edition does not exist
- H. Another reason, please state _____

14 Which language do you use when you read English language picturebooks to your children?

- A. Only English
- B. Mostly English with Chinese explanations
- C. I mostly translate to Chinese, with a few English words
- D. I translate everything into Chinese

15 When reading English language picturebooks to your children, what kind of questions do you ask? (Multiple choice)

- A. I don't ask any questions, I only read.
- B. I ask my child/ren to point to characters, places and objects.
- C. I ask my child/ren if they understand or not (Why? Who? How?)
- D. I ask my child/ren to predict the stories.
- E. I ask for a Chinese explanation of words or sentences.

F. I ask my child/ren if they are enjoying themselves (the story, the characters, the place)

G. I ask my child/ren to imitate the actions or words.

H. Other questions, please state _____

16 In which languages do your children respond to you when you read English language picturebooks to your children?

A. English

B. English and Chinese

C. Chinese only

D. There is no response or other

17 During English picturebook reading, what are the most frequent reasons for being interrupted? (Multiple choice, choose a maximum of three reasons).

A. My children do not interrupt me, he or she listens to me.

B. My children ask me the Chinese meaning of a word or sentence, then go on.

C. When my children show no interest in this book.

D. My children find it difficult to understand because of the language.

E. My children point out something related to their own life.

F. My children find small details in the book.

G. My children find other books that they want to read.

H. My children think my or my partner's reading is not entertaining enough.

I. he reading time is too long, the children feel tired and turn to other activities.

J. My children are distracted by other things (such as TV, cartoons, food, brothers and sisters, etc.)

K. Other reasons, please give an example _____

18 Who chooses the picturebooks each time, you or your children?

- A. Mostly me
- B. Half and half
- C. Mostly the children
- D. Hard to say

19 Apart from you, is there anybody else who reads English language picturebooks to your children?

- A. No, only me
- B. Yes, _____ (For example, the other parent)

20 Do you think your children enjoy reading picturebooks? (5 scale rating, 1 is not very much, 5 is they like reading very much)

Picturebooks in general (including Chinese): 1 2 3 4 5

English language picturebooks: 1 2 3 4 5

Part 3 Consumer habits

21 Where do you get information about choosing an English language picturebook? (Multiple choice, choose a maximum of 3 categories)

- A. Other family members choose it
- B. I browse in a bookshop and choose
- C. Recommendations by a book, magazine, or library and then I search for it
- D. Recommendations by a friend or an Internet group (for example, QQ, Wechat group)
- E. Online search or online bookshop
- F. Other, please indicate _____

22 Have you joined or do you belong to any Internet reading group (for example, Wechat)? If yes, please state

A. Yes, for example, _____

B. Yes, but I don't remember

C. No

23 If you saw the 10 books below, which ones might you buy for your children? (Choose 1 to 5 books. Imagine you haven't read about them or already bought them).

(Images of online book choice)



24 What are the reasons for you to decide to buy or borrow a picturebook? (Rating by dragging online, 1 is the main consideration, 2 is the next, etc... choose 5 reasons)

A. Reasonable price

B. I have heard of this book (from friends, internet group)

C. I think this book is suitable for my children's level of English

D. I think I can read this book to my children without difficulty or with the help of a CD

E. I know my children very well, he or she may like this book

F. My children would choose this one, I respect his or her choice

G. This book is beautifully designed. I, as a parent, like it as well

H. I think this book is funny

I. I think this book may help my children to build good habits, or this book can educate my children (no fighting, be polite, potty training, school entry preparation)

J. Children can learn some knowledge of English from this book

25 What kinds of other activities or tools do you do relate to picturebook reading?

(Sequencing 1-3 activities most often)

A. I mainly read to my children

B. My children mainly read by themselves

C. We use an electronic pen to read

D. We listen to CDs or audio resources of picturebooks

E. We watch a cartoon or video related to picturebooks

F. We play games or make a craft related to picturebooks

G. We read digital books, use software or apps related to picturebooks

H. We go to a reading class or learning centre

I. We get online training about picturebook reading

J. We watch or perform the drama from picturebooks

26 What kind of English language picturebooks do you mostly buy? (Choose a maximum of 3 categories)

A. Books about knowledge (alphabet, counting, maths concepts, word book)

B. Fairytales, story books, fiction

C. Phonics or graded reading books

D. A book series

E. Toy books, games books (including plastic books, toy books, pop-up books)

F. Non-fiction (science, plants, animals, history, geography, biography)

G. Other, please state _____

27 Please write down your top 3 favourite English language picturebooks.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

28 Please write down your children's top 3 favourite English language picturebooks.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

29 Please write down the titles of 3 English language picturebooks you and your children shared most recently.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

30 What is your annual family income? (Including investments or rental income? 1 pound=9 Yuan)

A. Less than 50,000 Yuan

B. 50,001 to 100,000 Yuan

C. 100,001 to 200,000 Yuan

D. 200,001 to 500,000 Yuan

E. More than 500,000 Yuan

F. I'd rather not say

31 What is your highest level of education?

A. Secondary B. College C. Master's D. Doctorate

E. Other _____ F. I'd rather not say

32 Would you like to take part in the following observation and interview parts?

Yes (Go to question 33 if choose "yes")

No (Go to submission page)

33 If you answered 'yes' to question 32, please leave your contact information. If you answered 'no', please ignore this.

Name: _____ Mobile: _____

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Appendix 2 The interview questions

Part 1 About the parent English learning and reading experience

Could you tell me your English learning experience?

About English, which aspect do you think you are good at? I mean speaking or reading or writing? Or are they the same?

Do you read English books? Is there any book you still remember or liked?

Do you read in Chinese? Do you like reading?

Did you read picturebooks when you were a child? Did you own it or borrow it?

Part 2 About the parenting style, the family environment, the reading environment

Could you tell me your child's reading experience and habits?

How many Chinese or English language picturebooks do you have at home?

When did you begin reading English language picturebooks to your children? Why?

Do you know a lot of families who read English books to their children? Did other parents influence you?

How long do you read to your children every day? How many Chinese or English language picturebooks have you read?

Are there other family members involved with reading activities?

What's Daddy's role in the children's educational choices.

Have you joined in other educational activities?

Part 3 About the reading process

Who chooses books everyday?

If you don't explain it in Chinese, do you think s/he can understand the story?

Do you think s/he understands the story because s/he sees the pictures or listens to the words?

If s/he doesn't want to read any more, but wants to play instead, what would you do? Let him/her play for a while?

When your child chooses a book, can she or he tell which one is a Chinese picturebook and which one is an English picturebook, or do they choose a book based on whether the story is fun or not?

Does s/he react differently when s/he reads a Chinese or English language picturebook? For example, when reading in Chinese, are there more interactions or responses?

Does s/he have a reading partner, such as friends from the library?

Does s/he participate in any storytelling activities with other children? Or only on a parent-child basis?

Part 4 About book consumption

Do you go to the library?

Where do you buy English language picturebooks from?

How do you choose a book? Do you consider recommendations from Wechat group?

I asked you in the questionnaire about your book choice. You said you liked artistic books.

What kind of book do you think is "artistic"?

I gave you a mock book choice exercise in the questionnaire. Why did you choose the National Geographic book and a book about space? Do you think these books would enrich her/his knowledge?

What kind of storybook do you like? (Genre, character, length) Why do you prefer Dear Zoo rather than No, David?

Part 5 About apps, electronic books and reading pens

Do you use any app and electronic books? What kind of app do you use?

So do you prefer picturebooks with CDs or audio files?

Do you have a reading pen at home?

Part 6 About book choice

Do you like books which help children to acquire new knowledge, such as words?

Does your child like any *particular character*?

Do you think s/he understands English stories?

What kind of Chinese books does s/he like?

Does s/he like a particular author or style?

Do you choose guided reading books? Do you think they are different from picturebooks?

Part 7 About educational plan

What kind of kindergarten do you plan to send Xiaoxia to?

Will you look for a kindergarten with a native English-speaker teacher?

Do you have any future educational plans for Xiaoxia, for example, studying abroad?

How about English reading or English, do you have any plans? What do you think of independent reading?

OK, do you plan to teach her phonics?

Do you want to teach Xiaoxia phonics by yourself or at a private institution? Do you think a mother can be a good teacher?

You said you plan to send Xiaoxia to study abroad. Would you also consider sending Xiaoxia to an international school before that?

Do you plan to teach Xiaoxia any Chinese words before primary school?

