

**THE USE OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN ENGLISH-CHINESE
BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN WESTERN CANADA**

by

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Abstract

This study explored the use of children's literature in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context. The purpose was to examine the types of children's literature that are used in bilingual education, the roles that children's literature plays in students' bilingual and biliteracy development, and how teachers' and parents' experiences and perspectives might influence their use of children's literature. Underpinned by sociocultural perspectives on literacy, this study employed the continua model of biliteracy, the literacy expertise framework, and the efferent-aesthetic continuum as conceptual frameworks. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, this qualitative case study used remote ways to collect data, specifically online interviews with three teachers and three parents, and children's book lists provided by the participants. Findings revealed that levelled readings and classic works were predominant in the Chinese children's literature being used in the programs, and that these works tended to be decontextualized and depoliticized, while the English children's literature selected was more often used for aesthetic and pleasure reading. Moreover, Chinese children's literature that had been translated into English and children's books from Canada (as opposed to the US and other English-dominant countries) were lacking. Children's literature plays a variety of important roles in bilingual education, including relationship founder, enhancer, and bond; language and literacy learning resources and bridge; and cultural agent. This study contributes to scholarship and pedagogy in terms of providing a clearer vision for teachers and parents to reconsider their use of children's literature and reconceptualize bilingual education through a translanguaging lens. It promotes the use of more diverse and contemporary children's literature in bilingual education to foster students' language and cultural awareness in a more collaborative and critical way.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Jing Jin. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, “The Use of Children's Literature in an English-Chinese Bilingual Program in Western Canada”, No. Pro00094699, December 10, 2019.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my wonderful husband Qi and our son Zheng.

Thank you for being my foundation and inspiration.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Preface	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vii
List of Tables	xi
List of Figures	xii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Coming to the Study.....	1
Societal Context	4
Statement of the Problem	7
Research Questions	10
Significance of the Study	11
Overview of the Study.....	15
Chapter 2: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework	17
Social Constructivism	18
Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory	19
Sociocultural Perspectives on Literacy	21
The Continua Model of Biliteracy	23
The Context of Biliteracy	25
The Development of Biliteracy	26
The Content of Biliteracy	28
The Media of Biliteracy	29
Summary	30
The Literacy Expertise Framework.....	32
Transactional Theory.....	35
The Reading Transaction.....	36
The Efferent-Aesthetic Continuum	36
Summary	38
Chapter 3: Review of the Literature	40
Studies on Bilingualism and Biliteracy	40
The Typology of Bilingual Education	46
The Definition of Bilingual Education for This Study.....	51
The Definition of Bilingual Children for This Study	52
The English-Chinese Bilingual Program in the Canadian Context.....	53
The Complementary Chinese School in the Canadian Context	58
The Use of Children’s Literature in Bilingual and Biliteracy Education.....	61
The Definition of Children’s Literature for This Study	62
Children’s Literature as a Resource in Bilingual/Multilingual Pedagogical Practices	63
Chapter 4: Methodology	71

Interpretive Case Study	73
Interpretive Inquiry	75
Participant Recruitment and Research Sites.....	78
Researcher Stance	82
Data Collection.....	85
Document Collection.....	86
Pre-Interview Activities and Open-Ended Interviews.....	89
Data Analysis.....	92
Content Analysis	93
Interview Data Analysis	94
Hermeneutic circle.	97
Whole-part relationships.	99
Translation of Interview Data.....	101
Ethical Considerations.....	103
Limitations	105
Delimitations	105
Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion	107
Portraits of Participants	107
Anne	108
Faye	109
Jenny.....	110
Jack.....	111
Shelly.....	112
Chloe	113
Summary	114
Categories, Findings, and Discussion Related to the Collected Children’s Literature ..	115
Categories of the Collected Children’s Literature.....	115
Function: pedagogical/instructional/didactic vs. aesthetic/pleasure.	117
Language and country of origin: original vs. imported.....	119
Time period: classic vs. contemporary.	121
Media communication and influence: worldwide vs. local.....	123
Format: illustrated vs. not illustrated.....	124
Findings.....	126
Discussion on the Category of Function	128
Discussion on the Category of Language and Country of Origin	133
Discussion on the Category of Time Period.....	137
Discussion on the Category of Media Communication and Influence.....	143
Discussion on the Category of Format.....	148
The Various Roles Children’s Literature Plays in English-Chinese Bilingual Children’s Language and Literacy Development	152
Children’s Literature as Relationship Founder, Enhancer, and Bond	153
Children’s literature as relationship founder and enhancer between teacher and student.	154
Children’s literature as relationship bond and enhancer within communities.	

.....	163
Children’s Literature as Language and Literacy Learning Resource and Bridge ..	167
Children’s literature as an authoritative resource for language and literacy learning.....	168
Children’s literature as an immersive resource for language and literacy learning.....	172
Children’s literature as a playful/interactive resource for language and literacy learning.....	176
Children’s literature as a bridge for bilingual and biliteracy development. ...	180
Children’s Literature as Cultural Agent	186
Children’s literature as an agent of cultural transmission.	186
Children’s literature as an agent of cultural identity construction and recognition.....	189
Summary	192
The Influence of the Teacher and Parent Participants’ Experiences and Perspectives on Their Use of Children’s Literature in Bilingual Education in the Canadian Context	193
The Influence of Participants’ Upbringing Experiences on Their Use of Children’s Literature	194
The Influence of Participants’ Expectations of Children’s Bilingual Development on Their Use of Children’s Literature	204
The Influence of Participants’ Perspectives and Knowledge of Children’s Literature on Their Access to and Use of Children’s Literature	209
The Challenges of Using Children’s Literature in Bilingual Education in the Canadian Context	213
The challenge of limited accessibility.	214
The challenge of over-reliance on a few standard resources.....	216
The challenge of restricted resource sharing.....	219
Summary	223
Chapter 6: Looking Through the Theoretical Lenses.....	226
Looking Through the Literacy Expertise Framework.....	226
Looking Through the Continua Model of Biliteracy.....	235
Looking Through the Context of Biliteracy	236
Looking Through the Content of Biliteracy	240
Looking Through the Media of Biliteracy	244
Looking Through the Development of Biliteracy	247
Summary	249
Chapter 7: Contributions and Significance of the Research.....	252
Contributions to Scholarship.....	253
Illumination of Significant Features of Children’s Literature Used in Bilingual Education.....	253
Extension of Important Theoretical Frameworks.....	258
Reconceptualizing Bilingual Education Through the Translanguaging Lens	262
Contributions to Pedagogical Practice	265
Implications of This Research for Selecting Children’s Literature.....	266

Implications of This Research for Using Children’s Literature	269
My Research Journey	276
The Detour: Missing Voices	277
Back to the Path: My Reflections as a Researcher	280
Suggestions for Future Research	282
Concluding Remarks	283
References	286
Cited Children’s Literature.....	307
Appendix A: Information Letter to Participants	310
Appendix B: Participant Consent Form	312
Appendix C: Minor Assent Form	315
Appendix D: Sample PIAs and Interview Questions for Teacher Participants	317
Appendix E: Sample PIAs and Interview Questions for Parent Participants.....	321
Appendix F: The Chinese Textbook <i>Zhong Wen</i> and the Matching Workbooks	325
Appendix G: The Adapted Chinese Version of <i>Wild Animals I Have Known</i>.....	326
Appendix H: Thousand Character Classic [千字文]	327
Appendix I: A Chinese Folklore Set Jack Often Used With His Child.....	328
Appendix J: A Set of Chinese Historical Story Books Shelly’s Children Liked to Read	329
Appendix K: Picture Book <i>Tyrannosaurus</i> Series.....	330
Appendix L: Three Scenarios of Reading Books (PIA Shared by Jack).....	331
Appendix M: Photo of Book Collection Shared By Chloe.....	332
Appendix N: Borrowing Chinese Books Within Community (PIA Shared By Shelly). 333	
Appendix O: Photo of <i>New Chinese Reading Book</i> Series Shared By Shelly.....	334
Appendix P: The Fiction Shelly’s Child Created in Chinese	335
Appendix Q: Fortnite and Minecraft Fiction Series Shared By Chloe	336
Appendix R: Sample of Faye’s Picture Book Translation Project	337
Appendix S: Little Gold and the Three Pandas Picture Book Created By Anne	338
Appendix T: The Chinese Character Writing From Jack’s Child	339

List of Tables

Table 1. Typology of Program Models for Bilingual Students	47
Table 2. Background Information of Participants Related to the Use of Children’s Literature in Bilingual Education.....	80
Table 3. Numbers and Percentages of Five Categories in the Study Set of English and Chinese Children’s Literature	127

List of Figures

Figure 1. Nested relationships among the continua of biliteracy.	24
Figure 2. Power relations in the continua of biliteracy.....	24
Figure 3. The literacy expertise framework.	33
Figure 4. The hermeneutic circle.....	98
Figure 5. From comprehensible input to critical literacy.	229
Figure 6. The roles of children’s literature in bilingual and biliteracy development.	231

Chapter 1: Introduction

Coming to the Study

Snapshot 1:

It was Wednesday, the library day. As usual, Jonny brought home two books in English and two books in Chinese. I took a look at the books he handed me. Mmmm, interesting, the English books he had chosen were chapter books that were far beyond his reading level, yet the two Chinese titles were labelled as for beginner readers, which was below his reading level. More interestingly, Jonny urged me to read the English books first because he really wanted to know what the stories were about, and he put the Chinese books away because, using his own words, “They’re baby books.”

Snapshot 2:

We were at Jonny’s school library. The school was having a book sale to get rid of the books that few students read. Surprisingly, I found many of those books were brand-new Chinese children’s literature that, from my perspective as a children’s literature researcher, were not only of high quality but also would be good reading material for students who enrolled in English-Chinese bilingual programs. Why did the school want to sell these books? I asked the librarian and she told me that these Chinese books had been donated by the local branch of Confucius Institutes, and they were “just too hard for our students”; therefore, almost no one wanted to read them.

Snapshot 3:

Lucy was trying hard to recite an ancient folk song, Ballad of Mulan, in Chinese to a group of parents and their kids. The parents gathered through the virtual meeting were nodding approvingly with Lucy’s recitation, yet from time to time I noticed that kids who were seemingly listening to the story yawned, or their eyes wandered elsewhere. As the organizer of this virtual Chinese storytelling club, I worried that the kids might find the storytelling just like a boring Chinese class and not come again next time. To my surprise, however, when it came to play a brainteaser game, all the kids participated enthusiastically, and there was lots of laughter. They were fascinated with those tricky, funny, and even complicated Chinese riddles and paronomasias. I suddenly realized it was not that the children lacked interest in Chinese; rather, they were bored only because the story was told in an uninteresting way that they could not understand.

I was born in China, and Mandarin Chinese is my mother tongue. In 2010, I came to Canada to continue my studies, and since then English has become another language I use every day.

My childhood memories were always accompanied by amazing children's stories, and the appreciation and love of children's stories later became the trigger for me to study children's literature at Ocean University of China. At that time, I began to realize how powerful children's literature can be in many different areas, such as literary analysis (Brenna, 2010; Hintz, 2020; Hintz & Tribunella, 2019; Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson, 1999; Peng, 2011; Zhu, 2014), cultural representation (Bainbridge & Wolodko, 2002; Cai, 1994; Edward & Saltman, 2010; Hall, 2011; Jin & Wang, 2021; S. A. Lee, 2017), and childhood studies (S.-W. Chen, 2019; Nodelman, 2008). Then I got a chance to continue my studies in Canada, and this experience opened up more possibilities of children's literature for me. In addition to being used as tools to teach language arts and basic literacy skills, children's books could become mirrors, windows, and even sliding doors (Bishop, 1990a, 1990b) for children to explore serious issues such as gender and sexual diversity (e. g., Crawley, 2017; Flores, 2016; McNeil, 2010), multiculturalism (e.g., Bainbridge et al., 1999; Chaudhri, 2017; Mendoza & Reese, 2001; Meyer & Rhoades, 2006), and social justice (e.g., Ciardiello, 2010; Greenlaw, 2005; Hope, 2007; O'Neil, 2010; Swartz, 2020).

I used to be a Mandarin Chinese teacher in a local complementary school in Canada. Because I was aware of the important role that children's literature plays, not only in language teaching and learning but also in culture transmission, I often read Chinese children's picture books to my young students. Every time their eyes focused on the book I was holding, or they laughed or even cried during the stories, I knew that interest in and love for their heritage language and culture had been buried deep inside their hearts, like a hopeful seed waiting to bloom in the spring, and was being awakened by the Chinese children's literature I shared

with them. I read and shared both Chinese and English children's literature with my own child, too. When he reached school age, I sent him to an English-Chinese bilingual program with the hope that his acquisition and use of both languages could have a balanced development. Accordingly, I am concerned about how children's literature in both English and Chinese is used in bilingual education. However, the above three snapshots, and many other similar moments that have happened in my life, made me wonder and ask questions: What kind of children's literature is currently used in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context? How have teachers and parents used children's literature with their bilingual children? Why was my child's attitude towards the Chinese and English books so different even though he was regarded as a balanced bilingual? Why did the librarian think the Chinese books that suited the reading level of Chinese elementary students were actually too hard for English-Chinese bilingual students? And what implications we can take from the fact that the bilingual kids enjoyed the brainteaser more than the parent-approved and literary ancient folk song in the storytelling club?

My study was inspired by the above concerns and my desire to know more about what role children's literature plays in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context. At the end of 2019, right before I was about to start the data collection for my research, the COVID-19 pandemic swept the world and changed everyone's lives in unpredictable ways. Schools shut down, libraries closed, and most social communications and group gatherings had to switch from in-person to online. My research had to be postponed and amended several times to cope with the changing public health protocols. The pandemic has changed many things we used to take for granted. For this study, the pandemic acted like a magnifying lens,

amplifying some dilemmas of bilingual education while also making many people see more clearly the significance of adhering to bilingual education and the important role of children's literature in it. Nevertheless, all the changes, amendments, and challenges also brought new insights into this study, such as the experiences and perspectives of parents as well as stories told by missing voices. In brief, I hope this study, with its distinctive mark of the COVID-19 pandemic, will shed new light on exploring the use of children's literature to support the development of children's English-Chinese bilingual and biliteracy abilities, as well as cultural transmission in this increasingly globalized world.

Societal Context

In 2015, 271,847 immigrants came to Canada for diverse economic, humanitarian, and educational reasons (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2017). The People's Republic of China is one of the top immigration source countries, and Mandarin Chinese is one of the top five frequently spoken mother tongues at home (CIC, 2017). According to Canada's 2016 census (Statistics Canada, 2017), Mandarin, Cantonese, Punjabi, Spanish, and Tagalog were the top five languages other than English and French used at work. The proportion of workers who use more than one language at work rose from 14.9% in 2006 to 15.4% in 2016.

Statistics Canada (2011) also predicts that the ethnocultural diversity of Canada's population will continue to increase dramatically, with 25% to 28% of the population being foreign born by 2031 and 47% being second generation or Canadian-born children of immigrants. The data demonstrate that Canada is an increasingly multilingual and multicultural country.

Multiculturalism has been implemented as a federal policy in Canada since the 1970s. In response to one of the goals of the Multiculturalism Act, which is to "preserve and enhance

the use of languages other than English or French, while strengthening the status and use of the official languages of Canada” (Tavares, 2000, p. 159), several bilingual programs (e.g., Ukrainian, German, Hebrew, Chinese, Arabic, and Spanish) have been initiated in Western Canadian schools (Kirova, 2012; J. Wu, 2005). In addition, the number of complementary schools targeting minority languages has increased (Du, 2014; Mizuta, 2017). A growing body of research shows that bilingual education can benefit not only children’s language proficiency in both languages (e.g., August & Shanahan, 2006; Cummins & Danesi, 1990; Koh et al., 2017; Marian et al., 2013) but also have a positive impact on minority students’ self-perceptions of their citizenship and cultural identity (e.g., Gu & Patkin, 2013; Sun, 2011; J. Wu, 2005). In the Canadian context, much of the research on bilingual education has investigated the outcomes of French immersion programs (e.g., Genesee & Jared, 2008; Genesee & Lindholm-Leary, 2008; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Lapkin et al., 2003; Swain & Lapkin, 1983; Turnbull et al., 2001), while research available on bilingual programs other than English and French is very limited (Koh et al., 2017; Sun, 2011). Nevertheless, a similar positive influence of bilingualism and biliteracy has been reported in those programs that involve nonofficial heritage languages (e.g., Cummins & Danesi, 1990; Koh et al., 2017; Sun, 2011; J. Wu, 2005). However, the existing research on bilingual education other than English and French in the Canadian context primarily focuses on exploring the influence of bilingualism on students in terms of linguistic performance and cultural identity recognition. Very little research has been done on what resources these language programs use or how effective they are in supporting students’ bilingual and biliteracy development and fostering

cultural awareness. In addition, research that explores the use of literature resources in bilingual education from teachers' and parents' perspectives is still rare.

Language and literacy education has long been a substantial subject area, and literature should be at the centre of it. With the influence of sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), transactional theory (Rosenblatt, 1982a, 1982b, 1994), and the whole language approach (Giddings, 1992; K. Goodman, 1997; Y. Goodman, 2003), children's literature is now commonly used as an important resource in classroom practice as well as at home to help children develop language and literacy proficiency and foster their cultural awareness (Cunningham & Zibulsky, 2010; Jin, 2015; Kiefer, 2010; Leland et al., 2013; Naqvi et al., 2012; Paley, 1997; Pantaleo, 2008, Qiaoya Huang & Xiaoning Chen, 2016; Zou, 2022). Literature-based instruction in teaching English language arts, especially in reading, has been advocated and adopted by increasing numbers of teachers as one of the most common and effective ways to engage students in various literacy activities (Becker, 2020; Kiefer, 1994; Peterson & Swartz, 2008; Raphael & Au, 1998; Yopp & Yopp, 2010). In bilingual and second language education, literature-based approaches have also been advocated by significant numbers of educators and researchers (Bird & Alvarez, 1987; Hadaway et al., 2002; Martinez-Roldán & Newcomer, 2011; Opitz, 1999; Samway et al., 1991; Schwinge, 2003; Sullivan, 1994; Urzúa, 1992; Zapata et al., 2015; Zaidi, 2020; Zaidi & Dooley, 2021; Zou, 2022), and children's literature has been used in a variety of ways. As examples, Martinez-Roldán and Newcomer (2011) used wordless picture books to encourage students who are non-native English speakers to engage with and make meaning of texts; through picture book read-alouds, Schwinge (2003) established bilingual curricular coherence and helped students

explicitly learn to make appropriate intertextual connections; Zapata et al. (2015) helped their ESL (English as second language) students creatively compose with diverse materials and linguistic varieties by making bilingual picture books; and Zaidi and Dooley (2021) discussed how dual-language book pedagogies could benefit multilingual literacy and literacy education in the digital age. With the positive impacts of bilingual education being affirmed by increasing research, it is necessary to further explore how bilingual education, especially in early years, could be better implemented with appropriate use of children's literature.

Statement of the Problem

The increasing popularity of bilingual education is evident in the emergence of more bilingual programs worldwide (Baker & Wright, 2021; Cummins & Hornberger, 2008). Many bilingual programs have been recognized as successful routes to effective second language acquisition and heritage language maintenance (Baker & Wright, 2021; Bialystok, 2001a, 2007; Cummins, 2000, 2021; Cummins & Danesi, 1990; Koh et al., 2017; Sun, 2011; J. Wu, 2005; W. Wu, 2009). However, issues such as bilingual students' uneven use of their first and second languages and students' sustained development of the target language remain a concern in bilingual education (Pumpki et al., 2022; Sun, 2011; Swain, 1996; Tarone & Swain, 1995). A robust literature demonstrates that bilingual children have a depressed vocabulary in one of their languages compared to monolingual peers, which indicates that exposure to language-rich home and school environments is essential to children's balanced bilingual development (Bialystok et al., 2010; Jiang, 2009; Lin & Johnson, 2016; Zou, 2022). Despite the increasing numbers of bilingual programs and complementary schools that teach heritage languages, a significant body of research has indicated that many people whose first

language is other than English gradually give up speaking their heritage language in countries where English is the dominant language (Brown, 2011; Kang, 2010; Park, 2013; Tse, 2001; S. Wu, 2016; You, 2005; Zhang, 2008; Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe (2009) reported, for example, that young immigrant children are “often subject to the language assimilation pressures in their immediate school environment and fail to recognize the potential payoffs of learning the HL [heritage language] in the long run” (p. 92). In countries where using English has been taken for granted as an ideology, children easily believe that only English is acceptable and valued at school and in society (Brown, 2011). As a result, when children move to the upper levels of their schooling, they may become resistant to learning heritage languages and attending complementary schools for heritage language maintenance (Kang, 2010; You, 2005). By the time they reach adulthood, “their heritage language has become their weaker language because it is the minority or secondary language in daily functional use” (S. Wu, 2016, p. 448).

In addition, little research has been conducted on bilingual education other than French in the Canadian context (Koh et al., 2017; Sun, 2011; J. Wu, 2005). Despite the fact that English-Chinese bilingual programs have existed in Western Canada for almost 40 years and complementary Chinese schools have an even longer history, very little research has been done on how these programs function or how effective they are in using children’s literature to activate and engage students’ use of both languages. The available research on English-Chinese bilingual programs has primarily centred on the achievement and positive influence of bilingualism and biliteracy (Bilash & J. Wu, 1998; Koh et al., 2017; Sun, 2011; J. Wu, 2005). Research regarding complementary Chinese schools in the Canadian context is almost

nonexistent. Many inquires remain to be explored: What approaches and children's literature resources are teachers and parents using to teach both languages to English-Chinese bilingual children? What role does children's literature play in English-Chinese bilingual children's learning of both languages and cultures? Is there a difference between the use of English children's literature and the use of Chinese children's literature in the English-Chinese bilingual education? Are there previously ignored needs of children's literature in the bilingual education? Moreover, as Christensen (2004) pointed out, "communication between book and child does not, in the first place, occur without a mediator" (p. 238); the mediator is normally an adult. Nodelman (2008) also emphasized that there is always the hidden adult in creating, distributing, and studying children's literature. In terms of the use of children's literature in English-Chinese bilingual education, the mediator and the hidden adult are primarily teachers and parents; I regard them also as gatekeepers.

It should be noted that I use the term *gatekeeper* with the intention of reflecting on the decisive influence of adults regarding the creation and selection of children's literature. The word *gatekeeper* means that someone is withholding and controlling information and may imply that adults have authority over children. This term can be used to depict the role of teachers and parents in using children's literature, and to some extent, may also reflect the relationship between adults and children.

Nevertheless, as Christensen (2004) noted, adults can also play the role of mediators between children's literature and children. According to sociocultural theory, human beings can also be counted as a class of mediator in addition to material tools and psychological tools in the course of the development of mind (Daniels, 2016).

Whereas the word *gatekeeper* tends to be associated with control and a closing of relationships, the expression *mediator* implies facilitation and an opening of relationships. Therefore, to better facilitate students'/children's bilingual and biliteracy development and foster their sense of autonomy through children's literature, teachers and parents need to rethink the role they play and shift from being merely gatekeepers to becoming mediators. In brief, to explore the use of children's literature in bilingual education, looking through teachers' and parents' experiences and perspectives is crucial and cannot be bypassed.

Research Questions

My study had three purposes. First, this study set out to examine what kind of children's literature is being used in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context. Second, I wanted to achieve a thorough understanding of what role children's literature plays in bilingual education. Finally, I wanted to explore how teachers' and parents' experiences with and perspectives on children's literature might impact their pedagogical practices with their English-Chinese bilingual students/children. Due to the constructive and inductive nature of qualitative research (Merriam, 1998), the research questions often do not become apparent or emerge until one has spent time in the field (Heath & Street, 2008) or research site. When I began the process of data analysis, I realized that themes had indeed emerged from the data beyond the aspects I tried to cover in the initially designed research questions. In addition, some of the findings were different from my assumptions and shed new light on my thinking and perception on the use of children's literature in bilingual education. Therefore, on the one hand, I organized the structure of this dissertation around the research questions, trying to answer my own, and probably many bilingual teachers' and parents',

questions and wonderings regarding children's literature and bilingual education. On the other hand, I also included the emergent themes and phenomena in the findings and discussion chapter, trying to unfold things that might have been previously unseen or unheard. The questions that guided my research and the structure of this dissertation are:

1. What kind of children's literature is being used in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context?
2. What role does children's literature play in English-Chinese bilingual children's language and literacy development?
3. How might teachers' and parents' experiences with and perspectives on children's literature impact their practices in using children's literature with English-Chinese bilingual children?

Significance of the Study

Due to increasingly high rates of immigration and the increasing use of multiple languages, issues such as heritage language maintenance, the implementation and development of bilingual education programs, and cultural identity formation have become increasingly important in Canada. A growing body of research indicates that effective development of literacy and academic skills in any first language provides a foundation for English development in the long term (Cummins, 2007). Bilinguals have even been found to demonstrate advantages in certain areas of metacognitive and metalinguistic functioning (Bialystok, 2001a; Bialystok & Craik, 2010). In addition, for many minority and immigrant parents, maintaining their ethnocultural heritage is a central part of child-rearing and parenting (Albanese, 2016). Heritage language and second language skills are considered to

be beneficial by a growing number of minority language parents in terms of intergenerational communication, promotion of positive self-images, cultural awareness, and career advantages in the future (Brown, 2011; Dixon et al., 2012; Gu & Patkin, 2013; Hu, Torr, et al., 2014; King & Fogle, 2006; Kwon, 2017; Zhang, 2008, 2010; Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). As a result, bilingual education has received more attention and support than before. For instance, in the Western Canadian city where the English-Chinese bilingual programs were first launched, the number of students enrolled in the programs increased from 40 in 1982 to more than 2,600 in 2019 (Edmonton Public School Board [EPSB], n.d.). However, in spite of this growth, little research has been conducted on English-Chinese bilingual education, especially with regards to examining the types of literature resources that have been used from teachers' and parents' perspectives, and how children's literature is being used to activate and engage students' learning of both languages in a meaningful way in the Canadian context (Koh et al., 2017; Sun, 2011; J. Wu, 2005). As Hornberger and Link (2012a) pointed out, "*what* (content) biliterate learners and users read and write is as important as *how* (development), *where and when* (context), or *by what means* (media) they do so" (p. 268, emphasis in original). In addition, demonstrating the variety and richness of the languages is also important in English-Chinese bilingual education. As Wong-Fillmore (1986) asserted, it is not enough to advocate for educational equity without also advocating for excellence, because "all children, bilingual children included, must have access to education that reflects a vision of what could be in classrooms" (as cited in Hudelson et al., 1994, p. 164).

For children, books are both mirrors in which they can recognize and learn about themselves and windows that open to the rest of the world and through which they can

understand the lives of others (Aldana, 2008; Bishop, 1990a, 1990b; Galda, 1998; Wiltse, 2015). Therefore, children who speak Chinese as their first language and children who learn Chinese as a heritage/international language in Canada need to read literature that reflects their own culture and is written by authors who have shared some of their life experiences (Cai, 1994; Chen & Wang, 2014; Fillmore, 1986; Qiaoya Huang & Xiaoning Chen, 2016). While the English-Chinese bilingual programs in public schools and other related institutions such as complementary Chinese schools have provided a myriad of reading materials, there is still a need to increase the amount and visibility of high-quality children's literature that can specifically meet the needs of English-Chinese bilingual students. Furthermore, as Hunt (1996) stated, in "contemporary, child-oriented literary studies . . . we are talking about childhood, about *use*, about books being touched, eaten, rejected, banned, pulped—in short, about live issues" (p. 202, emphasis in original). Thus, to understand how children's literature can be more effective for bilingual children, in addition to analyzing the texts used, it is necessary to explore how children's literature is perceived and used by its important gatekeepers and mediators—teachers and parents.

Hence, my research aimed to provide new insights into English-Chinese bilingual education through examining the current utility of children's literature in the teaching and learning of both languages and cultures from teachers' and parents' perspectives. I set out to identify some of the prominent features of the collected children's literature, as well as trends regarding the use of children's literature by teachers and parents in bilingual education. In doing so, I hoped this research would demonstrate some of the gaps and challenges that teachers and parents experience regarding access to and use of children's literature for their

bilingual students/children, and would inspire them to rethink and reconceptualize their perceptions and practices of bilingual education and their use of children's literature.

Pedagogically, this research offers some implications on selecting and using children's literature in the hope of helping teachers and parents notice the issues that have been overlooked and rethink the use of dual-language books and translanguaging approaches in bilingual education. Moreover, these implications may also hold potential for teachers who want to choose children's literature for increasingly diverse classrooms.

The findings from this study may also contribute to theoretical development in the field of bilingual and biliteracy research through the adaptation and extension of Cummins and Early's (2011) literacy expertise framework and Hornberger's (2013) continua model of biliteracy. By examining the findings from the theoretical lens of the literacy expertise framework, this research revealed a lack of awareness, intention, and action to use children's literature as an avenue to foster children's language awareness and critical literacy capability in bilingual education. In terms of the continua model of biliteracy, this research extended the continua model's focus on media from linguistic forms to incorporate other media forms based on the various ways the teacher and parent participants used children's literature. The extension of the framework also indicates that in the digital age, children's literature is often used across boundaries and media; thus, teachers and parents need to include more multimodal and interactive ways to facilitate children's bilingual and biliteracy development.

Finally, given the long-term social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever to promote intercultural understanding between countries, nations, and regions. As the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) stated,

“COVID-19 is much more than a health crisis. By stressing every one of the countries it touches, it has the potential to create devastating social, economic and political crises that will leave deep scars” (para. 3, n.d.). For example, anti-Asian discrimination is still experienced and has become worse within Canada (e.g., Azpiri, 2021; CBC Kids News, 2022; Ibrahim, 2022; Lui, 2021). To reduce inequalities and build resilience to crises and shocks, and to create a more inclusive and mutually understanding society, advocating bilingual and multilingual education will provide one step toward this goal. Hence, by exploring the use of children’s literature in bilingual education, this research also sheds light on how to better foster children’s language awareness and critical literacy capability through bilingual education.

Overview of the Study

In Chapter 2, I present the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that I employed for this study. Chapter 3 provides a review of literature that is closely related to studies on bilingualism and biliteracy, as well as the use of children’s literature in bilingual and biliteracy education. Chapter 4 describes the methodology, including the study design, participant recruitment, brief portraits of each participant, data collection, data analysis, and the amendments I made to cope with conducting research during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Chapter 5, I present the research findings and related discussion based on the three research questions. Each question is the focus of a respective section: the emergent features of the collected children’s literature; the various roles children’s literature plays in English-Chinese bilingual children’s language and literacy development; and the influence of participants’ experiences and perspectives on their use of children’s literature in bilingual education. In

Chapter 6, I reexamine the findings that emerged from the three research questions through the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underpin this study—the literacy expertise framework (Cummins & Early, 2011) and the continua model of biliteracy (Hornberger, 2003; Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester, 2003)—to provide a more comprehensive picture regarding the use of children’s literature in bilingual education. The final chapter explains the contributions my research makes to scholarship and pedagogical practice, followed by a reflection on my research journey and possible directions for future research. I conclude the chapter with closing remarks on what I learned through this doctoral research journey.

Chapter 2: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

In research broadly and in language and literacy research particularly, “theories are propositional networks commonly used to help members of a community of researchers and practitioners understand, explain, and make predictions about key concepts and processes in a particular field of study” (Unrau & Alvermann, 2013, p. 49). This does not mean, however, that theoretical and conceptual frameworks can provide a “perfect” structure in which researchers can organize their findings and identify key issues. On the contrary, as Unrau and Alvermann (2013) asserted, “theory and theoretical models have the power to cast both light and shadow on our understanding. . . . They seem to exercise their powers absolutely but on a continuum of degrees of illumination” (p. 47). Graue and Walsh (1998) also argued that theory, on the one hand, has the value to allow us to see the previously invisible and shed a new light on what was previously visible; yet on the other hand, we must treat theory with caution because “it can function like a set of blinders, restricting what one sees and how one sees it. . . . Theory, then, is a tool that both supports and constrains research” (p. 26).

The purposes of this study are to achieve a more thorough understanding of the use of children’s literature and the role it plays in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context, and to explore how teachers’/parents’ experiences and perspectives regarding children’s literature might impact their pedagogical practices with their bilingual students/children. The use of children’s literature is closely linked to social and cultural contexts. Therefore, the sociocultural nature of this study makes qualitative research methods suitable for it. As Dressman (2007) pointed out, the role of theory in qualitative research is complex and evolving. While some scholars believe that qualitative research can expand

theoretical knowledge and understanding through interactions between theories and inquiries, others argue that qualitative research should not depend on preconceived theories and be solely inductive (Mitchell & Cody, 1993). For this study, the theories and concepts I drew upon helped not only with guiding and framing the discussion of the study's findings but also in providing implications for future research. In the meantime, unanticipated findings emerged from the study, and I included them in the discussion with the hope that they may suggest new research directions.

In brief, the theoretical framework of this study is underpinned by social constructivism (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Hays & Singh, 2012; Lincoln et al., 2011), sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), and sociocultural perspectives on literacy (Gee, 1996; Kress, 2000; New London Group, 1996; Perry, 2012; Street, 1984; Unrau & Alvermann, 2013). The conceptual frameworks of this study include the continua model of biliteracy (Hornberger, 1990; Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester, 2003), the literacy expertise framework proposed by Cummins and Early (2011), and the efferent-aesthetic continuum of reading that is based on Rosenblatt's (1982a, 1982b, 1994) transactional theory.

Social Constructivism

Social constructivism is a belief system that assumes universal truth cannot exist because there are multiple contextual perspectives and subjective voices that can label truth in scientific pursuits (Hays & Singh, 2012). Lincoln et al. (2011) summarized the features of social constructivism in terms of ontology, epistemology, and methodology. The ontology of social constructivism states that reality and knowledge are local, and are coconstructed through individuals' lived experiences and individuals' interactions with other members of

society. Epistemologically, social constructivism is transactional and subjectivist: “The investigator and the object of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked so that the ‘findings’ are *literally created* as the investigation proceeds” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 111, emphasis in original). Methodologically, social constructivism is hermeneutic and dialectic, as Guba (1990) stated: “Individual constructions are elicited and refined hermeneutically, and compared and contrasted dialectically, with the aim of generating one or a few constructions on which there is substantial consensus” (p. 27). According to social constructivism, the inquiry aim of this study is not to gain the “absolutely true” and objective reality, but to understand and interpret the use of children’s literature in English-Chinese bilingual education through the participants’ coconstructed and reconstructed lived experiences in a particular social and contextual setting.

Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory

According to Unrau and Alvermann (2013), the term *sociocultural* “refers to a group of perspectives that includes sociolinguistics, pragmatism, and second-generation cognitive science and that commonly manifests themes distilled from Vygotsky’s cultural historical theory” (p. 67). In brief, sociocultural theory assumes that individuals’ mental development emerges from social interaction with others, and that activities of the individual are mediated by tools and symbol systems (languages) that are largely based on their specific historical, social, and cultural circumstances. Therefore, to understand the development of an individual human being, one must look not only at the individual’s trajectory but also at the social and material environment with which they interacted in the course of their development.

As the founder of sociocultural theory, Vygotsky (1978) asserted that mental development is “the result of social learning, of the interiorization of social signs, and of the internalization of culture and of social relationships” (Blanck, 1990, p. 44). Among Vygotsky’s (1978, 1986) many contributions, three are of particular importance for understanding the connections among history, society, culture, and the individual child’s development of mind. This study is underpinned by these concepts. First, to understand a child’s intellectual or cognitive development, one must understand the historical, social, and cultural contexts of this child’s experiences. Second, language/speech is one of the most important means that allows a child to interact with others in their culture and to strive for self-mastery. As Vygotsky (1978) illuminated, “*the most significant moment in the course of intellectual development, which gives birth to the purely human forms of practical and abstract intelligence, occurs when speech and practical activity, two previously completely independent lines of development, converge*” (p. 24, italics in original). Third, Vygotsky (1978) believed that “every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, *between* people (*interpsychological*) and then *inside* the child (*intrapsychological*)” (p. 57, emphasis in original). In other words, children’s language and literacy development is shaped or constructed through the social and cultural influences and interactions within their environment. In this way, language and literacy development is considered to be a social behaviour, and the important roles of parents, teachers, peers, and the community should be emphasized in children’s learning processes.

In addition, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasizes the importance of the mediating role of artifacts in activity. As Wells (2000) pointed out,

human beings are not limited to their biological inheritance, as other species are, but are born into an environment that is shaped by the activities of previous generations. In this environment they are surrounded by artifacts that carry the past into the present. . . . Human development is thus. . . immeasurably enriched and extended through the individual's appropriation and mastery of the cultural inheritance as this is encountered in activity and interaction with others. (p. 54)

As a sociocultural production, children's literature is a kind of artifact with rich cultural connotations. The use of children's literature also links with its specific historical, social, and cultural contexts. Not only can reading and sharing children's literature be an effective way for children to learn and use a language, but also the reading and sharing of children's literature is a means to consciously or unconsciously inherit culture and transmit this culture to children.

Sociocultural Perspectives on Literacy

Traditionally, literacy has been understood to be a fixed body of skills in terms of making meaning from and through written text; literacy is "culturally neutral, universal in its features, and developmentally accessible" (Luke & Woods, 2009, p. 9). Consequently, research on language and literacy has been largely shaped by cognitive and psycholinguistic perspectives (Gee, 2000a; Perry, 2012; Unrau & Alvermann, 2013) that focus on particular language and literacy skills of individuals in decontextualized environments and often advocate using

objective and empirical quantitative methods. However, over the past five or six decades, “in and across a wide variety of disciplines, there has been a massive ‘social turn’ away from a focus on individual behavior . . . and individual minds . . . towards a focus on social and cultural interaction” (Gee, 2000b, p. 180).

Grounded in Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory, sociocultural perspectives on literacy commonly refer to a set of theoretical perspectives that share assumptions about the mind, the world, and their relationship (Perry, 2012). In brief, sociocultural perspectives on literacy are related to sociolinguistic conceptualizations of the ways in which culture is realized through language (e.g., Gee, 1996; Halliday, 1973), the ways in which language use and literacy practice vary depending on context (e.g., Dyson, 2013; Heath, 1983), the relationship between language use and power (e.g., Gee, 1996; Freire, 2001), and how literacy is understood as meaning making through a multiplicity of communications channels and media (e. g., Kress, 2000; New London Group, 1996). As a practical matter, sociocultural approaches have long played an important role in the field of language and literacy, and have provided alternative perspectives in terms of understanding the ways in which people use language and literacy in their everyday lives and finding ways to make language and literacy instruction meaningful and relevant to students, especially those “whose families and communities practice literacy in ways that may differ from those in the mainstream or in position of power” (Perry, 2012, p. 51).

As Perry (2012) noted, due to the differences among various theories that are underpinned by the larger umbrella of sociocultural perspectives on literacy, “it is more appropriate to speak of sociocultural perspectives as a collection of related theories that

include significant emphases on the social and cultural contexts in which literacy is practiced” (p. 51). Hence, literacy as a social practice (e.g., Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Heath, 1983; Street, 1984), multiliteracies (e.g., Kress, 2000; New London Group, 1996), critical literacy (e.g., Gee, 1996; Freire, 2001), the continua model of biliteracy (Hornberger, 1990; Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester, 2003), and the literacy expertise framework (Cummins & Early, 2011) can all fall under this paradigm. Based on a sociocultural perspective on literacy, the three main conceptual frameworks that I drew upon in this research are the continua model of biliteracy, the literacy expertise framework, and the efferent-aesthetic continuum.

The Continua Model of Biliteracy

Hornberger (1990) proposed the notion of biliteracy as “any and all instances in which communication occurs in two (or more) languages in or around writing” (p. 213). She developed *the continua model of biliteracy* (Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester, 2003) as a framework to understand and elaborate research, teaching, and language planning in linguistically diverse settings. The framework of the continua model of biliteracy is four nested and intersecting components: development, content, media, and contexts (as shown in Figure 1).

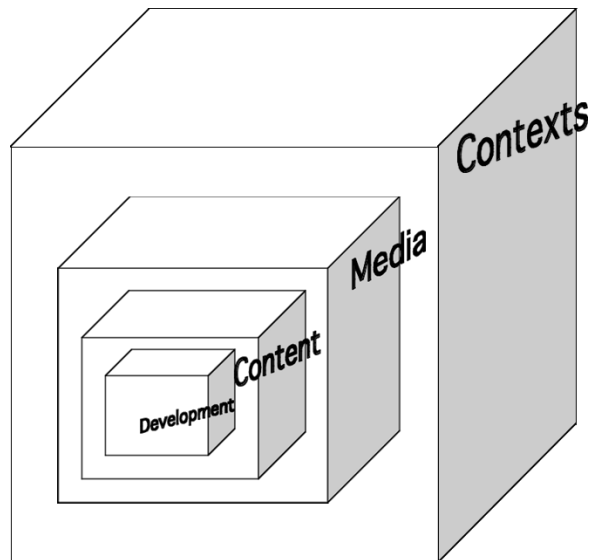


Figure 1. Nested relationships among the continua of biliteracy.

Source: Hornberger and Skilton-Sylvester, 2003, p. 36

Each component of the continua model of biliteracy has three subdimensions, which are shown with their power relationships in Figure 2.

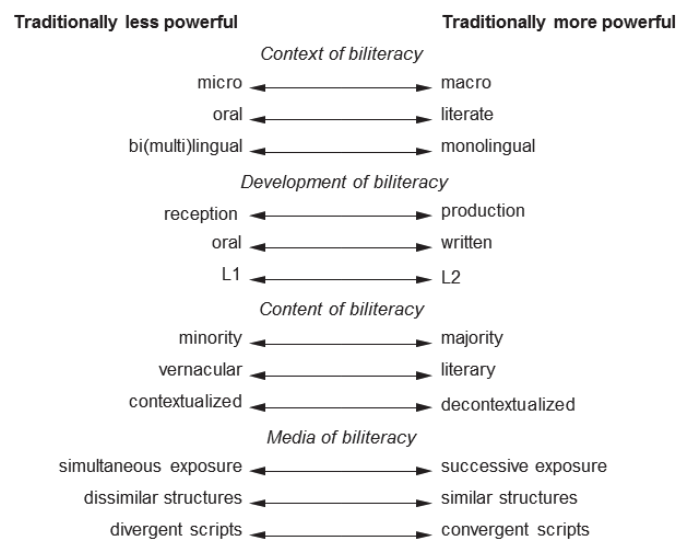


Figure 2. Power relations in the continua of biliteracy.

Source: Hornberger and Skilton-Sylvester, 2003, p. 39

The Context of Biliteracy

Considering context as a significant factor in understanding literacy can be dated back to the early 1960s and the beginnings of sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication (Fishman, 1968; Hymes, 1964; Pride & Holmes, 1972). Heath's (1983) study on the literacy development of children from three different communities is one of the most representative studies that illuminates how reading and writing vary in their functions and uses across history, cultures, and "contexts of use as defined by particular communities" (Heath, 1980, p. 126). The context of biliteracy has three subdimensions: the micro-macro continuum, the oral-literate continuum, and the bilingual-monolingual continuum.

With regard to biliteracy, at the mirrors level, "biliteracy often exists in a context of unequal power relations" (Hornberger, 2003, p. 11); for instance, one type of literacy in a multilingual society may become marginalized (e.g., August & Shanahan, 2006; Broomes, 2013; Cho & Krashen, 1998), or literacies may become specialized by functions (e.g., Dyson, 2013; Street, 1984). At the micro level, literacy practice might be impacted by various situational factors; for example, in her study about how three English-Chinese bilingual students engaged in language and literacy practices in the two languages, Sun (2010) stated that dialogue between languages, dialogue among peers, and dialogue across places were three main factors that impacted the students' bilingual and biliteracy development.

The oral-literate continuum, as another subdimension under the context of biliteracy, demonstrates the variety of literacy. As Street (1989) argued, literacy can be "for storytelling and reading; for immediate functional purposes in the home and work; for leisure and pleasure purposes; and for personal exploration as in diaries and private notebooks" (p. 8-9).

It should be noted that, although any particular instance of biliteracy can be located at a point on the oral-literate continuum, more emphasis should be placed on the contexts in which language is used rather than on the supposed differences between written and oral language use (Street, 1988).

The third defining continuum for the context of biliteracy, the bilingual-monolingual continuum, aligns with the other two continua, that is, the distinction appears to be less on the difference in languages but more on the differences in contexts, functions, and use of language. Biliterate individuals do not so much possess two different sets of functions and uses of language. Rather, “bilinguals switch languages according to specific functions and uses, whereas monolinguals switch styles in the same contexts” (Hornberger, 2003, p. 14). In summary, the context of biliteracy can be defined by the above three continua, and any particular instance of biliteracy could be identified at one point of intersection among the three.

The Development of Biliteracy

Differing from the context of biliteracy as a broader picture, the development of biliteracy focuses more on the biliterate individual, and this repertoire is crucially defined by three continua: reception-production, oral language–written language, and first language–second language transfer. Traditional theories of language development assume that receptive and productive language skills are acquired in a sequenced development process—that is, the development of listening and speaking precedes the development of reading and writing—and that receptive (listening and reading) skills precede productive ones (speaking and writing). However, the reception-production continuum suggests that “receptive and productive

development occurs along a continuum, beginning at any point, and proceeding, cumulatively or in spurts, in either direction” (Hornberger, 2003, p. 16). In other words, the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing can interact with and transform each other.

As already noted in the oral-literate continuum under the context of biliteracy, the oral language–written language continuum refers to the embeddedness of reading and writing development in oral language use. That is to say, the learning of reading and writing heavily relies on spoken language. For bilinguals and multilinguals, the development along the oral-written continuum is also not unidirectional, as Hudelson (1984) concluded: “The processes of writing, reading, speaking, and listening in a second language are interrelated and interdependent. It is both useless and, ultimately, impossible to separate out the language processes in our teaching” (p. 234).

According to Hornberger (2003), first language–second language transfer generally refers to the positive effects that literacy ability in one language might have on literacy achievement in the other language. In spite of increasing research on bilingualism and biliteracy that suggests a positive association between first language development and second language acquisition (e.g., Baker & Wright, 2021; Brown, 2011; Cummins, 1991, 2000, 2001, 2007, 2021; Dixon et al., 2012; Hu et al., 2014a; Kwon, 2017; Shin, 2013; Wong-Fillmore, 1991; Zaidi, 2020; Zaidi & Rowsell, 2017; Zhang, 2008, 2010; Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009), many studies show evidence of a negative effect and challenges in balancing one’s first language and dominant societal languages (e.g., Creese & Blackledge, 2011; Figueiredo et al., 2016; Gu & Patkin, 2013; G. Huang, 2000; Jean & Geva, 2012; Kenny, 1996; Martin, 2010; Mori & Calder, 2013; Tse, 1998). However, as Hornberger (2003) noted, the answer to the

question in terms of whether the first or dominant language should be chosen as the initial language of instruction varies from case to case depending on micro and macro contextual factors. For example, in countries where using English has been taken for granted as an ideology, minority children are “often subject to the language assimilation pressures in their immediate school environment and fail to recognize the potential payoffs of learning the HL [heritage language] in the long run” (Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009, p. 92). Whereas when there are positive attitudes and support for the first language development and the equally important status of both languages has been recognized in the wider community, transfer between one’s first and second language can be achieved; Canadian French immersion programs and English-Chinese bilingual programs are both excellent examples of this successful transfer (Johnstone, 2002; Koh et al., 2017; Sun, 2011; J. Wu, 2005).

The Content of Biliteracy

The continua of biliterate content was added in Hornberger and Skilton-Sylvester’s (2003) revision of the continua model of biliteracy based on Skilton-Sylvester’s (1997) study of literacy, identity, and educational policy among Cambodian women and girls in Philadelphia. Differing from the media continua, which focus on the form literacy takes, “the content continua focus on the meaning those forms express” (Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester, 2003, p. 50). Traditionally, society weights more power on the content continua towards the majority, literary, and decontextualized ends, yet Skilton-Sylvester (1997) argued that it is important to include minority, vernacular, and contextualized whole language texts to reflect minority students’ literacy experiences. As Hornberger and Skilton-Sylvester (2003) pointed out:

If students' whole contextualized texts, with all of their imperfections, could be used as a starting point, meaning would be insured and students could intrinsically see the links between decontextualized and contextualized language, and between the literary and the vernacular. If minority texts could be chosen as a part of the literary content of the classroom, links could also be made between the content students bring with them to school and the content they encounter at the school door. (p. 54)

The Media of Biliteracy

The media of biliteracy can also be viewed as a part of the context. The three continua under this component are simultaneous-successive exposure, similar-dissimilar structures, and convergent-divergent scripts. Simultaneous bilingual language acquisition is also known as early bilingualism, which refers to people who become bilingual in infancy, whereas successive bilingual language acquisition, that is, late bilingualism, often occurs in adolescence. Thus, the simultaneous-successive exposure continuum can be used to demonstrate type and degree of bilingualism. However, as Hornberger (2003) argued, "type and degree of bilingualism have more to do with systematic use of the two languages than with age of acquisition" (p. 23). It is also worth noting that although fully developed first language is not necessary for better second language acquisition, the absence or lack of development of first language can affect second language development (Cummins, 1981, 1991; Cummins & Early, 2011; Hornberger, 2003). In like manner, "a number of configurations exist as to the simultaneous or successive development of biliteracy and . . . these involve varying degrees of development of L1 [first language]" (Hornberger, 2003, p.

23). For instance, under the transitional type of bilingual programs, literacy development of dominant societal language often builds on minimal literacy development of minority children's first language; by contrast, studying a second language at the college level usually builds literacy development of the second language on highly developed literacy skills in the first language.

The similar-dissimilar language structures continuum can be used to indicate the linguistic relation between first and second languages. Different linguistic relations will lead to different processes of literacy development and provide various contexts for the study of biliteracy. As Bialystok (2001b) noted, for example, progress in biliteracy is more affected by the close or distant relationship of the two languages (e.g., comparing English-French and English-Chinese) than by bilingualism.

The convergent-divergent scripts continuum refers to a range of possibilities regarding writing systems. Ovando et al. (2003) argued that, when two languages have different writing systems (e.g., English-Chinese), "general strategies, habits and attitudes, knowledge of text structure, rhetorical devices, sensorimotor skills, visual perceptual training, cognitive functions, and many reading readiness skills transfer from L1 to L2 reading" (p. 175).

Summary

In summary, the continua model of biliteracy provides a framework to help understand biliteracy. As Hornberger (2003) suggested,

the interrelatedness of the continua allows us to see why there is potential for positive transfer across languages and literacies, whereas the nested nature of

the continua allows us to see that there are a myriad of contextual factors that may abet or impede such transfer. (p. 25)

It is also worth noting that in the later revisiting of the continua model of biliteracy, Hornberger and Skilton-Sylvester (2003) put more emphasis on power relations in the continua model as they indicated that although some actors and practices at the traditionally powerful ends of the continua of biliteracy might currently be privileged, they need not be. Instead, as Hornberger and Skilton-Sylvester (2003) suggested, “the very nature and definition of what is powerful biliteracy is open to transformation through what actors—educators, researchers, community members, and policy makers—do in their everyday practices” (pp. 38–39).

Underpinned as it is by sociocultural perspectives on literacy, this study views the use of children’s literature as both a social and cultural practice through which teachers and parents in English-Chinese bilingual education “act within a textually mediated social world” (Barton, 2001, p. 95). The use of children’s literature also connects to and is shaped by a myriad of sociocultural factors, including institutions such as the school board and language programs, as well as power relationships such as the relationship between majority and minority societal languages. Moreover, the selecting of and ways of using children’s literature with English-Chinese bilingual children are accompanied by particular purposes of language and culture learning and are influenced by teachers’ and parents’ own experiences and perspectives towards children’s literature; both are embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices. Hence, I hope that by drawing upon the continua model of biliteracy as a

heuristic, this study will provide a panoramic perspective that embraces sociocultural factors to explore the use of children's literature in bilingual education.

The Literacy Expertise Framework

This study is also informed by Cummins' language development theory. As a Canadian language learning theorist, James Cummins has contributed greatly to the field of bilingual education and second language acquisition. From a psychological perspective, Cummins (1973) argued that bilinguals can have superior thinking abilities based on their dual linguistic system, which can lead to greater cognitive flexibility (nonlinguistic explanations) and higher levels of concept formation (linguistic explanations). Starting in the 1980s, Cummins began to notice that "psycho-educational perspectives were incapable of addressing these ideological assumptions about bilingual education"; thus he "began to integrate [his] interest in bilingualism and bilingual education with a consideration of how power relations affected what was happening in schools" (Cummins & Early, 2011, p. 12). Correspondingly, Cummins' academic work has evolved from psycho-educational consideration in terms of "how exposure to two languages in childhood affect[s] the development of cognitive abilities" (Cummins & Early, 2011, pp. 10–11) to incorporate sociopolitical and sociocultural contexts regarding the (under)achievement of minority students. For this study, I drew upon the literacy expertise framework Cummins and Early (2011) proposed to facilitate the analysis and discussion of the findings.

