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Chinese written language in Hawai‘i: The linguistic, social and cultural significance for immigrant families

Scott, Amanda, Ph.D.

University of Hawaii, 1994
CHINESE WRITTEN LANGUAGE IN HAWAI'I: THE LINGUISTIC, SOCIAL,
AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

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IN
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is an initial investigation of the role and significance of written Chinese among Chinese people in Hawai'i. Much of the data derive from an ethnographic study of the place of literacy in the lives of four families of Chinese background living in or near the city of Honolulu. The families comprised eight adults and five children. Two of the children were born in the United States. All other family members were first generation immigrants. In each family Mandarin Chinese was the usual language spoken at home.

The study showed that written Chinese constituted an important channel of communication and avenue of contact with the outside world. It played an important part in the personal, social, and intellectual life of the family members who were proficient in writing and/or reading Chinese. With the notable exception of Chinese calligraphy, written Chinese was largely seen as a practical tool which was used by family members in their everyday lives for a wide variety of purposes. These purposes depended on the individual's personal preferences and his or her position and role in the family and wider social context.

The data indicated that the children in the study families used written Chinese for fewer purposes as proficiency in English increased. This was taken as evidence of language shift. On the other hand, the fact that Chinese has an accepted written standard was seen to assist language maintenance in general. However, there was little indication that the often stated link between written Chinese and Chinese history and civilization was a factor in the promotion of Chinese language by the parents in the families in this study.
The study showed that the non-phonemic nature of written Chinese, together with the historical relationship between the written code and the spoken dialects had certain specific effects on how written Chinese was used and regarded in the study families. In addition, it was seen that the way family members interacted with written language, both Chinese and English, was affected by the multilingual situations in which the families were operating and the varying degrees of biliteracy of the individuals involved. Nevertheless, in terms of the types and functions of reading and writing activities in which family members took part, the range of behaviors associated with these, and attitudes towards literacy in general, the families in this study shared many of the characteristics of mainstream middle class families described in Heath (1983).

The current study showed the close interrelationship between written and oral channels of communication. It also indicated numerous differences between reading and writing in terms of patterns of acquisition and use. Finally, the study emphasized the overall importance of written language in the linguistic repertoire of educated individuals living in a literate oriented society.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The Overall Aims of the Study
The research is an initial investigation of the role and significance of reading and writing in Chinese script among Chinese people in Hawai'i. The main aim of the study is to look at how written Chinese impacts on the life of a number of individuals of Chinese ethnic background and to develop an understanding of the social and cultural factors that influence the use, preservation, transmission, and loss of reading and writing in Chinese.

The main participants in the study were the members of four families: eight adults and five of their children ranging in age from 11 to 21. All the parents and three of the children are first generation immigrants, that is to say they were born overseas. Their length of residence in the United States at the beginning of the study varied from 16 years to only three months for the most recent arrivals. The study looks at how Chinese writing is used in their everyday lives. The functions and purposes for which reading and writing are used are analyzed in relation to the individual, the individual's position and role in the family unit and in relation to the wider social context, both in Hawai'i and overseas. I also investigate the beliefs and values held by, and demonstrated by family members towards written Chinese and the link between these and the use, promotion and in some cases, loss of skills in written Chinese.

The family was chosen as the focus of the research since this is one of the main domains of minority language use (see for example Fishman et al. 1966, Fishman 1972). I was able to gain entrée by offering my services as an English tutor to the adults, and later to some of the children in the families. Using this role as a tutor I was able to visit the families regularly, over a long period of time. This enabled me to observe, ask about, and in some
cases participate in reading and writing activities within the home. In addition to looking at the role of these activities in family life, I also investigated their place in the lives of family members outside the home in relation to work, study, worship, recreation, and everyday transactions. I also looked at the extent to which, and the ways in which family members interacted with various outside institutions and organizations which promoted Chinese language use. This not only provided data on written language use but also about attitudes and values.

I also wanted to investigate what effects, if any, the nature of the Chinese written script itself has on its role and significance in everyday life in Hawai‘i. Learning to read and write Chinese is a slow and lengthy process largely because the script is not alphabetic and is not based on phonemic principles (Fishman 1980b, DeFrancis 1984). There are some phonetic clues to pronunciation which can be accessed (see DeFrancis 1984 for a detailed discussion of the phonetic component of Chinese characters), but learning to write certainly requires many hours of memorization and practice.

The non-phonemic nature of the script, together with the social and political history surrounding its development and use has also led to a particular relation between the written form and the various spoken dialects of Chinese. All dialect speakers have come to accept that there is only one standard for the written form of their language. This has contributed to the view that Chinese is a single language, which is troubling to some linguists, especially Western linguists, since on many linguistic grounds the dialects of Chinese would be classified as separate languages. In this study I will follow general usage and refer to the various forms of Chinese, such as Cantonese, as dialects.
One further aspect related to the Chinese script is the widespread belief that Chinese character writing has played a significant role in Chinese culture, civilization and history. Such values need to be taken into account since they can have important effects on attitudes towards the promotion and use of Chinese written language. In my study I therefore pay special attention to behaviors and statements which might reflect or be a result of any of the above "special" features of the Chinese script.

While the focus of the study is written Chinese, other written codes, most notably English, and other channels of communication, especially spoken English and spoken Mandarin, have to be considered. Just as the investigation of the literacy activities of family members necessarily involves consideration of the family's place in the wider society, so a study of Chinese writing in Hawai'i must take into account the place of this particular written code in the overall communicative economy. Writing in Chinese is only one channel of communication. Why it is chosen over others, or in addition to others available to the participants is an important part of this study.

In line with the philosophical underpinnings of the qualitative methodology used in this research, the aim of this study is not to lead to generalizations about reading and writing in Chinese families in Hawai'i in general. Nor does it aim to generalize about the role of written Chinese in the lives of Chinese people in various stages of acculturation to the American way of life. The family members who became the focus of the study include new arrivals who know little English, first generation immigrants who are fairly proficient in English, and American-born Chinese (ABC). They may be examples of these various categories but I make no claim that they are representative or typical. In fact, my knowledge of other Chinese families in Hawai'i indicates that they are not. The major aim of the study was rather to make a detailed description of the literacy activities and
behaviors in the families I visited and came to know, and to document their views of their own behavior. This data is analyzed and compared with a view to identifying patterns and structural regularities. These findings can then be compared with the results of other studies on the uses and roles of reading and writing so that general themes and hypotheses can be developed about the social and cultural roles of written language in general and written Chinese in particular.

In summary, there are two major aims of this research. The first is to try and answer, in respect to written Chinese in the families studied, the question posed by Szwed: "What positions do reading and writing hold in the entire communicative economy and what is the range of their social and cultural meanings?" (Szwed 1981: 22). The second aim is to examine how, and to what extent the nature of the Chinese script, and beliefs about its nature and significance affect its everyday use and its promotion and maintenance.

Structure of the Dissertation
Chapter 2 details the conceptual framework used in the development of this study, the methodology employed, and the research questions addressed. Chapter 3 looks at the history and current position of people of Chinese background in Hawai‘i and some of the organizations and resources which have been developed to serve their needs, including their language needs. Chapter 4 introduces the families, gives details of their personal histories and current activities, and describes their homes and my visits to them. Chapters 5 and 6 detail the various types of writing and reading activities in which the family members routinely engage. Chapter 7 describes the forms of the Chinese written code found in the data, and looks at the distribution and organization of these in the various types of texts detailed in the previous two chapters. Chapter 8 investigates reading and writing as activities and considers the role of written Chinese in the lives of the various
family members. It then compares the types and uses of literacy found in the Chinese families with those discussed in a number of ethnographic studies of the everyday use of literacy in English in the United States. Chapter 9 looks at some patterns of use. The first part describes the range of behaviors which can surround reading and writing activities, and considers such variables as the number of participants involved and their respective roles in the events described. I then compare the extent to which various family members utilize their literacy skills in Chinese and in English, and the factors which influence their choice of written language in general and written Chinese in particular. Chapter 10 looks at how the findings of this study relate to issues of language maintenance and shift. Chapter 11 is the summary and conclusions.

Significance of the Study
This study takes as its basic premise the view that written language is an instance of language which is as subject to the applications of linguistic methodology as any other (a view well expressed by Romaine 1982 and Stubbs 1980). It is one of the three basic modes, or channels, of linguistic communication, the other two being spoken language and sign language. Having recognized the written mode as an area of legitimate study in its own right one can systematically study its form and function in various contexts and in relation to spoken language. Biber (1988), Chafe and Tannen (1987) and Heath (1983) have all contributed to research in this area. This attention to the written channel contrasts with work in some areas of linguistics which continues to ignore written language or dismiss it as merely a derivative of speech. The latter is a view propounded by early twentieth century linguists, such as Bloomfield, largely as a reaction to previous study of language which had focused almost exclusively on written languages.
There is evidence that education in our Western literate society affects how people view and use their language. Gleitman and Gleitman (1970) show that the level of education affected an individual's ability to understand, produce, and manipulate certain syntactic structures. In his article in the *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* Urquhart (1994) points out that at age five, the age most students begin to learn to read, "it is very unlikely that a child's command of the [first language] is complete in any sense." Even Bloomfield said that it was evident that "by learning to read and write, the individual greatly extends his linguistic horizon and that such developments as the growth of his vocabulary are from then on largely tied up with his reading" (Bloomfield, 1970: 385). Linell (1992) goes so far as to suggest that the way written language has been developed and used in modern Western society has deeply influenced modern theoretical linguistics. One of the reasons that much modern linguistic research is based on the assumption that language can be studied as an autonomous abstract system is due to a culturally embedded written language bias in our society. Street (1984) and Biber (1988) also point out that the data on which models of language are based in modern linguistics are more similar to written language than to spoken language. The latter notes that this is particularly so in the generative transformationalist paradigm (ibid.: 7). While exploration of such ideas is far beyond the scope of the present study, they provide cogent reasons why consideration of the nature and function of writing is necessary in the field of linguistics.

The present study focuses on four Chinese families in Hawai'i and concentrates on their use of Chinese written language. It looks at the ways reading and writing are used in their everyday lives and considers the various roles written language plays. It shows that written language is an important part of the linguistic repertoire of family members. Written language not only offers an alternative to spoken language, but can augment and reinforce it. Analysis of the data also shows that, while they are obviously connected,
reading and writing need to be considered separately since they can have different patterns of acquisition and use. Since the families are operating in bilingual or multilingual situations, and individual family members all have some degree of biliteracy the study compares their use of Chinese and English to identify factors which influence their choice of channel/s and language/s. It shows that such choices are not arbitrary. They show patterns of use specifically related to the context of the activity in which they are used.

One of the criticisms often leveled at ethnographic studies is that their concentration on the particular makes it impossible to generalize from their findings to other contexts. I hope that the data in the present study and its analysis will contribute to research involving other individuals, families, or groups, literate in Chinese or other languages, in other settings by providing a basis for comparison. I hope that my description will be "thick" enough for other researchers to be able to make meaningful comparisons with their own work. Thick description is a term associated with Geertz, who explains it as description at many levels. The researcher not only gives a detailed description of events, the context in which they take place, and their meaning as he/she sees them, but also records the ideas and opinions about what is happening of others involved in the events (see Geertz 1973: 6-10). In other words, the aim is to make the findings of the present study transferable rather than generalizable. It is left to the other researcher to make the transfer based on his or her assessment of contextual similarities. As Lincoln and Guba (1985: 298) say, "The responsibility of the original investigator ends in providing sufficient descriptive data to make such similarity judgments possible."

Given the wide scope of the present study, which considers the role of everyday reading and writing activities in individual and social life, the interaction and interrelations of written and oral language, the relation between reading and writing, the cultural and
symbolic functions of written language, the effects of using a non-alphabetic system of writing, language use in multilingual situations, and language maintenance and shift, I hope that it will provide data for comparison and contribute to research in a number of other research areas.

In this research I also compare my findings with those of other ethnographic studies which look at literacy behaviors, activities, and/or beliefs of individuals who are using other languages in settings far removed from Hawai'i. By noting the similarities and differences I hope to add to the knowledge of the nature and roles of reading and writing in general, and the relation of these to oral language. Such comparisons will also point out any special features associated with multilingual settings as well as highlighting the particular effects of the use of written Chinese.
CHAPTER 2
BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This chapter details the conceptual framework on which this study is based, the methodology employed in the research, and the initial research questions which guided the study.

Conceptual Framework

A number of areas of theory and research were drawn on to develop a conceptual framework for this study. The main areas are literacy as social practice, which includes studies of the use of literacy in more than one language, the ethnography of communication, language maintenance and shift, and finally, literature which discusses the nature of Chinese written language and commonly held attitudes towards, and beliefs about Chinese writing.

Literacy as Social Practice

The role of literacy in the lives of individuals and the societies in which they live has been looked at by researchers from a variety of academic and theoretical backgrounds, each with their own agendas, be these political, social, and/or academic. Literacy has been seen as the key element in the development of modern society and ways of thinking (see Gee 1990: 32 for an overview of the claims in this area). Goody and Watt (1968) suggest that widespread alphabetic literacy is a necessary prerequisite for the kind of logical and rational thought underpinning science and modern Western intellectual traditions. This belief in the psychological and social consequences of alphabetic literacy has been called the Great Divide hypothesis based on the assumption of a sharp dichotomy between orality and literacy (Chafe and Tannen 1987: 391). Others have queried this view. Gough
(1968) points out that literacy in other systems besides the alphabetic can have social effects. She, and many others (such as Graff 1981, Gee 1990) have also questioned the causal link between literacy and the effects attributed to its use.

Scribner and Cole's work among the Vai in Liberia is particularly important. Vai is a multiliterate society in which three scripts are used: Vai, which is syllabic, Arabic, and English. By comparing individuals literate in one or more of these scripts with others who are illiterate, Scribner and Cole (1981a) are able to test for intellectual effects which can be attributed to literacy alone. In addition, since only English literacy is associated with modern schooling, they are able to separate, to some extent, the effects of literacy from those of schooling. They find that only literacy in English improves performance on cognitive tasks associated with categorizing and logical reasoning, skills which have been said to depend on literacy. What is more, each type of literacy correlates with quite specific skills, and these can be linked with the ways the particular literacy is acquired and/or is actually used in everyday life. Their work therefore also shows the importance of ethnographic data in considering the effects of literacy in society.

Instead of focusing exclusively on the technology of a writing system and its reputed consequences ("alphabetic literacy fosters abstraction," for example), we approach literacy as a set of socially organized practices which make use of a symbol system and a technology for producing and disseminating it. Literacy is not simply knowing how to read and write a particular script but applying this knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts of use. The nature of these practices, including, of course, their technological aspects, will determine the kinds of skills ("consequences") associated with literacy. (Scribner and Cole 1981a: 236)

Such work and that of others shows that literacy cannot be looked at in isolation. It has to be considered in relation to the particular social conditions and ideological framework in which it is transmitted and used. Literacy cannot be separated from social practice. This view is central to the approach taken in the present study.
Ethnographic studies of literacy have concentrated on the sorts of reading and writing activities that people engage in and the purposes that they satisfy. Comparison is a vital element in such research. In multilingual and multiliterate societies like the Vai one can compare the different roles of the two or more languages. Reder and Green (1983) examine the uses of Russian and English literacy in an Alaskan fishing village. Bennett and Berry (1987) compare the uses of the Cree syllabic script with the English writing system in northern Canada. Spolsky (1981) discusses the relation between literacy in Navajo and English on the Navajo Reservation, and Weinstein-Shr (Weinstein 1984 and Weinstein-Shr 1989) looks at Hmong, Lao and English literacy in two immigrant Hmong communities in Philadelphia. Some studies compare the use of literacy in different communities. For example, Reder (1987) compares literacy practices in an Eskimo village with those in a Hmong and a Hispanic community in the USA. Such cross community comparisons need not involve different languages. Heath (1983) compares the literacy practices of two working class communities, one White and one Black, with those of a "mainstream" community. In all three communities she is looking at literacy in English. Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) compare reading and writing in a number of poor Black urban families with Heath's data and the results of an ethnographic study of literacy in White middle class homes (Taylor 1983). Again, literacy in English is the focus of attention. In most of these studies the historical dimension is also considered. This is important to see how the use of, and attitudes towards the literacy or literacies involved develop and change with time.

Aims of ethnographic studies relating to literacy can vary. Heath, Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines are concerned with improving the schooling experience of minority students by showing how everyday uses of literacy compare to literacy activities in the school. Weinstein-Shr (1989) illustrates how the study of the uses and functions of literacy in
specific people's lives can provide insights into human organization and social process. In multiliterate communities the focus may be on the various domains of use and the roles of the different literacies, and how these change with time and/or generation of users.

Heath (1983) also seeks to show how the development of values, knowledge and use of literacy is part of the general socialization of children in the various communities she describes. This link between literacy acquisition and socialization has been an important focus in many studies. Most concentrate on the effects of mainstream education, school being a powerful socializing and acculturating agent as well as the major place for teaching reading and writing. Since mainstream schools usually embody the culture and values of the dominant group in society, school success depends largely on internalization of, or at least accommodation to this group's ways of thinking and behavior. These include the way texts are dealt with and interpreted. Hence, the call by educational and other researchers for increased awareness of the difference between "school literacy," as currently conceived (since its meaning has changed over time), and other types of literacy in the community (see Cook-Gumperz 1986, Heath 1983, and Whiteman 1981). The other side of the same coin is the role of non-mainstream education, such as ethnic language schools, in the socialization of children into the ethnic community. Study at these schools can contribute to the development of positive attitudes to the language and the culture which it embodies, and hence be one factor in language maintenance (see Fishman 1980a, 1980b, Fishman et al. 1966). While a detailed examination of the link between formal education, in both mainstream schooling and community language schools, and socialization is beyond the scope of the present study, the implications of the potential link will be taken into account in my discussion of language maintenance and shift.
Another aspect highlighted by ethnographic studies is that literacy activities are not necessarily solitary private pursuits as is often assumed in mainstream, "Western," educated circles. While it may be recognized that the reader or writer is communicating with another through the use of the written code, it is commonly held that the typical literacy activity, such as writing a letter or reading a book, is carried out alone (see Howe 1992, Stock 1992). Research in the community, however, has shown that reading and writing are often collaborative practices which often involve speaking. Participants may work together for a variety of reasons. In some cases they have different levels of knowledge. The use of social networks and younger family members to decode letters and fill in forms is common among immigrant communities (see Shuman 1983, Weinstein-Shr 1989). Such division of labor can also be seen in the way illiterate native English speaking American adults meet their literacy needs (Fingeret 1983). Even literate individuals may need help with particular reading and writing tasks which involve special vocabulary and language usage (for example legal language). More than one participant may also be involved because of differences in status. For example, when a secretary takes down a letter dictated by a boss.

Working together in groups can also be important for the development of literacy skills. Blazer (1986) looks at the role of speech in the development of writing of pre-schoolers, and group reading aloud is a common practice in reading classes. Reading together with others may also be part of the accepted way of doing things by certain groups or in certain situations. Heath notes that reading alone is frowned on in the Black working class community she studied, and "individuals who did so were accused of being anti-social" (Heath 1983: 191). In other groups solitary reading may be the norm but certain situations, such as a religious service, may call for group reading. In Christian churches
the congregation often routinely read passages from the bible out loud together, read prayers and/or sing hymns in unison.

The decision to use an ethnographic approach in research also has implications for the unit of observation and analysis. The primary unit of observation is the literacy activity, which can be called a "literacy practice" (Scribner and Cole 1981a, Reder 1987). The former define this as a "recurrent goal directed sequence of activities using a particular technology and particular systems of knowledge" (Scribner and Cole 1981a: 236). Letter writing is given as an example. Heath (1983), and Wagner, Messick and Spratt (1986) talk of the "literacy event," which the latter defines broadly as any activity which involves reading or writing. The important point is that the activity is considered to be part of the social cultural context and is seen as patterned and regular. This is a central tenet in the ethnography of communication, another area on which I based the conceptual framework for this study.

Ethnography of Communication
This area of research studies language in its social and cultural context and seeks a comparative understanding of language and communication. One does not just study linguistic form. It is also necessary to see how these linguistic means are used to serve various social functions in specific contexts. Detailed descriptions and understandings of communication in particular cultural settings are a necessary first step towards the development of an overall theory of human communication. The central unit of analysis is the communicative event, which is not given a priori, but needs to be determined by observation, inference and by taking into account the way the various participants in the event talk about and describe their activities. Hymes (1974: 10) lists various factors which need to be taken into account in the ethnographic approach. These include the kind and
character of the event as a whole, the participants involved, the channels (such as writing, speaking) and their modes of use (such as visual, aural), the codes shared by the participants (e.g., linguistic, interpretive, interactive), the setting, the form of the message and its genre (from a single word to sermons and other organized routines and styles), the topic and function. One then looks for the patterns to be found within and between events. "There is not complete freedom of cooccurrence among components. Not all imaginably possible combinations of participants, channels, codes, topics etc., can occur" (ibid.: 17).

Hymes suggests two other levels of description and analysis: the communicative situation and the communicative act. The communicative situation is the context within which the communicative event/s occur. "A single situation maintains a consistent general configuration of activities, the same overall ecology within which communication takes place ... " (Saville-Troike 1989: 27). The communicative act is the smallest level of description. It is "generally coterminous with a single interactional function, such as a referential statement, request, or a command ... " (ibid.: 28).

Basso (1989) and Szwed (1981) specifically discuss the application of the ideas of the ethnography of communication to literacy. Basso just looks at writing, which he suggests can be profitably analyzed as a communicative event. He uses the activity of letter writing as an example and looks at the characteristics of the components of this event and the relationships that obtain among them. His brief discussion shows that:

the distinction between 'formal' and 'personal' letters is matched by variation in the form and content of these types of messages, their immediate functions, and the kinds of social relationships that obtain between individuals that exchange them ... [Such findings] illustrate the premise that the components of writing events can be described and analyzed in systematic terms. (Basso 1989: 431)
He sees this type of analysis as a first step in the examination of the function of writing events, their social patterning and their contribution to the maintenance of social systems. Writing should therefore not be considered in isolation. It is one of several communication channels:

Consequently, the conditions under which [writing] is selected and the purposes to which it is put must be described in relation to these other channels. This requirement suggests that the ethnographic study of writing should not be conceived of as an autonomous enterprise, divorced and separated from linguistics ..., but as one element in a more encompassing field of inquiry which embraces the totality of human communication skills and seeks to generalize about their operation vis-à-vis one another in different sociocultural settings. (ibid.: 426)

Some of the questions Basso poses were particularly influential in the development of the initial research questions which I used to guide the present study. He asks about the distribution of reading and writing abilities in the community, how individuals acquire these abilities, at what age and for what reasons, whether writing is considered a source of pleasure and fulfillment and whether excellence in writing is valued as a form of graphic and literary art. "In short, what position does writing occupy in the total communicative economy of the society under study and what is the range of its cultural meanings?" (ibid.: 432).

Szwed draws on Basso's article, but thinks that the relation between reading and writing is an empirical one, so it would be wiser not to concentrate on one or the other, at least initially. He sees the questions raised by Basso as particularly problematic in "a large, multiparted, stratified society such as ours, a society continually reshaping itself through migration, immigration and the transformation of human resources" (Szwed 1981: 23).

He notes the complexity introduced by the presence of bilingual or multidialectal speakers
in the community and the consequent need for special attention to reading and writing in several languages.

**Language Maintenance and Shift**

In contrast with many of the studies of literacy as social practice, a lot of the research in the area of language maintenance and shift concentrates on large scale social investigations based on surveys and census data. Studies of language shift concentrate on the waxing language and the loss of the other language/s under discussion. In general, studies show that the loss of immigrant and minority languages in the United States has been remarkably swift so that by the second or third generation English is usually the main language of communication (see Fishman et al. 1966, Hakuta 1986, Li 1982, Veltman 1983).

In most cases this shift to English has taken place through non-coercive means, the United States policy toward immigrant languages being generally "one of benign neglect" (Hakuta 1986: 169). There are powerful economic reasons for learning and using English. Lack of English proficiency makes it difficult to find employment and to climb the socioeconomic ladder. Coupled with this is a widespread belief, bolstered until the 1960s by various educational experts, that the use of a non-English language at home is detrimental to the English language development of children (ibid.). There have, of course, also been sporadic, deliberate moves against the learning of ethnic languages. In the twentieth century proficiency in English has become associated with patriotism in the United States (see for example, Crawford 1991). Conversely, the use of other languages has been associated with disloyalty and a threat to national unity. Such fears led to various moves to ban the use of German during the First World War, the closure of language schools, such as the Japanese schools in Hawai'i, during the Second World War,

Veltman's study is based partly on the survey "High School and Beyond," a sample of more than 58,000 high school students in the United States, which included a number of language related questions (see Veltman 1983). Respondents were asked to assess their competence in reading and writing as well as speaking and listening. The results indicated that in all languages, including English, there seemed to be:

a natural hierarchy of language skills ... The ability to understand a language is more developed than the ability to speak it, which in turn is more developed than the ability to read it. In turn the ability to read is more developed than the ability to write. (Veltman 1983: 158)

Despite the similarity of pattern, the drop in proficiency between the skills was less steep for English than in other languages and the levels of competence for each skill were higher for English. The survey also asked about the context of language use and found that the minority language was used more in the home than outside with friends or at work.

Veltman notes that Chinese is one of the languages in the United States which shows more resistance to shift, though this may not be because of any particular language loyalty but may relate to other factors such as place of birth and the language characteristics of parents (Veltman 1983: 99). He points out that continued immigration is a vital factor in the maintenance of a pool of people who usually speak any minority language. Also important are demographic facts such as the size and concentration of the non-English speaking group, minority language education, and overall level of education. Veltman does not find that socioeconomic status (SES) plays much of a role.
Li (1982) looks specifically at language shift among Chinese Americans. He has no data on actual language use, since he bases his research on responses to the question about mother tongue of respondents in the U.S. 1970 census. His data shows a clear correlation between shift to English and generation. As one goes from first to second and third generation, the proportion claiming Chinese as their mother tongue falls. He also notes that the rate changes with cohort:

Sixty years ago, almost no second-generation Chinese-Americans were reared in English; in the past 20 years the proportion has increased to 16%. During the same period, the proportion of the third-generation reared in English increased dramatically, from 26% to 62%. (Li 1982: 123)

Like Veltman, Li finds a positive correlation between residential segregation and resistance to language shift, especially with third generation Chinese. Living in a Chinatown seems to increase the retention rate of Chinese language. Unlike Veltman, however, he finds some relation between SES and language shift, though the relationship was not linear or easy to interpret. There is some indication that the shift to English is highest in the lower SES group.

Fishman is the researcher most associated with studies of language maintenance, where the emphasis is on the minority language. In Language Loyalty in the United States he tries to give an overall picture of the linguistic situation and how it has changed over time. He cannot deny the power of the English language but focuses on why, despite all the attractions of "Americanization," one still has the "... anomaly. Ethnic groups and ethnicity, language loyalty and language maintenance, still exist on the American scene" (Fishman et al. 1966: 31). It should be noted that, while Fishman acknowledges that the link between ethnicity and language is not an inevitable one, most of his writing proceeds on the assumption that a vital part of ethnic identity is lost if knowledge and use of the
respective language is lost. He views language as central to group identity and is an active proponent of the maintenance of minority languages in the United States. Others, such as Edwards (1985) consider language to be only one among many possible markers of ethnic identity, especially when the language is no longer used for communication but is just a symbolic part of the ethnic heritage.

In the absence of nationwide information on actual language use (before 1980 the decennial census did not collect such data) much of the information in Language Loyalty in the United States is based on indirect measures of language use such as the extent of the non-English and ethnic group press and foreign language broadcasting, the number of ethnic schools, and the extent of use of non-English languages in ethnic parishes and organizations. The history and current position of such institutions and organizations can both indicate the vitality of ethnic languages and contribute to their maintenance and/or promotion (Fishman 1980a, Fishman et al. 1985).

Cheung (1981) uses the results of a detailed interview survey carried out in five cities in Canada to examine the effect that parents of Chinese background have on the retention of Chinese language by their children. He finds that direct promotion of the language, such as speaking to children in Chinese and demanding that they respond in Chinese, has the greatest effect. Indirect promotion, such as sending the children to Chinese school, is not so effective. This ties in with Fishman's repeated observation that though ethnic schools can help language maintenance they cannot do so alone. Use of the ethnic language in the family domain is a vital factor (Fishman et al. 1966). Cheung also finds that the parents' ethnic community involvement and their lack of proficiency in English or French correlates with the degree to which they promote Chinese language with their children.
If we turn to Hawai‘i, Reinecke, in his 1935 thesis (reprinted in 1988), finds that size and concentration of the ethnic group, age of the individuals involved, and SES are important factors in the retention of ethnic languages. Attitudes are also important. The attitude of the wider community towards the ethnic group and the use of their language, and the attitude of the ethnic group towards their homeland, permanent settlement and assimilation in Hawai‘i, and intermarriage are all important factors which need to be considered.

While acquisition of English is associated with upward social mobility, Reinecke notes that among the Chinese, who had largely achieved middle class status by 1935 in Hawai‘i, there is an increase of pride in their ethnic heritage and their own language. Enrollment in Chinese ethnic schools reached a peak in 1934 and most of the students were third generation (Reinecke 1988: 122). This interest in exploring one's ethnic roots has some of the same characteristics of the "ethnic revival" of the 1970s (see Fishman et al. 1985). Another important factor promoting language retention was a very pragmatic one, proficiency in Chinese language being seen as an advantage in trade and business.

Both Fishman (1980a) and Reinecke (1988) note the importance of literacy in mother tongue maintenance. Where the immigrant group is highly literate, or has a high respect for literacy, foreign language schools and the foreign language press can play an important role. As Reinecke says, "The respect of the Chinese for literacy is proverbial" though for many of the peasants who came to Hawai‘i their "respect was perforce ideal rather than practical" (Reinecke 1988: 119).

I hope to add to knowledge in the area of language maintenance and shift by looking at the various findings and hypotheses put forward in the above macro-level investigations at
the level of the family. I also focus on the role of written language, an aspect not often emphasized in studies of language maintenance. The potential role of writing seems particularly salient in the case of Chinese in view of the claims made about the special respect for literacy in the society (see Reinecke, above) and the importance afforded the script by many scholars of Chinese history and language (discussed in the next section).

The Nature of Chinese Written Language and Beliefs about Chinese Writing
Many scholars have noted that the belief that there is only one system of Chinese writing shared by speakers of mutually intelligible dialects has been a powerful unifying factor for the Chinese people (e.g., Light 1980, Norman 1988, Ramsey 1987). As Ramsey says, "The power of unification exerted within Chinese culture by Chinese writing should not be underestimated; even the illiterate have always felt its influence" (Ramsey 1987: 18). The idea that there is only one Chinese writing system, coupled with the idea that the script is the Chinese language, thus promoting it in importance above the various spoken forms (see Scollon 1990a, Allen 1992), is one of the reasons that Chinese is seen as a language, while the varieties it encompasses, such as Cantonese and Taiwanese, are considered to be dialects.

Luke and Nancarrow (1992) point out that the belief that there is only one Chinese writing system is an idealization. Even if one could say that all Chinese readers have learned the same set of characters they would still need to have learnt the conventions followed in the various genres, types and styles of texts to fully understand their meaning. In fact, people vary in the numbers of characters with which they are familiar, depending on the type and extent of their education and exposure to various types of writing. Some characters are more restricted in use. For example, they may be found only in dialect writing or in classical Chinese. One also finds cases where familiar characters are used in non-standard
ways. This happens for example when certain colloquial Cantonese words are written in
standard characters which are chosen for their sound value. An example of this is yih ga
家庭 which is the colloquial word for 'now'.\(^1\) If pronounced in Mandarin this
combination of characters has no meaning. The standard Chinese for 'now' is xian zai
現在.

Colloquial Cantonese writing has a long and extensive history. It has more literature
written in the vernacular than any other non-Mandarin dialect (Cheng 1978). Ramsey
(1987) dates it from the Ming dynasty (1368 - 1644). In spite of this, its use, as with all
other such regional varieties, is restricted to certain low status types of writing such as
popular novels, comics, and jokes.