Appendix 3 Example of coding process

Appendix 3. Example of coding process			
	Open coding	Arial coding	Selective coding
Adults behavior examples			
Xixi's mother- Are you shy? For example, when you meet someone you don't know. Are you shy? You are not shy, right? You are good at handle this.	codes adult commets to personal experiences	Interaction focus Exploratory focus: knowledge and discovery	
Xixi's mother- You can choose by yourself.	adult lets child to choose books	Literary focus: reading pleasure	fit with Literary focus
Xixi's mother-tunktunk (mimic the action sound) of carrots creeping. He turned...but there was nothing there. (parent do the action)	adult mimics the action of book character	Literary focus: translation and meaning confirmation	
Niumiu's father- He doesn't like raining, right?	adult asks confirmation questions	Literary focus: translation and meaning confirmation	
Niumiu's father- Can you say it after me?"No david."	adult asks child to read or say it in English	Literary focus: translation and meaning confirmation	
Niumiu's father- "I am not a happy pig. "I am not a happy pig(Chinese).	adult translates to Chinese	Literary focus: translation and meaning confirmation	
Xiaowei's mother- Shall I read to you?"This is a mud pie. "(both read together)	adult helps to decode the English words (or read)	Literary focus: developing reading skills	
Xiaowei's mother- How to say that in Chinese?	adult asks child to translate	Literary focus: translation and meaning confirmation	
Xiaowei's mother- I can't read it all, difficult for me.	parent refuses to read one book		fit with literacy focus
Xiaowei's mother- I remember you can read this one.Try.	adult encourages child to read by herself or himself	Literacy focus: developing reading skills	
Xiaowu's mother- He was jumping away, right?"He was too jumpy, jump here and there.	adult pauses to evaluate, expand, repeat, comment	Exploratory focus: knowledge and discovery	
"So the frog is jumping away from this book.Maybe to a pond, right?"	child's responses		
R-Do you prefer books with CD or reading pen?	reading pen	Digital focus: interaction with technology	
Xiaowu's mother- I like reading pen. When I get tired, I let him hear the nursery rhymes.			
Yuki's mother- My Dad is Super. "(Points to the words)	adult points to the words	Literacy focus: developing reading skills	
Wuyue's mother- Shall I sing this song to you? "One little finger, tap, tap, put your finger on, put your finger down, put on your -head."	adult sustains interest and attention		fit with literacy focus
Child behavior examples			
	codes	Arial coding	Selective coding
Yuki- What does "super" mean?	child asks the meaning of foreign language	Interaction focus Literal focus: translation and meaning confirmation	
Xixi- Peek-a-boo. (do the action)	child mimics the action of book character or play with	Literary focus: reading pleasure	fit with Literary focus or
Xiaowei's mother- Shall we read this one?	child refuses to read one book		Literary focus
Xiaowei- No, No, I won't.			
Anzai's mother- I let her listen the audio of these books at home. I read less but she listened a lot.	child uses digital tools, listen to CD or audio files	Digital focus: interaction with technology	

Primary source

- Aesop. (2013). *Aesops Illustrated Fables*. Barnes & Noble
- American Academy of Pediatrics. (2014). *The American Academy of Pediatrics' Guidelines*. Bantam, 6th Revised ed.
- Awdry, W. (2006). *Thomas the Tank Engine: Blue Train, Green Train*. New York: Random House US.
- Baby Professor. (2015). *Peek-a-Book: Look and Find Games for Teens*. Baby Professor.
- Bang, M. (2004). *When Sophie Gets Angry — Really, Really Angry*. Scholastic Paperbacks.
- Barbauld, A. L. (1778/2015). *Lessons for Children*. Andesite Press.
- Barthelme, D. (2013). *Snow White*. London: Touchstone.
- Berenstain, Stan & Jan. (2014). *The Berenstain Bears' First Time Do-It! Book*. New York: Dover Publications.
- Brown, W. M. (1977). *Goodnight Moon*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Browne, A. (2002). *My Dad*. Doubleday UK.
- Browne, A. (2002). *My Mum*. Doubleday UK.
- Browne, A. (2005). *Into the Forest*. London: Walker Books Ltd.
- Browne, A. (2018). *The Tunnel*. London: Walker Books Ltd.
- Burningham, J. (2001). *Mr Gumpy's Outing*. Leypoldt: Henry Holt.
- Briggs, R. (2015). *The Snowman*. New York: Random House.
- Campbell, R. (2014). *Dear Zoo*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Carle, E. (1994). *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Penguin UK.
- Carle, E. (1999). *From Head to Toe*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Carle, E. (2015). *Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me*. Little Simon.

- Carrol, L. (2003). *Alice' Adventures in Wonderland*. Penguin Classics
- Chang, Y. (2019). *Gu Gong Li De Da Guai Shou* [*The Monster in the Forbidden City*]. Encyclopedia of China Publishing House.
- Chen, B. C. (1931/2018). *A Li Si Xiao Jie* [Miss Alice]. Beijing Institute of Technology Press.
- Christelow, E. (2017). *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed*. Boston: HMH.
- Chua, A. (2011). *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*. Penguin Books.
- Cole, J. (1998). *Magic School Bus at the Waterworks*. Pittsburgh: Scholastic.
- Collodi, C. (2009). *The Adventures of Pinocchio*. Oxford University Press.
- Comenius, I. A. (1658/2001). *Tu Hua Zhong Jian Dao De Shi Jie* [Orbis sensualium pictu]. Shanghai Bookstore Publishing.
- Cousins, L. (2019). *Maisy's Christmas Eve*. London: Walker.
- Davies, A. B. (2009). *Peppa Pig: Peppa goes swimming*. Ladybird.
- Dean, J. (2013). *Pete the Cat*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Dean, J. & Dean, K. (2019). *Pete the Cat and the Supercool Science Fair*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Donaldson, J. (2018). *Cheng Li Zui Piao Liang De Ju Ren* (*The Smartest Giant in Town, translation by Ren Rongrong*). Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- Dunn, P. (2012). *Little Lamb*. New York: Random House.
- Eccleshare, J. (2018). *1001 Children's Books: You Must Read Before You Grow Up*, translated into Chinese by Chen Xiaoqi among others, Beijing: China Pictorial Publishing House.
- Edgson, A. (2006). *Emperor's New Clothes*. Child's Play Ltd.
- Fang, J. (2017). *Niu Lang He Zhi Nv* [The Cowherd and the Girl Weaver]. Tsinghua University Press.

- Ye, S. T. (1921/2017). *Xiao Bai Chuan* [Little White Boat]. Beijing Institute of Technology Press.
- Ye, S. T. (1923/2015). *Dao Cao Ren*. [Scarecrow]. Anhui Education Press.
- Gag, W. (2006) *Millions of Cats*. Puffin Books.
- Highlights. (2016). *High Five*. Highlights.
- Hill, E. (2017). *Spot Goes to the Fire Station*. London: Puffin.
- Hoff, S. (2017). *I can read: Danny and the Dinosaur: School Days*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Hovland, H., & Kove, T. (2011). *Johannes Jensen føler seg annerledes*. [John Jenson Feels Different], [Bartlett, D., Trans.]. Eerdmans Books for Young Readers.
- Hunt, R., & Brychta, A. (2003). *Oxford Reading Tree: Stage 1+: First Sentences: Kipper's Diary*. Oxford University Press.
- Hunt, R., & Brychta, A. (2005) *Oxford Reading Tree: Stage 1+: More First Sentences B: Hook a Duck*. Oxford University Press.
- Hunt, R., & Brychta, A. (2011) *Oxford Reading Tree: Level 1+: More First Sentences C: The Mud Pie*. Oxford University Press.
- Hutchins, P. (2012). *Rosie's Walk*. Red Fox Picture Books.
- Jane, M. (2015). *My Little Pony the art of Equestria*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.
- Kunhardt, D. (2008). *Pat the Bunny*. New York: Random House US.
- Lang, L., & French, M. (2008). *Lang Lang: Playing with Flying Keys*. Delacorte Press.
- Lee, J., & Huang, Y. R. (2019). *Honey English*. PARA publish.
- Lin, G. (2007). *The Red Thread*. Albert Whitman & Company.
- Martin, B. (2013). *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See*. Leypoldt: Henry Holt and Co.
- Mayer, M. (2007). *Little Critter: It's Easter, Little Critter*. New York: HarperCollins

- McCaughrean, G. (1999). *Thousand and One Arabian Nights*. OUP Oxford
- Mcbratney, S. (2014). *Guess How Much I Love You*. London: Walker Books Ltd.
- Merritt, R. (2017). *The Wheels on the Bus*. Pat-a-Cake.
- Nick, J. (2013). *I Love Colors (Dora the Explorer)*. New York: Random House US .
- O'Dell, S. (2016). *Island of the Blue Dolphins*. Penguin.
- Peng, G. L. (2019). *Hao Xi Guan Yang Cheng Hui Ben*. [Forming a Good Habit series].
Chemical Industry Press.
- Potter, D. (2005). *I am the Music Man*. Child's Play (International) Ltd.
- Price, M. (2019). *Go away, Mr. Wolf*. Mathew Price Ltd.
- Reynolds, A. (2012). *Creepy Carrots*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Rousseau, J. J. (2016). *Emile*. Sovereign.
- Rowling, J. K. (2014). *Harry Potter*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC.
- Rosen, M., & Oxenbury, H. (1997). *We are Going on a Bear Hunt*, Walker Books.
- Risom, O., & Scarry, R. (2011). *I Am a Bunny*. Golden Books.
- Silvey, A. (2010). *100 best books for Children*. (Wang, L,Trans) Changsha: Hunan Children
Publishing House.
- Sarah, F. (2019). *Paw Patrol Mad Libs Junior*. Mad Libs.
- Scarry, R. (2000). *Richard Scarry's Rabbit and His Friends* (Little Golden Book). Crown
Books for Young Reader.
- Shannon, D. (2019). *No, David*. Pittsburgh: Scholastic.
- Shannon, M. (1934). *Dobry*. The Viking Press.
- Shen, C. W. (1928/2014) *A Li Si Zai Zhong Guo*, [Alice's Adventures in China]. Changjiang
Literary and Art Press.