From a sociocultural perspective, Cummins (2001) strongly emphasized the interactions between educators and students and argued that these interactions are "the most immediate determinant of student success or failure in school" (p. 21). Educator-student

interactions can be viewed through two lenses. One is “the *teaching-learning relationship* in a narrow sense, represented by the strategies and techniques that teachers use to provide the comprehensible input required to promote reading development, content knowledge and cognitive growth” (Cummins, 2001, p. 21, italics in original). The other lens “is the lens of *identity negotiation* which is represented by the messages communicated to students regarding their identities—who they are in the teacher’s eyes and who they are capable of becoming” (p. 21, italics in original). Cummins and Early (2011) presented the literacy expertise framework (Figure 3), centred on teacher-student interactions, to demonstrate the instructional ways in which teachers can encourage students to “use their multilingual and/or multimodal skills as cognitive tools and to employ a broad range of modalities to create literature and art and to generate insight about social and personal realities” (Cummins, Hu, et al., 2015, p. 557).

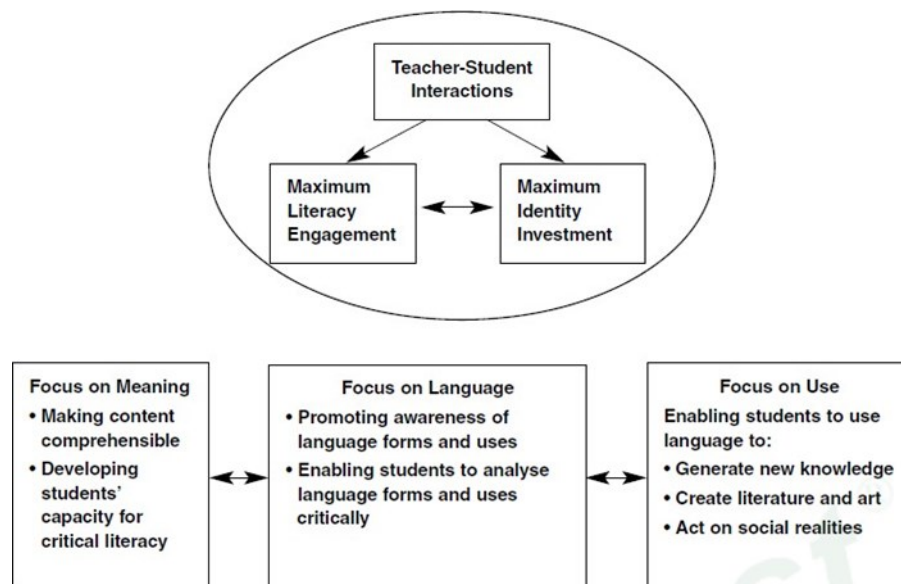


Figure 3. The literacy expertise framework.

Source: Cummins and Early, 2011, p. 33

Specifically, the literacy expertise framework expresses “the kinds of instructional emphases and language interactions required to build students’ literacy expertise” (Cummins & Early, 2011, p. 32). The focus on meaning in this framework entails not only understanding content but also reaching deeper levels of cognitive and linguistic processing to develop critical literacy. The focus on language involves “(a) promoting explicit knowledge of how the linguistic system operates, (b) developing a metalanguage to talk about it, and (c) enabling students to become critically aware of how language operates within society” (p. 32). The focus on use parallels the New London Group’s (1996) transformed practice and emphasizes that students need to use the language they learn in the classroom in authentic ways to prevent the situation that “L2 [second language] acquisition will remain abstract and classroom-bound” (Cummins, 2001, p. 144).

For this study, I adapted the literacy expertise framework into a diagram titled The Roles of Children’s Literature in Bilingual and Biliteracy Development (Figure 6 in Chapter 6) as a conceptual way to manifest the various roles children’s literature plays in bilingual children’s language and literacy development, as well as their construction of cultural identity. I acknowledge that Cummins and Early’s (2011) framework can not only be used to examine the literacy practice that occurs in school contexts, but is also applicable in exploring literacy practice such as the use of children’s literature within a broader context. Through the lens of the literacy expertise framework, how children’s literature is being used in bilingual education can be more clearly demonstrated, and the aspects that need to be strengthened are also easier to see.

Transactional Theory

The transactional theory developed by Rosenblatt (1982a, 1982b, 1994), one of the most influential reader-response theorists, has been accepted by increasing numbers of teachers since the 1970s and 1980s (Yopp & Yopp, 2010). Rosenblatt (1982b) used the terms *transaction* and *transactional* to describe the relationship between human beings and the outer world, stating, “Human activities and relationships are seen as transactions in which the individual and the social, cultural, and natural elements interfuse” (p. 154). With regard to understanding language activities in general and reading and writing in particular, transactional theory has profound implications. As Rosenblatt (1982b) explained:

Language, we know, is a socially generated public system of communication—the very bloodstream of any society. But it is often forgotten that language is always internalized by an individual human being in transaction with a particular environment. . . . No language act, however, can be thought of as totally public or totally private . . . although we speak of individual signs or words, we know that words do not function in isolation, but always in particular verbal, personal, and social contexts. (p. 156)

As the purpose of this study is to explore the use of children’s literature in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context, and the use of children’s literature largely involves reading, I elaborate the reading transaction in particular in the following section.

The Reading Transaction

According to Rosenblatt (1982b, 1994), a transaction between a reader and a text occurs during the reading process:

Every reading act is an event, a transaction involving a particular reader and a particular configuration of marks on a page, and occurring at a particular time in a particular context. . . . Meaning does not reside ready-made in the text or in the reader; it happens during the transaction between reader and text.

(Rosenblatt, 1982b, p. 157)

In other words, readers bring different backgrounds, experiences, understandings, and attitudes to their reading. Furthermore, “essential to any reading is the reader’s adoption, conscious or unconscious, of a stance” (Rosenblatt, 1982b, p. 158). The reader’s stance can reflect the reader’s purpose for reading, and influence the reading transaction as well.

The Efferent-Aesthetic Continuum

Rosenblatt (1982b, 1994) stated that a reader’s stance falls along a continuum from efferent to aesthetic. In efferent reading, “the reader’s attention is focused primarily on what will remain as the residue *after* the reading—the information to be acquired, the logical solution to a problem, the actions to be carried out” (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 23, emphasis in original). In contrast, when taking an aesthetic stance,

the reader’s primary concern is with what happens *during* the actual reading event . . . [the reader] pays attention to the associations, feelings, attitudes, and ideas that these words and their referents arouse within [the reader]. . . . *The reader’s attention is centered directly on what he is living through during his*

relationship with that particular text. (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 24, emphasis in original)

Taking this study as an example, an English-Chinese bilingual child probably takes a predominantly efferent stance when reading a bilingual dictionary to look up the meaning of a Chinese word, while the same child likely takes a predominantly aesthetic stance when reading a bilingual comic book. It should not be assumed, however, that efferent reading occurs only with informational text and that aesthetic reading happens only with fictional text. Reading a dictionary may also provoke experiences and feelings in the child related to a particular word, whereas, if reading a comic book is for gathering information to complete a quiz, the child is engaging in efferent reading. Rosenblatt (1982b) pointed out that, “since each reading is an event in particular circumstances, the same text may be read efferently or aesthetically” (p. 160).

In brief, texts can be read efferently or aesthetically, and “much of our reading falls in the middle of the continuum, [with] the reader responding to cognitive as well as emotive aspects” (Karolides & Roen, 2005, p. 60). A reader’s stance changes from text to text, situation to situation, and moment to moment. Moreover, “it is influenced by many factors, including the text, the reader, the context and—in the case of students—the teacher” (Yopp & Yopp, 2010, p. 3). As Yopp and Yopp (2010) argued:

When teachers focus on the information in texts, they promote an efferent stance: Students read to gather and remember information. When teachers encourage enjoyment of the reading experience and invite and accept personal responses to the reading; when they ask students to recapture the lived-through

experience of the reading through drawing, dancing, talking, writing, or role playing; when they allow students to build, express, and support their own interpretations of the text, they promote an aesthetic stance. (p. 3)

I would argue that in the case of English-Chinese bilingual education, in addition to the influence from teachers, the reader's stance of bilingual children is also impacted by their parents' perceptions toward children's literature and the interactions that children have with the parents regarding children's literature. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I was unable to conduct this study within the school site and make field observation as initially planned; therefore, I was not able to examine the reader's stance of the students and teachers through the efferent-aesthetic continuum when they spontaneously read or were assigned to read English and Chinese children's books in school. Alternatively, I employed the efferent-aesthetic continuum to analyze the types of children's literature collected in this study. For instance, in Chinese reading and English reading respectively, what types of children's literature did the teachers and parents select and use with their students/children? With the children's literature the teachers and parents used, what kind of reader's stance might did they appear to be pushing the bilingual children toward? What implications do the different reader's stances in bilingual education carry? I elaborate on this topic in the related discussion in Chapter 5.

Summary

To summarize, based on social constructivism (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Hays & Singh, 2012; Lincoln et al., 2011) and sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), this study views the use of children's literature in English-Chinese bilingual education as a literacy practice

that is embedded in a specific social and cultural context. What teachers and parents do in the course of reading and sharing children's literature in bilingual education connects to, and is shaped by, their perceptions, values, beliefs, feelings, social relationships, and broader power structures. The continua model of biliteracy (Hornberger, 1990; Hornberger & Skilton-Sylvester, 2003), the literacy expertise framework (Cummins & Early, 2011), and Rosenblatt's (1982a, 1982b, 1994) transactional theory contribute to the detailed conceptual guidance I relied on to explore the use of children's literature in the socially and contextually situated English-Chinese bilingual setting in Western Canada. In the next chapter, I provide a literature review of studies on bilingual and biliteracy education and the use of children's literature in bilingual and multilingual settings, focusing on the Canadian context.

Chapter 3: Review of the Literature

Literature review is an integral part of scholarship. Kamler and Thomson (2011) summarized four key tasks accomplished through working with scholarly literature: mapping the field relevant to the inquiry; identifying texts that are most pertinent to the research being undertaken; creating the justification for the research; and explaining the particular contribution the current research will make. For this study that explored the use of children's literature in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context, the literature review first summarizes relevant studies on bilingualism and biliteracy education. It then outlines an overall picture of bilingual education, including the typology summarized by Baker and Wright (2021), and defines bilingual education and bilingual children as terms used in this study, as well as briefly describing English-Chinese bilingual programs and Chinese complementary schools in the Canadian context. Last, the literature review encapsulates the studies on the use of children's literature in bilingual and biliteracy education that are most pertinent to this study, and also identifies both gaps in previous research and the contribution this study may make.

Studies on Bilingualism and Biliteracy

Increasing studies indicate that literacy in two or more languages is advantageous at both individual and societal levels (Baker, 2011; Baker & Wright, 2021; Bialystok, 2001a, 2001b, 2007; Blair et al., 2022; Cummins, 2001, 2021; Cummins & Early, 2011; Fu et al., 2019; Sung & Tsai, 2019). For individuals, bilingualism and biliteracy not only benefit language acquisition and mastery but also encourage self-esteem and positive identity construction.

Bilingualism and biliteracy have been found to be advantageous in certain areas of metacognitive and metalinguistic functioning (Bialystok, 2001a, 2007; Bialystok & Craik, 2010; Bialystok et al., 2014; Blair et al., 2022). In studies (Bialystok, 1997; Bialystok et al., 2000) that tested whether children understand that the meaning of a printed word is determined by its structure rather than external factors, Bialystok and her colleagues suggested that the performance of bilingual children was more than a year in advance of that of their monolingual peers. Being exposed to two writing systems, or two kinds of storybooks, enabled bilingual children to more quickly develop an understanding that words are symbols that correspond to specific meanings. In a later study, Bialystok et al. (2014) demonstrated that being involved in bilingual immersion programs was also beneficial to develop monolingual English-speaking children's metalinguistic awareness.

In his study that explored the cultural and linguistic identities of Chinese immigrant parents and teenagers in the US and how parental involvement impacted children's language awareness and attitudes, Kung (2013) found that speaking two languages benefits Chinese-English bilingual children because it enables them to think and process their ideas cognitively through another culture, which facilitates and enhances language conceptual knowledge in the long run. Similarly, by examining the data from Ontario's assessments of reading, writing and mathematics administered to the same minority students in grades 3 and 6, Broomes (2013) showed that home language or interactions with home language are significant for students' academic achievement. Students who speak a language other than or in addition to English at home are, in general, a little more likely to be proficient at grade 6. In their study examining how English-Chinese bilingual children apply their knowledge of language to Mandarin and

English reading through miscue analysis, Blair et al. (2022) revealed that “though Chinese and English literacy involve two different kinds of orthographic systems (logographic and alphabetic), children who are literate in Chinese do bring reading strengths, skills, and strategies when they learn to read in English” (p. 261); these authors reinforced the hypothesis that, “in learning a language, learners develop metalinguistic insights that can be applied to other languages, allowing for cross-linguistic transfer to occur” (Koh et al, 2017, p. 345). Therefore, Blair et al. (2022) strongly encouraged teachers to value children’s multilingual and multiliteracy repertoires in their classroom teaching.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, one’s home language closely connects with one’s sense of identity, cultural awareness, and feeling of belonging, all of which contribute to one’s overall development (Baker, 2011; Baker & Wright, 2017, 2021; Cummins, 1986, 2000, 2001, 2021; Fishman, 1991; Tse, 2001). For instance, through surveying Chinese-American and Korean-American secondary students, S. K. Lee (2002) found that successful home language maintenance was essential for children’s positive identity formation. Cho and Krashen (1998) put forth that heritage language development could help immigrant children define their cultural identity more precisely in a bilingual or multilingual society in that being bilingual promoted their appreciation and respect for others who were different from them as well as their own heritage culture. Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe (2009) found that many Chinese immigrant parents in the US viewed their heritage language as a resource and representation of their ethnic identity that led to family cohesion. Baker and Wright (2021) suggested that when minority languages and cultures are celebrated through bilingual and multilingual education, minority students’ identity is more likely to be affirmed and accepted. They further

stated that, “in strong forms of bilingual education—where the aim is to develop and maintain high levels of proficiency and literacy in both languages—the incorporation of the home language contributes to the collaborative creation of power” (p. 425).

In her study that looks at the losses from monolingualism and benefits of bilingualism, Law (2015) concluded that being unable to speak their heritage language would lead to two consequences for children: first, they may feel inferior due to their lack of competence in the heritage language, and second, they may “act superior when expressing racism toward their own people after they have adopted other cultural values as their own” (p. 736). Either way, if they do not speak their heritage language, they may eventually lose their family relationship and cultural identity. As Law (2015) indicated, “they will have a hard time belonging, which . . . [is] the heart of bilingualism, [and] beyond utilitarian and unemotional instrumentality” (pp. 736–737). Law further argued that “while these two fundamental elements may not be necessary for success in academia, they are crucial to success in life, which cannot be taught in school” (p. 737). On the contrary, not only does heritage language maintenance prevent the loss of social and cultural connections and promote positive self-images and appreciation of diversity, “it also has positive effects on a child’s social, cognitive, and academic development” (p. 737).

Biliteracy is also important at the societal level. Literacy in a minority language provides a greater chance of survival for that language, and can also increase the functions, usage, and status of the minority language. As Baker (2011) stated,

literacy in the minority language enables the attendant traditions and the culture to be accessed, reproduced and renewed. . . . Literacy enables access to

language minority practices that help make sense of the world and hence affect the structure of human cognition. Biliteracy gives access to different and varied social and cultural worlds. (p. 320)

Furthermore, Cummins (2021) pointed out that encouraging minority students to engage with biliteracy or multiliteracy activities that correlate with their identities “constitutes a counter-discourse that enables them to repudiate the devaluation of identity that is embedded in the structures and relationships operating within many schools and other societal institutions” (p. 77).

Studies regarding parents’ attitudes towards heritage language learning and bilingual development (Hu et al., 2014; Kwon, 2017; Zhang, 2010) also demonstrate the potential economic advantages of being biliterate or multiliterate. Most of the parents interviewed in these studies believed that being biliterate would allow their children to enjoy many economic advantages in the future. Although it may not be obviously economically advantageous to be bilingual in a society where English is the dominant language or where those from the Anglosphere nations are the majority, two-thirds of the worldwide population is bilingual (Ro & Cheatham, 2009); the ability to communicate and work with them is undoubtedly important. Additionally, research has confirmed that well-implemented bilingual programs can increase the academic performance not only of English-language learners but also of mainstream students and is further beneficial to the development of the whole society (DeJesus, 2008; Lindholm-Leary, 2001). In brief, being biliterate or multiliterate is increasingly important given the global economic integration.

While bilingualism and biliteracy are represented positively in studies, there are still issues that need to be discussed and further researched to fulfill the promise of bilingual education, such as the debate about instructional time allocated for each language, the lack of resources, and the lack of guidelines for educators to follow up to help students develop high academic language and literacy proficiency in two languages (Christian, 2016; Lindholm-Leary, 2012; Sung & Tsai, 2019). Taking English-Chinese bilingual programs as an example, one of the issues that are most in need of study is to investigate the bilingual programs from teachers' perspectives to pinpoint problems and figure out possible solutions. In their study on Mandarin Chinese dual language immersion programs in Utah, US, Sung and Tsai (2019) interviewed 10 English teachers and 15 Chinese teachers, and indicated that the challenges identified by the Chinese teachers in teaching in the bilingual program included limited resources, frequent curriculum changes, language-proficiency gap between students, limited time and large class sizes, lack of support from parents and administrators, and a Chinese-only rule in the classroom. In contrast, the English teachers identified limited time to accomplish all tasks and communication with the Chinese teachers as the two main challenges they had encountered. Among all of the challenges, the most frequently mentioned by the Chinese teachers was the lack of resources, including standardized teaching materials, supplemental materials and technology tools, and support for getting resources. Sung and Tsai's (2019) study looked at the bilingual program in a US context. Given the different historical and social circumstances, English-Chinese bilingual education in Canada is a different landscape. Hence, it is necessary to explore the use of children's literature in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context to provide new insights and

identify potential issues regarding the use of teaching and learning resources for bilingual education.

In his framework of language planning, Ruiz (1984) suggested that greater emphasis should be given to a *language-as-resource* rather than *language-as-problem* or *language-as-right* orientation in which linguistic diversity is seen as a societal resource that should be nurtured for the benefit of all groups within the society. Cummins (2001) also insightfully asserted that one's mother tongue is the key to their identity formation; therefore, immigrant children's home language should be encouraged and treated as a resource by educators rather than as a problem that interferes with their English acquisition. The Canadian English-Chinese bilingual program this study explored treated language as a societal resource rather than a right or a problem.

The Typology of Bilingual Education

According to Baker (2011), bilingual education can be roughly distinguished by transitional and maintenance types based on their different aims. Generally, the ultimate aim of transitional bilingual education is to assimilate minority children socially and culturally into the language majority, whereas maintenance bilingual education, sometimes referred to as enrichment bilingual education, "attempts to foster the minority language in the child, and the associated culture and identity" (Baker & Wright, 2017, p. 197).

Baker and Wright (2021) developed a typology based on various studies on bilingual education to illustrate various program models for bilingual students. This typology with its three broad categories and ten specific subcategories of bilingual education is presented in Table 1. It is worth noting that, although the typology of bilingual education is necessary for

conceptual clarity and comparisons across countries and contexts, it has limitations due to the complex and ever-changing reality, such that Baker (2011) points out that “not all real-life examples will fit easily into the classification” (p. 208).

Table 1. Typology of Program Models for Bilingual Students

Type of Program	Typical type of child	Language of the classroom	Societal and educational aim	Aim in language outcome
Monolingual forms of education				
Mainstreaming/submersion	Language minority	Majority language	Assimilation	Monolingualism
Mainstreaming/submersion with pull-out or push-in majority language instruction support	Language minority	Majority language	Assimilation	Monolingualism
Sheltered/structured immersion	Language minority	Majority language	Assimilation	Monolingualism
Weak forms of bilingual education				
Transitional	Language minority	Moves from minority to majority language	Assimilation/ subtractive	Relative monolingualism
Mainstreaming with world language teaching	Language majority	Majority language with L2/WL lessons	Limited enrichment	Limited bilingualism
Separatist	Language minority	Minority language (out of choice)	Detachment/ autonomy	Limited bilingualism
Strong forms of bilingual education				
Immersion	Language majority	Bilingual with initial emphasis on L2	Pluralism and enrichment	Bilingualism and biliteracy
Maintenance/heritage language	Language minority	Bilingual with emphasis on L1	Maintenance, pluralism and enrichment	Bilingualism and biliteracy
Two-way/dual language	Mixed language minority and majority	Minority and majority	Maintenance, pluralism and enrichment	Bilingualism and biliteracy
Mainstream bilingual	Language majority	Two majority languages	Maintenance and enrichment	Bilingualism and biliteracy

Notes: L2 = second language, L1 = first language, WL = world language. This table is based on discussions with Ofelia García. She provides an in-depth discussion of models in García (2009)

(Adopted from Baker & Wright, 2021, p. 210)

According to the above typology, there are three broad categories of bilingual education: monolingual forms of education, weak forms of bilingual education, and strong forms of bilingual education. The English-Chinese bilingual education settings I explored for

this study are examples of strong forms of bilingual education. I describe this category in detail, and briefly introduce the other two following.

In the three types of programs under monolingual forms of education, minority students are instructed in the majority language with or without ESL support to meet their special linguistic and cultural needs. In such a language learning environment, minority students often lose their first language, and their self-esteem may suffer from being deprecated for their identity, relationships, roots, religion, and race. In these programs bilingual children are present, but neither bilingualism nor biliteracy are promoted.

The second category, weak forms of bilingual education, refers to programs that elicit relative monolingualism or limited bilingualism. The first type, transitional bilingual program, allows minority students to temporarily use their home language for content learning until they are capable to move to mainstream classes in which all instruction is in the majority language; therefore, the aim is still assimilation. The second type, mainstreaming bilingual program, refers to teaching second languages to language majority students as a subject in the curriculum similar to science or mathematics. The last type, the separatist program, is relatively rare. The reason for promoting this type of education is often for the survival of the minority language community or for self-protection.

Increasing numbers of researchers and educators currently advocate the third category, strong forms of bilingual education, through which the aim of bilingualism and biliteracy could be adequately achieved. A growing body of research (e.g., August & Shanahan, 2006; Cummins & Danesi, 1990; Koh et al., 2017; Marian et al., 2013) shows that bilingualism and biliteracy not only benefit children's language proficiency in both languages, but that

bilinguals have even been found to demonstrate advantages in certain areas of metacognitive and metalinguistic functioning (Bialystok, 2001; Bialystok & Craik, 2010). Additionally, research has confirmed that well-implemented bilingual programs can increase the academic performance, not only of English language learners but also mainstream students (e.g., Bialystok et al., 2014; DeJesus, 2008; Lindholm-Leary, 2001). The category of strong forms of bilingual education includes four types of bilingual programs: immersion, maintenance/heritage language, two-way/dual-language, and mainstream bilingual education.

Immersion bilingual education started in Canada as an educational experiment in the 1960s and since has spread to many countries of the world. The term immersion education was used to describe a new form of bilingual education through which students are able to concurrently develop dual language proficiency, academic achievement, and intercultural competence. Research over the past several decades has shown that, as a successful approach to effective second language acquisition, immersion bilingual programs can improve rather than diminish individual cognitive abilities and academic achievement because bilingualism requires a much more complicated network control (Bialystok & Craik, 2010; Brutt-Griffler & Jang, 2022; Castillo et al., 2022; Creese & Blackledge, 2011; Cummins, 2021; Cushen & Wiley, 2011; Genesee, 1987; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Swain & Lapkin, 1983; Xie & Dong, 2021; Yang et al., 2011).

Another strong form of bilingual education, maintenance/heritage language bilingual education refers to “a wide variety of in-school and out-of-school programs that give students an opportunity to develop higher levels of proficiency in their home or heritage languages” (Baker & Wright, 2017, p. 224). This type of bilingual education “occurs where language

minority children use their native, ethnic, home or heritage language in the school as a medium of instruction with the goal of full bilingualism” (Baker, 2011, p. 232).

Two-way/dual-language bilingual education typically occurs when there is a balanced mixture of students from two (or more) different language backgrounds and both languages are used for instruction. The difference between two-way/dual bilingual education and immersion bilingual education is the nature of the student population. Immersion bilingual schools usually contain only language majority students learning much or part of the curriculum through a second language, such as English-speaking children learning through the medium of French in Canadian French immersion programs. With regards to two-way/dual-language bilingual schools, there are approximately equal numbers of native speakers of two languages in the same classroom, and the learners have a chance to learn the language from both their teachers and their peers.

The last type of bilingual program under this framework is mainstream bilingual education. Such bilingual programs usually “exist in societies where much of the population is already bilingual or multilingual (e.g., Singapore, Luxembourg) or where there are significant numbers of natives or expatriates wanting to become bilingual (e.g., learning through English and Japanese in Japan)” (Baker & Wright, 2017, p. 234).

In summary, although strong forms of bilingual education vary in terms of the amount of time given to the minority and majority languages in the classroom and the language backgrounds of students, full bilingualism, biliteracy, and biculturalism are expected as outcomes.

The Definition of Bilingual Education for This Study

For this study, the participants I invited with regard to English-Chinese bilingual education were primarily from two settings; one was the English-Chinese bilingual program implemented in public schools in a Western Canadian city; the other was a complementary Chinese school organized and operated by the local Chinese community in another Western Canadian city. The two bilingual settings are both in line with the strong forms of bilingual education illustrated in Table 1. The English-Chinese bilingual program can be viewed as a hybrid of the immersion model and the dual language model. On one hand, the bilingual program is open to all students who are interested in synchronously learning both Mandarin Chinese and English, and there is no requirement of previous language knowledge to register in kindergarten or grade 1 (EPSB, n.d.). In other words, language majority students are also eligible to enroll in the bilingual program and experience an immersive language learning environment. On the other hand, the bilingual program involves many students whose heritage language is Mandarin Chinese, and these students, together with their English language majority peers, have created a two-way learning environment in which they can promote each other's language learning.

The complementary Chinese school can be viewed as a representative of the maintenance/heritage language model in Table 1. This school is newly founded and different from the more traditional Chinese heritage language schools, which are mainly operated by parent volunteers rather than professionals. First, despite being grassroots based, the school has a relatively strict teacher recruitment criterion as compared to traditional heritage language schools: The teachers are required to have a certain teaching experience and develop

appropriate pedagogical methods. Second, in addition to Chinese language teaching, the school offers other extracurricular courses such as mathematics competition training and basic computer coding, which makes the school complementary based rather than for language learning only. I elaborate on the English-Chinese bilingual program and complementary Chinese school in the Canadian context in the following section to provide related background information for this study. In brief, the definition of bilingual education in this study refers to strong forms of bilingual education through which bilingualism and biliteracy are expected to be achieved as ultimate goals.

The Definition of Bilingual Children for This Study

As Baker and Wright (2021) pointed out, “defining exactly who is or is not bilingual or multilingual is essentially elusive and may ultimately be impossible” (p. 16). They suggested a variety of aspects regarding the definition of bilingual individuals, including but not limited to language ability, language usage, and language proficiency. Languages are never static and thus bilingualism is also dynamic. Therefore, a more accurate depiction of the complex and dynamic nature of bilingualism might be as García (2009) suggested, that it is like a moon buggy with an intricate wheel system capable of moving in multiple directions across varied terrains.

For this study, corresponding to the definition of bilingual education, the definition of bilingual children may vary but is fundamentally in line with strong forms of bilingual education. The bilingual children whom the teacher and parent participants in this study were supporting in their bilingual education (their students/children) were either enrolled in the public bilingual program or the complementary Chinese school. In other words, the teachers

and parents of these bilingual children all recognized the value of bilingualism and had a positive and affirmative attitude towards bilingual and biliteracy learning. Therefore, they were willing to actively engage and devote time to reading and sharing children's literature in both Chinese and English, and thus had relevant rich stories and experiences to share.

Following García's (2009) metaphor, I would argue that there can be a polygon figure for every bilingual individual to describe their language ability, usage, choice, achievement, and so on, because everyone's situation is different. In the same sense, English-Chinese bilingual programs, regardless of whether they are in public schools, private learning institutions, or community complementary schools, are like a common homemade dish—though the basic ingredients are the same, different families will use a different recipe depending on their preferred taste or diet. In summary, the bilingual children in this study cannot be summed up simply by their bilingual ability or usage; what is more salient is whether their parents and teachers were actively engaged in bilingual education and consciously used children's literature in their children's/students' bilingual and biliteracy development.

The English-Chinese Bilingual Program in the Canadian Context

In response to one of the goals of Canada's Multiculturalism Act, several heritage language bilingual programs—Ukrainian, German, Hebrew, Chinese, Arabic, and Spanish bilingual programs—have been initiated in Western Canadian schools (Kirova, 2012; J. Wu, 2005). The English-Chinese bilingual program, established in 1981, has become one of the largest bilingual programs among the above (J. Wu, 2005), and the term *heritage languages* has been gradually replaced by *international languages* in Canada (Duff, 2008), which “reflects the

impact of globalism on education systems in Canada, as well as significant shifts in multicultural policies and perspectives” (Tavares, 2000, p. 156).

As a representative of strong forms of bilingual education (Baker & Wright, 2021), the English-Chinese bilingual program fulfills the requirements of the provincial curriculum, and the public school board promises that “students enrolled in Chinese (Mandarin) Bilingual will receive the same high-quality education available in all of our programs” (EPSB, n.d., para. 5). At the elementary level, instruction time is 50% in Mandarin and 50% in English; at the junior high level, Mandarin instruction is 25% (250 minutes/week); and at the senior high level, instruction in Mandarin is 20% (200 minutes/week) (Edmonton Chinese Bilingual Education Association [ECBEA], 2019, para. 7). Generally, each class within the Chinese bilingual program has separate instructors teaching English and Chinese subjects. Those teaching Chinese subjects are usually native speakers of Chinese who are also proficient in English, while most of the English subject instructors are usually native English speakers, often with little or no knowledge of Chinese. According to the guidelines for recruiting language teachers (Alberta Education, 2015), although school administrators can hire staff without Alberta teaching certification to teach languages other than English, many of the Chinese teachers in the bilingual program not only hold Alberta certification but also completed their teacher training in Canada. In other words, differing from many other English-Chinese bilingual programs in North America (e.g., Mandarin Chinese dual language immersion programs in US, Sung & Tsai, 2019), many Chinese teachers in bilingual programs in Western Canada have become accustomed to and are familiar with both Canadian and Chinese cultures, teaching and learning styles, school and district policies, classroom

management, and interactions with students and parents in Canada. It is also worth noting that, with the increasing numbers of graduates from the bilingual programs growing up and devoting themselves to education, more young teachers who teach English in the bilingual programs are also able to communicate in Chinese.

Despite its long history and popularity in Western Canada, little research has been conducted on how the English-Chinese bilingual program functions or how effective it is in terms of developing English-Chinese bilingualism and biliteracy (Koh et al., 2017; Sun, 2011; J. Wu, 2005). In the Canadian context, much of the research on bilingual education has examined the outcomes of French immersion programs (e.g., Genesee & Jared, 2008; Genesee & Lindholm-Leary, 2008; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Lapkin et al., 2003; Swain & Lapkin, 1983; Turnbull et al., 2001). As Sun (2011) argued, many of the research findings with regard to French immersion bilingual programs “may not be completely applicable to a Chinese bilingual program considering the significant linguistic, cultural, and contextual difference” (p. 34). Therefore, many aspects regarding the development of English-Chinese bilingualism and biliteracy still remain to be explored.

Bilash and Wu’s (1998) study revealed that even in the same school district, bilingual programs with the same educational principles can be quite different from others due to various reasons. They compared students’ perceptions of language learning and identity in Chinese and Ukrainian bilingual programs in the same Western Canadian city. The study findings showed that, although students from both programs reported positive influences of the bilingual programs, the overall responses from Ukrainian bilingual students were more positive than those from Chinese bilingual students.

To achieve further understandings of the role that Chinese bilingual education played in students' self-esteem and cultural identity, J. Wu (2005) conducted a study in which he interviewed 14 Chinese bilingual children from a grade 6 elementary class about their experiences of speaking Chinese in Canadian society and their self-perceptions of their citizenship, ethnic identity, and multicultural thinking. The findings of this study suggest that the Chinese bilingual program empowered these minority language students. Wu pointed out that the participants' comments not only reflected the confirmative role the Chinese bilingual program played in helping them build positive attitudes towards their own language, culture, and ethnic identity, but also illustrated how the program helped the students understand multiculturalism. As one student said, "the Chinese Bilingual Program has allowed me to learn about other cultures, to respect them and to interact with other cultures" (pp. 28–29).

Correspondingly, Sun (2011) conducted an ethnographic case study to explore English-Chinese bilingual students' language and literacy practices at school and out of school in a city in Western Canada. She collected data from three grade 5 students who enrolled in the English-Chinese bilingual program, and identified three main themes as significant factors—dialogue between languages, dialogue among peers, and dialogue across places—that support these bilingual students' successful language and literacy development and positive identities as language learners. The findings of this study showed that all of the three child participants "were successfully engaging in the language and literacy practices in the two languages in and out of the school contexts" (p. 182). They were not only making progress in achieving bilingualism and biliteracy in English and Chinese but also developing positive identities as language learners. Moreover, Sun's study illuminated the importance and

strength that English-Chinese bilingual programs brought, not only to individual students' personal development, but also to "the nation as a whole by preserving the language resources of the country" (Li, as cited in Sun, 2011, p. 189). Sun further argued that if Canada truly intends to be a "multilingual country and Chinese Canadians who have relocated here over generations are to continue their positive identity in Canada, then the many possibilities of language education need to be explored" (Sun, 2011, p. 189).

In addition to the above studies on students' perspectives and practices with regard to English-Chinese bilingual programs, a recent study (Koh et al., 2017) examined the literacy outcomes of such a bilingual program in Ontario. This study compared bilingual-program students with students from Mandarin-speaking backgrounds who received English-only instruction in school and attended an out-of-school Chinese language class for 2.5-hours per week. Students' abilities in phonological awareness, vocabulary knowledge, morphological awareness, and word reading were measured. The results showed that the bilingual-program students' overall performance was comparable in all English measures to their peers in the English-only programs. In terms of the Chinese language and literacy measurement, the bilingual group scored significantly higher on the character recognition task. The researchers reported that they observed "strong, significant cross-linguistic correlations between English and Chinese language and literacy skills . . . suggest[ing] that transfer is taking place as students develop proficiency in their two languages" (Koh et al., 2017, p. 356). The study also suggested that bilingual instruction promotes literacy skills in the minority language at no cost to students' literacy development in the majority language. In fact, balanced instruction in

both the minority and majority languages is more beneficial to literacy development compared to contexts where instruction is only given in the majority language.

In sum, all of the above studies have indicated and confirmed the beneficial effects of English-Chinese bilingual programs on students' language and literacy development and construction of positive identities. Nevertheless, what kind of children's literature is used in the programs to support students' bilingual and biliteracy development in the Canadian context remains to be further explored. In addition, there is a need to explore, from both teachers' and parents' perspectives, in what ways and by using which literature resources, English-Chinese bilingual education could better meet the language development, aesthetic, and critical thinking needs of students/children. Last but not least, how to demonstrate the variety and richness of the languages and cultures through children's literature is also an important topic that needs to be discussed.

The Complementary Chinese School in the Canadian Context

The term *complementary school* is sometimes used interchangeably with *community school* or *heritage language school*. In contexts where Chinese is the minority language, complementary school usually refers to a wide variety of out-of-school programs that “give students an opportunity to develop higher levels of proficiency in their home or heritage languages” (Baker & Wright, 2021, p. 237). According to Creese et al. (2006) and Strand (2007), in the United Kingdom (UK), the term complementary school has replaced community school and supplementary school to illustrate the positive complementary function of teaching and learning between voluntary schools and mainstream schools and their potential to enhance educational achievement.

Learning Mandarin Chinese as a heritage or additional language at Chinese complementary schools has long been a tradition for many Asian Canadians across Canada. If one looks up through the internet and searches the key words “Chinese school in Canada,” one can easily find a variety of language schools, including programs established by provincial departments of education, associations sponsored by local enterprises and social organizations, and community schools that are organized by Chinese parent volunteers. However, as Baker and Wright (2021) pointed out, “heritage language schools have hitherto lacked documentation” (p. 238). The limited available studies have unpacked the phenomenon of Chinese complementary schools in the UK (e.g., Hancock, 2014, 2016; J. Huang, 2021; W. Li, 2011; Li & Wu, 2010) and in US contexts (e.g., Jia, 2008; M. Li, 2005; Liao & Lark, 2008; Liu, 2008; Song, 2018; Zhang, 2008), and most focused on individual students’ or parents’ experiences and perspectives. A few studies have explored Asian immigrants’ Chinese learning at complementary schools in Canada (Du, 2014; G. Li, 2006a; Mizuta, 2017) but still centred on individuals’ experiences of heritage language learning and maintenance rather than looking at complementary schools as an overall phenomenon.

Hancock’s (2014) study is a rare one that provided both historical and current overviews of the Chinese complementary school phenomenon in Scotland and explored it by employing Hornberger’s (2003) continua model of biliteracy as an analytical framework. The study examined the Chinese complementary school in the four dimensions of the continua model, including how prevailing education policies shaped Chinese children’s learning of Mandarin Chinese (context), how different texts were used by teachers to guide children to appreciate Chinese cultural values (content), how pedagogies sometimes deviated from

traditional ones to generate children's interest in learning Chinese literacy (media), and how children drew on their biliteracy resources to support their bilingual learning (development). Hancock concluded that complementary schooling greatly contributes to Chinese minority children's mainstream academic achievement as well as their cultural identity recognition.

However, as Hancock (2014) pointed out, "Chinese complementary schools across the globe may have common goals, motivated by a need to retain parents' heritage language and their cultural identity, but Chinese children are also influenced by their situatedness in diverse socio-political and cultural contexts" (p. 10). Complementary Chinese schools in Canada and the children who are enrolled in these schools are also influenced by their unique political, social, and cultural contexts; thus, research conducted in other regions, such as the UK and the US, may not be applicable to the situation in Canada. Hence, there is a need for research on the complementary schools specifically focusing on the Canadian context.

In her research exploring Chinese as a heritage language (CHL) in the Canadian context through the stories of Chinese Canadian parents' struggles and choices regarding their own heritage language, Mizuta (2017) outlined the long-term historical continuities of Chinese language education in a Western Canadian city. She pointed out that, despite the increasing popularity of learning Chinese and the rise of the Chinese economy, the challenges of CHL education have largely remained the same over decades. Mizuta also argued:

English monolingualism as a foundational property in Canada is the root of the problem for CHL education and Chinese language programs in public schools, not the "increasing" presence of Chinese. As long as the unmarkedness of

English today is (mis)recognized as natural and neutral, the markedness of

Chinese as social other will still remain. (p. ii)

Importantly, Mizuta's (2017) study focused on individuals' experiences of learning Chinese as a heritage language and the dynamics of history, politics, and economy capitals beyond the learning. Although most of her participants had learnt Chinese at complementary schools, the settings themselves were not the centre of the study.

Studies focusing on the complementary Chinese school phenomenon in the Canadian context are rare. Although the overall situation of the complementary school was not the centre of this study, through exploring the teachers' and parents' experiences and perspectives, I hope this study can provide an insightful glance at the complementary school as an important setting of English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context.

The Use of Children's Literature in Bilingual and Biliteracy Education

Children's literature can serve as both mirrors and windows for children. Children can see reflections of themselves and their families, as well as learn about those who are different from them, through reading and sharing children's books (Aldana, 2008; Bishop, 1990a, 1990b; Galda, 1998; Wiltse, 2015). Children who speak Chinese as their home language and children who learn Chinese as an international language in Canada need to read literature that reflects their images and is written by authors who have shared some of their life experiences (Cai, 1994; Chen & Wang, 2014; Fillmore, 1986; Qiaoya Huang & Xiaoning Chen, 2016). As the UK Bullock Report stated:

Literature brings the child into an encounter with language in its most complex and varied forms. Through these complexities are presented the thoughts,

experiences, and feelings of people who exist outside and beyond the reader's awareness. . . . [Literature] provides imaginative insights into what another person is feeling; it allows the contemplation of possible human experiences which the reader himself has not met. (as cited in Baker, 2011, p. 320)

Children's literature may be used in bilingual education both for education and recreation, for instruction and enjoyment. In the following section, I introduce some studies regarding the use of children's literature in bilingual/multilingual practices and in second language teaching. I start by defining children's literature.

The Definition of Children's Literature for This Study

Different scholars and researchers use various definitions of children's literature based on their own experiences and historical or cultural contexts, and it is difficult to reach a consensus. For instance, Harvey Darton (as cited in Hintz & Tribunella, 2019, pp. 82–83) defined children's literature as books that are specifically produced for children and designed to give them spontaneous pleasure rather than to instruct; by this definition all schoolbooks should be excluded. In contrast, Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson (1999) defined children's literature as "good-quality trade books for children from birth to adolescence, covering topics of relevance and interest to children of those ages, through prose and poetry, fiction and nonfiction" (p. 2). As Hintz and Tribunella (2019) pointed out,

the definition of children's literature is an unstable and contested one.

Ultimately, the definition one chooses at a given moment—and we must allow for the possibility of making different choices at different moments—will be determined largely by one's purpose. (p. 84)

Hence, for this study that explores the use of children's literature as a resource in English-Chinese bilingual education, the term children's literature refers not only to books that are specifically produced to give children spontaneous pleasure, but also works with instructive purposes of teaching language and literacy, such as textbooks. It is far from enough to teach or study children's literature in the limited field of *children* and *literature*; researchers need to explore children's literature within a broader field and to emphasize the interactive relationships among *children*, *adults*, and *literature*. As Nodelman (2008) argued, there is always a hidden adult behind children's literature:

The simplicity of texts of children's literature is only half the truth about them.

They also possess a shadow, an unconscious—a more complex and more complete understanding of the world and people that remains unspoken beyond the simple surface but provides that simple surface with its comprehensibility.

(p. 206)

Therefore, it is also important to explore the role of children's literature in English-Chinese bilingual education from the adults' perspectives, including the classroom teachers and parents who review, select, and teach children's literature.

Children's Literature as a Resource in Bilingual/Multilingual Pedagogical Practices

Children's literature is commonly used as an important resource in pedagogical practices to help children develop language and literacy proficiency and to foster their cultural awareness (Cunningham & Zibulsky, 2010; Jin, 2015; Kiefer, 2010; Leland et al., 2013; Naqvi et al., 2012; Paley, 1997; Pantaleo, 2008; Qiaoya Huang & Xiaoning Chen, 2016; Zou, 2022).

Literature-based instruction has long been used in teaching English language arts (Becker,

2020; Peterson & Swartz, 2008; Raphael & Au, 1998; Yopp & Yopp, 2010). In bilingual/multilingual education, literature-based approaches have been advocated by significant numbers of educators and researchers (Bird & Alvarez, 1987; Hadaway et al., 2002; Martinez-Roldán & Newcomer, 2011; Opitz, 1999; Samway et al., 1991; Schwinge, 2003; Sullivan, 1994; Urzúa, 1992; Zapata et al., 2015) because such approaches can increase students' linguistic competence and further both their cultural understanding and analytical thinking skills. According to Giddings (1992), the use of children's literature, rather than fragmented language or language constructed for instructional purposes, is the core of literature-based approaches. Moreover, children's motivation to read, and to read independently and enjoyably, is more likely to be enhanced by texts that have friendly and relevant cultural meanings (Baker, 2011), and such texts could be easily enacted through children's literature.

Several studies have indicated the positive role that children's literature plays in language acquisition and literacy development. In her dissertation *Children's Literature as a Tool for Teaching Second Language to Adolescents*, Sullivan (1994) employed quantitative research method in terms of using questionnaires and demographic surveys to examine "whether children's picture books would be an academically useful and student-accepted tool for reinforcing the teaching of second language to adolescents" (n.p.). As a conclusion, Sullivan suggested that adolescent students from a variety of ethnic backgrounds at the three academic levels of foreign language traditionally found in high schools would be accepting of the use of children's literature in the adolescent classroom and would benefit academically from the experience. In other words, the use of children's literature is positively related to

second language acquisition. Coincidentally, Schwinge's (2003) dissertation *Making Connections Between Languages, Between Cultures, Between Texts: Intertextuality in Bilingual Elementary School Read-Alouds*, in which she examined "the characteristics of the literacy event of picture book read-aloud in a second grade bilingual classroom" (p. vi), also indicated that children's literature could be a useful resource in bilingual classrooms in terms of establishing curricular coherence and explicitly helping students learn to make appropriate intertextual connections. In their separate studies on literature study circles, an approach that emphasizes reading and discussing unabridged and unexcerpted children's literature, Samway et al. (1991) and Urzúa (1992) both indicated that such a literature-based approach, together with quality children's literature, can help students build their literary repertoires and become engaged learners who are motivated to read, listen, and discuss, regardless of their language and cultural backgrounds. Similarly, for ESL students, learning through children's literature, trade books, magazines, and other media beyond the standard texts in the students' native language and English provides rich oral language experiences that result in well-developed vocabularies, promote conceptual understanding, and expand the knowledge of language structures (Hadaway et al., 2002). In like vein, Zapata et al. (2015) helped their ESL students creatively compose with diverse materials and linguistic varieties by making bilingual picture books, through which the students' cross-language use was fulfilled.

Many more researchers have investigated the positive role of children's literature on cultural aspects. For example, In the article "Cultural Diversity + Supportive Text = Perfect Books for Beginning Readers," Opitz (1999) articulated his opinion directly through the title, that is, books that represent children's cultural heritage not only help them with language

acquisition but also provide children with opportunities to learn about similarities and differences among people and to consider different points of view. Similarly, Mendoza and Reese (2001) discussed the possibilities and the pitfalls involved in selecting multicultural literature for use with young children, and indicated that multicultural picture books allow young children opportunities to develop their understanding of others, while affirming children of diverse backgrounds. Wiltse (2015) considered issues of resonance and representation in children's literature, especially in picture books that reflected Indigenous cultures. Taliaferro (2009) was concerned with how picture books can be used to expand adolescents' imaginations in order to develop empathy for characters whose lives are different from their own. Hadaway and Young (2009) examined 19 children's books published in the last 20 years that address the linguistic and cultural adjustments of learning English as part of the transition to a new home in the US. They indicated that children's picture books can help teachers and monolingual peers become more aware of English learners' adjustments. In sum, increasing numbers of researchers emphasize the need to understand the interdependence of all people in a global culture and the urgent need for peace and understanding. Children's literature is one vehicle through which teachers can support and encourage cultural respect and understanding among children.

In spite of the value of children's literature that has been advocated in many bilingual/multilingual and second language teaching practices, little research has been done on how children's literature is being used in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context. Current research regarding the use of children's books for bilingual children is primarily about how these books functioned or were selected in out-of-school

settings or in home literacy practices. Hu, Liu, et al. (2018), for example, examined three preschool English-Chinese bilingual children's meaning-making and storytelling development in both Chinese and English through five wordless picture books used in home settings. In relation to bilingual development and second language learning, their study results suggest that wordless picture books may be a good tool to use with English language learners to elicit oral language production because, "with the absence of print, readers, especially English language learners and struggling readers, may feel motivated and more confident when reading them" (p. 232). Then, the authors suggested, teachers can transcribe and use the oral production as the basis for other literacy practices such as reading and writing. They also suggested that when language learning occurs in an open environment where bilingual students can freely use both languages interchangeably and their use of the home language is respected and supported by the teachers, they are able to achieve better meaning making and more detailed storytelling.

Also investigating Chinese bilingual children's reading of anglophone picture books, Zou's study (2022) focused on the patterns of foreign language parent-child shared reading and the factors that may result in and impact such patterns. Her findings revealed that Chinese parents tended to choose books based on the potential linguistic, literacy, and educational values over children's reading for pleasure or consolidating the parent-child bond. Nevertheless, the data also indicate that children showed their agency through book selection. Although book choice overall was still a didactic process, the different tendencies regarding book selection between parents and children had space to be negotiated and resolved. In brief,

this study demonstrated some home reading characteristics of Chinese bilingual children living abroad but did not put much attention on their bilingual and biliteracy development.

In terms of the use of English-Chinese bilingual children's literature in bilingual and biliteracy development, Hu, Chen, et al. (2012) designed an eight-week study session to explore how five Chinese first graders responded to the books selected for the study. The study was conducted in one of the authors' living room areas, which had been redecorated as a learning room that differed from the participants' traditional Chinese classroom settings. All the child participants were Chinese, spoke Mandarin Chinese as their native language, and were learning English as second language in schools and complementary English classes. Four English-Chinese bilingual children's books were selected due to their qualities of being culturally relevant and close to the children's lives (and thus would easily simulate their conversation, creativity and imagination). The results showed that all the child participants responded positively to the bilingual books. Their responses included becoming engaged with various book-related activities; making text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections; activating cultural and background knowledge within book discussions to facilitate comprehension; and showing previously unnoticed talents such as rich retelling and creative writing skills. The authors also highlighted the positive impact of the use of bilingual children's books on the child participants' language and literacy development in both English and Chinese. The development in English included increased vocabulary, the development of invented spelling, and the use of graphophonic cues in reading, while the development in Chinese was primarily reflected in the language the children used during their oral storytelling, such as longer stories and more complex, attractive, and creative story plots. It is

also worth pointing out that some parents reported that their children began to enjoy writing with Pinyin, the official romanization system for Standard Chinese, by being inspired by the invented spelling in English they had learned from the bilingual book study session, which suggests a positive transfer between the two languages. In sum, the study findings indicate that bilingual children's literature, along with appropriate instruction, can be an enjoyable and powerful resource to promote children's bilingual and biliteracy development.

In their respective studies on English-Chinese bilingual children's language and literacy practices, Sun (2011) and Hsu (2012) both mentioned the important role that children's literature plays in the participants' language and literacy development, including the use of Chinese and English children's books in family shared readings and advanced Chinese learners' independent readings. Although it was not the focus of their studies, Sun (2011) and Hsu (2012) both concluded that the use of children's literature can promote interest and engagement in language learning or maintenance and work to strengthen family ties and cultural identities.

To sum up, the parts of the above studies that related to the use of children's literature primarily centred on the participants' home settings and parents' and children's perspectives. How children's literature functions in school settings, especially in English-Chinese bilingual programs and complementary Chinese schools, still remains to be explored. For teachers who teach Chinese or English languages in bilingual programs and complementary schools, what kind of children's literature do they usually use in their daily teaching? For parents who have enrolled their children in bilingual programs or complementary schools, what kind of children's literature do they most often choose for their children to read? How do

teachers'/parents' experiences and perspectives with children's literature impact their use of children's literature with their bilingual students/children? In what ways do teachers and parents use children's literature to support children's bilingual and biliteracy development? How do teachers and parents review and select children's literature for their bilingual students/children? What suggestions and challenges might they have with regard to the use of children's literature in the bilingual education? As Freeman (2007) pointed out, "it is important for bilingual education researchers to go beyond general discussions of *what* bilingual education means to investigate *how* and *why* actual bilingual programs function the way that they do in specific social and historical locations" (p. 3, emphasis in original). I hope this study answers some of the above questions and addresses some of the gaps in the field of English-Chinese bilingual education. In the next chapter, I elaborate the methodology of this research, including the study design, the process of conducting the research, brief portraits of each participant, data collection and analysis, and the amendments I made to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This study was underpinned by the qualitative research paradigm and employed interpretive case study and interpretive inquiry as the methodological frameworks. According to Merriam (1998), “*qualitative research* is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible” (p. 5, italics in original). My study falls under the umbrella of qualitative research and the social constructivism paradigm because, first, its intention is to gain an in-depth understanding of the use of children’s literature in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context, which is a specific socially and culturally constructed environment. Second, as a children’s literature researcher and as a parent whose child is enrolled in an English-Chinese bilingual program, I examined and reflected my own perceptions and stance in relation to this study. Third, although I was unable to physically go to the settings as initially planned because of the COVID-19 pandemic, I endeavoured to have as rich conversations as I could by expanding the scope of participants and collecting diverse artifacts to gain a thorough understanding. Fourth, the data was collected and analyzed in an inductive way. Last, the study’s findings are presented in a richly descriptive way.