There seems to be no case where a non-standard dialect has ever been employed in a
written form as the language of administration or even of commerce. Even in periods
when China has been disunited, there has never been an attempt to set up a regional
literary language based on one of the local dialects. (Norman 1988: 3)

The prestige of standard written Chinese has been a powerful deterrent to the
development of any dialectal or regional competitors.

In the long history of Chinese language, only two written forms have been accepted and
used as standards. These are classical Chinese, which is based on the prose classics of the
late Zhou and Han periods (900 B.C. to 200 A.D.), and the modern vernacular literary
language (baihua). The latter "is a direct continuation and development of the literary
vernacular of the Song and Yuan times [960 A.D. - 1368 A.D.]" (Norman 1988: 3). The
movement to replace classical writing with baihua gathered momentum in the early
twentieth century after the establishment of the Republic of China. Despite efforts to base

\(^1\) In this dissertation, the Yale system of Romanization will be used for Cantonese. Pinyin
will be used for Mandarin.
the modern written language on spoken Mandarin, it still incorporates classical elements. This can be attributed to the continued prestige of the older literary standard and to the continued use of the character writing system (see Li and Thompson 1982). For centuries power and status in Chinese society depended on one's command of the written language, which was the classical language. Examinations testing the memorization of written texts and skill in certain written genres were the principle gateways to social power. One needed many years of intensive study to have a chance at success in these exams. The links between writing, education, scholarship and social status are therefore entrenched in Chinese history.

Even the Communists, when they came to power in 1949 and founded the People's Republic of China (hereafter referred to as PRC), were influenced by the power of the character writing system. They quickly abandoned their earlier plan to reform Chinese writing by replacing the character script with an alphabetic one. The Communists had previously used alphabetic orthographies successfully in a number of literacy programs around the country in a bid to raise literacy levels among the general population. Their change of policy may have been largely pragmatic since they did not want to antagonize the educated classes on whom they depended for support if they were to successfully run the country (see DeFrancis 1984). Serruys (1962) suggests that the Communist leaders may also have been influenced by the historical link between the Chinese script and Chinese history and civilization. When they actually took control of the country they felt the weight of their inheritance and could not make the break with tradition which their earlier script reform policy would have entailed. Instead they decided to concentrate on simplifying the characters, which involved, among other things, reducing the number of
strokes.\textsuperscript{2} It was hoped that this would make the script easier to read and write. Whatever the reason for the policy change, the new government used statements about the link between Chinese character script and Chinese culture, its importance for national unity, and its uniquely Chinese nature to justify its policy decisions. Those in power were therefore able to use, and at the same time reinforce such beliefs for political ends.

Two other aspects of Chinese writing need to be mentioned. One is the practice of calligraphy, a highly valued and admired art form. Since good calligraphy is associated with scholars, it also has connotations of status, good taste and refinement. One other important aspect of writing is its association with mystic powers and good luck. This is in turn connected to calligraphy, since good luck couplets and characters are usually written by calligraphers (see Hwa 1992).

Methodology
This research is based on the naturalistic paradigm (see Lincoln and Guba 1985), which has implications for both the planning and methodology used. I did not start with a hypothesis or set of hypotheses which I wanted to test, but rather I had a general focus and number of initial research questions based on my reading and on my experience, prior to the formal study, as a participant observer in various settings where Chinese language is used in Hawai'i (called "prior ethnography" in Lincoln and Guba 1985). The research questions are listed on pages 29 and 30.

Selection of the families was made through the various contacts I made before and during the initial stages of the formal research. Every effort was made to include as wide a range

\textsuperscript{2} A romanized script, known as \textit{pinyin}, was developed but was, and still is, used mainly to annotate characters to assist pronunciation, rather than being seen as a fully fledged orthographic system.
of backgrounds as possible in terms of length of time in the United States, dialect, socioeconomic status, and educational background, so as to obtain a broad spectrum of data on literacy practices. This allows maximum opportunity for comparison and contrast. In addition, I concentrated on families with children so that questions relating to language learning, maintenance, and loss could be addressed.

It was not easy to find families who were able and willing to allocate the time each week to meet with me over a series of months. Two of the first families I located quickly dropped out of the study. In one family the mother became too busy with her work and looking after her small son, and her husband was not really interested in improving his English. In another the father started to attend English classes in the evening, and his wife lacked the confidence and/or the interest to meet with me without her husband's support. Another family I visited were Chinese but did not use Chinese writing at all. They were from Vietnam and only the mother spoke Chinese (Cantonese). Although she had attended Chinese school for five years, any reading and writing she did in Hawai'i was in Vietnamese, the language her four children spoke. Eventually, I found the four families who provide much of the data in this study. A detailed description of the families is given in chapter 4.

These families are not seen as a representative sample. As Lincoln and Guba point out:

sampling serves different purposes for the naturalist than for the conventionalist. The concept of "population" is foreign, as is the reason for being concerned with "population" in the first place: the desire to generalize. Naturalists sample in ways that maximize the scope and range of information obtained; hence sampling is not representative but contingent and serial. (Lincoln and Guba 1985: 224)

This philosophy also sidesteps the problem of defining what one could mean by "the Chinese community" in Hawai'i. As we will see in chapter 3, people of Chinese
background cover a wide spectrum from fifth generation Chinese who speak no Chinese to recent arrivals who may speak a variety of non-English languages and dialects and little or no English.

Data collection methods employed on my visits to the homes of the families included those usually associated with ethnographic studies. These include long term participation and observation, interviews of various degrees of formality, and document collection, which in this study involved collecting examples of written Chinese. I also took every opportunity to speak to various family members and, if the occasion arose, to participate with them in activities outside the home. I went with them to Chinese church and Chinese community school, accompanied parents to open house days at their children's regular day schools, and visited some of their work places. Families were usually visited once a week over periods of time ranging from five months to over a year. The family homes and my visits are described in some detail in chapter 4.

In addition to thick description, Watson-Gegeo and Ulichny (1988) talk of "thick explanation." By this they mean explanation at many levels, not just the immediate setting and circumstances surrounding the behavior, interactions, and events as they happen, which they call "horizontal levels of context" but also "vertical levels of context." These levels include "institutional constraints and influences from the larger culture and society that may appear to be outside the immediate context, but which can shape behavior in various ways" (Watson-Gegeo and Ulichny 1988: 77). They point out that these vertical levels are very important determiners of behavior but are not directly observable and may not be recognized or understood by the participants in the event.
To gain knowledge of the wider context, information was obtained from oral histories, text books, the media, public records, census data, and relevant scholarly literature. As pointed out by Heath (1982), Heubner (1987), and Ogbu (1987) it is important to consider the historical background of the current setting as well the social present. Hence, particular attention was given to the social history of the Chinese people in Hawai'i. In addition to secondary sources, I collected background data by visiting various institutions, organizations, and settings (such as Chinatown) where I might see and hear Chinese being used and/or meet individuals of Chinese background to discuss their experiences and opinions about learning and using written Chinese. For example, I visited Chinese language schools, churches, and organizations, sometimes on a regular basis for several months.

On these occasions, as when talking to family members, I paid particular attention to the individuals' views, beliefs, and knowledge. Their view of reality and their attitudes were recorded along with my observations, which I was aware were grounded in my own experience and background. I also tried to be aware of the effect of my presence on the behaviors and statements of others. Not being Chinese, and often being the only non-Chinese present, made me stand out in many of the activities which I took part in or attended. My greater facility in English than either Mandarin or Cantonese, the only Chinese dialects that I am familiar with, also affected my interactions with others.

In accord with ethnographic methods, I tried to make analysis of the data I obtained during the research an ongoing part of the study. This serves to both check understanding of what is going on and to guide and focus further avenues of inquiry. I also tried to involve the major participants in the study, the family members, asking them for their
views on my findings. This is one way to check that these are credible and dependable, the qualitative researcher's equivalents to internal validity and reliability (Davis 1992).

Research Questions
The following research questions were developed after reading the relevant literature and after my initial period of ethnographic work among Chinese people in Hawai'i.

1. What different varieties of Chinese script are used and/or encountered by Chinese people in Hawai'i? For example, what is the nature of the characters (simplified or full form, standard or dialectal, hand-written or printed), direction of writing, and choice of vocabulary.

2. How are the varieties described above distributed and organized in the various texts written and read by the family members? What do the patterns found tell us about social context?

3. What is the relation between reading and writing Chinese?

4. What kinds of literacy activities do the various family members engage in and how are they classified by their users? (Examples might be 'letter-writing' or 'reading the newspaper').

5. What can I find out about the functions of literacy in the families? How do these functions relate to the individuals involved, the various roles they play, and the overall social context?
6. What factors favor, or necessitate the use of the Chinese written channel as opposed to, or in addition to the spoken channel and other written codes?

7. How do the types, uses, and roles of written Chinese relate to the findings of other studies which consider the social uses of literacy (for example, Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines 1988)? What can this tell us about the special nature and functions of written Chinese?

8. What can I learn about the social attitudes and cultural values associated with the various forms and functions of written Chinese?

9. How do the findings of this study contribute to an understanding of the processes of language maintenance and loss?
CHAPTER 3
THE SETTING: CHINESE IN HAWAI'I

The 1990 United States decennial census showed that 68,804 people in the State of Hawai'i (6.2% of the population) identified themselves as Chinese by race. This is the highest proportion of people of Chinese background recorded in any State. Since respondents may only nominate one race, this number does not include many of the part Chinese in Hawai'i. Answers to the ancestry question on the long form of the census, which allows more than one answer, indicate that 96,293 people claimed Chinese ancestry, representing 8.6% of the population (Hawai'i 1992). Whether one takes ancestry or race as a measure, this makes the Chinese the fifth largest group in the population after Caucasian (locally called haole), Japanese, Filipino, and Hawaiian.

The Chinese in Hawai'i today represent a very diverse group. The majority are descendants of 19th century immigrants, often speak little or no Chinese, and have largely adopted middle class American values. Others are more recent arrivals with various levels of proficiency in the English language. There are great differences within and between these two groups but they both live with the legacy of the early Chinese immigrants who affected the social environment of Hawai'i and contributed to what it means to be Chinese in Hawai'i in 1994. Some of the more recent immigrants may also have family or other connections with members of the older established group. For both of these reasons one needs to consider the historical context to understand and appreciate the current position of the Chinese population of Hawai'i.

1An example of this will be seen in the next chapter.
Historical Background

The first Chinese came to the Hawaiian Islands soon after Captain Cook visited in 1778 (Nordyke and Lee 1989). They worked as traders, merchants, farmers, and servants. They introduced rice growing and were the first to develop commercial sugar production, though this was soon taken over by Caucasians with more capital and access to large tracts of land and modern machinery. Hawai‘i was also an important source of sandalwood for China, hence the Cantonese name for Honolulu, *Tan Heung Shan* 'the sandalwood mountains'. By 1819 sandalwood was the most important export. The number of Chinese actually living in Hawai‘i was small, but significant in terms of the overall numbers of foreigners. In 1838, 30 or 40 Chinese were recorded as living in Honolulu, which represented up to ten percent of the foreign population (ibid. : 198).

Chinese people began to arrive in large numbers after 1852 as contract laborers for the expanding sugar industry. These laborers had fixed term contracts and were nearly all men. "According to the best estimates, a total of more than 46,000 Chinese were brought to Hawai‘i as laborers, chiefly between 1876 and 1885 and between 1890 and 1897" (Lind
In 1884 they represented over 20% of the population of the Kingdom of Hawai'i. Their large numbers and monopoly on the labor market began to alarm the authorities and there were several moves to restrict their entry. Immigration was finally virtually stopped when Hawai'i became a United States Territory in 1900 and subject to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. The sugar plantations turned to Japan, Portugal, and the Philippines in search of the workers they needed, thus laying the basis for the ethnic mix now found in the population of Hawai'i.

Over half the Chinese originally brought to Hawai'i as laborers returned to China in line with their original plan to come for a few years, make some money, and then return home. This may have been after a period of working in other occupations since they tended to move off the plantations to follow more lucrative and amenable occupations as soon as their contracts expired. By 1884 almost 30% of the Chinese population was living in Honolulu and "60% of the wholesale and retail merchandising establishments of the Islands were operated by members of this ethnic group" (Lind 1980: 88). Those who stayed to make Hawai'i their home, together with the smaller number that originally came as merchants and entrepreneurs, are the ancestors of the majority of Chinese and part Chinese living in Hawai'i today.

It has often been noted that there are significant differences between the Chinese population in Hawai'i and that on the United States mainland (e.g., Hsu 1971, McDermott et al. 1980, Kwok 1988). Some of these differences relate to place of origin in China and others from the very different social milieu the Chinese encountered in Hawai'i. As regards language, the Zhongshan dialect of Cantonese has long been the lingua franca among the Chinese speaking population in Hawai'i, whereas See Yap dialects have predominated on the United States mainland. The Zhongshan dialect is similar to the
Cantonese dialect of Hong Kong and Guangzhou (Canton), which is generally recognized as a regional standard and is becoming more common in the United States with the arrival of newer waves of immigrants. Another difference between the Chinese in Hawai‘i and the rest of the United States is the rate of intermarriage. This was uncommon, often prohibited by law, on the U.S. mainland. In Hawai‘i it was quite acceptable and many Chinese men, finding it difficult to bring wives from China or to find Chinese wives in Hawai‘i (in 1884 there was one Chinese woman for every 17 Chinese men), married non-Chinese women, most often Hawaiian. The men had a good reputation for hard work, so were looked on favorably by Hawaiian women, while having a Hawaiian wife allowed the husband to acquire land. Chinese-Hawaiian is the most common part-Hawaiian mixture in Hawai‘i today (Lebra 1991). High rates of intermarriage have continued. By 1985 over 60% of Chinese brides and grooms married people of another race (Nordyke and Lee 1989: 207).

Chinese people in Hawai‘i were also quick to achieve higher social status. The anti-Chinese movements of the late 19th century were less virulent and not as long lasting as those on the United States mainland. The Chinese were able to take advantage of the educational opportunities available in urban centers, especially Honolulu, and by the 1930s "had found places in a wide range of occupations, skilled trades, businesses, and professions, and ... were an integral part of the Island economy" (Glick 1980: 101). In 1930, 50% were in preferred occupations, i.e., skilled jobs, professions, and clerical positions (Morrison 1977). Chang (1972) suggests that the success of the Chinese was also due to their small numbers in comparison to the Japanese and Filipinos. The White elite thus considered them less of a threat than other groups and were consequently more tolerant towards them. The Chinese also benefited during and immediately after the Second World War when the Japanese population of Hawai‘i were viewed with suspicion.
because of their possible sympathies and loyalties towards Japan. China, on the other hand, was an ally. Many Chinese residents bought homes in Honolulu's more affluent suburbs and left Chinatown behind. By 1949 "men of Chinese ancestry were prominent in Hawaii's political, professional and business ranks" (Hsu 1971: 5). This situation has continued until today.

All these factors have resulted in the gradual social and economic integration of the well established Chinese population into the general community in Hawai'i. This has been accompanied by a noticeable loss of Chinese language skills among this group, particularly reading and writing (McDermott et al. 1980). In her study of Chinese organizations in Hawai'i Morrison (1977) found that the term "Chinese" at that time was merely a label which served to retain a sense of ethnic identity but which was virtually devoid of cultural content. While the picture has changed somewhat since the 1970s, the majority of people of Chinese background in Hawai'i today were born in Hawai'i and most are the descendants of 19th century arrivals. This differs from the mainland United States, where 60% of people who identify themselves ethnically or racially as Chinese are overseas born.

The new wave of Chinese immigrants to Hawai'i, and to the USA in general, is from Taiwan, the PRC, Hong Kong, and countries of Southeast Asia, particularly Vietnam. Most entered the USA after 1965 with the passing of a new Immigration and Nationality Act which changed the quota system and allowed more people to immigrate from Asia. The majority have come under family reunion provisions. Some also came as refugees from Indo-China after the Vietnam War. These recent arrivals have a wide range of educational, socioeconomic, and linguistic backgrounds. Some are highly educated professionals with high levels of English proficiency while others are rural workers with few years of schooling and little or no knowledge of the English language. In addition to
immigrants, overseas students at institutions of higher education have increased the number of Chinese speakers in Hawai'i.

The arrival of these new groups has had a great affect on the visibility of the Chinese in Hawai'i, particularly as it also coincided with a renewal of interest of American born Chinese in their ethnic and cultural heritage. This was partly an offshoot of the "ethnic revival" which began in the 1970s and was itself encouraged by a number of social and political movements of the 1960s and 1970s (see Fishman et al. 1985). It is also due to the increased possibilities for communication with, and travel to the PRC after the establishment of diplomatic ties between it and the United States in the 1970s. Evidence of this increased interest in Chinese culture and background is shown by the establishment of the Hawai'i Chinese History Center in the early 1970s. This helps individuals trace their family trees and has also been instrumental in the preparation and production of a number of publications about the Chinese in Hawai'i. The 1970s also saw renewed interest in organizing regular large scale cultural activities in Honolulu's Chinatown. For example, "Night in Chinatown," which is organized each Chinese New Year by the Chinatown Merchants Association.

The last thirty years have also seen a general revitalization of Chinatown, which for much of its history has, in fact, been dominated by other ethnic groups. Many of the businesses in the Chinatown area are now run by new immigrants, particularly from Southeast Asia. More Chinese language is now heard around the streets of Chinatown (McDermott et al. 1980, Chang 1988), particularly Cantonese from Hong Kong and Vietnam, and Mandarin. There is also more written Chinese seen in and around Chinatown's streets and businesses. The use of Chinese has also increased in the professional and business worlds, and bilingual and multilingual doctors, dentists, social workers, real estate agents, lawyers, and
accountants are in demand. The general increase of interest in, and use of, Chinese language in Hawai'i has had various repercussions on organizations such as churches, community language schools, regular day schools, and Chinese societies. The media, both print and electronic, have also responded to the increased demand for Chinese language materials and programs.

Organizations and Services in Hawai'i

In this section I will discuss some of the changes in organizations and services which have occurred over time in response to the changing nature of the Chinese population in Hawai'i. These are important from the point of view of Chinese language use, including written language, and also because of the potential linguistic, social, and cultural resources which they make available to Chinese people living in Hawai'i, including the four families who are the focus of this study.

Churches

The early Chinese brought with them a range of religions, including Christianity. Early Chinese Christians were in the minority, but they found a lot of support for their activities in the non-Chinese Christian population. The church also acted as an important agent of acculturation. The first Chinese Christian church was founded in 1879 (the same year as the first temple to Kuan Yin was built). Several other Chinese churches sprang from this first church as the congregations increased and then divided due to language, philosophical, and religious differences (see Mark 1989 for details). The earliest Chinese churches held services in Cantonese or Hakka and used literature printed in Chinese. As second and third generation members began to predominate the English language became more common.
The arrival of significant numbers of Chinese speaking Christian immigrants and students since the 1970s has led to the foundation of several new Chinese churches. These include the Chinese Lutheran Church of Honolulu, which holds both Cantonese and Mandarin services, and the Honolulu Chinese Alliance Church, which has services in Cantonese. Some of the older established Chinese churches have also reintroduced Chinese language services, while other churches have set up Chinese Ministries within their overall structure. One of the latter holds services in Taiwanese, a Min dialect of Chinese. Since church services tend to be organized around written texts, all this has led to an increased use of religious literature printed in Chinese.

**Chinese Societies**

Many Chinese societies were established in Hawai'i in the 19th century. The majority were either based on the geographical area in China where the Chinese people came from (this could be at the district, the *doo* 'sub district', or village level) or on surname groups. There was also the United Chinese Association, founded in 1884. This was allied to no particular group but played a significant advocacy role for the Chinese population in general. These societies aided the early Chinese in many ways, in both practical and spiritual terms. For example, they served as links to the homeland. One could go to the society to receive letters, hear news of native villages, and remit money to China. They also offered financial help, settled disputes, gave temporary lodging, celebrated festivals, housed shrines, and arranged for remains to be sent back to China for burial. There were over a hundred societies in Hawai'i in the 1930s. Many of these still exist today but some are almost moribund. As the older members die they are not being replaced by members of the younger generation. Some are gaining members from new immigrants, however,

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2 The new arrivals have also infused new life into the more traditional Chinese religions. At least two new Chinese Buddhist temples have been established on O'ahu since 1970.
since many come from the same areas in China as the first arrivals. This has led to at least one club holding meetings in Cantonese again after many years of operation largely in English.

Immigrants from non-traditional areas of immigration to Hawai'i have set up their own societies since the established ones are not perceived as relevant to their needs. These new societies are often very active and provide centers of contact, support, and information for more recent arrivals. Societies established since the late 1970s include the Association of Chinese from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, and the Hawai'i Chinese Association. The former was instrumental in assisting new arrivals from Indo-China, many of whom were refugees. The association provided interpreting services, and also helped its members find jobs and place children in schools. Most of the members of the latter organization are immigrants from Taiwan, the majority being professionals or business people. Another organization set up in the early 1980s is the Chinese Culture Service Center. This is subsidized by the Chinese Government in Taiwan through its Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission, and offers a number of services to the public. It allows various groups to use its premises for meetings and functions, houses a variety of language and culture classes, offers a venue for cultural exhibitions, and screens Chinese films once a month. It also has a library which members can use and, like other societies which have clubrooms, has a number of Chinese newspapers which people can sit and read at their leisure.

Community Schools and Chinese Language Classes
Some Chinese language classes were organized by churches and other organizations in the late 19th century, but Chinese schools as permanent institutions date from 1911 with the establishment of two Cantonese language schools in Honolulu, Mun Lun and Wah Mun.
These are still in existence today, though the latter is now called Sun Yat Sen School (also referred to in the community as Zhongshan School, a name it was known by until 1961). By 1934 there were 19 schools, 12 in Honolulu, 3 elsewhere on O'ahu, 2 on the island of Hawai'i, and one each on the islands of Kaua'i and Maui (Huff 1975). They had a total enrollment of over 3,000 students, which represented 40% of the Chinese population of school age in the Territory. Most instruction was in Cantonese. There was some effort to introduce Mandarin, the national language of China, but lack of speakers made it difficult to interest students and to find teachers.

The aim of the Chinese schools in the early days was very much focused on China. It was hoped that knowledge of the language would encourage continued ties with the homeland and perhaps allow some of the young to go back and help in its development. The schools were also seen as a way of maintaining cultural values and traditions.

Numbers of schools and students declined significantly after the Second World War. This was partly because of an eight year break in their operation. All foreign language schools were closed from 1941 to 1949, first under military law and then because of restrictions imposed by the Foreign Language School Act passed by the Territorial Legislature in 1943. The main targets of these moves were the Japanese language schools, which were seen as centers of subversive propaganda, but all community language schools were affected. Community language schools were only able to re-open in 1949 after community protests that the legislation was unconstitutional and litigation in the courts. Another factor which reduced the numbers of students was the fear of some parents that attendance at after-hours schools would deleteriously affect their children's progress in

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3 Japanese language schools in Hawai'i far outnumbered Chinese schools in terms of number of schools and enrollments. At their peak in 1934 Japanese language schools had an enrollment of 40,000 students (Carr 1979).
English. Educational arguments along these lines had been used to justify the passage of the 1943 Act. It was said that forced learning of two languages simultaneously was detrimental "to the mental health and well being of young children ... In addition, ... language schools doubtlessly retard the improvement of their English" (Lum 1950: 2). Increasing acculturation of the Chinese population, the desire to become American, and the pressure of other school work also contributed to declining enrollments (Yu 1971). In addition, the movement of Chinese families out of Chinatown made it more difficult for children to get to the schools, which held classes daily after regular school hours. By 1961 there were only 7 schools, all on O'ahu, with about 1400 students. By 1975 this number had dropped to 5, with a student enrollment of 700 (Huff 1975). Most instruction was still in Cantonese, though the two largest schools, Mun Lun and Sun Yat Sen, had added Mandarin to the curriculum for the upper grades. In 1994 only four of the old established Chinese schools remain. Their total enrollment is less than 300 and one of the small schools no longer teaches Cantonese, only Mandarin.

The move to Mandarin is indicative of the direction of the current interest in Chinese language learning. In addition, there has been a change in the type and timing of classes. New community schools have been established and Chinese teaching has been extended into the regular day school curriculum. There are also numerous private tutoring arrangements, with Chinese, usually Mandarin, being taught to individuals or small groups of school-age students.

Community language schools and classes established since the 1970s generally meet only once a week, usually for about three hours on Saturday or Sunday. This is more convenient for working parents, who may live in widely dispersed suburbs. Only one of these recently established schools teaches Cantonese, the others teach Mandarin. The
Cantonese school has about 90 students and the others have a combined enrollment of about 200. In common with the student body in the four older established community schools, most students attend regular day schools at Elementary or Intermediate levels. There are few students of High School age due to the pressure of study and extra curricular attractions.

Mandarin classes have also been established in regular day schools. Most of these classes date from the 1970s but one private school has had a Mandarin program since the early 1960s. In 1993 approximately 350 students were studying Mandarin at the secondary level, 250 in three private schools and 100 in four public High Schools. Class contact time is usually between three to four hours a week. At the junior level, 100 students study Mandarin at one private school, while five public elementary schools offer Mandarin to over 700 students. One elementary school teaches Cantonese to about 40 students. Apart from the students in the Mandarin classes at public elementary schools, the vast majority of students studying Chinese are of Chinese background. The percentage may reach almost 100% in the private schools.

The teaching of Chinese language in a formal schooling situation is important since such classes are the major place for the teaching of literacy. As Fishman (1985: 372) notes, "Schools are crucial literacy-imparting institutions, even though they need outside help, even in this respect, if what they teach is to take hold and be maintained later in life." He also notes the role of the school in the acquisition of formal speech which he defines as "those spoken varieties that are proximate to literacy" (ibid.). Parental pressure is usually the main reason children of Chinese background attend language classes, at least initially. Parents see the classes as a way to teach their children about their heritage. They and/or their children may also see more practical reasons for improving their skills in Chinese.
Learning or maintaining the language may help communication with the older generation or relatives overseas. There are also potential advantages in business and professional life and for travel. Chinese school also provides social venues for children of Chinese ethnic background to meet with each other and to make friends. Many of the older children I spoke to at the Cantonese community school I attended for a semester said that they continued to come because of their friends there.

Newspapers and Other Print Media

There have been a number of Chinese language newspapers in Hawai‘i since the first was established in 1881 (see Glick 1980: 292-295 for details). Many of these supported various political groups and continued as long as they were financially underwritten by the sponsoring organization and its members. Reinecke (1988) comments on their high mortality rate. Only one of these early papers survives today, the daily United Chinese Press (Zhonghua Xinbao). Its daily circulation is given as 800 in the Atlas of Hawaii (1983: 191). When I approached the management for current circulation figures they declined to provide these, but if it is as high as 800 this must largely be due to annual subscriptions since very few copies are sold in the news agencies in Honolulu that carry the paper. Most of the space in the four page paper consists of advertisements, many of which remain unchanged for weeks or even months at a time. There are a few short news articles on the front page, either translated from a local English daily newspaper or obtained from the Taiwanese daily paper, Zhongyang Ribao. The main items of interest seem to be Chinese society announcements and obituaries. The only other local paper in Chinese is the monthly Hawaii Chinese Community News (Xiawaiyi Baodao), which began publication in May 1993. This has been distributed free since its inception, though it bears a cover price of 25 cents. It contains local news, much of which relates to Taiwanese societies and cultural events arranged through the Honolulu office of the
Coordination Council for North American Affairs, the official representative of the Republic of China (Taiwan) in the United States.

The most commonly read Chinese newspapers in Hawai'i today are American editions of Hong Kong and Taiwan based papers, and newspapers sent from Chinese speaking countries, mainly the PRC, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Most are moderately priced and readily available in a number of news agencies, book stores, and Chinese food stores in Honolulu, especially in Chinatown. The most popular newspapers are the Taiwan based *Shijie Ribao* (World Journal) and the Hong Kong based Sing Tao Daily. The editions which come to Hawai'i are printed in San Francisco, and cover Hawai'i and the North Western States of the U.S.A. They carry many advertisements and personal announcements for businesses, organizations, and individuals in Hawai'i, reflecting their wide circulation here. A local representative of the *Shijie Ribao* said that 3,000 copies were sent to Honolulu daily from San Francisco, though this included some destined for Guam and Samoa. The Sing Tao Daily declined to give figures, but they may be of a similar magnitude. Such circulation details give some indication of the number of people literate in Chinese, though they can only be a guide since the actual number of readers exceeds the number of papers sold. One paper is typically read by more than one member of a family. In addition, Chinese newspapers in society club rooms are available to many readers.

Magazines and books published in Chinese are also plentiful in Chinatown, though they are more expensive than in other cities in the United States with larger Chinese populations, such as San Francisco or Los Angeles, or in the country of publication (most are published outside the USA). Many regular readers thus receive copies from family or friends living in California or overseas and/or pass on copies their of books and magazines.
to others once they have finished reading them. There is also a thriving trade in second
hand comic books and magazines in Chinatown. This situation contrasts with that
described by Reinecke in 1935 when practically all reading matter in Chinese was in the
form of newspapers. Popular magazines were almost non-existent, and books could
generally only be bought at newspaper offices (Reinecke 1988: 120, 121).

The Electronic Media: Film, Video, Television, and Radio
Glick (1980) notes that in the 1930s Chinese movies were not popular enough to be
shown daily or even weekly in Honolulu. This changed with the arrival of the new wave
of immigrants, and by the late 1970s there were three movie theaters in Honolulu that
showed only Chinese films (McDermott et al. 1980: 63). Today there is only one, the
Golden Harvest Theatre, which shows mostly Cantonese films from Hong Kong. This
cinema appears to be thriving in spite of the competition from video shops. There are
several of these around Honolulu, especially in Chinatown, and they carry a large stock of
Chinese feature films and videos of popular television series. As regards television, there
are currently two stations in Hawai‘i with some programming in Chinese. The Chinese
Community Broadcasting Service began broadcasts in the early 1980s, renting air time on
various channels. It currently broadcasts on KWHE. Broadcasts are mainly in Mandarin,
though some of the advertisements and short locally produced segments may be in
Cantonese. Length of programming has varied over the years, but currently it is two
hours a day, Monday to Saturday, with one hour being devoted to news and one hour to
soap operas, usually from Taiwan. Channel 20, KIKU, began broadcasts in Chinese in
1990 and now has 23 hours a week of Chinese language programs. These are in
Cantonese and Mandarin and are obtained from a sister station in Los Angeles. Only one
radio station in Honolulu broadcasts in Chinese. There is a one hour Cantonese program
on Friday evenings at 9 P.M. organized by the Chinese division of the Nu'uanu Baptist church.

All the films at the Golden Harvest Theatre are subtitled in Chinese and English. Most videos and some of the television programs, especially those from Taiwan, are subtitled in Chinese. Films, videos, and television programs thus provide numerous opportunities for reading Chinese in Hawai'i.

Discussion

In this chapter I have briefly described the history of the Chinese in Hawai'i, and noted the differences between this and the history of the Chinese in the United States mainland. Despite the fact that the Chinese have always been a minority, though quite a sizable one at times, they have had a significant impact on the social and economic life of Hawai'i. The new wave of Chinese speaking immigrants which began to arrive in the 1970s, together with the large numbers of overseas students from countries where Chinese is spoken, has led to an increase in the use of Chinese language in Hawai'i, both spoken and written. This has affected some of the organizations set up in the 19th and early 20th centuries for the earlier Chinese immigrants. It has also resulted in the establishment of new organizations and services to cater for Chinese speakers and readers. These new arrivals, together with the increased interest among the older established Chinese in their own ethnic roots has also led to the Chinese becoming a more visible presence in Hawai'i over the past twenty five years. The four families in the present study all arrived in Hawai'i in the 1980s and 1990s. They thus found a Hawai'i which had an active Chinese speaking population, together with a range of Chinese language resources and services resulting from the history, both distant and more recent, of the Chinese in the Islands.
CHAPTER 4
THE FAMILIES IN THE STUDY

The present study focuses on the members of four Chinese families living in or near Honolulu on the island of O'ahu. I will introduce them in the order in which I met them. All names and some details have been changed to protect their anonymity. It will be seen that the families share some characteristics, but differ in others. All the parents and three of the children are first generation Chinese in the United States, in the sense that they were born overseas. On the other hand, they are from different countries and have been here for periods ranging from only one year to over 15 years. The adults are all educated and literate, though their education ranges from high school to post graduate professional training. They all speak Mandarin at home, but speak a range of other dialects and/or languages as well. All the adults have attended some sort of English class, but their proficiency in the language varies from minimal to quite fluent. In all cases, I gained entry to the families because of the fact that I am an English teacher and the parents either wanted help themselves with the language or wanted me to help the children. For each of the families I will first explain how I met them and then go on to describe their initial experiences on arrival in the United States, their social, educational, language and family backgrounds, their current activities, and their social networks. I will then describe the homes of the families, and my visits to these.