- Stockham, J. (2016). *Down by the Station*. Child's Play (International) Ltd.
- Taylor, N. (2019). *Level 1: Sleeping Beauty (Pearson English Story Readers)*. Pearson Education.
- Thompson, C. (2007). *Looking for Atlantis*. Random House Australia.
- Uchida, R. & Nishimura, S. (2018). *Caterpillar Train*. Beijing Science and Technology Press.
- Walter, A. (2011). *The Three Little Pigs: Hopscotch Fairy Tales*. London: Franklin Watts.
- Wang, P. T. (2014). *Feed your children with books*. Nanning: Guangxi Science and Technology Publishing House.
- Wells, R. (1999). *Read to your bunny*. Scholastic.
- Willems, M. (2015). *Elephant and Piggie*. London: Walker Books Ltd.
- Wood, A. (2014). *The Napping House*. Boston: HMH.

Secondary source

- Adams, M. J. (1990). *Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Alderson, P., & Morrow, V. (2011). *The ethics of research with children and young people: A practical handbook*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Ambady, N., & Gray, H. M. (2002). On being sad and mistaken: Mood effects on the accuracy of thin-slice judgments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83, 947–961.
- Anderson, A., Anderson, J., & Shapiro, J. (2005). Supporting multiple literacies: Parents' and children's mathematical talk within storybook reading. *Mathematics Education Research Journal*. October 2005, Volume 16, Issue 3, pp 5–26.

- Anderson, A., Anderson, J., Lynch, J., Shapiro, J., & Eun Kim, J. (2012). Extra-textual talk in shared book reading: a focus on questioning. *Early Child Development and Care*, 182(9), 1139–1154.
- Anderson, D. (1998). *Casting gender: The constitution of social identities through literacy practices of third and fourth graders*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.
- Anderson, J., Anderson, A., Lynch, J., & Shapiro, J. (2004). Examining the effects of gender and genre on interactions in shared book reading. *Reading Research and Instruction: The Journal of the College Reading Association*, 43(4), 1–20.
- Aram, D., & Aviram, S. (2009). Mothers' Storybook Reading and Kindergartners' Socioemotional and Literacy Development. *Reading Psychology*, 30(2), 175–194.
- Ard, L. M., & Beverly, B.L. (2004). Preschool word learning during joint book reading: Effect of adult questions and comments. *Communication Disorders Quarterly*, 26(1), 17–28.
- Arizpe, E. (2009). Sharing visual experiences of a new culture: Immigrant children in Scotland respond to picturebooks and other visual texts. In J. Evans (Ed.), *Talking Beyond the Page: Reading and Responding to Picture Books* (pp. 134–151). Routledge.
- Arizpe, E. (2013). Meaning-making from wordless (or nearly wordless) picturebooks: what educational research expects and what readers have to say, *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 43(2), 163–176.
- Arizpe, E., & Hodges, G. C. (2018). *Young People Reading: Empirical Research Across International Contexts*. Routledge.
- Arizpe, E., & Styles, M. (2004). *Children Reading Pictures: Interpreting Visual Texts*. Routledge.
- Arnold, D. H., & Whitehurst, G. J. (1994). Accelerating language development through picture book reading: A summary of dialogic reading and its effect. In D. K. Dickinson (Ed.), *Bridges to literacy: Children, families, and schools* (pp. 103–128). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

- Atkinson, P., & Hammersley, M. (1994). Ethnography and participant observation. In Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp.248-261). SAGE.
- Audet, D., Evans, M. A., Williamson, K., & Reynolds, K. (2008). Shared Book Reading: Parental Goals Across the Primary Grades and Goal–Behavior Relationships in Junior Kindergarten. *Early Education and Development*, 19(1), 112–137.
- Bader, B. (1976). *American picturebooks from Noah's ark to the beast within*. Macmillan New York.
- Bai, W. (2012). Selecting English picture books for the Teaching of Reading in Primary Schools. *Journal of Nanjing XiaoZhuang University*. Sep.2016. No.5, 62-65.
- Bailey, J. (2008). First Steps in Qualitative Data Analysis: Transcribing, in *Family Practice*, 25(2), 127–131.
- Bainbridge, C. (2019). Top 5 Skills Needed for Childhood Literacy
<https://www.verywellfamily.com/literacy-skills-1449194>, accessed on 01/09/2019
- Baird, A., Laugharne, J., Maagerø, E., & Tønnessen, E. S. (2015). Child Readers and the Worlds of the Picture Book. *Children's Literature in Education*, 47(1), 1–17.
- Baker, C. E. (2013). Fathers' and Mothers' Home Literacy Involvement and Children's Cognitive and Social Emotional Development: Implications for Family Literacy Programs. *Applied Developmental Science*, 17(4), 184–197.
- Ban, M. (2016). Identifying the “motif” in a country's image of Children: Research on Children's Issues in the Ming Dynasty, a Cultural Critique and Interpretation of Formulated Developmental strategies. (Lin, A. M., Trans.) *Representing Children in Chinese and U.S. Children's Literature*. Routledge, 21-31.
- Bandura, A., Barbaranelli, C., Caprara, G.V., Pastorelli, C. (1996). Multifaceted impact of self-efficacy beliefs on academic functioning. *Child. Dev.* 67, 1206–1222.
- Barnyak, N. C. (2011). A Qualitative Study in a Rural Community: Investigating the Attitudes, Beliefs, and Interactions of Young Children and Their Parents Regarding Storybook Read Alouds. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 39(2), 149–159.

- Barry, A. M. (1997). *Visual Intelligence: Perception, Image, and Manipulation in Visual Communication*. SUNY Press.
- Barthes, R. (1974). *S/Z: An essay* (R. Miller, Trans.). New York: Hill & Wang.
- Baumrind, D. (1971). Current patterns of parental authority. *Developmental Psychology*, 4, 1–103.
- Baumrind, D. (1978). Parental disciplinary patterns and social competence in children. *Youth & Society*, 9, 239–276.
- Baumrind, D. (1989). Rearing competent children. In W. Damon (Ed.), *Child development today and tomorrow* (pp. 349–378). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Beach, J. D. (2015). Do Children Read the Children’s Literature Adults Recommend? A Comparison of Adults’ and Children’s Annual “Best” Lists in the United States 1975–2005. *New Review of Children’s Literature and Librarianship*, 21(1), 17–41.
- Beauvais, C. (2015) *The Mighty Child: Time and Power in Children’s Literature*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Beauvais, C. (2017). An exploration of the “pushy parent” label in educational discourse. In *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* (Vol. 38, Issue 2, pp. 159–171).
- Beauvais, C. (2020). ‘Didacticism’. In Christensen, N., Nel, P. & Paul, L. (Eds) *Keywords to Children’s Literature*, 2nd Edition. New York City, NY: New York University Press.
- Beckett, S. L. (2013). *Transcending Boundaries: Writing for a Dual Audience of Children and Adults*. Routledge.
- Bi, L. (2003). Capitalist Bears and Socialist Modernisation: Chinese Children’s Literature in the Post-Mao Period. *Children’s Literature in Education*, 34(1), 57–73.
- Bi, L. (2013). China’s Patriotic Exposé: Ye Shengtao’s Fairytale, Daocao ren [Scarecrow]. *Bookbird: A Journal of International Children’s Literature*, 51(2), 32–38.
- Bland, J. (2013a). *Children’s Literature in Second Language Education*. Bloomsbury Academic.