Although interpretive case study and interpretive inquiry are two different methodologies, they are both in line with constructivism and the qualitative research paradigm. Stake (1995) suggested that when conducting qualitative research, researchers could “use issues as conceptual structure in order to force attention to complexity and contextuality . . . because issues draw us toward observing, even teasing out, the problems of the case, the conflictual outpourings, the complex backgrounds of human concern” (pp. 16–

17). The conceptual structure of this study was driven by the research questions. I explored both the children's literature texts used in English-Chinese bilingual education and teachers' and parents' experiences and perspectives. The data includes both a close look at the collected children's literature and open-ended interviews with participants; therefore, a single methodology was not sufficient to address the different types of research questions and data. In my view, interpretive case study and interpretive inquiry complement each other, and combining the two methodologies was beneficial to analyze the data and address my research inquiry. Hence, I employed interpretive case study (Merriam, 1998) for the first research question to analyze the types and characteristics of the collected children's literature. For the second and third research questions, I used interpretive inquiry (Ellis, 1998a, 1998b) to analyze the interview data in exploring the various roles children's literature plays in English-Chinese bilingual children's language and literacy development, as well as how teachers'/parents' experiences and perspectives might impact their use of children's literature in bilingual education.

In this methodology section, I first define interpretive case study and interpretive inquiry within the social constructivism paradigm. Second, I elaborate on the participant recruitment criteria and procedures and the challenges I encountered during the process due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Next, I reflect on my stance as a researcher. Then I describe my process of data collection and the amendments I made to my research plan in following the public health protocols, and I describe the data analysis, which was informed by hermeneutic philosophy. Last, I explain the ethical considerations and possible limitations of this study.

Interpretive Case Study

According to Merriam's (1988) definition, "a qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit" (p. xiv). More specifically, the case is:

a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries. I can "fence in" what I am going to study. The case then, could be a single person who is a case example of some phenomenon, a program, a group, an institution, a community, or a specific policy. (Merriam, 2014, p. 40)

In this sense, the case of my study can be identified as the children's literature used by teachers and parents for English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context.

Merriam (1998) further categorized case studies into descriptive case study, interpretive case study, and evaluative case study based on the overall intent. The research findings gained from this study emerged from the data as I used an inductive approach to better understand the use of children's literature in English-Chinese bilingual education; thus the study can be defined as an interpretive case study. Not only does this study contain rich and thick descriptions in terms of the category criteria, features, and trends of the collected children's literature that is being used in the two English-Chinese bilingual education settings, but I used this descriptive data to develop conceptual categories regarding the potential that children's literature might have in students'/children's language and literacy development, and to illustrate, support, or even challenge previous theoretical assumptions in bilingual and biliteracy development. In addition, because this study analyzes and interprets the use of

children's literature in a specific English-Chinese bilingual context, it also resonates with analytical characteristics of interpretive case study (Merriam, 1998).

Interpretive case study is in line with constructivism. Social constructivism argues that reality about education phenomena "should never be labeled as objective since the voices of researchers and participants are biased and seated in different cultural experiences and identities" (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 41). This study was inspired by my own experience of being a parent who has engaged in bilingual education and is an advocate of children's literature. Based on my personal perspective and curiosity, one intention of this study was to explore how other teachers and parents involved in English-Chinese bilingual education were using children's literature in their pedagogical practices. In addition, I wanted to learn about other teachers' and parents' perceptions and the challenges they may have encountered in using children's literature in bilingual education through analyzing both interviews and the children's literature titles they provided to me. In doing so, I developed a "collaborative dialogue" (Patton, 2002; Ponterotto, 2005) between myself as researcher and the participants that was based on our respective experiences and identities in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the use of children's literature in English-Chinese bilingual education.

I chose interpretive case study as a method because it can "investigate and report the real-life, complex dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships and other factors in a unique instance" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 289). In other words, case study with an interpretive emphasis can offer a deep, rich, and personal exploration of participants' feelings, opinions, experiences, and reflections. I primarily used interpretive case study design to look at the first research question: What kind of children's literature is being used in

English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context? My focus was to demonstrate the features and trends of the collected children's literature titles and to understand the participants' intentions, expectations, and experiences in using these texts. The understanding is also a result of my constant reflection and interpretation regarding the use of children's literature in bilingual education throughout the study.

Interpretive Inquiry

According to Patterson and Williams (2002), "research methodology should fit the nature of the phenomenon being investigated and the questions being asked and the credibility of research should not be inferred separate from its reading" (p. 36). My exploration of the use of children's literature in English-Chinese bilingual education was inspired by my personal experiences and driven by other teachers' and parents' relevant experiences, which is in line with the nature of interpretive inquiry because "the process of interpretation is . . . the transformation of self-understanding" (Jardine, 1998, p. 49). As a parent whose child is enrolled in an English-Chinese bilingual program, and as an advocate for and researcher of children's literature, what I am trying to understand is not only how such experience has changed who I am and what I understand myself to be, but also "to evoke in readers a new way of understanding themselves and the lives they are living" so that we might understand "who we are differently, more deeply, more richly" (Jardine, 1998, p. 50).

Interpretive inquiry is rooted within hermeneutics and associated with the social constructivism paradigm. Building on Gadamer's seminal work on philosophical hermeneutics, *Truth and Method* (1989), Ellis (1998a) asserted that "we can relinquish any fear that we will somehow miss finding 'objective reality.' Nor is a uniquely correct

interpretation possible since perception is interpretation and each person perceives from a different vantage point and history” (p. 8). Positioning this study in the social constructivism paradigm requires me, as the researcher, to actively analyze and interpret the collected children’s literature titles and interview data and construct meaning. This construction of meaning is not objective because “researchers cannot ‘bracket’ their preconceptions, nor can they truly empathize with another’s experience” (Patterson & William, 2002, p. 12). By conducting this study, I interpreted and coconstructed the meaning of using children’s literature with the participants, who were also involved in English-Chinese bilingual education. Furthermore, Ellis (1998a) stated that research done in the manner of interpretive inquiry “may not necessarily provide the final answer to a question or a complete solution to a problem; rather it opens up promising directions for further inquiry or efforts” (p. 10). The second and third research questions of this study aim at exploring the roles children’s literature plays in English-Chinese bilingual children’s language and literacy development from their teachers’ and parents’ perspectives and to understand how teachers’ and parents’ experiences with and perspectives on children’s literature might impact their practices in using children’s literature in bilingual education. In other words, the purpose is not to provide an ultimate solution or guide to using children’s literature in bilingual education, but “to think more fruitfully than we could before in our efforts to gain wisdom or find helpful approaches to difficult problems” (Ellis, 1998a, p. 10).

Ellis (1998b) outlined three central themes in hermeneutics: (1) “the inherently creative character of interpretation” (p. 15); (2) the back-forth, part-whole relationship; and (3) “the pivotal role of language in human understanding” (p. 16). As I reflected on these

themes in terms of my own research methodology, I saw them as interrelated and interwoven throughout the flow of activities involved in the interpretive process. First, in interpretive inquiry the researcher works creatively and holistically “in an effort to discern the intent or meaning behind another’s expression” (Ellis, 1998b, p. 15). In other words, to creatively interpret the participants’ experiences and perspectives, the researcher must draw on their beliefs, intuition, and everything they have experienced, sensed, or know, while “be[ing] committed to learning what the participant means by his or her expression [and being] committed to learning about the wholeness and complexity of his or her experience” (Ellis, 2006, p. 115). To achieve this, I used pre-interview activities (PIAs) to better get to know the participants, and then creatively constructed the meaning of the participants’ experiences from the interviews as well as my own experience and perspective. I included the section “Portraits of Participants” at the beginning of Chapter 5 to provide the reader with an introduction to who these people are as teachers and parents engaging in bilingual education, and to provide a foundational and holistic view on my interpretation of the data.

The second hermeneutical theme, “playing back and forth between the specific and the general, the micro and the macro” (Smith, 1991, p. 190) centres on how to interpret research data effectively and holistically. In brief, the researcher needs to consider both the whole and individual parts of the study to understand and construct meanings; when the data collection is completed, the end results are not viewed as the sum of parts but rather the fusing together of parts into a whole. I used the *hermeneutic circle* (Figure 4) as a conceptualized tool to demonstrate my back-and-forth movements in the process of interpreting the research data. I

elaborate the hermeneutic circle and the whole-part relationship in the section “Interview Data Analysis” to explain how I interpreted the interview data in this study.

Ellis (1998b) highlighted the key role of language as the third theme of hermeneutics; in Smith’s (1991) words, language “both encourages and constrains a person’s understanding” (p. 190). As Ellis (2006) pointed out, “because language is such a significant element in the construction of understanding, it is important for researchers to give careful attention to the language used by themselves and by participants in their research” (p. 117). For this study, not only was the children’s literature being examined presented in two different languages, but also the participants came from various language and cultural backgrounds; therefore, a deep attentiveness to language—and the influencing role of culture embedded in the language the participants use—is essential. Throughout this study I was especially careful and sensitive to the idea that not all the participants expressed the same notions or terms using the same words, or vice versa, that the same words they used did not necessarily convey the same meaning. Inspired by Ellis’s (2006) suggestion to pay attention to the use of language in research, I used open-ended questions and invited the participants to share stories about their experiences that were relevant to the concept under discussion rather than introducing language “that may not reflect their most salient ideas or most common forms of everyday sense-making” (p. 117). In addition, I paid close attention to the issue of translation in interviews; I elaborate this in the section “Translation of Interview Data.”

Participant Recruitment and Research Sites

As I mentioned in the introductory chapter, this research was postponed and amended several times due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead of conducting the field research in a school as

initially planned, I collected all the data via remote ways; this inevitably affected the data collection. To ameliorate the gap, I expanded the scope of participants from teachers and librarians in the English-Chinese bilingual program in one public school to teachers and parents in the broader bilingual education context. In summary, I invited three teacher participants and three parent participants who were knowledgeable in regard to using children's literature in their students'/children's bilingual education and who thus could provide in-depth opinions and related rich experiences. In the course of data collection and analysis, I also included various stories regarding the challenges teachers and parents encountered during the pandemic, as well as the efforts they made for their students'/children's bilingual education in general and for using children's literature in particular.

The participant recruitment for this study was twofold. First, to recruit teacher participants, I went through the Cooperative Activities Program in the Faculty of Education of the University of Alberta to obtain permission from the Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB) to conduct the research. I was given contact information by the EPSB of several schools to recruit potential participants. Eventually, I recruited two teacher participants who had related experience working in the English-Chinese bilingual program. Second, through my personal network I recruited one teacher participant who had worked for a complementary Chinese school and three parent participants who had actively engaged in English-Chinese bilingual education. All the participants were given the information letter (Appendix A) to understand the purpose and procedures of the study. All the participants signed the consent form (Appendix B) before participating in the study. For the participants who also provided

their children’s artifacts regarding bilingual education, assent was obtained from their children before the artifacts were collected and used in the study (see Appendix C for the assent form). I created a chart (Table 2) to concisely display information about the participants to facilitate the reader to better understand the research analysis and findings. All the names for participants are pseudonyms.

Table 2. Background Information of Participants Related to the Use of Children’s Literature in Bilingual Education

		Types of bilingual program they teach/their child(ren) enrolled in	Primary place spending childhood/receiving pre-college education	The languages of the children’s literature that is primarily used in reading to/with students/children
Teacher participants	Anne	Bilingual program in public schools	Canada	English
	Faye	Chinese complementary schools	China	Mandarin Chinese
	Jenny	Bilingual program in public schools	China	Mandarin Chinese
Parent participants	Chloe	Bilingual program in public schools	Canada	English/Cantonese
	Jack	Bilingual program in public schools	China	Mandarin Chinese
	Shelly	Chinese complementary schools	China	Mandarin Chinese

The sampling strategy used in this study was *purposive* (Chein, 1981) or *purposeful* (Patton, 1980). According to Merriam (1988), “purposive sampling is based on the

assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore, one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most” (p. 69). I noted in my initial proposal that I planned to invite teachers and teacher-librarians who had been working in a public school’s English-Chinese bilingual program for a while to explore their experiences and perspectives on the use of children’s literature in the classroom and in the school. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it became impossible for me to visit a specific bilingual program in person and invite potential participants who worked in the same school. Alternatively, I expanded the participant scope to teachers who were working in, or had worked in, various bilingual contexts, including English-Chinese bilingual programs of public schools and complementary Chinese schools. In other words, there were two research sites for this study; one was the English-Chinese bilingual programs implemented in public schools in Western Canada, while the other was a specific complementary Chinese school. It should be noted that the Chinese complementary school I regarded as one of the research sites cannot be simply categorized as a traditional heritage language school. First, this complementary school is newly established, and its aim is to provide extracurricular courses in addition to teaching Mandarin Chinese language in order to improve children’s educational achievement. Second, because of its emphasis on the complementary function, the complementary school employs relatively strict requirements in recruiting teachers. The teachers are not only asked to have related professional knowledge but are also required to master pedagogical skills. Third, the parents’ attitude toward learning in the complementary school is different from that in more traditional heritage language schools. For many parents who register their children in this complementary school, learning Mandarin Chinese is not only a way to maintain heritage

language and culture but, more importantly, is an investment in their children's future in terms of the increasing social-economic capital embedded in the Chinese language. Moreover, due to the public health protocols during the pandemic, I was not able to conduct participant observation in schools and collect supportive materials such as photos of the school library or students' artifacts as initially planned, which meant there would be a large degree of missing data for the study. To lessen the gap, I recruited parent participants who were willing to share both their related experiences and their children's artifacts in order to create a more comprehensive picture regarding the use of children's literature in bilingual education.

Researcher Stance

Denzin and Lincoln (2002) pointed out that "all research is interpretive; it is guided by the researcher's set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied" (p. 22). Due to the social constructivist theoretical orientation this study is based on, as a researcher, I must participate in the research process with my subjects to ensure I am producing knowledge that reflects not only the participants' but my own realities (Lincoln et al., 2011). In other words, my own ontological, epistemological, and methodological beliefs as well as my personal experiences and perspectives all shaped and influenced my approach to data collection and interpretation of the meaning of the use of children's literature in bilingual education.

In this sense, my own bias will be inevitable in doing this study. Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggested that "the best cure for biases is to be aware of how they slant and shape what we hear, how they interface with our reproduction of the speaker's reality, and how they transfigure truth into falsity" (p. 148). By reflecting on my own possible biases prior to,

during, and after conducting this study, I have expected that the findings, discussion, and implications are inevitably affected by a number of factors, such as my language and cultural background, my experience of being a parent and a Chinese teacher, and my points of view regarding bilingual and biliteracy education. Within the interpretive framework, I became conscious of my influencing role as key instrument, mediator, and interpreter of what I observed and heard during this research.

As a researcher, I am shaped by my lived experience as a children's literature advocate, a Mandarin Chinese teacher, and a parent who is curious and cares about and supports children's bilingual and biliteracy development; these experiences will come out in the knowledge I generate as a researcher and in the data generated by my subjects. As Gadamer (as cited by Patterson & Williams, 2002) argued, the process of interpreting research data is like "the fusion of two horizons of meaning (the horizon of the author of the text [actor] and the horizon of the reader [researcher]), both of which play a constitutive role in the development of understanding" (p. 22). Moreover, according to Ellis (1998a), our horizons "continually change because of our contact with the horizons of others . . . a fusion of horizons takes the form of broadening one's own horizon through 'a dialogical encounter of questions and answers'" (p. 8). Guba (1990) also weighed in on this idea, writing that "inquirer and inquired into are fused into a single entity" (p. 27). Accordingly, the findings, discussions, and implications of this study are naturally and literally the fusion of my horizons as a researcher and the participants' horizons.

I employed Gadamer's hermeneutic notion of fusion of horizons as a reflexivity tool to address my researcher stance in this study. When I began the study, I was reminded of my

previous experience as a Mandarin Chinese teacher who advocated for the use of children's literature in language and literacy education. I was aware that the aspects that have shaped my bias, or my horizon, included but were not limited to my knowledge and perceptions of children's literature, my promising experience in using children's literature with children, and my recognition of the benefits of bilingual education. However, I was also aware that not every bilingual teacher shared the same experiences, perspective, and positive attitude as mine regarding the use of children's literature in bilingual education. The horizon of every teacher participant plays an essential role in developing an understanding of the use of children's literature in bilingual education. I needed to fuse my horizon with their horizons rather than entrenching my own horizon or judging others' horizons in order to develop a new and coconstructed understanding. Moreover, because two of the teacher participants were recruited through EPSB's Cooperative Activities Program and I did not know the two teachers before conducting the study, I reminded myself to strengthen my sensitivity of what it means to be open with another person and to build a relationship of ongoing mutual trust. Ely et al. (1997) reminded me that "this call for trust enters into all the stages of a research process in which the researcher is the chief instrument" (p. 277).

I also saw my role not as static but as constantly changing as I responded to different participants. When conducting interviews with parent participants, I reflected on my experience as a parent who had encountered similar or different challenges in using children's literature with bilingual children. In doing so, I gained a clearer understanding of some of the similarities and differences in my role as an outside researcher who was also a parent and who wanted to learn about another parent's experience and perspective. Correspondingly, through

the eyes of a researcher, I saw different things than I saw through the eyes of a parent and I interpreted what I saw differently. Once again, I was aware that both the parent's and researcher's horizons are equally important, and that my interpretations were informed by both the parent participants' and my own experiences, perceptions, and different kinds of knowledge to form a new horizon.

Data Collection

In a qualitative case study, the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection (Merriam, 2014). In other words, my eyes and ears and other senses are the basic tools for collecting data (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). The types of qualitative data vary and include but are not limited to texts, sound recordings, images, and texture samples (Creswell, 2011). In terms of data collection methods, as Merriam (1988) stated, there is no particular method for data collection or data analysis when conducting a case study, and this is one of the major strengths of case study research because it gives researchers the opportunity to use multiple methods of data collection.

The flexibility of data collection in qualitative case study is indeed reflected through my three amendments of this study. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I was unable to collect the data as initially planned. First, I had to cancel participation observations because physically visiting school sites was restricted and observing online classrooms or home settings was challenging for both researcher and participants. Second, instead of observing the book collections and writing contextual field notes myself, I asked the participants to send me a list of book titles and/or photos of books that they often use with their bilingual students/children. Moreover, as collecting student's works via online platforms was too

complicated and made most teacher participants feel uncomfortable, I instead asked for consent from both parent participants and their children to collect relevant artifacts in order to provide supportive and intuitive evidence for this study. The pre-interview activities (PIAs) and open-ended interviews took place via Google Meet or Zoom instead of in person. I recorded the interviews locally on my laptop computer, and I disabled cloud syncing until the recordings were removed from the device. The cloud recording service of Google Meet or Zoom was not used; therefore, the platforms do not retain any recording of the interviews. The Google Meet server is located in the United States, and the Zoom server is located in Canada. In the following section, I briefly describe each of the data collection methods for this study.

Document Collection

According to Merriam (1998), the term *document* is an “umbrella term to refer to a wide range of written, visual, and physical material relevant to the study at hand” (p. 112).

LeCompte and Preissle’s (1993) definition of artifacts— “symbolic materials such as writing and signs and nonsymbolic materials such as tools and furnishings” (p. 216)—is also included in the broad term of document.

For this study, the documents I collected and examined can be divided into two parts. The first part is the children’s literature that was collected by the teacher and parent participants, including physical children’s books and online children’s literature resources. Because the research design was amended from in-person to remote ways, to know what kinds of children’s literature the participants often use, I could only ask them to send me a book list and/or online links to children’s literature resource they used, or to take photos of the

book covers they often use and/or their bookshelves. Despite all the inconvenience, I managed to collect abundant data. The detailed protocols are described in Chapter 5 in the section “The Types of Collected Children’s Literature.”

The second part of the document collection was “personal documents” (Merriam, 1998)—artifacts produced by the teachers, the parents, and the bilingual children when selecting and using children’s literature, for example, writing or drawing responses to a book, book lists, or photos of favourite books. The purpose of collecting these personal documents was to provide further insight into how the teachers and parents used children’s literature in their daily pedagogical practice, how this use may have been impacted by their experiences and perspectives on children’s literature, and how their choices and use of children’s literature may have influenced their students’/children’s bilingual and biliteracy development.

In qualitative case studies, as Glaser and Strauss (1967) described, using documentary material as data is like being

surrounded by voices begging to be heard. Every book, every magazine article, represents at least one person who is equivalent to the anthropologist’s informant or the sociologist’s interviewee. In those publications, people converse, announce positions, argue with a range of eloquence, and describe events or scenes in ways entirely comparable to what is seen and heard during fieldwork. (p. 163)

The children’s literature titles and the personal artifacts that were collected and examined in this study are like a myriad of voices speaking of their specific historical, social, and cultural contexts. Hence, by collecting relevant data of the children’s literature resources

used in bilingual education, together with the artifacts derived from the use of those resources, a panorama can unfold of the use of children's literature in English-Chinese bilingual education.

As Merriam (1998) pointed out, there are both limitations and strengths in using documents as research data. First and foremost, documents are not produced for research purposes; therefore, "some ingenuity is needed in locating documents that bear on the problem and then in analyzing their content" (Merriam, 1998, p. 133). In other words, when using documents as research data, congruence between the documents and the research inquiries depends on the researcher's flexibility in constructing the problem and the related questions. In addition, understanding how to locate and analyze potential documents is essential to the success of the study and also requires ingenuity on the part of the researcher. Nevertheless, as Merriam (1998) argued, such a researcher's stance is particularly fitting in qualitative studies, because the very nature of qualitative research is that it is "emergent in design and inductive in analysis" (p. 133).

Despite the limitations, documents are a good source of data for numerous reasons, including easy accessibility, the potential to yield better or more data, stability, and grounding in the context under study. In the pandemic and post-pandemic era when most in-person research methods are impracticable, including documents as research data is an alternative way to conduct qualitative research. Moreover, as Merriam (1998) explained:

the data found in documents can be used in the same manner as data from interviews or observations. The data can furnish descriptive information, verify

emerging hypotheses, advance new categories and hypotheses, offer historical understanding, track change and development, and so on. (p. 126)

In summary, “documents of all types can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem” (Merriam, 1998, p. 133). For this study that explored the use of children’s literature in English-Chinese bilingual education, documentary material was essential for demonstrating what kind of children’s literature was being used and exploring how it was being used. By collecting and analyzing relevant documents in an appropriate way, in addition to conducting open-ended interviews, a deeper and more comprehensive understanding regarding the research inquiries was gained.

Pre-Interview Activities and Open-Ended Interviews

Pre-interview activities (PIAs) may consist of drawings or diagrams that participants complete to represent ideas or experiences related to the research topics (Ellis, 2006; Ellis et al., 2013). The benefits of using PIAs include but are not limited to (1) enabling researchers to reframe or reconsider the research questions or interview process; (2) helping researchers to have the participant recall past events from over a long period of time when there is a need; and (3) leading participants to identifying central ideas in their experiences (Ellis et al., 2013).

For this study, I designed two groups of PIAs (see Appendices D and E) and sent them to the participants prior to our interviews. The first group of PIAs asked the participants to use drawings or diagrams to demonstrate their lives and backgrounds in general. The second group of PIAs was directly related to the specific research topic. The participants were invited to select the activities they were interested in and complete them before the interviews. The

responses to the selected PIAs then became the opening remarks of the interview between the participants and me as the researcher. It is worth pointing out that the concept of PIAs was fresh to all the participants, yet each of them cooperated very well. Some participants particularly expressed their appreciation of the PIAs to me and said these activities were not only intriguing but also very helpful to evoke their memories. As a researcher, I also found that the PIAs functioned well as an icebreaker, especially because the participants and I were not familiar with each other prior to the study. As a result of using PIAs, richer data was generated from the subsequent open-ended interviews.

Open-ended interviews with the participants were conducted after the sharing of PIAs. According to Brenner (2006), the intent of open-ended interviews is “to understand informants on their own terms and how they make meaning of their own lives, experiences, and cognitive processes” (p. 357). Employing open-ended interviews in a qualitative case study not only “takes advantage of the format by asking informants how and what questions that cue informants to give their perspective in their own words” (Brenner, 2006, p. 363), but also gives the opportunity “to an interviewer to extend and clarify an informant’s responses through probing” (p. 364).

What also needs to be pointed out is that the open-ended interview involves “an interactional relationship [and] both informant and interviewer are engaged in an ongoing process of making meaning” (Brenner, 2006, p. 357). As Weber (1986) argued, asking someone to participate in an interview is, in a sense, to invite the participant to have a conversation with the interviewer because,

through dialogue, the interview becomes a joint reflection on a phenomenon, a deepening of experience for both interviewer and participant. It becomes a conversational relation between two people, one in which they come to learn as much about each other as they learn about whatever is the topic of conversation. (p. 66)

Therefore, in addition to identifying topics, stories, key ideas, and themes from what the participants expressed in the interviews, I also constantly reflected upon how my stance and perspective had influenced or coconstructed the interviews.

The open-ended interviews were framed by following the interview structure that was outlined by Brenner (2006) and Ellis et al. (2013). Specifically, each interview began with grand tour questions (Brenner, 2006; Ellis et al., 2013) through which I was able to get to know my participant in a more holistic way. Then I moved forward with mini-tour questions (Ellis et al., 2013) to gain more specific perceptions and perspectives with regard to the use of children's literature in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context. The interview questions designed for the teacher and parent participants were slightly different. The questions for the teachers were more focused on their daily teaching experience in their bilingual context, while the ones for parents were more focused on their parenting experiences with bilingual children. For the detailed interview questions, please see Appendix D and Appendix E.

As previously mentioned, all the interviews in this study were amended from in-person to online via Google Meet or Zoom platforms due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I interviewed each participant, and each interview took between about 70 and 120 minutes,

which was slightly longer than I had expected. The primary reason was that, as the interview carried on, many of the participants realized that they rarely had time and space to express their thoughts, feelings, struggles, and challenges regarding bilingual education and children's literature; therefore, they relished this opportunity and wanted to talk more. I deeply appreciated the openness and sharing of each participant, and their stories inspired me in different ways as both a parent and a researcher in bilingual education. I need to note that I had additional communication with some of the participants via email after our interview to clarify particular information and meanings they provided in the interview and to obtain the photos or images of the children's literature they mentioned. In addition, because of the participants' different preferences in language use, I invited them to use whichever language they were comfortable with to complete the PIAs and interviews. For the participants who chose to use Mandarin Chinese or a mix of Chinese and English, I first transcribed the data in Chinese and then translated it into English.

Data Analysis

The theoretical framework of this study is underpinned by social constructivism (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Hays & Singh, 2012; Lincoln et al., 2011), sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), and a sociocultural perspective on literacy (Gee, 1996; Kress, 2000; New London Group, 1996; Perry, 2012; Street, 1984; Unrau & Alvermann, 2013). Given this framework, the processes and products of data analysis should be focused on understanding the meaning and significance of experiences for individuals or groups as they live their lives in the specific historical, social, and cultural environment (Jardine, 1992; Patterson & Williams, 2002). Therefore, I chose to use hermeneutics as a guiding framework for data

analysis because “hermeneutics advocates a constructivist perspective in which data are viewed as ‘a situated construction of social networks, a textually produced phenomenon rather than an entity with an existence independent of our practices of representation’” (Patterson & Williams, 2002, p. 24).

In qualitative research, the processes of data collection and analysis are recursive and dynamic, and should occur simultaneously (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Merriam, 1998; Patterson & Williams, 2002). That is, researchers do not wait until all the data is collected but rather begin analysis when the first text is collected and search for themes that can be used to guide future research. Specifically, the data analysis of this study involved moving back and forth between the general and the specific, or the whole and the parts, to comprehend contexts, flow of events, and relationships (Brenner, 2006; Patterson & Williams, 2002). For researchers, working with data is “a cyclical process of looking for coherence and meaning that requires returning to the data with a different perspective as insights are developed” (Brenner, 2006, p. 366). Hence, I recognize that my interpretations and reconstructions of data are not definitive and final (Jardine, 1998) but rather emergent and cyclical.

Content Analysis

Content analysis involves “a process of examining content and themes, typically from written documents” (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 419). Differing from my expectations, I did not examine the book titles I collected based on genre, creation intention, or representation of ethnicity and culture. Rather, for the sake of gaining outcomes that would reflect my research questions comprehensively, the content analysis of the children’s literature collected from the teacher and parent participants focused on the emergent themes rather than on predetermined

categories. Because the aim of this study was to reveal what kinds of children's literature the teacher and parent participants tended to select and use with bilingual children, and in what context and for what purpose they used the books, I did not follow the typical categorizations of children's literature but employed my own approach based on characteristics induced from the collected titles. The detailed categorizations and criteria are elaborated in Chapter 5 in the section "Categories of the Collected Children's Literature."

Interview Data Analysis

The analysis of interview data for this study followed the framework developed by Brenner (2006), which includes five phases—transcription, description, analysis, interpretation, and display. Regarding transcription, "there is no single agreed-on standard for the appropriate transcript" (Brenner, 2006, p. 367). First, I began the analytic and interpretive process by transcribing the audio recordings of all six interviews into separate written texts. During this process, I frequently stopped and relistened to the recordings to ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions, and meanwhile highlighted the stories, experiences, and thoughts the participants had shared that were closely related to the research questions or that drew my attention.

The next phase is description, which includes "coding, thematic analysis, identification of telling incidents, and so on" (Brenner, 2006, p. 367). On my first reading of the written transcriptions, I was overwhelmed by the various information and was uncertain how to code and distinguish it into different themes. Then I was reminded of Schwandt's (2007) statement that in qualitative research "the inquirer employs a variety of analytic strategies that involve sorting, organizing, and reducing the data to something manageable

and then exploring ways to reassemble the data in order to interpret them” (p. 7). Therefore, I used the research questions as a guide to reduce and organize the interview data by focusing on different roles that children’s literature plays in English-Chinese bilingual children’s language and literacy development, and how teacher and parent participants’ experiences and perspectives on children’s literature had influenced their practices in using children’s literature in bilingual education. This reduction made the data manageable for further analysis and interpretation.

In designing the interview questions, one of my aims was to create space to invite the participants to share their perspectives, experiences, and stories as much as possible. The results turned out to be very fruitful but also seemed scattered. Ellis (1998c) suggested to begin interpretative data analysis by “clustering the stories or statements” (p. 41). Therefore, I clustered these personal experiences and stories based on the participants’ purposes and contexts for doing them. I asked questions such as: “What is the purpose they use this children’s book? Is it for language learning, culture learning, or fun reading?” “In what context do they use this book? At school, at home, or in other places?” “What might be their assumptions when using this children’s book in this way?” As Mishler (1986) pointed out, it is important to allow the participants to tell their stories in their own way and “together to try to understand what their stories are about” (p. 249). By reflecting upon the purposes and contexts of the participants’ use of children’s literature, I noted several recurring themes emerging from my reading and rereading of the written transcripts, and I encapsulated them into three “big ideas” (Ellis, 2006): (1) children’s literature as relationship founder, enhancer, and bond; (2) children’s literature as language and literacy learning resource and bridge; and

(3) children's literature as cultural agency. In addition to big ideas, the analysis of the interview data entailed identifying smaller ideas that tied together the particulars of individual experience, and comparing different participants. Therefore, I further refined the big ideas into more specific smaller ideas to provide a more comprehensive and holistic picture of using children's literature in bilingual education. Specifically, based on the varying degrees and different objects that the participants built relationships on, the big idea of children's literature as relationship founder, enhancer, and bond was subdivided into (a) children's literature as relationship founder and enhancer between teacher and student; (b) children's literature as relationship bond between parent and child; and (c) children's literature as relationship bond and enhancer within communities. According to a variety of purposes and contexts for using children's literature, the second big idea of children's literature as language and literacy resource and bridge was divided into (a) children's literature as authoritative resource for language and literacy learning; (b) children's literature as immersive resource for language and literacy learning; (c) children's literature as playful/interactive resource for language and literacy learning; and (d) children's literature as bridge for bilingual and biliteracy development. Last, based on the different purposes of using children's literature as an avenue for cultural transmission and communication, the big idea of children's literature as cultural agency was subdivided into (a) children's literature as an agent for cultural transmission; and (b) children's literature as an agent for cultural identity construction and recognition. Using the same procedures, when looking at the research question about how participants' experiences and perspectives might have influenced their use of children's literature in bilingual education, I clustered the stories into three main themes: (1) the influence of

participants' upbringing experiences on their use of children's literature; (2) the influence of participants' expectations of children's bilingual development on their use of children's literature, and (3) the influence of participants' perspectives and knowledge of children's literature on their accessing and use of children's literature. Furthermore, along with the stories the participants shared with me, the challenges of using children's literature in bilingual education in the Canadian context also unfolded. Although revealing these challenges was not the focus of this study, sorting and organizing the relevant data provided significant implications regarding how to select and use children's literature in bilingual education more effectively. Therefore, I included and subdivided the various challenges as the fourth main theme. The detailed discussion can be found in Chapter 5.

The interpretation phase involves drawing connections between the research results and larger theoretical issues; this process was informed by the hermeneutic circle and whole-part relationship, which I elaborate in the following section.

Hermeneutic circle. The hermeneutic circle (as shown in Figure 4) is a metaphor to communicate multiple meanings; it describes the interrelationships between the part and the whole (Patterson & Williams, 2002). The hermeneutic circle can be visualized as having two sections that are composed of the forward arc and the backward arc (Ellis, 1998b; Packer & Addison, 1989). The forward arc, also known as projection, entails a researcher using their forestructure, which is the current product of one's purposes, beliefs, values, interests, and relationship to the undertaken research questions, to make initial sense of a research participant, text, or data. The back arc, also known as evaluation, entails endeavouring to see what went unseen in the initial interpretation due to projection. In this evaluation process, the

researcher needs to reconsider the interpretation by reexamining the data for confirmation, contradictions, gaps, or inconsistencies.

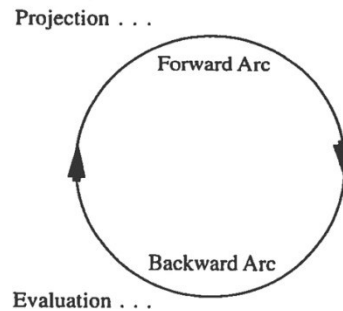


Figure 4. The hermeneutic circle.

Source: Ellis, 1998b, p. 27

I used the hermeneutic circle to guide the process of data analysis in this study. In the forward arc, I began with my forestructure, that is, my existing preconceptions, pre-understandings or prejudices, to make initial meaning of the participants, their responses in the interviews, the texts they provided, and the themes that emerged from the collected data. However, the first interpretation of the data in the forward arc may not reflect the fullness of the account of what the use of children's literature in bilingual education means for the teachers and parents. For example, I realized that my interpretation of the data had shifted along with the accumulation of the collected children's literature titles and interviews. Prior to and during the early stage of interviewing the participants, my interpretation of the use of children's literature in bilingual education stayed at exploring how to use children's books effectively as a means of language and literacy development; however, after conversing with different participants, I realized that even in the field of bilingual education, the use of

children's literature can extend far beyond language and literacy education to broader landscapes such as teacher-student, parent-child, and individual-community relationships. Hence, I need to move into the backward arc to evaluate my initial interpretations and to see what had gone unseen before (Ellis, 1998b). Within this process I also invited the participants—the teachers and parents—to provide their comments or perspectives on my understandings to help shape and reshape meaning. It is also worth noting that there is no end point of the hermeneutic circle because the purpose of hermeneutics is to keep discussion alive and keep inquiry under way (Patterson & Williams, 2002). In this sense, my interpretations of the data are not and cannot be the final ones; rather, the interpretations may, and in fact do, change over time as cultural, historical, and technological understandings change. In addition, I do not attempt to seek a uniquely correct or accurate interpretation for the data, but rather the most adequate one that can be developed at that time (Ellis, 1998b).

Whole-part relationships. My intention in using hermeneutics as a guiding framework for data analysis was to develop a “more informed and sophisticated” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 112) understanding of the use of children's literature in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context. According to Ellis et al. (2013), such a new understanding “should open up possibilities for the researcher, the research participants, and the structure of the context” (p. 491). The transformation of one's initial understanding of a phenomenon into a reconstructed or coconstructed new insight requires attention to whole-part relationships. As Ellis et al. (2013) pointed out, “one can only understand a *whole* in terms of its *parts*. Further, one can only understand a part in terms of its relationship to the whole” (p. 491, emphasis in original).

In this study, the use of children's literature for each participant is based on their childhood reading experiences, prior education experiences, teaching experiences in bilingual education, parenting experiences of raising bilingual children, language and cultural backgrounds, and larger community and social contexts. The parts, including the personal book lists, PIAs, and open-ended interviews for each participant, represent the individual's everyday experiences, activities, and practices in using children's literature in bilingual education; the larger whole represents how these individual experiences and practices are being shaped and reshaped in their bilingual environment and larger sociocultural context. Understanding the data in its entirety helps to examine separate parts in a closer way, but then understanding the separate parts also impacts understanding the original meaning/understanding of the whole, and vice versa in a cycle. These whole-part interconnections, meanings, and interpretations constructed from my collection of related documents, PIAs, and open-ended interviews are what shaped and shifted the outcomes of this study.

Last, I used tabular displays, verbatim quotes, and representative images to display the data for potential readers. Before displaying the data, each participant was given the transcript to perform a member check. A member check is a way to assure the findings are recognizable and accurate to the participant (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In terms of the specific process used, the participants were asked to read the transcript and respond if the information seemed correct, as well as what they remembered from the interview. If they did not feel that the transcript reflected their meaning, they were asked to correct it to be accurate with their views. Each participant edited their transcript by correcting the grammar and expanding their

comments as they felt necessary in order to portray their perceptions of using children's literature in bilingual education.

Translation of Interview Data

As mentioned above, the participants involved in this study had various language and cultural backgrounds; some spoke English as their native language, some spoke Mandarin Chinese as their mother tongue, and some were fluent in both English and Chinese. In order to allow the participants to express their thoughts, meanings, and perspectives smoothly, I encouraged them to use whichever language they were comfortable with in the interviews. As the researcher, I acknowledged myself as a bilingual who is competent to communicate and switch between English and Mandarin Chinese. Therefore, for the participants who chose to use Mandarin Chinese or a mix of English and Chinese in the interviews, I played the roles of both researcher and translator of this study, first transcribing the data into the source language, and then translating the transcript into English.

For all cross-language research, and for qualitative research in particular, language differences may have severe consequences such as misconception and misinterpretation (Squires, 2009; Van Nes et al., 2010). Language is not only used as a way to express meaning but also influences how meaning is constructed. According to Chapman (2006), language also influences what can be expressed; people speaking different languages would perceive the world differently because social reality is uniquely linked to one's own language. Some researchers have paid specific attention to the challenges of cross-language qualitative research (e.g., Squires, 2009; Van Nes et al., 2010) and recommended several ways to potentially reduce the loss of meaning due to translation and thereby to enhance the validity

and trustworthiness of the study. The first approach is to stay in the source language as long and as much as possible during the thinking, analysis, and reflection process. Second, the analyses could use fluid descriptions of meanings instead of fixed one-word translations to avoid possible misunderstanding or mismatch between different languages. Third, the researcher could cooperate with a professional translator to ensure that the translation of interview transcripts and research findings is as accurate as possible. In addition, when cooperating with a translator, the researcher should amply explain that the methodological choices related to translator roles include but are not limited to their identities, credentials, and how translation might be a limitation of the study.

In terms of this study, I am fluent in both Mandarin Chinese and English, which allowed me as the researcher the ability and flexibility to switch between languages during the thinking, analysis, and reflection processes whether the source language was Mandarin Chinese or English. Moreover, I tried to avoid fixed one-to-one translation in the analysis process; rather, I used more fluid descriptions. Finally, instead of employing a professional translator, my familiarity with both languages and cultures allowed me to work as an equivalent professional translator to solve possible linguistic problems in addition to being the researcher. It is also worth noting that all the participants in this study were English-Chinese bilinguals to varying degrees. Hence, if I, as the researcher, had problems with the source language or there were ambiguities in the interviews, I could ask the participants to explain or clarify their meaning in another language. With regard to specific direct quotes, the participants were capable of understanding the English translations, and they were encouraged to alert me to any inappropriateness or ambiguity in the translations. I hope the description of

how I approached translation issues in this study might give reviewers and readers insight into how potential meaning losses were avoided.

Ethical Considerations

I reviewed and followed the ethical practices and guidelines from the University of Alberta Standards for the Protection of Human Research Participants and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research with Humans. Approval of the study and the subsequent approvals of required amendments due to the COVID-19 pandemic were obtained through the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board (REB1) and the Faculty of Education's Cooperative Activities Program (CAP) for working with local school boards. For the teacher participants who worked in public schools and the complementary Chinese school at the time of this study, I followed the school and district philosophies and guidelines for research and provided information and letters to explain my research plans to potential participating schools and individuals. Before I began my research, I obtained signed consent from the teachers and parents to collect data through online interviews and various documents they were willing to provide and demonstrate for the study.

Before conducting this study, I had already built a close relationship with some of the participants due to my previous teaching of Chinese, volunteer work, and role as a parent. I believe such intimate relationships helped rather than hindered the study for the following reasons. First, this close relationship helped to facilitate my reaching out and explaining the research to the participants because I had already developed trusting relationships with them. Second, building rapport with participants is necessary for conducting open-ended interviews in order to gain genuine and deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Third, the participants

I invited had neither a professional relationship nor other involvement with me at the time of the study, so there was no direct conflict of interest between the participants and me as the researcher.

I also followed ethical procedures for the protection of participants' identities and data. Before interviewing, permission was asked of participants regarding audio recording the conversations for purposes of transcription. The interviews were conducted via virtual platform Google Meet or Zoom depending on the participant's convenience. The cloud recording service of Google Meet or Zoom was not used so that the platforms do not retain any recording of the interviews. I made it clear and explicit to the participants that the purpose of the interview was to expand understanding of the use of children's literature in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context. The participants were clearly informed that the intention of this study was not to evaluate or judge their opinions or practices related to the use of children's literature. Additionally, the participants were told that they could withdraw from the study at any time and that there would be no consequences for not participating in the study. The data was coded to de-identify participants, thus protecting confidentiality. Data was stored securely using password protection and encrypted files. Participants were informed that the findings and data from this study may be published in academic journals, presented at conferences, or shared with the local school board, but that their identities will be kept confidential. After the completion of the study, collected data will be stored for five years before being appropriately destroyed. I will also ensure that data is not used beyond the life of the research project unless permission has been granted by participants for this (Mukherkji & Albon, 2015).

Limitations

I acknowledge that there are several limitations in my research. First, because this study only included three teachers and three parents as the participants, and only focused on some English-Chinese bilingual settings, the findings are not generalizable to all bilingual education. Including more participants and other English-Chinese bilingual settings could have provided a more representative sampling, and, furthermore, analyzing a larger range of children's literature would have provided a more comprehensive overview of the use of children's literature in bilingual education in the Canadian context. Despite this limitation of an individual case, as Jardine (1998) asserted, "understood interpretively, such incidents can have a generative and re-enlivening effect on the interweaving texts and textures of human life in which we are all embedded" (p. 34). In other words, although an individual case only represents a particular experience that may not be generalized to all people, it is like a sprout that contains strong and infinite vitality. Next, since I am the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, this study is also limited by my abilities as a participant listener, interviewer, and interpreter. The final product of this study is inevitably filtered through the lens of my own understanding, language and cultural background, and context. However, I have regularly invited feedback and comments from all participants to help shape, reshape, and coconstruct interpretations and understandings.

Delimitations

This study is delimited to particular English-Chinese bilingual education settings in Western Canada. The study is further delimited to three teachers who had worked or had been working in bilingual education and three parents whose children were English-Chinese bilinguals and

positively engaged in bilingual education. I initially planned to conduct the study within a three-month time period. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the study had to be postponed for about one and a half years and went through several amendments and challenges regarding participant recruitment. The data collection finally started in February 2021 and took about three months. Despite all the obstacles and challenges, however, I hope this study will provide new insights for bilingual educators and parents to rethink the use of children's literature in their pedagogical practice, and that it may also hold potential for teachers who are choosing literature for increasingly diverse classrooms.

In the next chapter, I elaborate the findings and discuss them in the order of the three research questions. First, I demonstrate the prominent features that emerged from the collected children's literature according to a series of categories I developed for examining the use of children's literature in bilingual education. Next, I explain the various roles children's literature plays in bilingual education primarily based on the interview data. Finally, I look at how teacher and parent participants' experiences and perspectives on children's literature might have influenced their practice in bilingual education, as well as the challenges they had encountered in accessing and using children's literature.

Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion

This chapter begins with portraits of the participants to provide the reader a fundamental and holistic view to better understand the findings and correlated implications. Following the portraits of participants, the findings and discussion are divided into three main sections. In the first section, I identify the features of the collected children's literature for this study and discuss each category. In the second section, I explain the various roles that children's literature plays in English-Chinese bilingual education based on the data that emerged from the interviews. In the last section, I explore how teachers' and parents' experiences and perspectives might impact their use of children's literature in bilingual education.

Portraits of Participants

Including portraits of participants in this study is informed by narrative inquiry regarding the shaping of personal narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). My aim in portraying the individual participants in my study is to introduce the reader to who these people are as teachers and parents devoting themselves to bilingual education. The pieces that compose the portraits were primarily derived from the PIAs and the informal conversations I had with the participants prior to and after the interviews. These portraits are in no way intended to offer an exhaustive depiction of the participants. Rather, the purpose of their inclusion is to help paint the context that informed the interpretations I reached relative to this study's interest in exploring the use of children's literature in English-Chinese bilingual education. I hope these portraits will assist readers in understanding the broader places and spaces in which each of

the participants is located and from which they speak about their experiences and perspectives.

The three teacher participants selected for this study came from different English-Chinese bilingual programs and complementary Chinese schools. Similarly, the three parent participants enrolled their children in different bilingual programs and schools. Each of the participants, therefore, had a different way of using children's literature with their bilingual students/children. While each participant had distinctive stories, experiences, perspectives, and challenges to share, when I contemplated these individual accounts vis-à-vis the whole that was produced when they were taken together, I was able to discern several major themes related to my research questions.

The ensuing portraits are concise for two reasons. First, the focus of this study is not on the biographies of these individual participants, but rather on what kinds of children's literature these teachers and parents have been using in bilingual education, and in what ways. Second, although the number of bilingual programs and complementary Chinese schools has been increasing, English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context is still a relatively small circle. To protect the anonymity of my participants I do not go into a lot of detail lest individuals become identifiable to readers. All identifying information has been either deleted or modified.

Anne

"Anne" has been working as an English teacher in an English-Chinese bilingual program for a couple of years. She was born and grew up in Canada and identifies as Asian-Canadian. Anne attended a bilingual program when she was a child; this experience enables her to understand

bilingual education from both a teacher's and a student's perspective. Furthermore, Anne took a children's literature course as part of her master's degree; therefore, her knowledge and perception of children's literature was exceptional compared with the other participants. Anne was enthusiastic about collecting and using children's literature for her daily teaching, especially titles dealing with cultural identity and social justice. For Anne, children's literature is an important and effective way to not only support students' language and literacy development, but also to encourage them to explore their identities and viewpoints and to actively engage in the world. I was quite inspired by Anne's passion, insightful understanding, and critical thinking on children's literature as I came to know her during our conversations.

Faye

"Faye" has been working as both principal and teacher and sometimes support staff when there is a shortage of hands in a complementary Chinese school in a Western Canadian city. Before immigrating to Canada, Faye used to work as a high school teacher of history in China. Her experience and teacher training experience have both greatly influenced her educational philosophy and pedagogical practice. During our conversations and further communications, I found that Faye's transition from linguistic and cultural majority to minority has also shaped and shifted her perspective on children's literature and bilingual education. The reason that Faye established the complementary school in the first place was her concern for her own children's Chinese language maintenance and cultural inheritance. She found that the traditional Chinese heritage school that had long existed in the Chinese community could not meet her needs and expectations for quality education. Hence, Faye's aim for her school was to offer a high-quality education not only in maintaining Chinese

heritage language but also in providing interesting extracurricular content to the students. For me, Faye personified the ideal of a life-long learner. Despite her rich teaching experience in senior high school, Faye had little experience and knowledge on school administration and teaching Chinese in Canada. To provide high-quality Chinese language and other extracurricular courses to the students, Faye read relevant books and took countless courses to hone her management skills. In our conversations, she kept emphasizing the importance of life-long learning and the mutual learning between teachers and students. She also constantly tailored the school curriculum to better suit the educational needs of the increasing number of Chinese immigrant children, and often shared her pedagogical strategies and resources with novice teachers. At the same time, her Chinese school has gradually become a bond with the community. In addition to paid courses, there are many free reading, writing, arts, and science clubs based at her school and organized by local high school students and adult volunteers. Faye may be viewed as a latecomer in using children's literature in her pedagogical practice, but she is also a fast learner. Of all my participants, I found Faye to be the most creative in using children's literature in various ways.

Jenny

“Jenny” previously worked as a Chinese teacher in an English-Chinese program for several years. She was born and spent her childhood in China but took her teacher training program in Canada. Such experience makes Jenny competent in both Mandarin Chinese and English. She is a native Chinese speaker and fully understands Chinese culture; she is also familiar with prevalent education philosophy and curriculum within the public school system in Western Canada. Through the interview and our informal conversations, I found that Jenny was the

one out of all the participants who most often switched between Mandarin and English during our conversations. She was able to fluently switch back and forth between the two languages depending on the content and contexts we were talking about. In this sense, Jenny could be viewed as the most “balanced” bilingual individual among the participants, though the concept of balanced bilingualism might be problematic due to its limitations of definition and measurement (Baker & Wright, 2021). In terms of using children’s literature in her teaching, Jenny made a great effort to include various reading materials beyond the Chinese textbooks to encourage her students’ interest in learning the language and culture, including looking for and purchasing original Chinese children’s books and the Chinese versions of popular English children’s books. Because she was well acquainted with Chinese language and culture as well as Chinese e-commerce platforms, Jenny was able to order children’s books through these platforms and have them shipped to Canada, which might be challenging for teachers in bilingual programs who lack this knowledge and experience.

Jack

“Jack” has a child who has been studying in an English-Chinese bilingual program in a public school in Western Canada since kindergarten. As a first-generation immigrant, Jack hoped that learning Mandarin Chinese would help his child communicate with the family and understand Chinese culture. Before enrolling his daughter in the bilingual program, Jack had begun to homeschool her, particularly about the Chinese language, because, like many Chinese parents, he believed that education should begin in early childhood. Also like many Chinese parents, Jack’s Chinese formative education for his child included a great amount of classical poetry recitation and Chinese character writing. Jack’s Chinese homeschooling journey was not clear

sailing; he had encountered many challenges and much bewilderment, not only in regard to his child's learning of Chinese in particular, but also regarding the collision of Chinese and Western educational ideas. During our conversations, Jack mentioned a few times how he had transformed his view of education by reading parenting books and talking with other parents. He gradually abandoned the idea of pursuing excellence in his child's learning achievement, in favour of a more holistic approach. As a result, reading children's literature with his child had become a way to enjoy parent-child time rather than merely for learning purposes. Jack's experience reminds me of my own confusion and struggle as a parent who had hoped to raise a "perfect" bilingual child.

Shelly

"Shelly" was often admired by other Chinese parents because she had two kids that others perceived as the ideal children, who were not only obedient but also did well in their studies. Perhaps only Shelly knew how much effort she and her family had put into nurturing multilingual children. Shelly had been an elementary school teacher in China. Compared with many novice parents who lacked experience with young children, Shelly raised and educated her children with great facility. During our conversations, she shared many useful strategies in cultivating children's living and learning habits, and I found many of them were inspiring even for me as a researcher who was relatively knowledgeable in the field of education. I was especially impressed by Shelly's belief in the power of role models. One of the interview questions was whether there were any special people or even fictional characters the participant admired or wished they could be like. Shelly answered "no" without any hesitation. She later explained that she always educated her children, both girls, that one

should only compare themselves to themselves and not to others: If “I think I am better today than I was yesterday, then that is the best version of myself.” Shelly considered her parents as her role models; they had encouraged her to be an independent and self-reliant person. Hence, she also wanted to be her daughters’ role model and to show them what an independent female could be like. Shelly’s endeavour was not limited to pursuing her own career but was also reflected through her persistence in her children’s language learning. With abundant knowledge on Chinese language and on pedagogical strategies, Shelly was equipped to select appropriate children’s books for her children and to use them in creative ways. I have seen some of her children’s writing, storytelling, hosting, and recitations in Chinese, and I was astonished: They were not only much more advanced than their peers in Canada but were even better than many of their counterparts in China. I believe Shelly’s experience and perspective will be a great inspiration for many parents and teachers who are devoted to bilingual and multilingual education.