The Wang Family

The Wangs arrived in Hawai'i from Beijing in the PRC in 1990. The parents, Long and Niknik, are in their early forties and their daughter, Rebecca, is 12 years old. She has just completed grade 6 at the local public intermediate school. I met the family through Niknik's sister, Susan, who I knew in Beijing when I was teaching English there in 1985.
Susan emigrated to Hawai'i in 1986 to join her mother and younger brother, who were the first of her immediate family to come.

The story of the family's link with Hawai'i is an interesting one. Niknik's mother's side of the family originally came from the Zhongshan area of southern China and have had a long standing connection with Hawai'i. One of her great grandfathers was a successful citizen of the Islands. He owned a bank, and was a friend and supporter of Doctor Sun Yat Sen, the founder of the Chinese Republic.¹ Unfortunately, the bank was later forced into bankruptcy and the family's fortunes went into decline. Niknik's maternal grandparents, who were both born in Hawai'i, decided to return to China in the 1920s so that her grandfather could take up a position with a well known firm in Shanghai. They had four children at the time. Niknik's mother and a younger brother were born later in Shanghai. The elder sons in the family returned to Hawai'i in the 1940s, and lost contact with their parents and younger siblings after 1949. When relations between the United States and the PRC were reestablished in the 1970s two of the brothers went back to try and find the family. Their parents had passed away, but they contacted their sister, Niknik's mother, who had by then moved to Beijing and was married with four children. It was when she asked them to sponsor her son to the United States that they told her that she was herself an American citizen, registered at birth by her parents with the American consulate in Shanghai. The brothers helped sort out the paperwork, and the chain of immigration for Niknik and her siblings commenced in 1984 with the arrival of her mother in the land of which she was a citizen.

¹ Dr. Sun had a long association with Hawai'i, spending most of his teenage years here at school, his elder brother having established himself on the island of Maui as a prosperous trader and merchant. Dr. Sun later returned to Hawai'i more than once to visit his family and to raise money and muster support for his revolutionary cause.
The Wangs knew no English when they arrived. Niknik told me of the confusion at the airport when they could understand nothing of what was going on and had to await the arrival of an interpreter. Their extended family gave them plenty of support after arrival, however. Niknik's younger brother had found an apartment for them and had arranged employment for Long in the company he was working with at the time. Long therefore started work within a matter of days. He still works there, making frames for pictures. It took Niknik longer to find a job, but after two months she found one through her mother. One of her fellow students at English class was a supervisor at a hotel in Waikiki and knew they were looking for housekeepers. At first the manager was doubtful about employing Niknik because of her lack of English but she gave her a trial and found her to be a good worker. Niknik is now the longest serving housekeeper there, and acted as supervisor for a while. Niknik's brother also helped with the formalities of enrolling Rebecca in school. She had completed grade 2 in the PRC and started elementary school in Hawai'i in grade 3. Niknik's sister, Susan, helped the family find a Chinese speaking doctor and dentist.

In the PRC Long worked in a factory office and Niknik was an electrician. They were both forced to leave high school in their early teens during the Cultural Revolution. They were sent to work in the countryside but eventually made their way back to Beijing, where they later married. In the mid 1980s they decided to study for degrees. Long studied for his high school leaving certificate, took a university entrance examination, and was accepted to study business management at the Beijing Broadcasting and Television University. His factory allowed him three half days leave a week to attend classes, and he graduated the year before emigrating. Niknik enrolled in a correspondence course organized by the same university and studied at home in her spare time, watching lectures on television. Her major was Chinese. Long really enjoyed studying and would have liked
to continue. He said that when he finished he wondered what to do with his spare time. In Hawai'i it is a different situation however. Both of them feel tired after work and have little energy for anything, let alone study.

The Wangs shared their first apartment with Niknik's mother, Dorothy, for over a year until Dorothy's husband arrived from China to join his wife. He had stayed in Beijing until he could retire. While living with Dorothy, Niknik and Long went with her to English classes in the evening. They were placed in a lower class since her English is better than theirs. Dorothy had learned English in the PRC and had also been attending classes in Hawai'i for longer. They stopped going to classes when they moved into their present apartment. It is too far from the school for them to be able to walk, and they feel it is too much trouble to get the car out at night. They both have to use some English at work. There are no other Chinese speakers at the hotel, and only one of Long's coworkers speaks Chinese. The language demands are not high, however, so they need only a minimum to manage their jobs.

Mandarin is the language of the home. Niknik's sister, Susan, also chooses to use Mandarin in her family since she wants her two young sons to speak Chinese. She thinks there will be plenty of time for them to learn English when they go to preschool and is anxious that their Mandarin be well established before they start using English on a regular basis. In line with her wishes Dorothy also speaks only Mandarin to the children. She also speaks Mandarin at home as her husband does not speak much English. He is originally from Shandong, in the north of China, so speaks Shandonghua, a dialect of Mandarin. In addition to Mandarin Dorothy speaks the Shanghai dialect, since she went to school in Shanghai, and also the Zhongshan dialect of Cantonese, which was the dialect
she spoke at home as a child. She finds the latter very useful when shopping in Chinatown.

The Wangs see a lot of their extended family. Dorothy cares for Susan's two boys during the day. Since she is not allowed to have children in her apartment more than once a week, she looks after them in Niknik's apartment every weekday except Friday. Rebecca therefore sees her cousins and grandmother nearly every day when she gets home from school, as does Niknik if she finishes work early. Susan's husband, David, picks the children up after work, takes his mother-in-law home, and collects Susan. Niknik also often sees her younger brothers and their wives, and occasionally her uncles and their children. Some of her cousins and their spouses cannot speak Chinese, many of them having been born in Hawai'i. If they do speak Chinese, it is the Zhongshan dialect of Cantonese, the dialect of Dorothy's family.

Most of the Wangs' social life revolves around the extended family. They have also made social contacts at work, but only see Long's Chinese speaking coworker, Mr. Wong, and his family outside work hours. Other friends have been made at the English classes Niknik and Long used to attend, and at parties organized by friends, members of the extended family and, occasionally, by David's company. Long says he feels handicapped because of the fact that he cannot speak English. All his friends therefore have to be Mandarin speakers. Most are from Beijing and nearly all are from the PRC. Rebecca has friends at school but she rarely sees them out of school hours. They sometimes telephone, often about homework. Rebecca speaks to them in English. She says that there are few Chinese speakers at her present school.
Niknik and Long are keen for Rebecca to do well at school and would like her to go to university. They support her in her studies, but do not push her. If she has questions about homework, they try to help if they can but their lack of English limits what they can do. In general, they seem happy to let Rebecca get on with her school work in her own way. I suggested they go to the open house at her school and went with them to interpret. Rebecca did not seem very happy about this, but it may just be that she was shy. It was there that Niknik found out that she was supposed to sign the progress report that the mathematics teacher sends home from time to time. The teacher was not worried though. She said Rebecca was a good student. The English teacher hardly knew her, she was so quiet in class.

Television plays a very important role in the life of the family. The main programs they watch, or record for later viewing, are those in Mandarin on the Chinese Community Broadcasting Service. Susan’s husband, David, works for this company. He was trained in film and television in Beijing. The family also watch English programs, especially the news, soap operas, and movies, though Niknik and Long don’t understand a lot of the content. The television is also much used by Dorothy when she cares for Susan’s children. They like the cartoons. Rebecca watches these with them when she returns home from school. Rebecca and Long also enjoy watching Chinese videos rented from one of the shops in Chinatown. These are often in Cantonese so they need to read the Chinese subtitles to understand them. Long is beginning to understand some of the dialogue, however, partly from exposure to the dialect on the videos and partly through hearing it in Chinatown.

Another regular family activity is shopping. When I first visited the family Long shopped in Chinatown about once a week during his lunch hour. When the family go shopping
together, however, they go by car and visit supermarkets where parking is easier. Only Long can drive. Rebecca enjoys shopping the most. Niknik isn't so keen, especially when her income is reduced. Since she gets paid by the hour her wages are lower when business at the hotel is slow. Niknik keeps a careful eye on the family finances. She is in charge of the money side of things, even though Long is the one with the degree in business management. The family also enjoy driving round the island, which they call *huan dao* 'circle island' (a common phrase in English in the tourist domain in Hawai'i). This is a favorite outing at the weekend, with different stopping points selected each time.

The Wangs rarely attend any Chinese cultural events, nor do they belong to any Chinese clubs or societies. Mr. Wong has invited Long to the Chinese Culture Service Center a few times to see his calligraphy or paintings in exhibitions there. Mr. Wong is a keen painter. He also plays with a Chinese music club in Chinatown. If he goes to the art exhibitions Long only stays a short time and does not socialize much. Niknik says he does not like crowds or noise. He prefers smaller gatherings in people's homes. The first year they were in Honolulu the family went to a Chinese New Year celebration in Chinatown. They found it very small and disappointing compared to Beijing and have not been since. Niknik went to a Buddhist temple once, but did not like it so has never been back. She and Long used to regularly attend a temple in Beijing, having become interested in Buddhism a few years before leaving the PRC. Long still practices meditation daily. Despite the fact that the family seem to make little use of Chinese organizations or cultural activities in Hawai'i, Niknik says she feels at home here because of the obvious Asian presence.
The Home and My Visits

The Wangs live in a rented two bedroom apartment in a small complex. It is light and airy but very noisy as it is on a busy main road. Niknik said the noise bothered her at first but she has got used to it now. The apartment suits the Wangs for two main reasons. Firstly, it is in a good location. It is conveniently situated with respect to the buses Long and Rebecca take each day to go to work and school respectively. The family have a car but Long does not use this for work since parking is a problem. Niknik can walk to work in about 10 minutes. Secondly, the rent is very reasonable for an apartment of this size in Hawai‘i. This is largely due to the fact that they took over the lease from the previous tenants, Chinese acquaintances who left to work in Canada.

The door of the apartment opens directly into a small living area, which extends into an L shape to accommodate the kitchen. A small round dining table occupies the space between the open plan kitchen and the living area. At the back of the apartment, away from the road, are two bedrooms and a bathroom. The bedrooms run along the side of the building, however, so they are not protected from the traffic noise. The living area is dominated by the television set with its 25 inch screen. A video machine on a stand underneath this allows access to rented videos and video games, the latter being popular with Rebecca. Much of the remainder of the living area is taken up with two sofas, at right angles to each other and placed to gain maximum viewing advantage of the television. A long coffee table is in front of the sofas. Next to the television is a small two drawer chest, on which the telephone sits, and a small cupboard with two shelves. The top drawer of the chest is where papers, mainly letters, bills, and accounts, are kept. The cupboard has family photos on top of it and a clutter of magazines, papers, writing materials, and one or two paperback books on the shelves. These things seem to stay there relatively untouched from week to week, though the pile gradually increases until
Niknik feels she has to sort it out. In the corner, between the two sofas, is another cupboard. There used to be several small porcelain Buddhist figures on top of this, but they have been moved. Niknik’s father, who is also a Buddhist, told her they were not facing the right direction and were also too near the bathroom.

The walls of the living area are decorated with a number of prints, paintings and photographs. Above the sofa opposite the television is a large formal photograph of the family group. The same wall has two long scrolls, one on either side of the photograph. Each is a Chinese print, one depicting shrimps and the other bamboo. Niknik said her younger brother gave her these. He did not want them any longer. On the wall above the other sofa is a large water color painted in Western style. It shows a snow covered mountain in Tibet reflected in a calm lake, with a herd of what Long told me were yaks grazing on the shore. Long’s uncle in China painted this. On the wall housing the television is a small painting by Long’s friend at work, Mr. Wong. This is in Chinese style. Next to it is a photograph of Rebecca and one of Susan’s sons. Long made the frames for the paintings and the photographs. Above the opening leading to the bathroom and the bedrooms hangs a bright red Mickey Mouse clock. On the opposite side of the room, on the back of the front door, hangs a bronze plaque in the shape of the Chinese character fu ‘good fortune’. As is the custom, it is hanging upside down.²

I have been visiting the family about once a week since November 1992. The original purpose was a language exchange. They helped me not to forget the Mandarin language I learned in China and I, in exchange, helped them with English. They then agreed to become part of the present study. I always visit on weekends. Long works a five day

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² The word for ‘upside down’ in Mandarin is dao, a homonym (but not a homograph) of dao ‘to arrive’. An inverted fu therefore can be interpreted as inviting the arrival of good fortune.
week, Monday to Friday, and Niknik usually does not work on Saturdays and Sundays. She is sometimes called in if the hotel is short-staffed or very busy. If she does not need the money she unplugs the phone so that the manager cannot contact her. When I visit I sit on the sofa opposite the television. Niknik sits next to me and Long sits on the other sofa at right angles to us. There are usually one or two recent editions of a Chinese newspaper on the sofa, on the floor nearby, or on the corner cupboard. There are also often a few English printed materials, such as brochures, advertisements for current specials at the stores, and the section of the free weekly English language paper *Midweek* which lists television programs. There may be some pieces of mail on the coffee table, especially if Niknik wants me to help her decipher the meaning of these. Once or twice I have seen paperback novels in English that Rebecca borrows from her school library. Apart from newspapers, most reading is done in the bedrooms, however, so this is where any books and magazines currently being read are to be found. There may also be one or two in the bathroom.

The format of my visits has become fairly fixed over the months. First Niknik prepares coffee and she, Long and I talk about what we have been doing during the week and any items of news that are of particular interest. I also take this time to ask them about what they have been reading and writing and, as the research progressed, to ask about my ideas on the emerging patterns found in the data. Most of this conversation is in Mandarin. Then we move on to the English lesson part of the visit. Niknik and Long like to read out of a text book for this. At first we used a text they had studied in their English classes in Hawai‘i, but then changed to an English text they brought with them from the PRC. They prefer this because it is bilingual. We work with the texts on the coffee table in front of us.
I don’t see much of Rebecca during the two hours or so I spend with the family. I find her difficult to talk to. She is very quiet. Even her parents say she does not speak much. They contrast her to Niknik, who is very talkative. Rebecca’s nickname is guai guai ‘well-behaved’, and she got this because she did not cry very much when she was a baby. She usually disappears into her room as soon as I arrive and works quietly on some handicraft project, reads, or sleeps. She occasionally emerges, usually to prepare herself something to eat in the kitchen, but rarely pays any attention to what we are doing. Sometimes her mother or father call on her to translate a word for us if we are having trouble communicating but this seldom meets with success. It is difficult to translate words out of context and also she is very shy. On the other hand, she is a demanding child and expects instant attention from her parents. Niknik and Long seem quite indulgent and pay little attention to her moodiness and short temper when she cannot get her own way. When I do talk to Rebecca I speak in English but she often answers in Mandarin. She always speaks Mandarin to her parents.

The Young Family
Irene and Simon have been married 6 years and are in their early thirties. They have no children. I met Simon when I stopped at his shop one day to ask about computers. He repairs electronic equipment, such as televisions, videos, computers, and stereos. Simon is from Laos, and is third generation Chinese as his parents were both born there. He fled the country with his brother at the age of 17. After some time in Thailand they both went to France as refugees. Simon spent four years there. His mother had a brother in Hawai‘i, who originally came as an overseas student. With his help, she and Simon’s younger siblings came to Honolulu, his father having passed away in the refugee camp in Thailand while awaiting processing of their applications for asylum. The brother sponsored other siblings and his mother so Simon has a lot of family on his mother’s side in Hawai‘i.
Simon's mother then sponsored Simon, and he arrived in 1982. His brother remained in France as he had met and married a girl there, also from Laos.

Simon went to English classes for two years after he arrived and then started a Diploma in Drafting Engineering at community college. When he discovered that the pay on graduation would be less than he was already earning in his part-time work he abandoned the course and has been working at servicing electronic equipment and appliances ever since. He learned his skills on the job and through his own reading. He has since given up his shop, and now works from home.

Irene came to Hawai'i as an overseas student in 1982. Her father had thought of sending her to Japan to study but changed his mind and decided she should come to Hawai'i where he had a friend who could keep an eye on her. After studying English for two years Irene enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Hawai'i. She did not complete this, giving it up when she married Simon. She said she could not be bothered to finish. She has had a number of jobs in Hawai'i. She worked in Simon's shop for a while, but now works for an uncle of his who is in the jewelry trade. Many of Simon's uncles are in this line of business and seem to have been very successful at it. Irene also helps Simon keep his business records in order. She makes sure that all the accounts for parts he purchases, credit card records, and bank statements are neatly filed in order of receipt. She also draws up a statement of income and expenses each month. Their accountant, who speaks Mandarin, takes care of the details.

Both Simon and Irene have to use English in their respective jobs and they are fluent speakers. At home, however, they speak Mandarin. Irene says she only speaks English at work. It was Simon's father who was particularly keen on his children learning Chinese.
The family spoke Mandarin at home in Laos and Simon and his eldest siblings were sent to Chinese school, where the language of instruction was also Mandarin. Simon studied there for six years and then went to Lao school in case he wanted to apply for a government scholarship to go overseas to study at a later date. He therefore reads Lao as well as Chinese. He also used to read Thai newspapers and magazines, which were more interesting than many Lao publications and were readily available in Laos. Marrying Irene and mixing with her friends and family from Taiwan have also improved Simon's Chinese skills, though people comment on his strange accent. He can also understand Cantonese. His maternal grandmother was from Guangdong, he has learned some Cantonese in Hawai'i, and his sister married someone from Guangdong so they usually speak Cantonese. Simon likes to watch the morning television Cantonese programs on KIKU and Cantonese language videos. He can also understand some Taiwanese because of his mother-in-law's visits.

Irene's mother still lives in Taiwan, but visits Hawai'i often. She stays with Irene and Simon in their apartment, which can sometimes lead to some friction. She speaks both Taiwanese and Mandarin, but no English. When she visited for several months in 1993 she came with her sister and the two usually spoke to each other in Taiwanese. Irene is a fluent speaker but prefers Mandarin, as does her sister, who now lives in Europe. She says her brothers speak more Taiwanese. They still live in Taiwan. Like Niknik's father, Irene's father was originally from Shandong province. He went to Taiwan in the 1940s. He is now deceased but Irene keeps in contact with his only relatives outside the PRC; a sister who lives with her daughter and family in Oregon.

Simon has lost contact with his father's side of the family but he knows that many are in Canada. In contrast, he has regular contact with his mother, his siblings in Hawai'i, and
his maternal aunts and uncles and their families. Nearly all of his mother's family are in Hawai'i. There are not as many large family gatherings as there used to be before his grandmother died. When she was alive the family often had parties in one of their houses or the entertainment room of their condominiums. These events were usually fairly informal, with each person taking a dish to share. In Simon's mother's generation, only she and the next two eldest siblings went to Chinese school. Thus Lao is the usual language the family use amongst themselves. Their children, Simon's cousins, prefer English. Irene says that the parents encourage the use of English at home. She disagrees with this idea. Like Susan, she thinks that children will pick up English quickly enough when they go to school no matter what language they speak at home. Only one cousin who was born in France and arrived in Hawai'i with his parents in 1990 speaks Mandarin. He enjoyed talking to Irene when he first came. Irene noted that the daughter of Simon's brother who is still in France also speaks Chinese. She wondered whether this was just a coincidence, or reflected some difference between the position of the ethnic Chinese Lao community in Hawai'i and in France.

One of Simon's younger aunts, who speaks no Chinese, married a person of Chinese background from Southeast Asia. He speaks several Chinese dialects and is very keen for his daughter to learn Chinese. He would have liked a Chinese nanny for her when she was young. This is the uncle that Irene works for. At her suggestion the daughter attends a Chinese community language school. Irene takes her every Saturday. Her father would like her to spend time with Irene and her friends, the Lins, after school on Saturday since he knows that the Lin children, Janet and Richard, speak Mandarin. This did not prove very successful. His daughter is reluctant to speak Mandarin, and Richard complained that she knew so little that he and his sister were forced to use English. The uncle has even thought of sending his daughter to study in a Chinese speaking country. He admires
the Chinese way of doing things and talks about relocating to Singapore or Taiwan himself.

Apart from family, Irene and Simon's closest friends are the Lins. Irene met them while she was still a student. She used to baby-sit Janet and Richard, mainly in the evenings as they had a nanny during the day. The children thus think of her as a second mother. The Youngs also have many acquaintances. Simon meets a lot of people through his work. Some of these are Chinese. He met Susan's husband this way, and knew that he worked at the Chinese broadcasting company. Irene knows most of the parents of the children at the Saturday Chinese school after years of taking and collecting the Lin children and Simon's niece. She said the parents all talk together while they wait for classes to end.

The Youngs do not belong to any Chinese organizations. However, they sometimes attend functions organized by these with the Lin family. For example, they went to a concert for the Double Ten celebration. Taiwan has a national holiday on October 10 to commemorate the founding of the Chinese Republic. They also go to films at the Golden Harvest Theatre, often with the Lins. Simon likes Chinese films better than English language films. They also rent or buy a lot of Chinese videos in Chinatown. Irene sometimes sends copies of these and Chinese television programs to her aunt in Oregon. In contrast to Hawai'i, there are no Chinese programs or stores with Chinese language videos there. The Chinese population is not big enough to support such services.

The Home and My Visits

Simon and Irene live in a two bedroom apartment, which they are buying, in a small complex. One enters through the main door directly into the kitchen, which leads into the living area. A table can be lowered from the wall between this and the kitchen to make an
eating area. The living area has a large French window at the far end which gives access to a small courtyard. On one side of the room is a sofa. Opposite this is the television, video, and stereo system. To the right of the television is a piano on which there is a large volume of Buddhist scripture. A portrait of Buddha hangs on the wall above this. Both of these were a gift of Irene's mother, who is interested in Buddhism. Irene does not pay them much attention. Next to the television are two tall cupboards each with two shelves protected by sliding glass doors at the top. There are no book shelves, any books being kept inside one of the cupboards. The only other notable item in the living room is a large cage and a perch, the home of two parakeets. Since Simon now works at home, the living area often contains a number of videos, televisions, and computers in various stages of assembly and disassembly. There is usually a pile of newspapers and magazines on or near the sofa. The newspapers are generally Chinese, while many of the magazines are in English. Copies of both are also found in the bathroom, which adjoins the living area.

The doors to the two bedrooms open on each side of this.

I visited Irene once a week, usually on a morning when Irene was working the second shift on the jewelry stall (4-11 P.M.). We always spoke in English since her English is much better than my Mandarin. If Simon was at home, he would usually stay in the bedroom. But often he was out making calls. Irene and I sat either side of the fold-down dining table. Irene wanted to expand her knowledge of English vocabulary, mainly to help her reading comprehension. We usually read an article from the free weekly paper, *Midweek*, and then discussed it. We once looked at a novel she was reading, *The Joy Luck Club*, since there were some parts she could not understand. She had originally said that she wanted me to help her write letters in English. It transpired that she had only one addressee in mind, a Japanese friend she had met in her English classes who had since returned to Japan. We never did get around to this. The only letter I helped her write was
to her husband's customers telling them that he had closed the shop and was now working from home.

The Lin Family
I was introduced to the Lins by Irene. The mother, Anna, expressed interest in improving her English. When we first met, in Irene's apartment, she said she wanted to be able to answer back people who she thought were being rude to her. I found her spoken English quite good but she lacks confidence. She and her husband, JP, are in their mid forties and emigrated from Taiwan in 1977. They were sponsored by JP's elder sister, who had lived in the United States for many years. After a few months in Los Angeles they went to Massachusetts for six years. JP did postgraduate medical training and the necessary hospital internship to allow him to practice medicine in the United States, and Anna studied English and accounting. She already had a degree in home economics from Taiwan. Their two children, Janet and Richard, were born during this time.

In 1983 the family moved to Hawai'i to be with JP's parents who had retired here because they liked it and because they spoke Japanese. Many people in Hawai'i speak Japanese so his parents felt less handicapped by their lack of knowledge of English. JP is the youngest of six sons, only one of whom is still in Taiwan. Since his other siblings were already established in their respective businesses and professions, it was decided that he should be the one to come to Hawai'i as he could set up his practice anywhere. When they first arrived the Lins lived in the same apartment building as JP's parents. This was a difficult time for Anna. JP's parents were born on the Chinese mainland and were more comfortable speaking Shanghai dialect than Mandarin. They spent a lot of time with Anna and the children, expected things to be done their way, and had very strict ideas about the
woman's place in the home. Anna was pleased when she and JP purchased an apartment further away from her in-laws.

JP established his own medical practice in Hawai'i. He is busy at work on weekdays and Saturdays, except for Thursday afternoons when he plays golf. His wife helps in the practice occasionally, doing typing and liaising with the accountants. She has control of the financial side of things, making good use of the accounting classes she took in Massachusetts. She uses the same certified public accountant as Irene and Simon. Most of her time, however, is taken up with looking after the home, cooking, and ferrying the children to school and after school activities. Janet is 14 and Richard is 11. They have just completed grade 9 and grade 5 at their respective schools, both private.

Anna and JP think that schooling is very important and spend a great deal of time, energy, and money on the children's education. They always attend school open house days and employ tutors if extra tuition is needed. In return they expect their children to be well behaved and to do their best at school. Anna described the children as shy and hard working, but I find Janet quite talkative and confident. She is more academic than Richard, and passed a competitive exam to enter a prestigious private school in year 8. Richard studies diligently, doing all the extra study that his mother demands of him without complaint. His parents, especially his mother, do not expect such high standards of him, however. For example, his mother does not expect him to be as good as his sister in writing Chinese since learning the characters is such a difficult task. One of Richard's main interests is sport. He was very proud of being on his school's basketball team.

The usual language in the Lin family is Mandarin. My presence in the home affects the language used since JP and the children always address me in English. However, when I
am not involved in the conversation they speak Mandarin, though with a lot of code switching, English vocabulary items being mixed into basically Chinese utterances. Anna speaks to me more in Mandarin when the children are present because they do not like her speaking English. When we met for English lessons, however, we always spoke in English.

Both Janet and Richard spoke Mandarin as their first language. Anna thinks that parents in Chinese families who speak English at home must have a greater knowledge of English than she does. She says that her children speak Mandarin to her because if they use English she cannot understand and is constantly asking them to repeat what they said. Irene once said that she noticed differences between the Mandarin levels of Janet and Richard and Chinese children of the same age in Taiwan. For example, she said that Richard had only recently begun to pick up more adult ways of speaking. He also seemed to be basing some of his new found phrases on a limited number of role models so that Irene could recognize their source. She also noticed that if any classical language was used on television or video programs, such as might be found in historical dramas, the children could not follow the dialogue. They had not been exposed to much of this kind of language, either aurally or through reading.

Unlike the Youngs and the Wangs, the social lives of the Lins are not so dependent on the extended family. Now that JP's parents have passed away, neither he nor Anna have any relatives living permanently in Hawai'i. Anna's parents come to stay with them for at least a month every year, however. They live in California with the remainder of Anna's siblings. Family also call in on their way between Asia and the mainland United States. For example, Anna's maternal uncles came to Hawai'i in 1993 on their way home to the PRC after visiting their sister in San Francisco. This was the first time they had all been
together for 40 years. The Lins also see JP's siblings and their families every two years when they have a reunion somewhere in the United States.

Despite the lack of family in Hawai'i, the Lins have an active social life. JP is on the board of one of the newer Chinese associations. Its aims are to promote friendship among the members, help fellow members, and to encourage the development of skills and knowledge. It organizes social and cultural events and was one of the three sponsors of a Mandarin speech contest for public and private schools which was held for the first time in 1993. JP is also a member of the Taiwanese Medical Association, which offers social as well as professional contacts. He also plays golf twice a week, on Thursday afternoons and Sunday mornings. Most of his golfing partners are Chinese. JP is a popular person. He is relaxed, easy going, and enjoys going out and meeting people. Anna is more reserved. She likes to be at home with the children and is happy to have a few close friends. She speaks to Irene by telephone at least once a day. However, she accompanies JP to various functions and enjoys entertaining since she likes cooking. When the Lins entertain JP likes to sing karaoke with their guests. They have a good selection of songs in English and Mandarin.

Anna also knows people through the church. She was brought up as a Christian but says that she is not as religious as her mother, who reads the Bible every day. When she first came to Hawai'i she attended the Mandarin service at the Lutheran Church, but switched to a more distant Cantonese service since the time of the Mandarin language service, Sunday afternoon, was not convenient for the children. She feels comfortable with Cantonese because this was the language of her childhood, her parents originally being from Guangdong. Her father still prefers to speak Cantonese rather than Mandarin. Anna does not attend the Cantonese service as regularly as she used to when the children were
younger, but she and Janet still go about once a month. Janet made good friends at the Sunday school, which is held in English. I once went with them to the service. Lots of people stopped to talk to Anna, usually in Mandarin I noticed. She feels she does not really know anyone there though. As JP is not a Christian Anna has never joined any of the study or discussion groups which would have enabled her to get to know other members of the congregation better. She has always just attended the service and left immediately after it finishes. Similarly at the Lutheran church she has lots of acquaintances, many of whom are patients of her husband, but few friends. Richard seldom goes to church now, though he sometimes attends the Lutheran service with a school friend and his parents. When her parents are visiting Anna also occasionally goes to the afternoon Mandarin service with her mother.

Anna says that she met most of the people she knows through her husband's practice. For many years she worked in the office in the mornings as a receptionist, and used to talk to the patients as they waited their turn. She certainly seems to have a wide circle of acquaintances. In our conversations she often knew people I mentioned. For example, she knew the teacher at one of the Mandarin schools I went to, the winner of a calligraphy contest that I met, a student I knew from a Cantonese class, and Niknik's sister Susan. Susan is not only a patient of JP, but also works in the same building as the medical practice.

Many of JP's patients are Chinese. He says he knows more Chinese people in Hawai'i and speaks more Chinese than he did in Massachusetts. While he speaks English to second generation Chinese patients, he usually uses Chinese with first generation immigrants. His ability to speak Shanghai dialect as well as Mandarin has proved very useful. He has also picked up Cantonese since he has been in Hawai'i. His Chinese speaking patients not only
use his medical knowledge but also often seek his advice on other matters since he knows English and the workings of the American system. They may talk to him about their personal problems or bring written documents in English which they do not understand. Examples Anna mentioned were bills and advertisements. The receptionists at the practice are also Chinese and speak a variety of Chinese dialects. Anna knows the reassurance of being able to speak to one's health professional in one's own language. In Massachusetts she used to take the children to a clinic in Chinatown for this reason. She has a list of names and telephone numbers of a number of Chinese speaking health professionals in Hawai'i which she makes available to anyone who needs it.

JP likes to relax at home in the evenings watching television. He usually comes home too late to see the Mandarin programs on KWHE but Anna always watches these, together with the morning soap operas in Cantonese on KIKU. She tries to limit the children's viewing hours on school days, but I have seen Janet watching the Mandarin programs with her while I have been tutoring Richard. The family also often go to the cinema, sometimes with Irene and Simon. They like the Golden Harvest Theatre in Chinatown. Richard likes action films, so is particularly keen on kungfu movies. Janet and her mother like romantic films.