- Bland, J. (2013b). *Children's Literature and Learner Empowerment: Children and Teenagers in English Language Education*. London and New York: Bloomsbury.
- Bloome, D., Carter, S.P., Christian, B. M., Otto, S., & Shuart-Faris. (2005). *Discourse Analysis and the Study of Classroom Language and Literacy Events: A Micro ethnographic Perspective*. Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In: Richardson JG (ed.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood Press, 241–258.
- Bourdieu, P. (2004). 'Forms of Capital', in S. Ball (ed.) *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Sociology of Education*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Boyce, L. K., Cook, G. A., Roggman, L. A., Innocenti, M. S., Jump, V. K., & Akers, J. F. (2004). Sharing Books and Learning Language: What do Latina Mothers and Their Young Children Do? *Early Education and Development*, 15(4), 371–386.
- Caspe, M. (2009). Low-income Latino mother' bookshiring styles and children's emergent literacy development. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 24(3), 306-324.
- Cuperman, R. C. (2013). Prejudice and Stereotypes Revealed Through Reader Responses in Pre-School Students, *New Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship*, 19:2, 119-138.
- Brickman, S. O. (2003). Effects of a joint reading strategy on Even Start. Dissertation Abstracts International, *A: The Humanities and Social Sciences*, 63(12), 4261–A.
- Brooks, W., & Browne, S. (2012). Towards a Culturally Situated Reader Response Theory. *Children's Literature in Education*, 43(1), 74–85.
- Brown, P.(2009). "Girls Aloud"; Dialogue as a Pedagogical Tool in Eighteenth-century French Children's Literature. *The Lion and the Unicorn*, Volume 33, Number 2, April 2009, pp. 202-218.
- Bullen, E., & Nichols, S. (2011). Dual Audiences, Double Pedagogies: Representing Family

- Literacy as Parental Work in Picture Books. *Children's Literature in Education*, 42(3), 213.
- Bus, A. G. (2001). Joint caregiver–child storybook reading: A route to literacy development. In S. B. Neuman & D. K. Dickinson (Eds.), *Handbook of early literacy research* (pp. 179–191). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Cao, W. X. (2016). translated by Liang, H. *Children's Disposition and Children's views. Representing Children in Chinese and U.S. Children's Literature*. Routledge, 129-136.
- Carlson, S., Gerhards, J., & Hans, S. (2017). Educating Children in Times of Globalisation: Class-specific Child-rearing Practices and the Acquisition of Transnational Cultural Capital. *Sociology*, 51(4), 749–765.
- Chao, R. K. (1994). Beyond parental control and authoritarian parenting style: understanding Chinese parenting through the cultural notion of training. *Child Development*, 65(4), 1111–1119.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, Calif.
- Chen, Y., & Wang, G. (2019). A survey of students' reading habits. *Course Education Research*. Vol.25:95-96.
- Chow, B. W.-Y., McBride-Chang, C., & Cheung, H. (2010). Parent–child reading in English as a second language: Effects on language and literacy development of Chinese kindergarteners. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 33(3), 284–301.
- Chow, B., McBride-Chang, C., Cheung, H., & Chow, C. S. (2008). Dialogic reading and morphology training in Chinese children: Effects on language and literacy. *Developmental Psychology*, 44(1), 233–244.
- Clark, A., & Moss, P. (2001). *Listening to Young Children: The Mosaic approach*. National Children's Bureau.
- Clark, C., & Foster, A. (2005). *Children's and Young People's Reading Habits and Preferences: The Who, What, Why, Where and When*. National Literacy Trust.

- Clark, C., Torsi, S., & Strong, J. (2005). *Young People and Reading: A School Study Conducted by the National Literacy Trust for the Reading Champions Initiative*. National Literacy Trust.
- Clark, C., & Rumbold, K. (2006). *Reading for Pleasure a research overview*. The National Literacy Trust.
- Clark, C., & Douglas, J. (2011). *Young People's Reading and Writing: An in- depth study focusing on enjoyment, behaviour, attitudes and attainment*. National Literacy Trust.
- Clay, M. M. (1982). *Observing young readers: Selected papers*. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann.
- Clay, M. M. (2000). *Concepts about print: What are children learning about the way we print language?* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research Methods in Education*. Taylor & Francis.
- Coles, M., & Hall, C. (2002). *Children's Reading Choices*. Taylor & Francis.
- Collins, M. F. (2005). ESL preschoolers' English vocabulary acquisition from storybook reading. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 40, 406–408.
- Cox, K. E., & Guthrie, J.T. (2001). Motivational and cognitive contributions to students' amount of reading. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 26(1), 116-131.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. London: Sage.
- Cunningham, A.E., & Stanovich, K. E. (1997). Early reading acquisition and its relation to reading experience and ability ten years later. *Developmental Psychology*, 33 (6), 934-945.
- Davydov, V. V. (1999). A new approach to the interpretation of activity structure and content. In S. Chaiklin, M. Hedegaard, & U. J. Jensen (Eds.), *Activity theory and social practice: Cultural historical approaches* (pp. 39–50). Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.
- Day, R. R., & Bamford, J. (1998). *Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Deater-Deckard, K., Pylas, M. V., & Petrill, S. A. (1997). *The Parent-Child Interaction System (PARCHISY)*. London: Institute of Psychiatry.
- DeBaryshe, B. D., & Binder, J. C. (1994). Development of an instrument for measuring parental beliefs about reading aloud to young children. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 78, 1303–1311.
- DeBruin-Parecki, A. (1999). Assessing adult/child storybook reading practices (*CIERA Report #2-004*). University of Northern Iowa.
- DeBruin-Parecki, A. (2004). *A guide to using the Adult/Child Interactive Reading Inventory*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.
- DeBruin-Parecki, A. (2007). *Let's read together: Improving literacy outcomes with the Adult-Child Interactive Reading Inventory (ACIRI)*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing Co.
- DeLoache, J. S., Strauss, M. S., & Maynard, J. (1979). Picture perception in infancy. *Infant Behavior & Development*, 2, 77–89.
- Demers, P., & Moyles, G. (Eds.). (1982). *From instruction to delight: An anthology of children's literature to 1850*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Department for Education. (2012). Research evidence on reading for pleasure. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/284286/reading_for_pleasure.pdf. Accessed 10/12/2019
- Desai, C. M. (2006). National identity in a multicultural society: Malaysian children's literature in English. *Children's Literature in Education*, 37(2), 163–184.
- Dewey, J. (1902). *The Child and the Curriculum*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Macmillan Co.
- Dickinson, D. K., & Smith, M. W. (1994). Long-Term Effects of Preschool Teachers' Book Readings on Low-Income Children's Vocabulary and Story Comprehension. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 29(2), 105–122.
- Díez Medrano, J. (2014). The socio-economic returns of fluency in English as a foreign language. In: Gerhards J, Hans S & Carlson S (Eds.) *Globalisierung, Bildung und*

- grenzüberschreitende Mobilität*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 239–257.
- Dixon-Krauss, L., Januszka, C. M., & Chae, C.-H. (2010). Development of the Dialogic Reading Inventory of Parent-Child Book Reading. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education: JRCE / Association for Childhood Education International*, 24(3), 266–277.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Teaching and Researching Motivation*. Harlow, Longman.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methodologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2009). The L2 motivational self-system. In: Dörnyei, Z., Ushioda, E. (Eds.), *Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 Self. Multilingual Matters*. Clevedon, UK, pp. 9-42.
- Dredge, S. (2015). Are tablet computers harming our children’s ability to read? *The Guardian*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2015/aug/24/tablets-apps-harm-help-children-read>
- Dun, C., & Cai, S.H. (2007). The strategies of English extensive reading with technology. *Journal of Hebei Normal and Technology University*. Vol.03.
- Dunn, O. (1997). *Real Book News*, 1:1.
- Dunn, O. (2002). Do boys need different learning opportunities? *REALBOOK news*, 11. 1.
- Earl, A., & Maynard, S. (2006). What Makes a Child a Reluctant Reader? *New Review of Children’s Literature and Librarianship*, 12(2), 163–181.
- Early, M. (1990). ESL beginning literacy: A content-based approach. *TESL Canada Journal*, 7(2), 82-93.
- Echevarria, J., Short, D., & Vogt, M. E. (2008). *Making content comprehensible for English learners: The SIOP Model*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Ehrenreich, B. (1989). *Fear of Falling: The Inner Life of the Middle Class*. New York: Pantheon.
- Elkin, J. (2014). Babies Need Books in the Critical Early Years of Life. *New Review of*

Children's Literature and Librarianship, 20(1), 40–63.

Elley, W. B. (1996) “Lifting Literacy Levels in Developing Countries: Some Implications from an IEA Study.” *Promoting Reading in Developing Countries*. Ed. V. Greaney. Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 39–54.

Emer O’Sullivan. (2004). “Comparative children’s literature.” *International companion encyclopedia of children’s literature*. Ed. Hunt, P. Routledge, 191-202.

Enriquez, G., Clark, S. R., & Della Calce, J. (2017). Using Children’s Literature for Dynamic Learning Frames and Growth Mindsets. *The Reading Teacher*, Vol. 70, pp. 711–719.

Erikson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M.C. Wittrock (Ed.). *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd ed., pp. 119-161). New York: Macmillan.

Evans, K. (1996). A closer look at literature discussion groups: The influence of gender on student response and discourse. *The New Advocate*, 9, 183-196.

Evans, M. A., Shaw, D., & Bell, M. (2000). Home literacy activities and their influence on early literacy skills. *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology = Revue Canadienne de Psychologie Experimentale*, 54(2), 65–75.

Evans, M. A., Fox, M., Cresmaso, L., & McKinnon, L. (2004). Beginning reading: The views of parents and teachers of young children. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 96, 130–141.

Evans, M. A., & Saint-Aubin, J. (2005). What Children Are Looking at During Shared Storybook Reading: Evidence From Eye Movement Monitoring. *Psychological Science*, 16(11), 913–920.

Evans, M. A., Williamson, K., & Pursoo, T. (2008). Preschoolers’ attention to print during shared book reading. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 12(1), 106–129.