Chloe

“Chloe” immigrated to Canada at a very young age; her mother tongue is Cantonese. Although Chloe went to both the bilingual program and weekend heritage language school, her Mandarin Chinese “was not good enough.” However, this did not mean that Chloe regarded learning Chinese language and culture as unimportant; quite the contrary, she fully understood the importance of maintaining the heritage language and inheriting the culture, and she believed that bilingualism and biculturalism would greatly benefit her children. On the one hand, Chloe expected that spending an equal amount of time learning another language and English together would give her children more challenges at school because she

felt the current curriculum was too easy. On the other hand, she hoped that her mixed-race children could retain their Chinese cultural ties. During our conversations, Chloe said she felt there were more difficulties in bilingual learning for her children and herself compared to parents who can fluently speak and write Mandarin Chinese and thus can give their children the support they need. As a result of her lack of Mandarin fluency, Chloe encountered more challenges in searching for and using children's literature in Chinese with her children. Nevertheless, as avid readers themselves, Chloe and her husband enjoyed various children's literature in English with their children. Chloe also mentioned that if there were an English-Cantonese bilingual program in public school, she would love for her children to be enrolled. For Chloe, the focal meaning of bilingual education perhaps was not learning the language but teaching her children to recognize and be proud of their cultural identity.

Summary

Having had the privilege to spend time with my six participants and to hear their stories and perspectives through interviews and informal conversations, I gained respect and admiration for each of them as individuals. More generally, listening to their stories led me to an even deeper appreciation for those who commit their professional and/or parenting lives to English-Chinese bilingual education and children's literature. The accounts of their everyday lives that the participants were so willing to share allowed me to expand and challenge my own understanding of what it means to be a teacher/parent in bilingual education and the roles that children's literature has played can play in children's lives, not only in language and literacy education, but more importantly, in whole person education.

In developing the foregoing portraits, I did not use a standard template into which I tried to fill each participant's story to meet certain depiction specifications. My intention was to attain a holistic sense of the person, and each portrait was meant to be as unique as the individual it was written about. When given the opportunity to talk about their professional lives or parenting experiences and what was important to them, each participant talked about different things or focused on different aspects. Cutting across the myriad topics, however, were several major themes under each of my research questions as they related to the use of children's literature in bilingual education. In the following section, I categorize the collected children's literature and discuss emergent findings according to each category.

Categories, Findings, and Discussion Related to the Collected Children's Literature

In this section, I employ content analysis as the primary method to look at the collected children's literature titles. First, I explain my categorization approach and criteria for analyzing these titles. Second, I summarize the results of categorization into Table 3. Last, I discuss the findings according to each category, as well as the potential implications the findings might have for English-Chinese bilingual education.

Categories of the Collected Children's Literature

According to the book lists provided by the teacher and parent participants, a total of 315 children's books (series and eBook websites counted as one title) were examined and categorized to answer the first research question— "What kind of children's literature is being used in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context?" (see Table 3). The purpose of categorizing these books is not to figure out which genre is more popular or which theme was more commonly seen; rather, the categorization closely ties with bilingual and

biliteracy education. It aims to reveal what kind of children's literature the teacher and parent participants tended to select and use with their bilingual children and, more importantly, in what context and for what purpose. Hence, I did not use the typical categorization approach in the children's literature field which is based on genre and theme (e.g., Hall, 2012; Hintz & Tribunella, 2019; Kiefer, 2010) but employed my own approach based on the emergent characteristics of the collected titles. Moreover, some of the participants had already labelled every selected title with specific purposes in their book lists or had differentiated the function of books in the process of our interviews, such as for language learning or for parent-child reading. The categorization criteria, therefore, were also largely drawn from the information provided by the participants. In summary, the study set of collected titles can be divided into the following five categories:

1. function: pedagogical/instructional/didactic vs. aesthetic/pleasure;
2. language and country of origin: original vs. imported;
3. time period: classic vs. contemporary;
4. media communication and influence: worldwide vs. local; and
5. format: illustrated vs. not illustrated.

I divided each of the categories into English children's literature and Chinese children's literature to demonstrate how children's literature was being used with the two different languages and cultures. It should be noted that such categorization is subjective and may reflect participant and/or researcher bias. For instance, a children's book could be used by a teacher participant for reading comprehension in language arts teaching and thus be categorized as pedagogical/instructional/didactic. Vice versa, the same book could be used by

a parent participant for storytelling in a community book club and thus fit into the function of aesthetic/pleasure. The function of a book, and a children's book in particular, depends on who is using the book, in what context, and for what purpose; therefore, the categorization is subjective and open to bias. In the same sense, in terms of media communication and influence, whether a children's book can be categorized as worldwide or local is partially determined by a participant's or the researcher's perspective and funds of knowledge (González et al., 2005). In addition, different functions may overlap in one title. As Minh-ha (1989) pointed out, "despite all our desperate, eternal attempts to separate, contain and mend, categories always leak" (p. 94). A children's book could be used in English or Chinese language arts teaching based on the teacher's consideration and thus be categorized as pedagogical/instructional/didactic. The same book might also be included in the teacher's class library for students' leisure reading; therefore, it would also fall into the category of aesthetic/pleasure. The data demonstrated in the following table and in the rest of this dissertation may also present multiple categorizations for one children's book title. The detailed criteria of the five categorizations are as follows.

Function: pedagogical/instructional/didactic vs. aesthetic/pleasure. In terms of the category of function, the determining criteria were drawn from both the participants' and the researcher's subjective judgments about the collected books. In this study, the function of children's literature was subdivided into two categories: *pedagogical/instructional/didactic* and *aesthetic/pleasure*. As Nikolajeva (2014) argued, children's literature spontaneously inhabits an educational project, and the collected children's literature for this study has also shown a strong educational intention; therefore, the pedagogical/instructional/didactic

category was crafted to describe this prominent characteristic of the collected titles. The term *pedagogical* reflects the teacher or parent participant's teaching intention of using specific children's books. In other words, if a children's book was labelled or explained by the participant as for educational purposes, whether for language and literacy teaching or for social studies, it would be categorized under the pedagogical function. As elaborated in the section that defines children's literature, the scope of children's literature in this study included both literary works and textbooks. Textbooks, including levelled readings, formed an important component of reading resources in English-Chinese bilingual education and were often designed for linguistic instruction. The term *instructional* refers to these works. According to Hintz and Tribunella (2019), *didactic* is used to "describe books that are specifically designed to teach a lesson, whether moral, political, religious, social, or practical" (p. 34). Hence, the titles among the collected children's literature which conveyed the intention of life-lesson teaching, such as Chinese idiom stories and Western fables, fit into the criterion of didactic.

Nikolajeva (2014) pointed out that, "although children's literature has been extensively used as an educational implement, this does not exclude or preclude its parallel use as a source of aesthetic pleasure. Moreover, pleasure makes acquisition of knowledge more efficient" (p. 226). The aesthetic/pleasure function of children's literature could not and should not be positioned in opposition to its pedagogical/instructional/didactic function. Rather, the using and reading of children's literature in this study can be seen as a continuum with aesthetic/pleasure at one end and pedagogical/instructional/didactic at the other end, as inspired by Rosenblatt's (1994) efferent-aesthetic continuum of reading. Specifically, for this

study, books labelled for class library reading or leisure reading, such as parent-child reading or a child's independent reading after class, were categorized under aesthetic/pleasure.

The function of a specific book is endowed by the purpose of its user and reader. For instance, if the Harry Potter books (Rowling, 1997–2007) are used in English language arts for teaching reading or writing strategies, they can be categorized as pedagogical/instructional/didactic, whereas if the series is used for leisure reading, it fits into aesthetic/pleasure. In other words, the function categorization of a book is fluid and constantly changing depending on who is using it, for what purpose, and in what context. Looking at the collected English and Chinese children's literature through this continuum of function was underscored by the intention of bilingual and biliteracy development. The aim was to examine which end of the continuum was emphasized more by the teacher and parent participants, and how this emphasis had been impacted by a variety of sociocultural factors which in turn have influenced bilingual education. It should be noted that for titles that were not specially labelled by the participants, I, as the researcher, decided their suitable categories based on the interview data drawn from the participants, as well as my funds of knowledge (González et al., 2005) and teaching experience with children's literature.

Language and country of origin: original vs. imported. The second category, *language and country of origin* was relatively objective and reflected a prominent feature of the collected titles regarding their use and reading in the Canadian context, which I elaborate in the discussion section below. This category was subdivided into *original* and *imported*. Because this study focused on the use of children's literature in bilingual education, it was essential to examine the language and country of origin of the collected children's literature

since bilingual education highlights a simultaneous development of two languages and fostering of cultural/intercultural awareness. As Nikolajeva (2014) pointed out, “literature uses language to communicate, and that language consists of conventional semiotic signs, based on an agreement between the bearers of a particular language and culture” (p. 9). Moreover, children’s literature “transmits information and values of the culture from which it emerges, and it can influence readers in subtle ways to accept and internalize beliefs, perceptions, and expectations” (Hintz & Tribunella, 2019, p. 35). Hence, examining the collected children’s literature by the language and country of origin can illuminate, when using children’s literature with English-Chinese bilingual children, whether the language was original or translated, and what cultural values were transmitted or dominant.

The term *original* means that the original text of a selected title was created within the same geographic location or in the same language and culture of the user and reader. If an English title in the study set was written by a Canadian author, occurred within the Canadian context or was related to Canadian cultural and historical issues, then it qualified as original. On the contrary, even if a title was originally written in English yet the context was in the US, the UK, or Australia, it was not counted as original but imported. The reason for this criterion was that, as Hintz and Tribunella (2019) argued,

writers are always influenced by the culture of the time and place in which they live and write, even in ways that they are unconscious of, and so the traces of that cultural context can be seen in their work, whether authors intend those elements to appear or not. (p. 36)

For the Chinese titles, in the same sense, to be categorized as original, the selected book must have been originally written in Mandarin Chinese or set within the Chinese context.

Therefore, even if a title in the study set had been created by a Chinese or Chinese-heritage author or illustrator but was written in language other than Mandarin Chinese (maybe later translated into Mandarin Chinese), it was counted as imported.

The term *imported* was used to describe all the collected titles other than those that were created in the original language, within the Canadian and Chinese contexts, and regarding Canadian and Chinese cultures and histories. In other words, translated children's literature in this study set was categorized as imported as well. It should be noted that for the Chinese levelled readings used in English-Chinese bilingual education, even if the context was not China, they were categorized as original because they were written in Mandarin Chinese.

Time period: classic vs. contemporary. Another intriguing feature that emerged from the collected titles was the time period in which the books were written. This category was subdivided into *classic* and *contemporary*. According to Hintz and Tribunella (2019), many best-known classics appeared in the first golden age of children's literature, roughly from 1865 to 1915, and the second golden age, which is also known as the period of contemporary classic in the mid-twentieth century. Similarly, Zhu (2014) outlined the classics of Chinese children's literature in his book *Chinese Children's Literature in the Golden Age*. Therefore, for this study, the term *classic* refers to children's books that were written during these golden ages and have been generally recognized as classics in the research field of children's literature or have earned a reputation in a large region. For example, *Anne of Green Gables*

(Montgomery, 2013) is a classic of the first golden age, and Roald Dahl's works are among the most outstanding children's literature of the second golden age. Both authors' works fall into the criterion of classic in this study. In addition, works with a certain historical inheritance, including those that may not have been originally written for children yet have been adapted and are now commonly read as children's books, such as rhymes, poetry, myths, legends, folklore, fairy tales, historical stories, and idiom stories, were all counted as classic. In the same sense, a contemporarily produced children's book that tells a classic or canonical story was also counted as classic. For instance, the picture book *Interstellar Cinderella* (Underwood, 2015), which was adapted from the fairytale *Cinderella*, and *Mulan: The Legend of the Woman Warrior* (F. Wu, 2019), which was adapted from the Chinese legend *Hua Mulan* both fit this criterion.

In contrast, *contemporary* refers to more recently published children's literature. The publication of the first book in the Harry Potter series (Rowling, 1997–2007) might be said to have unveiled the third golden age of children's literature (Hintz & Tribunella, 2019; Marcus, 2008). Because most of the teacher and parent participants' childhood reading was heavily influenced by children's books that belong to the first and second golden ages, to explore how their experiences and perspectives might impact their practices in using children's literature with English-Chinese bilingual children, I used the year 1997, when *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* was initially published, to draw an artificial line between classic and contemporary. Children's books in the study set that were published before *Harry Potter* and regarded as representative works in the first and second golden ages were categorized as classics, whereas books published after the Harry Potter series, despite perhaps being widely

recognized, were categorized as contemporary. In other words, the employment of the terms classic and contemporary in this study can be viewed as relative and temporal. This neither implies that the children's books published after *Harry Potter* cannot be considered classics nor that the distinguished titles published during the second golden age cannot be regarded as contemporary work. Such a division was meant to illuminate through what avenues the teachers and parents may have obtained information related to children's literature, and how time period as a factor may have affected their choice of children's literature in bilingual education.

Media communication and influence: worldwide vs. local. The category of *media communication and influence* was created to examine what factors other than function, language, and time period might have been impacting the teacher and parent participants' selection of English and Chinese children's books. The emergent characteristics of the collected titles in this category suggested two subcategories: worldwide and local.

The term *worldwide* refers to the children's books in this study set that have won a global reputation or popularity. Moreover, worldwide also includes children's literature that has been widely translated or adapted into other media. For example, the Goosebumps series (Stine, 1992–1997) and the Geronimo Stilton series (Dami, 2011) fit into the criterion of worldwide as they were translated into multiple languages and were once bestsellers.

The term *local* was used to describe titles in the study set that had influence only in their own countries or linguistic regions. Some of these books were bestsellers in their home countries yet had not gained international popularity. For instance, as a book series read by generations, *The Adventures of the Bailey School Kids* (Jones & Dadey, 2021) was only

popular in English-speaking countries; thus it was categorized as local. A similar example for the Chinese titles was the Chinese author Yang Hongying's works. Despite being widely read by young readers in China and some of her bestselling works having been translated into other languages, such as the Mo's Mischief series (H. Yang, 1998–2020), they were categorized as local since they have not gained worldwide popularity.

As mentioned above, whether a selected title was categorized as worldwide or local was primarily determined by the participants and the researcher. For example, some may not consider the picture book *Chrysanthemum* (Henkes, 1991) a world-renowned work, but because its Chinese translation was very popular in China, it fit into the category of worldwide. Such categorization was primarily based on the researcher's funds of knowledge (González et al., 2005) and experience of reading and using children's literature. A distinction between classic and worldwide should also be noted. Some of the collected titles were categorized as classic because they were adapted from ancient classics that usually had worldwide recognition, but this cannot guarantee that the books were also categorized as worldwide. Take the picture book *The Chinese Emperor's New Clothes* (Compestine, 2017) as an example. It was adapted from the classic literary folk tale *The Emperor's New Clothes* written by Hans Christian Andersen, which fell into the category of classic. However, the picture book adaptation could only be categorized as local because it has not received worldwide popularity.

Format: illustrated vs. not illustrated. The last category, format, was divided into *illustrated* and *not illustrated*, which are two contrasting characteristics that emerged from the collected titles. Examining forms and formats contributes to better understanding of some of

the radical changes in children's literature over time (Dresang, 1999), as well as broad curriculum trends in education (Brenna et al., 2021). There are various aspects regarding the form and format of a children's book, such as the synergy of words and pictures, and layers of meaning (Dresang, 1999). Without the language barriers that can exist in written words, visual images can convey meanings and express emotions in a more universal and accessible way. Hence, picture books (especially wordless ones) and graphic novels have been increasingly used in second language learning and bilingual education (e.g., Dolan, 2014; Martinez-Roldán & Newcomer, 2011; Yang, 2008; Zapata et al., 2015) as a way to develop language and literacy proficiency and promote intercultural understanding.

The collected titles for this study are no exception. There are abundant highly illustrated books within the collected titles, either happening to fit or having been specifically designed for language learning purposes, including levelled readings, picture books, and graphic novels. Therefore, looking at the format of the collected titles through the dimensions of illustrated and not illustrated can facilitate examination of what kind of children's literature is preferred in English and Chinese language teaching respectively in bilingual education. Further, it can help determine whether the teaching and learning of the two languages and cultures has developed in a balanced way, and what factors may have led to an even/uneven development. It is worth noting that with the advances in printing technology and the development of multimedia and multimodality, the line between illustrated and nonillustrated books is increasingly ambiguous. For this study, not illustrated does not mean there are utterly no illustrations in a book; rather, in addition to the book cover, there might be a few pictures in the book. Whether there are pictures or not, however, would not impact the book's meaning

making. For example, although the series *Mr. Lemoncello's Library* (Grabenstein, 2013–2020) includes several pictures as facilitators for puzzle solving, it tells the story primarily through text; therefore, it was categorized as not illustrated. In contrast, although *The Last Kids on Earth* (Brallier, 2015–2022) is acknowledged as a chapter book series, it is a chapter book / graphic novel hybrid, similar to *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (Kinney, 2007–2021) in format. Thus, as with *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, which is also included in the collected titles, *The Last Kids on Earth* series was categorized as illustrated. Again, the category of format drew from the researcher's funds of knowledge (González et al., 2005) and was subject to bias.

In sum, by examining the collected children's literature through the five categories of function, language and country of origin, time period, media communication and influence, and format, this study demonstrates the kinds of children's literature that teachers and parents tend to use in educating English-Chinese bilingual children in the Canadian context. Looking at the collected titles through these different categories also reveals what aspects teachers and parents were more focused on when selecting and using children's literature in bilingual education, and what cultural knowledge and values they consciously or unconsciously transmitted to the children. In addition, the categories also shed light on the avenues teachers and parents use to access children's literature and keep up to date with related information.

Findings

Based on the five categories elaborated above, I grouped the collected children's literature titles and created Table 3 to provide an overview of the results regarding the 315 children's book titles, from which various characteristics closely related to English-Chinese bilingual education emerged. Excluding duplicates, there are 116 titles in English and 199 titles in

Chinese in total. In addition to the total numbers in each category, Table 3 shows the percentage of the English and Chinese book titles in their respective languages. In order to clearly demonstrate what aspects of children’s literature are underscored in teaching and learning the two different languages, Table 3 is also divided into English and Chinese titles. It is worth noting that in the later discussion, in addition to looking at the collected titles based on their language, I will also analyze the data from the individual users’ perspectives. By doing so, I hope to provide a more holistic picture of the use of children’s literature in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context.

Table 3. Numbers and Percentages of Five Categories in the Study Set of English and Chinese Children’s Literature

		English Titles	Chinese Titles
Function	Pedagogical/Instructional/Didactic	75 (65%)	186 (93%)
	Aesthetic/Pleasure	63 (54%)	18 (9%)
Language and Country of Origin	Original	13 (11%)	185 (93%)
	Imported	102 (88%)	12 (6%)
Time Period	Classic	28 (24%)	22 (11%)
	Contemporary	88 (76%)	177 (89%)
Media Communication and Influence	Worldwide	24 (21%)	14 (7%)
	Local	92 (79%)	185 (93%)
Format	Illustrated	74 (64%)	187(94%)
	Not illustrated	42 (36%)	12 (6%)
Totals (N=315)		116	199

As Table 3 shows, in terms of function, 75 (65%) English titles are classified as pedagogical/instructional/didactic and 63 (54%) as aesthetic/pleasure. For the Chinese titles, 186 (93%) fall into pedagogical/instructional/didactic, and 18 (9%) are aesthetic/pleasure. Under language and country of origin, 13 (11%) books among the total 116 English titles were originally written or published in Canada; the rest of the English titles were predominantly imported from the US (there are 84 books imported from the US, three from

the UK, three from Australia, one from Italy, and one is unidentified), and imported titles account for 88% of the total. In contrast, 185 (93%) books among the total 199 Chinese titles were originally written in Mandarin Chinese or published in China; only 12 (6%) books are categorized as imported. Under the third category of time period, 28 (24%) English titles are categorized as classic and 88 (76%) as contemporary. Twenty-two (11%) Chinese titles are categorized as classic and 177 (89%) as contemporary. The collected English and Chinese children's literature appears similar in the category of media communication and influence; that is, worldwide titles are far fewer than local. There are 24 (21%) English and 14 (7%) Chinese titles categorized as worldwide, whereas the numbers of local titles are respectively 92 (79%) and 185 (93%). In regards to the category of format, 74 (64%) English titles and 185 (94%) Chinese titles are classified as illustrated, and the nonillustrated English titles and Chinese titles are respectively 42 (36%) and 12 (6%).

Discussion on the Category of Function

The two contrastive groups of characteristics—pedagogical/instructional/didactic and aesthetic/pleasure—under the category of function were inspired by Rosenblatt's (1982b, 1994) efferent-aesthetic continuum. Rosenblatt stated that a reader's stance falls along a continuum from efferent to aesthetic. In efferent reading, "the reader's attention is focused primarily on what will remain as the residue *after* the reading—the information to be acquired, the logical solution to a problem, the actions to be carried out" (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 23, emphasis in original). In contrast, when taking an aesthetic stance,

the reader's primary concern is with what happens *during* the actual reading event. . . . [The reader] pays attention to the associations, feelings, attitudes,

and ideas that these words and their referents arouse within [them]. . . . *The reader's attention is centered directly on what [they are] living through during [their] relationship with that particular text.* (Rosenblatt, 1994, p. 24, emphasis in original; gender-biased language has been altered)

As previously mentioned, the subcategories pedagogical/instructional/didactic refer to children's books with a strong teaching intention, which includes language learning, culture transmission, moralistic teaching, and acknowledging social and cultural norms and values; all the above can be viewed as the gains or "residue" after reading. Therefore, the higher the percentage of children's books categorized as pedagogical/instructional/didactic in the collected titles, the closer it would potentially push the reader toward an efferent stance. In contrast, the higher the percentage of aesthetic/pleasure books, the closer it would push the reader toward an aesthetic stance given that the titles categorized as aesthetic/pleasure are more likely related to relationship building, seeking a sense of belonging, or reading for fun.

It is obvious that the Chinese titles are much closer to the efferent end on the efferent-aesthetic continuum, whereas the English titles are at a relatively balanced point on the continuum. It should be noted that the book list the English teacher participant provided includes more titles that fit the typical definition of children's literature—high-quality literary works that are specifically produced for children and designed to give them spontaneous pleasure (Hintz & Tribunella, 2019). On the contrary, the Chinese titles provided by the Chinese teacher are primarily levelled readings that were shared and used within the English-Chinese bilingual program. It may seem unfair to compare and contrast literary works and levelled readings as they are designed for different purposes and targeted toward different

markets. However, the comparison demonstrates an important fact regarding bilingual education in the Canadian context, that is, levelled readings have been dominant in the Chinese children's literature used in bilingual education.

According to the collected Chinese book titles and interviews for this study, as well as my own experience as a parent whose child is enrolled in a bilingual program, the Mandarin Chinese children's books that teachers use with bilingual students at school are mostly levelled readings; the take-home Chinese readings still consist of levelled books. Although not all levelled readings might be read from the efferent stance, they were initially designed for the purpose of language and literacy teaching. That is to say, the targeted reader's attention is being directed to focus on "the residue after the reading"—to acquire language knowledge and to further enhance related literacy skills. For example, Greenfield Education Center, one of the major publishing houses appearing in the provided list of Chinese children's books, described their levelled reading product I Can Read Series as "adopt[ing] the whole language approach to help develop young children's reading, speaking, listening and writing skills in Chinese. . . . After finishing the full series of 96 stories, young children can learn 840 new words & 1600 phrases" (n.d.). In addition, most of the Chinese children's literature presented by the parent participants that was not levelled readings and was used for parent-child shared reading or children's independent reading at home focuses on information acquisition as well. In other words, the Chinese children's literature that is supposed to engage readers with an aesthetic intent is impeded by an efferent intent. Various versions of Chinese myths and legends such as *Journey to the West* (C. Wu, 2014, 2018) and *The Story of the Chinese Zodiac* (Liu, 2018), for instance, regularly showed up in the teacher and parent participants' book

lists. Although these books usually do not function as language teaching tools, teachers and parents often use the stories to immerse bilingual children in Chinese culture and thus intentionally or unintentionally push the child reader toward an efferent stance in reading.

In contrast, the study set of English children's literature demonstrates a more balanced point on the efferent-aesthetic continuum; this is principally due to the dominant status that the English language occupies in Canadian mainstream society. Many studies have revealed that even when enrolled in an English-Chinese bilingual program, bilingual children still prefer to use English as their primary language for daily communication (Brown, 2011; Fu et al., 2019; Kang, 2010; Park, 2013; Sun, 2011; Sung & Tsai, 2019; S. Wu, 2016; Zhang, 2008; Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009; Zheng, 2021) for various reasons, such as lacking exposure to other languages or taking English for granted as an ideology. Consequently, these children are more likely to take an aesthetic stance when reading children's books written in English. In this study, not only did children whose dominant home language was English have more titles in English in their book collections at home, but the children whose home language was Mandarin Chinese or Cantonese often read English children's books as their leisure reading. For instance, *Dog Man* (Pilkey, 2016–2021) and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (Kinney, 2007–2021) are two of the repeating titles in the book lists. Almost every teacher and parent participant in this study reported that their students/children enjoyed reading the two titles, regardless of their home languages.

The results regarding the category of function also reveals the different attitudes of teachers and parents towards English and Chinese languages in the bilingual program.

Learning Mandarin Chinese tends to be endowed with more academic or practical

expectations by teachers and parents. As the teacher participant Faye said, “some parents had a high expectation for the Chinese class. They complained about why their kids cannot write a modern Chinese poetry or read the Chinese version of *Harry Potter* after learning [the textbook].” On the face it, Faye’s statement shows that parents were concerned about the aesthetic value of learning the Chinese language since they were hoping their children could create poetry or understand literary works such as *Harry Potter* (Rowling, 1997–2007) in Chinese; however, their real demand was to see the *outcome*, or using Rosenblatt’s (1994) term, to acquire the *residue* after reading the Chinese textbook. In other words, the process of reading and the relationship a child reader may be living through with a particular text had been ignored. The primary goal for these parents was acquiring the language instead of using it and then appreciating it. Therefore, an efferent stance was taking the leading position in the reading of Chinese children’s literature in the bilingual program.

Jerome Bruner (1990) pointed out that literacy includes not only a child’s linguistic competence but their cognitive competence and social competence. Nikolajeva (2014) also argued that children’s literature is a vehicle to transmit social and cultural knowledges. Why are language subjects in the curriculum of bilingual program (Alberta Education, n.d.) named Chinese language arts and English language arts instead of linguistic studies? I consider one of the underlying reasons to be that the term *language arts* connotes aesthetic education in addition to language learning. One of the hidden issues I observed while conducting this study is that learning Chinese in the Canadian context has been largely treated as linguistic skills acquisition instead of language arts learning. This might also explain why the Chinese textbooks *Zhong Wen* (College of Chinese Language and Culture of Jinan University [CCLC],

2006), published by Jinan University (see Appendix F), have gained a certain popularity among many Chinese teachers in bilingual education. This set of textbooks is specifically designed for teaching and learning Chinese language in a step-by-step process. The content is convenient in terms of sequenced language acquisition and subsequent evaluation. The problem, however, is that for most bilingual children, Chinese is not merely a language tool; it is rooted in cultural connotation and identity construction. Therefore, if children are not being exposed to literature that appeals to them or which they resonate with, then their language learning will be greatly compromised.

Discussion on the Category of Language and Country of Origin

The results for language and country of origin in the English titles reveals only a small amount of original Canadian children's literature in the lists, and books translated from languages other than English appear rare. One of the primary reasons might be that English children's literature has been the most widely distributed and the market has been profoundly prosperous. Therefore, it is not difficult for teachers and parents to access high-quality children's literature in English. In other words, as long as a book is written in English, there seems no need to be concerned whether it is from Canada, the US, the UK, or Australia. However, in addition to being a resource for language and literacy learning, children's literature is an important vehicle to embed and transmit culture (Bainbridge & Wolodko, 2002; Cai, 1994; Edward & Saltman, 2010). As Nodelman (2008) argues, "Canadian children are being encouraged to understand themselves as ordinary Americans who happen to live outside the United States, not just by the American books they usually read but by Canadian

books that are increasingly and normatively ‘American’” (p. 295). The stark contrast between original and imported English titles supports Nodelman’s argument.

Though written in the same language, children’s literature from different English-speaking countries has different cultural emphases. For example, in recent years, the issue of race and ethnicity has been gaining increased attention in American children’s literature. More and more titles depicting Black or Asian Americans have been winning awards. The 2021 Newbery Medal winner, *When You Trap a Tiger* (Keller, 2020), tells a story about a Korean-American biracial girl and her cultural heritage; and the 2020 Caldecott Medal winner, *The Undefeated* (Alexander, 2019), honours Black history in the United States. Many titles in the provided book lists, such as *Eyes That Kiss in the Corners* (Ho, 2021), *Front Desk* (K. Yang, 2018), and the *Alvin Ho* series (Look, 2009–2014), to name a few, focus on the issue of Asian American cultural identity. Differently, in recent years, Canadian children’s literature has paid more attention to representing the voices of Indigenous people. Among the 13 collected Canadian titles written in English, seven depict Indigenous experiences or residential school, whereas only one picture book, *Mooncakes* (Setto, 2013) by Loretta Setto, is related to Asian culture through telling folk tales of the Chinese traditional Mid-Autumn Festival. Although celebrating diversity has been one of the most prominent features in Canadian children’s literature (Edwards & Saltman, 2010; Peterson & Swartz, 2008), the analysis of language and country of origin of the collected book titles in this study reveals that the use of Canadian children’s literature in classroom teaching and home reading may not correspond with this trend. Original Canadian titles regarding Indigenous experience and culture, as well as the wild geographical environment of Canada, are more likely being used by teachers and parents

to construct and (over)emphasize a particular Canadian national identity. As Nodelman (2008) pointed out,

Canadian books thus traditionally tended to represent something not simply Canadian but *distinctly* so . . . the northern tundra or the wild forest or the pastoral idyll of Anne's Green Gables—rather than the urban places most Canadian children actually have lived in throughout much of Canadian history. There were also many versions of Canadian aboriginal tales and almost none representing the European and other backgrounds of the majority of Canadian children. (p. 291, emphasis in original)

In sum, the analysis of the collected titles in the category of language and country of origin suggests that more original Canadian children's literature that depicts and can represent racial and regional diversities needs to be introduced and used in school and at home in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context. It also implies that the aspect of cultural representation of children's literature needs to be further stressed in bilingual education.

Among the Chinese titles, although 185 of the total 199 can be categorized as original, 163 are levelled readings. In other words, these originally-written-in-Chinese books are specifically designed for language and literacy learning. Most of them are decontextualized and thus function poorly for culture transmission or cultural identity recognition. For example, the levelled reading series *My First Chinese Words* (Yu, 2005), published by Beijing Language and Culture University Press, covers many situational themes for young children, such as introducing family members, distinguishing colours, and playing games. All these

stories contain common themes for children regardless of their cultural backgrounds. The book series would work just the same in a language other than Mandarin Chinese.

If the Chinese titles categorized as aesthetic/pleasure are separately examined, however, the imported ones are in the majority. Once again, the examination reveals the unbalanced use of Chinese children's literature in bilingual education—the original literary works were largely regarded as supplementary reading materials for bilingual children's linguistic acquisition or literacy skill development, while aesthetic/pleasure reading has largely relied on imported children's literature. When asked about the favourite children's books to read with students/children, Shelly, one of the parent participants, stated that in addition to Chinese children's fiction, her kids also loved reading Mo Willems's *Elephant and Piggie* series (2007–2016) and picture books created by Robert Munsch and Michael Martchenko. Similarly, another participant, Faye, who is both a Chinese teacher and a parent volunteer in the Chinese Storytelling Club, said that two of her favourite books for leisure reading with students and her own kids are the picture book series *Tyrannosaurus* (2011a) created by Japanese author Tatsuya Miyanishi and *Wild Animals I Have Known* (Seton, 2016), written by Canadian author Ernest Thompson Seton. Both titles, translated into Mandarin Chinese, were eagerly welcomed by Faye's bilingual students. Interestingly, *Wild Animals I Have Known* was first created in 1898 and was originally written in English as a new genre of realistic wild-animal fiction, but the version Faye read with her kids (see Appendix G) was adapted by a group of Korean authors into a picture book format, then later translated into Mandarin Chinese. The examples above on one hand demonstrate the transnational transmission and adaptation of high-quality children's literature; on the other hand, the

prevalence of imported children's literature among the collected Chinese titles also exposes the inadequacy of original Chinese children's literature—high-quality works are lacking in English-Chinese bilingual education in Canada, and teachers and parents find it difficult to access appropriate Chinese children's books.

Discussion on the Category of Time Period

As I argued in the previous section of categories of the collected children's literature, in this study, most of the teacher and parent participants' childhood reading had been deeply influenced by children's books that were published during the first and second golden ages of children's literature (Hintz & Tribunella, 2019). Canonical or classical children's literature has "haunted" not only both adults' and children's reading activities (Hunt, 1996; Pryce, 2021) but also other cultural and social aspects of their everyday lives. Therefore, to explore how the teachers' and parents' experiences regarding children's literature might be impacting their current practices in using children's books with bilingual students/children, I used the year 1997, when the first book in the *Harry Potter* series (Rowling, 1997-2007) was initially published, to draw an artificial line between classic and contemporary children's literature. In this study, being categorized as classic means the children's book has become a canon in both school and home reading, and further, transmits, reinforces, or expands certain concepts or ideologies embedded in it.

According to the data analysis shown in Table 3, three times as many English titles on the book lists are categorized as contemporary than as classic. The difference in quantity shows that with the flourishing of English children's literature, plenty of recent English titles are available for readers to choose from. Although some classical titles are still being used in

classroom teaching, they constitute only a small portion in the use of English children's literature. This finding implies that in bilingual education the most well-known English children's books might be less canonical than classic Chinese children's literature. It is worth mentioning, though, that the parent participants tended to use more classic stories, in both English and Chinese, with their children than the teacher participants. This might be because parents usually do not have as much knowledge and ability to access children's literature as teachers do. With such limitations, using classic children's literature seems more convenient and less error-prone for parents since the content is more familiar to them and copies are readily available.

In terms of Chinese children's literature, 177 titles fit into the contemporary category, but the majority (166) are levelled readings rather than literary works. That is to say, contemporary Chinese children's books in the study set were predominantly used for language and literacy teaching. According to data derived from the interviews, the parent and teacher participants tended to primarily use classic Chinese works in moralistic teaching and culture transmission. Various forms of classic works, such as traditional rhyming verse, poetry, myths, legends, folklore, historical stories, and idiom stories, were often used because they were believed to contain abundant knowledge of Chinese history and culture. For instance, the teacher participant Faye stated in her interview that her favourite children's book that she often used in Chinese teaching was *Thousand Character Classic* [千字文] (Zhou, 2019; see Appendix H), an ancient rhyming verse for young children's literacy learning:

(I like this book) because first of all, not one of the thousand characters is repeated, so you can learn Chinese characters. Secondly, every four sentences

as a group tells a historical story of China. Therefore, while teaching, I might not only teach four Chinese characters, but a long story is involved in there. . . . Culture, ancient classic stories, rhyming, Chinese characters and phrases, everything is in it. That's why I like this book the best, it perfectly matches with our Chinese teaching.

Many contemporary Chinese children's books in the study set are adaptations of traditional Chinese legends and historical stories. Although these stories are told or retold by contemporary authors and are often accompanied with modern illustrations, the cultural values conveyed through them are normally in line with traditional social norms that have permeated Chinese society. One parent participant, Jack, displayed many Chinese books he often read with his child in the photos. One of the photos (see Appendix I) includes a set of Chinese folklore—*The Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea* [八仙过海] (Yao, 2015a), *Pigsy Eats Watermelon* [猪八戒吃西瓜] (Yao, 2015b), *Carp Jumps Over the Dragon Gate* [鲤鱼跳龙门] (Yao, 2015c), and *The Golden Axe and the Silver Axe* [金斧头银斧头] (Yao, 2015d)—which all contain traditional Chinese social and cultural values. *The Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea* demonstrates Chinese Taoist culture and legend figures through telling a story about how eight immortals used their unique ways to cross the sea. Each of the immortals was once human and had their own background stories. The stories of the eight immortals are frequent themes appearing in various art products such as sculptures and paintings and are also paraphrased in idioms and common sayings; hence, this story is not only used for language teaching but also for transmitting and explaining Chinese traditional culture to children. Similarly, adapted from ancient classics, *Carp Jumps Over the Dragon Gate* states that while

many carp swim upstream against the Yellow River's strong current, few are capable or brave enough for the final leap over the waterfall, after which they are transformed into a powerful dragon. This folk tale is often used as a metaphor to teach Chinese children to achieve success through hard work and perseverance. Although *Pigsy Eats Watermelon* (Yao, 2015b) is a modern children's literature work adapted from the classic *Journey to the West* (C. Wu, 2014, 2018), its purpose is to arouse children's interest and guide them to further read the original masterpiece. The last title Jack displayed, *The Golden Axe and the Silver Axe* (Yao, 2015d), is an adaptation of "The Honest Woodcutter" in *Aesop's Fables* (620–564 BCE); the Chinese version has removed its commercial element of "A river does not always bring axes" but highlighted the moral that "honesty will always be rewarded" (Hansen, 2002) to cater to traditional Chinese values. In sum, all four books can be viewed as primers in traditional Chinese literature and culture.

Another parent participant, Shelly, showed a set of Chinese historical story books that her children enjoyed reading in one of the photos she provided to the researcher as supplemental materials. As can be seen from this photo (see Appendix J), the book covers are illustrated in a Japanese manga style, which is in line with the current children's aesthetic trend—the characters have big round eyes and adorable appearances, which makes the content seem to be entertainment oriented. However, the titles of the books—*Hegemon-King of Western Chu* [西楚霸王] (Gu, 2018a), *The Great Han Empire* [大汉帝国] (Gu, 2018b), *The Flying General* [龙城飞将] (Gu, 2018c), and *The Reappearance of Shen Nong* [神农再现] (Gu, 2018d)—reflect the fact that the books convey serious Chinese history and culture, and the emphasis is on the instructive meaning.

It is worth pointing out that many Chinese titles in the book lists, similar to the books Jack and Shelly demonstrated in their photos, come in sets rather than individual copies. To facilitate their categorization, a set of books was counted as one title shown in Table 3. In other words, one English title provided by a participant may only refer to one book, but a Chinese title may include several different books. Therefore, the proportion of the classic stories is much higher than contemporary Chinese children's literature in bilingual children's actual reading in Chinese. According to the interviews, the teacher and parent participants mostly endorsed the cultural values in the classic stories they used with their students/children. The participants believed that it was necessary to pass on certain traditional cultural values to their children, even if they were born and raised in Canada, and that they should not forget their "cultural roots." As one Chinese teacher participant, Faye, stated when discussing what she liked best about working as a bilingual teacher,

I'm shouldering the responsibility of passing on history. . . . [I] feel I want to carry forward the good Chinese culture. . . . Our ancestors have given us a lot of legacies; there're many good things about China and about Chinese culture that we need to let our children know.

Compared to the collected English children's literature, contemporary Chinese children's literature appears to be used relatively rarely in reading for pleasure; the teacher and parent participants to a large extent relied on their own childhood reading experience to select books for their children. Interestingly, several teacher and parent participants who grew up in China said that Western fairy tales and fables played an important role in their own childhood reading. The teacher participant Jenny recalled:

I was very fond of fairy tales when I was young. . . . My parents were busy, so they bought me cassettes that telling stories from *Grimm's Fairy Tales* and *Anderson's Fairy Tales*. . . . I loved listening to those fairy tales so much that I can recite them backwards. . . . But I read few Chinese [children's books], only *Journey to the West*.

Another teacher participant, Faye, also indicated that the favourite children's books in her childhood reading were fairy tales such as *Grimm's Fairy Tales* (Grimm & Grimm, 1985) and the Western classic *Aesop's Fables* (Aesop, 2015). From the subsequent interviews and their book lists, it can be seen that the two teachers both preferred to use fairy tales and fables in their teaching with bilingual children. Similarly, one parent participant, Jack, stated that he liked reading Chinese fairy tales written by Zheng Yuanjie (known as the King of Fairy Tales in China) rather than Western fairy tales depicting stories about princesses and princes or the classic Chinese books with strong ideological propaganda. As a result, in his book list regarding reading for pleasure with his bilingual child, he selected many contemporary Chinese fairy tales.

In short, time period has been imperceptibly functioning as a factor to impact teachers' and parents' selecting of children's books with their bilingual students/children. Either for pedagogical/instructional/didactic reading or aesthetic/pleasure reading, teachers and parents often unconsciously go back to their childhood reading experiences and tend to choose the children's literature that they enjoyed or were familiar with when they were young. It also appears that for teachers and parents who may not have relevant knowledge regarding children's literature, it is hard for them to access and use more contemporary children's books

with their students/children; as a result, they rely on their own childhood reading experiences, which might not be sufficient to support their children's bilingual and biliteracy development.

Discussion on the Category of Media Communication and Influence

The collected English and Chinese children's literature titles show similarity in the category of media communication and influence; that is, titles that fit into *worldwide* are far less than *local*. There are 24 English and 14 Chinese titles categorized as worldwide, whereas the numbers for local are 92 and 185. Comparatively, there are more English titles than Chinese ones in worldwide; this probably results from the longtime dominance of English children's literature in the market. Moreover, according to the book lists provided by different participants, although there is a certain overlap in the English and Chinese titles categorized as worldwide, the distinction is significant and reflects how different cultural values have been emphasized through children's literature in different cultural contexts.

The book series *Elephant and Piggie* (Willems, 2007–2016), created by Mo Willems, and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (Kinney, 2007–2021), written by Jeff Kinney, are representations of the overlap. The two titles repeatedly appeared in several teacher and parent participants' book lists, including both the English and the Chinese versions. Although many other English titles categorized as worldwide were also translated into Mandarin Chinese and may have gained a certain popularity in mainland China, they were only presented in the book lists provided by participants whose first language was English, while the participants who spoke Mandarin Chinese as the home language tended not to select and use the Chinese versions of these books as the bilingual children's Chinese reading. This is possibly due to the higher reading level these books require—the Percy Jackson series (Riordan, 2005–2009) and Harry

Potter series (Rowling, 1997–2007) are the representative examples. Nevertheless, most of the English children’s literature categorized as worldwide has gained popularity in both English and Chinese book markets.

In contrast, many of the Chinese titles categorized as worldwide in this study have not received comparable popularity in the English market. For example, one teacher participant mentioned that she regularly used the picture book series *Tyrannosaurus* (Miyanishi, 2011a) as both the language teaching resource in her Chinese class and for pleasure reading with Chinese children at a voluntary storytelling club (see Appendix K). The series is created by Japanese author Tatsuya Miyanishi and has been translated into many other languages, including Mandarin Chinese. It has also been adapted into animations and stage dramas for children and has achieved great success. According to the book introduction presented on the webpage of China Dangdang Inc., one of the largest online book-selling platforms in China, since the first book in the *Tyrannosaurus* series was published in Mandarin Chinese in 2004, it has remained a top-10 bestseller and the accumulated sales have reached tens of millions of copies (“Tyrannosaurus series,” n.d.). Because of its use of simple language, vivid illustrations, and humorous and touchable plots, the *Tyrannosaurus* series is also welcomed by many English-Chinese bilingual teachers, parents, and children in Canada. However, the series has had a lukewarm reception in the English-speaking world, receiving only an average rating of 3.5 out of 5 on Goodreads (2021). One book in this series, *I Will Love You Forever* (Miyanishi, 2017), received the lowest rating of 3.08. It tells a story about a kindhearted mother, Maiasaura, who raised a tyrannosaurus. Although the tyrannosaurus struggled with his instinct and identity as he grew up, he eventually chose to battle against his birth parent

and protect the Maiasaura family. The most liked comment about this book on Goodreads criticized it, saying:

[This book is] written and illustrated in a style I find harsh and violent. . . . The story seems to wander off track to what I find an ending that I don't think will make adopted kids feel better about their adoptive families.

(PattyMacDotComma, 2017)

Another reader, Wayne McCoy (2017), put it more plainly: “The story seems to be telling a message about adoption, but the ending is kind of sad and confusing.” In contrast, on Douban, a Chinese social networking platform similar to Goodreads, the rating for *I Will Love You Forever* (Miyanishi, 2011b) was 9.1 out of 10. Most of the readers commented that they were deeply moved by the book. From reading this book with their own children, they further realized and experienced the selfless love between parent and child. Interestingly, hardly any comments mentioned the topic of adoption, and although some readers considered the ending to be less than perfect, no one felt it was confusing (Douban, n.d.). Overall, it seems that both the theme conveyed and the style of artistic expression in *I Will Love You Forever* (Miyanishi, 2011b) are more understandable to Chinese readers than to Western readers.

Similarly, the Chinese version of the French children's literature series *Les P'tites Poules* (Jolibois, 2006) has gained a huge popularity and success in the Chinese book market, while the English version has remained in obscurity. First translated and published by 21st Century Publishing Group in 2006, sales of the Chinese version of *Les P'tites Poules* reached six million in 2011 (Fanghuang, 2011). In addition to being presented in the book lists provided by the participants in this study, the *Les P'tites Poules* series was also shared by

bilingual children in a virtual voluntary storytelling club organized by the local Chinese community. More than half of the dozen children who attended the storytelling club had read the book series, despite the fact that it had been several years since many of them had immigrated from China. The popularity of *Les P'tites Poules* showed that this French children's literature series has been widely recognized and used by both parents and children in English-Chinese bilingual education.

It is also worth noting that in the total of 14 Chinese titles categorized as worldwide in this study set, 11 were originally written in other languages and later translated into Mandarin Chinese. The only three titles originally written in Chinese are adaptations based on two ancient classic literary works that have a long international reputation, *Journey to the West* (C. Wu, 2014, 2018)¹ and *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (Luo, 2014). Although some of the contemporary Chinese children's literature presented in the book lists has been translated into other languages, they have not achieved the same prominence in the overseas book market as their English counterparts accomplished in the Chinese book market. For example, the book series *Mo's Mischief* (H. Yang, 1998–2020), written by Chinese author Yang Hongying, has sold over 60 million copies (the series contains 29 books as of 2021) since it was first published in 2003 (Sina Books, 2019). It has also been adapted into various media such as TV series, cartoons, and stage plays multiple times in China. Although the global multilingual copyrights to the series were licensed to one of the big five English-language publishing companies, HarperCollins Publishers LLC, early in 2008, only eight of the books have been translated into English and published so far. The first book in the series, *Four*

¹ There are two different adapted versions of *Journey to the West*.

Troublemakers (H. Yang, 2011), has only 12 ratings and 3 reviews on the website Goodreads (*Mo's mischief: Four troublemakers*, n.d.).

The above discussion on the category of media communication and influence has two implications. First, as I argued earlier, there is sufficient and even surplus high-quality English children's literature in the English language book market; therefore, it is difficult for non-English children's literature to compete with the English counterparts and enter the English-speaking market. Second, and more significant and illuminating for bilingual education, is the culture disconnection reflected by the discrepancy between the English and Chinese titles categorized as worldwide in this study. I have elaborated above how differently English and Chinese readers reacted to the Japanese picture book series *Tyrannosaurus*. It is not surprising that Chinese readers could better comprehend a Japanese author's visual and conceptual narrative as the two cultural environments are similar. Most Chinese readers can appreciate the ending in *I Will Love You Forever* (Miyanishi, 2011b) when the tyrannosaurus chooses to leave the Maiasaura family to protect them, which confused many English readers. They are completely able to understand why the author arranged such a "sad" and "brutal" ending. Such understanding is built on the readers' and author's mutual comprehension of East Asian culture. The cultural values rooted in the ending encompass the edification "expend the love of the young ones in one's family to that of other families" that is advocated by Confucian culture, and the spirit of self-sacrifice embodied in both Chinese and Japanese culture. Both are regarded as traditional virtues in East Asian culture. In short, *I Will Love You Forever* (Miyanishi, 2011b) will never be interpreted as a story about adoption by East Asian readers as it was by the English readers. It is this cultural discrepancy that makes this story hard to

understand and accept for many English readers. The quantity variance of the collected English and Chinese titles categorized as worldwide may also illustrate that the culture disconnection is more embodied in English children's literature. The predominance of translated works in the Chinese titles categorized as worldwide shows that children's literature from various languages and cultures was well received by most of the Chinese teacher and parent participants. The Chinese book market, on the one hand, needs more original Chinese children's literature to better depict and represent the lives of Chinese children; on the other hand, it has a higher level of acceptance and adaptability towards imported and translated children's literature, and thus shows a kind of heterogeneity. In contrast, the English book market, with its tendency to disregard children's literature from other languages and cultures, has shown the characteristics of homogeneity and exclusiveness. Furthermore, the large number of titles categorized as local in both the English and Chinese groups reveals a hidden issue in the use of children's literature with English-Chinese bilingual children. It indicates a conservativeness and segregation in bilingual education. More specifically, the use of English and Chinese children's literature in bilingual education tends to be localized within the children's respective language and culture. The solid and efficient bridge that that bilingual children direly need has not been completely built to facilitate their language and literacy development in both languages.

Discussion on the Category of Format

As Table 3 demonstrates, there is a striking difference between the collected Chinese and English titles in the format category. Despite the fact that illustrated books account for over 60 percent of the collected English titles, there are a considerable number of nonillustrated

books. Most of these nonillustrated books are long chapter books requiring a fairly high level of language and literacy development. In contrast, the amount of nonillustrated books among the Chinese titles is almost negligible. This finding implies that the actual or potential readers of these books—the bilingual children—are assessed by their teachers and parents as having better language and literacy ability in English than in Mandarin Chinese.

It should be noted that the dividing line between illustrated and not illustrated is blurred. With the improvements in printing technology and the interpenetrating influence among various media types, the forms and formats of children's literature have also been rapidly changing. As Dresang (1999) pointed out, changing forms and formats is one of the three radical change types manifesting in contemporary literature for youth, which includes six aspects: (1) graphics in new forms and formats; (2) words and pictures reaching new levels of synergy; (3) nonlinear organization and format; (4) nonsequential organization and format; (5) multiple layers of meaning; and (6) interactive formats. One of the titles recurring in the book lists, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (Kinney, 2007–2021), is a representative example. This series can be viewed as a hybrid of graphic novel and fiction, which enables written texts and illustrations to reach a new level of synergy and provides readers multiple layers of meaning. Because illustrations have significant narrative meaning in *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, though written text is its main component, the series as well as other books that employed similar forms and formats are all categorized as illustrated for this study. Nevertheless, even with such loose categorized criteria, the collected English children's literature that takes written texts as the main form in this study occupy an important position in the bilingual children's reading.

In contrast, the Chinese children's literature in the collected titles, including both levelled readings and literary works, heavily relies on illustrations to engage its bilingual child readers. It should be noted that this does not imply that less cognitive competence and a lower level of language and literacy ability are required to understand picture books or books with more illustrations; rather, it demands a different comprehensive ability to interpret both the verbal and visual narratives as well as the interplay between them (Edward & Saltman, 2010; Hintz & Tribunella, 2019; Nikolajeva, 2014). Furthermore, in the digital age, literacy development can no longer be understood as the mastering of a fixed body of skills to make meaning from and through written text. Instead, literacy competence implies and, even more, emphasizes the comprehension and interpretation of visual information. The titles categorized as illustrated in the collected Chinese children's literature, however, are predominantly levelled readings. Compared to picture books and graphic novels, the illustrations in levelled readings play a more subsidiary role in assisting readers to understand the written texts. In other words, in these levelled readings, written text is the core of narration and can independently construct and convey meaning, while illustration is dispensable and attached to the text. Moreover, in addition to levelled readings, illustrated Chinese children's books in this study set include many adaptations of traditional myths, legends, folklore, and classic literary works, which originally were created and circulated in a text-only form. Adding illustrations to these works can be regarded as a way to make the content more appropriate for children to read and understand. Therefore, similar to levelled readings, illustrations in these adapted literary works are still a secondary condition, and only play a supporting role in children's understanding, or as a way to arouse children's reading interest.

To sum up, the significant difference between the collected English and Chinese children's literature regarding the format of illustrated and not illustrated reflects that, in bilingual children's language and literacy development, English and Mandarin Chinese are in imbalanced positions. According to the provincial curriculum documents on international language programs, bilingual programs are designed to use both languages in a half and half manner, not only for language arts but also for instruction in other courses, in order to prompt students' learning through the language rather than only learning the language (Alberta Education, n.d.). Similarly, bilingual education in other contexts, such as Chinese complementary schools or at home, also tends to maintain a balanced development between the two languages to foster simultaneous bilingualism (Baker & Wright, 2021; Sun, 2011; Sung & Tsai, 2019). However, such an expectation is unlikely to be achieved due to a variety of influences, including insufficient exposure to the target language other than English and lack of relevant academic support. For instance, parent participant Chloe shared about her children's exposure to Mandarin Chinese that

they definitely have more troubles with the Mandarin portion of everything. I think the troubles with it is that we don't speak it primarily at home, so they're not exposed to it. I think that's our problem is they don't hear it very often except for at school, so it's harder for them to maintain that.