The Home and My Visits
When I first visited the Lin family they lived in a spacious, modern, three bedroom high rise apartment. They then put this on the market and bought a house. I have only been to the house a few times, so I will describe my visits and impressions of the apartment which I got to know very well. It was light and quiet, being cut off from the noises of the street by height and the fact that it was air conditioned and therefore had no need of open windows. It had a good view of the ocean, only slightly marred by the high rise building.
next door. The style of furniture and the wall decorations were distinctively Chinese. There was no doubt that this was the home of a Chinese family. The carved wood of the sofa and chairs looked like the furniture one sees in some of the Chinese societies in Chinatown, but was light in color rather than the usual heavy looking dark wood. This, plus the light colored wooden paneled floors added to the modern, airy appearance of the apartment. One wall in the living area was taken up with a piano. Both children learn this as well as the violin. An indoor miniature basketball net hung rather incongruously above and to the left of this. Another wall was occupied by a large glass fronted cabinet which housed a television, stereo system, and an extensive selection of compact discs. Many of the discs were for karaoke. On top of the cabinet were a number of cups and trophies which JP had won at golf. A cream colored sofa with wooden legs and arms was opposite the television, and two large matching arm chairs were arranged along the fourth wall, under a window, at right angles to the sofa. On the walls in the small entrance hall and in the living area were a number of knotted hangings, usually gifts of friends visiting from Taiwan. There were also a number of Chinese paintings and prints. Many of these and the knotted decorations incorporated Chinese script in their design.

The living area opened into a small dining section which was filled with an oblong, wooden cream colored table and six chairs. Next to this, separated by a work bench, was the small open plan kitchen. Both this and the dining area had calendars from Chinese companies on the walls on which Anna kept a record of significant dates. On the other side of the living room from the dining area was a closed in verandah. This was used for drying clothes. It also housed the computer which the children, especially Janet, used for school work and the occasional letter. Richard also had one or two computer games which he enjoyed playing. Anna uses the word processor at her husband's office. The children each had a bedroom, both of which contained study desks and bookshelves.
Around the top of the walls of their rooms were their annual school photographs. Anna and JP had the largest bedroom, which had an en suite bathroom. Their bedroom contained a small television and had two long shelves full of Chinese paperbacks.

Anna is a meticulous housekeeper. The apartment was always very neat, clean, and well looked after. When I first went I was surprised to see split tennis balls attached to the bottom of the legs of all the wooden furniture to protect the floors. Everything had its place and could be immediately accessed. For example, when there was a problem with the refrigerator one day Anna found the instruction manual and guarantee within minutes.

The house the Lins now live in has an even better view of the ocean. Since the house is bigger and no extra furniture has yet been purchased it looks rather sparsely furnished. But it is still distinctively Chinese. As soon as one enters, one sees the Chinese style furniture, paintings, and other wall hangings.

I used to visit Anna every Thursday morning for about two hours at the apartment. Anna and I would work at the dining table. We talked mainly in English, discussing recent events. Anna is very well informed about these. She reads the newspapers avidly and also watches the television news. Her spoken English is good but she lacks confidence in her own ability. This opinion is reinforced by her children, who laugh at her accent, and by some upsetting experiences she has had in the community with people who have treated her like a foreigner or an idiot. She wanted to improve her pronunciation and grammar, and also her English reading and writing skills. We usually read one or two passages each week, either from a newspaper or a general interest magazine. I also helped Anna compose letters in English to various organizations and companies. After several months I began to tutor Richard in English to help him prepare for school entrance examinations. He is trying to get into a more academically oriented school. This meant that I went to the
apartment in the afternoons and had a chance to meet the rest of the family. I was usually invited to stay for dinner, which gave me additional opportunities to observe and ask about reading and writing activities. When Anna became fully occupied with moving house and settling in to the new home our English sessions diminished, but I continued to see her and the rest of the family when I tutored Richard.

The Chen Family
The Chen family were the last that I met. The mother, Hua, is a teacher at the Cantonese community school I attended for one semester. She and her husband, Siu, and their two sons arrived in Hawai'i in July 1993 from Guangdong province in the south of the PRC. Siu is in his early 50s, Hua is in her mid forties, and their sons, Yan and Sheng, are 21 and 14 respectively. They were sponsored by Hua's mother in Washington State, who immigrated with one of her sons in the early 1980s (she, in turn, was sponsored by a sister). The son moved to Hawai'i in early 1993, hence the Chens chose Hawai'i to settle. He was able to arrange for an apartment for them so that they had somewhere to live when they arrived. He also helped Sheng enroll at the local intermediate school. This is the same school that Rebecca Wang attends but the two do not know each other. Two of Hua's other siblings and their families also immigrated to the United States in 1993. One brother joined his mother in Washington, while the sister went to Los Angeles where her husband's brother was able to help them get established.

Yan was the first to find a job in Honolulu. He speaks the best English in the family, having studied the language at high school. He works in a fast food restaurant in Waikiki, but plans to continue his university studies next academic year. He completed two years of an electrical engineering degree in the PRC but he does not necessarily want to pursue this major here. Hua also quickly found a position. She teaches two hours a day in an
after hours Chinese community language school in Chinatown. The salary is low, however, and she is now looking for other work. She would eventually like to work as a teaching assistant in a school with high migrant intake, but her English is not good enough at the moment. It took Siu a few months to find a job. He knows little English and this made it difficult. He eventually found one through a friend that Hua met at her English class, and now works as a kitchen hand in a restaurant.

Both Hua and Siu are university graduates. Siu graduated in the early 1960s. He majored in Vietnamese but never seemed to use this in his working life. He did office work in Shandong and Guangdong and then became a teacher of Chinese. The Cultural Revolution disrupted Hua's education and she did not go to university until the mid 1980s, majoring in Chinese. She has always been a teacher. During the Cultural Revolution a high school education was deemed sufficient preparation for this. It was during this time that Siu was sent to work in Guangdong and met Hua. They lived there for a while before moving to Shandong for over ten years. The family then again returned to Guangdong prior to emigrating to the United States. In Guangdong Siu taught Chinese in one city while his wife taught physics in a middle school about 70 miles away. They saw each other once a month. The younger boy, Sheng, lived with his mother while Yan was away at university in a regional capital.

Hua and her siblings were born and grew up in Vietnam and can speak, read, and write Vietnamese. Her grandfather went there from China and her parents were both born there so Hua is third generation Chinese. The language of the home was Cantonese. Hua and her siblings, like their parents before them, all went to Chinese school. Hua says that her mother can read French, Vietnamese, and Chinese. Hua can also read and write Vietnamese, but when she and her mother write to each other they use Chinese. Hua
moved to China with her younger brother and their grandfather in the early 1960s when she was fifteen. She seems to have had no trouble fitting into the Chinese educational system or living in China. She said it was like going home. Other siblings moved to China later, and her parents arrived there in 1978.

Siu was born in Shandong province so, like Niknik's and Irene's fathers, speaks *Shandonghua*. His parents are both deceased but his siblings still live in the PRC. He can understand Cantonese but does not like to speak it. He does not like the sound. The Chen family therefore usually speak Mandarin at home, though I have heard Sheng talk to his mother in Cantonese. Siu also speaks Vietnamese because of his university studies and sometimes uses this when talking to Hua's mother, who does not speak Mandarin. He also knows a little Japanese, which he studied for a year in China. There is plenty of opportunity to see and hear Japanese in Hawai‘i, so Siu likes to practice his Japanese skills. He thinks they may be useful in the future. Yan and Sheng speak Mandarin and Cantonese but cannot understand Vietnamese.

Hua's mother visited Hawai‘i shortly after the family arrived. Hua's brother's wife had just had a baby so the visit had a double purpose, to see Hua and to see the new grandchild. Hua keeps in touch with her siblings in the United States and her mother by telephone and the occasional letter. She does not seem to have had a lot of contact with her brother in Hawai‘i after the initial settling in period. When she needed assistance in finding a Chinese speaking doctor for Siu, for example, she turned to her English teacher for help and then the *Chinese Yellow Pages*. When the family needed to go to a government office to find out about health insurance a new Chinese speaking acquaintance from a nearby art shop gave Siu a lift there. This is very different from the Wang family who get most of their advice and help from their extended family.
Most of the family's social contacts are Chinese speakers. Hua knows the other teachers at the Chinese community school and also has two good friends from her English class. Her main preoccupation is with her immediate family, however, and the day to day running of the household. She is in charge of the money and making sure that financial obligations are met on time. She is anxious that Sheng succeed at school. He arrived for the final year of intermediate school after only one year of English study in the PRC, and she was worried that he would not be promoted to high school. All seems well, however, and he will go on to grade 9 next year. Hua asked me to go with her to visit her son's school one morning when there was a meeting for parents who had children in the Students with Limited English Proficiency Program (SLEP). Hua was a bit disappointed with the meeting because none of Sheng's teachers were there. The speakers, who were from the State Department of Education rather than the school, just explained school policy and procedures and gave details of a free after school homework and tutoring service available to students who have been in the United States for less than two years. Afterwards Hua and I went shopping together.

Siu has met Chinese speakers at work and in the neighborhood, but his main social contacts have been made through the Chinese Culture Service Center, to which I introduced him. He has attended art and calligraphy exhibitions, met fellow artists and people from his home province in the PRC, listened to the weekly Peking Opera practice, and regularly watches the free monthly Chinese movie at the center. Sheng sometimes goes to the film with his father but is usually happy to read and play with his computer game in the evenings. Yan seems the least reliant on Chinese acquaintances. He has been on two or three nature walks I told him about, and sometimes goes around the island using the subsidized monthly bus pass he gets from work. Generally, however, he spends
most of his time working, studying, and playing with his recently purchased computer and modem. The Chens are the only family in this study without a car. They use the bus or walk. Yan and his father can both walk to work. Sheng sometimes walks to school.

Unlike the other families, the Chens do not watch a great deal of television, even though they are now connected to cable. Yan explained that they would have had to pay for it to be disconnected so he decided it would be easier just to keep it. Sheng is the most avid viewer, but his mother believes it is not good for the eyes so tries to discourage him. They also do not have a video machine. Yan said that if they had one he would borrow educational videos. Hua and Siu like to listen to music and have accumulated quite a number of Chinese cassettes, often gifts of friends. The family now have a walkman as well as a larger cassette radio so that individual family members can listen to music without disturbing the others. Siu’s main hobbies are calligraphy, painting (mainly Chinese style), and reading (Chinese). Hua says she has no time for hobbies. She feels too harassed by family commitments. She sometimes goes by bus with the family to scenic spots or places of interest on the island. At Chinese New Year Hua, Siu, and Sheng went to see the celebrations in the Cultural Plaza in Chinatown. Sheng was not impressed. The level of skills in kungfu and the lion performers did not compare favorably with those he had seen in China.

The Home and My Visits

The family rent a one room, third floor studio apartment in a small block in Waikiki. It is in a very nice position, with a pleasant view of the mountains from the front door. The French window, which occupies the wall on the opposite side of the room, opens onto a verandah which overlooks a grassy vacant lot. The apartment is crowded but always neat. It is basically one large rectangular living area with a small bathroom and cooking area to
the right of the front door. A double bed, two couches, which serve as beds for the boys, and a dining table in the middle of the room take up most of the space. Next to the double bed, in front of the window, is a low two drawer cupboard with a small television on top. To the right of this is a two tier bamboo shelf which houses books and papers. This abuts onto the desk which has more papers and books on it. In the corner of the room, between the two sofas, is a small table which holds the cassette players, tapes, reading lamp, and yet more books, usually Yan's library books. Most of the books were brought by the family from China or are borrowed from public libraries. The family rarely buy any books, magazines or newspapers.

With four people living in one room, storage is a problem. Before they had the double bed they used a double mattress on top of packing cases. Though this was rather ungainly because of its height, it did provide plenty of storage space. The present bed is on legs which allows some things to be kept under it but it is not as high as the previous arrangement so holds less. Each time I visit I notice more boxes and containers in which the family store their increasing number of belongings. They are adept at re-using what others discard. A small, broken refrigerator with no door is used for food storage, and boxes and crates are stood on their ends to form cupboards. An empty cereal box pinned to the wall above the desk is used for storing slips of paper, usually store receipts, which are used for writing messages and notes. The phone is below this on the desk. When I first visited the family they said that they did not need a phone. They had never had one in China. After five months, however, they changed their minds, realizing how useful it was for employment and social purposes.

There is a large Chinese style painting on one wall of the apartment. This was painted by an artist acquaintance of Siu's in China. The other walls house various pieces of Siu's
calligraphy and, sometimes, one of his paintings in progress. Other things on the walls which incorporate Chinese script are more practical. There is a calendar, provided by a Chinese Vietnamese store in 1993 and by China Airlines in 1994, which Siu uses to record his work hours and appointments. Above the desk are two lists of instructions written in Chinese. One relates to Siu's medicine and the other to the tasks Sheng must complete before playing his video game.

I used to visit the family once or twice a week, usually Friday morning when Hua and Siu had no English class, and sometimes on Sundays when Sheng was at home. Now I just go on Fridays, though Hua and Siu no longer attend formal English classes, Siu because of his work schedule and Hua because she is looking for a full-time job. Yan is sometimes at home in the morning since he works afternoons and evenings at the restaurant, but is often at the library studying. He and Sheng make much use of the local libraries. These not only give free access to books but also offer a cool and more spacious place to study. Even when he is at home, Yan rarely joins in any English study. He is usually busy with his computer, or reading the computer manual. However, I draw him into the conversation when I ask Hua about reading and writing activities in the family.

Hua's English has improved a lot in the year she has been in Hawai'i, and we now talk in English for part of the time. We always work at the table in the middle of the room and talk about what has been happening during the week, in our own lives, in Hawai'i, and in the world. This is a lot more interesting than the sessions we had before Siu started work. He liked me to read through the text book he was using at his English class and was reluctant to speak English. When he did, he insisted on repeating each word until he was satisfied that his pronunciation was perfect. It was hard to get him to say a whole sentence, and dialogue practice or any type of conversation in English was virtually
impossible. I tried to encourage him to listen rather than read and was very pleased when
the family bought a cassette player so I could record some material for him and the rest of
the family. Siu gave up formal English classes when he started work and now shows little
interest in learning. If Sheng is at home he may ask me about school work with which he
is having trouble. Like Yan, he always speaks to me in English. For a short time he was
writing a journal for English practice and we used to work on this together. If he has no
particular questions, however, he usually ignores Hua and me and sits on one of the
couches and reads quietly, usually one of the family's Chinese books.

Discussion

The above shows the wide variety of backgrounds and current situation of the four
families in this study. The families differ in many ways, and yet share certain things in
common. One of the more obvious differences is in terms of income. The Lins and the
Youngs are more prosperous than either the Wangs or the Chens. They are buying their
own homes, have their own businesses, and the Lins send their children to private schools.
Their current status owes much to the fact that these two families have been in the United
States for much longer than the other two and have a better command of English. In
addition, JP Lin comes from a wealthy family.

One of the things the families have in common is that Mandarin Chinese is the main
language of the home. This is despite the fact that four family members were born in
countries where Chinese is not the language of the majority of the population. Janet and
Richard Lin were born in the United States but were brought up speaking Mandarin. They
did not really start to use English until they went to preschool. Mandarin was also the
home language of Simon Young who was born in Laos. His use of Mandarin has since
been maintained and reinforced by his spouse. Hua Chen learned Mandarin at Chinese
school in Vietnam, and then moved to the PRC and married someone who speaks Mandarin and dislikes Cantonese. While they all use Mandarin, however, the families' very different backgrounds and histories mean that individual family members use a variety of other dialects and languages with members of the extended family and in social, study, and work circles.

The families also share other characteristics. Apart from Irene, they all came to the United States under the family reunion provisions of the Immigration Act, and the support of their extended families was very important, particularly when they first arrived. For some, for example the Wang family, the extended family still provides their main source of social contacts. Others, particularly the Lins and the Chens, have based their social networks on friends and acquaintances made through other avenues, such as work, study, and Chinese organizations, including churches and schools. English classes seem to be a particularly good place to make contacts, both for friendship and for more practical purposes, such as finding employment.

All the families make some use of the Chinese language resources and services in Hawai'i established by, and/or in response to the presence of Chinese speakers. The most notable of these mentioned in this chapter are television, video, and the facilities of Honolulu's Chinatown. The role of Chinese newspapers and other print media in the lives of the families will be discussed in more detail in later chapters. Hawai'i may not offer as many resources for Chinese speakers as some other cities in the United States (for example, San Francisco and San Jose have many more hours of Chinese television broadcasting), but it certainly offers more than the town in Oregon where Irene's aunt lives. Both Hua and Niknik said they felt comfortable in Hawai'i because of the Asian presence in the
community. Hua said that she never had any trouble getting help from Chinese speakers when she was shopping, even if this was not in Chinatown.

The level of English proficiency in the families varies greatly, from fluent in the Lin and Young families to quite limited in the Wang and Chen families, at least as far as the parents are concerned. Lack of English can have drastic effects on the employment possibilities available to family members, irrespective of their educational level or any professional skills they may have. Most of the family members, however, want to improve their English language skills. It was this desire that allowed me to gain entrée to their homes initially. All the parents also want their children to succeed in the English medium education system in Hawai'i.

Finally, all four families are educated and literate. On reflection, this is not too surprising. They were a self selected group. They are a group of families who were interested enough to make use of my offer to help with English, and confident enough to allow a non-Chinese researcher to enter their homes and lives on a regular basis to ask about reading and writing Chinese.
CHAPTER 5
WRITING ACTIVITIES IN THE FAMILIES

In this chapter I will describe the various types of writing that occur in the families. On my visits I have asked about writing activities that families have been involved in during the week, have been given pieces of writing to look at or to keep, have seen writing going on, and have sometimes been an active participant in a writing event. A number of different kinds of documents were written by family members. These include letters, greeting cards, notes of various kinds, stories, and recipes. One family member keeps a diary, another writes poetry and practices calligraphy. Writing is also involved in filling out forms, writing checks, and making credit card purchases. When I visit the Wang and Chen families we often resort to writing words and phrases to help understand each other. I also saw, or was told about, writing related to work and study.

Each of these various kinds of writing will be described below. The names of some documents varied between families, either because they were using different languages (documents were usually referred to by their English names in the Lin and Young families, and by their Mandarin names in the Wang and Chen families), or because they were classified differently. I will record the names as they used them. I will focus more on events that involve writing in Chinese, and will describe these first, since that is the focus of this study. But I will also consider writing in English, together with oral channels of communication, so as to see the role of written Chinese in perspective, and to provide the basis for the analysis of its place in the overall communicative economy of the families.
Letters

All the families write letters in Chinese to family and friends who live outside of Hawai'i. Such letter writing is not very frequent, one letter every two weeks being about average. For many family members, such letter writing is the only time they write a lengthy piece of connected prose.

In the Chen family all but the youngest son write letters in Chinese. Hua says Sheng is too lazy to write. Siu writes the most often, usually to his family and old friends in the PRC. He has known some of the latter since his elementary school days. When he writes to an artist friend, whose work he greatly admires, he takes a great deal of care. He writes a draft of the letter first and then uses calligraphy to write the final version, which is thus written vertically, with the columns of writing running from right to left. In all other letters he writes the letters straight off, horizontally from left to right, the direction usually used by other members of the four families. Yan and Hua write fewer letters, though Hua says that when she does write her letters are longer than her husband's. Yan writes to old classmates and to a professor who likes to keep in touch with former pupils. Hua occasionally writes to some of her relatives, and to a former student who writes to her. As her closest relatives are in the United States, however, she tends to phone them, usually calling her mother once every two weeks.

Long and Niknik Wang write regularly to someone in Chinese. They take turns writing to Long's parents in China, though Niknik seems to think that they appreciate letters from him more than from her, as it is he that they miss most. She claims her letters are longer but Long denies this, saying he sometimes writes three or four pages. Rebecca occasionally writes a letter to her grandmother, but more frequently just writes a line or two on the bottom of her parents' letters. Long also writes to his siblings in the PRC.
Nearly all of Niknik's family are in Hawai'i so she doesn't have to write to them, but she
does keep in touch with former classmates, one of whom now lives in Canada. They write
to each other about once a month, always in Chinese. Niknik may reply within a few days
of receipt of their letters, sometimes even on the same day, or it may take longer,
depending on how busy she is at home and work. All the letters I have seen have been
written on file paper (Niknik usually uses a yellow lined pad), and are about two pages
long.

Rebecca needs help when she writes Chinese because, although a fluent speaker of
Mandarin, there are many words she does not know, or has forgotten, how to write. Once
when I was visiting she was in her bedroom writing a letter to a former teacher. Rebecca
twice came into the living area, where I was sitting with her parents, and asked her mother
how to write a number of words. Her mother wrote them down on a spare piece of paper
for her to copy. Rebecca must have been writing a draft of the letter since the following
week I saw her copying out the final one page version. When she lost interest in the task
she left the letter on the coffee table for anyone to see. This contrasts to her attitude
towards the letters she writes to her grandmother. These are private, and on one occasion
even her mother was not allowed to read it.

In the Lin family Anna is the most frequent writer. She writes in Chinese to friends she
knew in Taiwan. Some are still in Taiwan, others are now in the United States. She was
very excited when an old friend in Taiwan offered to put her in touch with several fellow
students from elementary school with whom she had completely lost touch. She wrote
one letter. The friend then duplicated this and passed on a copy to each of the others.
Like Hua and Niknik, most of Anna's close family are in the United States or Canada, so it
is more convenient to keep in regular contact by telephone. Like Siu, Anna likes writing
letters. This contrasts with most other family members who think of it as a necessary
chore. When I asked Long and Niknik if they liked writing to Long’s parent’s they thought
the question was irrelevant. It was just something that had to be done. Niknik said her
parents-in-law would be angry if they did not get a letter. Long said he writes to get news
of his parents. In a similar way, Yan said he writes letters "to keep in touch, to get
information of [friends in China]." He certainly does not like writing; it takes too long.

Anna's husband, JP, does not write many personal letters, though he does occasionally
write or fax his brothers on the United States mainland and in Taiwan. Anna always edits
his letters; he makes so many mistakes. He also often uses English words, though the
letters are basically in Chinese. Sometimes he does this because he cannot remember the
Chinese word. An example he gave was "mortgage." He also often uses the salutation
"dear," since it is easy to write. Everyone in Taiwan knows what it means, he said. Anna
said she did not mix written English with Chinese in this way.

Their daughter, Janet, does not write many letters in Chinese. Her teacher at school tried
to arrange for the class to have pen friends in Beijing, and Janet wrote to her designated
pen friend for a while. Drafts of the letters had to be prepared for class and were only sent
after the teacher had graded them. I was interested to see that the draft in Janet's exercise
book was written vertically from right to left, in line with the other pieces of writing she
had to do for school. When she wrote the actual letter though, she wrote it horizontally
from left to right. On another occasion, Janet wrote a letter to her mother. This was
written one evening, and Anna read it the following morning after Janet had gone to
school. Janet said that it started out as a short note, but as her parents were not paying
any attention to her she just kept on writing. A copy of the letter is given in figure 1 (all
figures are given in the Appendix).
An English translation of the letter is given below. Words in English in the original have been underlined.

Hello mother,

Today I want to write you a letter in Chinese. Is my writing good to look at? It certainly is not beautiful is it? Do you want to buy a house? Here [arrow points to picture of a house] I will give you another one [picture of two houses]. On Monday I again got a B in my algebra test. But I got A in my Chinese test. Every time all are AAA ... very good! [picture of smiling face]. X-mas will soon be here. I hope many friends will give me nice presents. Has father gone to play golf again? Tell him Good Luck! [picture of smiling face] I will again give you two houses because I have so much money. Afterwards I will certainly have more money than my brother because maybe he will very quickly spend his - I hope it is not like this! Do you think I should become a doctor?

Well, I will sleep. I will go.

Bye, bye, bye, bye, bye

Hello. Hi. "Ohio go zi e mus" ["good morning" written in Japanese]

Bye bye [in large characters]

[Pictures of her and her brother]

I don't want to speak to you.

You always say HMPH to me!

When I asked her why she wrote the English words Janet said she just wrote the first thing that came into her head. It was not necessarily because she did not know the Chinese equivalent. The word for Monday, for example, is not difficult. Also, we can see that she knows both the Chinese farewell, zaijian, and the English, since she uses both. She seems to be playing with language, extending the English farewell to "bye, bye, bye, bye, bye," using some Japanese language, and adding greetings to the farewells. Together with the drawings this all adds color and variety to the letter.

Anna was very proud of this letter and read it out to me and to a real estate agent who happened to visit while I was there. She was also Chinese, and said that she wished her own children could write as well as that. Anna had noticed some mistakes in the writing and had corrected some of these (the letter was written in pencil). Two mistakes involved
homonyms - the wrong character for wang in xiwang 'hope', and hou in yihou 'after'. The other involved part of a character being omitted, the first part of shui 'sleep'.

Very few letters are written in the Young family. Irene prefers to phone, even to her sister in Europe. If she does write, she usually writes in Chinese. Like JP, she often uses some English words, again partly for ease. For example, she says that she writes "dear" rather than qinaide (the nearest Chinese equivalent, but not used as frequently as in English) because "it has less strokes." Another English word she commonly uses is "anyway."

When I asked her if her friends would understand these English words, she thought there would be no problem. They were either now living in the United States, or had studied or spent some time here or in other English speaking countries. Her husband, Simon, does not seem to keep in touch with any family and friends except those in Honolulu. He contacts these by telephone.

Very few personal letters are written in English. Janet and Richard Lin write the most. Such letter writing is usually a result of their parents' urging, and is often seen as a language practice activity, especially for Richard. At Christmas time Irene Young reluctantly wrote in English to a friend from Japan she had met when they were both English students in Hawai'i. The letter took a long time and needed several drafts. She would have preferred to phone, but did not have a current telephone number. In the Chen family Siu once wanted to write a letter in English. He had been ill and unable to go to English class, and wanted to write to the teacher and the class to thank them for their help and concern. His teacher had tried to help him find a Chinese speaking doctor, and two classmates had come to visit him, but he had not been at home. Since he does not write English, he wrote the letter in Chinese. His son, Yan, translated it for him, and I was then asked to check this for correctness.
In contrast, most letters to official agencies, businesses, and people other than family or friends need to be written in English. If family members feel that their English writing ability is not adequate for the task at hand, they call on others to help. Siu and Hua Chen can get assistance from Yan. I have helped Anna, Niknik, and Irene write drafts of letters to various agencies. For example, I helped Anna write to the University of Hawai‘i traffic office to protest a parking citation.

Writing Greeting Cards

Greeting cards present a quicker and easier way to keep in touch than writing letters. All the families send some Christmas/New Year cards. Few send birthday cards, preferring to give gifts. Only the Lin family send cards for Mother’s Day.

Hua and Yan Chen sent about a dozen cards at Christmas, Hua to relatives who are not in Hawai‘i, and Yan to old school friends and teachers in China. Siu said his family in China do not celebrate Christmas, so he sent cards for Chinese New Year. The family do not usually send birthday cards, but they gave me one. Siu adapted a New Year card for the purpose. He wrote a suitable greeting and wishes, using his calligraphy brushes, and painted a scene on the card. Niknik and Long send many Christmas cards to friends and relatives who do not live in Hawai‘i, sometimes adding a greeting in Chinese. Anna also sends Christmas/New Year cards, usually adding a short note to augment the printed message. She also buys cards for her husband to send to his siblings. He signs these and may add a short greeting in Chinese. Anna then posts them for him. Irene Young sends Christmas cards. She says she used to send cards on other occasions, but now does not.

Janet Lin makes greeting cards for close family members. Anna showed me a Mother’s Day card and a birthday card that Janet had made for her. It had flaps which opened up to
reveal messages underneath. Some messages on the card were written in Chinese, such as *wo ai ni* 'I love you', and some were in English, for example, "Happy Chinese Birthday." The family know their birth dates according to both the solar and the lunar calendars. The lunar date is especially significant for Anna because it is the same as that of her friend Irene. Richard's cards to his mother are all in English. Janet and Richard also send Christmas cards, written in English, to their school friends. They do not send birthday cards, though Richard may take one if he goes to someone's birthday party.

Notes

The most frequent writers of notes are the mothers in the families. This reflects their roles in caring for the everyday needs of the family and the running of the household. The kinds of notes written can be divided into different types depending on several factors. These include the purpose of the note, whether it is written mainly for the writer or for others, and whether the addressee is present at the time of writing or not. The various names given to the notes reflect these differences.

Many notes are written to addressees who are not present at the time of writing. In the Chen family these are referred to as *liu yan tiao*. Although they live in one room, more notes are written in this family than in the other three. This is because the educational and work commitments of the Chen family members mean that they often do not have much opportunity to talk to each other, especially on weekdays. The rest of the family are usually asleep by the time Yan returns from his job at the fast food restaurant, often as late as 1 A.M. He is asleep when his mother and brother leave to go to classes in the morning. Hua leaves for her job at the Chinese school before Sheng returns from school and does not return until it is time for the evening meal, which is after Yan has left for work.
Most notes are from Hua to her sons. Some are informational, telling them where she has put things, and which food is ready to be eaten, but most are orders or requests. She writes notes to remind Sheng to do things, such as returning a library book or cassette tape, do his homework, or ask his teacher about something. Some notes relate to the preparation of food. Both boys are expected to help with the cooking. Since Yan is older and the best speaker of English in the family, he is also asked to do more responsible things, such as returning goods to stores, telephoning people Hua has not been able to reach or who do not speak Chinese. In addition, Hua asks him to help his brother in various ways. Two examples of Hua's notes are given in figures 2 and 3. The former is addressed to Yan and the latter to Sheng (their real names have been deleted). An English translation of these notes is given below.

Yan
Can you ring Mrs. Wu and tell her I just phoned her but she was not in. Sorry, I had to go to work, so I couldn't phone her again. Tomorrow I will phone her again at 1 or 1.30. If she is busy at that time, please arrange a time.

Mother 1.25

Sheng
Today you should do a section of math questions from the math book your teacher lent you.

Mother 93.3.13

In another two of Hua's notes, she uses non-standard characters to represent colloquial Cantonese vocabulary. These are the only examples of colloquial dialect that I found in the writing of the families. In one, she writes 堆 bou 'pot', and in another, 炊 sung 'dish'. The Mandarin (and hence Standard Written Chinese equivalents) for these would be 金 guo and 菜 cai, respectively.
Sheng occasionally leaves notes for his brother, usually asking for help. One is a very long, involved request for help to fill out an options choice form for school, which neither Sheng nor his parents had been able to understand (see Figure 4). It can be translated as follows:

Notice [title, written in red]

Elder brother:
Here is a form about physical education classes that we cannot understand. It is now the beginning of the third quarter, today I have already changed the fourth or fifth class. Physical education, is a troublesome class. At the end of this form, I know, I must have health insurance. At the moment I don't have any. This is a problem. Moreover, I also have to buy a sports uniform, $12 for the set. They do not explain what they mean, I do not know what they will want next.

Today, you come back very late, and very tired, but I still need you to handle this. I am not afraid to change class, if this is going to be a problem, I will just have to change. This form needs to be handed in tomorrow, dear brother you must finish this by the morning! [written in red]. Under the form there is a piece of paper, if I change course please use it to write a letter.

This note differs from those his mother writes in several ways. It is much longer and more carefully written. Hua's notes are hastily written, usually on the back of shop receipts. She may cross out a word or over-write a character if it is not clear or not correct, but there is little evidence of real editing. Sheng's note is on half a sheet of file paper. Most of it is in pencil and one can see that he has erased some words to do some rephrasing. His note has a title, which is not all that suitable since it suggests a very formal document, like a will. It also gives a lot of background information about the problem at hand and his own thoughts on the matter. The line asking Yan to complete the form before the next morning is written in red, as is the title, emphasizing their importance. Yan did as he was asked. Then, since he did not want to be woken up in the morning about the form, he wrote a note in Chinese to Sheng on the bottom of his note. Translated into English, this reads "Sign your name! One of the parents sign their name."
In the Wang family Niknik occasionally writes notes, which she calls *tiaozi*. These are also in Chinese. While Hua usually writes several notes a week, Niknik has only written three that I know of in the eighteen months that I have been visiting the family. One note was informational, telling Rebecca where her parents had gone. The other two were orders, one to Long about defrosting the refrigerator, and the other telling Rebecca not to eat on the coffee table because Niknik had just sprayed there. Long says he sometimes leaves notes at work for his Chinese workmate. He said these would be less casual than the ones at home, which are usually scrawled on pieces of paper used, previously or subsequently, for other purposes.