Farquhar, M. A. (2015). *Children’s Literature in China: From Lu Xun to Mao Zedong*. Routledge.

Feng, W., & Yu, Z.T. (2005). Recent Research on Parenting Styles. *Chinese Journal of Special Education*. Vol.62(8), 52-56.

- Fielding-Barnsley, R., & Purdie, N. (2003). Early intervention in the home for children at risk of reading failure. *Support for Learning*, 18(2), 77–82.
- Fish, S. E. (1980). *Is There a Text in this Class? : The Authority of Interpretive Communities*. Harvard University Press.
- Fleming, N. D., & Mills, C. (1992). Not Another Inventory, Rather a Catalyst for Reflection. *To Improve the Academy*, 11, 137-155.
- Fong, V. L. (2004). *Only hope: Coming of age under China's one-child policy*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Freeman, J. (2010). *Gifted lives: What happens when gifted children grow up*. London: Routledge.
- Frijters, J. C., Barron, R. W., Algire, L., Humphries, N., & Vander Zwaag, K. (2001, June). *Pre-readers' self-reported interest in literacy and math: Associations with early academic skills and parent teaching*. Symposium presentation at the Canadian Psychological Association Annual Meeting, Laval, Quebec, 2001.
- Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning: the Role of Attitudes and Motivation*. Edward Arnold, London.
- Gardner, R. C. (2006). The socio-educational model of second language acquisition: a research paradigm. *EUROSLA Yearb.* 6, 237-260.
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Golden, J. M., & Gerber, A. (1990). A Semiotic Perspective of Text: The Picture Story Book Event. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 22(3), 203–219.
- Golden, R. M., & Rumelhart, D. E. (1993). A parallel distributed processing model of story comprehension and recall. *Discourse Processes*, 16(3), 203–237.
- Grenby, M. (2009). “The origins of children’s literature.” *The Cambridge Companion to Children’s Literature*. Ed. Matthew Grenby & Andrea Immel (pp.3-18). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Grenby, M. O. (2015). Children’s literature, the home, and the debate on public versus

- private education, c.1760–1845. *Oxford Review of Education*, 41(4), 464–481.
- Grenby, M. O., & Immel, A. (2009). *The Cambridge Companion to Children's Literature*. Cambridge University Press.
- Grenby, M. O., & Reynolds, K. (2011). *Children's Literature Studies: A Research Handbook*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gruner, E. R. (2009). Teach the Children: Education and Knowledge in Recent Children's Fantasy. *Children's Literature*, 37(1), 216–235.
- Gu, A. H. (2014). The response of reading picturebooks by primary school students, MA dissertation, Shanghai Normal University.
- Guccione, L. M. (2011). Integrating literacy and inquiry for English learners. *The Reading Teacher*, 64(8), pp. 567-577.
- Guo, E. H. (1999). The responses of children and adults towards children's picturebooks reading, MA dissertation, Taiwan Normal University.
- Guo, K. (2013). Ideals and realities in Chinese immigrant parenting: Tiger mother versus others. *Journal of Family Studies*, 19(1), 44–52.
- Haines, N. (2017). *Office of National statistics: Births by parents' characteristics in England and Wales: 2016*. Retrieved from <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/livebirths/bulletins/birthsbyparentscharacteristicsinenglandandwales/2016>
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1975). *Learning how to mean: Explorations in the development of language*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Hamilton, L. (2013, October 25). The role of the home literacy environment in the early literacy development of children at family-risk of dyslexia (Ph.D). University of York. Retrieved from <http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/4823/>
- Hamilton, L. G., Hayiou-Thomas, M. E., Hulme, C., & Snowling, M. J. (2016). The Home Literacy Environment as a Predictor of the Early Literacy Development of Children at Family-Risk of Dyslexia. *Scientific Studies of Reading: The Official Journal of the*

- Society for the Scientific Study of Reading*, 20(5), 401–419.
- Hannon, P. (1995). *Literacy, Home, and School: Research and Practice in Teaching Literacy with Parents*. Psychology Press.
- Hargrave, A. C., & Sénéchal, M. (2000). A book reading intervention with preschool children who have limited vocabularies: The benefits of regular reading and dialogic reading. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 15 (1), 2000, 75-90.
- Hays, S. (1996). *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- He, D., Zhang, X., Zhuang, Y., Wang, Z., & Jiang, Y. (2019). China fertility report, 2006–2016. *China Population and Development Studies*, 2(4), 430–439.
- Heath, S. B. (1982). What no bedtime story means: Narrative skills at home and at school. *Language in Society*, 11, 49–76.
- Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms*. Cambridge University Press.
- Heath, S. B. (1986). The functions and uses of literacy. *Literacy, Society, and Schooling: A Reader*. Cambridge University Press.
- Heilman, A.W., T. R. Blair, & W.H. Rupley (1998). *Principles and Practices of Teaching Reading*. 9th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Henri, J., Warning, P., & Angel, L. Y. H. (2011). Encouraging and Sustaining Reading Among Primary Aged Children in Rural China. *New Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship*, Vol. 16, pp. 112–141.
- Herrera, S. G., Perez, D. R., & Escamilla, K. (2010). *Teaching reading to English language learners: Differentiated literacies*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Hickman, J. (1981). A New Perspective on Response to Literature: Research in an Elementary School Setting. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 15(4), 343–354.
- Hickman, J. (1983). Everything considered: Response to literature in an elementary school setting. *Journal of Research & Development in Education*. Retrieved from

<https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1984-10710-001>

- Ho, D. L. (1997). Chinese children's literature - then and now. *New Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship*, 3(1), 127–137.
- Ho, L. (1993). Of morals, misguided writing and commercialism: the essence of children's literature in Singapore. *International Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship*, 8, 181–181.
- Hollindale, P. (1988). *Ideology and Children's Book*. Stroud: Thimble Press.
- Hood, M., Conlon, E., & Andrews, G. (2008). Preschool home literacy practices and children's literacy development: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100, 252–271.
- Horner, S. L. (2004). Observational learning during shared book reading: The effects on pre-schoolers' attention to print and letter knowledge. *Reading Psychology*, 25, 167–188.
- Hunag, Q.Y. (1986). A survey of children's literature in China. *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 10, 23–25.
- Hunt, P. (1994). *An Introduction to Children's Literature*. Oxford University Press.
- Iser, W. (1978). *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Iser, W. (1987). *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Becket*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Turner, L. A. (2007). Toward a Definition of Mixed Methods Research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(2), 112-133.
- Johnston, R. R. (2011). Reader Response. In Grenby, M. O., & Reynolds, K. (Eds.), *Children's Literature Studies: A Research Handbook* (pp.133-141). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Joy, L. (2019). *Literature's Children: The Critical Child and the Art of Idealization*. Bloomsbury Academic.

- Justice, L. M., & Ezell, H. K. (2002). Use of storybook reading to increase print awareness in at-risk children. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 11, 17–29.
- Justice, L. M., McGinty, A. S., Piasta, S. B., Kaderavek, J. N., & Fan, X. (2010). Print-focused read-alouds in preschool classrooms: Intervention effectiveness and moderators of child out-comes. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 41, 504–520.
- Kalia, V. (2007). Assessing the role of book reading practices in Indian bilingual children’s English language and literacy development. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 35, 149–153.
- Kaser, S. (2001). Searching the heavens with children’s literature: A design for teaching science. *Language Arts*, 79(4), 348-356.
- Kelley, C. P. (2003). *Dialogic Reading: When a Picture is Worth a Thousand Words*. New York: Bank Street College.
- Kiefer, B. (1993). Children’s responses to picture books: a developmental perspective. In K.Holland (Eds.) *Journeying: Children responding to Literature*. London; Heinemann.
- Kim, Y. S. (2009). The relationship between home literacy practices and developmental trajectories of emergent literacy and conventional literacy skills for Korean children. *Reading and Writing*. 22:57–84.
- Kleindorfer, S., & Robertson, J. (2013). *Learning before birth*. Australasian.
- Kokkola, L. (2013). Reading Multilingual Literature: The Bilingual Brain and Literacy Education. *Bookbird: A Journal of International Children’s Literature*, 51(3), 22–35.
- Kormos, J., & Kiddle, T. (2013). The role of socio-economic factors in motivation to learn English as a foreign language: The case of Chile. *System*, 41(2), 399–412.
- Kovač, S. N. (2016). Pictures in educating teachers of English to Young Learners. *Children’s Literature in English Language Education*. Volume 4, Issue 2.
- Krashen, S. D. (1993). *The Power of Reading: Insights from the Research*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.
- Krashen, S.D. (2004). *The Power of Reading: Insights from the Research*. 2nd ed. Westport,

CT: Libraries Unlimited.

Kress, G. (2003). *Literacy in the New Media Age*. Routledge.

Kress, G. R., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. Routledge.

Kümmerling-Meibauer, B. (1999). Metalinguistic Awareness and the Child's Developing Concept of Irony: The Relationship between Pictures and Text in Ironic Picture Books. *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 23(2), 157–183.