Chloe further stated that although all her children are involved in the bilingual program, they mostly read story books in English, especially for aesthetic/pleasure reading. As for the children's literature that is most effective in encouraging her children's development of language and literacy in Chinese, she pointed out that reading resources

accompanied by pictures and audio assistance are most helpful for the children to be able to comprehend.

In addition, Chloe's experience, as well as other teacher and parent participants' preference for using illustrated books in facilitating their children's development of Chinese, reflects a mindset that is frequently present in bilingual education, that is, that the development of written and literary language is more valued than other literacy practices such as interpreting visual images. Illustrations are usually regarded as scaffolding facilitators to beginners and novice readers in Mandarin Chinese, while the ultimate goal is to be able to read and understand Chinese language in written-text-only format. As Nikolajeva (2014) illuminated, "expert readers tend to rely more on verbal statements than on mind-reading from images, possibly because we are, from early school years, manipulated to believe that language has more weight than images" (p. 104). Therefore, it is not surprising that illustrated books are predominant in bilingual children's Chinese reading materials, particularly at the elementary level, and are regarded by teachers and parents as a footstone for reading text-only literature in the future. In the next section, on the basis of the findings and discussion in this chapter, as well as the interview data, I will further elaborate the various roles children's literature plays in English-Chinese bilingual children's language and literacy development and their daily lives.

The Various Roles Children's Literature Plays in English-Chinese Bilingual Children's Language and Literacy Development

This study employed interpretive inquiry as the primary way to analyze the interview data. As explained in the methodology section, I summarized and grouped a variety of roles that

children's literature plays in English-Chinese bilingual children's language and literacy development according to the themes that emerged from the interview data. In brief, the data revealed three broad roles: (1) children's literature as relationship founder, enhancer, and bond; (2) children's literature as language and literacy learning resource and bridge; and (3) children's literature as cultural agent. Each of these broad roles becomes more nuanced when children's literature is used by different people, with different intentions, and/or in different contexts. In the following section I explain the three major roles and elaborate how they function and vary in response to different situations.

Children's Literature as Relationship Founder, Enhancer, and Bond

According to Cummins (2021), human relationships are at the heart of schooling. He asserted that establishing powerful relationships among educators, students, and communities is more central to student success than any method of pedagogy. In addition, a healthy parent-child relationship and positive interactions between parents and children can also greatly impact children's language and literacy development as well as their social and emotional development (Aram & Aviram, 2009; Hamilton et al., 2016; Zhang & Koda, 2011). In this study, the role children's literature plays in regard to establishing and maintaining relationships was constantly emphasized by the teacher and parent participants. Depending on the various contexts in which the children's literature was used, its role in regard to relationships might be described as one of relationship founder, relationship enhancer, or relationship bond. The role of *relationship founder* refers to the initial establishment of a relationship in which children's literature functions as a stepping stone. When there is no intrinsic connection between the two (or more) parties in the relationship, children's literature

may function as an icebreaker. After a relationship is established, children's literature may serve as a *relationship enhancer* to strengthen the ties. *Relationship bond* implies that there may have already been a tie, whether strong or weak, and children's literature sustains this relationship. In brief, *relationship* is the key word that emerged from the interview data.

Below, I elaborate on these more nuanced roles that children's literature plays in establishing and maintaining relationships in specific terms: (a) children's literature as relationship founder and enhancer between teacher and student; (b) children's literature as relationship bond between parent and child; and (c) children's literature as relationship bond and enhancer within communities.

Children's literature as relationship founder and enhancer between teacher and student. Relationship building with students had a central place in the consciousness of each bilingual teacher interviewed for this study, regardless of which language they taught or which program they were working for. As Anne stated,

I really want to emphasize relationship with my students. . . . Making sure that academics are important, but the relationship should be number one, because they're not going to learn from someone that they don't feel comfortable with. . . . If they don't feel like they belong in the classroom, then they're not going to learn.

Identified as a Chinese Canadian herself, Anne shared her journey of exploring and recognizing her own identity and how it has impacted her selection and use of children's literature with her bilingual students. She highlighted the influence of the release of the movie

Crazy Rich Asians (2018), which is “the first modern story with an all-Asian cast and an Asian-American lead in 25 years” (Ho, 2018, para. 2), on her identity recognition:

I never thought about like seeing myself in media. I never thought of it as a big deal, just because you just get used to what’s around you. . . . I never felt I see myself that way before, like I can see myself in every single character on the big screen. The fact that it was people enjoying the movie with me that maybe weren’t Chinese either that enjoyed it. That was also pretty exciting to me and just the fact that I saw myself, which is something I never realized I missed.

Since then, instead of feeling that more was better and buying books on sale without specific intention, Anne had begun to purposefully collect and use children’s literature in which her students, using her words, “can see themselves no matter what colour, what culture they are from.” In addition, Anne emphasized, “I hope that they can see that sense of belonging, that sense that you are a part of this world, and you’re welcomed.”

Anne’s explanation demonstrates how children’s literature becomes a relationship founder between her and her students. Although she had acknowledged relationship building as the most essential principle in her teaching, before she started collecting and using children’s books that depicted cultural identity issues, her relationship with students was more focused on building a general trust and rapport instead of culture-based recognition and resonance, partly because she was an English teacher and did not have an obligation to teach knowledge regarding Chinese language and culture. Through using children’s literature more frequently in which the bilingual students could see themselves, the teacher-student relationship between Anne and her students was enhanced, as she elaborated:

I have made more intentional efforts to include more books with East Asian characters. I try really hard to make sure that they can see themselves in the classroom. So you don't just see yourself during Chinese class. You see yourself in English class as well. And when you look around, this is a classroom where you feel like your most authentic self—you can see yourselves in the assignments, in the tasks, in the books, in the movies, and in the shows that we have, so that they're welcomed no matter what class it is during the time of day.

In addition, this relationship enhanced through children's literature extended to link with the bilingual students' daily experiences. When talking about her favourite children's books to use in the classroom, Anne showed a couple of picture books and explained that these books depict children who are trying to connect with their grandparents, whose first language is not English. Through reading these books with her students, she was able to ask questions like "Do you have that in your family?" and "What language do your grandparents speak?" which helped the bilingual students better make cultural connections. In sum, for Anne, beyond the pedagogical purpose, the children's literature she chose and used with her bilingual students functioned as an enhancer to strengthen the teacher-student relationship.

Similarly, as a Chinese teacher who used to teach in a bilingual program, Jenny also put relationship building with students first. Compared to Anne, her relationship building with the bilingual students more evidently relied on children's literature. In the interview, she shared her experience of doing guided reading centres with her bilingual students and stated that all the students enjoyed and were engaged in the reading; through this, they had also built

an intimacy with her. Jenny indicated that although she mostly used short stories with simple Chinese words in her reading centre, her students were very fond of this routine because her way of reading books was dramatic, and most students regarded this activity as storytelling rather than language and literacy learning. In addition, Jenny also intentionally used children's literature that was based on and represented Chinese culture with her bilingual students, thus further enhancing their teacher-student relationship. For example, she said:

When (preparing for teaching) the Chinese New Year, I ordered a pop-up book from Taobao (Taobao is a Chinese online shopping platform that has overseas delivery service available). It was a comprehensive book, with (pictures of) fireworks popping up when being opened, and children wearing new hats and clothes for celebrating Chinese New Year, and pictures of eating dumplings and spring rolls. The kids in my class love such books, and I love teaching them with these books.

Jenny was born and educated in China before entering college in Canada, which makes her growing up experience different from her bilingual students who were born and raised in Canada. Therefore, unlike Anne, it was more difficult for Jenny to build an intimate relationship with students. Nevertheless, by using children's literature that portrays and honours Chinese culture, Jenny not only founded a close relationship with her bilingual students but also enhanced such relationships through the similar cultural practices manifested in the books. In brief, though the children's literature Jenny selected and used was mainly for the purpose and needs of language and literacy teaching, it also worked as her relationship founder and enhancer with her bilingual students.

Faye, another teacher participant who had been working as a lead Chinese language teacher in a complementary school in Canada, emphasized the importance of establishing and maintaining strong teacher-student relationships as well. Faye had worked as a high school teacher in China for many years, and this abundant teaching experience made her fully aware that building relationships should not be limited to the classroom but extended to students' daily life, in her words, "to understand students' inner lives." She quoted a common Chinese saying, "impart knowledge and educate people," to explain her educational principle:

I think a good teacher needs not only to be good at imparting knowledge, but more importantly, educating people. The students may not remember what knowledge you have taught him, but one of your unexpected words may be the turning point of his life. . . . As a teacher, you need to see the student with your heart, you need to see his best in him.

The strong sense of responsibility she felt as a teacher made Faye believe that bilingual education is not merely about teaching language but about transmitting and carrying forward Chinese history and culture. Hence, in selecting and using children's literature, Faye preferred books that underscore historical and cultural knowledge. For example, she stated that one of her favourite children's books she often used in Chinese teaching was *Thousand Character Classic* [千字文] (Zhou, 2019), an ancient rhyming verse for young children's literacy learning:

(I like this book) because, first of all, not one of the thousand characters is repeated, so you can learn Chinese characters. Secondly, every four sentences as a group tells a historical story of China. Therefore, while teaching, I might

only teach four Chinese characters, but a long story is involved in there. . . .

Culture, ancient classic stories, rhyming, Chinese characters and phrases, everything is in it. That's why I like this book the best, it perfectly matches with our Chinese teaching.

For Faye, in addition to education and care, her relationship building with the bilingual students was associated with culture transmission and inheritance. Faye's use of children's literature that contained abundant Chinese culture not only reinforced the teacher-student relationship but transformed it into a compatriot connection through which she and her bilingual students had embarked on a journey to explore the roots of Chinese culture.

Children's literature as relationship bond between parent and child. Reading and sharing children's literature is a common parent-child interaction nowadays and is believed to have an important impact on children's language and literacy development (Hamilton et al., 2016; Lyytinen et al., 1998; Zhang & Koda, 2011). Moreover, the benefits of shared reading include improving social emotions (Aram & Aviram, 2009) and consolidating the parent-child bond (Scholastic, n.d.). Derived from the interview data of this study, one significant role children's literature plays is indeed the relationship bond between parents and children. For children's literature used in English-Chinese bilingual education, such a parent-child relationship bond is also correlated with cross-cultural identity construction and recognition. All three parent participants indicated that through reading children's literature, especially literature that represented Chinese culture, their relationship with their children became more intimate and harmonious. For example, for the PIAs, Jack chose to draw three scenarios through which his experience of reading and teaching with his bilingual child was reflected

(see Appendix L). The three drawings showed different locations at home where his child enjoyed parent-child reading time with him: in bed, lying on their stomachs on the floor, and sitting on the stairs in the sunlight. Jack explained that he did not want to set limits on where and when his child should read; instead, he wanted to create a relaxing and game-like atmosphere. He also scattered the Chinese books he collected all over the home and let his child pick the ones they would read together. It is worth mentioning that the majority of books Jack read with his child were in Chinese; he made this choice because he believed it was not difficult for bilingual children to learn English in the Canadian setting since it is the mainstream societal language. Mandarin Chinese, on the other hand, is in opposition to English due to its marginalization as a minority language. Jack wanted his child to be able to acknowledge how charming and important Chinese culture is through learning Chinese language and reading Chinese books. By using Chinese children's literature in this way, Jack not only succeeded in encouraging his bilingual child's interest in reading in Chinese, but also consolidated the parent-child relationship and helped his child construct a positive image and cultural identity of being Chinese.

Another parent participant, Shelly, shared a similar experience regarding the use of Chinese children's literature with her children in the PIAs. She described five important scenes she would like included if someone was going to make a movie about her life of raising bilingual children. One of the scenes would be her older daughter discussing the Chinese classic *Journey to the West* (C. Wu, 2014, 2018) and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (Luo, 2014), with her grandfather. Although the books Shelly's daughter read were picture book adaptations instead of the original novels, it did not obstruct the discussions and

conversations between her and her grandfather about the stories. As Shelly said, “sometimes they have very deep conversations about the books, they would discuss many details. I feel so good to see such interactions across generations.” The grandfather cannot speak fluent English but has ample knowledge of Chinese classics; therefore, through the children’s book adaptations his granddaughter read, their relationship, once detached by their different languages, has reconnected. Once again, Chinese children’s literature had facilitated a bond that consolidated intergenerational relationship.

The bond created through children’s literature between Chloe and her bilingual children was slightly different from that of Jack and Shelly with their children. Chloe had immigrated to Canada at a very young age and spoke Cantonese as her home language, so that she was not fluent in Mandarin Chinese. Therefore, for Chloe, it could be difficult to provide home literacy activities targeting Chinese language for her bilingual children, such as reading books written in Mandarin Chinese. However, she highly valued the important role that children’s literature plays in language and literacy development, especially the role Chinese children’s literature played in her children’s learning, because she believed storybooks can keep children entertained and engage them in literacy learning. She thus adapted and developed various strategies that were applicable to her situation. For example, sometimes when her children picked up books written in English to read with her, Chloe would orally translate the language into Cantonese while reading the books to the children. In this way, her children were able to develop their oral language in Cantonese and learn the names of certain items in both English and Chinese. Another strategy she used was to find Chinese books with

Pinyin, the official romanization system for Standard Mandarin Chinese; thus, Chloe could figure out what the words meant together with her children.

The relationship bond created by children's literature between Chloe and her children was further reflected in the English children's books she shared in the interview. When asked about her favourite books she enjoyed reading as a child and the ones she now liked to read with her children, Chloe indicated that there were many overlaps in her own and her children's reading lists. She said she had introduced and shared many of her favourite childhood English titles with her children, and gave examples such as books by Dr. Seuss, Roald Dahl, and Judy Blume. In the photo Chloe provided to display her older son's book collection (see Appendix M), some classic English children's literature like *James and the Giant Peach* (Dahl, 2018), *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Dahl, 2018), *Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator* (Dahl, 2018), and *Matilda* (Dahl, 2018) by Roald Dahl, and *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* (Blume, 2011) and *Fudge-a-Mania* (Blume, 2007) by Judy Blume are side by side with more contemporary children's books like the *Dog Man* series (Pilkey, 2016–2021) and *Confronting the Dragon: An Unofficial Minecrafters Adventure* (Cheverton, 2014). This example intuitively demonstrates how the parent-child relationship is bonded and enhanced through children's literature that is embedded with shared memories and reading enjoyment.

Some participants' recalling of their own childhood experiences also reflected how children's literature could become a strong relationship bond between parent and child. When asked what could have made reading or sharing children's literature more enjoyable for them

as children, Jenny and Jack both mentioned that they very much admired the bedtime story time that is conventional in Western culture. Jenny said:

I often saw these scenarios in TV shows and movies after I came to Canada that kids sleeping in the bed, hugging their stuffy, and the parents would read books for them. I feel it is such an enjoyable time as a kid. . . . It's not only about reading; it's actually building the relationship.

Jack shared, "I don't think we have such things as parent-child shared reading when we were young. It would be much more enjoyable if there was." In summary, the relationship bond between parents and their bilingual children had been or could be further enhanced through reading and sharing children's literature based on similar culture and childhood memories.

Children's literature as relationship bond and enhancer within communities. The role of children's literature as relationship bond and enhancer within communities is probably the most intriguing finding that emerged from this study. Some studies have confirmed that diverse children's literature can play important roles in educating students and raising their awareness of social justice issues, thus helping to build a more harmonious global community (e.g., Damico, 2005; Dolan, 2014; Greenlaw, 2005; O'Neil, 2010; Wiltse, 2015). Such a role of children's literature in bilingual education may be more prominent in building and strengthening relationships within communities, both in the English-Chinese bilingual context and in the Asian community. Moreover, this role was reflected more through the activity of sharing and using Chinese children's literature rather than by the literature itself. Almost all of the participants in this study said one of the biggest challenges they had encountered in using

children's literature in bilingual education was the accessibility of appropriate Chinese books for their students/child(ren), and the COVID-19 pandemic had made the situation even worse.

As Chloe said,

definitely selecting proper Mandarin books, and having access to it (is challenging). I mean right now the only way to get access to the books for my kids is the school library. The public library is closed now. Anyways, I don't know if I am comfortable with borrowing books from the public library right now. Anyways, it's just finding appropriate books for them that they can comprehend and that they can read as well.

Also unable to access public book resources, another parent participant, Shelly, turned to the Chinese community for help. She shared stories about parents borrowing children's books from each other during the pandemic within the Chinese community where she lived. In one of the drawings she did for the PIAs (see Appendix N), Shelly depicted a woman handing out books to a little girl. Although the drawing is very simple, with the smiling faces of both the woman and girl, and the tree and sun highlighting comfortable surroundings, it easily conveys the trust Shelly felt about living in the community. She further explained why she was grateful and respectful to the Chinese parents who were willing to lend books to her:

I found many Chinese parents here take the trouble to carry Chinese books from China. I saw people don't want to sell these books even when they move because it takes them a lot of effort to bring all the books here. So, every time when others are willing to borrow books to us, I always tell my children they

must not damage the books and (must) value such friendship, especially during the pandemic. It means a lot for people to take care of each other.

From Shelly's experience, it is not hard to see that books, particularly Chinese children's books, are very precious to Chinese parents largely due to the difficulty of accessing them. Moreover, for Chinese parents, these books are not only a kind of educational resource, but also vehicles of memory, preservation, and inheritance of their own culture. In addition to the community solidarity and warmth Shelly said she felt from this experience, she also took this special borrowing experience as an opportunity to educate her children to value and maintain such intimate community relations. Hence, in an unexpected way, children's literature helped Shelly and her children strengthen the sense of belonging to their community, and brought the Chinese community closer together.

Similarly, Jack shared how he searched for and selected Chinese children's books appropriate for his child by asking help from his friends in China during the pandemic. He explained:

I used to count on public libraries for Chinese books, but the libraries are closed because of pandemic. Therefore, I have to choose shipping Chinese books from China by sea. Another interesting way I use is to mass texting all my schoolfellows through WeChat (WeChat is a Chinese multipurpose instant messaging, social media, and mobile payment App developed by Tencent), including groups of my classmates from elementary, junior high, and high schools. I texted that I was in urgent need of Chinese children's books and asked for their support, and everyone was keen to help and donate their used

books. . . . In this way, I got all kinds of books, even including Chinese workbooks. . . . They delivered the books to my dad who lives in China and then my dad shipped them to me.

Different from Shelly, the community Jack had strengthened his bond with through children's literature was not physically but virtually connected across time and space.

In addition to borrowing books, the participants also found other ways to consolidate their relationships within the Asian community through children's literature. For example, as discussed earlier, Anne had been dedicated to looking for and collecting books related to Chinese cultural identity, and through which she felt her own identity had connected and resonated with her bilingual students. By sharing and reading Chinese stories she was familiar with to her bilingual students, Jenny also found a cultural sense of belonging in the bilingual program.

In short, relationship bond and enhancer within communities is probably the most unique role children's literature plays in bilingual education, which is unlikely to occur in other contexts. It can be regarded as one of the emerging characteristics regarding the use of children's literature in bilingual education, and it has been amplified by the pandemic. One of my initial assumptions about the study findings was that in bilingual education, teachers and parents would pay more attention to the role of children's literature in language learning; however, to my surprise, almost every participant gave top priority to the building and maintenance of relationships. This finding reveals that with the importance of children's literature being increasingly recognized and advocated for in bilingual education, more teachers and parents have begun to consciously learn, understand, and use children's literature

as a vehicle for relationship building and consolidation. As a result, the role children's literature plays has been broadened beyond merely a tool of language and literacy learning but as an avenue for whole person education (Jerb et al., 2015; Wortham et al., 2020). For Chinese children's literature in particular, it appears that with the increasing influence of Chinese language and culture, the social and cultural meanings embedded in children's literature are more essential than the linguistic and communicative meanings in bilingual education.

Children's Literature as Language and Literacy Learning Resource and Bridge

Literature occupies a central place in language and literacy education. Numerous studies have highlighted the fact that children's literature is an important vehicle for effective language and literacy education, as well as multilingual and multicultural education (e.g., Brenna et al., 2021; Kiefer, 2010; Martinez-Roldán & Newcomer, 2011; Peterson & Swartz, 2008; Wiltse, 2015; Zapata et al., 2015).

The role children's literature plays as a language and literacy learning resource and bridge in bilingual education is profound, as shown in this study. There are four different aspects involved in this role: (1) children's literature as an authoritative resource for language and literacy learning; (2) children's literature as an immersive resource for language and literacy learning; (3) children's literature as a playful/interactive resource for language and literacy learning; and (4) children's literature as a bridge for bilingual and biliteracy development. In the following section, I elaborate on these four aspects with data that emerged from the collected children's literature titles and the in-depth interviews for this study.

Children's literature as an authoritative resource for language and literacy

learning. As previously stated, the definition of children's literature can vary and even contradict depending on different experiences, perspectives, and historical and cultural contexts. This study employed a fairly broad definition of children's literature; in addition to books that are produced to give children spontaneous pleasure, such as fiction and graphic novels, textbooks and levelled readings which are created primarily for language and literacy learning are regarded as children's literature as well. These books with strong pedagogical and instructive purposes undoubtedly comprise the majority of the authoritative resources in this study set. In brief, this authoritative role is collectively played by textbooks, printed levelled readings, online reading resources such as i-Chinese-Reader and Raz-Kids, and a small number of various literary works. Children's literature playing this role tends to be decontextualized and literary because it usually carries a clear pedagogical intention of developing the traditional set of literacy skills, which involve making meaning from and through written text.

Therefore, when children's literature is used in its role as authoritative resource, the focus tends to be on learning new vocabularies and grammar rules. Comparatively, for bilingual education in the Canadian context, children's literature in Chinese is more frequently used as authoritative resource in terms of exemplifying syntax and semantics, while children's literature in English is mostly used to teach reading and writing comprehension and strategies. The data shown in Table 3 and the discussion on the collected set of children's literature in the previous section both show that with regard to children's literature in Chinese, teachers and parents in bilingual education tend to choose works with a

certain authority. Not only do teachers in bilingual programs prefer to use the united textbook *Zhong Wen* (CCLC, 2006) and levelled readings compiled by professional organizations (e.g., Greenfield Education Center, and Beijing Language and Culture University Press) as authoritative resources to teach Mandarin Chinese, but parents also often use textbooks of Chinese language arts designed for elementary schools in China and extracurricular Chinese readings recommended by Chinese educational experts as their bilingual children's after-school reading materials. For example, in one of the photos Shelly shared regarding books her children often read, she demonstrated two copies of *New Chinese Readings* [新语文读本] (Wang et al., 2001), a collection of domestic and overseas classic literary works edited by leading Chinese children's literature scholars, educators, and authors (see Appendix O). The specific grade level for which the book is designed is indicated next to the book title, along with a recommendation above it: "A lifetime's worth of reading for us and our children." As long as parents had some knowledge regarding Chinese language education and Chinese literature, they would be able to immediately recognize the names of the editors because they are all well-known experts in China. As a result, the collection has asserted its authority through its cover and its editorial board. It is worth noting that it was Shelly, rather than her children, who selected the collection for the Chinese reading. Similarly, because of not being familiar with Chinese children's literature, another parent participant, Jack, chose to use a Chinese elementary textbook as reading material when he began to guide his child's early reading in Chinese because he believed in its authority. Jack also said, however, that his child was not interested in reading the textbook, because the content was "too boring." Both Shelly's and Jack's experiences reflect a major problem exposed by children's literature as

authoritative resource, that is, children often do not spontaneously develop an interest in these works labelled as authorities. Shelly and Jack further explained the reasons they believed their children did not like reading textbooks or textbook-like stories. Jack explained why his child was not interested in Chinese idioms stories that had a strong literacy teaching and didactic purpose:

First of all, the kid has already known the idioms from the oral storytelling and our daily conversations, she's familiar with it; and on the other hand, the idiom story books are boring and not very imaginative. It's not because that she cannot understand the connotation of the stories or the language. She is even able to use one idiom to explain another idiom, so she does understand. She's not interested mainly because the books are not fancy and attractive.

Although she did not directly comment on her children's reading of Chinese textbooks, Shelly did emphasize that children's literature with strong story lines was most appealing to her children. In brief, whether it is authoritative might be an important factor for bilingual teachers and parents to choose and use a children's book, but it is unlikely to be a motivation and might even be an obstacle for a child to read the book.

Furthermore, although the teacher and parent participants did not specifically mention this in the interviews, there is a potential issue embedded in the role of children's literature as authoritative resource, that is, if the authority of certain children's literature, such as textbooks or recommended classic works, is overemphasized, the possibility of critical reading is likely to be undermined. Children's literature not only functions as an avenue of language and literacy development, but also transmits social norms and inherits cultural values, while being

limited by its own historical context. One of the connotations of authority is that it should not be questioned and challenged. Hence, if the role of children's literature as authoritative resource is overemphasized in children's reading, children are less likely to develop critical thinking and they might easily take for granted that the messages and values conveyed in the work are infallible. Hunt (1996) has already argued that children's literature can be divided into books that *were* for children and *are* for children. Because the studies of books that *were* for children are generally literary and historical studies that have been regarded as having a high academic status, their research object—canonical and classical children's literature—is accordingly considered as being more authoritative. As a result, “the classic” and “the great” works are more likely to constantly appear in children's recommended reading lists, but Hunt reminds us that child-oriented literary studies, and I would also add studies on the use of children's literature, need to focus on “live issues” (p. 202, emphasis in original). In his thought-provoking book *Was the Cat in the Hat Black?* (2017) Philip Nel also criticized many classic children's books as having hidden racist ideologies. These titles have long been regarded as authoritative reading materials for children, including Dr. Seuss' *The Cat in the Hat* (2013), Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1994), Hugh Lofting's *The Story of Doctor Doolittle* (1968), P. L. Travers's *Mary Poppins* (2015), and Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2018). Many of these titles were on the teacher and parent participants' book lists for this study as well. Chinese children's literature scholar Zhu Ziqiang (2009) argued that the modern sense of children's literature was born after the concept of child-oriented ideology was established; therefore, we should not blindly accept the idea that ancient classic works are authoritative and take for granted that using them as

children's reading will never go wrong. Since in bilingual education, the use of children's literature, particularly children's literature in Chinese, often pays great attention to historical and cultural content, teachers and parents may involuntarily emphasize the authority of Chinese children's books while ignoring their limitations; this should be alarming. In other words, if the use of Chinese children's literature in bilingual education could co-opt the idea of critical reading that has been advocated for English children's literature, English-Chinese bilingual students might more easily engage in reading and related activities, which would benefit their bilingual and biliteracy development in the long run.

Children's literature as an immersive resource for language and literacy learning.

In regard to after-school reading or parent-child shared reading, children's literature frequently plays the role of immersive resource for language and literacy development. There is not always a straightforward pedagogical intention entailed in this role; rather, the literature creates an immersive language and cultural environment that imperceptibly enhances language acquisition and cultural transmission. The reading experiences of Shelly's children illuminate this point very well. Despite systematically learning Mandarin Chinese in a complementary Chinese school for only two hours per week, Shelly's children demonstrated an even higher level than their peers in China. They were not only fluent readers in Chinese but could also create thousand-word stories in Chinese (see Appendix P). Shelly largely credited this achievement to her children's immersive reading, which she had constantly supported and encouraged them to do. From a very young age, Shelly's children had listened to various stories in Chinese because Shelly believed that "earlier makes better" for language learning. She added, "Fostering interests is important. You need to make children have fun (in

learning languages), you need to let them immerse in the language environment.” In addition, Shelly stated that lively children’s literature full of fun was most effective in encouraging her children’s learning in languages, literacy, and cultures. She said from their favourite Chinese story books, her children have learnt many Chinese idioms and common phrases:

This kind of novel series with strong stories appeals to my kids the most.

Books written by Yang Hongying, such as *Mo’s Mischief*, and other funny stories by Chinese authors Zheng Yuanjie and Gu Qingping, are among her favourites. . . . The kids can learn how to choose appropriate wording, and some expressions in Chinese and Chinese culture as well from reading these books. Yesterday a friend invited us to visit a rural farm. When we were walking on the cobblestone road, my kids used the Chinese idioms “荒无人烟” [lonely field] and “荒郊野岭” [wilderness] to describe that place, I think she learned it from the books she read.

The immersive reading that Shelly’s children had been doing was primarily independent reading, while the immersive reading of Jack’s child was dominated by shared reading. Similar to Shelly’s children, Jack noticed that his child liked fairy tales with rich storylines, and he had preferred to read contemporary Chinese fairy tales in his childhood as well. Therefore, when his child began to learn Mandarin Chinese, it was often through reading Chinese contemporary fictional fairy tales to and with her to help her learn Chinese characters, become familiar with grammar rules, and cultivate a continuous interest in Chinese.

In summary, it emerged from this study that, by playing the role of immersive resource, children's literature provided a solid foundation for bilingual children's language and literacy development. If textbooks and levelled readings can be compared to a shallow swimming pool for beginners to practice in, children's literature as immersive resource is like vast rivers and oceans that not only provide continuous resources but also allow children to swim smoothly and freely. However, it is also worth pointing out that many teacher and parent participants were concerned that the time for bilingual children's immersive reading was far from adequate. Faye said, "[Students'] after-school reading quantity is not enough. . . . They do not have much time to put into reading Chinese books because there are also various sports that they need to participate in."

In addition, because immersive reading is usually for fun and is not mandatory, the bilingual children would only read in the language (either Mandarin Chinese or English) they were more comfortable with if their teachers or parents did not provide intentional guidance.

As Shelly said:

My older child prefers to read Chinese story books, while she is not so interested in books in French and English. She reads e-books on Epic as well, 20 minutes every day, and she would also read in great interest but not as fascinated as she reads Chinese books, and the English and French books she reads are not as difficult as the Chinese books. If I give her a thick Chinese story book, she would be lost in reading for a whole day, but if it is an English or French book of equal difficulty, she would not sit still like that.

Although much effort has been made to support and encourage children's reading in bilingual education, the use of children's literature as an immersive resource still needs to be improved. For example, i-Chinese-Reader, a levelled online reading platform purchased by many English-Chinese bilingual programs, has served as the primary reading resource of bilingual students for several years. Because most of the e-books that i-Chinese-Reader offers are levelled readings that tailored to improve "students' mastery and retention of both the language and the subject matter" (i-Chinese-Reader, 2021)—or in other words, academic achievement—many bilingual children just read these books to complete a task rather than reading for fun. As a result, children tend not to take extra time reading books on the platform other than the 20 minutes assigned by their teachers. In other words, children would be unlikely to experience immersive reading through such a platform. As Chloe said, "a lot of Chinese stories on i-Chinese-Reader don't really make sense or they're kind of not realistic. . . . Children know that they are reading i-Chinese-Reader for learning Chinese but not to enjoy the story, so it kind of discourages them to continue reading."

Moreover, this finding illuminates that, in terms of immersive reading, parents probably should not rely too much on digital platforms, which are mostly designed for children's independent reading instead of providing a milieu for parent-child shared reading. The absence of shared reading will greatly weaken the enjoyment of reading for children and may affect their bilingual and biliteracy development in the early years. As argued previously, the use of children's literature in bilingual education actually takes relationship as the core. In the same sense, for immersive reading, creating a relaxing, intimate reading environment is more important than merely providing rich reading resources—or, to put it in another way,

where to read, and *with whom* to read, is as essential as *what* to read for immersive reading in bilingual education.

Children’s literature as a playful/interactive resource for language and literacy learning. The role children’s literature plays as a playful/interactive resource for language and literacy learning overlaps with the role of immersive reading resource. The reason to distinguish the two roles here is that, according to the data that emerged from the interviews, in addition to the children’s literature works themselves, there are many related or derivative activities based on children’s literature in bilingual education that cannot be simply characterized as immersive reading experiences. In this study, I regarded the role of children’s literature as immersive resource as the activity of reading itself, including bilingual children’s independent reading, read-alouds in the classroom, parent-child shared reading, group reading through a storytelling club, and so forth. On the other hand, the role of playful/interactive resource focuses on the related or derivative activities, such as drama plays adapted from children’s literature, finger dancing with lyrics from children’s poetry and rhymes, singing poetry instead of reciting it, and brainteasers related to the reading. In other words, when children’s literature plays the role of playful/interactive resource, it is often transboundary in nature and combines with various other media forms.

When asked about their favourite activities or events in their own childhood reading, and in retrospect, what could have made reading and sharing children’s literature more enjoyable for them, the keywords of the participants’ responses consistently centred on “reading together,” “listening to stories,” “entertaining,” “in a playful way,” “interactive,” and “role play.” For example, Faye shared that what impressed her most in her childhood reading

experience was that her elementary teachers once adapted a Tang Dynasty poem into a song and taught the students to sing it together while the teachers accompanied with guitar and accordion. Shelly recalled how she earned money by helping out on the farm and saved it to buy the books she wanted to read when she was a child. She also mentioned that when working as a teacher in China, one of her students' favourite activities was exchanging books at the flea market organized by the school. These experiences related to childhood reading had profoundly influenced the practices of the teacher and parent participants in their own students'/children's reading of children's literature in bilingual education. Therefore, when I asked about some of the activities or events that the participants felt their bilingual students/children liked best when they were reading/sharing children's literature with them, I received a tremendous amount of responses in the interviews.

Faye, for example, who was working as a Mandarin Chinese teacher at the time, paid much attention to actively mobilizing her bilingual students' bodies to learn the language. In addition to her own childhood experience of learning language and literacy through musical activities, Faye said she had also been strongly influenced by the *total physical response approach* first proposed by James Asher (1969) and later promoted by Xie Mianmian, the cultural coordinator at a Confucius Institute and previous Chinese language teacher, for English-Chinese bilingual education in Canada. Faye elaborated how she had employed this approach to language and literacy teaching that is based on children's literature. For instance, she found that her favourite book, *Thousand Character Classic* (Zhou, 2019), had been adapted into a children's song and then into finger dancing; she immediately incorporated the singing and gestures into her Chinese teaching and let the students perform at the celebration

of Chinese New Year. She proudly said that the students had been fully engaged and even performed better than she had. Once Faye taught a Chinese poem, “Moss” [苔] (Yuan, 2017), to the senior students; to make the learning more interesting and impressive, she managed to find the related sign language in Chinese, and combined the poem recital with the sign language for the students’ learning. Faye was also inspired by her own child’s reading experience; she said the most memorable moment for her child in Chinese learning was when he played one of the piglets in the drama of *The Three Little Pigs* (Jacobs, 2018):

He was only 3 years old at that time. He can still remember his role wore a pink costume. Although he cannot recall the lines, he was deeply impressed because he needed to get on the stage and spend a very long time for rehearse. He would practice his lines for so many times. Only once but he will probably remember the experience for a lifetime.

Since then, Faye had tried her best to manage one or more drama plays based on well-known Chinese tales each year for the bilingual students to perform at the Chinese New Year or graduation ceremony. As she expressed, “they all love stories . . . although it might be only once a year, they will probably remember for the rest of their life.”

As mentioned above, what Shelly remembered most regarding her childhood reading was buying books with the money she had earned through her own work; as for Faye, this experience had influenced how she used children’s books with her children. In addition to using books as rewards for her children for doing chores, Shelly used fun scavenger hunts to guide and encourage them to enjoy reading. She gave her children assignments such as reading Chinese poetry; when they fulfilled the task, the children would get gift papers

written with Chinese words to indicate where the gifts were hidden. The whole process involved reading, learning new Chinese words, and gaining a comprehensive understanding of the Chinese language. More importantly, it was an interaction embracing children, parents, and children's literature that fascinated her children into reading and learning in a playful way.

Some parent participants drew more on their children's personal interests when they tailored reading-related activities for their children. For example, Jack's child loved drawing and crafting, so he designed and made props with her and planned to do role plays based on the children's books they read together. Jack also shared that he often randomly played word games such as Idioms Solitaire to encourage his child's interest in learning Chinese. As he said, what mattered most was "not the types of activities but whether she likes the activity and has fun from it." Another parent participant, Chloe, used a different way to implement children's literature as playful/interactive resource. She mentioned that one type of children's books her older child liked to read was novels adapted from famous games such as Fortnite or Minecraft (see Appendix Q). Her husband also liked playing the games and reading these novels with the children; thus, this type of children's literature became an avenue for parent-child interaction as well. This reading activity can be viewed as being transformed from playing games. In other words, the role of children's literature as a playful/interactive resource is not unidirectional; it can be transferred and transformed with other media forms in a reciprocal way.

In one of the snapshots at the beginning of this dissertation, I described how the children who participated in the online storytelling club listened without interest to a story written in classical style but enthusiastically engaged in the brainteaser activity. This snapshot

of bilingual children's life in combination with the stories and experiences shared by the participants could be an illumination—If we expect children's literature to function effectively in bilingual education, it must be used not only for reading books, but rather to germinate and expand through integrating with other media and forms to create a variety of playful and interactive activities to engage children. In playing the role of playful/interactive resource, children's literature acts as a cornerstone on which a fantasyland for children to play in can be built.

Children's literature as a bridge for bilingual and biliteracy development. In bilingual education, a specific role played by children's literature is as a bridge for bilingual and biliteracy development. Using children's literature both to bridge English and Mandarin Chinese and to foster cross-cultural awareness requires that teachers and parents equip corresponding funds of knowledge (González et al., 2005) in the two languages and cultures. Some teacher and parent participants had deliberately used children's literature and the language ability of the bilingual children and themselves in this way, but most of their practices had been conditioned in specific contexts and constrained by various factors.

For example, Faye shared a translation project she had done with her students to learn Mandarin Chinese. She asked the students to choose one short picture book in English and cover the text with sticky notes, then write down their own translation of the text in Chinese (see Appendix R). Through this project, Faye was purposefully trying to develop students' ability to flexibly transfer between the two languages; the ultimate goal was not only learning the Chinese language but also achieving balanced bilingual development. However, Faye also

indicated that one of the necessary requirements to implement such a translation project was a relatively high level of students' language capability. As she explained:

When (the students were) younger, for them English is English, and Chinese is Chinese, they cannot make connections between English and Chinese. . . .

When they first started the project, it may take them one week to translate only one page. . . . The process was very slow because it's hard for them to find the equivalent word, and after they did the translation, you need to correct and revise it. That's when you can truly teach bilingual. There must be an input process to develop bilingual. It's by the third grade they can gradually integrate the two languages in a natural way. . . . They would spontaneously realize the English or Chinese meaning of it when you speak a word because they now can accurately understand it.

In brief, usually only older students whose cognitive abilities had reached a certain level would be able to develop the bilingual capability, and they would also need certain funds of knowledge (González et al., 2005) in different cultures. Most of Faye's students spoke Chinese as their home language and could easily access immersive Chinese-speaking environments such as community gatherings; meanwhile, they were exposed to English most of the time at school. Therefore, it would not be too difficult for these bilingual children to engage in the translation project. For students learning Chinese or English as a second language who lacked support from teachers and parents, however, such a project might not be easy or appropriate to carry out. Although it is an effective and interesting way to develop bilingual and biliteracy abilities, the translation project may only fit for a small group of

bilingual children who have relatively abundant support with both languages; it would be difficult to implement with a wide range of students with diverse language levels. In other words, students' language development level and language support system would limit the use of children's literature to bridge the two languages and cultures.

Similarly, using children's literature as a bridge for bilingual and biliteracy development may also be constrained by teachers' language competence and cultural knowledge. For instance, Jenny stated that she often used children's books that were available in both English and Mandarin Chinese versions when doing read-alouds with her bilingual students. Two titles she frequently used were the *Peppa Pig* (Chinese version) series (British Happy Ladybug Publishing Company, 2013) and the *Elephant and Piggie* (English version) series (Willems, 2007–2016). Jenny bought the Chinese version of *Peppa Pig* from China, and she usually simplified the language when she read the books to her students because the Chinese text was sometimes too long and too complicated for the younger students. Then she asked related questions along with the reading and guided her students to learn some new characters and phrases in Chinese. With the *Elephant and Piggie* series, sometimes Jenny directly used the English version but translated the text into Mandarin Chinese herself during read-aloud and asked simple questions in Chinese such as “What is this?” and “What colour is this?” She encouraged her students to answer the questions in Chinese. Jenny said:

I like these (translated) books, because I found some students would say “I know the English version of it,” so sometimes they could guess even if they don't know what the word means in Chinese since they have seen the book in

English, they could guess the meaning through their previous memory of reading the English version and the concepts they know in English.

The prerequisite for interchangeably using different language versions of children's books in bilingual education is that the teacher needs to be like Jenny, who is proficient in both languages and familiar with the two cultures. Moreover, accessing and locating appropriate children's literature in different versions requires that teachers have similar capability to Jenny's. This capability is apparently higher than the provincial education ministry's requirements for teachers. Therefore, although using different versions of children's literature could be an effective way to promote bilingual and biliteracy development, it is restricted by individual teachers' capability.

In the same sense, parents would also need a certain mastery of both languages and cultures if they intended to use children's literature as a bridge for bilingual and biliteracy development. As stated earlier, due to the lack of access to Chinese children's literature, Chloe used the strategy of orally translating English picture books into Cantonese when doing shared reading with her children to increase their exposure to the Chinese language. Although Chloe said her Chinese was not fluent, to some extent she was capable of orally code-switching between the two languages due to her cultural background. However, for parents who do not have relevant cultural backgrounds or know little about English or Chinese, it would be almost impossible to use children's literature to bridge the two languages and cultures.

According to the interviews, most of the participants' practices in which children's literature functioned as the bridge for bilingual and biliteracy development occurred in

relaxed conditions with little or no pedagogical intention, such as read-aloud time or bedtime story time. Although some language learning did happen in these contexts, most focused on oral language development; more systematic teaching that targeted literate development and mutual transfer between the two languages was rare. Intentionally and properly using children's literature as a bridge for bilingual and biliteracy development, such as the bilingual translation project promoted by Faye, was scarcely mentioned by other participants in the interviews. Despite the long history of English-Chinese bilingual education in Canada, most of the time Chinese and English teaching and learning are still in a separate state. In some bilingual programs and complementary Chinese schools, the policy of exclusively using the target language for instruction (i.e., Chinese only or English only) is still in practice (G. Li, 2006b; Zhou & G. Li, 2021). Sometimes such a rule is applied because teachers intend to create an immersive and intensive language learning environment (e.g., the Chinese-only rule for Chinese language class), while sometimes the rule has to be implemented because teachers cannot understand the other language (e.g., the English-only rule for English language class or other classes where the subject teachers do not speak languages other than English). This separation of languages appears more obvious in complementary Chinese schools because, unlike bilingual programs, whose aim is providing an integral learning opportunity through different languages, the main objective in complementary Chinese schools is to learn the Chinese language. Hence, both the Chinese teachers and parents in the context of complementary Chinese schools tend to focus more on children's learning of Chinese, and a more monolithic language environment easily forms. Even in a bilingual program that intends to provide "an environment in which both English and Chinese are used and needed

constantly for purposes of communication, personal satisfaction and learning” (Alberta Education, n.d.), the separation of languages has long existed. One aspect reflected in the separation is neglect of the potential value that ethnic Chinese teachers can contribute to a bilingual program. As Anne stated,

sometimes because I’m the English teacher, I’m pigeonholed I guess in a way that sometimes people don’t see me as like a resource or a person they can go to about learning Chinese. But I think the fact that I am in the (bilingual) program and that I grew up in the program, I still think I may not be *the* Chinese teacher, but I’m *a* Chinese teacher, if that makes sense. And I think that my knowledge is still valuable. So I wish that was something that was more valued or honoured in a way. (emphasis added)

In sum, bilingual education in the Canadian context has been rendered with conservativeness and segregation. This is reflected in the less common role children’s literature plays as a bridge for bilingual and biliteracy development. To use children’s literature as a bridge for bilingual and biliteracy development first requires that students, parents, and teachers have a relatively high level of mastery in both languages and cultures. Second, the long-held pedagogical ideology of one language only should be broken, and the approach of translanguaging (Fu et al., 2018; García, 2009; Hornberger & Link, 2012; Leung & Valdés; 2019) should be promoted to better fit the bilingual or multilingual settings. Third, the bilingual engagement of teachers and students needs to be better activated and encouraged, and the value of ethnic Chinese teachers like Anne needs to be recognized.

Children's Literature as Cultural Agent

In addition to functioning as a resource for language and literacy education, children's literature is frequently used as a medium for teaching about cultural diversity, fostering cross-cultural awareness, and constructing cultural identities (Cai, 1994; Dolan, 2014; Edwards & Saltman, 2010; Greenlaw, 2005; Hall, 2011; Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009; Nodelman, 2008; Park, 2013; Wiltse, 2015). Based on the data derived from the collected children's literature and interviews in this study, the role that children's literature plays as cultural agent in English-Chinese bilingual education is twofold: one is as an agent for cultural transmission; the other is as an agent for cultural identity construction and recognition. The following section elaborates in what ways children's literature plays this role.

Children's literature as an agent of cultural transmission. Both the selection and use of children's literature link with the specific historical, social, and cultural traditions of those selecting and using it. An important avenue for adults inheriting culture and transmitting this culture to children is the creation and sharing of children's literature. As demonstrated in the section discussing the collected children's literature, in terms of cultural inheritance and transmission, both teacher and parent participants in this study tended to use classic Chinese children's literature, including a variety of classic works such as traditional rhyming verse, poetry, myths, legends, folklore, historical stories, and idiom stories, as they were believed to contain abundant Chinese historical and cultural knowledge. Moreover, the teacher and parent participants all acknowledged that cultural transmission is the most important goal, besides language learning, in English-Chinese bilingual education. For example, Faye emphasized in the interview that her complementary Chinese school always prioritized cultural teaching and

learning, and she elaborated several ways regarding how to implement cultural transmission. She organized a Culture Day activity for her students to provide them an opportunity to experience Chinese culture, such as writing Chinese calligraphy and Spring Festival couplets. At the end of each semester, the school held the event of “The Same Song,” through which all the students could learn and sing a popular Chinese song together and perform it at the graduation ceremony. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, the teachers managed to continue holding the event by asking every student to record and upload videos of themselves singing the song, and then teachers and parent volunteers edited all the videos into one and played it via the online classroom. As Faye stated, “Chinese characters are embedded in the profound Chinese culture. The learning of Chinese needs a cultural sustainment.” She further shared one of her experiences to emphasize why she regarded cultural transmission as essential in bilingual education:

Speaking of culture, I specifically talked with my students about the Chinese dragon at class . . . because we believe the Chinese are the descendants of the dragon. Then the local library asked me to come over to revise some of their picture books (that) mentioned about Chinese dragons and some related props they made for the storytelling. The dragon props they used for years are actually wrong. They had a vague awareness that their books depicting Chinese dragons might be wrong, and they made the wrong props according to the wrong illustrations. The dragon props they made have wings, but only Western dragons have wings. Chinese dragons are more like snakes but with claws, and the heads are like horses. So if you don’t talk to your kids about

things like this, they will never know. They will never be able to distinguish the Chinese and the Western dragons. They will not be able to understand the culture if we don't transmit these cultural concepts and knowledge to them.

Faye's experience illuminates that when Chinese is learned as a minority language in the Canadian context, the cultural values and traditions contained in the language are more likely to be highlighted and even amplified; as a result, cultural transmission through children's literature is especially emphasized in bilingual education.

In addition to Chinese cultural transmission, some bilingual teachers also paid attention to the transmission of other cultures in order to celebrate cultural diversity in the Canadian context. For instance, as demonstrated earlier, in addition to collecting as much children's literature as she could with respect to Chinese cultural identity, Anne also kept an eye on collecting titles that represented cultural diversity. Some representative titles include *Hidden Figures* (Shetterly, 2016), which tells the story of three African American women who worked as mathematicians to solve problems for engineers and others at NASA from the 1930s through the 1960s; *Fatty Legs* (Jordan-Fenton & Pokiak-Fenton, 2010), which depicts the residential school experience of a young Inuit girl; and *Let's Talk About Race* (Lester, 2005), which discusses race and equity in a broader way. Anne explained:

It's important for [the children] to see themselves, but even as someone who's Chinese, they also need to see other people too. So I've been trying to make sure that I have books featuring Korean characters, featuring Indian characters, featuring South American characters, make sure that it's diverse because they need to see that there are other cultures out there as well as their own. . . . It's

important to feel proud of yourself, but also to have an awareness of others. I guess around them too, just because you're in a Chinese program doesn't mean that you're necessarily Chinese, right? We have kids in our class who are French, German, who are African as well. So I want them to be able to see themselves too. So it's not just reading books that have Chinese characters, but also a diverse collection of characters and others, too.

In summary, children's literature in bilingual education is strongly expected to transmit culture, including from one generation to the next, and it has indeed been used effectively as a tool of cultural transmission. Compared with the regular program, Chinese children's literature in bilingual education plays a more obvious role in inheriting and transmitting Chinese culture.

Children's literature as an agent of cultural identity construction and recognition. Edwards and Saltman (2010) asserted, "Complex and contested ideas about nation, community, and the importance of cultural identity are embedded in any discussion of a national children's literature" (p. 11). Since many students who participate in English-Chinese bilingual education are either Chinese immigrants or ethnic Chinese, using children's literature to help them positively construct and recognize their cultural identity becomes an important task for teachers and parents. For instance, one of the most explicit purposes for Anne in using children's literature was to seek Canadian Chinese cultural identity, not only for her students, but for herself as well. Out of the 104 children's book titles she provided to me, which represent the types of children's literature she often used with her students, over 40 directly related to cultural identity. Although many of the titles Anne collected and used in her

teaching more specifically referred to American Chinese or Asian American cultural identity, the similar geographical and sociocultural environments can easily evoke related emotions and experiences for her students in the Canadian context. Anne highlighted how working in the bilingual program had influenced her perspective and experience regarding the cultural identity issue:

I think one thing that I love (about working in the bilingual program) is seeing people that look like me. I love seeing kids that look like me, I love seeing colleagues that look like me, and I didn't realize that's a big deal, but it is. I am not the only Chinese person in the lunchroom anymore, right? And that's valuable to me. Another thing that I love is just the fact that these kids are here and they understand or they get certain experiences, like when I talk about hot pot, they can get it because they've done it before. Whereas if you are teaching in a regular class, or most likely, I have to explain what it is and what types of food it uses, like those kinds of things. So it's nice to not have to explain everything that I do all the time because you have done it before as well.

In the same sense, Anne realized how important it was to help her students construct and feel safe and proud of their cultural identities through children's literature, given that books can function as both mirrors and windows for children to see and understand the world (Aldana, 2008; Bishop, 1990a, 1990b; Galda, 1998; Wiltse, 2015). As she explained,

none of the stories written when I was a kid had Asian characters, no East Asian characters. I think I didn't know about that back then because kids are like what's normal around them is what you tell is normal. . . . I wish I'd had

characters that these kids right now in my classroom to see. I wish that it was normal to have these diverse books in the classroom. They're not just diverse books; they're books that everyone enjoys.

In addition to collecting and introducing children's literature that focused on cultural identity and represented diverse cultures, Anne also created a picture book, *Little Gold and the Three Pandas*, that she adapted from the classic story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* (Southey, 1837), weaving in representative elements of Chinese culture (see Appendix S). Anne stated that her intention was to encourage people to think about their cultural identities and where they saw themselves represented in the world. Anne further explained that the representation of cultural identity should be multifaceted instead of only emphasizing some stereotypical features of certain cultures, which often occurred in many children's books depicting Chinese characters and Chinese culture. She used the book *Front Desk* (K. Yang, 2018) as an example:

This book is about a girl who moves to America. And I like the fact that she's Chinese, but that's not the only thing about her or she's not drawn in a stereotypical way. She's multifaceted. It shows all the different emotions she goes through. It shows you so many different types of actions and different types of personality traits that she embodies in the story. It's not just like a stereotype character, like she's not a martial artist, she's not a funny sidekick; she's the main character.

In summary, cultural agency is an important role that children's literature plays in English-Chinese bilingual education. Chinese children's literature acts more as an agent of

cultural transmission; English children's literature, on the other hand, often works as an agent of cultural identity construction and recognition.