In the Lin family Anna writes most of the notes, the language depending on the recipient. Notes to her father, husband, and friends, Irene and Simon, are written in Chinese. Figure 5 shows two notes, one to her father and the other to Janet. They are written vertically, so the first, which is to her father, is written on the right. The second note is on the left. Translated into English, they read as follows. Words in English in the original are underlined.

**Father:** we have gone out will be back at noon. [signature] 2/3/94 11.20 A.M.

**[daughter’s pet name]:** we have gone to Queen Hospital lab will be back at noon.

**Mother** 2/7/94 8.05 A.M.

This vertical direction is unusual, since Anna usually writes horizontally. She says she used to write vertically more often when she was in Taiwan. She may have reverted to the earlier pattern because the note was written to her father, who happened to be visiting from San Francisco. Having written the first note vertically it would be natural for the second to be written in the same direction. Anna left the note for her father in his indoor
shoes near the front door of the apartment so that he would be sure to see it as soon as he came in. Janet says this is a common place to leave notes.

In an earlier note to Janet, shown in figure 6, Anna wrote part of the message twice, once in Chinese and once in English. The note reads as follows. Words in English in the original are again underlined.

[daughter's pet name, in Chinese Characters] Good morning
The morning is cool
Is cool
please wear jacket
please wear jacket
[you] do not want to get sick.

Anna left this note one morning when Janet had a 7.30 A.M. start at school, so got up earlier than the rest of the family and went to school by bus. Janet wrote "Thanks, Bye" (in English) and drew a smiling face on the bottom of the note to acknowledge that she had seen it. When I asked Anna why she had translated some of the note into English she said that it was to make sure that Janet understood. She did not want to risk any misunderstanding.

The note to Janet telling her that Anna had gone to Queens Hospital was written several weeks later. When I asked Anna why she had not been worried that Janet would fail to understand this note, she said that Janet's reading skills had improved a lot because of the intensive nature of the Chinese classes at her school. Unless the message is very complicated she now usually writes in Chinese. On the other hand, when she leaves notes for Richard, they are always written in English. Anna said he would not understand Chinese. Richard, in turn, always writes notes in English, though he usually signs his name using Chinese characters.
Few notes are written in the Young family. Irene says she usually knows where Simon is, so will phone if she has a message. One of the only notes I saw in their apartment was on the message pad on the refrigerator door. It read:

*wo chu qu chi fan* / [names in Chinese]
at [name of Chinese restaurant -in Chinese] by walk !!

Irene did not know where Simon was, and had reluctantly set out on foot to meet Anna and a friend from Taiwan at a nearby restaurant. Fortunately, she had met Simon as she was leaving so had been spared the walk. This note was still on the refrigerator three weeks after the event, confirming Irene's assertion that she does not write many notes.

Some notes are written when the addressee is present at the time of writing. In some cases the addressee may, in fact, be the writer, so that the note is actually written to oneself. Shopping lists written in the Wang household are good examples. These are written by Niknik, and are also called *tiaozi*, thus not distinguishing them from the other notes she writes. When I first visited the family Niknik used to write shopping lists about once a week. Long works in Chinatown and used to buy things there for Niknik during his lunch hour. He was usually present when Niknik wrote the list, so she could give oral instructions about quantities to be bought and the names of any particularly suitable shops. She did not need to write these details for him. In 1994 work at the hotel has been slow, so Niknik's hours have been reduced. As a result, she does not have the cash to buy things in Chinatown and has taken to buying more at the supermarkets, where she can charge the purchases to her credit card, thus postponing payment until the following month. The number of shopping lists she writes has therefore diminished.
She occasionally writes out lists of things to buy when she herself goes on large shopping expeditions, usually with other family members. As with the lists for Chinatown, these are usually written on the envelopes in which Long receives his weekly pay check. One of these lists is shown in Figure 7. It reads as follows:

First column:
photo album, mop head, socks, biscuits, mushroom sauce, soy sauce, shrimp, monosodium glutamate, dried plums, mince, pork chops, liquid detergent, greens.

Second column:
To give people: macadamia nuts, alcohol, chocolate candy, make up.

Niknik said that she had to invent the word for liquid detergent, *xiyishui*, which literally means 'wash clothes water', since they do not have this type of detergent in the PRC. Also the word she uses for macadamia nuts, *xiang guo*, is not the standard translation. She said she had not come across these nuts before, and had learnt this name for them in Hawai`i. The other families rarely, if ever, write shopping lists.

Hua often uses writing to prepare for something she herself has to say or write. She calls these kinds of note, *beiwanglu* 'memos'. They are written in Chinese, but may include a word or phrase in English if the event in which they will be used calls for spoken English or if an English proper name is involved. One example is the note she wrote just prior to calling her English teacher, who speaks no Chinese. Hua was calling her because Siu needed a Chinese speaking doctor, and the teacher had said that she knew of three. In preparation for the phone call Hua jotted down some notes, again using the back of a shop receipt. Using Chinese, she wrote three possible ways of asking the questions she wanted to ask. As the conversation was to be in English, she also wrote "I want to spick to Ms ___," and "Which hospital is they in?" [sic] On another occasion Hua wrote a detailed memo to let her class know of the preparations that had been made for the Chinese school
Principal’s birthday. Unlike most of her notes this memo is written on file paper, since it is quite lengthy, and it has deletions, substitutions, and word order changes, indicating that it was read over and edited before it was used as the basis for an announcement to the class. Hua also writes memos to others when the addressee is present at the time of writing. If she wants Yan to contact someone for her and the message is complicated, she will often write notes down for him so he will not forget anything. One example that I saw was a series of questions she wanted Yan to ask when he phoned his brother’s school to find out about taking a subject for credit by exam. The memo, as usual written on the back of a shop receipt, was in Chinese except for the name of the school counselor.

Another example of writing in the Chen family which reminds others of what to say is found on some small pieces of paper near the telephone. Yan wrote a number of useful English sentences, together with their Chinese equivalents, so that his parents could deal with incoming calls. These sentences included: "Who are you calling?", "Can you leave your number?", and "My English is not very good." Sheng and Siu also sometimes use writing to help themselves remember things. Sheng wrote out a plan of action to help him make good use of his time after school. This is entirely in Chinese. He wrote several drafts, and the final one now hangs in a place of prominence above the desk in the apartment. The main aim of the plan is to remind him of all the things he needs to do before he can play his one and only computer game, an activity that he dearly loves. The plan reminds him that before he can play the game he has to finish his homework, wash himself and his clothes, eat, tidy up his things, and clean his teeth. Only then can he play the computer game. Next to this plan hangs a set of instructions his father has written out to remind himself how to take his medicine. With the help of Yan and the dictionary, he translated these into Chinese from the English version the pharmacist gave him. Siu also uses the calendar to record his work shifts and details of doctor’s appointments. He starts
work at different times each day and needs the record to both remind him of when he has to start work and, later, to check that his pay has been calculated correctly.

In the Wang family Long occasionally used to mark significant dates on the 1993 calendar in the passage opposite the bedroom door. He said Niknik had nothing to remember, so did not need to use the calendar. She does, however, stick notices and announcements on the refrigerator door to remind her of the dates of things, such as field trips and excursions Rebecca is to attend at school. Long is not marking a calendar in 1994 since the family was not given one. In the Lin household the calendar near the eating area is well used. Anna is in charge of keeping track of the family's commitments and usually marks five or six dates each month. Some notes are written in English, e.g., "open house," and "7.30 band Christmas show," and some in Chinese, e.g., appointments for the dentist, and dates that payments, such as for the mortgage, utilities, and credit card, fall due.

The above all show how seemingly insignificant jottings, which are mainly in Chinese, can play a very important role in organizing everyday activities. It is also interesting to see how changes in a family's writing patterns reflect changes in life style and living conditions. When I first visited the Chen family Hua rarely wrote notes. Siu was always there to pass on messages. This all changed when he got a job, and now the exchange of notes is an integral part of family life. Similarly, the calendar was bare of any annotations when I first visited. Hua said that they were not accustomed to keeping track of dates. One reason she gave for this was that they seldom made appointments in China. Now, however, Siu's medical problems and flexible working schedule mean that the calendar is used in this way. In Niknik's family, we can see how the change in shopping habits necessitated by a cash flow problem has led to a significant reduction in the writing of shopping lists. In the Lin family Anna's increasing use of Chinese as the written code for
the writing of notes to Janet can be correlated to Janet's increasing Chinese literacy skills. Who writes the notes to whom, and for what purposes, can also show a lot about the participants' respective roles in the family.

Writing Stories
Anna Lin writes stories when she cannot sleep, or during the day if she has time. She says she writes for pleasure and relaxation. It enables her to put her feelings down, though she says that she never writes about herself, and escape from everyday reality. The stories are generally written for herself, though she did contemplate sending one to the Shijie Ribao (a popular Chinese daily paper) when it asked readers for contributions of love stories of about 1,000 characters in length. JP did not think it was good enough, however, and so she decided not to submit it. She has kept all the stories she has written, and occasionally goes back over them and edits. In general, though, it is the act of writing that seems more important.

Recipes
Anna occasionally writes down recipes when she comes across a dish she likes and is in a position to be able to ask about how it is made. She usually writes these recipes in Chinese, but she may include an English word, usually because there is no exact Chinese equivalent that she can think of at the time of writing.

Writing a Diary
Anna is the only person to regularly write a diary. She has been keeping a diary since the age of sixteen or seventeen, and says she continues partly out of habit. She writes a few sentences each day, usually about the events of the day rather then her personal ideas and thoughts. When she was younger she used to write more personal things. It was because
of this that she burned two of the diaries. She did not want anyone, especially her
husband, to see the contents. All the diaries are written in Chinese. She writes in the late
evening or during the day if she has a spare moment. Occasionally she refers to a diary to
check on a date but rarely shows the diaries to anyone else.

Calligraphy

Chinese calligraphy is one of Siu Chen's hobbies. He practices a lot, writing over the
printing on free papers, magazines, and other publications he collects from around town.
This is another example of the way the family recycles paper. Neither of the sons shows
any interest. Yan thinks that young people do not like calligraphy because it is too slow.
Siu uses calligraphy in many aspects of his life. He likes to cover his books and uses
calligraphy to write their titles on the cover. He sometimes writes the title, or his name,
along the surface created by the edges of the pages of the closed book. This writing of the
owner's name along the pages is quite common in all the families, though others do not
use calligraphy. Anna uses a small stamp which she has had since primary school. Siu
also likes to write on the flyleaf inside the book, recording details such as the date and
circumstances of the book's acquisition. If he gives a book to someone as a gift, he likes
to write a greeting or dedication on the flyleaf. In a book he gave to Sheng on his 12th
birthday, he wrote a few lines extolling the virtues of learning when one is young.

Siu also gives pieces of calligraphy to friends as gifts. He gave me a piece of prose, a
translation from a German writer, which I had seen and admired on the wall of the
apartment. He was going to give me that copy, but then decided that it was not good
enough and wrote out two more versions before he was satisfied. At Chinese New Year
he gave friends lucky couplets and phrases he had written in black ink on long narrow
pieces of thick red paper. He also wrote the character fu 'good fortune' on large squares
of thin, gold flecked, red paper. This character was designed to be hung upside down, as shown by the fact that one could only read the smaller characters he wrote on the squares, one in each corner, in this position. As noted elsewhere, hanging fu upside down is a play on the homonym dao, which can mean either 'arrive' or 'upside down'. Fu dao, when spoken, can therefore mean either fu is upside down, or good fortune will arrive.

Hua is the only other person who practices calligraphy. In her case, however, it is not because she likes it, but because she has to teach calligraphy at the Chinese community school one day a week. It is considered part of the Chinese education there, and students are expected to enter the annual calligraphy competition organized in Chinatown.

Writing Poetry
Siu Chen enjoys writing and drawing. He has a small notebook which he brought with him from the PRC. This contains paintings and calligraphy by his artist friend in China and some sketches and paintings of scenes and people in Hawai'i that Siu himself has painted. The book also contains a few poems that he has written.

Writing to Aid Communication
When I don't understand something Niknik or Long are telling me in Mandarin they often write down a key vocabulary item for me. Sometimes I ask them to do this, but other times they spontaneously write a character, or characters, to see if this helps my comprehension. This also happens in the Chen family, where Siu and Hua often write both the simplified form of character used in the PRC (jiān ti), and in the more traditional form (fān ti), which is still used in Taiwan and elsewhere. Siu is particularly keen on writing Chinese to explain what he means. When I asked about this both families said that this use of characters was largely restricted to communication with waiguoren.
'foreigners'. Hua and Yan Chen thought that if they encountered difficulties when talking with another Chinese speaker an oral paraphrase would be the most likely way to deal with the problem. Long and Niknik agreed that writing was usually used with foreigners, though Long said that he has resorted to written Chinese at work when dealing with customers who are speaking Cantonese or heavily accented Mandarin.

In a similar way English words are sometimes written during my visits to the families to help our oral communication. I noticed that there was a different pattern in how we wrote, depending whether we were writing Chinese or English. This seemed to be related to our relative proficiencies in writing the different languages and also to the nature of the scripts involved. When I query a Mandarin word family members usually write the character, or characters, for me. This is the quickest and easiest way to achieve our immediate goal, i.e., to get a visual representation of the troublesome word onto paper. I sometimes try to write a character. They help when I get stuck by giving another word which contains the same character, or part of the character, the name of the radical, or the name of a particular stroke that I may have written wrongly or omitted. This is a time consuming process and, because of my lack of writing proficiency, not always very successful. Hence, they usually write the word for me. This contrasts with what happens when they want a word or phrase written in English. I sometimes write it, but often they do, asking me, or expecting me, to help with the spelling. It is relatively easy for them to follow my spoken instructions. They need only recognize the 26 letters of the alphabet. Thus, Niknik, who is not a very proficient writer in English, can easily write a word when I spell it out.

I noticed that there is also a tendency among Chinese writers to actually write out a character if someone asks about how it should be written. This often happened with the
children. For example, Yan wrote some characters for Sheng when he was not sure how to write something, and Niknik wrote out the characters that Rebecca needed when she was writing the letter to her teacher. When helping Janet with homework her mother and Irene also tend to show her how to write, rather than tell her how to. Sometimes this is not possible, for example when Irene is helping Janet with her homework over the phone, so one of the alternative methods has to be used.

Writing Related to Work

Only Hua and Niknik do much writing at work in Chinese. Others do very little, and much of what they do write involves English rather than Chinese.

Niknik keeps a record of the work she does every day at the hotel in a small notebook. She started to do this when she was the supervisor and needed to check the work of the other housekeepers. She wrote down the name of each housekeeper and the rooms they cleaned, checked off each room as she inspected it, and noted underneath any jobs that still needed doing. Niknik wrote mainly in English (e.g., "small window," and "pillows"), since she used to show her notes to the other housekeepers so that they could complete their work satisfactorily. Now that the supervisor position is no more, she still keeps the notebook, but now just records her own work. As it is now for her own reference, the writing is mostly in Chinese, including the names of the other workers if she mentions them. The only thing that she regularly writes in English is the date and sometimes the heading "rooms." In addition to this she has to record her work on a printed list of rooms provided daily to each housekeeper. As she cleans each room she checks it off on the list, and notes anything special that needs attention, for example "light to be fix." [sic] She also notes how many soaps, shampoos, and other amenities she has supplied. This, she writes in Chinese, even though she knows that no one can read it when the list is turned in
at the end of the day. She sees these details as a record for herself, rather than for management.

The Manager at the hotel once asked Niknik to write an account of some irregularities she had reported (for example, some rooms had been used after she had cleaned them, others had been used when they had not been occupied by guests). Niknik said the manager asked for something in writing because she could not understand Niknik's spoken report. While I was watching television with her daughter Niknik used the detailed record she kept in her notebook to write a long, two page account in Chinese of what she had noticed, specifying the dates and rooms concerned. Writing it out enabled her to make sure she recorded everything and allowed her to get the story clear in her mind. She knew the written version would not help me because my reading comprehension, especially of handwritten Chinese, is not good. When I was summoned from the television to help her write the report in English, she had to laboriously go through all the details orally in Mandarin. I then made sure I had understood correctly, clarifying each part orally using a mixture of English and Mandarin, and then wrote each part down in English. As my handwriting is difficult to read, I then had to read or spell out certain words so that Niknik could write out the report in English for the manager. It took over two hours, but finally she had her written report in English as requested.

Another task Niknik had for a while when she was acting as the supervisor was to devise a work schedule (Niknik used the English word "schedule") for the other housekeepers. This is an interesting document, as it shows three attempts to work out the best version (see figure 8). In each of the three drafts the days of the week are written across the top in Chinese, and the names of the five housekeepers (including herself) are listed down the left hand side. All the names are represented by Chinese characters, despite the fact that
only the first two are Chinese. In the other cases Niknik is using characters for their sound values. Thus  Rou represents 'Rose', and  Lin represents 'Linda'. In the body of the schedule she uses a mixture of Chinese and English. While all three versions use the Chinese  xiu to designate 'rest day', the first two versions use the Chinese gong for 'work day' (which looks like "2" in Niknik's writing), and the third uses the English letter "W" for this. The final version was obviously superior to the other two, since it allowed all five housekeepers to have their two rest days consecutively.

Hua does a lot of writing for her teaching job. She prepares teaching materials at home, such as exemplary pieces of calligraphy. She also sets and marks quizzes and exams, writes revision lists, keeps records of student's work and attendance, fills out the report cards which students take home each month for their parents to sign and return, calculates final percentages and grades for the semester, and fills out semester report cards. At school, she writes a lot on the chalk board, both in relation to the texts that the students use and the supplementary material she brings from home. For example, she writes out classical poems and interesting stories, the latter either taken from books the Chens brought with them from China or from the children's section in the Shijie Ribao.

When developing quizzes and tests Hua uses writing to plan the questions. She deletes, inserts, and rewrites until she has a final version which she can write out neatly and take to school to copy onto the chalk board. Figure 9 shows the final version of a quiz which she used with the sixth graders in her class. It has the heading "Quiz (sixth grade)." Under this are some words and phrases which will be used as dictation, followed by a cloze passage. The latter is a short passage with some words omitted. Students have to fill in the blanks appropriately so that the text makes sense. As with most of her notes, the quiz is written on the back of a shop receipt.
If they have to write at all at work, other family members usually write in English. Long Wang checks off a work sheet as he completes each job, and also writes his name on his time card once a week. Irene Young has to record every item she sells at work each day, and writes a receipt for purchases if the customer requests one. Simon types invoices for his customers, using his word processor. JP Lin occasionally has to write detailed reports to insurance firms, which take him a long time because they have to be written in English. One of his receptionists types the report for him. He also writes and updates patients' charts after each of their visits. These are also written in English, but this is not a problem. Even in Taiwan he kept such records in English, the language with the appropriate technical vocabulary. Anna sometimes helps her husband's receptionists type out insurance claim forms.

Writing Related to Study

Sheng Chen, Rebecca Wang, and Richard and Janet Lin are all full-time students. They have many writing tasks related to school work. Most of these are in English. Parents try and help as much as they can. For example, Niknik helps Rebecca with mathematics. In the Lin family Janet is also expected to help her brother. He is not only younger but less academic than she is.

Janet and Richard also attend Chinese classes, Janet at her day school and Richard at Saturday morning Chinese school. Much of Richard's writing in Chinese involves writing individual characters and words to practice the mechanics of writing. One day he announced to Irene that he had a new method for remembering how to write them:

\[ wo bu jide wo jiu baibai kan \]

'if I do not remember I put [the various parts of the character] in place and look [to see if they look right]'.
Richard's other school work involves annotating new Chinese characters to show their pronunciation, and using a given Chinese word or character appropriately in a phrase or sentence. Janet is a more advanced student. She has to write extended texts in dictation and translation exercises, as well as connected prose giving opinions, summarizing material, etc. Anna and Irene assist with Chinese homework. Janet may ask for help with a vocabulary item, such as the Chinese word for "pizza," or how to write a word in Chinese which she knows how to say but does not know how to write. In addition to help with the mechanics of writing, Janet also sometimes needs assistance with ideas. Being younger than the other students in her Chinese class, she is sometimes unsure of what to say in response to certain questions, for example about moral and sexual matters.

Of the adults, only Hua and Siu were still attending formal English classes when I started visiting the families. They also had informal English lessons with me, as did Niknik, Long, Irene and Anna. Most of the writing involved in these study situations is at the word and sentence level. The most common use of Chinese is for recording translations of newly encountered English vocabulary. The act of writing can aid memory. It also provides a permanent record which can be accessed at a later time. Niknik, Long and Hua annotate their English texts extensively for this purpose. Niknik also uses Chinese characters to record the pronunciation of English words. For example she wrote "hai" to remind her how to say "high," and "danbulinsi" to help her remember "dumplings."

Unlike the children at formal educational institutions, most of the English writing that the adults do in relation to study is also at the word, or occasionally phrase, level.
Acknowledging Something in Writing

Writing to acknowledge that one has seen and/or acted on a written message is quite common in the families. Some examples were described in relation to the writing of notes, where the respective addressees, Janet and Yan, wrote a short response on the bottom of the note they received. Yan wrote in Chinese, while Janet wrote in English.

The parents, usually the mothers, frequently have to sign notices and reports from their children's schools to show that they have seen them. Only in the case of Richard's Chinese school can this be done in Chinese. Usually, English is required. Richard once had to stay in his classroom at English school for several days during recess because his mother forgot to do this. The consequences at Rebecca's school are not so extreme. In fact, Niknik did not know that she was supposed to sign the homework and test results sent home by the mathematics teacher at the end of each unit until we met the teacher at the school's open house day.

In some cases only initials are required. An example of this was when the real estate agent came to Anna's apartment to ask her to sign the contract for its sale. While all the conversation was in Mandarin, she used the word "initial" several times to indicate where Anna had to initial to show that she understood, and agreed to the various conditions.

The importance of signatures and initials is something that the adults in the families had to learn when they came to the United States. There is less need to sign one's name in either the PRC or Taiwan. If some official acknowledgment is required, a chop (or seal) is often used. Anna said that in her family they had different chops for different purposes. There was one just for the bank for example. Her family labeled the chops to remember which one to use where.
Financial Writing

All of the adults need to sign their signature when they write checks and make withdrawals at the bank. Most also have credit cards and need to sign for purchases. This sometimes causes problems. Siu Chen once had to sign in Chinese at a bank to verify his identity because his English signature varied too much from the sample they had on record. Anna Lin sometimes has similar problems as her English signature tends to be very variable. She gets very annoyed at the branch of the bank in her husband's office building when they query her signature. Sometimes they make her wait while they telephone the main branch to get clearance for a transaction.

Filling in Forms

Form filling is part of modern life. I am more aware of the forms with which the Chen and Wang families are faced, as I have been called on to help them understand and complete these. In the Chen family the eldest son, Yan, is also expected to assist. Forms which I have seen relate to applying for medical insurance, low income housing, and option choices at Sheng's school (in the Chen family), applications for credit cards and for joining the local library, and order forms for numerous mail order purchases (in the Wang family). Anna Lin sometimes helps fill out insurance claim forms at her husband's practice.

Discussion

In this chapter I have described different kinds of writing which take place in the four Chinese families. It can be seen that there are a variety of types of writing, varying from a word jotted on a calendar, or a signature, to lengthy texts, such as letters, reports, and stories. There is also a lot of variation within and between families in terms of how much any one individual writes, how much of this is in Chinese, and why family members write what they do. Such patterns of writing are also fluid; they change with time and
circumstance. In general, I have talked of written Chinese as if this was a homogenous code, though I have mentioned some variations, such as the style and direction of script. A more detailed discussion of the Chinese written code, and the variations within it, will be found in chapter 7. In this chapter I have also made some comments on the role that writing plays in the lives of family members and the social networks, including the family, of which they are part. This will be further discussed in later chapters. In the next chapter I will go on to look at the various types of reading that take place in the four Chinese families.
CHAPTER 6
READING ACTIVITIES IN THE FAMILIES

This chapter will describe various types of reading that are part of the everyday life of family members. This information was gathered by talking to family members, asking about what they read, observing reading activities in progress, and cataloging the various kinds of reading matter I saw on my visits to the families. As in the previous chapter, I will concentrate on Chinese written language, but I will also note the uses of reading in English and how reading relates to spoken languages to allow for later analysis of the overall place of reading Chinese in the lives of individual family members.

The data show that most printed Chinese read in the families falls into the categories of books, newspapers, or magazines. The other major source of Chinese reading material comes from documents and texts which are written in the families, or are received by them from friends and relatives. These are the kinds of texts described in the previous chapter, and include letters, notes, and memos. Most of these are handwritten. There are a few printed and/or duplicated documents associated with events and activities specifically aimed at people of Chinese background living in Hawai'i. In addition, some Chinese writing can be seen in certain areas, such as Chinatown. Reading Chinese can also be involved in recreational activities, such as watching videos and films, and singing karaoke. All these various types of reading will be described below, with special attention given to who does what kind of reading, when, where and why.

Newspapers
Newspapers are the most frequently read Chinese publications in all the families except for the Chens. For most of the adults reading the newspaper is a daily leisure time activity,
and newspapers are an important source of information about national and international events.

This is particularly true in the Lin household, where two Chinese daily newspapers are delivered, the *Shijie Ribao* and the *Zhongyang Ribao*. The first arrives daily from San Francisco. The latter is from Taiwan. The vagaries of the postal system mean that it may not arrive each day, so two or three may come at once. Anna is the most avid reader of the papers. She reads both the news sections and the human interest and short story sections. She reads during the day, if she has time, or at night before she goes to sleep. In fact, she says she usually has to read something before she is able to sleep. JP says that the *Zhongyang Ribao* is not very good for news. It tends to be dated, and the reporting is not objective. He reads the non-news section, especially the *fukan* which has serialized stories. But he is really more interested in the *Shijie Ribao*, which is his main source of news. He reads this when he gets home from work, often in the bathroom where he retires for some time. The children seldom look at the Chinese papers. Anna said that Richard has expressed interest in the cartoons in colloquial Cantonese which are found in the Hong Kong section of *Shijie Ribao*. She can usually understand these, but does not seem to want to pass on the meaning to Richard. Janet could read the children's page in the *Shijie Ribao*, which has each character annotated with *zhuyin fuhao*, the phonetically based system used in Taiwan to guide Mandarin pronunciation, but she shows little interest in this.

This is an example of something that I noticed many times in the Lin family. Anna would point out some reading materials which Janet could read, if she wanted to. There are lots of newspapers, magazines and books produced in Taiwan which are specifically aimed at children, including special publications for the overseas Chinese. They are typically
beautifully illustrated, attractively printed and presented, and usually annotated in zhuyin fuhao, which can aid comprehension where the reader is a speaker of Mandarin. Unless connected to school requirements, however, Janet is not sufficiently interested to spend time reading Chinese. A good example of this, as regards newspapers, is the overseas Chinese children’s paper Qiao Jiao. Janet used to read this when it was used at the Chinese community school she attended before starting Mandarin classes at her English school. It is still delivered to the family, but is now no longer read. Janet says she has no time to read it. Once, on the way to the bathroom, she announced she needed something to read. When her mother tried to give her a copy of Qiao Jiao she made it clear that this was not the kind of light reading matter that she had in mind. She would much prefer to read in English. Richard is usually not considered a potential reader. Although he goes to Chinese school, the family seem to accept that any general reading in Chinese is quite beyond him.

The Youngs also subscribe to the Shijie Ribao. If both Irene and Simon are at home when it arrives in the mail, usually before noon, there is a tussle over who will read it first. Irene says she reads for both entertainment and to find out about the news. The Shijie Ribao covers American, Taiwanese, Hong Kong, and PRC news. Irene is most interested in America and Taiwan. She glances through the PRC section, and only reads an article if she is particularly attracted by the headline. The other parts of the paper she likes are those containing short stories, the part called jia yuan 'family garden', which discusses everyday life, especially of Chinese in the United States, and allows readers to write in and comment, and the sections dealing with movie stars, both American and Chinese. She says she does not understand the business part of the paper. Simon, on the other hand, is very interested in economics. He reads the paper mainly to find out about the news. The
bathroom is again a favorite spot for reading in the Young household, especially for Simon.

The Wang family reads the Hong Kong based Sing Tao Daily. Long prefers this paper to other Chinese dailies because he thinks it has good coverage of current affairs in Taiwan, the PRC, the United States, and Hong Kong, though he is not much interested in the latter. He buys the paper at lunch time in Chinatown. He says that it is wise to buy it early as the news agents can sell out. When I first started to visit the family, Long only bought the Sunday edition of the paper on a regular basis. This is available on Mondays, since papers are a day late reaching Hawai'i from the US mainland. It is bigger than the weekday paper and contains an extra part, the "Cosmo Chinese Weekly," which discusses film stars, etc. Long usually took this paper home, since it took him two days to read. Apart from the Sunday edition, he only bought the paper if the headlines looked interesting, and often read it during his lunch hour. When I asked why he did not bring it home for the family, he said that Niknik had no interest and Rebecca could not read it because it had too many complex characters which she could not understand (she only learnt jianti zi, the simplified form of character, at school in the PRC). This is not totally true. If the paper is around, Niknik will read some parts if something catches her interest. For example, one day when I arrived a little late, she had been looking at the report about the Movie Oscar ceremony, which she had watched on television a few days before. She says she reads when there is nothing else to do. As regards Rebecca, Niknik told me that she occasionally tried to read parts of the paper, but confirmed the difficulty with the complex form of characters.

Since late 1993, however, things have changed. Rebecca now regularly reads the section of the paper which talks about movie stars and fashion. As soon as he gets home from
work, she asks her father if he has bought the paper. As a result Long now buys the paper every day. When I asked Rebecca about this, she said she started to get interested in this particular section when she had Chinese friends at elementary school who used to talk about the people and events written about. At the school she goes to now there are few Chinese students, but she still likes to read about the celebrities in the paper. She says she can read the content without too much problem, guessing characters she does not know from context. She still occasionally asks her parents for help, but less than before. Niknik seems to think that Rebecca now reads more in Chinese at home than she does in English, which she considers strange since she only completed two grades of schooling in China, as compared to four here. Long has complained about her spending so much time reading Chinese, and threatened to stop bringing the paper home. When I asked him about this he said that Rebecca already knew how to read Chinese. He thought her skills in this area were good enough. They would be enough, for example, to help her get a job at some stage in the future if the position required someone who knew Chinese. On the other hand, her English reading was still weak. Long therefore thought more time should be spent practicing English.

In the Chen family Chinese papers are usually read only if they are provided by others. Few are purchased. Hua sometimes looks at the Sing Tao Daily and the Shijie Ribao when other teachers bring copies with them to the Chinese community school where she works. She likes the Shijie Ribao best, thinking it has the best coverage of the PRC. She sometimes cuts out the children's section in this paper, and uses it for a text in her class. Her sister in San Francisco also sometimes sends articles from Chinese papers which she thinks Hua might be interested in. She showed me two that her sister had sent from local San Francisco papers. One was about mothers and the other was about middle age, which was referred to as "second Spring." Siu occasionally is given a copy of a Chinese paper by
friends at work, but generally learns about current affairs from the television or from talking to his coworkers, three of whom are from Hong Kong. Siu and Sheng also watch the news in Mandarin on the television when they can. Hua and Yan are seldom at home when this broadcast is aired.

I took the two local papers to the families to ask them if they read them. Irene had not even heard of the daily United Chinese Press. Long, Anna and Hua had seen it but would not dream of buying it, though it is only 20 cents. They said it contains nothing of interest to them. As I noted in chapter 3 the paper contains little news. Long said people only buy it to see who has died. The monthly Hawaii Chinese Community News fares little better, even though it is available free of charge. Niknik and Long say that it is not interesting because the local news it contains relates mainly to the Taiwanese community in Hawai'i, and the other news is too dated. Niknik had read it once but found it a waste of time. Hua has seen the monthly paper at school, but rarely takes a copy home. Anna, Irene and Simon sometimes read it, as it is one source of local news. Anna knows most of the people featured in the articles. The main source of information about local happenings, however, is the television for Irene, and the local English paper for Anna.