Kümmerling-Meibauer, B. (2013). Code-Switching in Multilingual Picturebooks. *Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature*, 51(3), 12–21.

Kümmerling-Meibauer, B. (2015). From baby books to picturebooks for adults: European picturebooks in the new millennium. *Word & Image*, 31:3, 249-264.

Kümmerling-Meibauer, B., & Meibauer, J. (2005). First Pictures, Early Concepts: Early Concept Books. *The Lion and the Unicorn*, Vol. 29, pp. 324–347.

Lancy, D. F., Draper, K.D.& Boyce, G. (1989). Parental influence on children's acquisition of reading. *Contemporary Issues in Reading*, 83-89.

Landry, S. H., Smith, K. E., Swank, P. R., Zucker, T., Crawford, A. D., & Solari, E. F. (2012). The effects of a responsive parenting intervention on parent-child interactions during shared book reading. *Developmental Psychology*, 48(4), 969.

Lareau, A. (2011). *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. University of California Press.

Latimer, B. (2009). "Leaving Little to the Imagination: The Mechanics of Didacticism in Two Children's Adaptations of Samuel Richardson's Novels." *The Lion and the Unicorn*, vol.33, 167-188.

Lau, C. (2009) *The New Generation: Chinese Childhoods*. Ph.D. Thesis, The University of Leeds, School of Sociology and Social Policy.

Lau, P. S. S., & Warning, P. (2007). "The basis of their reading experience": Progress on Reading to Learn in Hong Kong Primary Schools. *International Association of School*

Librarianship. Selected Papers from *The Annual Conference*, 1.

- LeFevre, J., Clarke, T., & Stringer, A. (2002). Influences of language and parental involvement on the development of counting skills: Comparisons of French- and English-speaking Canadian children. *Early Childhood Development and Care*, 172, 283–300.
- Lemos, G. (2012). *The End of the Chinese: why Chinese people fear the future*. London: Yale UP.
- Lerer, S. (2008). *Children's Literature: A Reader's History, from Aesop to Harry Potter*. University of Chicago Press.
- Leseman, P. P. M., & de Jong, P. F. (1998). Home literacy: Opportunity, instruction, cooperation, and social-emotional quality predicting early reading achievement. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 33, 294–318.
- Levy, B. A., Gong, Z., Hessels, S., Evans, M. A., & Jared, D. (2006). Understanding print: early reading development and the contributions of home literacy experiences. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 93(1), 63–93.
- Li, X. H. (2007). *A Probe into the Concept of Parenting in the Context of Changes in Urban Family Life Style*. Master Thesis, Central China Normal University, College of Psychology.
- Li, L. (2004). A descriptive study of translated children's literature in China: 1898-1919. In *New Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship*. Vol. 10, Issue 2, pp.189-199.
- Li, L. (2006). Influences of Translated Children's Texts upon Chinese Children's Literature. *Papers: Explorations into Children's Literature*, 16(2), 101–106.
- Li, L., & Fler, M. (2015). Family pedagogy: parent–child interaction in shared book reading. *Early Child Development and Care*, 185(11-12), 1944–1960.
- Li, X. (2016). The analysis of parenting styles of post-1980s parents. *Data of Cultural and Education*. 706(2), 128-129.
- Li, X. (2018). *Chinese Fathers in the Twentieth Century: Changing Roles as Parents and as*

- Men. *NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*, 26(4), 331–350.
- Li, X., & Jankowiak, W. (2016). The Chinese father: Masculinity, conjugal love, and parenting. In K. Louie (Ed.), *Changing Chinese masculinities: From imperial pillars of state to global real men* (pp. 186–203). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Lu, H. J., & Chang, L. (2013). Parenting and socialization of only children in urban China: an example of authoritative parenting. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 174(3), 335–343.
- Lurie, A. (1990). *Don't Tell the Grown-Ups: Why Kids Love the Books They Do*. New York: Avon,
- Lütge, C. (2012). 'Developing "literary literacy"? Towards a progression of literary learning', in Maria Elisenmann and Theresa Summer (eds), *Basic Issues in EFL Teaching and Learning*, Heidelberg: Winter, pp.191-202
- Lyytinen, P., Laakso, M. L., & Poikkeus, A.-M. (1998). Parental contribution to child's early language and interest in books. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 13(3), 297–308.
- Mackey, A., & Gass, S. (2005). *Second Language Research: Methodology and Design*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Madura, S. (1998). An Artistic Element: Four Transitional Readers and Writers Respond to the Picture Books of Patricia Polacco and Gerald McDermott. *National Reading Conference Yearbook*, 47, 366–376.
- Martinez, M., & Teale. (1993). Teacher storybook reading style: A comparison of six teachers. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 27, 175-199.
- Martini, F., & Sénéchal, M. (2012). Learning literacy skills at home: Parent teaching, expectations, and child interest. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science/Revue Canadienne Des Sciences Du Comportement*, 44(3), 210.
- Mason, J. (2002). Chapter 4 'Qualitative Interviewing'. *Qualitative Researching*, SAGE Publications Ltd.

- Maynard, S., Mackay, S., & Smyth, F. (2008). A survey of young people's reading in England: Borrowing and choosing books. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 40(4), 239–253.
- McCambridge, J., Witton, J., & Elbourne, D. R. (2014). Systematic review of the Hawthorne effect: new concepts are needed to study research participation effects. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 67(3), 267–277.
- McGee, L. (1992). First graders' responses to literature in grand conversations: Exploring shared meaning construction. *National Reading Conference, San Antonio, TX*.
- McKee, P. A., & Rhett, N. (1995). The Even Start family literacy program. In L. M. Morrow (Ed.), *Family Literacy: Connections in schools and communities* (pp. 155–166). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- McNair, J. C. (2012). "I Never Knew There Were So Many Books About Us" Parents and Children Reading and Responding to African American Children's Literature Together. *Children's Literature in Education*, 44(3), 191–207.
- Meisel, J. M. (2011). *First and Second Language Acquisition: Parallels and Differences*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Meyer, L. A., Wardrop, J. L., Stahl, S. A., & Linn, R. L. (1994). Effects of Reading Storybooks Aloud to Children. *The Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 88, pp. 69–85. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.1994.9944821>
- Mickenberg, J. (2006) *Learning from the Left: Children's Literature, the Cold War, and Radical Politics in the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mickenberg, J., & Nel, P. (2010) (Eds.) *Tales for little rebels: a collection of radical children's literature*. NYU Press.
- Mitchell, W. J. T. (1994). *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*. University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Mol, S. E., Bus, A. G., de Jong, M. T., & Smeets, D. J. H. (2008). Added Value of Dialogic Parent–Child Book Readings: A Meta-Analysis. *Early Education and Development*, 19(1), 7–26.

- Montag, J. L., Jones, M. N., & Smith, L. B. (2015). The Words Children Hear: Picture Books and the Statistics for Language Learning. *Psychological Science*, 26(9), 1489–1496.
- Morrow, L. M. (1990). Small group story readings: The effects on children's comprehension and responses to literature. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 29, 1-17.
- Moses, L. (2013). Viewing as a cultural tool in the construction of meaning with expository texts for young bilinguals. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 9(2), 72-93.
- Moses, L. (2015). The Role(s) of Image for Young Bilinguals Reading Multimodal Informational Texts. *Language and Literacy*, 17(3), 82–99.
- Mourão, S. (2015). The potential of picturebooks with young learners. In Janice Bland (ed.), *Teaching English to Young Learners. Critical Issues in Language Teaching with 3-12 year olds* (pp. 199-218). London: Bloomsbury.
- Mourão, S. (2016). Picturebooks in the Primary EFL Classroom. *Children's Literature in Language Education Journal (CLELE journal)*, 3(2), 25–43.
- Mourão, S. (2017). The Picturebook in Instructed Foreign Language Learning Contexts. In Beauvais, C. & Nikolajeva, M (Eds.), *The Edinburgh Companion to Children's Literature* (pp.245-261). Edinburgh University Press.
- Muijs, D. (2004). *Doing Quantitative Research in Education with SPSS*. SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Murphy-Lejeune, E. (2002). *Student Mobility and Narrative in Europe. The New Strangers*. London: Routledge.
- National Bureau of Statistics. (2018) *Social Development Report during last 40 years since The Open Policy*. National Bureau of Statistics, Retrieved from http://www.stats.gov.cn/zjtj/ztfx/ggkf40n/201809/t20180918_1623598.html
- National Bureau of Statistics, (2020). *China Gross National Income*. National Bureau of Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/china/gross-domestic-product/gross-national-income>
- Natsiopoulou, T., Souliotis, D., Kyridis, A., & Hatzisavvides, S. (2006). Reading children's b