Summary

This study demonstrates that children's literature plays a variety of important roles in bilingual education, including relationship founder, enhancer, and bond; language and literacy learning resources and bridge; and cultural agent. These roles have helped and promoted, not only bilingual children's language and literacy development, but also broader cognitive and affective development. Chinese children's literature, in particular, has played an unexpected and important role in bonding and consolidating community relationships for the study participants. In addition, when selecting and using Chinese children's literature, the teachers and parents tended to put more emphasis on its authoritative role, and Chinese books were more often used as agents of cultural transmission. In contrast, English children's literature was more commonly being used as an immersive reading resource in bilingual education. English children's literature has also played an important role in the construction and recognition of cultural identity. In summary, children's literature has been playing increasingly irreplaceable roles in bilingual education, and parents' and teachers' attitudes toward, choice of, and use of children's literature are constantly improving to better fit bilingual children's/students' needs and interests. In the next section, I explore further how the teacher and parent participants' experiences and perspectives regarding children's literature might influence their pedagogical practices in using children's literature with their bilingual students/children.

The Influence of the Teacher and Parent Participants' Experiences and Perspectives on Their Use of Children's Literature in Bilingual Education in the Canadian Context

This study is informed by sociocultural perspectives on literacy that emphasize the social and cultural contexts in which language is used and literacy is practiced (Perry, 2012). Drawing on sociocultural perspectives on literacy, the theory of literacy as a social practice highlights social relationships and interactions in which literacy practices exist (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Perry, 2012; Purcell-Gates et al., 2011). Resonantly, Mackey (2016) points out that “texts shape what we do, activate our sensory awareness and affect the actions of our hands, both in interaction with the physical object and in response to its contents” (p. 167).

Therefore, children's literature as texts per se and the use children's literature as a literacy practice both connect to and are shaped by a variety of social and cultural factors, such as power relationships, social institutions, and individual experiences and perspectives. Reading, sharing, selecting, accessing, and making use of children's literature in English-Chinese bilingual education is influenced by the gatekeepers' and mediators'—teachers' and parents' in particular—experiences and perspectives towards children's literature. Hence, exploring how the gatekeepers' and mediators' experiences and perspectives may be impacting their use of children's literature—and more importantly, the challenges they have encountered in using children's literature in bilingual education—is essential to this study. As with the last section, I employed interpretive inquiry to analyze the data that emerged from the interviews, and summarized the findings to answer this study's third research question: How do teachers' and parents' experiences and perspectives with children's literature impact their practices in using children's literature with English-Chinese bilingual children? I discuss the findings in the

following three sections: (1) the influence of participants' upbringing experiences on their use of children's literature; (2) the influence of participants' expectations of children's bilingual development on their use of children's literature; and (3) the influence of participants' perspectives and knowledge of children's literature on their access to and use of children's literature. Subsequently, I use these findings and other data that emerged from the interviews to discuss a variety of challenges regarding the use of children's literature in bilingual education in the Canadian context.

The Influence of Participants' Upbringing Experiences on Their Use of Children's Literature

Children's literature scholar Nina Christensen (2018) pointed out that the research of children's literature and childhood studies are inextricably linked. John Stephen (1992) also argued, "Picture books can, of course, exist for fun, but they can never be said to exist without either a socializing or educational intention, or else without a specific orientation towards the reality constructed by the society that produces them" (p. 158). I would extend Stephen's argument regarding picture books to the broader children's literature, and furthermore, based on Christensen's point of view, argue that one's childhood reading experiences influence their future use of children's literature with children.

The six participants in this study came from different backgrounds with various upbringing and reading experiences. Despite the differences, the data reflects some resemblances among participants who grew up in a more similar social and cultural context than the others. Based on the participants' childhood reading and education experiences, I roughly divided them into two groups—participants who were born and raised in China and

those who were born and raised in Canada—to explore how their upbringing experiences may have impacted their use of children’s literature in their children’s/students’ bilingual education.

In the previous section, I drew on the interview data to summarize three major roles that children’s literature plays in bilingual education: (1) children’s literature as relationship founder, enhancer, and bond; (2) children’s literature as language and literacy learning resource and bridge; and (3) children’s literature as cultural agent. In terms of the role of language and literacy learning resource and bridge, I explored the nuances of this role, which include authoritative resource, immersive resource, playful/interactive resource, and bridge for bilingual and biliteracy development. According to the responses of the participating teachers and parents to the interview questions, as well as the book lists they provided, participants who had received their elementary education in China and whose childhood reading had mostly occurred in the Chinese context tended to put more emphasis on the role of children’s literature as language and literacy resource and bridge; they also tended to distinguish and use children’s literature based on different pedagogical functions, and were apt to highlight adults’ guiding responsibility in reading and sharing children’s literature. For example, Jack, who was born and raised in China, indicated that his pedagogy with his bilingual child was greatly influenced by his own upbringing experience. Although Jack was aware that his child was not very interested in reading Chinese textbooks and levelled readings based on idiom stories and Chinese legends, and although he also considered these books to be “boring,” he kept reading them with his child because he believed this kind of book can benefit children’s language development through “larger text and phonetic

notations, and new Chinese characters in each title,” and thus these books were necessary. In other words, one of Jack’s primary purposes in reading children’s literature with his child was to teach Chinese language and literacy. When asked what some of his favourite activities or events were for reading and/or sharing children’s books when he was a child, Jack said:

I thought for a long time but really can’t think of too much. In my mind, I never did anything except study when I was young, and then I wrote down the activity of “listening to Pingshu (the traditional Chinese performing art of storytelling).” I think listening to Pingshu may have been helpful for my reading and improved my interest in reading.

Jack also added that many books he had read as a child had been forced by his parents because those books were believed to be beneficial to cultivating children’s good behaviour, but he was not interested in these books at all and regarded them as “crappy.” Influenced by his own upbringing and reading experiences, Jack easily took for granted that one of the most essential roles of children’s literature is to guide and help children gain certain literacy skills. Moreover, he tended to distinguish children’s literature based on different functions, such as “for vocabulary” and “for fun reading.” His criteria for the categorization, on the one hand, were based on how a book is positioned by its publisher or recommended by education professionals; for instance, some books advertise on their covers that they can improve reading ability. On the other hand, Jack’s tendency to group children’s books came from his childhood reading experiences and school education experiences in which he was *taught* to treat different kinds of children’s literature differently: textbooks and levelled readings must be read and read carefully even if they were not fun to read; books for fun reading were much

less valuable and should not occupy too much study time. Therefore, involuntarily, Jack continued to use “boring” children’s literature with his child because he believed that for “normal” language and literacy education, children’s literature ought to be authoritative and not for fun.

Similarly, as a former high school teacher who had not only received her education but also had been trained in the teacher education system in China, Faye tended to use children’s literature more often as language and literacy teaching resources, and she categorized children’s books based on her pedagogical purpose, such as for lesson teaching or for after-class reading. When she was being trained as a preservice teacher, Faye said she learned that the most important trait of a good teacher was to master the specific subject knowledge they were going to teach students in the future. She explained:

When I was a college student, I participated too many social activities so that I feel I did not have a thorough study of the specialized knowledge I was supposed to teach in future, which I think is a pity. If I had had more knowledge reserves, I would have spent less time on the preparation of teaching content, and I would have been more able to see the big picture, and then my teaching and communication with students would have been more effective. . . . I think subject knowledge is very, very important.

Influenced by such an educational concept, Faye also emphasized specialization in her practice as a Chinese language teacher in the Canadian context. Further, the concept impacted her selection and use of children’s literature. For Faye, the main criterion for children’s literature to be used in her pedagogical practice was whether it could effectively assist the

students' language, literacy, and culture learning, while the entertainment value of the book and its potential for critical literacy were placed in a subordinate position. As she stated:

Every language has its own traits, and Chinese language is built upon Chinese characters; each character has many layers of meaning. Therefore, Chinese children's literature is very important for teachers' teaching and for bilingual students' language learning. Because in the process of reading, sharing, and accessing to children's literature, students can get a deeper or more multi-layers understanding of the meaning of Chinese characters and cultural knowledge.

In short, Faye's use of children's literature focused on its role as language and literacy learning resource. In addition, her childhood reading and schooling experiences had habituated her to make a hierarchy of children's literature based on different functions. That is, books with strong potential for language, literacy, and cultural teaching were ranked at the top, whereas books written to give children pleasure were ranked lower. When referring to her reading experiences as a young child, Faye said,

There was a sharp line between textbooks and after-class reading in school. . . . (Teachers) only emphasized textbooks and did not provide students a good experience for reading. I think it reflects the utilitarianism of education at that time, which resulted in not letting students realize that reading can be fun and enjoyable. . . . All students read at school were textbooks, and you had to analyze the content of the textbooks, and teachers would help you to do the

analysis even before you read the text because that's what is on the exam—that makes reading be painful.

In summary, the upbringing experiences of Jack and Faye regarding reading and sharing children's literature suggest that teachers' and parents' childhood reading and schooling experiences can have a great impact on their use of children's literature with their students/children. In terms of Chinese language and cultural learning in bilingual education in the Canadian context, teacher and parents who had received their education in China tended to design course content or teaching goals based on the given children's literature, which was usually standard textbooks, rather than vice versa: selecting and using children's literature based on course outlines or teaching goals.

In contrast, the teacher and parent participants who had been raised in Canada tended to focus more on the role of children's literature as cultural agent, especially as an agent for cultural identity construction and recognition, and they also tended to use more diverse children's books. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, as a Chinese Canadian herself, Anne experienced a struggle and quest related to her own cultural identity, which led to her collecting and using children's literature that specifically depicted cultural identity issues, because she wanted her students to “see that sense of belonging, that sense that you are a part of this world, and you're welcomed.” For Anne, whether a book could be used as an effective resource to teach language and literacy was not the primary criterion; rather, the potential for her students to make connections to the world through the words was key because, in Anne's words, “they're not only learning language, but they're also learning more about the world.” Moreover, Anne considered herself to be a bookworm when she was young; she had spent a

lot of time reading and had read a variety of books. Unlike Jack and Faye, who had not had nourishing and enjoyable childhood reading experiences, Anne shared many titles she had loved reading when she was a child. She recalled:

I read everything. I read mysteries, I read animal stories, I read stories about school kids, fantasy, all those popular series like *Harry Potter*. . . . My favourite book was *Ella Enchanted*. I remember reading that book in grade 4. It's kind of like a fairy tale mash up chapter book. I think I took it out one summer and I just read it like 20 times. I remember counting in Italian because I loved the story. I think I liked fantasy stories the best as a kid. I liked listening to the teacher read . . . and the reading week . . . and independent reading.

Therefore, in addition to her awareness and knowledge of children's literature, Anne's love of reading and fond memories of childhood reading were the foundation to her enthusiasm for collecting and using diverse books with her students. Anne explained:

I try my best to try to use books from diverse authors. I know that there are lots of classics out there, but by classics doesn't mean they're not necessarily the classics for this age or for this time, for this generation. Who says that we need to stick with the classics all the time? The classics were written in a very different social construct versus the time now. So I think we need to find new classics. Right? There's no harm in that. There're so many good authors out there that are writing from different points of view, writing about different experiences. And I think it's important for me to show kids that.

Similarly, having also grown up in Canada, Chloe had enjoyed pleasant childhood reading experiences like Anne's. She said, "I used to love reading as a kid. I used to just read all kinds of fictional novels." She added, when asked about her favourite activities or events for reading books as a child:

It was really just going to the library and borrowing books. My mom used to take us to the library every week. We were allowed to just borrow as many books as we wanted. . . . For class time, sometimes we can share a story that you liked or writing your own (stories), we make up our own stories. I used to like to write my own stories and share them with our friends or classmates. . . . I liked reading out loud and reading along with the younger kids or my classmates.

Chloe's enjoyable reading experience as a child had influenced her use and sharing of children's literature with her own children. Although she agreed that reading could help her children improve their literacy skills and spark their interest in language learning, using children's literature as language and literacy resources was not at the centre of her home reading activities with the children. Instead, Chloe considered that the premise of home reading was to let children enjoy reading. When talking about the bedtime story time in her daily routine, Chloe said:

My husband usually reads to the boys, because they like to read the novel books, and my daughter always wants me to read to her. I usually put my daughter to bed. And usually 30 minutes to an hour, we will lay with them and read with them.

Moreover, Chloe encouraged her children to pick up the books they liked to read rather than assign them books she considered would be appropriate for their age level or would benefit their language and literacy development. Chloe said her children were fond of funny stories such as Roald Dahl's works, fiction adapted from video games such as Minecraft and Fortnite, and popular comic books such as *Dog Man* (Pilkey, 2016–2021) and *Captain Underpants* (Pilkey, 1997–2015). These books were mostly of her children's choice, and many were contemporary titles that Chloe was not familiar with, yet Chloe still encouraged their reading of these books instead of reducing this not-for-study reading time as many Chinese parents would do, because she believed such diverse and expansive reading experiences would encourage her children to enjoy reading.

In summary, the findings show that the teacher and parent participants who had been born and raised in China tended to focus on the role of children's literature as language and literacy learning resource. They were more likely than their counterparts born in Canada to distinguish children's literature based on different pedagogical functions and usage occasions, and to cling to classic or canonical children's literature in both Chinese and Western books. In contrast, the teacher and parent participants who had been born and raised in Canada tended to emphasize the role of children's literature as cultural agent and to treat children's literature like an overall resource rather than categorizing it by different purposes and usage occasions. In addition, they valued pleasure in children's reading experiences and tended to select and use more recent contemporary children's literature instead of classic titles.

It is important to reiterate that the purpose of this study is not to gain a fixed and generalized conclusion about the use of children's literature in bilingual education; rather,

through fusing my understanding of this phenomenon with the participants' experiences and perspectives, I hope to reconstructed or coconstructed new insights. In other words, although I grouped the participants according to where they grew up, I cannot and should not make generalizations with such small numbers. For example, despite both having had pleasant memories of childhood reading, Anne's and Chloe's experiences cannot be generalized, because not all Canadians have fond memories of childhood reading. It should also be noted that such differences are not simply caused by where or under what cultural background the participants spent their childhood and received their education, but are due to different perceptions and understandings of childhood and children's literature in schools, families, and even society as a whole. Participants whose childhood reading to varying degrees was constrained and disciplined by schooling and family education tended to regard children's literature more as a tool for language and literacy development when using children's literature with their students/children. Moreover, they tended to choose classic and canonical literature works recognized and recommended by authoritative professionals. By contrast, participants who have been given more freedom in their childhood reading tended to pay more attention to the pleasure of reading children's literature; they were also more open-minded in selecting and using children's literature, often choosing contemporary titles instead of clinging to classic and canonical titles. Both the teacher and the parent participants' upbringing experiences had greatly influenced their selection and use of children's literature in bilingual education with their students/children.

The Influence of Participants' Expectations of Children's Bilingual Development on Their Use of Children's Literature

All of the participating teachers and parents in this study had expectations, though with varying degrees, towards their students'/children's bilingual and biliteracy development. Some hoped their children would become balanced bilinguals and take the HSK test (*Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi*, Chinese Proficiency Test) in order to go to a top university in China; some wanted the children's Chinese language and literacy to reach the level of junior high; and some just expected their children's Chinese language to be sufficient for daily communication and to understand Chinese culture to some extent. The different expectations for their children's bilingual development led to the participants' differing selection and use of children's literature. For example, teacher and parent participants with more ambitious expectations tended to select and use children's literature with stronger potential in terms of language and literacy development, and thus put more emphasis on the role of children's literature as language and literacy learning resource. They frequently selected and used children's books with more written text and fewer illustrations, and ancient Chinese classics such as traditional primers and ancient poetry, because the language used in these works is more complex and literate and the historical and cultural knowledge contained in them is more abundant. Teacher and parent participants with less ambitious expectations, on the other hand, tended to select and use children's books with less text and more illustrations because one of their main goals was to keep their children interested in learning the language and culture, rather than putting them off. Again, it should be noted that, due to the small numbers of participants in this study, the individual case regarding the influence of expectations on the

use of children's literature cannot and should not be generalized to all bilingual contexts. Nevertheless, although an individual case only represents a particular experience that may not be generalizable to all people, it is like a bud that contains strong and infinite vitality. Through this bud-like individual case, more plentiful and diverse living experiences can be aroused, and a collaborative understanding may form. In addition, an individual case can stimulate, arouse, and generate "a new and fresh understanding of something already understood. It open[s] up something that seem[s] 'over and done with'" (Jardine, 1998, p. 40). Through the individual case, we are able to see the familiar and taken-for-granted things from a completely new perspective and rediscover the unfamiliarity. Hence, I believe that demonstrating the influence of teachers' and parents' expectations on the use of children's literature in this study offers inspirational meaning to bilingual education.

In addition to the children's literature shared by the participants that was specifically created for bilingual and bicultural learning, such as the Chinese textbook *Zhong Wen* (CCLC, 2006), the online reading resource i-Chinese-Reader, and titles regarding cultural identity issues, another increasingly used type of children's literature for bilingual and multilingual education in recent years is dual-language books. The rise of dual-language children's books, on the one hand, has inherited the tradition of multicultural education (e.g., Gilman & Norton, 2020; Naqvi et al., 2012; Zapata et al., 2015); on the other hand, their use has been influenced by the theoretical orientation and pedagogical approach to translanguaging proposed by García and colleagues (e.g., Fu et al., 2019; García, 2009; García & Li, 2014). In brief, translanguaging theory highlights the dynamic heteroglossic integrated linguistic practices of bilingual and multilingual individuals and therefore endorses educators to create spaces and

opportunities for emergent bilinguals and multilinguals to use any languages they choose to maximize their learning and potential. With this notion in mind, one might expect to see increasing use of dual-language children's books in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context, as well as supportive attitudes towards the use of dual-language books in both teachers and parents. However, to my surprise, the data that emerged from the interviews shows a rather opposite conclusion.

First, none of the six participants frequently used dual-language books with their bilingual students/children; some had not even heard about such books. Moreover, after I explained the concept of dual-language children's books, more than half of the participants expressed their disapproval about using this type of book in their children's bilingual and biliteracy practices. For example, although there were many dual-language levelled readings in the booklist provided by the Chinese bilingual teacher Jenny, she stated that the guided-reading list had been collectively produced by a team of teachers who had been teaching Chinese in the English-Chinese bilingual program, and she was personally not fond of using dual-language titles. Jenny further explained:

It is because my students would just skip the Chinese and read the English text, so there is no point. I have tried this type of book with my students but wondered why they could finish the reading very quick. Then I asked them where they were looking at and found out their sights were at the English text and totally ignored the Chinese text.

Parent participant Shelly expressed a similar viewpoint to Jenny's, but from a different perspective. Shelly's oldest child was more fluent in Chinese than in English, and Shelly explained:

I personally disapprove to use that kind of books. If you put the two languages together, she would definitely read the Chinese text and skip the English one, so I'd rather separate the languages. Maybe for some older children who are learning a foreign language and are conscious of what aspect needs to be strengthened, it would be good because they could compare and feel the difference between languages. But for my children I think it would be better to separate the (Chinese and English) books.

Another parent participant, Chloe, was not directly reluctant to use dual-language books, but she said:

I guess it's not like the same book with the English and Mandarin in it together. But I want to have books like the Fortnite books, or like Roald Dahl's books. If they can convert that kind of story into a Chinese story, like into a Chinese version of it . . . just something that they would be interested in reading.

The teacher and parent participants who were supportive of using dual-language books had only a vague idea of what these books looked like and how they might be used in bilingual education. They assumed dual-language books would be an effective resource in bilingual education but had hardly ever used these books themselves. As Anne, who was an English teacher in the bilingual program, said, "the books have one line in English and then translate it to another language. I wish that there were more of those. I feel like those would be really a

good resource for Chinese bilingual classrooms.” It is worth noting that the teacher and parent participants who supported the use of dual-language books were all like Anne in that they spoke English as their first and daily language. They were either not in charge of Chinese teaching or not proficient in Mandarin Chinese themselves, and thus lacked understanding of or did not have an explicit expectation of the students’/children’s Chinese language development. On the contrary, the teacher and parent participants who disapproved of or questioned the use of dual-language books were mostly native Chinese speakers who expected their students/children to achieve higher levels of Chinese and a more balanced bilingual development. Their relatively more ambitious expectation for the children’s bilingual development may also explain why they tended to separately use the English and Chinese versions of the same book rather than letting the children simultaneously read two different languages in the same book.

In summary, though all were involved in English-Chinese bilingual education, the participants had different expectations regarding their students’/children’s bilingual and biliteracy development. One intriguing consequence caused by the different expectations was the disapproval and questioning of the use of dual-language children’s books in bilingual education. For teachers and parents who had more ambitious expectations for the children’s bilingual development, dual-language books were not considered to be an effective learning resource and thus were more likely to be excluded from their bilingual children’s reading activities. From my point of view, this is primarily because these teacher and parent participants had specific goals for their students’/children’s learning results in the two languages; therefore, they paid special attention to their bilingual and biliteracy development.

In other words, their general expectations were that the students'/children's language and literacy ability in English and Chinese respectively would reach a certain level in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, rather than mingling together, as in a translanguaging status. The teacher and parent participants with a disapproving attitude toward dual-language books generally believed that when children were reading them, they would involuntarily tend to read in the language they were most proficient in, and thus their language learning could not help but focus on their dominant language, which would affect the development of the target language. Therefore, they believed that dual-language books made little sense for children in bilingual education. However, as Kleker et al. (2021) have argued, "dual language picturebooks provide a means for children . . . to tap into and expand their linguistic capital and put them in the position of becoming language inquirers" (para. 22). With appropriate guidance in its use, dual-language children's literature can become a new avenue for bi- or multilingual children to explore their understanding of language diversity and further develop their bilingual and biliteracy capabilities. It is necessary for teachers and parents to change their entrenched ideas on bilingual education and reconsider the benefits that dual-language children's literature, as well as the translanguaging approach, can bring to bilingual education.

The Influence of Participants' Perspectives and Knowledge of Children's Literature on Their Access to and Use of Children's Literature

Based on German children's literature scholar Hans-Heino Ewers' description of different types of authors writing on childhood throughout the history of German children's literature, Christensen (2004) outlined five types of positions of children's literature researchers: the researcher as educator, the naïve researcher, the sentimental researcher, the critical researcher

as the child's advocate, and the meta-critical researcher. Briefly, from the perspective of researcher as educator, childhood is viewed as a stage to be passed through, and thus the reading of children's literature should lead to the gain of knowledge and wisdom for children. The naïve and sentimental standpoints both see childhood as a more valuable period than adulthood, so that reading children's literature not only provides a way for adults to communicate with their "inner child" but should also shelter children from adult life. From the perspective of the critical researcher as the child's advocate, childhood and adulthood deserve equal respect, and children should be engaged in changing the unjust and unequal social reality to make a better world. Christensen (2004) acknowledges that the four positions are caricatures and that much of the time they are interwoven in the reading of and reflection on children's literature in real life; thus, she proposes the final position of the meta-critical researcher. From this perspective, adult readers and researchers first are aware that, as a fictitious artifact, children's literature "is an expression of images of children and adults on various levels" (p. 238), and second, there is a difference between representations of childhood/adulthood and actual childhoods; therefore, reading of children's literature should be integrated with childhood studies and combine many other factors, such as various media and sociocultural contexts.

Although Christensen's (2004) argument focuses on the position of children's literature researcher, I find that these different perspectives on childhood and children's literature can also be used to analyze different positions assumed by teachers and parents when they are using children's books. According to the children's literature titles collected for this study and the interview data, the teacher and parent participants who had been raised in

China and had relatively little relevant knowledge of children's literature tended to take the position of literary educator, which regards children's literature more as an avenue for children to acquire knowledge that, in the context of bilingual education, can benefit language and literacy development. Hence, it is not surprising that, when taking the perspective of literary educator, the teachers and parents also tended to select and use authoritative children's literature, for example, textbooks and levelled readings, as the resource for students'/children's language and literacy learning. As explained in a previous section, in bilingual education, children's literature in Chinese is more frequently used as an authoritative resource since it can function as examples of standard language use. Besides taking the position of literary educator, the teacher and parent participants raised in China sometimes also intertwined the naïve and sentimental stances into their use of children's literature. For example, when asked about his favourite children's books in his reading with his child, Jack said, "I don't like any of them. How could I like such childish books? And the wording is not very beautiful; its use of childish expression is not interesting for adults to read." Similarly, when asked about her standards for selecting children's literature for her young students, Jenny said:

If it is for the guided reading, I would see if my students could recognize most of the Chinese characters . . . whether they are familiar with the context or whether they would be interested in the themes. . . . They are more likely to read books and do the following activities if it is something to do with animals or colours. If for the leisure reading or my read-alouds, I would consider, is the book colourful? Does it have Pinyin? Is it attractive to my young students?

Both Jack's and Jenny's responses reflect the perspective of literary educator as a major position combined with naïve and sentimental stances to a lesser degree. First and foremost, they regarded reading and sharing children's literature as an effective means to help the children develop language and literacy skills. Next, although Jack's and Jenny's selection and use of children's books were based on the children's interests and comprehension capacity, this also implies that they viewed children's literature as only for children, so neither the themes nor the language forms should be too complex or critical. In other words, the responses and actions of Jack and Jenny and other participants who had similar perspectives reflect that they, as adults, did not see themselves as potential or hidden readers of children's literature; therefore, it might be difficult for them to consider using children's literature as a way to engage in critical discussions and actions with children.

In contrast, participants like Anne and Chloe, who had had rather rich and enjoyable childhood reading experiences, tended to take the perspective that integrated the critical researcher as child's advocate stance with the naïve and sentimental positions. From their recollections of their childhood reading experiences and their current reading and sharing of children's literature with their students/children, both Anne and Chloe regarded themselves as potential readers of children's literature since they acknowledged they could still learn from or enjoy the pleasure of reading children's literature. As Anne stated, "Children's literature is where I am becoming more aware of accurate cultural representations." Chloe mentioned that her husband liked reading the children's fiction adapted from the games Fortnite and Minecraft as much as their children did. For teachers and parents like Anne and Chloe, reading and sharing children's literature is not an obligation they must do for the

students/children, and it does not have to be limited to the purpose of language and literacy teaching.

In summary, the findings of this study show that the teachers' and parents' upbringing experiences, their expectations of the students'/children's bilingual development, and their perspectives and relevant knowledge regarding children's literature greatly influenced how they selected and used children's literature in bilingual education. Several implications can be derived from these findings. First, as a gatekeeper and mediator of children's literature, one needs to constantly reflect on the habitual or taken-for-granted ways of selecting and using of children's literature to diversify both the types and use of children's literature in bilingual education. Second, it is important to balance the various roles that children's literature plays in bilingual education instead of overemphasizing a specific role. For example, Chinese teachers and parents might consider using children's literature, not merely as language and literacy learning resources, but as a way to develop students' capacity for critical literacy and action on social realities. Similarly, English teachers and parents could pay more attention to the English versions of contemporary Chinese children's literature to expand children's reading scope and provide children a better understanding of today's Chinese society and the daily life of Chinese children, instead of reinforcing decontextualized learning about traditional Chinese culture.

The Challenges of Using Children's Literature in Bilingual Education in the Canadian Context

Various challenges in using children's literature in bilingual education were indicated by the participants in the interviews, most of which related to the accessibility and use of Chinese

children's literature. In the following section, I summarize the major challenges that emerged from the interviews, including the challenge of limited accessibility, the challenge of over-reliance on a few standard resources, and the challenge of restricted resource sharing.

The challenge of limited accessibility. One of the major challenges that was repeatedly mentioned by almost every participant was the limited access to high-quality, appropriate children's literature, especially in Chinese, for their students'/children's English-Chinese bilingual education. Shelly's experience of looking for Chinese books for her children is a vivid illustration of this challenge:

At first, I tried to download (books) but it didn't work, so I began to ask through social media and second-hand groups, but no one responded to me at that time. Someone told me that I could try buy books overseas, so I ordered some on Taobao (a Chinese online shopping platform with overseas delivery service available), but the process was very tortuous and slow, and didn't work well. . . . I have a friend in China who's tutoring children's public speech, I asked her for some resources. She took some pictures of book pages for me, and I coped with about two weeks as a transition. But I can't always ask her to do it and it is not a permanent solution, so I had to think of something else. Then I asked an owner of a printing shop I knew to help me scanning books. I first bought the book from Taobao, then he scanned and sent it to me. It cost me CNY 100 to scan a CNY 12 book.

Another parent participant, Jack, had a similar experience:

There are few resources for Chinese learning in Canada, especially now with the pandemic. I have to search resources online, because you have to have something, like textbooks, to teach the kids. The library is closed, and the only available resources are shipping a few books from China, and then looking for relevant things on the internet. It has taken me a long time just to search for resources. . . . I think it's a challenge for every parent who wants their children to have a bilingual education.

That parents of bilingual children like Jack and Shelly encountered accessibility problems is largely because there was little available Chinese children's literature within their reach. However, even with abundant English children's literature available in Canada, there were similar problems regarding accessibility as well. For example, despite a large collection of various children's literature, Anne said, "I think one of the most challenging things is just accessing resources. If you go to a bookstore, most of the books you'll find don't feature characters that are of Asian descent." In addition to a lack of diverse books, resource updating is another challenge, as Anne pointed out: "I find that there's just not enough good modern literature, like some of those books in the library are really old."

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated how children's literature unexpectedly yet spontaneously played the role of relationship enhancer and bond within Asian communities for the study participants; however, the findings also reflect how difficult it is for teachers and parents to access high-quality, appropriate children's literature for their bilingual students/children. Relying on community support obviously cannot solve the problem of accessibility for good. In the same sense, it is impossible to solve the problem by depending

on individual endeavours. Although English-Chinese bilingual education has been implemented in Canada for nearly 40 years, the Chinese language still occupies a marginalized position, which is one of the reasons that accessing children's literature resources is challenging. Therefore, on the one hand, it is necessary to further promote the concept of multiculturalism and celebrate diversity; on the other hand, it is important to make people aware of the benefits of learning foreign languages, including Chinese. Only when languages gain respect and a relatively equal status in society will the problem of resource accessibility be solved.

The challenge of over-reliance on a few standard resources. In addition to accessibility, the over-reliance on a few standard resources in English-Chinese bilingual education was another challenge mentioned by the participants, and it was more distinctive in the teaching and learning of Chinese. Many English-Chinese bilingual programs in Western Canada have been using the Chinese textbook *Zhong Wen* (CCLC, 2006), compiled and published by Jinan University, as the primary teaching materials. For child learners whose first language is not Mandarin Chinese, this set of textbooks might be very applicable due to its step-by-step design. Additionally, using a standard textbook is a tradition and characteristic of an Asian education system; therefore, many Chinese bilingual teachers who have received and/or been trained in the Chinese education system are accustomed to teaching the Chinese language through textbooks. However, one of the drawbacks of using a unified textbook is decontextualization. As participant Faye said, "(The textbook) is not only for children in North America but also other countries and regions like Africa or Arab countries. Therefore, it cannot be tailored for one group, which means it would not fit everyone." In other words, the

textbook *Zhong Wen* is designed to teach Mandarin Chinese to children who are learning Chinese as an additional language around the world, thus its content must be universal and general, which makes it difficult to contextualize to local children's lives.

Another potential drawback of constantly using the same set of standard textbooks is that it could easily lead to rigidification of the course content. Generally, the upgrading of standard textbooks is a relatively slow process. For example, the Chinese textbook *Zhong Wen* (CCLC, 2006) was first designed and published in 1997, and the revised edition was published in 2006, which means it has been globally used in Mandarin Chinese teaching for almost 20 years. Although there was another revision in 2018, only minor adjustments were made, such as unifying the format or updating paraphrasing. In other words, there was no fundamental reform in the structure or content of the textbook (Overseas Chinese Language and Culture Education Online, 2019). The teacher participants who had used or were still using the textbook *Zhong Wen* coincidentally expressed their concerns. Jenny said, "I think it's more important to keep students interested in learning (Chinese). . . . I hope we could change the textbook. I don't know what alternative would be better, but I just feel this one doesn't fit very well." Faye also considered *Zhong Wen* to be a literacy-based teaching material, and she related what the parents of her students had commented: "They felt this textbook cannot truly nourish the children's Chinese learning but just help them recognize some Chinese characters." In short, the over-reliance on one textbook is likely to risk alienating the learning of the Chinese language and culture from students' daily lives, as well as the reality of China's ever-changing society.

In addition to the limitations of the textbook, the children's literature that was available for the bilingual children to read after class was also limited. A lot of bilingual students' only access to Chinese children's books was through the school library and sometimes the teachers' personal collections. Chloe said the following when talking about things she found challenging about using children's literature in bilingual education:

“Definitely selecting proper Mandarin books, and having access to it. I mean right now the only way to get access to the books for my kids really is the school library.” Nevertheless, Chloe also mentioned that her oldest child did not really read the Chinese library books he borrowed from school but only the textbook, and he sometimes used the online levelled reading resource i-Chinese-Reader. Some other participants also noted this phenomenon.

Anne said:

I noticed that last year when we were able to make library visits, then the students picked their own books to read, they had to pick two English books and then two Chinese books, but it would be hard when they got to Chinese books because there were only certain books that they knew how to read on their own. And as much as my kids loved reading, reading in Chinese was very challenging for them. And we also have a very small collection of Chinese books, so they probably would have seen those books since kindergarten.

Jenny expressed similar concerns:

When the students are getting older you will realize that there is a huge gap between their reading level and their interest level. I think one big problem the bilingual program faces is that, especially for the senior students, they can't

understand difficult Chinese books, but they don't want to read the easy ones either. So how to create books that target both their language level and interest level is very difficult, and we haven't solved this problem.

In summary, the overly unitary nature of the available Chinese children's literature resources due to an over-reliance on a few standard resources means that bilingual children have few choices when it comes to reading in Chinese after class. According to the participants, most of the Chinese children's literature in the bilingual program came from the collection that had been purchased by the bilingual Chinese teachers, or were Chinese books donated by Confucius Institutes. The former primarily consisted of levelled readings due to the teachers' pedagogical purpose of language teaching, while the latter mainly included Chinese classics and outdated children's literature canons due to the Institutes' purpose of spreading traditional Chinese culture. Hence, children were often unwilling to read these Chinese library books because the content was too simple and boring for them, or they had already repeatedly read the books. At the same time, children were unable to understand many of the Chinese library books because they were beyond their language comprehension capability. To a large extent, the over-reliance on a few standard children's literature resources in bilingual education has hindered both children's language development and their interest in learning.

The challenge of restricted resource sharing. The challenges of limited accessibility and over-reliance on a few standard resources mentioned above to some extent both relate to the challenge of restricted resource sharing in English-Chinese bilingual education. Although overall the variety of Chinese reading resources in the public bilingual program is inadequate,

it at least can provide its students with numerous and free Chinese children's literature resources. This Chinese children's literature, however, is only available to share within the public bilingual program within a region. In other words, other bilingual children, such as those who learn Chinese in complementary Chinese schools, do not have access to the resources for free. This is one of the biggest challenges bilingual students and teachers in complementary schools are confronted with. As a Chinese teacher working in a complementary school, Faye said she had experienced several rejections when asking to share resources: "I asked the teachers in the bilingual program if they can share their list of levelled reading, but they politely refused. . . . I guess maybe it is because the policy doesn't allow them to do so or there's an issue of copyright." When asked what she would do if she could make any changes in the use of children's literature in bilingual education, she described the urgent need for improved resource sharing:

What we need to change the most is the status quo of inaccessibility and no sharing of resources. If I could make any change, I would like to build up a professional and free resource library of Chinese children's literature that is funded by government or other social organizations. I see that almost every domestic and foreign children's literature resource charges fees, so many parents let their children quit reading. Another problem is that there's too much different information, so that we need professional people to filter it and find the appropriate children's books. It would be great if we could have access to a professional and free resource of children's literature, and it cannot be commercialized. It would be a great merit for the future generations.

In brief, the lack of shared resources has led to an encapsulation of Chinese children's literature in Canadian bilingual education, thus exacerbating the difficulty of accessing quality children's literature for other bilingual education institutions and individuals. Additionally, the lack of effective resource sharing may also lead to further over-reliance on a few standard texts of Chinese children's literature in bilingual education.

There also are challenges regarding resource sharing of English children's literature inside the bilingual program. Anne indicated several things she found challenging in using children's literature in bilingual education, including accessing resources, having sufficient funds to get resources, and making the resources more sharable. She said:

I think (one challenge is) finding a way to make the books more widespread so that more teachers know about them, then we don't have to rely on the same books. . . . I hope that all the bilingual teachers have access to it. It's not just one teacher having access to all these books, buying all these books; it's all teachers knowing about it too, so that hopefully bilingual kids, whether they go to this school or that school, they can still have that experience.

As an English teacher working in the bilingual program, Anne further pointed out that it is also important to extend the range of resource sharing to make bilingual education more inclusive:

Not every English teacher is Chinese, right? I'm lucky that I am Chinese and I also kind of know about some of these things (about children's literature) and am actually making the effort to find out, but some English teachers are like "I don't know about that." They don't realize that it's something that the kids

need. I wish that there was something that maybe the program thought about, maybe they can get teachers to help make a list or hire someone or find PD out there to create list of books that would help with both language teaching and with cultural awareness.

According to Anne, the issue of resource sharing not only refers to Chinese children's literature but also English children's literature that depicts Chinese culture, ethnic Chinese, and other racial, cultural, and gender diversities. If the relevant children's literature resources are only shared within the group of Chinese teachers while making no connection with English language teaching and learning, it means that half of the teachers and other administration and support staff who also work in the bilingual program are excluded. In this way, it is easy to rupture the learning of the two languages and cultures, thus not giving full play to the greatest advantage of bilingual education.

Teacher participant Jenny pointed out that another issue of resource sharing in bilingual education is that the use of children's literature is too biased toward language education. According to Alberta Education (n.d.), the "International Languages Programs include bilingual programs, where in addition to Languages (*sic*) Arts (Kindergarten to Grade 12), the language is used for instruction in other courses up to a total of 50% of the school day" (para. 1). In other words, the aim of the bilingual program is not only learning the language but learning *through* the language. In addition to Chinese language arts, the subjects of mathematics and health are also taught in Mandarin Chinese. However, there are few materials available in Mandarin Chinese that target these two subjects. Jenny said:

Take the health course as an example, it has curriculum and is a program of study, so there are instructional materials selected and authorized by the provincial education department to support the implementation (for the regular program). But we have to select the teaching materials by ourselves (if to teach it in Chinese). So I wonder if there could be a list of books in the Chinese bilingual program that can both target program of study and Chinese language teaching. It would be great but needs people and time to build. . . . I think health is a good subject with which you can use children's literature to teach concepts. Now we teachers have to build materials by ourselves. It would be better if there was a well-development system or shared resource.

It will require teachers to put in a lot of extra time and effort if they have to build up their own teaching material packages and choose the corresponding children's literature. This is not and should not be a task that is accomplished by teachers individually; it needs collective work and cooperation of a variety of agencies, teachers, and parents. The challenges that the teacher and parent participants encountered remind us that it is increasingly urgent to improve accessibility, promote diversity of resources, and expand resource sharing in English-Chinese bilingual education in order for it to have a more sustainable and promising development.

Summary

The findings that emerged from this study show that teachers' and parents' experiences with and perspectives on children's literature impacted their practices in using children's literature with English-Chinese bilingual children in various aspects. First, different upbringing

experiences led the teacher and parent participants to emphasize different roles in the use of children's literature. The teacher and parent participants who were born and raised in China tended to be more focused on the role of children's literature as language and literacy learning resources, whereas the teacher and parent participants who had been born and raised in Canada tended to emphasize the role of children's literature as cultural agent. Furthermore, an enjoyable childhood reading experience was more likely to make the adult value the pleasure in children's reading and be open-minded toward contemporary children's literature instead of relying on classic titles. Second, different expectations towards students'/children's bilingual development led to the teacher and parent participants' different use of children's literature. One interesting result was the disapproval of using dual-language children's books in bilingual education; many participants believed it would hinder children's mastery of the target language. Third, different perspectives and knowledge regarding children's literature can also result in different ways of using children's literature. Hence, it is important to promote a critical perspective of childhood and to balance the various roles children's literature plays in bilingual education so that it can better function as a bridge between two languages and cultures.

The teacher and parent participants in this study encountered various challenges in their use of children's literature in bilingual education. Some of the obvious and most often mentioned challenges included difficulty in accessing high-quality, appropriate children's literature, over-reliance on a few standard resources, and restricted resource sharing. These challenges indicate that cooperative action between different gatekeepers and mediators of children's literature, including but not limited to teachers, parents, children's book editors and

publishers, librarians, and children's literature scholars, needs to be strengthened in English-Chinese bilingual education.

In the next chapter, I draw on the literacy expertise framework proposed by Cummins and Early (2011) and the continua model of biliteracy developed by Hornberger (2003) to look at the use of children's literature in bilingual education from a holistic perspective.

Chapter 6: Looking Through the Theoretical Lenses

The analysis presented in this chapter draws on the findings and discussion in the previous chapters and is twofold. First, I created a diagram (Figure 6) that I adapted from the literacy expertise framework proposed by Cummins and Early (2011) to demonstrate in what ways and to what extent the various roles children's literature plays in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context can benefit bilingual and biliteracy development. The diagram also uses dotted boxes to show the aspects of the use of children's literature in bilingual education that need to be strengthened. I also employ the continua model of biliteracy developed by Hornberger (2003) as a heuristic to explore the use of children's literature in English-Chinese bilingual education from a panoramic perspective.

Looking Through the Literacy Expertise Framework

The literacy expertise framework (Figure 3) proposed by Cummins and Early (2011) is primarily used to examine the academic development of students with minority linguistic and cultural backgrounds in classrooms where English is the mainstream language. In considering the emergent data of this study, I found that this framework was also applicable to analyze the roles children's literature plays in English-Chinese bilingual education. Cummins and Early (2011) pointed out that minority students' literacy development will be optimized when teacher-student interactions maximize both cognitive engagement and identity investment. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of this study. That is, the most essential roles children's literature plays are as relationship founder, enhancer, and bond. Only through positive relationships can bilingual children develop a positive attitude towards learning two

languages and cultures, and their bilingual development realized to the maximum extent. In addition, the data that emerged from the collected children's literature and the interviews reveals that in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Western Canadian city where the study took place, children's literature was frequently used as a cultural agent to transmit Chinese culture and help bilingual children construct and recognize their cultural identities. This finding is in line with identity investment in the literacy expertise framework. Both cultural transmission and cultural identity construction and recognition need to be built on positive teacher-student, parent-child, and community relations. As demonstrated in this dissertation, establishing trust and intimacy between teachers and students is the prerequisite that enables teachers to engage students in language and culture learning; meanwhile, teachers from various Chinese backgrounds can find emotional common ground with their students through children's literature and then gain a sense of recognition, belonging, and gratification. Similarly, the data shows that a good parent-child relationship can also promote children's bilingual and biliteracy development and foster their positive cultural awareness. In particular, parents' attitudes towards Chinese language and culture greatly affects children's attitudes towards bilingual and bicultural learning. On the one hand, the positive attitude of parents can encourage children to learn multiple languages; on the other hand, it can make children proud of their own cultural identity, so that children can persist in bilingual and biliteracy development. Last but not least, reading and sharing children's literature also helps communities to establish mutually supportive relationships, thus further encouraging bilingual development in a larger social and cultural context.

In the literacy expertise framework, Cummins and Early (2011) explained that effective literacy instruction should include three foci: a focus on meaning, a focus on language itself, and a focus on use. The three foci can also be employed to investigate the role children's literature plays as language and literacy resource and bridge in English-Chinese bilingual education.

According to Cummins (2021), a *focus on meaning* “includes scaffolding strategies intended to make linguistic meanings comprehensible to students, but it goes beyond simply literal surface-level processing of language to include the development of critical literacy” (p. 74). In other words, developing students' capacity for critical literacy is the higher aim of a focus on meaning. Cummins (2001) further outlined five phases to elaborate the progression from comprehensible input to critical literacy in the focus on meaning component: the experiential phase, literal phase, personal phase, critical phase, and creative phase (Figure 5).

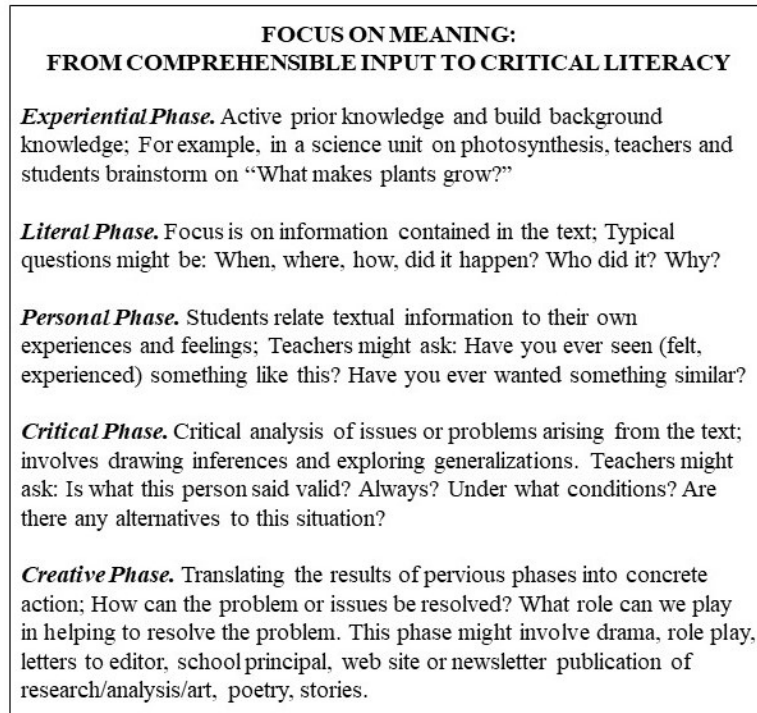


Figure 5. From comprehensible input to critical literacy.

Source: Cummins, 2021, p. 75

As demonstrated in “The Roles of Children’s Literature in Bilingual and Biliteracy Development” (Figure 6), when playing the role of language and literacy resource and bridge in bilingual education, children’s literature largely stays at the superficial level of making content comprehensible through the more nuanced roles of immersive resource, playful/interactive resource, and bilingual and biliteracy bridge, instead of functioning as an avenue to further develop students’ capacity for critical literacy. According to the data of this study, most of the Chinese children’s literature used in bilingual education involves only the experiential, literal and personal phases. Although the teacher and parent participants strongly encourage children to engage in immersive reading in Chinese, and often have playful interactions with children through children’s literature, these activities mostly focus on learning Chinese language and culture, or in other words, on better developing children’s

comprehension in Chinese through acquiring knowledge (experiential phase), analyzing information contained in the text (literal phase), and connecting textual information to children's life experiences (personal phase). In contrast, English children's literature in bilingual education is more likely to involve the critical and creative phases. For example, Anne had purposefully collected and introduced English children's literature regarding cultural identity and other social issues to her bilingual students, and she would also make connections and have careful discussions with her students on controversial social events and news. As she said:

What surprised me is just how aware some of these kids are that they're talking about the news at home. . . . I didn't realize that they would know about things like Black Lives Matter or Trump losing the election. Just how much they knew was, "Wow, you guys knew all that? That's fantastic. Let's talk about it." Because I think that's where a lot of good teaching can happen. They want to talk about the world out of their age where they want to find out more. Better they find out from someone like me that they trust versus random people on the internet.

Anne's use of children's literature and her discussions with students about news obviously reaches the critical phase because she not only provided related texts but also engaged students in critical analysis of issues and problems arising from the texts and other associated news. It is only through this critical phase that the transfer into concrete action that happens in the creative phase becomes possible.

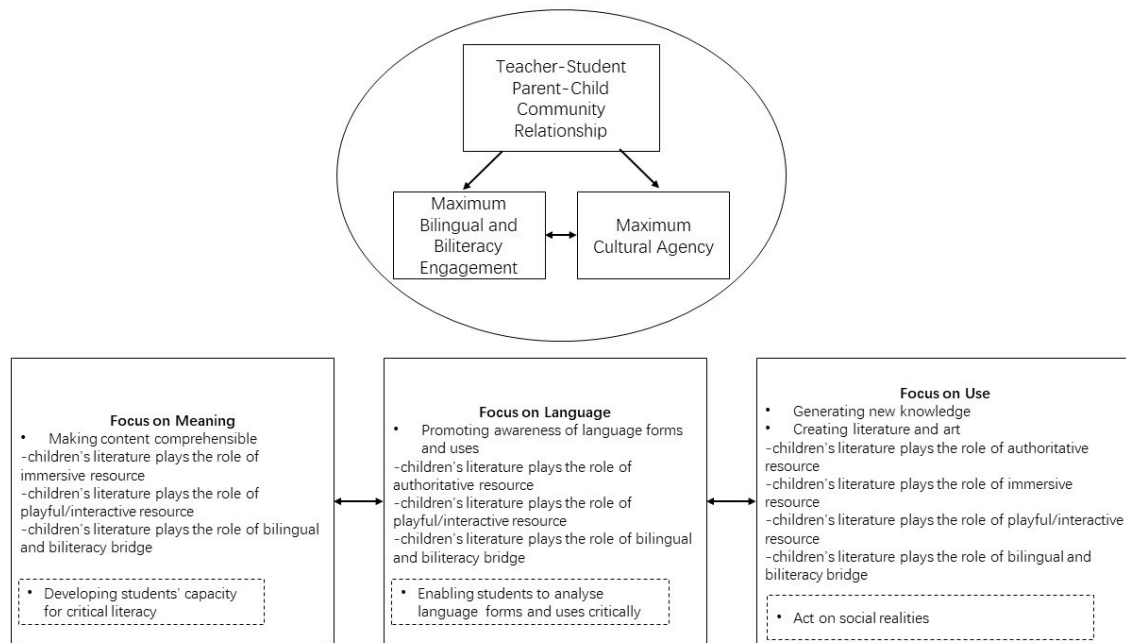


Figure 6. The roles of children's literature in bilingual and biliteracy development.

The participants' different uses and emphases between Chinese and English children's literature in bilingual education may be due to the fact that this study focused on the application of children's literature in bilingual education at the elementary level, and developing students' critical literacy capacity through literary works was not yet the focus of teaching. However, the standpoints and attitudes expressed by teacher and parent participants in the interviews revealed that in bilingual education, Chinese and English languages, along with Chinese and English children's literature, have been charged with different responsibilities. For example, in terms of language and literacy development in Chinese, some parent participants said they would be satisfied if their children could reach Chinese junior high school language level, while other participants put a high value on the metalinguistic and metacognitive development that learning Chinese affords their children. In brief, the "responsibility" of learning the Chinese language and reading Chinese children's literature results in a focus on linguistic and cognitive development. Both teachers and parents were

paying more attention to whether the bilingual children had learnt relevant language skills and associated cultural and historical knowledge. Comparatively, English language learning and reading English children's literature have shouldered more responsibilities for affective development (Kidd & Castano, 2013; Nikolajeva, 2014) and critical thinking in addition to linguistic and cognitive development (e.g., the recognition of Chinese cultural identity and the attention and discussion of social issues such as gender and race equality).

Similar to focus on meaning, a *focus on language* “involves promoting not just explicit knowledge of how linguistic code operates (e.g., phonics, grammar, vocabulary) but also critical awareness of how language operates within society” (Cummins, 2021, p. 74). Children's literature in bilingual education undoubtedly is conducive to promoting awareness of language forms and uses mainly through the roles of authoritative resource, playful/interactive resource, and bilingual and biliteracy bridge. As mentioned above, by playing the role of authoritative resource, children's literature can provide referential examples for Chinese language learning. Textbooks and levelled readings that are extensively used in bilingual education provide a variety of standardized and exemplified language forms and uses. The role of playful/interactive resource highly requires the participation and interaction of teachers and parents; therefore, in this process, bilingual children are able to get timely guidance and correction in terms of their language forms and uses. Through the role of bilingual and biliteracy bridge that children's literature also plays, the different forms and uses in English and Chinese languages are directly or indirectly demonstrated to bilingual children at the metalinguistic level, so that children can visually see and compare the differences and deepen their awareness of language forms and uses. I used a dotted box in Figure 6 to mark

the critical component in focus on language, which is “enabling students to analyse language forms and uses critically” (Cummins & Early, 2011, p. 33), because according to the data generated from the collected book lists and the interviews, bilingual teachers and parents more commonly associated the value of learning Chinese with positive recognition of the mother tongue and its culture. For example, the promotional web page of a bilingual program highlighted that being enrolled in bilingual education will enable students to master two of the world’s most important languages, that is, English as the language spoken over the largest geographical area, and Mandarin as the language spoken by the largest number of people across the globe (ECBEA, 2019). The program also listed several benefits of bilingual education, including having stronger first language skills, scoring higher in literacy and math, being superior in divergent thinking tasks, memory ability and attention span, and displaying greater cultural sensitivity, which is key to good citizenship. However, neither the design of the curriculum nor the practice of bilingual education is attempting to guide children to explore the underlying causes of such language structure and status quo, and how language is culturally and socially shaped and reshaped to empower or disempower people. In other words, there is little critical analysis of language forms and uses through children’s literature in bilingual education.