While it is largely geared towards the Taiwanese in Hawai'i, with a lot of information about events organized and/or funded by the Coordination Council for North American Affairs, the monthly often contains an article which uses Cantonese characters, or talks about differences between Cantonese and Mandarin vocabulary. A particularly interesting article I looked at with Hua once was entitled "Hong Kong Man," and was a rather tongue-in-cheek look at the characteristics of Hong Kong people. Hua read it out to me in Mandarin but had to change into Cantonese when colloquial Cantonese vocabulary was used. I left the copy of the paper with her, and on my next visit we had cause to refer to it.
again. I was planning to go to the upcoming Mandarin speech contest for children learning Chinese. Community Chinese schools, and English day schools which taught Mandarin, could send students to compete. I thought the competition started at 9 A.M., but Hua, who had been helping her students to prepare and practice their speeches for the competition, had been told it started at 8 A.M. We remembered that the paper had an article about the contest, so were able to check the starting time. It confirmed that it began at 9, so we presumed that it was only the competitors that had to be there at 8 A.M.

As for English newspapers, the Lins are the only family to read one regularly. They have a local English paper delivered daily. This arrives early in the morning, and JP and the children sometimes look through it while eating breakfast. JP looks at the headlines, Richard looks at the sports section, and Janet looks at the comics. Anna reads the paper later, but only skips through it, finding it harder to read than the Chinese papers. As part of her English lesson we sometimes discussed some of the articles. She usually had little trouble reading them out loud, but the meaning sometimes escaped her.

Simon and Irene rarely read English language newspapers. This is partly because of lack of interest. Irene considers them boring. She sees them as lacking the rich non-news side that the Chinese press provides. She also says she finds reading English difficult in terms of vocabulary and, sometimes, overall meaning. We often read an article from a local daily paper or the free weekly advertising paper, Midweek, for English practice. Midweek is delivered free to households on Wednesdays, and contains a TV guide, information of weekly specials in the stores, and also some human interest stories.

The Wang family does not buy or read English newspapers. They receive the free weekly Midweek, as do all the other families, and I often see the TV Guide on the sofa in the
living room. Niknik says that Rebecca is the main reader of this. In the Chen family Siu
sometimes picks up the free tourist papers available in Waikiki. He uses these to practice
calligraphy, writing over the printing, and to practice his Japanese reading, since some are
printed in Japanese. He occasionally brings issues of English language dailies home from
work for his sons. English language dailies are also available at Yan's work place for the
employees to read during their breaks. He says that he looks at these, but I am not sure
how much he actually reads. During the 1994 Winter Olympics, for example, when the
papers had talked of nothing but the furor that surrounded two of the ice skaters for
weeks, he knew nothing of this. Yan also says he listens to news on the radio.

Magazines

Chinese magazines tend to be expensive in Hawai'i, typically costing six dollars or more.
As a result, those that are read by the various members of the families are often gifts from
others. Those that they buy, or receive from others, are frequently passed on to friends
and family after they have been read. This also happens with Chinese books, and to some
extent with newspapers. Anna passes on her copies of the two Chinese dailies to the
receptionist at her husband's office.

The only Chinese magazine that the Lin family subscribes to is the Chinese version of the
Readers Digest. This is delivered each month. Anna loved to read this as a child and is its
main reader in the family. One year her sister-in-law in Los Angeles also sent her a year's
gift subscription for the Taiwanese magazine *Huang guan* 'Crown'. Anna welcomes any
additional reading matter that comes her way. On one of my visits, she was very pleased
because a friend had lent her husband a whole set of mystery magazines and kungfu
magazines, together with four novels. JP likes kungfu stories. She was more interested in
the novels, which she read in three days. In the hope that they might interest Janet, Anna
once bought a number of children's magazines called *Ertong Tiandi* from someone who was leaving the apartment building. As far as I know, these have never been read.

A lot of magazines are seen in the Young household. There is usually a pile next to the sofa in the living area, and one or two in the bathroom, reflecting the favorite reading places. Irene prefers Chinese magazines. Because of their cost in Hawai'i, her mother usually brings some from Taiwan when she visits. Alternatively, Irene buys back issues in Chinatown, or gets copies from Anna. Irene enjoys reading fashion and gossip magazines, which she calls *cesuo wenhua* 'toilet literature'. This name is not necessarily due to the place where one reads this type of magazine it seems. The *Shijie Ribao* is often read in the bathroom, but does not fall into this category. *Cesuo wenhua* is just a family name. Anna had not heard of it. She calls such magazines *ba gua*, which is the Mandarin pronunciation of the Cantonese *baat gwa* 'gossip'. Simon tends to look at English language magazines, but he once mentioned that he sometimes reads *Wuxia Shijie* 'World of Martial Arts and Chivalry'. This is a weekly magazine printed in Hong Kong. It contains stories of martial arts heroes and their exploits.

Long Wang also reads *Wuxia Shijie* if his friend and work mate, Mr. Wong, passes on his copies after he has finished with them. Long likes to read in bed. Rebecca and Niknik also read it sometimes. The only other Chinese magazine I saw in the family was the current affairs magazine from Hong Kong, *Cheng Ming*. Mr. Wong was again the source. I have seen few magazines in the Chen family. Hua's brother in Seattle once sent a copy of an old *Cheng Ming* when he sent Yan some information about enrolling in university there. All the family seemed to enjoy reading this.
When we look at English language magazines, the pattern is the same. More are found in the Lin and Young families. The Lins have the *National Geographic* and *Vogue* delivered for the waiting room at JP's medical practice. Anna looks through these for interesting articles either before or after they have been put there. Some patients also donate magazines, and JP gets a magazine for children which is specifically designed for waiting rooms. For a few months in late 1993 the English version of the *Readers Digest* began to arrive along with the Chinese version to which Anna subscribes. She tried to get Janet interested in it, with little success. So, when Simon pointed out that a bill might eventually follow, I helped Anna draft a letter to inform the company that the English edition was not required.

Most of the magazines that Simon reads are in English. Some are related to his work, such as computer magazines, manuals, and catalogues, while others are more for general interest, such as *Popular Science*, and *Trail and Road*. He says he does not really read them. He finds reading English an effort, requiring concentration on every word, but he can understand enough to extract the information of interest to him. Irene has *Better Homes* delivered each month. The pictures and the household tips seem to be the main attraction. Irene also occasionally buys *Newsweek* if it features someone she is interested in. One issue was about Michael Jordan, who she likes. She had shown this to Richard, who is very keen on sport, and they had looked at the pictures together. In general, however, Irene says she does very little reading in English. Like Simon, she finds it too difficult.

The only magazines in English I have seen in the Wang apartment are free ones. Niknik likes to look at the glossy magazine, *Real Estate*, which lists houses and apartments for sale in O'ahu. I also saw a magazine which arrived free through the mail. This remained
in the living area for months. I do not think anyone really read it. There are also occasionally catalogues and glossy advertising brochures from various stores around town. In the Chen family I have seen only one English language magazine, a copy of *Sports Illustrated*, which one of the family had come across at work.

**Books**

Anna Lin has by far the largest collection of Chinese language novels in any of the four families. When she lived in the apartment two long shelves in her bedroom were full of Chinese paperbacks. Some of these were bought in Hawai‘i, often by JP. Anna says he buys several at a time in Chinatown, but gives them to her one at a time as he knows she will read them very fast. As noted previously, she read the four novels that JP’s friend lent them in three days. She stayed up until 1.30 A.M. to finish the last one. They were written by a Hong Kong author, and Anna pointed out some Cantonese vocabulary items that they contained. Other novels were bought in California or in Taiwan, where they are cheaper than in Hawai‘i. Most are about everyday life and ordinary people. She also enjoys biographies and autobiographies. Each of her books is marked with her name, which is stamped on the outside of the pages. She sometimes lends them to friends and wants to make sure that they can easily identify which books are hers so she can get them back. Novels in Chinese are also available at the local library but these tend to be old, and the selection is small. Anna usually reads before bed to relax. She sometimes reads in the bedroom, but if the light disturbs JP she moves to the lounge or the bathroom.

In addition to novels, Anna also reads the Bible. She has at least two copies, one of which is kept in the trunk of the car ready for use when she goes to church. Anna goes to two church services, one where Cantonese is spoken and the other where the proceedings are in Mandarin. I once went to the Cantonese service with Anna and Janet, and have been to
the Lutheran Mandarin service several times, but not with the Lin family. Reading is an important part of both church services. As members of the congregation arrive they are given a printed order of service. This includes details of which hymns to sing, which passage of the Bible will be read, and the title of the sermon, which is usually connected to the Bible reading. Group reading is required for the hymn singing. In the Mandarin service the words for the hymns are projected onto the wall either side of the altar by overhead projectors. In the Cantonese service the hymns are read from hymn books. Anna sings in Mandarin in both churches. She says she feels more confident of her reading pronunciation in Mandarin. In both churches the text of the hymns is also given in English. The way the Bible reading takes place differs in the two services. In the Cantonese service the leader for that Sunday reads the passage aloud and the members of the congregation follow the text silently in their own Bibles. In the Mandarin service the congregation participates, saying every other verse aloud.

Other books that Anna uses regularly are consulted rather than read. These include cookbooks, medical books, and a small English-Chinese dictionary. She regularly consults three bilingual cook books (shipu) written by a Taiwanese author, with whom she took cooking lessons when living in Taiwan. The first two volumes show signs of long use, and were purchased in Taiwan. The third was bought here, is newer, and has been used less. Inside these books are a few recipes cut from English and Chinese newspapers, and a few handwritten recipes. When taking special care with a dish, such as when guests are coming for dinner, Anna follows the recipe closely. She looks at each item, makes the appropriate response (e.g., getting the ingredient named), and then reads the next part. One of her brothers-in-law, who was visiting Hawai‘i once, laughed at her for this. He wondered what would happen if a gust of wind blew the page over while she was busy looking elsewhere. For everyday cooking she may just quickly refer to the ingredients and
method to check that she has remembered everything. She also has three or four medical books which she consults, usually when the children are sick. These were bought in Taiwan. On my visits she always had a small, well used, English-Chinese dictionary on hand.

JP does not have much time for books. He is not interested in the novels that Anna reads, preferring martial arts adventures. He said he started reading these in Taiwan when his sister told him he was too old to read comics. He especially likes novels by Jin Yong. JP said that once he had read his books he did not want to read any other author. He had most of his novels in Taiwan. In Hawai‘i, however, JP's reading in Chinese consists mainly of newspapers and the occasional magazine.

As for the children, most of their Chinese reading is connected to their school work. Richard uses level four of the text *Hua Yu*, which is the text that Hua also uses at the Cantonese community school. It is inexpensive and easy to obtain. In fact, many copies are provided free by the education section of the Coordination Council for North American Affairs. Janet has several Chinese text books, plus some duplicated materials prepared by her Chinese teacher. Apart from these texts, the children read very little in Chinese. This is not because there are no Chinese language children's books available. Anna showed me several sets of large, hard cover books. Some were translations of fairy tales from Europe. These included tales from Germany and by Hans Christian Anderson. Others were Chinese stories, including a children's version of the 24 tales of filial piety. These are ancient Chinese stories which exemplify dutiful children and describe the way they care for their parents. All these books had been bought in Taiwan at various times, were beautifully illustrated, and had the characters annotated with *zhuyin fuhao*. Some had obviously never been opened. Janet said she had tried to read one of the stories when
she was younger but had found it too hard, even though her mother helped her. Now that her reading level is high enough to read them, she has no interest in the stories. Anna said that she had never tried to read any of them with Richard.

In the Young family Irene is the only one to read novels. She has a small number of Chinese paperbacks, which she keeps in one of the tall cupboards in the living room. When she got them out to show me, she fingered them with loving care. She likes the feel and the look of the books. "They are not rough like they used to be," she said. The five or six she showed me were printed in Taiwan. Like Anna's books, they are about people and their lives. They call this type of novel wenyi xiaoshuo. We talked about a particular author Irene likes, Liu Yong, a ex-journalist from Taiwan who now lives in the United States. His son, Liu Xuan, who has translated some of his father's works into English, also writes novels, but in English.

Apart from these novels, Irene has a few Chinese cookbooks and a volume of the Buddhist scripture, the fojing, which her mother bought for her. This is usually on display on top of the piano in the living area. Irene has never used it, however, and does not even know which part of the fojing it contains. She also showed me a bilingual Chinese-English dictionary, and a book of American idioms and swear words with their Chinese equivalents.

Both Niknik and Long Wang told me that they enjoy reading novels in Chinese, Niknik preferring stories set in the past, lishi xiaoshuo 'historical novels', and Long liking martial arts adventures, wuxia xiaoshuo 'martial art novels'. They own only one series of novels, an eight volume set about the Empress dowager Cixi. Reading these has been slow going

1 Cixi Waizhuan 'An Unauthorized Biography of Cixi'.
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since Niknik reads in bed and quickly falls asleep. Long bought the novels for her in Chinatown, and he was quick to write his name on each. Like Siu and Anna, he wrote this along the surface made by the closed pages. The books were expensive, and he did not want them to go astray. Niknik and Long are aware that Chinese language novels are available at some branches of the State library but say that they do not have time to read. Niknik’s mother is a member and has lent Rebecca her card to borrow books a couple of times, but this had not been very convenient. She had told them it was easy to join, but so far they have not done so.

Nearly all the Chinese books that they have were brought with them from the PRC.

Niknik has a book of traditional Chinese cures, which she often consults. She and Long also brought some English texts with translations and grammatical explanations in Chinese. These are the books we work from in the “English lesson” part of my visits. They do not count general conversation as learning English, so we have to spend some time each week reading through the sentences in their texts. Rebecca has an eight volume set of fairy tales, a book containing Chinese proverbs and sayings (chengyu), one or two comic books, and a book of jokes. She likes to read and reread these. Unlike publications from Hong Kong and Taiwan, these are printed in line with current PRC norms, being written in simplified characters, horizontally from left to right.

The only books that I have seen in their apartment written vertically in complex characters are Niknik’s Buddhist texts, and a comic book of Rebecca’s that she obtained in Hawai’i.

Niknik says she used to read the Buddhist texts in China but now has no time. One of the

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2 Pianfang daquan ‘A Collection of Folk Prescriptions’.
4 The title of the fairy tales is Shijie tonghua mingzhu ‘Famous World Fairy Tales’. Sheng Chen said he had also had these in China but had not brought his copies with him to Hawaii.
books is a mantra, so although it is written in Chinese characters the language is not Chinese. It is Sanskrit. When read out in Mandarin pronunciation Niknik presumes it sounds like Sanskrit. Rebecca's comic book is like many that I have seen for sale or rent in Chinatown. It is a translation from a Japanese comic and features Xiao Ping Pang 'Little Ping Pang', a rather strange-looking cat. Long referred to the comic as being Japanese despite the fact that it is a Chinese translation. Such comics are very popular among the students at the school where Hua teaches. One of the places they can be rented is at the Comics Club in the Chinese Cultural Plaza. There is a membership fee and a small charge for each book borrowed.

One book that all the families have is the *Chinese Yellow Pages*, but I never saw this used in the Lin or Young families. This was published for the first time in Hawai'i in 1993. It was compiled and distributed free by the Chinese Community Broadcasting Service, the company where Niknik's brother-in-law works. The front portion of the book, over 100 of the 500 pages, contains all sorts of interesting information about everyday life, including Hawaiian vocabulary, transport, education, business, health, immigration and personalities in the Chinese community. The *Yellow Pages* therefore provides interesting reading as well as addresses and telephone numbers. When he first got a copy Long used to read a little each night in bed. On two of my visits we also used the *Yellow Pages* as a reference; once to find the name of a Chinese organization, and once to find the address of the Chinese music club that his coworker, Mr. Wong, belongs to.

Long also has a small bilingual dictionary which he sometimes consults, but he prefers to use his electronic English/Chinese dictionary, which he calls fanyiji 'translation machine'.

To operate this, which looks like a big pocket calculator, he enters the English word letter

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5 Lexicomp LM-3. Abstract R & D, USA.

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by letter, presses enter, and various possible Chinese translations then appear in the
window. The keys are in alphabetical order, which slows down my entries since I am used
to the order on a typewriter, but this apparently presents Long with an easier task than
looking words up in the dictionary. When one wants to find the English word for a
Chinese one, however, the regular printed dictionary has to be used. The romanized input
system for Chinese is based on one used in Taiwan rather than the pinyin system used in
the PRC, and Long does not know how to use this.

All the Chinese books that the Chen family have are from the PRC. They sent some by
mail, and brought the rest with them. They do not have as many books as the Lin family,
but they seem a lot. As they live in one room, all the books are on display. They are
arranged on the corner table, the desk, the bamboo shelf and various boxes which have
been stood up on their ends to act as cupboards and shelves. Unlike the other families, the
Chens have books in both baihua, modern Chinese vernacular, and older styles of written
language. No one else in the other families reads anything but baihua. Most books in the
Chen family are non-fiction. Those in baihua include books on palmistry (shuo xiang),
which Siu has been studying. He is interested in using massage of the hand to relieve
various illnesses and bodily aches and pains. Others include a book of stories about the
lives of a number of artists (famous painters, calligraphers, sculptors etc.), a recipe book,
Chinese grammar books, Chinese dictionaries, Chinese-English dictionaries, and Chinese
history books.6 Sheng likes to read history. He is continuing to study and develop his
vocabulary skills in Chinese. One day he was engrossed in the section of a history book
which gave Standard Chinese translations for folk sayings and phrases.

6 The book about the artists is Yishujia gushi 'Stories of Artists'. Sheng's favorite history
book is Shijie wuqian nian 'Five Thousand Years of the World'.

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Since they have only one room, the Chens are used to ignoring what others around them might be doing while they are reading. On one occasion Sheng was reading a Chinese history book, sitting on one of the couches opposite Hua and me, who were at the table reading her English text together. Siu was writing at the desk, and Yan was plugged into his walkman, oblivious to all. When they really need to study however, Yan and Sheng often go to the public library when it is open.

Dictionaries have often been used during my visits to the Chens, but not usually to help translate Chinese or English. Sheng used a dictionary to show me the list of dynasties that it contained. He had been telling me about the period of the Three Kingdoms. On another occasion I was asking about the ordering system that I had seen in the Chinese school that Hua works at. Opposite the Principal's office there was a long list of winners in the school-wide Cantonese speech competition, which is held early each year. There were seven levels of students, and three students were awarded first, second, and third place in each level. Sheng thought the seven were the first in a series of twelve. On consulting the dictionary we discovered that they were the first seven of the ten "heavenly stems." 7

Another time Sheng asked me to go over a grammar point that he had been reading in the grammar section in one of his dictionaries.

No one seems keen to use English-Chinese dictionaries to look up translations. Sheng once had a list of pottery terms which he was worried about. He had to learn them for a test in his art class. The terms (such as "clay," "coil method," "cone," and "slab method") were listed in alphabetical order, and each was followed by an explanation of its meaning. He made no effort to look any words up in a dictionary. He waited until I visited and

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7 The ten "heavenly stems" are combined with the twelve "earthly branches" to form a sixty year cycle which has been used in dating since the Shang dynasty. The former are also used as abstract counters like A, B, C, D, (see Chao 1968: 536).
hoped (in vain, as it turned out) that I could translate them for him. Bilingual dictionaries only seem to be consulted as a last resort. Hua bought an electronic dictionary, since she finds it a long tedious business to look things up in a written dictionary. She says she is slower than either of the boys because she does not have as much practice with alphabetical order as they do, and her Mandarin tones are not as standard as theirs. This electronic machine is more advanced than Long's. It can deal with more languages, including Mandarin, Cantonese, Japanese, and French. For some of these languages it also has the capacity to speak the required translation. It has a variety of input systems for Chinese. Mandarin can be entered in pinyin or zhuyin fuhao, and there is also a romanized form of input for Cantonese. As with the Wangs, however, the machine is only used in one direction, namely English to Chinese. Hua sometimes tries to enter Mandarin, but without much success. It is not the pinyin which seems to cause the trouble, but the tones.

Other books in the Chen household are not written in baihua, but are either in what Norman (1988) calls "old vernacular," which the family call ban wenyanwen 'semiclassical', or in the even older wenyanwen 'classical Chinese'. These styles may be written in either simplified or complex characters, the former being written horizontally from left to right and the latter vertically, from right to left. Old vernacular texts include novels such as Journey to the West and Tales of the Three Kingdoms. Sheng likes to read these. The copy of Tales of the Three Kingdoms belonged to his mother's father, and the title on the brown paper cover is in his handwriting. Sheng says he has no trouble reading these novels, which are in janti zi. An example of classical Chinese is a book of Tang poetry which Sheng and his father like to read. This is written horizontally in jiantizi.

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8 Jin zi dian 'Golden character dictionary'. Model GD 89. Instant-dict USA. Speaking translator.
Hua has little time for recreational reading. She constantly feels harassed by family and work commitments. She said she had more time to read in China, and liked science books. In Hawai'i she only reads some of the family's books to prepare for her teaching, since she thinks that the text that her students have is too easy for them. She has used some of the stories about artists, reading them out (in Cantonese), and asking the students to write them down in their own words. If they do not know how to write a character they ask her, and she writes it on the chalkboard. She has also used a few of the Tang poems, usually writing them out on the board in fanti zi, the style with which her students are most familiar. The class members copy down the poems and are expected to learn them so that they can both write out the poems from memory and recite them, usually in Cantonese.

Hua used the Chinese Yellow Pages when she needed to find a Chinese speaking doctor for her husband. She chose the medical center advertised on the first page of the directory, a full page color advertisement, complete with photo of the medical director. Like Niknik and Long, the Chens also have bilingual English texts from the PRC. One set of three are the text books Long used in High School in China. I have recorded some of the dialogues and stories for Sheng.

If we now turn to English books, we find a very different picture. The only members of the families that read English novels on any regular basis are Janet, Richard, and Rebecca. Sheng says he can only read stories, myths and legends being his favorite. Novels are too difficult. Janet and Richard sometimes read for pleasure, despite their mother's opinion to the contrary. She sometimes despairs at their apparent disinterest in general reading. She finds it particularly hard to understand Janet, because when she was her age Anna loved to
read. Nevertheless, I have seen both Janet and Richard reading books which are not required for school work. Rebecca, too, says she reads some English books because she wants to, saying that she finds English and Chinese equally easy to read. Both the Lins and the Wangs buy books for their children. The Chen family does not buy many books, but Sheng borrows books from the local public library.

It is certainly true, however, that most books in English read by the four children are connected with school. Numerous book reports are required for English classes, and texts and references need to be read and consulted for everyday school work and special projects. Richard, and to some extent, Janet also have reading work set by their parents, especially during school holidays.

Yan Chen also reads mostly in English, but rarely for pleasure. He regularly borrows books from the library, going downtown to the main branch rather than using the local branch, as he wants specific texts and does not want to wait for inter-library loan. There is usually a small pile of his library books on the corner table of the Chen's apartment. He used to just borrow non-fiction books, explaining that he was reading to get information, or to help him with his preparation for university entrance. Recently he has been borrowing some novels, mainly with a view to helping him develop his English vocabulary.

Of the other adults in the families I have only seen Irene reading a novel in English. She bought a paperback copy of *Joy Luck Club* after seeing the film. This film had puzzled her. She could not understand its point, and saw the behavior of the women as atypical for Chinese (a view shared by Anna). She hoped that the book might help her understand the story a little better. However, she found the novel hard going. She said she had to read every paragraph at least twice, and even then sometimes did not understand it. I was
puzzled that she had such trouble with written English since she had nearly completed an Arts Degree at University in Hawai'i, but she said all the reading had taken her a long time. Anna does not read novels in English, but she does have some pictorial books. One of these is published by National Geographic and describes mainland China. Such books are also bought with the children's general education in mind. The only books in English that Niknik, Long, and Hua use regularly are their English texts. Hua studies *Express Ways*, the text from her English class. She also uses an English text that Yan used at school in the PRC.

**Other Printed and Duplicated Documents**

Other than the above, not many printed materials containing Chinese are read by family members. Those that are either originate in the PRC or Taiwan, or relate to Chinese organizations and/or their activities in Hawai'i. The latter are likely to include an English translation for all or part of their content in recognition of the fact that they are operating in Hawai'i, where the written language of the majority is English.

**From Abroad**

The Wang and Chen families have copies of certificates, diplomas, school records, and other documents which they brought with them from the PRC. Family members also receive greeting cards written in Chinese. They may also be given name cards by visitors to Hawai'i. Yan showed me two birthday cards he had been sent from the PRC. One was from a former professor and one from an old school friend. Both had English as well as Chinese printed greetings, though some of the English sounded a little odd. For example, "Birthday Happy," which follows the Chinese word order, *shengri kuaile*, "Wish all the best to be a colorful world," and "Happy to You." Such use of English reflects the worldwide interest in the language and its association with modernity. It is especially
fashionable among the young. Interestingly, Long also thinks that the complex form of the Chinese script, fānzi, is also considered trendy at the moment in the PRC, perhaps because of its association with overseas trade and the modern, Westernized way of life.

Activities in Hawai'i

Anna had a program for a musical concert organized for the Double Ten Celebration by the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission and a Taiwanese television station. She went with Irene and Simon. In fact, they persuaded her to go, and provided transport for the occasion. The program was an elaborate affair of several pages with a glossy paper cover. It was printed in color, on high quality paper, and included not only the order of performance, and the names of the performers and those associated with the production, but also colored photographs of all concerned and the words to all of the songs sung. One of the songs was in English. Siu Chen had a similar glossy brochure/program with many color photographs which he received when he attended an art exhibition organized by the Coordination Council for North American Affairs at the Chinese Cultural Plaza. Long said that the governments of both Taiwan and the PRC always produced good quality publications for overseas Chinese consumption.

Other printed documents relate to Chinese schools, churches, and organizations. The Saturday Chinese school that Richard attends provides students and parents with a schedule each semester. This lists what is to be covered in class each week, the dates of quizzes and tests, and information on any special events. The school also sends home test results, which parents are expected to sign and return to show that they had seen them. Such information is usually in Chinese. It is often written by hand and duplicated rather than typed. Janet, and to a lesser extent Richard, also have to read various duplicated work sheets related to their Chinese classes. The orders of service at the churches which
Anna attends are also printed in Chinese, with a few words printed in English, mostly names and addresses. She also gets notices and annual reports, either sent by mail, or picked up when she goes to Sunday service. Siu and JP receive notices and newsletters from the Chinese organizations with which they are involved.

On one occasion a mainstream institution sent a letter written in English on one side of the paper and Chinese on the other. This invited Hua and Siu to go Sheng's school to find out more about the SLEP (Students with Limited English Proficiency) Program. This provides English help to students who need it. The letter said that interpreters would be available in huayu (a general term for Chinese, thus not disclosing the dialect), as well as Korean and Vietnamese. I went along with Hua, and was interested to see that the interpreter for the Chinese parents was from Hong Kong, an indication that the Education Department assumed that Cantonese would be the Chinese dialect required. Although she chatted happily in Mandarin before the information session began, she switched to Cantonese for the formal session since this was the language in which she was more fluent. As it turned out Mandarin would have been much more suitable. Two of the six Chinese parents who attended could not understand Cantonese at all. Of the other four, one was Hua, who is bilingual in Mandarin and Cantonese, and the others were from Taiwan. By chance, they all understood Cantonese, but Mandarin was the language they felt more comfortable with. One Taiwanese couple were extremely concerned about their son who, like Sheng, entered the school in grade 8, the final year of Intermediate School. They really could not get their ideas across in Cantonese, and switched to Mandarin to voice their concerns and ask questions.

In contrast to the dearth of such documents printed in Chinese, the families have to deal daily with various printed materials in English. The children are surrounded by materials
in English at school, both in terms of study materials, such as worksheets, tests, and quizzes, and organizational documents, such as timetables. Their parents receive notices from the schools giving information and instructions about school policy and procedures, study schedules, option choices, progress reports, and special events and activities, such as camps, school visits, and open house days. There may also be pleas for help, monetary and otherwise. Some of these notices require a written response. The Wangs and the Chens need help in interpreting these notices. In the Wang family Rebecca explains orally, in Mandarin, simple documents such as those concerning field trips. These usually just give dates, times, any costs, and ask the parent to sign to give permission for their child to attend. Niknik’s sister or I help with more difficult documents, such as school rules and policy. Yan helps in the Chen family.

Some parents, such as Anna, carefully file away their children’s reports and the results of external exams, such as the Secondary Schools Admission Test, for future reference. Other printed materials that may be kept in this way are receipts, instructions, and guarantees. Both Niknik and Anna could instantly lay their hands on the relevant documents when the occasion arose: Niknik, when she had a query about the fanyiji, and Anna, when something went wrong with her refrigerator.

Policy documents, rules, notices, and letters are received from employers, apartment managers, landlords, banks, insurance companies, mail order firms, and other businesses and government departments. Bills and invoices are regularly received. All the families also receive advertising material and junk mail. I sometimes help Niknik and Long with these items. Yan sorts out the important mail from the unimportant in the Chen household. JP does the same for some of his patients.
Some legal and financial documents may be quite complicated so that even skilled users of English need help to interpret the meaning. Anna and Irene both use the same Chinese-speaking certified public accountant in relation to their husbands' businesses, and when Anna was trying to sell her apartment and buy a house she chose a real estate agent who spoke Chinese. I was with Anna one day when the real estate agent called in with some papers for Anna to review, initial, and sign. While the written document was in English, all the explanation and discussion, apart from a few words such as "initial," "termite inspection," and "accept," was carried out in Mandarin.

Written forms and lists are also encountered at work. Niknik is given computer generated lists of rooms which indicate whether the rooms are "check out" or "stay over." This guides the type of service required. Long has a work order for each frame he makes. In addition to customer details, this gives instructions related to size, color of frame and mounting, and the type of frame, mounting, and glazing required. When he first started at the job he had to ask a lot of questions and used a dictionary to make sure he knew what was required.

Finally, some English reading is involved in other activities, such as shopping, and going to some social events, such as concerts and films. I once went shopping with Hua and realized how difficult it was to buy products without being able to read the fine print. On another occasion, she asked me why the powder she had bought to clean the toilet bowl did not seem to work very well. When she showed me what she had bought, it had an appropriate picture on the packaging but the writing indicated that it was meant to unplug blocked drains.
Handwritten Documents

In contrast to the preponderance of written English in the non-book, non-newspaper type of print noted above, most handwriting read in the families is in Chinese. All the types of writing in Chinese described in the previous chapter are, in turn, read. Family members receive letters and notes from relatives and friends, and read the memos, recipes, stories, diaries, and poems written by themselves or by others. The greeting cards and photographs they receive may also include a handwritten message. For example, Hua's sister in Los Angeles once sent her a number of photographs taken at Christmas when her mother had been visiting. There was no accompanying letter, the only writing being a line or so of explanation and description on the back of each photo. Calligraphy, in its many forms, also provides texts which can be read.

Other handwritten documents read by family members relate to work. In her teaching at the Chinese school Hua concentrates on reading and writing since the students are all fluent speakers of Cantonese. Much of the students' time is spent learning the meanings of new vocabulary items and how to write them. They are also expected to be able to write out stories and poems from memory. In addition, they have to complete a number of quizzes during the semester and write some essays. Hua therefore has a lot of written work to check, correct, and grade. Anna and JP read some Chinese at JP's office. When patients first come they have the option of filling out the general information form about their personal details and health background in Chinese. Anna says she always asks Chinese patients to write their names in characters so that she knows how to pronounce them. The romanized forms needed for official purposes, such as insurance claims, are based on a number of different systems and dialects, so she likes to see the character to know what the "real" name is and how to pronounce it.
In contrast, few family members, apart from the children, regularly deal with handwritten materials written entirely in English. Perhaps the main situation where the adults are called on to read English handwriting is during their English study, whether this be with a teacher in a formal educational institution or with me in their homes. During such study they or the teacher involved write down English phrases and words to help develop their vocabulary, and to assist in the understanding and retention of new words and expressions. JP, Anna and Long also have to deal with some handwritten English at work. For example, Long has to read the written instructions of the work orders.