- ooks to the preschool children in Greek families. In *International Journal of Early Childhood* (Vol. 38, Issue 2, pp. 69–79).
- Nelson, C., & Morris, R. (2016). *Representing Children in Chinese and U.S. Children's Literature*. Routledge.
- Neuman, S. B. (1996). Children engaging in storybook reading: The influence of access to print resources, opportunity, and parental interaction. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 11, 495–513.
- Neuman, S. B., Koh, S., & Dwyer, J. (2008). CHELLO: The Child/Home Environmental Language and Literacy Observation. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 23(2), 159–172.
- Newby, P. (2014). *Research Methods for Education*. Second Edition. Routledge.
- Niklas, F., Tayler, C., & Schneider, W. (2015). Home-based literacy activities and children's cognitive outcomes: A comparison between Australia and Germany. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 71, 75–85.
- Nikolajeva, M. (2010). *Power, Voice and Subjectivity in Literature for Young Readers*. Routledge.
- Nikolajeva, M. (2014). *Reading for Learning: Cognitive approaches to children's literature*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Nikolajeva, M., & Scott, C. (2001). *How picturebooks work*. Routledge.
- Ninio, A. (1980). Picture-book reading in mother–infant dyads belonging to two subgroups in Israel. *Child Development*, 51, 587–590.
- Nodelman, P. (1988). *Words about Pictures: The Narrative Art of Children's Picture Books*. University of Georgia Press.
- Nodelman, P. (2000). "The Urge to Sameness." *Children's Literature*, Vol.28. 38-43.
- Nodelman, P. (2008). *The Hidden Adult: Defining Children's Literature*. JHU Press.
- Nodelman, P., Hamer, N., & Reimer, M. (2017). *More Words about Pictures: Current*

Research on Picturebooks and Visual/Verbal Texts for Young People. Taylor & Francis.

- Nowak, S. N., & Evans, M. A. (2012). Parents' goals for and perceptions of alphabet books. *Reading and Writing*, 26(8), 1265–1287.
- OECD. (2002). *Reading For Change Performance And Engagement Across Countries — Results From PISA 2000*.
- Ofcom. (2014). *Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report*
https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0027/76266/childrens_2014_report.pdf, accessed on 01/08/2019
- Okagaki, L. (2001). Triarchic model of minority children's school achievement. *Educational Psychologist* 36, 9-20.
- Ommundsen, Å. M. (2011). Childhood in a multicultural society? : Globalization, childhood, and cultural diversity in Norwegian children's literature. *Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature*, 49(1), 31–40.
- Oziewicz, M. (2015). Review of *Children's Literature and Learner Empowerment: Children and Teenagers in English Language Education* by Janice Bland, and: *Reading for Learning: Cognitive Approaches to Children's Literature* by Maria Nikolajeva. *The Lion and The Unicorn*, Volume 39, Number 1, pp.121-124.
- Pantaleo, S. (2020). Slow looking: "reading picturebooks takes time." In *Literacy*, Vol. 54, Issue 1, pp. 40–48.
- Partanen, E., Kujala, T., Naatanen, R., Liitola, A., Sambeth, A., & Huotilainen, M. (2013). Learning-induced neural plasticity of speech processing before birth. *PNAS*, 110(37), 15145-15150.
- Peng, Y. (2006) *Reading the Picturebooks Classics*. JieLi Publishing.
- Phillips, G., & McNaughton, S. (1990). The practice of storybook reading to preschoolers in mainstream New Zealand families. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 25, 196-21.
- Pöllmann, A. (2013) Intercultural capital: Toward the conceptualization, operationalization, and empirical investigation of a rising marker of sociocultural distinction. *SAGE Open*

3(2): 1–7.

Postman, N. (1985). The Disappearance of Childhood. *Childhood Education*, Vol. 61, pp. 286–293.

Pringle, R. M., & Lamme, L. L. (2005). Using Picture Storybooks to Support Young Children's Science Learning. *Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts*, 46(1), 2.

Pullman, P. (2003). Lost the plot, *The Guardian*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/sep/30/primaryeducation.schools>

Reese, E., & Cox, A. (1999). Quality of adult book reading affects children's emergent literacy. *Developmental Psychology*, 35, 20–28.

Repp, C. (2012). What's Wrong with Didacticism? *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 52(3), 271–285.

Resnick, M. B., Roth, J., Aaron, P. M., Scott, J., Wolking, W. D., Larsen, J. J., & Packer, A. B. (1987). Mothers Reading to Infants: A New Observational Tool. *The Reading Teacher*, 40(9), 888–894.

Reynolds, K. (2008). *Radical children's literature: future visions and aesthetic transformations in juvenile fiction*. Palgrave Macmillan

Rosen, J., Reynolds, K., & Rosen, M. (2018)
(Eds). *Reading and Rebellion: An Anthology of Radical Writing for Children 1900-1960*. Oxford University Press.

Robbins, S. (1993). Lessons for Children and Teaching Mothers: Mrs. Barbauld's Primer for the Textual Construction of Middle-Class Domestic Pedagogy. *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 17(2), 135–151.

Robinson, E. A., & Eyberg, S. M. (1981). The Dyadic Parent–Child Interaction coding system: Standardization and validation. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 49, 245–250.

Rosenblatt, L. M. (1938/1995). *Literature as Exploration* (5th ed.). New York: Modern

Language Association of America.

- Rosenblatt, L. M. (1978). *The reader, the text, the poem: The transactional theory of the literary work*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Roser, N., & Martinez, M. (1985). Roles adults play in preschoolers' response to literature. *Language Arts*, 62 (5), 485–490.
- Rowe, D. W. (1998). The literate potentials of book-related dramatic play. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 33(1),10-35
- Rudd, D. (2004). "Theorising and theories: The conditions of possibility of children's literature." *International companion encyclopedia of children's literature*. Ed. Hunt, P. Routledge, 29–43.
- Salisbury, M. (2010). The artist and the postmodern picturebook. In *Postmodern Picturebooks* (pp. 34–52). Routledge.
- Sainsbury, L. (2013). *Ethics in British Children's Literature: Unexamined Life*. Bloomsbury.
- Schlager, N. (1978). Predicting children's choices in literature: a developmental approach. *Children's Literature in Education*, 9(3), 136–142.
- Scholastic. (2019). Kids & Family reading report, <https://www.scholastic.com/readingreport/downloads.html>, accessed on 01/08/2019
- Scott, C. (2013) .Chapter 5: The double attribution of texts for children and how it affects writing for children, In *Transcending Boundaries: Writing for a Dual Audience of Children and Adults*. Routledge. edited by Beckett, S. L.
- Sénéchal, M., LeFevre, J., Hudson, E., & Lawson, E. P. (1996). Knowledge of storybooks as a predictor of young children's vocabulary. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 88, 520–536.
- Sénéchal, M., Lefevre, J.-A., Thomas, E. M., & Daley, K. E. (1998). Differential Effects of Home Literacy Experiences on the Development of Oral and Written Language. *Reading Research Quarterly*, Vol. 33, pp. 96–116. <https://doi.org/10.1598/rrq.33.1.5>
- Sénéchal, M., & LeFevre, J. A. (2002). Parental Involvement in the Development of

- Children's Reading Skill: A Five-Year Longitudinal Study. *Child Development*, Vol. 73, pp. 445–460.
- Sénéchal, M. (2006). Testing the Home Literacy Model: Parent involvement in kindergarten is differentially related to grade 4 reading comprehension, fluency, spelling, and reading for pleasure. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Reading*, 10, 59–87.
- Shamir, A., Korat, O., & Fellah, R. (2012). Promoting vocabulary, phonological awareness and concept about print among children at risk for learning disability: can e-books help? *Read. Writ.* 25, 45–69.
- Shapiro, J., Anderson, J., & Anderson, A. (1997). Diversity in parental storybook reading. *Early Child Development and Care*, 127–128, 47–59.
- Shavit, Z. (2013). Chapter 5: The double attribution of texts for children and how it affects writing for children, In *Transcending Boundaries: Writing for a Dual Audience of Children and Adults*. Routledge. Edited by Beckett, S. L.
- Sheng, A. (2015). Children's Literature During China's Cultural Revolution: A Critical Review. *Comparative Literature Studies*, 52(1), 97–111.
- Sheu, H.-C. (2006). The Challenges of Using English Picture Story Books with Primary School Students in Taiwan. *English Teaching*, 30(4S), 39–60.
- Short, K. (2012). Children's Agency for Taking Action. *Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature*, 50(4), 41–50.
- Silinskas, G., Leppanen, U., Aunola, K., Parrila, R., & Nurmi, J. (2010). Predictors of mothers' and fathers' teaching of reading and mathematics during kindergarten and Grade 1. *Learning and Instruction*, 20, 61–71.
- Silvey, A. (1992). The new didacticism [editorial]. *The Horn Book Magazine*, 68. January/February: 5.
- Sim, S. S. H., Berthelsen, D., Walker, S., Nicholson, J. M., & Fielding-Barnsley, R. (2014). A shared reading intervention with parents to enhance young children's early literacy skills. In *Early Child Development and Care*. Vol. 184, Issue 11, 1531–1549