The *focus on use* component in the framework “argues that optimal instruction will enable students to generate knowledge, create literature and art, and act on social realities” (Cummins, 2021, p. 75). The four nuanced roles that children’s literature plays when functioning as language and literacy learning resource and bridge are all involved in the first two aspects in the focus on use component: generating new knowledge and creating literature

and art. For instance, as authoritative resources, children's literature can help students learn new vocabulary or syntax, which can be viewed as generating new knowledge. When playing the role of immersive or playful/interactive resource, children's literature can support students' learning of cultural and historical knowledge. As exemplified above, bilingual children learnt idioms and the appropriate contexts in which to use them through their immersive reading, and by playful/interactive activities associated with reading and sharing children's literature (e.g., drama plays, language games, singing with gestures, etc.), bilingual children were able to develop their oral language and learn narrative approaches and styles. Moreover, creating literature and art becomes more convenient through using children's literature. The appendices display some of the bilingual children's literary and artistic creations (see Appendix P and Appendix R). As for the role of bilingual and biliteracy bridge, the most significant benefit is to help children generate metalinguistic knowledge through comparing and contrasting two languages through translating projects or simultaneously reading in two languages. In addition, bilingual children can also create literature and art through the bridging role, such as translating picture books or making works with multiple languages and diverse cultures. Analogous with focus on meaning and focus on use, however, the aspect of acting on social realities in focus on use is framed in a dotted box. The reason is closely analogous to the earlier analysis. First, in the eyes of the Chinese teachers and parents who participated in this study, it seemed too early for young children to be involved in complex social activities such as politically related protests for social justice, thus their selection and use of children's literature were more focused on developing children's linguistic and literacy skills and learning knowledge, rather than engaging children with

controversial social issues. Second, the Chinese and English languages and their respective children's literature have been divided into different responsibilities in bilingual education, and Chinese children's literature is less frequently used in generating critical discussions on social issues and acting on social realities, whereas English children's literature undertook more of such responsibilities.

Looking Through the Continua Model of Biliteracy

As outlined in Chapter 2 on theoretical and conceptual frameworks, there are four nested and intersecting components in the continua model of biliteracy: context, media, content, and development. As Hornberger (2016) pointed out, the continua model of biliteracy gives a framework for people to use as a checklist to critically reflect on the *contexts* and *content* of bilingual education and to uncover the communicative repertoires (*media*) that students use at school and home, and that can serve as resources for their language and literacy *development*. In this section, I first look through the lens of context to focus on the micro-macro subdimension of bilingual education in the Canadian context, as well as the mix of bilingual-monolingual and oral-literate language practices that are reflected through the participants' use of children's literature. Second, I look through the lens of content to consider how the types of children's literature collected in this study and the ways that the participants were using children's literature demonstrate the subdimensions of minority-majority, vernacular-literary, and contextualized-decontextualized. Third, the media lens encourages me to think about not only the actual media of instruction—the structures, scripts, and sequencing of the two languages, but also other varying ways of using children's literature, such as musical performances and drama plays. Finally, the development lens helps me see how the use of

children's literature may facilitate or hinder children's developing first language–second language, receptive-productive, and oral-written language skills.

Looking Through the Context of Biliteracy

The component of context in the continua model of biliteracy positions micro, oral, and bi/multilingual on the traditionally less powerful side of the diagram, while macro, literate, and monolingual are positioned on the traditionally powerful side (see Figure 2). For this study, the history and status quo of bilingual education in the Canadian context, including bilingual programs in public schools and complementary Chinese schools, can be viewed at the macro level, while the teacher and parent participants' perspectives and uses of children's literature can be viewed as microlevel interactions.

At the macro level, multiculturalism has been implemented as a federal policy in Canada since the 1970s. Responsively, several bilingual programs (for example, Ukrainian, German, Hebrew, Chinese, Arabic, and Spanish) have been initiated in Western Canadian public schools (Kirova, 2012; J. Wu, 2005). Edmonton's English-Chinese bilingual program, in particular, has become one of the largest bilingual programs in a major city of Western Canada (J. Wu, 2005), and the student population has increased from 40 initially to more than 2000 across 14 schools from elementary to senior high school. At the same time, learning Mandarin Chinese as a heritage or additional language in Chinese complementary schools has also been a long tradition for many Asian Canadians across Canada, even before bilingual programs were established in public schools (Du, 2014; Mizuta, 2017). With the increasing importance of the economy of China as well as Chinese culture and language, theoretically, it seems as though English-Chinese bilingual education would have been further promoted and

more valued. In reality, however, the rise of China as a global economic powerhouse and the increasing impacts of immigration from Mainland China to Canada has sometimes had the opposite effect on bilingual education. For example, some newspaper articles have claimed that the increasing wealth of immigrants from China was the cause of rising property values and real estate speculation in Canada (e. g., Bains, 2016). In recent years, political tensions between Ottawa and Beijing (Boutilier, 2021; Houlden, 2020) have also negatively impacted Canadian-Chinese collaboration on English-Chinese bilingual education (French, 2019). Moreover, there has been controversy surrounding the English-Chinese bilingual program as some critics considered it as propaganda (e.g., Boudjikianian, 2019; “Chinese culture,” 2019). Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified racial discrimination against ethnic Chinese people in Canada (e.g., Ibrahim, 2022), which may further marginalize and stigmatize English-Chinese bilingual education. As a result, in countries where using English has been taken for granted as an ideology, children easily believe that only English is acceptable and valued at school and in society (Brown, 2011; Park, 2013; S. Wu, 2016; Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). In her study exploring Chinese as a heritage language in Canada, Mizuta (2017) concluded that English monolingualism as a foundational property and a colonial legacy in Canada is the root of the problem for Chinese as a heritage language education and Chinese bilingual programs in public schools. In short, the macro context of globalization and the complex reality of language ideologies have been continually invoked in the use of children’s literature in bilingual education at the micro level.

According to the findings derived from this study, the microlevel of context of biliteracy is prominently reflected through various challenges that the participants

encountered with using children's literature in bilingual education, including the limited accessibility, the over-reliance on a few standard resources, and the restricted resource sharing. For example, as one participant stated, due to intellectual property issues and the agreement with the Confucius Institute and China's Ministry of Education, Chinese teachers who work for the English-Chinese bilingual programs in public schools can create and share reading lists and book collections only within the program; other Chinese language education sites such as complementary Chinese schools are not able to access these resources.

Moreover, most available Chinese children's literature resources for the bilingual programs centre on language and literacy teaching, whereas other subjects taught through Mandarin Chinese, such as health, primarily rely on individual teachers' efforts to collect and sort out available resources. The use of English children's literature in bilingual education also faces the issue of restricted resource sharing; as Anne stated, her searching for and collecting of children's books that can evoke students' exploration of cultural identity was her personal endeavour, and there was lack of accessibility for teachers to collectively share and use these resources. In other words, in the macrolevel context where monolingualism (English) is the prevailing language ideology, it has been left to the efforts and resourcefulness of concerned Chinese teachers and parents to search for and collect appropriate children's literature themselves in order to develop their students'/children's bilingual and biliteracy capability and transmit culture to support their identity development.

In the previous chapter, I argued that the over-reliance on a few standard resources in bilingual education was related to teachers' and parents' tendency to use children's literature as language and literacy learning resources; however, the controversy about English-Chinese

bilingual programs at the macro level can also be viewed to some extent as a cause of the over-reliance on a few standard resources. Because the English-Chinese bilingual program has been accused by some people of containing strong political and ideological propaganda, many teachers would deliberately select and use Chinese children's literature that only focused on language and literacy content rather than the aesthetic aspect that might connote ideologies. Levelled readings thus become a preference because they are not only more literary and decontextualized but depoliticized.

With regard to context along the oral-literate continua, it is worth noting that the participants continually stressed the distinctiveness of the Chinese orthography and the importance of learning Chinese characters. For example, Faye said she considered the classic Chinese children's text *Thousand Character Classic* [千字文] (Zhou, 2019) to be the most effective text in her teaching mainly because it contained one thousand essential Chinese characters, and she believed that learning Chinese characters was the foundation of learning the Chinese language. Jenny also stated that she spent much time and attention on teaching Chinese vocabulary to her students. She employed various ways, including sharing circles, storytelling, independent reading, writing workshops, and puzzle games, to ensure her students had mastered the Chinese characters they needed to learn. Among the artifacts he shared regarding his child's Chinese learning (Appendix T), Jack displayed several pages of Chinese characters. He said:

I think learning how to write Chinese characters is the most difficult part of Chinese language learning. It was very hard when I first started to teach her to write, because she was too young, and I didn't know how to tell her, how to

make her remember, and it was boring to just keep telling her over and over again. Then I drew a picture next to each Chinese character to associate them. . . . Then she is getting interested and begins to draw the pictures herself. It's very effective.

Briefly, learning the Chinese writing system is viewed as the threshold of Chinese learning and an intrinsic part of Chinese bilingual children's cultural identity construction. As Ingulsrud and Allen (1999) have claimed, "to learn Chinese characters is to be identified as Chinese and true Chinese literacy is literacy in Chinese characters . . . that constitute a tradition that is largely unbroken for over three millennia" (p. 133). For English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context, much emphasis has been put on the literate side of the oral-literate continuum.

In summary, in terms of the context of biliteracy, there has long been a power tension and struggle between bi/multilingual and monolingual ideologies in the Canadian context, and that is reflected at both the micro level and macro level. As Mizuta (2017) pointed out, "multiculturalism does not equate to multilingualism" (p. 1). Given the increasingly political and controversial nature of bilingual education in Canada, bilingual educators and parents need to better understand the local context in which children are learning to be bilingual, and be advocates and agents for change.

Looking Through the Content of Biliteracy

The content of biliteracy concentrates on the meanings that texts express in three subdimensions: minority-majority, vernacular-literary, and contextualized-decontextualized. Traditionally, more power is put on the side of majority, literary, and decontextualized,

whereas the side of minority, vernacular, and contextualized, which better reflects minority students' literacy experiences, is less powerful. According to the results of the categorizations of the total 315 children's book titles collected in this study, the themes and genres covered in the English children's literature were more diverse than those in the Chinese children's literature, and bilingual children preferred English children's literature as their aesthetic/pleasure reading. The Chinese children's literature that is often used in bilingual education primarily consists of textbooks and levelled readings, which focus more on the pedagogical/instructional/didactic functions of children's literature. Thus, children rarely read these Chinese titles beyond their Chinese language learning.

In addition, for English-Chinese bilingual children in the Canadian context, accessing high-quality English children's literature is not as difficult as accessing appropriate Chinese children's literature. The Chinese teacher and parent participants in this study indicated that the greatest challenges they encountered when using Chinese children's literature included accessibility and the paucity of diverse resources. By contrast, the challenges in using English children's literature mainly related to resource sharing. Because there is sufficient children's literature in English that is easy to access either through personal or public channels, the only challenge is to systematically categorize and effectively share the resource. In other words, if we consider English-Chinese bilingual children's reading in both languages as a whole, the proportion of English children's literature is much higher than that of Chinese children's literature. In terms of the minority-majority continuum, Chinese children's literature is in competition with dominant English children's literature where Chinese bilingual children are more exposed to print and digital media in English as the majority language, whereas Chinese

children's literature as the minority is less privileged and is almost constricted in the context of Chinese language and literacy learning.

In the vernacular-literary continuum, the use of children's literature in bilingual education is strongly inclined toward the side of literary. Since one of the primary goals of the bilingual program is to teach Mandarin Chinese, children's literature with a vernacular content is rarely used at school. The bilingual children whose home language is a Chinese variety (e.g., Cantonese) or dialect other than Mandarin Chinese are unlikely to have children's literature tailored to their vernacular languages at home since such resources are not only difficult to access but are also scarce. The only practical way depends on parents' capability to code-switch; for example, parent participant Chloe orally translated English and Mandarin Chinese children's literature into Cantonese to read to her children.

As I demonstrated in the discussion on the collected children's literature in Chapter 5, in general, the parent participants tended to use more classic stories with high literary value in both English and Chinese reading with their bilingual children. In terms of Chinese children's literature, most titles that are categorized as contemporary are levelled readings and are primarily used in language and literacy teaching. The content of levelled readings must be in standard and literary language forms to ensure the learning outcomes. For transmitting Chinese culture and establishing appropriate Chinese moral values and socially accepted norms, both teacher and parent participants tended to use classic Chinese literary works. The tendency towards the literary side is also reflected through the authoritative role children's literature plays, particularly in the use of Chinese children's literature in bilingual education. Influenced by their upbringing experiences and perspectives on children's literature, whether

a children's book can be viewed as an authoritative resource is an important factor for bilingual teachers and parents in choosing and using it. The children's literature used as authoritative resources is also recognized as having high literary value since it often functions as exemplifying standard language forms and uses.

The continuum of contextualized-decontextualized is closely linked with the minority-majority and vernacular-literary continua. In this study, children's literature that played a role as authoritative resource also tended to be decontextualized because it carried clear pedagogical intentions to develop standard language and literacy skills. In the exploration of the participants' experiences and perspectives regarding the use of children's literature, some participants indicated that the textbooks and associated levelled readings used in bilingual education were mostly decontextualized because they were not designed for specific children in a specific context but for children who were learning Chinese as an additional language around the world. Moreover, as stated earlier, there has been controversy around English-Chinese bilingual programs because they are perceived by some people as political and ideological propaganda. Hancock (2014) indicated that literacy practices and sociocultural norms and values are profoundly interwoven in Chinese language education. The social and cultural aspects associated with Mandarin Chinese, and that Chinese group's identities and beliefs related to gender roles, nationality, ethnicity, teaching methods, and language use, may conflict with those of the dominant society. Therefore, it is not hard to understand why the use of children's literature, especially the use of Chinese children's literature in bilingual education, clings to the decontextualized side of the spectrum to avoid political and ideological disputes.

In summary, with regard to the continua of content, the findings of this study are in line with Hornberger's (2003) theorization, that is, that literary and decontextualized children's literature is at the privileged end of the continuum in English-Chinese bilingual education, while vernacular and contextualized children's literatures are at the less privileged end. However, as Hornberger and Skilton-Sylvester (2003) point out:

If students' whole contextualized texts, with all of their imperfections, could be used as a starting point, meaning would be insured and students could intrinsically see the links between decontextualized and contextualized language, and between the literary and the vernacular. If minority texts could be chosen as a part of the literary content of the classroom, links could also be made between the content students bring with them to school and the content they encounter at the school door. (p. 54)

In addition to children's literature that can help language and literacy development, vernacular and contextualized texts that can provide a space for bilingual children to enhance their biliteracy development and self-author their unique cultural identities at home and at school should also be valued.

Looking Through the Media of Biliteracy

For this study, media in the continua model of biliteracy offers a lens for considering the ways children's literature is used in bilingual education as part of bilingual children's communicative repertoires. In general, the use of children's literature in English-Chinese bilingual education is inclined to the side of successive exposure, dissimilar structure, and divergent script.

As compared with other bilingual programs in Canada, such as the English-French bilingual program, the differences in English-Chinese bilingual programs as reflected through the continuum of media are significant. Chinese learning applies structural-visual principles and requires learners to have syllable awareness and the ability to map spoken morphemes onto a large number of characters. It is distinct from English learning, which employs phonological awareness associated with grapheme-phoneme mapping (Hancock, 2014; McBride-Chang, 2004). These features and orthographic divergences are correlated with differences in pedagogical methods and help shape literacy practices, learning styles, and behaviour (Bialystok et al., 2005), and also influence the use of children's literature. For instance, as elaborated in the discussion regarding the function of the collected children's literature, there are more Chinese titles categorized as pedagogical/instructional/didactic than English titles. Furthermore, Chinese children's literature more frequently plays the role of authoritative resource in bilingual children's language and literacy learning, especially for exemplifying Chinese character writing as well as wording and phrasing. The Chinese teachers and parents tended to take the stance of literary educator to view children's literature and focus more on using children's literature as a language and literacy learning avenue. These differences are all closely linked with the continuum of media. The participant Jenny stated in her interview that the instructional method she had learned in her teacher training for English writing did not work for Chinese writing at all. Her students were able to apply the phonetic principle in trying to spell words out in English instead of memorizing the orthography first, but their Chinese writing had to be built on the fundamental knowledge of vocabulary and basic sentence structures. As exemplified in the context of biliteracy, both

teachers and parents in bilingual education highlighted the essentiality of memorizing and writing Chinese characters in Chinese language learning.

From my point of view, in addition to the three subdimensions proposed by Hornberger (2003), the media of biliteracy could also embrace medium forms through which learners develop bilingual and biliteracy. In the analysis of the various roles that children's literature plays in bilingual education, I summarized that one of the important roles is the playful/interactive resource. This role does not usually function through children's literature texts per se but is often transboundary and combines with various other medium forms. The findings of the interviews also reveal that the most effective way to use children's literature in language and literacy education is not to use it as an authoritative resource, but rather, if possible, in immersive, playful, and interactive ways. Almost every participant mentioned that children's literature needs to make children feel interested and playful in order to improve their enthusiasm and effectiveness in bilingual learning. The use of children's literature should not stop at the superficial level of text reading and appreciation but become a medium through which children can learn the words and the world (Freire, 2013). Moreover, children's literature should integrate with other medium forms, such as drawing, dancing, singing, gaming, and drama plays (which were mentioned in the interviews), and so on. Through these rich and varied medium forms, children can experience the fun and beauty of languages and explore the creative and critical use of children's literature.

In summary, in the Canadian context where the media of English-Chinese biliteracy is heavily successive, dissimilar, and divergent, both teachers and parents endeavour to use

children's literature in a variety of ways to make bilingual education more effective and intriguing.

Looking Through the Development of Biliteracy

Finally, the development of biliteracy lens helps me see how the use of children's literature may facilitate or hinder children's bilingual development in the continuum of first language–second language, receptive-productive, and oral language–written language. In the discussion regarding the context of biliteracy, I argued that English monolingualism is still the dominant ideology in the Canadian macrolevel context. It results in bilingual children's literacy practices in both schooled and informal contexts mainly occurring in English. Therefore, in the absence of a rich Chinese language exposure, teachers and parents in bilingual education tend to attach more importance to Chinese language learning. For example, parent participant Chloe hired a Chinese tutor to help her children to review Chinese words, practice for dictation and chapter tests, and be more comfortable talking in Mandarin. Another parent participant, Jack, said he only focused on his child's Chinese learning because he considered that she was growing up in English-speaking environment and could easily access abundant resources in English at school.

From the traditional view of language and literacy development, receptive (listening and reading) skills precede productive ones (speaking and writing). However, the reception-production continuum suggests that “receptive and productive development occurs along a continuum, beginning at any point, and proceeding, cumulatively or in spurts, in either direction” (Hornberger, 2003, p. 16). In terms of English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context, particularly in Chinese learning, the degree of emphasis put on receptive

skills (especially listening) is relatively lower than that of productive skills (especially writing). For instance, teacher participant Jenny stated that one priority in her teaching was to ensure students' mastery of Chinese characters; thus, she would do regular dictation every week. As shown in Appendix T, writing skills were the focus in Jack's Chinese teaching of his child. Moreover, Jack said he often used methods of retelling and playing language games to improve his child's speaking capability in Chinese. Examining the findings of this study through the continuum of reception-production unfolds some possible drawbacks in the use of children's literature in bilingual education. Due to the lack of Chinese language environment, the training of and evaluating receptive and productive skills usually occurs through textbooks and levelled readings. Some participants believed that children can only learn limited Chinese characters from textbooks and levelled readings; without meaningful contexts, it is difficult for them to learn how to productively use the Chinese language. As for evaluation of reading and speaking capabilities, bilingual students would often be asked to read assigned texts and answer prescribed questions. In other words, they rarely have space and opportunity to freely express their thinking and opinions in Chinese. Such confined use of children's literature makes the Chinese teaching in bilingual education easily fall into the "four Rs"—passive reception, repetition, recitation, and reproduction (Hu, 2002)—and ultimately affects children's bilingual and biliteracy development.

As already noted in the discussion of the continuum of oral-literate (context of biliteracy), dissimilar structure–similar structure, and divergent script–convergent script (media of biliteracy), in English-Chinese bilingual education, more emphasis is put on the side of written language. Oral language development usually occurs in informal settings with

no strong pedagogical intention, such as sharing circle at school, or bedtime storytelling.

Again, to learn Chinese is also to participate in deeply rooted historical and cultural practices.

In the Chinese cultural tradition where reading and writing capability is valued more highly than listening and speaking, it is not surprising that written language is more privileged while oral language is less privileged.

Summary

In conclusion, looking through the literacy expertise framework (Cummins & Early, 2011), there are some aspects regarding the use of children's literature in bilingual education that still need to be strengthened, including developing students' capacity for critical literacy, enabling students to critically analyze language forms and use, and acting on social realities.

In terms of the continua model of biliteracy, the context of biliteracy is shaped by English monolingual ideologies at the macro level, but at the micro level teachers and parents in bilingual education have been endeavouring to make change to promote bi/multilingualism and multiculturalism; the use of children's literature is one of their most important avenues and has tended toward the literate side.

The content of biliteracy concentrates on the ideological meanings embedded within texts. The findings illustrate that in the Canadian context, the use of English children's literature in bilingual education is positioned on the majority side, which echoes with the monolingual ideologies reflected through the context of biliteracy. It is necessary to include more vernacular and contextualized children's literature in bilingual education to better meet bilingual children's diverse linguistic and cultural needs. For bilingual children, and all

children, it is crucial to include both familiar and unfamiliar experiences in children's literature so that they can grow in awareness and understanding of each other.

The media of biliteracy acknowledges that diverse literacies are learnt in different ways. On the one hand, the media of English-Chinese bilingual education is rendered with Chinese teachers' and parents' culturally rooted perceptions of children's literature that highlight pedagogical/instructional/didactic values. On the other hand, teachers and parents in bilingual education have been exploring through a variety of medium forms beyond children's literature texts to facilitate students'/children's bilingual and biliteracy development.

The development of biliteracy draws attention to using a variety of languages based on one's funds of knowledge (González et al., 2005), including local vernaculars, diverse orthographies, and how these funds of knowledge can facilitate further bilingual and biliteracy development. One intriguing finding that emerged from this study and is related to the development of biliteracy is that the teacher and parent participants knew little about the pedagogical approach of translanguaging, and most believed that reading dual-language children's literature—one important vehicle to apply translanguaging—would not benefit but hinder children's bilingual and biliteracy development. However, as Hornberger and Link (2012) suggest, translanguaging is significant for biliteracy development because,

one, . . . individuals' biliteracy develops along the continua in direct response to contextual demands placed on them; and two, . . . individuals' biliteracy development is enhanced when they have recourse to all their existing skills (and not only those in the second language). (pp. 244–245)

Essentially, as suggested by Reyes and Hornberger (2016), the continua model of biliteracy provides bilingual educators a checklist to inquire and deeply reflect on their pedagogies, perceptions, and perspectives to better understand themselves, their students, and families in ways that reflect their strengths and assets. In terms of the use of children's literature in English-Chinese bilingual education, as educators and parents, we could ask ourselves: Have I thought about the many different genres of children's books that I can bring into students'/children's reading (both vernacular and literary)? Have I thought about other media forms in using children's literature to engage bilingual children? Have I thought about how this children's book can connect to bilingual children's culture and identity? Have I thought about all these dimensions of biliteracy that I can help the children to develop? These are some example questions that potentially could provoke our thoughts and reflections on bilingual education.

In the next and closing chapter, I first explain the contributions of my research for scholarship and pedagogical practices in bilingual education. Next, I reflect on my research journey and provide some possible directions for further research.

Chapter 7: Contributions and Significance of the Research

Starting with French immersion programs, various bilingual programs have been implemented in Canada for more than 50 years. Increasing numbers of teachers and parents have recognized the importance of bilingual and biliteracy education, and have used a wide range of children's literature to facilitate and scaffold students'/children's bilingual and biliteracy development. However, little research has focused on the use of children's literature in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context. Moreover, various challenges, omissions, confusion, and lack of awareness in teachers' and parents' perceptions of children's literature, as well as their correlated pedagogical practices, remain. This study aimed to address these gaps by exploring the use of children's literature in bilingual education in the Canadian context from teachers' and parents' perspectives.

In this study, I examined the book titles the teacher and parent participants provided to demonstrate the range of Chinese and English children's literature they were using in their students'/children's bilingual education. While their book lists provided only a glimpse into the full range of children's literature being used, it allowed me to explore how teachers and parents were using children's literature in bilingual education from a new and more holistic perspective. By categorizing the collected titles based on their emergent features, I identified some trends regarding the use of children's literature in bilingual education and explored the implications of these trends. The in-depth interviews with the teacher and parent participants, fused with my own experiences and perspective, deepened my understanding of the various roles children's literature plays in bilingual education. Moreover, by exploring how the teacher and parent participants perceive and use children's literature, I illuminated a variety of

dilemmas and challenges regarding the use of children's literature in bilingual education, as well as some aspects that have been overlooked or that need to be strengthened.

This final chapter is organized into three sections: contributions to scholarship, contributions to pedagogical practice, and reflections on my research journey. I begin with contributions to scholarship of this research. Next, I encapsulate some implications derived from this study for teachers and parents in bilingual education. The chapter ends with a reflection on my research journey and highlights a detour that I took along the way. In addition, I suggest a few possible directions for further research.

Contributions to Scholarship

In this section, I explain the theoretical contributions of my research, including (1) illumination of significant features of children's literature used in bilingual education; (2) extension of important theoretical frameworks; and (3) reconceptualizing bilingual education through a translanguaging lens. This research is significant because, with the increasing growth of various bilingual programs and the urgent need to promote intercultural understanding, it is important to move the research field forward by exploring what and how children's literature can be more effective for bilingual education.

Illumination of Significant Features of Children's Literature Used in Bilingual Education

Although the children's literature I examined in this research cannot be generalized to all bilingual institutions and contexts, some significant features emerged from my analysis of the collected titles that may shed light to inform future research on the use of children's literature in language and literacy education, as well as curriculum and practice in English-Chinese bilingual education. Below, I first separately highlight the features of Chinese and English

children's literature collected in this study, and then summarize the implications of those features through a comparison between the collected Chinese and English titles.

In terms of Chinese children's literature, the most prominent feature that emerged was the trend of decontextualization and depoliticization. The collected Chinese children's literature titles are predominated by levelled readings. On the one hand, teachers and parents who expect their students/children to become competent bilinguals tend to use children's literature as language and literacy resources more than leisure reading materials; levelled readings are considered more suitable than literary works to fulfill such academic goals. On the other hand, as a result of cultural and ideological divisions that were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, English-Chinese bilingual programs and other Chinese language learning institutions such as the Confucius Institutes have been perceived by some people as promoting strong political and ideological propaganda; therefore, many teachers and parents deliberately select and use Chinese children's literature that focuses on language and literacy content rather than more aesthetic works that may connote certain ideologies. The question remains, however, as to whether choosing to use depoliticized and decontextualized children's literature is really beneficial to the development of bilingualism and biliteracy. In the short term, this strategy might protect bilingual programs from political criticism, but what are the long-term repercussions? The goal of bilingual education is learning *through* languages instead of learning languages. The long-term expectation is to further understand different cultures and ideologies through language learning, to increase "awareness of, and sensitivity to, cultural and linguistic diversity" (Alberta Education, 2007, p. 1), and to educate "effective global citizens" (p. 23) who will endeavour to strengthen intercultural and international

understanding. Hence, I argue that exposing children to diverse children's literature that represents different cultures and ideologies and cultivates their critical thinking capabilities is essential to promote the sustainable and healthy development of bilingual education.

The collected English children's literature in this research manifests two prominent features. First, there is lack of children's literature that has been translated from other languages. Because English is the language spoken over the largest geographical area, and there is (more than) sufficient English children's literature available in the book market, access to high-quality children's literature written in English is not an issue for teachers and parents in bilingual education. However, exclusively using books that were written in English and neglecting books translated into English from other languages may expand the existing rifts and misunderstandings between different cultures since, as Stephens (1992) pointed out, children's books are cultural artefacts reflecting the values and ideologies of the society in which they are produced. One of the most effective ways to understand a culture, I believe, is to read the literature written in the native language in which the culture is rooted. Having little or no access to literature translated from other languages implies that it is difficult or even impossible to develop a true understanding of other cultures that are different from one's own. For bilingual education that aims at enhancing cross-cultural communication and understanding, it is necessary to attach importance to the reading of translated children's literature works instead of relying only on English children's literature. Neglecting children's literature written in languages other than English in bilingual education is a problem that has often been overlooked in previous studies. I hope my research will arouse academic attention

to further explore the use of translated works of children's literature in bilingual and multilingual education.

Second, there is lack of Canadian children's literature in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context. The collected English titles in this study were predominantly published by US and UK publishing houses; books from Canadian and independent publishing houses are few in the collection. Whether the children's books are about Canada, or whether they were originally created in and represent Canada, were not the primary concerns for the teacher and parent participants when choosing and using books. Although one teacher participant, Anne, had been trying to include more Canadian titles in her classroom book collection, most of the available books focused on Indigenous experiences and culture, or the wild geographical environment of Canada. In other words, there is not only a lack of Canadian children's literature but a lack of diversity of Canadian children's literature in bilingual education. Even though the texts are written in the same language, children's literature in different English-speaking countries represents and highlights the values and ideologies of the specific contexts in which they were created, and often these values and ideologies are not consistent across all countries and regions. Without being exposed to sufficient children's literature that depicts Canadian history, Canada's diverse environments, and the full spectrum of Canadian people, children involved in bilingual education in the Canadian context will find it difficult to use books as mirrors to see themselves. On the contrary, they would probably, as Nodelman (2008) has argued, "understand themselves as ordinary Americans who happen to live outside the United States" (p. 295). Therefore, I suggest that bilingual education in Canada should pay more attention to the use of original

Canadian works in English children's literature, so that children will have a better understanding of their identity and the sociocultural context in which they live.

When one compares the collected Chinese and English children's literature, it is not difficult to see discrepancy and disconnection in the use of Chinese and English books in bilingual education. The use of Chinese and English children's literature, regardless of the purpose in using it, tends to be confined to the respective languages and cultures instead of bridging and integrating the two languages and cultures. When teachers and parents use children's literature in either English or Chinese, they often do not consider whether it might also be a way for bilingual children to relate to the other language. Moreover, except for levelled readings in Chinese, most of the children's literature that the teachers and parents were using for bilingual education offered little possibility to bridge the two languages; the English translations of the Chinese levelled readings were also for the purpose of facilitating language learning. In other words, in bilingual education, Chinese and English children's literature is like two islands with no connection to each other. The separate use of Chinese and English children's literature reflects a conservativeness and segregation in bilingual education in the Canadian context that may be limiting the potential for bilingual and biliteracy development.

This research contributes to identifying what features are present in the children's literature being used in bilingual education and how these features might influence relevant pedagogical practices in bilingual education. In addition, by summarizing and discussing some of the pertinent features of children's literature used in bilingual education in the Canadian context, this research may provide new directions for future studies on bilingual

education and children's literature. I suggest some avenues for future research in the section "Directions for Future Research."

Extension of Important Theoretical Frameworks

This study was informed by two important theoretical frameworks: the literacy expertise framework proposed by Cummins and Early (2011) and Hornberger's (2013) continua model of biliteracy. In addition to looking at the findings through these two theoretical lenses to explore the use of children's literature in bilingual education in a broader sociocultural context and critically reflect on the implications, I also adapted and extended these two research frameworks based on my research findings.

I employed the literacy expertise framework primarily to examine the roles that children's literature plays in English-Chinese bilingual education. Resonant with Cummins and Early's (2011) highlighting of relationship in literacy development, this study reveals that the roles children's literature plays as relationship founder, enhancer, and bond are essential in maximizing children's bilingual and biliteracy development. Cummins and Early primarily used the literacy expertise framework to demonstrate which aspects teachers can help students with minority linguistic and cultural backgrounds with to develop their literacy capability and to read the world through reading words (Freire, 2013). I extended this framework into the field of bilingual education and adapted it by adding dotted boxes to Cummins and Early's diagram (see Figure 6) to show the aspects that need to be strengthened in using children's literature in bilingual education. In this way, the modified framework can provide a clear visual for teachers and parents in bilingual education to look at and (re)consider their use of children's literature. In brief, the modified framework reveals a lack of awareness, intention,

and action in using children's literature to develop children's capability for critical literacy in bilingual education. The use of Chinese children's literature in bilingual education is more associated with learning language skills as well as cultural and historical factual knowledge, and while English children's literature has been used to discuss cultural identity and racism issues, most of the time it only scratches the surface. Although, compared to multicultural curriculum in regular programs, the exposure to and recognition of languages other than English and cultures other than dominant Canadian culture are higher in bilingual education, often they are like multiculturalism in mainstream Canadian society, which means "little other than a celebratory approach" (Sensoy et al., 2010, p. 2). Srivastava (2007) argued that "liberal multiculturalism has taken a 3-D approach—one that celebrates dance, dress, and dining, but fails to take into account the multiple dimensions of racial and social inequality" (p. 291). Similarly, Meyer and Rhoades (2006) asserted that "an isolated day of food, festival, folklore, and fashion contrives a view of multicultural education that far too often denies understanding rather than enhances it" (p. 87). Both alliterative phrases—dance, dress, and dining, and food, festival, folklore, and fashion—refer "to the same response to diversity: a superficial, additive study of culture and culturally rooted differences and inequities" (Sensoy et al., 2010, p. 2). The language and literacy practices of teachers and parents that are reflected through their use of children's literature in bilingual education indicate similar problems to the superficial and additive approach in multicultural education. Based on the analysis of the collected book lists and interview data, most of the contemporary Chinese children's literature being used by the study participants is composed of levelled readings that are decontextualized and depoliticized. For the most part, the teacher and parent participants in this study were using

classic Chinese works, such as traditional rhyming verses and ancient poetry, and contemporary Chinese children's books that had been adapted or simplified from traditional Chinese legends, myths, historical stories, and idiom stories. The intention of teachers and parents was encouraging children to feel the greatness of Chinese culture and be proud of their cultural identity. For today's bilingual students/children, however, these stories take place in a distant time and space, and are almost no different from fantasy, or a simplified celebration of folklore and festival. Among the collected English children's literature titles, books related to Canadian society, history, and culture are also in the minority. Many challenging topics that may make teachers and parents feel uncomfortable to talk with students/children about, for example, the history of Chinese railway workers in Canada and the hatred and discrimination against the Asian community during the COVID-19 pandemic today, are unlikely to be discussed with children, even in English-Chinese bilingual education. As a result, the prevalent fairy tale that Canada is a multicultural mosaic where all the pieces of our diversity are welcomed and respected (Mackey, 1999) remains. Under mainstream multiculturalism, many non-white and non-Western children unquestionably accept that their home languages and cultures are just add-ons to the mainstream discourse, and transformative change is unlikely to happen.

In summary, the use of children's literature in bilingual education needs to be enhanced toward critical literacy, instead of not disrupting, challenging, or questioning textbooks and classic and canonical children's literature. As Sensoy et al. (2010) have suggested, an issue-based or problem-posing approach through which "students are invited to pose questions that reveal the contextual, political, and multifaceted nature of knowledge" (p.

7) should be more considered by teachers and parents; and I argue that such an approach should be implemented not only in multicultural education in regular programs but also in bilingual education to increase children's language awareness, as well as cross-racial, cross-ethnic, and cross-cultural values. For English-Chinese bilingual education in Canada, a more pressing responsibility other than inheriting and promoting language diversity is to have more Asian Canadians recognized for their achievements and place in Canadian history, and to make Asian communities more visible in order to address racial and cultural inequalities and oppression in Canadian society.

In terms of the continua model of biliteracy (Hornberger, 2013), I extended the scope of biliteracy media from linguistic forms to embrace various additional media through which learners develop their bilingual and biliteracy capabilities. The original scope of biliteracy media focuses on linguistic media or contexts through which biliteracy is practiced and developed, including simultaneous-successive language exposure, similar-dissimilar linguistic structures, and convergent-divergent scripts. Due to the great difference between English and Chinese languages, the media of biliteracy continuum demonstrates that children's literature in bilingual education tends to be rendered with characteristic of successive exposure, dissimilar structure, and divergent script. Nevertheless, both teachers and parents endeavour to use children's literature in a variety of ways beyond linguistic media forms to make bilingual education more effective and intriguing to children. When teacher and parent participants shared with me how they used children's literature with their students/children in their daily teaching and lives, I found it is quite common for them to use children's literature in playful and interactive ways not limited to linguistic forms such as reading and writing.

Drawing, dancing, singing, gaming, and drama play are some of the playful and interactive ways that teachers and parents were using children's literature with their students/children. Hence, I suggest that the scope of biliteracy media in the continua model of biliteracy be extended to incorporate other media forms. In the digital age, the use of children's literature in bilingual education is often transboundary and transmedia in nature; therefore, studies on children's literature as well as bilingual and biliteracy education should not only focus on language-based media forms but also consider the relationships among children's literature, bilingual and biliteracy education, and various media forms. By extending the continua model of biliteracy, I hope this research can provide a more comprehensive checklist to help bilingual educators critically reflect on their pedagogies, perceptions, and perspectives to better understand themselves, their bilingual students, and families in ways that manifest their assets and strengthen areas that need strengthening.

Reconceptualizing Bilingual Education Through the Translanguaging Lens

One of the most intriguing and unexpected findings that emerged from this research was the participants' lack of recognition or even rejection of dual-language children's books. The hesitation to use and denial of the benefits of dual-language books appears to be derived from parents'/teachers' desire that their children/students become competent bilinguals; however, this hesitation and denial also reflects the need to reconceptualize bilingual education through the translanguaging lens at both theoretical and practical levels. The term *translanguaging*, or in Welsh *trawsieithu*, was initially coined by a Welsh educator, Cen Williams (2002), in the context of Welsh-English bilingual programs to guide students to alternate languages for the purposes of receptive or productive use. Since Colin Baker translated the Welsh term into

English (Baker & Wright, 2021), it has been extended by many scholars to refer to “*new* language practices that make visible the complexity of language exchange among people with different histories, and releases histories and understandings that had been buried within fixed language identities constrained by nation-states” (García & Li, 2014, p. 21, emphasis in original), as well as the related pedagogical approaches.

Words with the prefix *trans* are increasingly appearing in language and literacy research. The term transmediality is used to describe phenomena that appear across media. Filipek (2020) explored children’s transliteracy practices in the digital age in her doctoral research. She pointed out that “trans describes action; multi describes things. There is fluidity in how we seek to learn that is not captured in the sense of multiple” (p. 264). Fu et al. (2019) questioned the binary perspective on language education and argued that “the prefixes bi- and multi- imply a collection of discrete items that can be readily numbered and counted” (p. 6). Hence, teachers and parents in bilingual education also need to reconceptualize what it means to be bi/multilingual and rethink how they can optimally facilitate and support students’/children’s bi/multilingual development through the translanguaging lens.

Through exploring the use of children’s literature in bilingual education, this research revealed that language separation in English-Chinese bilingual education still exists and impacts how teachers and parents perceive and practice language teaching and learning. However, in our increasingly globalized and digitized world, the conventional cognition that regards bi/multilingual education as learning different languages simultaneously yet separately no longer applies; rather, it is necessary to recognize one’s entire linguistic

repertoire beyond adherence to socially, culturally, and politically defined boundaries and regard this as one integrated system. As Fu et al. (2019) stated,

the evolving circumstances of communication seem to demand a more agile, flexible approach that involves familiarity with different ways of communicating and the ability to shape what is said in response to the expectations of each situation. . . . This could mean becoming literate in more than one language, being able to communicate with people with different language backgrounds, and being able to appreciate culturally different ways of communication and expression and to work with people with different perspectives and worldviews. (pp. 23–24)

In addition to taking advantage of bilingualism through a translanguaging lens, what is more important is how translanguaging could shift the ways we understand “the power relations in the society around us—power relations that privilege certain language choices and the people who make them, while at the same time marginalizing others” (Fu et al, 2019, pp. 28–29). As García et al. (2017) pointed out, “when we *language*, we are performing a series of social practices and actions that link us to what we want and who we believe we are” (p. 162, emphasis in original). Bilingual education should be used, not only as a vehicle to manipulate different languages for expression and communication, but also to create space for students to identify inequity and oppressive social practices and take action toward social justice. Reconceptualizing bilingual education through a translanguaging lens can invite anew bilingual students/children to “contribute their ways of words, cultural knowledge, problem-solving strategies, worldviews, and experiences on their path to becoming confident and

knowledgeable global citizens” (Fu et al., 2019, p. 30). In this sense, education scholars need to ponder how we can more effectively bring translanguaging concepts and approaches to bilingual education; how we can support and encourage bilingual students/children to optimize their linguistic strengths to develop their content knowledge, language and literacy skills, and critical awareness of their social contexts; and how we can offer not only bilingual but all students/children more opportunities to expand their communicative competence and open their minds to other languages, ways of constructing meaning, and perspectives through the translanguaging lens. I elaborate some ways regarding teachers and parents could use translanguaging approaches in bilingual education in the section below on the implications of using children’s literature.

Contributions to Pedagogical Practice

In addition to examining the features of children’s literature used in English-Chinese bilingual program in the Canadian context, this research looked at how teachers and parents perceived and were using children’s literature with their bilingual students/children, in order to explore how the selection and use of children’s literature might be made more effective for children, not only in developing their bilingual and biliteracy capability but also in promoting their cross-cultural and critical awareness of their social contexts. In this section, I outline the pedagogical contributions of my research. First, I provide some suggestions for teachers and parents when selecting children’s literature in bilingual education. Next, I highlight some aspects of using children’s literature that have often been overlooked or that need to be strengthened.

Implications of This Research for Selecting Children's Literature

Drawing on Rosenblatt's (1982b, 1994) efferent-aesthetic continuum, this research revealed that the use of Chinese children's literature in bilingual education tends toward the efferent end, whereas the English children's literature used is positioned at a relatively balanced point on the continuum. This finding demonstrates an important fact—that the use of levelled readings in Chinese children's literature has been dominant in bilingual education in the Canadian context. Learning Mandarin Chinese through reading children's literature written in Chinese tends to be endowed with more academic or practical expectations by teachers and parents. When the bilingual students/children are reading in Chinese, their reader stance is pushed toward the efferent end of the continuum, as acquiring the “residue” is the primary goal of reading. In contrast, their needs for aesthetic/pleasure reading are mostly met by children's literature written in English. In the long run, such separation in the use of Chinese and English children's literature might affect their continued interest in bilingual learning, especially in learning Mandarin Chinese. Therefore, my first suggestion for selecting children's literature in bilingual education is to choose more high-quality and age-appropriate children's literature, especially Chinese texts, that could be used as aesthetic/pleasure reading materials to engage bilingual children and encourage their sustained interest in bilingual and biliteracy development. Moreover, bilingual children need to see themselves and the world reflected, not only through English children's literature but through works written in Chinese that closely connect with their daily lives and resonate with their experiences, and that open new windows and sliding doors (Aldana, 2008; Galda, 1998; Wiltse, 2015) for them. In other words, teachers and parents need to shift from primarily focusing on the

pedagogical/instructional/didactic function of Chinese children's literature and pay more attention to literature's aesthetic and entertainment value.

Second, there is a need to select more contemporary children's literature for English-Chinese bilingual children, especially contemporary literary works created by Chinese authors. The analysis of the collected children's book titles shows that the time period in which the literature was written imperceptibly influenced teachers' and parents' selection of children's literature, as they often relied on their childhood reading experiences to choose books for their students/children. Correspondingly, the interview data revealed that the teachers' and parents' upbringing experiences were an essential factor that influenced their selection and use of children's literature. The teacher and parent participants whose childhood reading activities had been largely constrained and disciplined by school and family education were more likely to choose classic and canonical literature works recognized and recommended by authoritative professionals. However, because children are unlikely to resonate with the distant and strange life experiences depicted in many classic and canonical children's works, they often regard them as boring or old books designed for language and culture learning, and only read them when teachers and parents assign or even force them to do so. Children's literature needs to enable children to empathize with the characters, feelings, events, and backgrounds in the stories and facilitate them to see their own images in the books they read, as well as the lives of other people living in the same era but in different places, so that children can not only develop their linguistic and literacy skills but understand themselves and the world around them. Classic and canonical books are necessary but should not occupy too much space in bilingual children's reading. Therefore, teachers and parents

need to pay more attention to selecting more modern and contemporary children's literature works, rather than being limited to classical and canonical titles.

The predominance of classic and canonical children's literature in bilingual children's Chinese reading is also related to the reality that many teachers and parents lack sufficient knowledge and access to children's literature. For example, some teachers and parents consider children's literature to be a product specially tailored for children. The educational function of children's literature is regarded as the most important dimension by many teachers and parents in using children's literature, including teaching children historical and cultural knowledge, social norms, and moral values; in the context of bilingual education, the educational function of language learning is also emphasized. Therefore, when choosing books for children, teachers and parents have tended to ask: "Is this book suitable to read *to* children?" instead of "Is this book suitable to read *with* children?" In other words, despite being the gatekeepers and mediators of children's literature, teachers and parents often subconsciously detach their identity as potential readers of children's literature, or they do not see themselves as potential readers of children's literature. To these teachers and parents, children's literature is specifically created for children and not for adults. Such a perception of children's literature tends to lead adults to choose children's literature from a top-down perspective; thus, the trend of choosing classic and canonical children's literature with strong educational intentions is not surprising. In brief, the third suggestion for selecting children's literature in bilingual education is that teachers and parents shift the conventional perspective on children's literature and regard themselves as potential readers and users of children's literature along with the children. Moreover, teachers and parents need to be equipped with

more knowledge about children's literature, choose more books that appeal to both adults and children, and engage children in critical discussions and actions through children's literature.

Implications of This Research for Using Children's Literature

As a parent and teacher of a bilingual child myself, one of the reasons I started this research was to explore ways to help teachers and parents better understand and more effectively use children's literature with their bilingual students/children. While I anticipated receiving some useful suggestions regarding pedagogical practices from the participants, and did do so, the most unexpected but encouraging recommendation derived from this study is to always put relationships at the centre when using children's literature. As Cummins (2021) illuminated, relationships are at the heart of schooling, and establishing positive and trusting relationships between educators, students, parents, and communities is more critical to student success than any method of pedagogy. In this study, the participants' emphasis on relationship building and maintenance through children's literature reveals that the use of children's literature in bilingual education has been broadened beyond being a tool of language and literacy learning to also be an avenue of whole person education (Jerb et al., 2015; Wortham et al., 2020). As I argued earlier, when looking at the research findings through the lens of the literacy expertise framework (Cummins & Early, 2011), children's literature, especially Chinese children's literature, in bilingual education is being used more for developing language and literacy skills and less for developing students'/children's capacity for critical literacy, analyzing language forms and uses, and acting on social realities. Therefore, English-Chinese bilingual education needs to pay more attention to fostering children's critical language awareness and capability of critical literacy in a transformative way.

In addition, through probing the findings from the dimension of context in the continua model of biliteracy framework (Hornberger, 2013), despite Canada's long-time multiculturalism policy, there has been a power tension and struggle between bi/multilingual and monolingual ideologies in the Canadian context. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated tensions between different cultures and nations, and resulted in increased hatred against Asian people in immigrant-receiving countries like Canada. Again, the need to foster students'/children's critical awareness regarding language and literacy as well as multiculturalism is more urgent than ever; in this regard, children's literature holds potential to become an effective vehicle to foster such awareness in bilingual education. Moreover, in this increasingly globalized and digitized world, children should be prepared not only to operate within a plurilingual setting and with cosmopolitan mindsets (Zaidi & Rowsell, 2017), but also need to be equipped with knowledge through which they are capable of thinking about and acting on controversial issues independently and critically; this need also pertains to multicultural education. As Gorski pointed out, "multicultural education is a transformative movement in education that produces critically thinking, socially active members of society" (as cited in Meyer & Rhoades, 2006, p. 83). Nevertheless, a prerequisite for discussing these controversial topics and enhancing multiculturalism is a safe environment, and this environment needs to be built on a positive and trusting relationship because "transformative experiences require the individual to take personal and social risks" (Meyer & Rhoades, 2006, p. 85). In this sense, before engaging students/children in discussions of social justice issues and reflections on their cultural and social contexts through children's literature, it is recommended that teachers and parents make relationship building their priority.

In addition to prioritizing relationship building, another recommendation of this study is to use children's literature more as an immersive resource and a playful/interactive resource instead of overemphasizing its role as an authoritative resource. The children's literature that is used as authoritative resources in this study set comprised textbooks, printed and online levelled readings, and a small number of literary works. When children's literature is being used as an authoritative resource, the works selected generally focus on language and literacy skills development. In conducting this research and having daily conversations with bilingual parents and teachers, I found that many teachers and parents who highly valued reading often subconsciously set limits on what students/children could read, and this limited scope often focused on children's literature used as an authoritative resource. In other words, teachers and parents would carefully scrutinize the children's literature that students/children read to ensure its content was appropriate and had certain pedagogical significance. Thus, children's literature that had been reviewed and censored by education and reading experts was often the first choice of these teachers and parents, because it could save time and to a certain extent guarantee the quality of the books. As I argued in Chapter 5 in the section on children's literature as a language and literacy learning resource and bridge, however, the overemphasis of the authoritative role of children's books could easily lead to ignorance of the limitations. One of the limitations is that if the authority of certain children's literature, such as textbooks or recommended classic works, is being overemphasized, the possibility of critical reading is likely to be undermined. Moreover, children's literature that is used as authoritative resource usually has a strong didactic sense, thus is not appealing to children. Children in bilingual education often read these authoritative books only when they have to complete a reading task

assigned by their teachers or parents. In the long run, it may ruin children's interest in language learning and affect their bilingual and biliteracy development.

In contrast, children's literature as immersive reading resources was less emphasized by the teacher and parent participants since immersive reading activities are often regarded as purely for pleasure. When given the choice to choose books they are interested in reading, bilingual students/children tend to choose reading in the language (either Mandarin Chinese or English) they are more comfortable with. As a result, with the intention to further improve students'/children's bilingual and biliteracy skills, teachers and parents tend to encourage them to read in the other language that needs to be strengthened. Reading for (language) learning is highly prioritized over reading for pleasure in bilingual education. However, reading for pedagogical purposes and reading for pleasure can coexist, and increasing pleasure reading could enhance children's engagement as self-motivated and socially interactive readers (Cremin et al., 2014). For bilingual education, teachers and parents need to pay more attention to and encourage children's pleasure reading and try to set fewer limits on their reading. Moreover, in addition to paying attention to *what* to read, *where* to read and *with whom* to read are of equal importance when using children's literature as immersive reading resources. For bilingual children who prefer to read only in the language they are comfortable with during immersive reading, teachers and parents could use children's literature in playful and interactive ways to engage students/children in reading in the other language or in a translanguaging way. The stories and experiences shared by the participants in this research regarding using children's literature as playful/interactive resources demonstrate that the most effective way of using children's literature in bilingual education is

not only reading books per se but to germinate ideas and expand media forms through integrating with other media and forms and creating a variety of playful and interactive activities to engage children.

I argued earlier that there is a need to reconceptualize bilingual education through a translanguaging lens to adapt to our increasingly globalized and digitized world. In terms of the use of children's literature, teachers and parents in bilingual education could consider the following practices to implement translanguaging approaches. A first step might be to include more children's literature that is written in different languages in bilingual education. Many participants in this research hesitated or rejected the use of dual-language children's books, concerned that using such books might hinder their students'/children's bilingual and biliteracy development because the students/children would only focus on the language they are more familiar and comfortable with; therefore, the teachers and parents tended to use children's literature written only in English or Chinese. The one-language-at-a-time practice, however, will in fact aggravate language separation rather than mobilizing the full spectrum of bilingual students'/children's language repertoires. One way to address this concern is to give proper guidance and scaffolding to students/children when using dual-language children's books. Faye's translation project on picture books is a good example of how to encourage students to flexibly transfer between two languages and develop their bilingual and biliteracy capacity. When using children's literature that already has text in two or more languages, teachers and parents could discuss with students/children whether the language translation and correspondence in the books are appropriate, and whether there are alternative words or translation methods that could be used. In brief, dual-language children's books

could become an avenue to implement translanguaging approaches, but it is not yet fully understood by teachers and the parents. Moreover, N. Daly et al. (2022) stated, “Although dual language picturebooks are often associated with supporting bilingual learners in learning a language . . . these books can also encourage children in learning *about* language and language diversity” (para. 1, emphasis in original). Hence, the key is not the books per se but how to use them and how to guide students/children to explore the bilingual realm through them.