Some family members may have cause to read other languages with which they are familiar. For example, Simon was once summoned to his mother’s house to read a letter from his brother in France. He had written in Lao, but his mother can only read Chinese. Irene was indignant that none of Simon’s siblings, who all speak Lao in preference to Chinese, could read the letter. She herself does not know Lao, which must often be a handicap in family situations. On more than one occasion she has said that at least she knows one language fully, i.e., she can speak, read, and write.

Other Types of Print, including Environmental Print
The Lin family have an extensive collection of CDs and long playing CDs, which they call LDs. Most of these are for karaoke. They enjoy this form of entertainment when friends come to visit. Most of the discs have either been bought in Taiwan or are made there, so the titles of the discs and the songs are given in Chinese characters, even if the songs are sung in English (in which case the English version is also given). JP likes this, since it makes it easier for him to identify the songs. When playing karaoke discs the lyrics are flashed onto the screen in the language in which the song is sung. Anna bought a disc of
Chinese songs for the children but they showed little interest. This annoyed her since the discs are not cheap, especially if bought in Hawai'i.

Another time Chinese writing appears on the TV screen is during Mandarin programs broadcast by the Chinese Community Broadcasting Service. Subtitles can play an important role in the television watching enjoyment in the Lin, Young, and Wang families. They help family members understand the dialogue, which may be difficult to comprehend if the Mandarin is strongly accented or if some of the dialogue is in Taiwanese. Irene is particularly dependent on the subtitles, even though she can speak both Taiwanese and Mandarin. She says she is used to having the written text as everything produced in Taiwan is subtitled. She therefore finds it hard to follow any television program without these. Janet also makes use of the subtitles, especially if the dialogue contains some classical Chinese phrases or expressions. Irene thinks that such reading has helped increase Janet's Chinese language knowledge. The Cantonese and Mandarin programs on the other channel, KIKU, are not usually subtitled. Only Simon and Anna are keen viewers of the Cantonese programs since they understand spoken Cantonese. Irene says she can follow a lot of the dialogue but finds it too much of an effort. She said she would probably watch more if the programs were subtitled.

Subtitles are also found on videos and at the cinema. The Young and Lin families often go to the Golden Harvest Theatre in Chinatown, where most of the films have Cantonese dialogue. The Wangs rarely go to the cinema but they often rent videos from Chinatown, many of which are also in Cantonese. The subtitles in Cantonese films and videos are usually written in standard Chinese, but sometimes they are written in colloquial Cantonese. Long is a great fan of kungfu movies and says he is beginning to understand spoken Cantonese partly through following these subtitles. Only the Chen family do not
seem to make much use of subtitles. They rarely go to the movies or watch videos. Also, they can understand both Cantonese and Mandarin, so have less need to read. They can understand the dialogue. In addition, subtitles are not as common in the PRC as they are in Taiwan, so they are not accustomed to them. Their television set is also very small, so it would be difficult to read the subtitles even if they wanted to.

Other instances of Chinese writing can be called environmental. Around Chinatown the names of shops and restaurants are written in Chinese, as are the names of many of the goods in the shops and items on restaurant menus. In addition, each street sign has two Chinese characters hua bu 'Chinatown' next to the English name of the street. Long has noticed a number of what he considers to be amusing uses of Chinese script in Chinatown. Most are instances where characters are used for their phonetic value. When pronounced in Cantonese they approximate the sound value of an English word. When read in Mandarin, however, they make no sense. Examples are 热气 吉 magir 'market', and 雨水 洗 yinso 'insure'. One other example he noticed, which he thought meant 'restaurant', as this is the context in which it is used, is 热气 遍 jaapseeul 'chop suey'.

There are also notices and advertisements in Chinese around Chinatown, especially in the windows of shops and restaurants. Messages in Chinese characters (but usually related to the Japanese rather than the Chinese language) can also be seen in Waikiki and other tourist spots.

In the homes of the families too, one sees Chinese characters on the walls on scrolls, paintings, and pieces of calligraphy. These are especially abundant in the homes of the Lins and Chens. The Lin family also has a number of knotted hangings which incorporate characters painted on ceramic or enamel plaques. Most of these were given by visitors from Taiwan. The Wang family has the character fu, made of brass, hanging upside down
on the back of the apartment door. JP has the same character, written on paper, at his medical practice.

Environmental instances of English greatly outnumber Chinese everywhere except in the specific locations noted above, where Chinese speaking people are in the majority. Elsewhere, all family members are constantly exposed to written English, in streets, shops, offices, and places of entertainment.

One particular use of English print warrants special mention. This is the use of English to subtitle Chinese language dialogue. Some of the Chinese videos one can rent, and all the films at the Golden Harvest Cinema have English as well as Chinese subtitles. While the adults read the Chinese, Janet and Richard read the English subtitles to understand the Cantonese dialogue. When Irene went to see the film "Farewell my Concubine" at a mainstream cinema she also read the English subtitles, even though the dialogue was in Mandarin. She says she finds PRC Mandarin difficult to follow, and would have preferred the film to have been subtitled in Chinese. Anna was surprised that Irene should have trouble understanding spoken Mandarin, but her need to read may also be connected to her general reliance on subtitles. She even has a closed caption facility on her television so that she can read while watching programs in English. Such captions apparently annoy Janet and Richard. They find them irritating, and demand that the closed captioning be switched off when they visit Irene's home.

Discussion
The data presented in this chapter shows that the families have access to a wide range of printed material in Chinese, especially newspapers, magazines, and books. In addition, they are recipients of handwritten documents, such as those described in the previous
chapter. Which family members are involved in the reading of these, for what purposes, and to what extent differs considerably. The patterns and significance of these differences will be discussed in some detail in later chapters. It is also clear that family members have to deal with English print, since they are living and operating in an English language environment. As with writing, individuals differ in their English language proficiency, but while one can get by with very little writing, reading, at some level, is involved in most aspects of everyday life, for example, shopping and getting from place to place. As Corbett (1981: 47) points out, "writing will never be as crucial a skill for surviving or thriving in our society as reading is."

There are different levels, and different ways of reading, however. For Siu, most of his English reading is at the word identification level. Even the adults who have been in the United States for longer and have had tertiary level education here, still find reading English a struggle. But, like Simon, they manage to extract the information they want, or need to get from the text. Even when one is a proficient reader, not all materials are read in the same way. This applies to Chinese as well as English. Some things, such as novels, stories, letters, and notes are usually read from beginning to end. Others, such as magazines and newspapers, may be, but are much more likely to be read in sections, with more attention given to some parts than others. Some readers may only read one part, as with Rebecca and JP, who regularly read only one section of certain Chinese newspapers. Many non-fiction books, such as textbooks, cook books, religious books, and medical books, would also not be read from beginning to end. The relevant section is accessed as necessary. Reference books, such as dictionaries, grammar books, and telephone directories are typically not "read" as such but are "consulted," the change of verb indicating a change in type of activity. The perceived necessity to understand every word, rather than getting the general gist of the thing being read also varies depending on a
number of factors, such as the purpose of the reading, the activity of which it is a part, and the type of text involved.

Finally, the data in this chapter have again highlighted some variations within the Chinese written code, for example, *baihua* and Classical Chinese, as well as style and direction of print. Such variations and their significance will be the subject of discussion in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 7
THE CHINESE WRITTEN CODE: VARIATION, DISTRIBUTION, AND USE

In the first part of this chapter I will describe some of the variation in the Chinese written code that I noticed, or had pointed out to me when I was cataloging the various reading and writing activities the four families. I will then go on to look at the way these various forms are distributed and used. This will give information on a number of areas of interest to this study. It will tell us something about the nature of Chinese writing, the norms of use of the code, and family members' knowledge, views, and beliefs about each of these. A range of patterns of use are found. These vary depending on whether one is looking at what the family members read or what they write, so these will be discussed separately. Some of the patterns give information about what Watson-Gegeo and Ulichny (1988) call vertical levels of context, which involve institutional constraints and influences of the larger culture and society. Others relate more to horizontal levels i.e., the immediate setting (ibid.).

Forms of the Code
Three main types of variation in the code will be looked at. One relates to the actual way characters are written; that is to say, the same character can be written in different ways. For example mai 'buy' can be written as or . The former is fanzi, the older complex form of characters still used outside of the PRC. The latter is jianti zi, the simplified form introduced by the government of the PRC as part of their language reform policy in the mid 1950s and early 1960s. Simplification was achieved by two main methods. These were the elimination of some characters and a reduction in the number of strokes needed to write others. Just over one thousand variant characters were eliminated, while over two thousand of the seven thousand characters in everyday use had
some reduction in the number of strokes needed to write them (DeFrancis 1984: 260). While this has led to significant changes to the form of many characters, over 60% remain common to both fanti zi and jianti zi. In addition, many of the simplified forms have been used unofficially in cursive handwriting for hundreds of years, so are familiar to readers outside the PRC, who may also use them in casual writing. It is only some of the newly created abbreviations which may cause some difficulty in decoding.

Both the above characters for "buy" are written in a very plain style, where every stroke is clearly written. This contrasts with a more flowing "grass" style of writing, which can be seen in figures 2, 3, and 7 (all figures are in the Appendix). Calligraphers like Siu have a variety of such styles at their disposal. His favorite is xingshu 'running hand', but he also writes in kaishu 'regular script', which is like the printed form one finds in books. Such variations in writing style cut across the fanti zi, jianti zi distinction.

The second type of variation in the code involves choice of vocabulary. It is not the actual form of the character which varies, but which characters are written. Such variation relates to a different level of style. Different genres follow different conventions, of which choice of vocabulary is a part. Styles identified by the families, and by myself at this level were modern standard vernacular (baihua), colloquial dialect writing, and classical and semi-classical language (wenyanwen and ban wenyanwen respectively). In addition to these, I will discuss two other types of variation. These relate to the use of English vocabulary in basically Chinese texts, and the range of salutations and closings in letters written in baihua. All these differences at the level of vocabulary again cut across the jianti zi, fanti zi distinction. Classical Chinese texts and baihua writing can be written in either form of the script.
Some words and particles in Chinese dialects are not cognate with their modern Mandarin equivalents. In some cases the terms are not used at all in Mandarin. Alternatively, they may be used less frequently, sometimes with a different meaning, or restricted to older writings. "It is estimated that one third of everyday Cantonese words and expressions stand quite apart from their counterparts in modern vernacular [Mandarin]" (Zeng 1988: ix). There are two main ways to write such terms using Chinese characters. One can use standard characters in non-standard ways, or invent new, and therefore non-standard, characters.¹ In the former case the sound value of the characters, when pronounced in the dialect involved, represents the spoken form. An example from Cantonese is 屋企 `home'. An example of the use of a non-standard character is 冇 `not have'.

In standard written Chinese the more or less equivalent expressions for these two terms would be 家 jia and 没有 mei you respectively.

Examples of written language which pre-dates modern vernacular writing were found in the semiclassical novels read by Sheng Chen. These novels use vocabulary items such as 我 'my', 'we', or 'our', 你 'you', and 說 'to say'. In modern vernacular Mandarin these would be 我 (women for the plural), 你, and 說 respectively. In addition to differences in vocabulary, classical language differs from modern baihua in terms of grammar and style. Li and Thompson (1982) describe classical style as highly condensed and telegraphic due mainly to widespread zero anaphora, the scarcity of grammatical morphemes, and the brevity of clauses.

The third variation in form to be looked at relates to direction of writing. Some texts are written vertically, some horizontally and some are a mixture of both.

¹ A third alternative is to use a romanized form to represent the sound. This type of writing is found in some Hong Kong and Taiwanese publications, but no examples were found in the publications read by the families in this study.
Patterns of Use

In the first part of this section I will look at how the various forms of the written code noted above are distributed in some of the written materials read in the four families. I will then consider how family members deal with this variation, and what they think of it. In the final part I will look at how family members use the different forms in their writing.

Distribution

Most printed Chinese in Hawai'i, such as that found in newspapers, magazines, books of various types, notices from Chinese organizations and churches, film and video subtitles, karaoke lyrics, and environmental print in Chinatown and the homes of the families is written in the complex form of characters, fanti zi. This is the accepted norm for written Chinese in the United States and other overseas Chinese communities. Even some publications from the PRC which are written for an overseas Chinese readership are written in fanti zi. This is also the form of writing used by Chinese people who have come to the United States from countries outside of the PRC, or from mainland China prior to the writing reform policies of the 1950s and 1960s. This adds to the extent of use of fanti zi, since these are the groups from which the people who are influential in business and/or Chinese organizations in Hawai'i tend to be drawn. As Hua pointed out when we were talking about environmental writing in Honolulu's Chinatown, which is mainly fanti zi, few businesses are owned by recent immigrants from the PRC.

With the exception of some school text books, materials printed in jianti zi are not generally available for purchase in Hawai'i. Most of the texts and documents printed in this form of the script in the Chen and Wang families originated in the PRC. They were either brought by family members when they emigrated, or were sent to them later. Until
recently, all schools teaching Chinese in Hawai‘i used text books written in fanti zi. In fact, many still do, but a few are introducing jianti zi to their students. Some of Janet’s school text books contain a simplified version of the material, often as an appendix. The Mandarin teacher told me that the school thought students should be exposed to this type of script by their third year of Chinese in case they go to the PRC, for pleasure or for study, or find themselves in university classes in the United States where jianti zi is used. In the Cantonese school where Hua teaches, students in the higher classes are also introduced to jianti zi. In both cases then, fanti zi is regarded as the basic form and jianti zi as a later addition. Janet thinks this makes sense. She could not see how anyone could learn the short forms first.

The form of colloquial dialect writing of which family members are most aware is Cantonese. This reflects the historical links between Hawai‘i and Guangdong province, the current cultural influence of Hong Kong, and, in the case of the Chen family and Anna Lin, their own family and language backgrounds. Cantonese vocabulary items can be seen in the streets of Chinatown, in some newspapers, in novels from Hong Kong, and in the subtitles of videos. There is also a thriving business in colloquial Cantonese comic books in Chinatown. Some personal letters received from Guangdong Province, in the case of Hua, and Hong Kong, in the case of Anna, and notes written in the Chen family also contain examples of Cantonese vocabulary. The preponderance of Cantonese does not mean that no other colloquial dialect vocabulary is seen. When Anna knew that I was interested in this aspect she pointed out the non-standard use of some characters due to the influence of the Taiwanese dialect in some of the short stories in the daily newspaper, the Shijie Ribao. This reflects the background of both the authors and the readership of these pieces.
Dialect writing is restricted to casual, informal writing. It is not found in the more conservative newspapers, such as the Zhongyang Ribao, nor would it be found in serious books. Even in newspapers and magazines where it occurs, it is restricted to certain sections, such as comics, short stories, and human interest articles. News items usually follow the norms of standard written Chinese. I once asked Hua if the former student who wrote to her using colloquial terms such as neihdeih 'you PL', yiha 'now', and m 'NEG', had used this kind of vocabulary in the writing that she did in Hua's physics class in the PRC. The question made no sense to her. When writing about physics one would use the language of physics, the language of the text books. This would be standard written Chinese. It would not be appropriate to use Cantonese in such a context.

The distribution of classical Chinese and semiclassical style is similarly linked to a certain type of text. Examples of the former are found in the book of Tang dynasty poems that Sheng and Siu enjoy reading. These date from A.D. 618 - 907, the period associated with the height of literary development in China. Examples of the latter occur in old vernacular novels, such as Journey to the West, which date from the early Ming period (which began in A.D. 1368). Vocabulary associated with these styles of language is not restricted to literary texts. It can also be found in the subtitles of historical stories and serials on television and video when actors use older forms of language in their speech. Irene commented that Janet and Richard did not usually understand these parts of such stories.

Turning to the use of English, there are many examples where some English is found in the Chinese texts read in the families. One particular pattern of use will be discussed here, namely the way English is used to designate proper names and addresses. When I saw a notice advertising a meeting at a church, I was puzzled as to why all the information was in Chinese characters except the address. The notice was clearly directed at Chinese
speakers, so why give them the address in English? Irene pointed out the logic of this by showing me a number of advertisements in the local Chinese daily paper which had their addresses written only in Chinese characters. Even if she wanted to go to these places, she said, she would not know where they were. The addresses, when read in Mandarin, the dialect with which she is most familiar, did not resemble any English street name she could think of. Since the writers and readers connected with this old established paper are mainly from Zhongshan, most transliterations are based on their Cantonese pronunciation. For example, "Kalihi" is written in the paper with three characters which approximate the English name when read in Zhongshan dialect. In Mandarin these are pronounced as jia li xi, which does not sound much like Kalihi. Thus, one of the characteristics of the Chinese writing system which has made it so versatile, namely that the way the reader pronounces individual characters is no impediment to reading comprehension, proves to be a disadvantage when it comes to using characters for their sound values.

This is one reason why semantic translation has been preferred over phonetic borrowing in developing the terminology needed for the modernization and elaboration of the Chinese language in the twentieth century. When dealing with proper names one seldom has this option, though it does sometimes occur. For example "River Street" in Honolulu's Chinatown is written with the character which means "river." In countries where Chinese is the national language efforts have been made to promulgate standard transliterations for commonly used proper names, for example the names of foreign heads of state. In Hawai'i the situation is more complex because printed materials originate in a number of different countries, including the United States, so no one standard prevails. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the writers and readers of Chinese in the U.S. have such a variety of linguistic backgrounds, and because of the great need to refer to people
and places with English names, since one is operating in a country where English is the dominant language.

One last pattern I would like to discuss in this section relates to direction of print. Most books, newspapers, and magazines printed in fanti zi are bound on the right hand side of the page, with the lines of print running vertically from right to left. Family members agree that this follows the norms of Taiwan, Hong Kong and pre-language reform China. This contrasts with the current norm in the PRC, where publications are now regularly bound on the left hand side, like books written in English, and the text is organized horizontally from left to right. Within the fanti zi materials available in Hawai'i, however, there is a great deal of variation in direction of writing. Some books, booklets, and newspapers, particularly those produced locally, such as the monthly Hawaii Chinese Community News, the Chinese Yellow Pages, and the annual reports and orders of service of Chinese churches open the same way as English publications, and much of the print is horizontal. Notices and newsletters from Chinese organizations are also often written horizontally.

There may also be variation within any one document. Even in magazines printed almost entirely in vertical lines of print, such as Duzhe Wenzhai, the Chinese Readers Digest, there may be one or two lines of writing that run horizontally. These are usually titles and headings, which often run from right to left to fit in with the direction of the vertical lines. Advertisements, especially if they contain English words, tend to be organized horizontally from left to right. Newspaper typesetters and editors seem to exploit to the full the various permutations that Chinese writing offers in terms of direction. Since these papers are geared towards the United States market, they carry many advertisements which call for the use of English script for names and addresses (to avoid the difficulties with
transliteration, as discussed above). As with the Readers Digest, these usually run horizontally from left to right. Some, however, especially very small personal advertisements, are written vertically, in which case any English words are turned on their sides.

Variation and Reading
I will now go on to consider how readers of Chinese in the study families cope with these variations in the Chinese written code and what they say about them. This will give information about their knowledge and awareness of, attitudes to, and ideas about the Chinese script.

As noted above, most of the printed materials available in Hawai'i are written in fanti zi. For members of the Lin and Young families, this is the form of script with which they are most familiar since this is the form they learned at school. On the other hand, all the members of the Chen and Wang families, apart from Siu and Hua who did some of their schooling in the early 1950s, learned only jianti zi at school. Yet they all read fanti zi texts, apparently without too much difficulty. Most of the adults say they were used to this form of print before they left the PRC. Long Wang and Hua Chen told me that they had many books printed in fanti zi in their homes there, and their parents sometimes used this form of character in their writing. While not officially encouraged, books and other publications in this type of script are easily obtained. They either pre-date the 1950s or come from outside the country, for example from Hong Kong. Since these books were in their homes, the children in the two families also had some exposure to fanti zi outside of school, though in Rebecca's case this was quite minimal.
It has been interesting and instructive to see how Rebecca has developed her Chinese reading skills during the time I have been visiting her family. When I first went Long and Niknik both told me that the Sing Tao Daily was too difficult for her to read because there were many janti zi she did not know. Now, however, she enjoys reading the part of the paper which discusses film stars and movies. Her interest in this area of the paper seems to have provided her with sufficient motivation to spend the necessary time and energy to acquire the skills needed to read and understand it. This does not seem too extraordinary to her parents. Like most of the Chen family, they think that a reader of jianti zi can quite quickly learn to read fanti zi. Hua gave me another example of this. One of the students who had recently joined her class at the Chinese community school only knew jianti zi when she first attended. She had immigrated from the PRC a few years before, having completed three or four grades of school there. Hua said that it had taken only a short time for her to master reading the fanti zi texts they use at the school.

This attitude to fanti zi is one reason that Long does not think that there will ever be any demand for jianti zi among Chinese residents of Hawai'i, even if there is a significant increase in the number of immigrants from the PRC. They will accept fanti zi as the norm in Hawai'i, just as they accept other differences they find on arrival. Hua thought the same. People who want to read adapt.

In the Lin and Young families, the challenge is to understand jianti zi. Anna and Irene both have relatives educated in the PRC with whom they occasionally communicate in writing. Letters from these relatives are written in jianti zi. Usually they have little trouble reading these, though it may take some time. An example of this was seen when Irene received a letter from her cousin from the PRC who is now living in Oregon. Irene said that she had to guess the meaning of one or two unfamiliar characters. In one case
(the character mai 'buy'), it took several readings for her to realize what it meant. When I asked Irene what she thought of this type of writing she was not judgmental. She said that it was just the way they wrote in the PRC. Writers in Taiwan also have some simple ways of writing characters, she said. Some of these were the same as those used by her cousin, others were not.

Not that everyone thinks that the two forms are so easy to read. Janet said she could not read the letter from her Beijing pen friend because of the use of jianti zi. This contrasts with her mother, who read it out to us with no apparent trouble when Janet brought the letter to the dining table where I was sitting with Anna. Niknik also told me of her former supervisor at the hotel, who was originally from Taiwan. When she left Hawai'i, she told Niknik that it would be no use writing to her since she could not understand jianti zi, which is the only form which Niknik can write. Yan was also doubtful that all readers in the PRC could easily handle fanti zi. He said that many of his classmates at university in Guangdong told him that they could not read materials in fanti zi.

The above observations suggest that there are several key factors involved in determining whether a reader of one form is able to read materials written in the other. These include attitude towards the different forms, motivation to read the text in question, exposure to, and experience in reading the other form, and general reading proficiency. Janet's problems with jianti zi probably related to a lack of motivation and/or interest. The letter was, after all, part of a school assignment rather than a real personal message. The fact that Janet has been exposed to less handwritten Chinese than her mother probably also played a part. With Niknik and Yan's friends one could hypothesize that the readers involved had little exposure to, or motivation to read the forms of the code with which they claimed difficulty.
The part of the paper Rebecca reads also contains a lot of Cantonese terms. When I asked her about some of these she said that she knew the usage was not standard, and that she could not always say exactly what they meant. She can get the gist of the articles however, enough for her to enjoy her reading. Her father does not usually read this part of the paper, only reading the news and more serious stories. But when I showed him one of the articles he could not only give the Mandarin equivalents of the Cantonese terms, but could also pronounce many of them in Cantonese. He has become familiar with the dialect through watching Cantonese videos, many of which are subtitled in Cantonese rather than standard Chinese. These subtitles, together with the spoken dialogue and visual clues as to what is happening have helped him (and Rebecca to some extent, since she also watches) understand written Cantonese. He is also exposed to Cantonese writing and speech every day in Chinatown since he works there. In contrast, Niknik does not understand the written Cantonese terms in the newspaper, nor does she have any interest in understanding them. She considers such writing to be relevant only to people from Hong Kong, and nothing to do with her or others from North China.

It is not only non-Cantonese speakers who learn to read colloquial dialect writing informally. Cantonese speakers also pick up their reading knowledge outside of formal schooling, since all schools teach students how to read and write standard written Chinese, whether this is read out in Mandarin or Cantonese. This is why Cantonese schools in Hawai‘i, such as the one where Hua works, can use the texts supplied by the Chinese government in Taiwan for the teaching of Mandarin. Anna thinks that any Cantonese speaker who can read standard Chinese can read colloquial Cantonese. As soon as the reader realizes that the characters do not make sense in Mandarin, he/she would try the Cantonese pronunciation. Yan said that he learned to read Cantonese when he was at
university in Guangdong province. His roommates often wrote him notes containing colloquial forms. He also saw colloquial Cantonese in newspapers and magazines from Hong Kong.

It therefore seems that reasonably fluent readers of standard written Chinese can read colloquial Cantonese if they have enough exposure to the code in question, and the spoken form to which it relates. They may not read in the sense of understanding every word, but as with most general reading, the reader is satisfied with obtaining the overall meaning of the passage. Again motivation, and attitude towards the code and the kind of material to which it relates are both important.

When we come to classical Chinese, however, the picture is rather different. Readers are faced with significant grammatical as well as vocabulary differences. The adults in the families, together with Sheng and his brother, all studied classical Chinese at school before they came to Hawai‘i. Most agreed that this style of writing was very difficult to understand and required much study. Opinions about the difficulty of reading semi-classical differed. The Chen and Wang families thought it was quite easy to understand if one had studied classical Chinese. JP Lin, however, doubted he could read such texts because he has forgotten most of what he had learned about classical language. In relation to semiclassical writing, therefore, attitude, motivation, and exposure (in this case to classical Chinese) again seem important factors. As far as classical Chinese is concerned, however, this seems to be in a different category. There is no way to just pick it up. It has to be specifically taught.

Of the four families, only the Chens show much interest in texts written in these older styles. The others read only baihua texts. Neither Rebecca's nor Janet and Richard's
parents thought that it was important for their children to have any knowledge of classical or semiclassical writing. They think that it is unnecessary, unless one wants to specialize in history or ancient literature at university level. Anna actually complained to Richard's Chinese school teacher when the text the class was using introduced Tang dynasty poems, which the students had to learn by heart. She thought this was too difficult a task, took too much time, and was not useful, since this is not the kind of language needed in everyday life. On the other hand, use of classical phrases in writing is taken as an indication of education. For example, JP noted that his favorite writer, Jin Yong, whose work he greatly admires, made some use of classical language in his novels. This shows he is educated, and seems to correlate positively with the excellence of his writing.

Finally, I would like to comment on readers' reactions to the various directions of print. When I asked about this, most said that it was not important. It was merely a matter of convenience, or due to the personal choice of the typesetter. Some family members from the PRC said that it took some time to adjust to the general right to left orientation and the mixture of directions and patterns of print routinely exploited in the Chinese newspapers available in Hawai'i. Hua, Long and Niknik all reported some initial difficulties in working out where to start reading. Niknik said headlines and titles written horizontally from right to left were particularly troublesome.

**Variation and Writing**

If we now turn to writing, we will see different patterns in both knowledge and awareness of the various forms of the Chinese written code and the significance of these. In general, the repertoire of forms writers have at their disposal is less than the range which they can access in reading. For example, while all the members of the Chen and Wang families can read fanti zi, only Siu and Hua can write using this form. Everyone in the two families
agrees that writing is a very different task from reading. Acquiring a reading knowledge of fianzi is relatively easy, but writing is much more difficult. A similar pattern is seen with styles of script at a writer's disposal. Sheng, Rebecca, Janet and Richard always use a very plain form of character (see figures 1 and 4 for examples of Janet and Sheng's writing). Adults and skilled writers, especially when writing fast, can also use a more flowing "grass" style of writing. Other styles, such as xingshu 'running hand', and kaishu 'regular script', would be known only to certain people, such as those interested in calligraphy.

Where a writer has a choice of which form of the written script to use, we can look at the factors surrounding the particular writing activity involved to see which influence the choice of one form over another. Such analysis makes more explicit some of the rules and norms of use of written Chinese. It also gives information on the writer's view of both the code and the nature of the event in question.

As far as dialect writing is concerned, only Hua showed any evidence of the use of dialect related vocabulary in her writing. She twice used a Cantonese vocabulary item in notes to her sons. In both cases this usage seemed inadvertent rather than due to choice. Hua expressed a definite preference for writing standard Chinese, which she explained was due to her long sojourn in the north of China. When she received the letter containing a lot of colloquial Cantonese from an ex-pupil, she said she would reply in Standard Chinese. In addition, when she wrote out the speeches for her students at the Cantonese school she did not use colloquial dialect forms even though this is the form in which they would probably read the speeches. It was up to them to translate the standard Chinese Hua wrote into colloquial Cantonese as they read. The writing of classical Chinese was
similarly found to be quite restricted, in terms of both writers and type of text in which it is used. Only Siu writes in this style in his calligraphy and when writing poetry.

As to the use of fanti zi and jianti zi, only Hua and Siu are skilled in writing both, though they usually write horizontally in jianti zi. However, there were three situations where they also used fanti zi. These were during conversations with me, in Siu's calligraphy, and when Hua writes for her students at the Chinese school. Some of these situations also involved variations in direction of writing, and style of script. Each of these situations will be examined below, with an eye to identifying the reasons for the variation from the writers' usual style.

During our conversations Hua and Siu often wrote single characters and words in the hope that this would assist me to understand what they were saying. The functions of the event were to give me information, and to build and maintain a social relationship. The tone was informal, and we were speaking in a mixture of Mandarin and English, since none of us are fluent enough in the other language to hold a conversation entirely in that language. Mandarin was chosen over Cantonese since it is both the dialect that Siu prefers to speak, and the one that I best understand. The rule for interaction which all three of us assumed was that we would try all possible avenues to communicate with each other, and to keep the communication going. Writing presented an additional channel of communication which could be used. I sometimes wrote English words down, hoping this would help them understand what I was saying. I took care to write clearly and distinctly, not in my usual running hand style. When they wrote characters they would often write both the jianti and the fanti zi forms, again taking care to write clearly. By using both forms they hoped to maximize my chance of recognition. Thus, the main purpose for
using more than one form of the written code was to increase the possibility of successful communication.

In the piece of calligraphy Siu wrote for me (a translation of a quotation from a German writer), he chose two different styles of script. The piece is written vertically from right to left in black ink, with a brush, and on white rice paper in accordance with the norms associated with this genre of writing. The passage is written twice. First in kaishu 'regular script', and then in xingshu 'running hand'. He wrote the first version because he knows that I prefer kaishu as I find it easy to read. On the other hand, he likes xingshu. The two versions were thus a compromise to please both of us, the writer and the reader. Siu may also have wanted to familiarize me with the more flowing style of writing. The characters in both versions are a mixture of jianti zi and fanti zi, with the same character sometimes written one way and sometimes the other. When I asked about this Siu said it was for variation. In this case, therefore, the most important factors in determining the choice of style of script were the purposes of the event (to please, and possibly to instruct me, and to allow Siu to express his artistic talents), the participants involved (their preferences, and proficiency in writing and reading), and the genre and its associated norms.

In her teaching, Hua usually writes fanti zi. This is the form with which most students are more familiar. It is also the form which is used in their text books. It has also long been the norm in this old established school in Hawai'i, as in most other schools outside of the PRC. She usually writes horizontally from left to right. Sometimes, however, she also writes in jianti zi. This is to familiarize students, most of whom do not know this form, with this type of writing. It may also help those from the PRC who learned this form at school. She accepts either form in the students written work. (She also incidentally
accepts written colloquial Cantonese, though she herself does not use this). In this case
then, the important factors are again the purpose of the writing event (education), the
participants involved, and the norms associated with this type of event.

If we now turn to direction of writing in the families, it is interesting to note that the most
common direction in all families is horizontal from left to right. This is despite the fact
that most reading material available in Hawai'i is oriented vertically from right to left, and
that two of the families are from Taiwan, where vertical writing is said to be the norm.
There are certain occasions when vertical writing is found, however. These will be
considered below.

In the Lin family the vertical direction is typically reserved for Janet and Richard's school
assignments, reflecting the influence of the genre (school work), function (to please the
teacher, get good grades), and the expected norms of the classroom. All writing is in fanti
zi and in printing style, as these are the forms they are skilled in using. The influence of
school requirements is also seen in the draft of the letter to her pen friend in Beijing that
Janet had to prepare for school. This was written vertically from right to left. The final
version which was sent, however, was written horizontally.