- Sipe, L. R. (1998). How Picturebooks Work: A Semiotically Framed Theory of Text–Picture Relationships. *Children’s Literature in Education*, 29(2), 97–108.
- Sipe, L. R. (1999). Children’s response to literature: Author, text, reader, context. *Theory into Practice*, 38(3), 120–129.
- Sipe, L. R. (2000). The Construction of Literary Understanding by First and Second Graders in Oral Response to Picture Storybook Read-Alouds. *Reading Research Quarterly*, Vol. 35, pp. 252–275.
- Sipe, L. R., & McGuire, C. E. (2006). Young children’s resistance to stories. *The Reading Teacher*. Vol. 60, No. 1.
- Smith, T. (2013). The Vibrant Triangle: The Relationship between the Picture Book, the Adult Reader, and the Child Listener. *Bookbird: A Journal of International Children’s Literature*, 51(2), 65–70.
- Snow, C. (1983). Literacy and language: Relationships during the preschool years. *Harvard Educational Review*, 53, 165-189.
- Song, L.H. (2016). The utility principle in primary Education. *Journal of Henan Institute of Education*. 35(05).64-66.
- Stephens, J. (1992). *Language and Ideology in Children’s Fiction*. London; New York: Longman.
- Stephenson, K. A., Parrila, R. K., Georgiou, G. K., & Kirby, J. R. (2008). Effects of home literacy, parents’ Beliefs, and children’s task-focused behaviour on emergent literacy and word reading skills. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 12, 24–50.
- Stöhr, T. (2015) The returns to occupational foreign language use: Evidence from Germany. *Labour Economics* 32: 86–98.
- Storch, S. A., & Whitehurst, G. J. (2002). Oral language and code-related precursors to reading: evidence from a longitudinal structural model. *Developmental Psychology*, 38(6), 934–947.

- Strauss, A. L. (1987). *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. Sage, Newbury Park, Calif.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (2008) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Sage, Thousand Oaks, Calif.
- Suhor, C. (1984). Towards a semiotics-based curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 16, 247– 257.
- Sun, Q. Y. (2012) Construction of English reading strategy of children based on the English picture books, *Journal of foreign language studies*, No.1, 2012, p267-268.
- Sun, W. (2018). Reading for pleasure for primary Chinese classroom. *Course Education Research*. Vol. 38:94-95.
- Takacs, Z. K., Swart, E. K., & Bus, A. G. (2014). Can the computer replace the adult for storybook reading? A meta-analysis on the effects of multimedia stories as compared to sharing print stories with an adult. *Front. Psychol.* 5:1366.
- Tang, D (2019) Parents buy a £420,000 Room for place at top Beijing school. *The Times*, 15/07/2019.
- Torr, J. (2007). The pleasure of recognition: intertextuality in the talk of preschoolers during shared reading with mothers and teachers. *Early Years: An International Journal of Research and Development*, 27(1), 77–91.
- Trelease, J. (2006). *The Read-aloud Handbook* (6th edn), New York: Penguin.
- Twist, L., Schagan, I., & Hogson, C. (2007). Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS): Reader and Reading National Report for England 2006. NFER and DCSF.
- Uchikoshi, Y. (2006). English vocabulary development in bilingual kindergartners: What are the best predictors? *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 9, 33–49.
- Valdez-Menchaca, M. C., & Whitehurst, G. J. (1992). Accelerating language development through picture book reading: A systematic extension to Mexican day care.

- Developmental Psychology*, 28(6), 1106-1114.
- Van Kleeck, A., Gillam, R. B., Hamilton, L., & McGrath, C. (1997). The Relationship Between Middle-Class Parents' Book-Sharing Discussion and Their Preschoolers' Abstract Language Development. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, Vol. 40, pp. 1261–1271.
- Venuti, L. (1995). *The Translator's Invisibility: A history of translation*. Routledge.
- Vincent, C., & Ball, S. J. (2007). 'Making Up' the Middle-Class Child: Families, Activities and Class Dispositions. *Sociology*, 41(6), 1061–1077.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). Interaction between learning and development. *Readings on the Development of Children*, 23(3), 34–41.
- Wang, Q. G. (2011). A survey of “children’s reading movement” in the first decade of the new century. *Academics*, NO.6, 2011, 223-237.
- Wang, Q. G. (2016). Bai nian zhong guo er tong de san ci zhuan xing yu wu dai zuo jia, *Yangze River review*, 09, 2016, 72-85.
- Weenink, D. (2008) Cosmopolitanism as a form of capital: Parents preparing their children for a globalizing world. *Sociology* 42(6): 1089–1106.
- Wei, S. C. (1995). Shaping a cultural tradition: The picture book in Taiwan, 1945-1980. *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 20(3), 116–121.
- Wen, L. Z., & Wang, Y. (2010). Educational function in children's literature. *Theory and Practice of Contemporary Education*, 2(1), 8–10.
- Whitehurst, G. J., Falco, F. L., Lonigan, C. J., Fischel, J. E., DeBaryshe, B. D., Valdez-Menchaca, M. C., & Caulfield, M. (1988). Accelerating language development through picture book reading. *Developmental Psychology*, 24(4), 552–559.
- Whitehurst, G., Arnold, D., Epstein, J., Angell, A., Smith, M., & Fischel, J. (1994). A picture book reading intervention in day care and home for children from low-income families. *Developmental Psychology*, 30, 679– 689.
- Williams, R., Chapman, D., & Martin-Huff, E. (1982). Early Reading Experiences: Some

- Linguistic Perspectives on Parent/Child Interaction in Book Sharing Situations. In W. Frawley (Ed.), *Linguistics and Literacy* (pp. 325–357). Springer US.
- Williams, S. J. (2006). The Struggle to Develop a Distinctive Children’s Literature in Singapore. *New Review of Children’s Literature and Librarianship*, 12(1), 103–115.
- Wolff, S., & Heath, S. B. (1992). *The Braid of Literature: Children’s Worlds of Reading*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Worthy, J., Moorman, M., & Turner, M. (1999). “What Johnny Likes to Read Is Hard to Find in School.” *Reading Research Quarterly* 34: 12-27.
- Wu, Y. X., Huang, C., & Huang, S. (2017). The reproduce of family, school and culture: An analysis of cultural capital. *Journal of social development*, Vol.3.
- Wu, M. Y. (2012). The concept of guan in the Chinese parent-child relationship. In Yi, C. C. (Ed.). *The Psychological Well-Being of East Asian Youth* (pp. 29–49). Springer.
- Xu, X. (2013). Translation, Hybridization, and Modernization: John Dewey and Children’s Literature in Early Twentieth Century China. In *Children’s Literature in Education*. Vol. 44, Issue 3. 222–237.
- Yaden, D. B., Smolkin, L. B., & MacGillivray, L. (1993). A Psychogenetic Perspective on Children’s Understanding about Letter Associations during Alphabet Book Readings. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 25(1), 43–68.
- Yang, J. R. (2011). Develop students’ critical thinking. in *Prosercircles*, 02(11), 115-116.
- Yan, X. L. (2019). Interview with Dong muzi for *The Beijing News*. Has our taste of children’s books changed in the past 20 years? 24/11/2019.
- Yatvin, J. (2007). *English-only teacher in mixed-language classrooms: A survival guide*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Yuill, N., & Martin, A. F. (2016). Curling Up With a Good E-Book: Mother-Child Shared Story Reading on Screen or Paper Affects Embodied Interaction and Warmth. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7, Article 1951.

- Zhang, Z. L. (2006). How to Move our Children. *Bookbird*, 44(3), 68-74.
- Zhang, H. H. (2016). Parent-child reading in English via picture books. *Journal of Nanchang College of Education*, Jun.2016. No. 3, 98-101.
- Zhang, Y. C. (2017). Educational competition, Middle Class anxiety and social class immobilization, *Educational Research and Review*, 2017(3), 33-35.
- Zhang, Y. M. (2018). The strategies of reading for Pleasure in kindergarten. *Elementary Education Research*.VOL.13: 86-88.
- Zhang, D., & Koda, K. (2011). Home Literacy Environment and Word Knowledge Development: A Study of Young Learners of Chinese as a Heritage Language. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 34(1), 4–18.
- Zheng, Z. (1989/1936). Zhongguo ertong duwu de fenxi [Analysis of Chinese Children's Reading Material]. In *Zhongguo xiandai ertong wenxue wenlun xuan* [Selected Works on Modern Chinese Children's Literature] (pp. 360–378).
- Zhou, D. (2015). The beginning of Chinese children's picturebooks. *Journal of China Publishers*. 30/05/2015.
- Zhou, Z. R. (1998/1920). Ertong de wenxue [Literature of Children]. *Zhou Zuoren wenlei bian* [Zhou Zuoren Literary Works Selected by Genres], 5, 682–690.
- Zhou, Z. R. (2012). *Zhou Zuoren's essays on Children's literature*. Haitun Publishing House, Beijing.
- Zhu, Z. Q. (2014). The archaeology of knowledge for 'Children's literature', *Research of Chinese Literature*, Issue 3, 2014, 101-105.
- Zhu, M. (1999). The views and involvement of Chinese parents in their children's education. *Prospects*, 29(2), 233–238.