Furthermore, dual-language books are not the one and only vehicle to showcase language diversity in children’s literature. N. Daly et al. (2022) indicated that there are different ways to combine two or more languages in multilingual children’s literature, including “translingual (works from another language interwoven into the main language); bilingual (entire text presented fully in two languages); and dual version (same book published as two separate language versions)” (para. 21). Therefore, even if teachers and parents have concerns about dual-language books that are actually designed and presented in a monolingual way, they can choose other types of multilingual children’s literature that is suitable for their situation to implement translanguaging approaches. The point is, educators, scholars, book authors, and publishers need to collaborate to create more and varied multilingual children’s books and make them accessible to let teachers and parents know that there are a variety of options available. In other words, there is a need to create an understanding and accessible environment for translanguaging approaches to be implemented through children’s literature. More importantly, when creating and publishing dual-language books, authors and publishers need to “consider more carefully what it is to be bilingual when

they are deciding how to place and use the two languages within bilingual books” and be cognizant of how the languages used in dual-language children’s books could impact “language attitudes and ethnolinguistic vitality within minority language communities” (N. Daly, 2018, pp. 564–565). In sum, by effectively using children’s literature that presents language diversity and possibility, language status and people’s attitudes toward certain language can be reflected and changed in a transformative way.

At the same time, when using multilingual books, the guidance and scaffolding of teachers and parents are also crucial. When students/children are reading and using multilingual books, they need to be guided by teachers and parents to critically think about and discuss language use beyond language per se and to explore affective, social, cultural, power, cognitive, pragmatic, and performative aspects of language—or, in other words, to reflect on social and power issues through language awareness. According to Zaidi (2020),

the term *language awareness* refers to an understanding of the human faculty of language and its role in thinking, learning, and social life. It includes awareness of power and control through language, and the intricate relationships between language and culture. (pp. 270–271, italics in original)

For example, teacher and parents could ask students/children questions such as: Why are there different languages? How do we use languages? Will you choose to speak English or Chinese depending on different contexts? In which context will you speak English or Chinese, and why? Does language have power? How do languages influence us and our society? Is there bias, inequity, and injustice in using languages? Nicola Daly et al. (2022) used dual-language picture books to investigate children’s in-process thinking in the form of working theories

about language, and indicated that the participating children had their own inquiries and took the researchers' invitation "to focus on language in a different direction to focus on what *they* considered significant" (p. 14, emphasis in original); they concluded that "the most interesting data came from walking alongside children in their inquiries, rather than guiding them to a specific point" (p. 14). In other words, in addition to appropriate guidance and scaffolding, children need to be regarded as active language inquirers instead of only passive language receivers. This approach in exploring language diversity through multilingual children's literature can also be co-opted by Chinese-English bilingual education. As I have repeatedly argued in this dissertation, the goal of bilingual education is not only learning language but learning through language. From the point of view of critical language awareness, learning *about* language should be added and emphasized in bilingual education.

In summary, the significance of my research is reflected in both scholarship and pedagogical practices. Scholarly, this research contributes to identifying the features of the children's literature that is being used in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context, extending important theoretical frameworks that inform bilingual and biliteracy studies, and reconceptualizing English-Chinese bilingual education through a translanguaging lens. Pedagogically, this research contributes by providing suggestions and approaches to teachers and parents on how to select and use children's literature in bilingual education more effectively.

My Research Journey

This study has taken much longer than I planned, and I encountered a few unpredictable challenges. During this journey, I have constantly reviewed the findings and reflected on my

own experience and perspective. At the very beginning, I viewed this doctoral research more like a quest in which I must undertake a mission and achieve a specific goal regarding English-Chinese bilingual education and children's literature. As the study went on, however, one of the most important things I learned is that this is a *journey* rather than a *quest*. What really matters and can make a difference is not where I can arrive as the destination but the scenery along the way. The scenery has been collectively constructed by myself, my participants, the voices that were unfortunately not represented in this study, and the people who offered their insights and help to me. In addition, I also took a few detours in my journey to find the path. Some of the detours led to different paths which I was unable to follow in this journey, but I believe they also need to be known and explored. Therefore, in the following section, I highlight one of the detours in my research journey that I titled "Missing Voices." Although this detour led to an impasse in my research journey, I hope that by briefly exposing these missing voices, other researchers and educators will notice and perhaps explore this path, so that these missing voices can be heard someday. After this section, I encapsulate my reflections on my research journey.

The Detour: Missing Voices

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I took several detours during my journey trying to recruit potential participants. The most challenging detour was the recruitment of librarians. In my initial research proposal, I intended to invite at least one librarian as a participant because I believe librarians have a great responsibility regarding access to and use of children's literature. Librarians are often the ones who select, introduce, arrange, and recommend children's literature, not only for children but also for educators and parents who need

relevant knowledge and resources. If children's literature is compared to a treasure trove, I believe no one is a more appropriate gatekeeper and mediator to the treasure than a librarian. However, during my communication with one librarian who had been working in the English-Chinese bilingual program for more than 20 years, I was astonished to learn that she had been the only in-practice librarian in all the bilingual programs for a considerable period of time. Due to the pandemic, I was not able to invite her to be a part in the study; thus I turned my attention to librarians of public libraries, but again was shocked when I learned that the librarian I knew who could provide service in Chinese and was very knowledgeable in Chinese children's literature had been dismissed. After a few tries, I realized that one of the most important voices regarding the use of children's literature in bilingual education—the voice of librarians—would not be able to be included in this study.

The frustration of not being able to involve librarians in this study made me begin to think about the related implications. I realized that the shortage of librarians was not only because of the pandemic but was caused by entangled and complicated issues. The COVID-19 pandemic did exacerbate the shortage of librarians but it is unlikely it was the underlying cause. Before the pandemic, many public schools had been phasing out teacher-librarian positions (e.g., Cox, 2004; H. Daly, 2010; Kirkland, 2021). The use of Chinese children's literature in most bilingual programs has not depended on school librarians' professional services for some time; rather, it has relied on the guided-reading list collectively created by a group of Chinese teachers and related books purchased and shared within the programs. As for the English children's literature, in addition to the existing school library collection, students' access to books has largely depended on individual teachers' personal book

collections, or, to put it another way, on teachers' knowledge and enthusiasm about children's literature. My failure to involve the Chinese librarian from the public library also implies issues beyond the pandemic. In this Western Canadian city where I live, this librarian probably was the only one in the public library system who could speak Chinese and had the enthusiasm to promote Chinese children's literature. In my view, she should be considered irreplaceable, yet she was the most vulnerable during the pandemic crisis. The dismissal of this Chinese librarian, from my point of view, indicates that minority languages and cultures in a society where English is the dominant and supreme language still cannot receive the equal attention and respect that they deserve. Structural discrimination against minority and marginalized groups exists in ways that are easily overlooked. As a result, celebrating diversity may remain an empty slogan rather than inducing substantial and transformative changes.

In brief, the reasons that librarians' voices are missing in this research are threefold. First is the faculty shortage caused by the strain of the pandemic. Second, the lack of qualified teacher-librarians, not only in bilingual programs but in various school districts broadly, is a longstanding issue caused by constant funding cuts in public education. Finally, in my view, English monolingualism as a foundational policy and colonial legacy in Canada, as well as the power tensions and struggles between bi/multilingual and monolingual ideologies in the Canadian context, is the root of the reassignment and lack of librarians who could provide professional services in Chinese. These three aspects are so overlapping and entangled that they are far beyond the scope of this research. Nevertheless, as I argued in this study, there are various gatekeepers and mediators to the use of children's literature in English-Chinese

bilingual education, including but not limited to teachers, parents, librarians, publishers, and researchers. Each gatekeeper and mediator plays an indispensable role to collectively ensure the use of children's literature is maximized. As demonstrated in earlier chapters, the major challenges regarding the use of children's literature in bilingual education indicated by the participants in this study include difficulties in accessing resources, over-reliance on a few standard resources, and restricted resource sharing. The missing librarian's voice in this study might reveal one of the main causes of these challenges. Without capable librarians who can professionally search for, arrange, categorize, and recommend appropriate children's literature for bilingual children, other gatekeepers and mediators without librarians' specialized knowledge, such as teachers and parents, have to put in extra effort, time, and money to access and collect children's literature, and the existing inequities in access to quality school library programs are also exacerbated.

In summary, I believe sometimes it is precisely the voice we are missing that can reveal long-neglected issues. As Boler and Zembylas (2002) pointed out, "discourses include the silences as much as they include the spoken and written words" (p. 120). Only by making the missing voices heard can we truly find the path to a more promising future.

Back to the Path: My Reflections as a Researcher

When working as a researcher, there always are numerous moments in my daily life that can provoke my continuing thinking and reflection on the specific research topic. One recent moment for me was when my son was trying to practice the melody he had just learnt on his viola. As an adult and a tired parent, my assumption for the flow of practice is that it should be—grab the viola, practice the assigned song until achieving a certain fluency, and mission

accomplished. However, the actual situation was, my son first picked up the lyrics that accompanied the song, then started to sing without even opening his viola case. Hearing him happily singing the silly lyrics, my first reaction was to ask him to stop and hurry to finish the song that he was supposed to practice. I am glad that I did not do that at that moment, because on my second thought, I realized the reason I wanted him to stop was that I needed to make a check mark on my schedule signifying that the goal of practice had been achieved. In other words, what I was concerned about was only the result but not the process, especially whether my son had enjoyed himself in this process.

During the process of writing this dissertation, I repeatedly read the interview data and constantly reflected on my own experience and perspective based on the stories and experiences the participants shared with me. I was astonished by how similar their use of children's literature in bilingual education was to the story of my child learning to play the viola. I realized how often many teachers and parents, myself included, regard learning Chinese language and culture through reading children's literature as a task that needs to be marked with a check. Reading a children's book is usually associated with a predetermined goal. The goal could be learning specific vocabularies, learning sentence structure, or carrying out some moral teachings. How many times, as teacher or parent, do we just want children to finish reading a book so that we could make a check mark in our mind or on our actual schedule? How often do we care about whether the story is fun, or whether our children enjoy reading? Typically, we consider that aesthetic pleasure in children's reading is secondary to the potential educational functions associated with it. But should it be? Is it in this constant

pursuit of accomplishing assigned goals that we push children away from being avid readers and gradually kill their interest in learning Chinese and reading literature?

In the same sense, in bilingual education, English children's literature is often placed in opposition to Chinese children's literature. The reading of English children's literature, particularly the "nonacademic" pleasure of reading outside of school, is often regarded by teachers and parents who emphasize the pedagogical function of children's literature as dispensable reading. In other words, pleasure reading does not need to be check-marked, thus it often takes a back seat to academic reading. As a result, the aesthetic/pleasure feature of English children's literature is strengthened; the more children like reading in English, the more they may dislike reading in Chinese. Bilingual education's aim of developing bilingual and intercultural competence and fostering global citizens might, therefore, be undermined.

Suggestions for Future Research

As I finish this dissertation, I want to offer several possible directions for future research on the use of children's literature in bilingual education, or in more general language and literacy education. First, this study investigated the use of children's literature in English-Chinese bilingual education from teachers' and parents' perspectives; however, there are many other gatekeepers and mediators of children's literature, such as librarians, children's book authors, editors, and publishers. Exploring how librarians or other relevant professionals write, edit, select, and use children's literature would provide a more comprehensive picture of how adults choose and use children's literature and the consequent impacts on children's language and literacy development. Moreover, there is a need to more broadly examine how children's literature aimed at overseas Chinese language learning has been selected and used, and to

explore the ways that the use of children's literature in different languages in bilingual and multilingual contexts can be more effectively bridged. Second, given that children are the target audience of children's literature, children's voices in choosing and using children's literature are also essential. In terms of bilingual education, what types of children's literature bilingual children often read at school and at home, what kinds of books they spontaneously read, how they select and access children's literature, how their selection and access impacts their bilingual and biliteracy practices and engagement, and in what ways their reading and use of children's literature influences their language awareness and critical thinking are all worth exploring in future research. Last, this research primarily focused on exploring the use of printed children's literature. Though some online reading platforms were mentioned in the interviews, I did not engage in in-depth analysis and discussion about them due to the time and space constraints of the research. With children's rapidly increasing access to and use of various digital devices, investigating how digital forms of children's literature, such as online reading platforms and audio books, impact children's language and literacy engagement, and how animated visual images, sound effects, and other multimodal mediums influence the creation and use of children's literature in bilingual education, would be productive avenues for research in language and literacy education.

Concluding Remarks

Children's literature has always played a significant role in my life and now also in my child's life. Personally, I believe that children's literature provides a pathway to a vast world full of imagination and many various possibilities. As a researcher, I have always believed that children's literature can function not only as a means of pedagogical practice but also as

avenues of aesthetics, pleasure, and identity development. As a parent, my aim is to nurture my child's language and literacy development through children's literature, and meanwhile help other parents to nurture their children's language and literacy development, in order to give them the key to this fascinating world.

Although there are still aspects to improve and strengthen, children's literature has shown irreplaceable advantages for English-Chinese bilingual education. Research concerning the use of children's literature in bilingual education is practically nonexistent. Therefore, many of my findings are based on my own experiences and perspective as a researcher and parent who is interested in both bilingual education and children's literature. They have also been collectively constructed and fused through the experiences and perspectives shared by the participants in this study, who are also immersed in bilingual education. I hope this qualitative case study will provide insights regarding the use of children's literature in bilingual and biliteracy education.

My personal ability only allows me to look at a limited scope of the use of children's literature in bilingual education; the composition and dynamics regarding this topic are more complex than what I have demonstrated in this study. More importantly and practically, it is necessary to create and compile more children's literature with interesting content, aesthetic value, and richer language for bilingual children and children learning Chinese overseas, and to make more children's literature resources easily accessible. Both bilingual education and the use of children's literature are always changing depending on different purposes and contexts, and are inevitably influenced by different historical, cultural, social, and political

factors. Therefore, it is also essential to shift from our conventional thinking on children's literature and bilingual education to explore more possibilities with open minds.

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Appendix A: Information Letter to Participants

Study Title: The Use of Children’s Literature in English-Chinese Bilingual Education in Western Canada

Research Investigator:

Jing Jin
Department of Elementary Education
233 Education South
University of Alberta
Phone: (780)885-5732
jjin2@ualberta.ca

Supervisor:

Dr. Lynne Wiltse
Department of Elementary Education
634 Education South
University of Alberta
Office: (780)492-2016
wiltse@ualberta.ca

Hello,

My name is Jing Jin and I am a doctoral student in the Department of Elementary Education at the University of Alberta. I am writing this letter to invite you to participate in my research study: “The Use of Children’s Literature in English-Chinese Bilingual Education in Western Canada” as part of my PhD program and dissertation.

Although the positive impact of bilingual education has been affirmed by increasing research, and various English-Chinese bilingual programs have existed in Western Canada for a long period of time, very little research has been done on what resources these programs use or how effective they are in supporting students’ bilingual and biliteracy development and fostering cultural awareness. In addition, research that explores the use of children’s literature from the perspectives of educators and parents who have relevant experiences teaching or raising English-Chinese bilingual children is still rare. As a professional or a parent interested in the selection and teaching of children’s literature in English-Chinese bilingual education, you may find this study of benefit.

The purpose of this study is three-fold:

- First, I intend to examine what kind of children’s literature is being used in English-Chinese bilingual education in the Canadian context.
- Second, I hope to explore what role children’s literature plays in English- Chinese bilingual children’s language and literacy development.
- Third, I want to achieve a more thorough understanding on how educators’ /parents’ experiences and perspectives with children’s literature might impact their practices in using children’s literature with English-Chinese bilingual children.

If you agree to participate, I will start with looking at the collection of children’s literature in your workplace/home or you have used in your teaching/reading with bilingual children, and then would like to

interview you about your experiences and stories related to the use of children's literature with English-Chinese bilingual children Data will be collected through:

- Examining and categorizing the collection of children's literature in your workplace/home or you have used in your pedagogical practice. You may need to provide the book lists/photos of children's books you use in your daily teaching/reading with children should visiting of the physical setting be unavailable.
 - Photographs of physical settings or materials without identified information, such as the layout of the library, the collection of children's books in the classrooms/your home, or teachers' lesson plans and children's ' works.
 - Some pre-interview activities, including diagrams, drawings or other visual representations that can represent some aspects of what is generally important to you in your lives, and something that has been important to you regarding the research topic.
- A 60 to 90 minute open-ended interview related to the research topic. The interview will be audio-recorded. The interview may take place via Google Meet/Zoom. The interviews will be recorded locally to the researcher's laptop computer. Cloud syncing of the computer will be disabled until the recording is removed from the device. The cloud recording service of Google Meet or Zoom will not be used therefore the platforms will not retain any recording of the interviews. The security settings will include but not be limited to: (1) make sure no one else is near the researcher during the interview; (2) start a secured online meeting with password; (3) lock the virtual meeting room so that no one else can join; (4) do not take photos of/video record the meetings.

If you consent to participate in this study, you will be given a pseudonym and neither your real name nor the name of your workplace will be used in any written or oral presentation of data. The audio-recording of the open-ended interviews and other data (photographs, lesson plans, and children's works) will be securely stored using password and encrypted files, any identifying images will be masked or blurred, and voices will be altered to maintain privacy and confidentiality. Only the researcher, Jing Jin, will have access to the data collected. You will be given the opportunity to read and comment on all transcripts of the data.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you may decide to withdraw at any time during the study until May 15th, 2021, by which time data will have been analyzed. If you decide to withdraw, your data gathered to date will be destroyed. I anticipate that participating in this study may offer you a valuable opportunity to think and rethink the use of children's literature in your classroom/home literacy practices, and to further help children develop their bilingual and biliteracy abilities. However, there may be no direct benefits to participants.

Data from the study will be used in support of writing my dissertation as a requirement of my doctoral program. The data may also be used in professional or academic conference presentations or written articles in journals and/or books.

If you agree to participate, please sign the attached consent form and return it to me. Thank you very much for your cooperation. For further information, please contact me at the following email address or phone number:

Sincerely,
Jing Jin: jjin2@ualberta.ca (780-885-5732)

The plan for this study has been reviewed by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. The profile number is Pro00094699. If you have questions about your rights or how research should be conducted, you can call (780) 492-2615. This office is independent of the researcher

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

I, _____, hereby consent to be involved in the study

(name of participant)

entitled “The Use of Children’s Literature in English-Chinese Bilingual Education in Western Canada” being conducted by Jing Jin.

I agree to:

- Provide the researcher the book list/photos of children’s books I use in my reading and sharing with my students/child(ren).
- Provide the researcher photos of physical settings or materials without identified information, such as the collection of children’s books in the classroom/at my home, or children’s works related to the children’s literature he/she/they read.
- Participate in pre-interview activities and the later open-ended interviews (via Google Meet/Zoom) with regard to the use of children’s literature with my English-Chinese bilingual students/child(ren).

I understand that:

- Participation is voluntary and I can answer only those questions with which I am comfortable. I have the option to withdraw myself from the study for any reason, at any time, without explanation up to the point at which I have approved the transcripts.
- Data generated by myself may be withdrawn at any time up until data analysis begins, which will be when all of the transcripts have been verified by the participants and returned to the researcher. Once data analysis begins data cannot be withdrawn.
- The researcher, Jing Jin, will be the only persons who will have access to the data collected with identifying information.
- Pseudonyms will be used for me and my child(ren) to de-identify the data and protect identities.
- The researcher will keep privacy and security foremost when interacting over Google Meet/Zoom. The security settings will include but not be limited to: (1) make sure no one else

is near the researcher during the virtual meetings; (2) start a secured online meeting with password; (3) lock the virtual meeting room so that no one else can join; (4) do not take photos of/video record the meetings.

- If interview takes place via Google Meet/Zoom, only the researcher's laptop computer will be used to take audio-recordings. Cloud syncing of the computer will be disabled until the recording is removed from the device. No recording functions of Google Meet/Zoom will be used in the interviews therefore the platforms will not retain any recording of the interviews. The Google Meet server locates in the United States. The Zoom server locates in Canada.
- The audio-recordings of the open-ended interviews will be transcribed. This and other data (photographs and children's works) will be securely stored using password and encrypted files, any identifying images will be masked or blurred and voices will be altered to maintain privacy and confidentiality.
- After the required period of five years, then the data will be appropriately destroyed.
- The data from this research project may be published and presented at conferences; however, my and my child(ren)'s identity will be kept confidential. Although direct quotations from the interview will be reported, my child(ren) and I will be given a pseudonym, and all identifying information will be removed from the report.
- After the interview, and prior to the data being included in the final report, I will be given the opportunity to review the transcript of my interview, and to add, alter, or delete information from the transcripts as I see fit.
- I will receive a copy of this signed consent form for my keeping.
- I will receive a copy of the final report by contacting the researcher (jjin2@ualberta.ca).

(Signature of participant)

(Date signed)

For further information, please contact:

Jing Jin

Department of Elementary Education

233 Education South

University of Alberta

Phone: (780)885-5732

jjin2@ualberta.ca

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a participant or how this study is being conducted, you may contact the Research Ethics Office at 780-492-2615. The profile number is Pro00094699.

Appendix C: Minor Assent Form

Date:

Project Title: The Use of Children's literature in English-Chinese Bilingual Education in Western Canada

Research Investigator:

Jing Jin

Dear _____,

I am writing to invite you to take part in a research study. Your parent has already agreed to your taking part in this research study. Here is some information about the study that will help you to decide if you are interested in being part of this.

What is this research study?

- This research study is to learn more about the reading and sharing of children's books in English and Chinese. I am interested in knowing how you understand and think of the children's books you read in both English and Chinese.

Why am I being asked to be part of this research study?

- You are being asked to take part in this research study because I am trying to learn more about your thoughts about the children's books that you read and discuss in both English and Chinese.

If I join the study what will I be asked to do?

- You will be asked to allow me to have or take photos of your works (such as drawings or writings) that show your understandings and thoughts about the children's books you read.

Will my real name be used at any time in the research?

- No. You will be given a pseudonym (false name) that will be used for the research. Your school will also be given a false name so it can't be identified.

Will the study help others?

- Yes. The study may help other teachers and students to better use children's books in their teaching and learning of English and Chinese.

Who will see the information about me?

- The information about you during this study will be kept safely locked up. Your name on your works will be removed or blurred. Nobody will be able to know who you are through the work except me (the researcher).

Do I have to be in the study?

- No. You do not have to be in the study. It is totally okay if you don't want the researcher to have or take photos of your schoolwork.

What if I have any more questions?

- You can ask the researcher any questions that you may have about the study. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, either you can call or have your parents call us at the following numbers: Jing Jin 780-885-5732 or Dr. Wiltse 780-492-2016.

Other information about the study:

- If you decide to be in the study, please write your name and sign below.
- You can change your mind and stop being part of the study at any time by [DATE] and let the researcher know.
- You will be given a copy of this paper to keep.

Please put a check mark next to your decision below

Yes, I will participate in the study. _____

No, I don't want to do this.

Student's name

Student's signature

Date

Researcher's name

Researcher's signature

Date

Appendix D: Sample PIAs and Interview Questions for Teacher Participants

Pre-Interview Activities (PIAs) for Teacher Participants

Purpose of the interview

My research interest is in the area/topic of the use of children's literature in English-Chinese bilingual education. More specifically, I am interested in what kind of children's literature has been used in bilingual education in the Canadian context, what role children's literature plays in English-Chinese bilingual children's language and literacy development, and how your experiences and perspectives with children's literature might impact pedagogical practices in using children's literature with English-Chinese bilingual children. I understand that you have been working as a teacher with English-Chinese bilingual children for a period of time. In our interview, I hope to learn something about how you have experienced your use of children's literature through your daily practice with English-Chinese bilingual children.

There are two parts to the interview process:

- Pre-Interview Activities (PIAs) and
- Open-Ended Questions

Pre-Interview Activities (PIAs): About the person in general

Please **complete two or more** of the following visual representation activities and bring them to our interview. Please use pens, pencils and preferably coloured markers on blank paper. We will begin our interview by having you show me and tell me about the ones you completed.

1.	Draw a schedule for your week (day or year) and use colours to indicate how time is spent. Make a legend to explain the colours.
2.	Think of a component of your life that is very important for you (for example, sports, money, teaching, home, relationship with a particular person, travel). Make a timeline listing key events or ideas that changed the way you experience it.
3.	Draw a diagram or images to show where your support or support systems come from.
4.	Think of an important event that changed things in your life. Make two drawings showing what things were like for you before and after the event. Feel free to use thought bubbles or speech bubbles.
5.	Think of an activity that you do and is important to you. Make two drawings with one showing a 'good day' and the other showing a 'not so good day' with that activity. Feel free to use thought or speech bubbles.
6.	Think of a place or places where you spend a lot of time. Make a drawing to show what it is like for you when you are in that place.

Pre-Interview Activities (PIAs): About the topic of the research

Also please **complete two or more** of the following visual representation activities and bring them to our interview. Please use pens, pencils and preferably coloured markers on blank paper. We will begin our interview by having you show me and tell me about the ones you completed.

1.	Imagine that someone is going to make a movie about your life working as a bilingual teacher. Make a list of five important scenes that should be included in the movie.
2.	Think back to your earlier experiences of using children's literature in your teaching. Make two drawings: one showing a good day and one showing a "not so good" day. Feel free to use thought bubbles or speech bubbles.
3.	Make a list of 20 important words that come to mind for you when you think of the idea or concept of "using children's literature in bilingual education" and then divide the list of words into two groups in any way that makes sense to you. Please bring both the original list and the two smaller groups of words to the interview.
4.	Think of an event or idea that changed what using children's literature in bilingual education is like for you. Make two drawings showing what things were like for you before and after the change. Feel free to use speech or thought bubbles.
5.	Use colours to make three drawings that symbolize the way your experience in of using children's literature in bilingual education has changed over time.
6.	Make three drawings that express the way you are currently experience teaching with English-Chinese bilingual children.

Interview Questions for Teacher Participant

Purpose of the interview:

My research interest is in the area/topic of the use of children's literature in English-Chinese bilingual education. More specifically, I am interested in what kind of children's literature has been used in bilingual education in the Canadian context, what role children's literature plays in English-Chinese bilingual children's language and literacy development, and how your experiences and perspectives with children's literature might impact pedagogical practices in using children's literature with English-Chinese bilingual children. I understand that you have been working as a teacher with English-Chinese bilingual children for a period of time. In our interview, I hope to learn something about how you have experienced your use of children's literature through your daily practice with English-Chinese bilingual children.

Open-Ended Interview Questions:

Group 1 Getting to know you questions:

1.	Are there any special people or even fictional characters you admire, or wish you could be like?
2.	What would you like to be really good at doing?
3.	If you could spend two weeks with someone who does a special kind of work who might you choose?
4.	If you could pick something that you wouldn't have to worry about anymore what is one of the things you might choose?
5.	If you had one week off a month, what are some of the things that you would like to do with the extra time?
6.	In the year ahead, what are some of the things you wish you could do or even try for the first time?

Group 2 Questions about experiences of reading and sharing children's literature:

1.	As you look back over your earlier school years as a child, what kinds of children's books do you recall liking best?
2.	When you were a child what were some of your favourite activities or events for reading and/or sharing children's books?
3.	What could have made reading and/or sharing children's literature at school better or more enjoyable for you?

Group 3 Questions about experiences as a teacher generally:

1.	Were there any big surprises after you started working as a teacher? Were some parts of teaching greatly different from what you expected?
2.	What are some of the ways your students surprise you? With what they do well or cannot do well, or what they have insight about or what they are curious about, or what they find confusing?
3.	Over time, what are some of the ways your ideas, understandings, or convictions about teaching changed a lot or stayed the same?
4.	If you could have changed one thing about your own teacher preparation program what would you have changed to make it better?

Group 4 Questions about working as a bilingual teacher:

1.	What do you like best about your work as a teacher of English-Chinese bilingual education? Are there any aspects or parts that you wish were better or would like to change? If so, what?
2.	Are there some things in your teaching bilingual children that you changed because you wanted to? Are there other things you changed simply because you had to for some external reason?
3.	In the year ahead, are there some things you would like to accomplish, or try for the first time in your class work for the bilingual students?
4.	Is there any advice you would offer to someone who would be taking over your role as a bilingual teacher at your school?

Group 5 Questions about the experiences of using children’s literature in English-Chinese bilingual education:

1.	What kind of children’s literature do you most often use in your teaching/reading with bilingual students? What kind of children’s literature do you feel is most effective in encouraging students’ learning of languages, literacy and/or cultures?
2.	Do you have favourite children’s books in your teaching/reading with bilingual students? Please share one and explain why this book is your favourite.
3.	What are some of the activities or events that you feel your bilingual students like best when you are reading/sharing children’s literature with them?
4.	What are some of the ways that using children’s literature in your teaching/reading with bilingual students may be challenging?
5.	If you could make any change in terms of the use of children’s literature in English-Chinese bilingual education, what would you change?
6.	What are some of your most important ‘take-aways’ from your experience of using children’s literature in English-Chinese bilingual education?

Appendix E: Sample PIAs and Interview Questions for Parent Participants

Pre-Interview Activities (PIAs) for Parent Participants

Purpose of the interview

My research interest is in the area/topic of the use of children’s literature in English-Chinese bilingual education. More specifically, I am interested in what kind of children’s literature has been used in bilingual education in the Canadian context, what role children’s literature plays in English-Chinese bilingual children’s language and literacy development, and how your experiences and perspectives with children’s literature might impact pedagogical practices in using children’s literature with English-Chinese bilingual children. In our interview, I hope to learn something about how you have experienced your use of children’s literature with your English-Chinese bilingual child(ren).

There are two parts to the interview process:

- Pre-Interview Activities (PIAs) and
- Open-Ended Questions

Pre-Interview Activities (PIAs): About the person in general

Please **complete two or more** of the following visual representation activities and bring them to our interview. Please use pens, pencils and preferably coloured markers on blank paper. We will begin our interview by having you show me and tell me about the ones you completed.

1.	Draw a schedule for your week (day or year) and use colours to indicate how time is spent. Make a legend to explain the colours.
2.	Think of a component of your life that is very important for you (for example, sports, money, teaching, home, relationship with a particular person, travel). Make a timeline listing key events or ideas that changed the way you experience it.
3.	Draw a diagram or images to show where your support or support systems come from.
4.	Think of an important event that changed things in your life. Make two drawings showing what things were like for you before and after the event. Feel free to use thought bubbles or speech bubbles.
5.	Think of an activity that you do and is important to you. Make two drawings with one showing a ‘good day’ and the other showing a ‘not so good day’ with that activity. Feel free to use thought or speech bubbles.
6.	Think of a place or places where you spend a lot of time. Make a drawing to show what it is like for you when you are in that place.

Pre-Interview Activities (PIAs): About the topic of the research

Also please **complete two or more** of the following visual representation activities and bring them to our interview. Please use pens, pencils and preferably coloured markers on blank paper. We will begin our interview by having you show me and tell me about the ones you completed.

1.	Imagine that someone is going to make a movie about your life as a parent of bilingual child(ren). Make a list of five important scenes that should be included in the movie.
2.	Think back to your earlier experiences of using children’s literature in your reading with your child(ren). Make two drawings: one showing a good day and one showing a “not so good” day. Feel free to use thought bubbles or speech bubbles.
3.	Make a list of 20 important words that come to mind for you when you think of the idea or concept of “using children’s literature in bilingual education” and then divide the list of words into two groups in any way that makes sense to you. Please bring both the original list and the two smaller groups of words to the interview.
4.	Think of an event or idea that changed what using children’s literature in bilingual education is like for you. Make two drawings showing what things were like for you before and after the change. Feel free to use speech or thought bubbles.
5.	Use colours to make three drawings that symbolize the way your experience of using children’s literature in bilingual education has changed over time.
6.	Make three drawings that express the way you are currently experience reading with your English-Chinese bilingual child(ren).

Interview Questions for Parent Participant

Purpose of the interview:

My research interest is in the area/topic of the use of children’s literature in English-Chinese bilingual education. More specifically, I am interested in what kind of children’s literature has been used in bilingual education in the Canadian context, what role children’s literature plays in English-Chinese bilingual children’s language and literacy development, and how your experiences and perspectives with children’s literature might impact pedagogical practices in using children’s literature with English-Chinese bilingual children In our interview, I hope to learn something about how you have experienced your use of children’s literature with your English-Chinese bilingual child(ren).

Open-Ended Interview Questions:

Group 1 Getting to know you questions:

1.	Are there any special people or even fictional characters you admire, or wish you could be like?
2.	What would you like to be really good at doing?
3.	If you could spend two weeks with someone who does a special kind of work who might you choose?
4.	If you could pick something that you wouldn't have to worry about anymore what is one of the things you might choose?
5.	If you had one week off a month, what are some of the things that you would like to do with the extra time?
6.	In the year ahead, what are some of the things you wish you could do or even try for the first time?

Group 2 Questions about experiences of reading and sharing children's literature:

1.	As you look back over your earlier school years as a child, what kinds of children's books do you recall liking best?
2.	When you were a child what were some of your favourite activities or events for reading and/or sharing children's books?
3.	What could have made reading and/or sharing children's literature at school/at home better or more enjoyable for you?

Group 3 Questions about experiences as a parent generally:

1.	What is your child(ren) most curious about or fascinated with?
2.	Sometimes children surprise us with their depth of understanding or how much they know about things. Does your child(ren) ever make comments or ask questions that surprise you in that way?
3.	Over time, what are some of the ways your ideas, understandings, or convictions about parenting changed or stayed the same?

Group 4 Questions about being a parent of bilingual child(ren):

1.	What kinds of things regarding bilingual learning does your child(ren) find easy to do or hard to do?
2.	Are there some things in your parenting bilingual child(ren) that you changed because you wanted to? Are there other things you changed simply because you had to for some external reason?
3.	In the year ahead, are there some things you would like to accomplish, or try for the first time in your parenting with your bilingual child(ren)?
4.	Is there any advice you would offer to someone who would be letting their child(ren) receive English-Chinese bilingual education?

Group 5 Questions about the experiences of using children’s literature in English-Chinese bilingual education:

1.	What kind of children’s literature (both English and Chinese) do you most often read with your child(ren) or your child(ren) most often read independently? What kind of children’s literature do you feel is most effective in encouraging your child(ren)’s learning of languages, literacy and/or cultures?
2.	Do you have favourite children’s books for reading with your child(ren)? Does your child(ren) have favourite children’s books to read with you or read independently? Please share some specific titles and explain why the book(s) is your or your child(ren)’s favourite.
3.	What are some of the activities or events that you feel your child(ren) likes best when you are reading/sharing children’s literature with him/her/them (in both English and Chinese)?
4.	What are some of the ways that searching for/selecting/reading children’s literature for your bilingual child(ren) may be challenging?
5.	If you could make any change in terms of the use of children’s literature in English-Chinese bilingual education, what would you change?
6.	As a parent, what are some of your most important ‘take-aways’ from your experience of using children’s literature in English-Chinese bilingual education?

Appendix F: The Chinese Textbook *Zhong Wen* and the Matching Workbooks



Appendix G: The Adapted Chinese Version of *Wild Animals I Have Known*

by Canadian Author Ernest Thompson Seton



Appendix H: Thousand Character Classic [千字文]



Appendix I: A Chinese Folklore Set Jack Often Used With His Child



Appendix J: A Set of Chinese Historical Story Books Shelly's Children Liked to Read

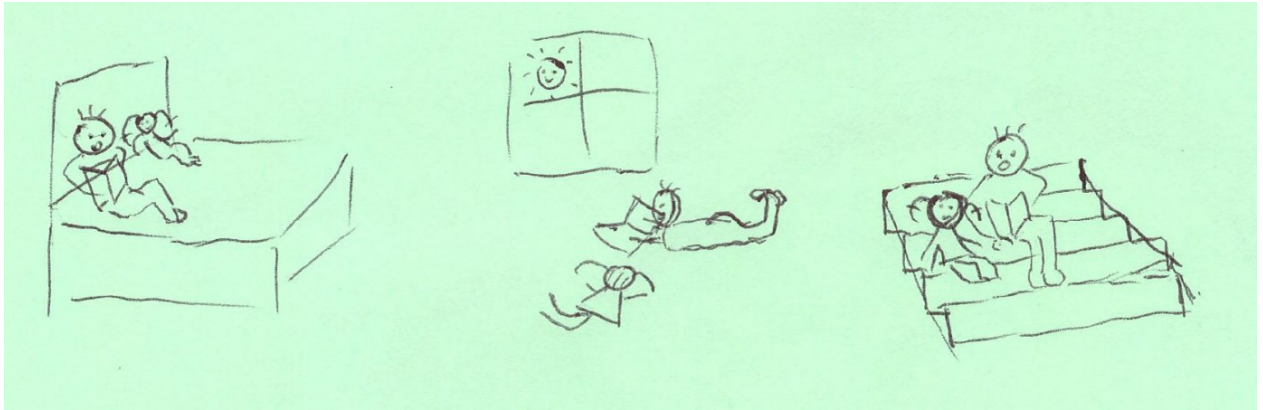


Appendix K: Picture Book *Tyrannosaurus* Series

by Japanese Author Tatsuya Miyanishi



Appendix L: Three Scenarios of Reading Books (PIA Shared by Jack)



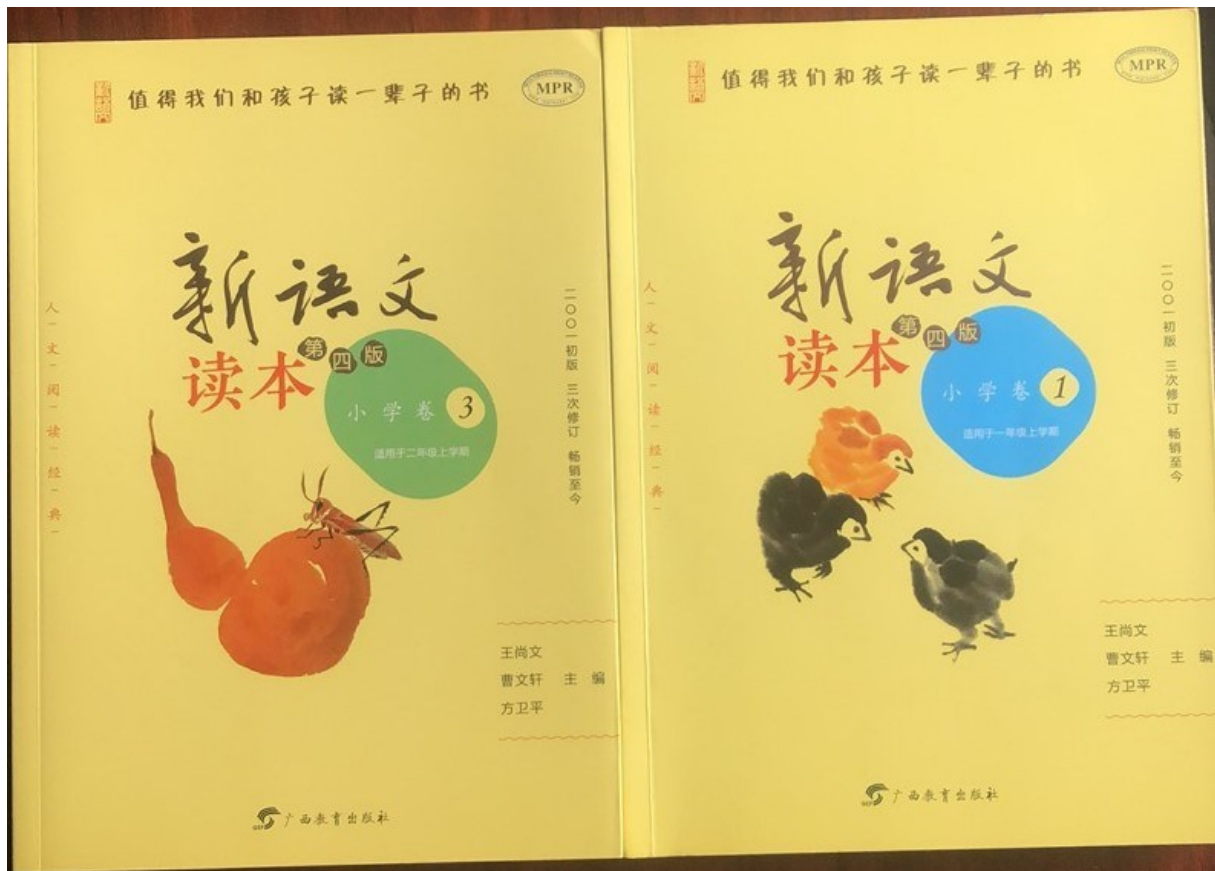
Appendix M: Photo of Book Collection Shared By Chloe



Appendix N: Borrowing Chinese Books Within Community (PIA Shared By Shelly)



Appendix O: Photo of *New Chinese Reading Book Series* Shared By Shelly



Appendix P: The Fiction Shelly's Child Created in Chinese

阿苏的故事

很久很久以前，人类犯了大错，以至于天神大怒，收走了太阳。从此，天地间死气沉沉一片，人类过上了暗无天日的生活。人们仅借着夜间月亮的光芒外出，生活很不方便。

有一个名叫阿苏的少年，无意中从爷爷口中得知了太阳被收走的原因，善良的阿苏决定找到天神，恳求天神的原谅，让太阳再次回到人间。阿苏的想法得到了爷爷的认同。临走前，爷爷给阿苏准备了一些干粮、一瓶水，还有四把箭。爷爷叮嘱阿苏：“这四把神箭能够帮你实现你的四个愿望，你只能在关键时刻使用他们。”阿苏点头告别爷爷。

阿苏一路跋山涉水，吃尽了苦头，但是勇敢的少年依旧义无反顾。这天，阿苏刚刚翻过一座高山，突然，听到从空中传来一阵凄惨的叫声。借着皎洁的月光，阿苏往空中望去：呀，不得了！一只老鹰抓住了一只小羊羔！阿苏毫不犹豫地拔出第一根神箭，“嗖”地一声射向老鹰。神箭不偏不倚地落在了老鹰身上。老鹰惨叫了一声，松开了爪子上的小羊。小羊得救了！得救的小羊告知阿苏：她是雷神的女儿，因为打碎了个名贵的花瓶被雷神施法变成了小羊贬到了人间。小羊问阿苏有什么愿望，阿苏告知了自己要寻找天神的事情。小羊说：“让我来帮你吧！”于是，小羊和阿苏一起愉快地上路了。

在经历了九九八十一天之艰苦之后，他们来到了一条被冰封住的小河前。小羊告诉阿苏，如果要找到天神，他们得沿着河继续往前走。阿苏和小羊走啊走，不知不觉，又一个八十一天过去了。河边上原本宽敞的土路开始变得越来越狭窄，以至于到最后无路可走，继而一面冰墙呈现在了阿苏和小羊的跟前。阿苏和小羊定睛看着眼前的冰墙，突然，冰墙里露出了一个美丽的身影。她有着如同白雪一般的肌肤，瀑布一般的黑发。可是她的表情看上去却是那么难受。阿苏想，被冰冻住的姑娘一定很冷。于是，阿苏拔出了第二根箭。当前击中

望他能完成解救万物生灵的使命。

阿苏和小羊走啊走啊，有一天，他们来到了一个大山洞前。小羊告诉阿苏，通往天神住处的路就在眼前的山洞里。阿苏的眼里闪过一丝充满希望的光芒，迈开腿大步朝洞走去。没走几步，一个巨型的蜂巢挡住了阿苏和小羊的去路。阿苏拿出第三支箭朝蜂巢射去。“砰”的一声巨响，蜂巢掉到了地上。阿苏的这一举动惹怒了蜂巢里的毒蜂，毒蜂们一拥而上，如同水浪般朝阿苏和小羊袭来。阿苏拿起身边的木棍一个将一个将毒蜂们打下。正当阿苏快要体力不支的时候，他想起了树神的话：“坚强的意志力，将帮助你战胜一切困难。”阿苏平静了下来，意志力的作用辐射开来。在阿苏和小羊的身边形成了一个无形的力量圈，任由毒蜂们怎么敲击也无法进入。三天过去了，毒蜂们无力招架，一个个都累得瘫倒到了地上。树神的力量帮助阿苏和小羊逃过了一劫，眼瞅着胜利就在眼前，阿苏和小羊信心满满继续前行。

山洞，好大，也好深。到处都是各种巨型的石头，还有一些阿苏从没见过的美丽花儿。正当一座美丽宫殿展现在阿苏眼前的时候，突然两块怪物石头出现在了阿苏和小羊面前。阿苏要小羊抓住他的衣服，奋力往前奔跑。两块怪物石头也迅速移动，一下定在了阿苏和小羊眼前。阿苏来不及停步，闭上眼睛，做好了和怪物石头决一死战的准备。可是，奇迹发生了，阿苏和小羊居然穿过了怪石。原来，这是水神的柔软力量在帮忙。

通过怪石，小羊对阿苏说：“你眼前的就是天神的宫殿，我没法陪你上去了。祝你一切顺利！”阿苏告别小羊，同时射出了最后一支箭。阿苏纵身一跃，抓住神箭，在神箭的带领下，来到了天神的宫殿。

阿苏找到了天神的住所，并向天神表明了来意。天神指了指大殿正中的一团烈火，告诉阿苏：烈火的中心就是太阳。阿苏伸手就要去取，但是被天神喝住了：“凡人是不可能轻易得到太阳的，除非你自己变为太阳！”阿苏大义凛然地说：“为了人类的幸福生活，我愿意牺牲我自己！”阿苏跳入了烈火之中，忍受着高温的炙烤，最终和太阳融为一体。

天神被阿苏的举动感动了，准许太阳再次回到人间。从此，地球又迎来了温暖的太阳。阿苏日日照着万物生灵，只有当他过度思念爷爷的时候，才会悄悄躲起来

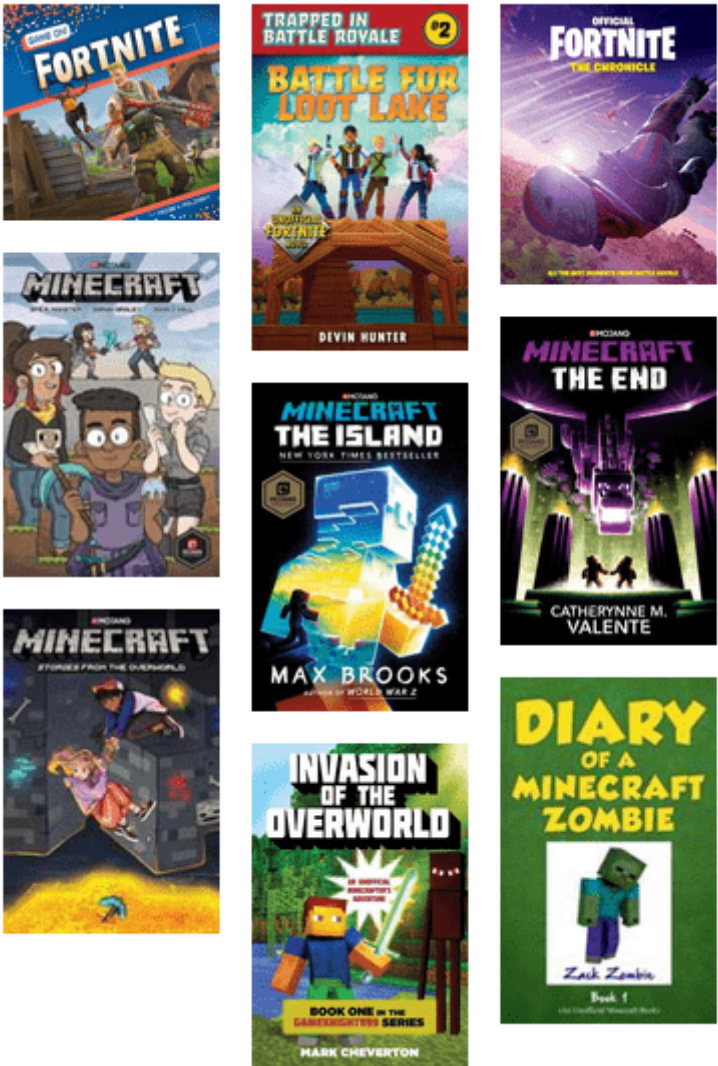
谢过水神，继续上路了。

一天，阿苏和小羊来到一片森林。因为常年没有太阳的光照，树木枯的枯，死的死，长时间的赶路让阿苏觉得口干舌燥，于是阿苏拿出爷爷准备好的水壶喝起水来。突然，一个声音隐隐约约从阿苏身旁的树上传来：“水，我要水。”阿苏摸摸脑袋，看了看大树：“大树，你是在跟我说话吗？”声音继续从大树里传来：“对，是我，那声音是那么虚弱。这让阿苏动了恻隐之心。阿苏将自己水壶里仅剩不多的水全都洒在了那棵大树上。顿时，大树的树干迅速伸展开来，变得枝繁叶茂。眼前的一切把阿苏惊呆了。这时，大树又开口了：“谢谢你，年轻人，如果没有你，我有可能就要死了。”大树告诉阿苏和小羊，他是树神。虽然长时间没有阳光的照射，很多树木都枯死了，但是他依旧凭借自己顽强的意志力在和困难做斗争。树神还说，阿苏无私地帮助他人，应该得到回报。树神把自己意志坚强的力量赠给了阿苏，希望他能完成解救万物生灵的使命。

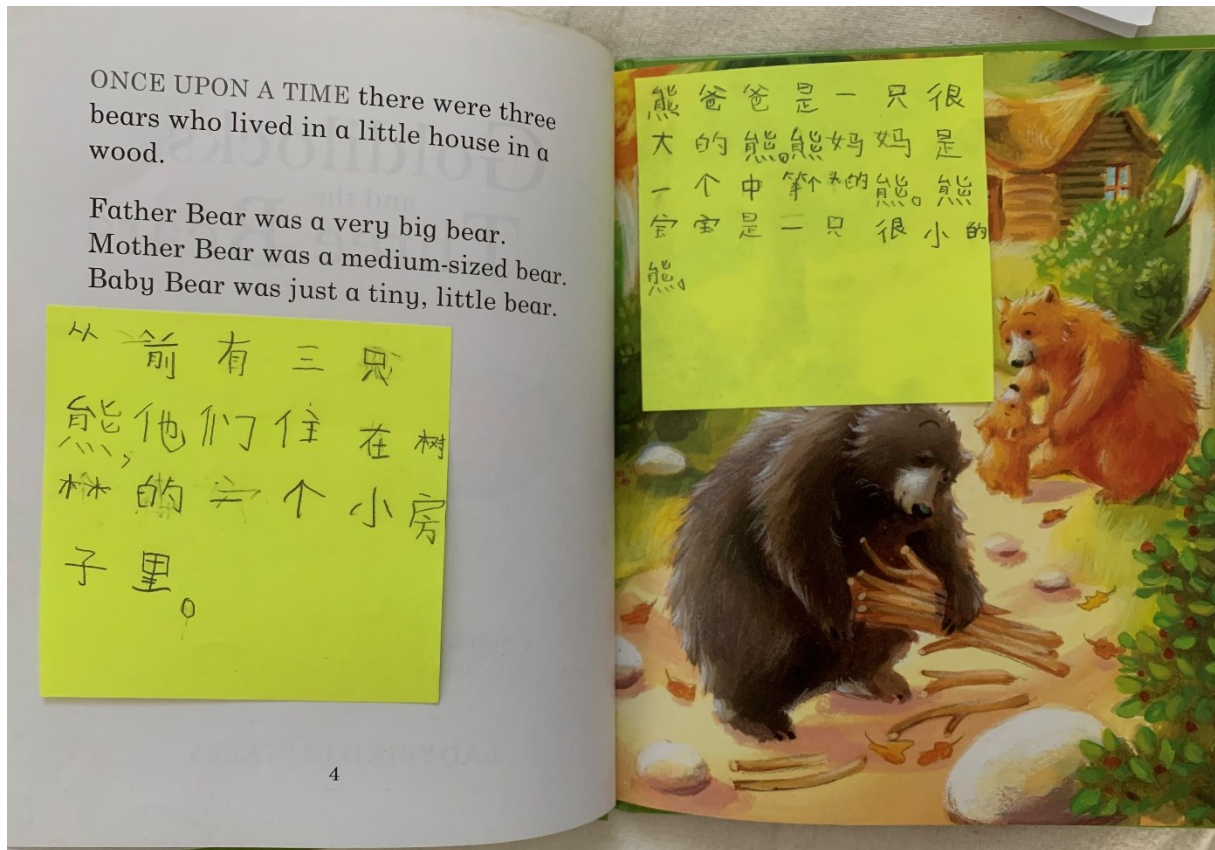
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Appendix Q: Fortnite and Minecraft Fiction Series Shared By Chloe



Appendix R: Sample of Faye's Picture Book Translation Project



Appendix S: Little Gold and the Three Pandas Picture Book Created By Anne



Appendix T: The Chinese Character Writing From Jack's Child