Her parents also usually write horizontally. JP says that vertical writing is associated with
old people. It is also more convenient to write horizontally from left to right since one is
then less likely to smudge what one has written (if one is right handed). For her part,
Anna said she used to write vertically more often before she came to the United States,
but now, with the influence of English and the kind of lined paper generally available in
Hawai'i, she usually writes horizontally. There are two examples where she departs from
this pattern. These are the two notes she wrote, one to her father and the other, on the
same piece of unlined paper, to her daughter (see figure 5). Both tell the reader where the rest of the household have gone. When I asked her why she wrote the notes like this she said it was because she was Chinese. Considering that all other writing of hers that I have seen is horizontal, this did not seem a very convincing explanation. As I speculated previously, she may have been taken back to earlier times and previous writing habits because of the fact that the addressee of the first note was her father. The fact that the paper was unlined also helped.

One other example of vertical writing is seen in the letters that Siu writes to one particular artist that he knows in the PRC. His esteem for the artist and the formal tone of this letter are shown in several ways. He writes using ink and calligraphy brush, writes a draft of the letter before writing the final version, and uses an old, and very formal term of address and closing formula in the letter. The term of address he uses, taijian, follows rather than precedes the addressee's name, and is a polite form asking the other party to read the letter. Siu wrote the salutation and closing formula he had used on a piece of paper for me, and I later showed these to Long and Niknik. Long thought these forms quite rare, associating them with Taiwan and/or very old people. Although they were written horizontally, Long assured me that the letter must have been written vertically. This is a good example of how choices cannot be made independently of each other. Having chosen a certain term of address, other choices, such as the form of the closing formula, and direction of writing, are limited (unless, of course, one wants to deliberately flaunt the accepted norm for some reason).

Variations in the form of salutations and closings are examples of how the choice of possible alternative vocabulary items in baihua itself (rather than between this style and
another, such as colloquial dialect), also varies according to context.\textsuperscript{2} The salutation chosen depends on the perceived relationship between the writer and the addressee. The most common opening is just to use the name alone if the addressee is a friend, or the family relationship, such as xiong 'elder brother' or di 'younger brother'. The use of qinaide 'dear' is reserved for close family members and friends. How it is used varies somewhat, but the family members whom I asked agreed that it is used much more sparingly than its English equivalent.\textsuperscript{3} A more respectful form of salutation mentioned in each family was the term jingaide, but no one seemed to actually use it. There are also variations in closing formulae. Common closings in informal letters to family and friends are various wishes, such as zhu ni hao 'wish you well', zhu ni yi qie shunli 'hope everything goes smoothly', zhu ni shenti hao 'hope you keep well', zhu ni shengri kuai! chunjie kuai!le 'wish you a happy birthday/Spring festival', etc. Letters to friends may be ended with ni de pengyou 'your friend', or just you 'friend'. Those to relatives may close with the appropriate kinship relationship, such as er 'son'. More formal closings include ci zhi jingli literally 'here salute you', but, like jingaide, there was no evidence that the form was ever used in the families. These closing formulae would then be followed with the writer's name. The usage of such openings and closings in letter writing are explicitly taught, usually in school. For example, the teacher told Janet's class not to use qinaide.

\textsuperscript{2} Of course, variations in salutations and closings, and the rules and norms of their use are just small examples of how vocabulary choice reflects and/or defines any particular situation (in terms of participants, genre, key, etc.; the factors highlighted as important in work in the ethnography of communication). While recognizing this, it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to explore this area further.

\textsuperscript{3} For Niknik qinaide is more appropriate for older, close family members while Hua said she would be more likely to use qinaide with younger siblings or female friends of the same generation. She also used it as the form of address when she wrote back to her former student in the PRC. Like Niknik, Anna thinks qinaide more appropriate with older family members but says that her own mood is also a factor. If she is happy she is more likely to address an aunt or uncle with qinaide than if she is not feeling so positive.
when writing to their allotted pen-friends. She told them that this term was not appropriate since Chinese people were more formal with strangers than Americans.

Finally I would like to look at how and why various family members use English in their Chinese writing. A number of examples of this were found in the data. Irene, JP, and Janet sometimes use English words in personal letters and/or greeting cards. Anna uses English in notes to her daughter, in some recipes, and in her reminders on the calendar. Niknik's shopping lists and Hua's notes also occasionally contain English names. I asked the writers about these examples and analyzed the circumstances of their use. A number of patterns emerged.

One factor is the difficulty involved in transliterating or translating English proper names. This is one reason why Anna wrote "Queen Hospital lab" in her note to Janet (see figure 5), and why Niknik writes the English name of a large discount store at the top of some of her shopping lists. The lack of an appropriate word in Chinese, and/or the failure to immediately call it to mind when writing, also encourages the use of English. Examples of this can be seen in some of the recipes and calendar entries that Anna writes, and in JP and Irene's personal letters.4

When writing to others the writer also needs to take into account the knowledge and skills of the addressee. Irene and JP often use English in their letters. Both assured me that the people they write to would have no trouble understanding the English words and phrases

4 It should be noted that English is by no means mandatory in any of these situations, especially when the writing is only for the eyes of the writer him/herself. Niknik often writes English proper names in Chinese characters, using them for their sound value. She also invents Chinese terms. For example, she coined the word xi yi shui for 'liquid detergent', an analogy based on the normal word for detergent in Chinese, xi yi fen (literally 'wash clothes powder').
they use. The knowledge and skills of the writer are also important. In her note to Janet about wearing a jacket for school, Anna uses her ability to write both English and Chinese to make sure the message is understood. There can also be a creative side to this potential for bi- or multiliteracy. This is shown by Janet in the letter to her mother (see figure 1). She draws on her linguistic repertoire both to get her meaning across and to play with language. Recognition of the increased creative and expressive possibilities offered by knowledge of two languages is important since it emphasizes the positive aspects of bilingualism and biliteracy (see Edelsky (1986) for further discussion of this aspect).

Thus there are several, often interconnecting factors which influence the use of English words and phrases in Chinese texts. These include the participants and their knowledge and degree of bilingualism, the purpose of the writing event (to transmit referential information, to express oneself), the nature of the Chinese written code (related to the difficulty in interpreting transliterations where the reader is not the writer), and the key (i.e., tone or manner) of the event (informal, friendly).

Discussion

In this chapter I have identified some variations in the Chinese written code and looked at the patterns of their distribution and use. I also noted the attitudes of family members towards the different varieties, deriving this information from what they said overtly about the various forms, and from observing how they used them and/or dealt with them. From this information a number of patterns and structural regularities emerge.

First, in relation to the larger cultural, social, and historical context, we see that the form of Chinese script most commonly encountered in Hawai'i is fanti zi. The existence of the simplified script, jianti zi, is recognized and is even taught in some schools. However, it is
identified with Chinese in the PRC rather than with Chinese communities outside of China. This situation is a result of the history of overseas Chinese communities in general, together with the continued acceptance by publishers, producers of films and videos, and the Chinese reading public that the norm for the printed language for this overseas Chinese audience is fanzi. In Honolulu's Chinatown and in Chinese organizations in Hawai'i, economic and social power rests predominantly in the hands of older immigrants and newer immigrants from Taiwan, Vietnam and Hong Kong. All of these use fanzi if they write Chinese. Even if these power relations change, the acceptance of fanzi as the norm may not. The data in this study show that the Chen and Wang families have readily accepted the current situation and have adapted their reading habits, and in some cases their writing habits (e.g., Hua in her teaching), accordingly.

The data also show the general acceptance in the families that each of these two forms of Chinese script is appropriate in its own context. I was a little surprised at this, expecting a somewhat negative reaction to jianti, especially from people from Taiwan. I thought the simplified system might be associated with communism and/or with a loss of Chinese tradition and history. To see if their opinion was related to the fact that both the Lins and Irene Young still had relatives in the PRC, I spoke to other people of Chinese background with whom I came into contact in Hawai'i. In general, reactions to jianti were fairly neutral. People explained that that was the way people did things in China. They might not like it, but that was the way it was. It did not really concern them directly.

In a similar way, both colloquial dialect writing and classical writing are accepted as valid in their own particular contexts. Written colloquial Cantonese is identified variously as characteristic of certain parts of the popular press, non formal writing, Honolulu's Chinatown, and/or Cantonese videos, depending on the individual family member's
experience and interest. Classical Chinese is identified with older types of writing and
historical dramas on television. Neither colloquial dialect writing nor classical Chinese
seem very important in the lives of family members. None routinely use colloquial dialect
forms in their writing. Some, such as Niknik, do not see it as relevant to their own lives at
all. It impinges slightly more on the lives of others: Anna, Long, Hua, and Yan because of
their contact with Cantonese speakers, Long and Rebecca because they like Cantonese
videos, and Rebecca because of her interest in fashions and film as reported in a Hong
Kong based newspaper. Apart from the Chen family, classical and semiclassical writing
also seems of marginal significance. While linked in the minds of some family members
with education and culture with a capital "C", others, such as Anna, see it as an
unnecessary addition to current day Chinese education. This point will be raised again in
the chapter dealing with language maintenance, since it is relevant to that discussion.

One thing that stands out about the families' views of classical Chinese is that it is very
different from modern Chinese. It requires serious study, usually in a formal schooling
situation, to be read and understood. This contrasts to their attitudes to other variations in
the written code identified in this chapter. In these cases, it was generally assumed that
readers of modern standard Chinese should be able to cope with such variation if they
wanted to and/or if they needed to. This indicates that most family members see two basic
types of written Chinese, i.e., classical writing (wenyanwen) and modern writing (baihua).

As regards the use of English in Chinese texts, there were a variety of examples of this in
the data, and these served a range of purposes. This kind of writing can be seen as an
adaptation to the new linguistic milieu in which Chinese written language is being used. It
reflects the linguistic repertoire of its users on the one hand, and the inherent difficulties of
rendering English proper names unambiguously in Chinese script on the other.
The availability of various styles of the Chinese code also allows for the possibility of more than one being used within one event to serve specific ends. These can be practical, such as to increase the chance of communicative success, or creative, as when different forms are used for expressive purposes. As with other situations of choice, the resulting patterns of distribution and use are not random, but are rule governed. Which form/s are used, in which combinations, is determined by, and interrelates with, a number of factors, such as the type, key, setting and function of the event, and the knowledge, skills and relative status of the participants involved. When any one writing event is analyzed from this point of view, the rules and norms which are operating on, and within the communicative event can be made more explicit. One can also see how social relations and social norms are indicated by, and at the same time influence patterns of use. While the data in this study relate to specific individuals, times, and circumstances, and concentrates on the written code, similar principles are relevant to any linguistic analysis which seeks to see how language forms and language functions are mutually interdependent.

Finally, this chapter indicates something about the relation between reading and writing. They are not mirror images of each other. In general, the linguistic repertoire of readers is greater than the repertoire of those same individuals when they are writing. Reading and writing skills may also not develop in parallel. This is clearly shown by Rebecca, who has continued to develop and expand her Chinese reading skills since arriving in Hawai'i, while she has been losing the writing skills that she had. In addition, the rules of use can vary. For example, when writing Chinese, the vertical direction is the marked form. It can be associated with formality, tradition, and certain genres (such as schooling and calligraphy). In reading, however, no special significance is given to vertical, as opposed to the
horizontal orientation of print. Which is chosen seems to depend on the preferences and/or immediate needs of the typesetter or editor.
CHAPTER 8
THE ROLE OF READING AND WRITING CHINESE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

In this chapter I will change the unit of analysis in order to focus on the role of reading and writing in the lives of the four families in this study. Instead of starting with the form of the written code, I will start at the level of the activity of which each type of writing and reading described in chapters five and six is part. It will be seen that in some cases the literacy event is central to the overall activity, while in others it is only a part. Using a framework developed by Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) I will then go on to analyze the functions served, and the roles played by Chinese writing, in whatever form of the code, in the lives of family members. The similarities and differences between the types and uses of literacy found in their work and this study will then be discussed and analyzed.

Reading and Writing Events as Activities
Many of the kinds of writing and reading described in chapters 5 and 6 can be considered as the central focus of the activity with which they are involved. For example, when I asked family members what they had written during the week they might say they had written a letter, a story, their diary, some poetry, a report for work, or a shopping list, or that they had practiced calligraphy. Even writing a check can be seen as an activity. Anna often terminated our meeting early because she had "to go to the office to write a check." Likewise for reading, participants could say they were reading the newspaper, a novel, a history book, a letter, or a note. On the other hand they might say they were checking the sports' results, looking at what was on the television, or doing their homework. Some of the types of reading and writing described would rarely be seen as central to the task at hand. For example, few people would say they were reading subtitles. They would see this as only part of watching a television program, video, or film. In a similar way few of
the family members would see writing Chinese characters as an event. In fact, they might not even notice how or why they did this during conversations with me, or when helping Janet and Richard with their Chinese homework, or helping Rebecca to write to her grandmother. For the purposes of this chapter the important thing is to see reading and writing as some part of a purposeful activity. I want to look at how and why family members use Chinese writing to get an idea of its role and place in their lives, and in their relations with others. All reading and writing is a means to an end, whether it is central to a certain activity or only part of one. It is these ends in which I am interested here.

Functions of Writing and Reading in the Families

One can classify the uses and functions of reading and writing in a number of ways. In a case study based on one family which I completed prior to starting formal research for this dissertation, I tried to base functions on my own observations, and on how the family members themselves viewed the purposes of their literacy activities. When I compared my findings with those listed in Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988), I found that some of the differences were more due to our own areas of interest and ways of seeing things than to substantive differences in the uses of reading and writing. Despite this, the similarities in the types and uses of reading and writing outweighed the differences. On reflection, this result should not be too surprising, since the framework of functions Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines developed was also based on ethnographic studies of everyday literacy in the United States. They used the results of their own study of reading and writing in a number of poor Black literate families. They also drew on the ethnographic research of Heath (1983) and Taylor (1983). Heath's discussion of the functions of reading and writing is based on her extensive study of two poor working class communities, one White and one Black, whose literacy practices are compared to those of a more affluent
"mainstream" community of White and Black families. Taylor looked at literacy in White middle class homes where children were successfully learning to read and write.

Since the use of my own classification tended to obscure some of the underlying similarities between the various studies, I decided to look at the data described in chapters 5 and 6 against the backdrop of the types and uses of writing listed by Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines. In doing this I was aware of the danger of forcing the data to fit into their categories, and tried to avoid this by amending and adding to these as necessary. Using their classification as a framework, however, makes it easier to highlight areas of difference. These can then be examined to see whether they relate any special features associated with Chinese writing, the multilingual nature of the communication in the four Chinese families in this study, and/or other factors not noted in the previous studies.

I will first look at the functions of writing and then of reading. These are listed roughly in order of their overall frequency in the four families as a whole. Each function is followed by a definition based on Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines if that function is listed in their work. As noted above, their definitions are amended or added to in order to adequately describe the data in this study. These differences will be discussed in more detail in a later section of this chapter. Most of my discussion relates to Chinese, but the uses of English will be indicated for purposes of comparison.

Writing and its Roles

Social Interactional Writing

This includes writing to establish, build, and maintain social relationships, and writing to negotiate family responsibilities. Examples from the data include letters and greeting cards
to family and friends, notes to others, helping children with homework, helping family members write Chinese, writing during conversations, and writing calligraphy for others.

Chinese is very important for writing letters and cards to family members and friends. These often serve a phatic function as much as transmitting real news or information. They can also be seen as somewhat of an obligation. Niknik said that Long's parents would be annoyed if they did not regularly receive a letter from Long or herself. Yan also said he did not like writing letters, but he does so to keep in touch with, and get information about old classmates and teachers in the PRC. With the exception of letters and cards written by Janet and Richard Lin, most of this type of writing in the families is in Chinese.

The exchange of various kinds of notes can play an important role in the smooth running of the household. The mothers in the families write most of these notes. In the Chen family, Hua's notes are mainly directed at her two sons. By looking at the content of these notes one can see her concern for the general welfare of the children, and her particular concern that Sheng not waste time after school or forget what he should do. One can also see her assumption that Yan, as an adult and with his greater command of English, should be capable of tasks such as contacting official agencies, returning goods to shops, and taking down and giving messages. It is also assumed that he should help his brother.

Both boys are expected to help prepare food for the family. There are two examples of notes from Sheng to his brother in the data. They both relate to his own needs, asking Yan for help to accomplish tasks Sheng needs to do. They thus contrast with his mother's notes, which usually relate to the welfare of others, or of the family as a whole.
In the Wang family Niknik is the main writer of notes. These relate to household matters such as defrosting the refrigerator, spraying against insects, and shopping. The shopping lists show that she is the one who plans and organizes the purchase of food and other household supplies. Most notes in the Lin family are written by Anna. Again their content shows her concern for others.

Family members also help each other to write Chinese characters which they have forgotten or are not sure of. Rebecca’s parents are called on to help Rebecca if she wants to write a letter to someone in China. Irene and Anna help Janet with her Chinese homework. When family members are writing words to help me understand what they are saying, they often ask others who happen to be present how a particular character is written, or check with them that what they have written is correct.

All the parents are anxious that their children succeed in the educational system, and they help them with their studies as much as possible. They also expect older siblings to help the younger. The parents of Sheng and Rebecca feel somewhat handicapped because of their lack of English language ability but they do what they can. For example, Niknik helps Rebecca with mathematics and Hua tries to make sure that Sheng gets as much help as he can from his teachers and from his brother.

In the Lin family Janet and Richard write Chinese because they know it will please their parents, especially their mother. Anna was tremendously proud of the Chinese letter that Janet wrote to her. Richard writes very little apart from the exercises he has to do for Chinese school, but he does use his Chinese name when signing notes and cards to his parents. He also works hard at memorizing characters for Chinese school because he
knows that his sister receives parental approval for her Chinese writing ability, and he wishes to share in this approbation.

Siu uses his calligraphy skills to build and maintain social relationships by writing pieces of calligraphy for friends, and giving them New Year couplets and written good luck wishes at Chinese New Year. He also likes to inscribe books he gives as gifts with a dedication and some words of encouragement or advice for the future.

English plays a much less important role in social and interactional writing in the families. Only Janet and Richard use English to any extent in letters, cards, and notes. Some written English is also used to help children with their school homework, and during my visits to the families to facilitate communication.

**Writing to Reinforce, Clarify or Substitute for Oral Language**

This refers to the use of writing when direct oral communication is not possible, or when a written message is needed to follow up or supplement an oral exchange. Examples of substitution for oral language in the data include letters and cards, notes to addressees who are not present at the time of writing, and acknowledgments of the receipt of a written message. Examples of reinforcement and clarification include writing shopping lists and other notes when the addressee is present, writing during conversations, and writing a report for work.

When I first saw this category of writing in Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines, I thought it was somewhat superfluous. Most writing could be said to "substitute for oral language." One of the advantages of writing is that it allows the production of a stable message form that can be transmitted over time and space. The main reason most of the notes discussed
under social-interactional writing above are written is that the addressees are not present at the time of writing. The written channel is also used to communicate with schools about everyday matters such as acknowledging progress reports and test scores, and giving permission for children to take part in certain activities.

It becomes clear from the data, however, that a lot of writing in everyday life not only substitutes for spoken language but is used in conjunction with it. It can reinforce and/or clarify oral language. Part of the reason for this is the common assumption in our society that a written document is more reliable than a spoken message. Hence, writing is seen as a more suitable channel for legal and official communications and transactions. One must have something "in writing" before it can be officially recognized or acted upon. This is one of the reasons why formal letters and forms are usually needed when dealing with agencies such as business firms and government departments. This type of official writing tends to be in English in Hawai'i so will not be further discussed here. I will concentrate on what the data tells us about how Chinese writing is used to reinforce and/or clarify an oral message.

Some notes reinforce the spoken message when the addressee is present at the time of writing. This used to occur often when Niknik wrote shopping lists for Long. Some of the notes written in the Chen family also fit into this category. When Hua wants Yan to speak to someone in English she may tell him what she wants him to ask or say, and also write it down to remind him. The report that Niknik was asked to write for her manager at work also followed an oral exchange. Her manager asked for a written version as Niknik's story was a complicated one, and she found it hard to understand Niknik's English. The report thus reinforced and clarified the oral account.
One of the best examples of using writing to supplement oral language is when single words and characters are written during my visits to the families to aid oral communication. This is more common in the Wang and Chen families, which shows that this use of writing relates to their lack of proficiency in English, and my lack in Mandarin.

**Memory Aids**

This is writing which serves as a memory aid for the writer and/or others. Examples include shopping lists, notes to oneself and others, instructions and plans of action, annotating English texts, writing recipes, marking books with the owner's name, recording the circumstances of a book's acquisition on the fly leaf, and making lists of useful telephone numbers.

In the Wang family shopping lists can serve to remind the person, or people, doing the shopping, who may or may not include the writer, what needs to be bought. Hua uses memos to help her, or others in the family such as Yan, remember what to say when speaking with others. She also writes notes to remind family members not to forget to do various things. Marking the calendar is another way to help family members remember significant dates. Anna makes extensive use of the calendar to keep track of the many things that need to be done in the Lin household. These examples again show how mothers use writing to plan and organize for the family as a whole.

The notes that Siu makes on the calendar about the different times he begins work each day are partly a reminder, but also serve as a record so he can check that his pay has been correctly calculated. Siu and his son Sheng also make use of writing to remind themselves of what needs to be done about taking medicine, in Siu's case, and before he can play his video game, in Sheng's case. Other records made for future reference include writing
down recipes, making lists of useful telephone numbers, marking books on the outside with the owner's name so they can be easily identified, annotating English texts with Chinese translations, and inscribing books with the details of when and why they were purchased.

**Work Related Writing**

This relates to writing for work, whether this is done at work or elsewhere. Examples include preparation for Chinese school, recording work done, preparing a work schedule, and writing a report.

Only some family members use writing to any extent at work. Of these, Niknik and Hua use more Chinese. Hua has to write the most. She needs to prepare lessons, written tests, and revision lists, mark papers, and write reports for her teaching. She also writes a lot during her classes, usually on the chalk board. Niknik does a surprising amount of writing considering the nature of her job. Some of this writing is required, for example checking off the rooms as they are cleaned, and noting down any special requirements. Other writing is not strictly necessary, but she feels she needs to do it to keep an adequate record of her own work and her observations on the condition of the rooms.

**Writing to Help Organize Thoughts**

Examples of this include the writing of some memos, writing drafts of various documents, and devising a work schedule.

The drafting of various versions of some of Hua's memos and school tests shows how writing can be used to clarify and organize one's thoughts, and to prepare the most suitable final version for the task at hand, whether this be an oral or written event. The
three versions of the work schedule that Niknik wrote also show this. Another good example is seen in the preliminary writing Niknik did for the report her manager asked her to write. Niknik first wrote a detailed account of what she had noticed at work. She wrote this in Chinese. She said she did so to *silu qingchu* 'consider clearly' what she wanted to say. She needed to make sure she had the story straight before working with me on the English version of the report. Sheng's drafts for the final detailed plan of the things to be completed before he can play his video game also show the way writing can be used to organize one's thoughts.

**Educational Writing**

This includes writing to educate oneself, and to fulfill school and college requirements.

The majority of the educational writing done by Sheng, Rebecca, Janet, and Richard is in English since they are enrolled full-time in English medium schools. Janet and Richard also have to do some writing in Chinese as part of their Chinese language studies. The amount of writing involved is quite extensive in Janet's case. The adults in the families who are enrolled in formal English classes or studying English informally, for example with me, also write Chinese to record new words they meet in writing or speech. Niknik sometimes also uses Chinese characters for their sound to record pronunciation.

Both Long and Niknik mentioned to me that it was an advantage to be literate in one's own language when learning English. It helps in vocabulary learning, and in preparation and review. They could not understand how Chinese immigrants who could not write Chinese could hope to learn English. Klassen (1991) reports similar attitudes on the part of illiterate Spanish immigrant learners. They pointed out that not only could they not write down translations of new vocabulary or study at home, but the lack of schooling...
(note the link between schooling and literacy) made it difficult for them to understand explanations couched in terms of grammatical rules and principals (Klassen 1991: 52).

**Creative Writing**

This relates to the use of writing as a means of self expression. Examples include calligraphy, painting involving Chinese characters, writing stories and poetry, making and writing greeting cards, and the letter Janet Lin wrote to her mother.

This particular use of writing seems to be restricted to only three individuals, namely, Siu, Anna, and to a certain extent, Janet. For Siu, calligraphy and poetry are the main vehicles for his creative use of writing. Anna writes stories. Janet shows her creativity in the format of the cards she makes and in her multilingual messages.

**Recreational Writing**

This is writing during leisure time for the enjoyment of the activity. Examples include calligraphy, story writing, writing letters, and making greeting cards. Only the three family members who use writing creatively seem to enjoy spending time writing. Others tend to write only when they have to, or when they think they should. For Anna and Siu, however, writing is a way to relax. Hua described the practice of calligraphy as being like qigong, a system of exercises for the mind and body quite popular in China. She thinks it relaxes Siu since he is fully involved when practicing calligraphy. Anna said that writing stories helps her relax since she is able to put down her feelings.

**Instrumental Writing**

This is writing to meet practical needs, and to manage and/or organize everyday life. It also includes writing to gain access to social institutions or helping agencies.
This is one of the categories that Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines added to their framework as a result of their own study. It does not seem a very useful addition, since most of the common types of writing discussed above incorporate this function. In fact, it could be said that all types of writing, except for creative writing, recreational writing, and autobiographical writing (none of which are very common), are instrumental.

**Expository Writing**

This is writing in connected prose to summarize generalizations and to back-up specifics for other people.

Such writing does occur in some of the study families, for example in some of Janet’s writing for school, and in Niknik’s draft for the report that I helped her prepare for the manager at the hotel. These types of writing have been mentioned under "educational" and "work related" writing, respectively. This seems a more meaningful classification, since expository writing is more of a style than a function of writing. As Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988: 167,171) themselves comment "the purpose of writing [is] not usually to create an expository text but to communicate through connected prose ... thus the category reflects neither the real world nor the contextual tying that takes place in everyday life." They retain the category largely because it was listed by Heath (1983), whose work was the starting point for their own descriptive framework.

**Financial Writing**

This refers to the recording of numerals and the amounts and purposes of expenditures, and to signatures. Examples include signing checks, signing for credit card purchases,
filling in order forms for mail order purchases, making calculations, and writing lists of the prices of things sold at work each day.

Apart from Siu's use of his Chinese signature once at the bank, most writing in this category is in English or numerals. In financial writing, the numerals are Arabic rather than Chinese. The difficulty that both Siu and Anna have experienced with their signatures at banks is not only due to the fact that they are writing their names in a script different from the one they usually use when writing their names. It also reflects the greater emphasis on signatures in the United States.

**Autobiographical Writing**

This is writing to understand oneself or to record one's life history. The only example of such writing in the data is Anna's writing of a diary.

**Environmental Writing**

This is writing by individuals which is designed to be displayed in public places for others to read. The only example from the data is calligraphy. The Chens have several pieces of Siu's calligraphy hanging in their apartment. I also hung on a wall at home the poem that he wrote for me. It is often admired and commented on by visitors.

**Public Records Writing**

This covers writing which creates public records such as newsletters, announcements, and reports for churches or social organizations, and the order of church services. No examples of this type of writing have yet been found in the study families. JP serves on the committee of one of the Chinese organizations, but he is not connected with the writing of records of meetings or of the association's newsletters. This type of writing was
also restricted in the previous studies recorded by Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines, so this particular function will not be further discussed.

Reading and its Roles
I now turn to reading Chinese. Again the functions are listed roughly in order of overall frequency.

Recreational Reading
This is reading done during leisure time or in planning recreational events. Examples include the reading of novels, comic books, fairy tales, joke books, the first section of the Chinese Yellow Pages, palmistry books, history books, poetry, newspapers, magazines, subtitles, karaoke words, titles of CDs, programs for concerts, catalogs for art exhibits, and consulting horoscopes.

For Anna Lin, reading books, newspapers, and/or magazines in Chinese is a major source of relaxation. She says she cannot sleep if she does not read for a while. Other family members simply enjoy reading various types of texts during their leisure time. For example, Sheng and his father like to read historical books and texts written in older Chinese. Siu also enjoys reading his palmistry books. Rebecca likes to read children's books, plus the movie star section of the Chinese newspaper. Her father, Long, reads martial arts stories and the news section of the paper. He says the main reason he reads is *xiuxi* 'to rest'. Niknik does not see reading in quite the same light. She says she reads when there is nothing else to do.

Some reading is part of other recreational events. Watching television, videos, and films may involve subtitles. Reading is also called for during sessions of karaoke singing, which
are popular in the Lin household. Most of the song titles on the discs are in Chinese, as are the lyrics flashed on the screen if the song is sung in Mandarin. Attendance at events organized by Chinese organizations in Hawai'i can also involve reading Chinese since the programs and catalogs are designed with a Chinese audience in mind.

All members of the families except for Janet, Richard, and Rebecca find it easier to read Chinese than to read English. Thus most recreational reading in the families is done in Chinese.

**Social Interactional Reading**

This is reading which helps to build and maintain social relationships. Examples include the reading of personal letters, greeting cards and notes, reading notices and newsletters from Chinese schools, churches and organizations, reading together during church services, singing karaoke, and helping children with homework.

Letters and cards from family and friends are usually written in Chinese. As noted previously, such writing has an important phatic function. It may also be seen as a social obligation. The use of notes in the smooth running of family affairs has also been discussed. Notes can serve to remind the readers of what they should do and/or ask them to take responsibility for certain tasks in the family.

For those who are connected with Chinese organizations, schools, or churches, notices and newsletters written in Chinese help to keep them informed of their various activities. Siu Chen gets the newsletter from the Chinese Culture Service Center telling him about classes, exhibitions, and films at the center. The Lins get information from Richard's
Chinese school, from the churches Anna attends, and from Chinese organizations to which JP belongs.

Reading with others is also a social activity. Reading the scriptures together, sometimes out loud, and singing together are important parts of church services. Joining in the proceedings at appropriate times, which the written order of service helps one identify, shows that one is participating in the event. Karaoke singing also involves joint reading. This is a popular social activity in the Lin family, where they usually sing karaoke songs when friends come over for dinner or just to visit.

Finally, helping children with their homework involves reading as well as writing. Apart from reading related to Richard and Janet's Chinese classes, much of this reading is in English. With the possible exception of Janet and Richard, written English generally plays a much less important role in building and maintaining social relationships than does written Chinese.

**News Related Reading**

This relates to reading to gain information about third parties, and events at the local, state, national, and international levels. Examples are the reading of newspapers and magazines.

For family members who do not understand spoken English very well, such as Niknik and Long Wang, and Siu and Hua Chen, Chinese television programs and the Chinese press are the major sources of information about current events. The television is limited in both hours of broadcast and depth of coverage, so the press can become very important for those interested in what is going on in Hawai'i, the nation, and the world. Some family
members who can understand English quite well also prefer the Chinese press. They find Chinese easier to read and also think that the coverage is more in keeping with their interests.

**Instrumental Reading**

This relates to reading to gain information for meeting practical needs, scheduling daily life, and dealing with public agencies. Examples include the use of reference books such as dictionaries, phrase books, the *Chinese Yellow Pages*, and Chinese medical books, consulting cook books and recipes, reading and acting on notes from others and from oneself, reading official letters, following a written plan, set of instructions, schedule, or order of service, and using lists of telephone numbers and electronic translating machines.

Most reading connected with public agencies in Hawai'i is in English. There can be exceptions as, for instance, when the public school Sheng attends sent a letter written in Chinese to invite parents to come to the school to hear about the special English program. The majority of reading connected with work, shopping, navigating around Honolulu, education, and housing, and most reading needed to deal with various businesses, advertisers, and service providers is also in English.

Nevertheless, reading Chinese is important in meeting the practical needs of the family and in specific areas of life in Hawai'i, such as shopping in Chinatown, or getting information from Chinese schools, churches, and organizations. Here I will concentrate on meeting practical needs and scheduling daily life within the home.

In the Chen family, acting on the requests and directions given in notes helps accomplish necessary tasks, and assists in the smooth running of the household. Buying things on
shopping lists in the Wang family makes sure the family has the provisions it needs. Attending to notes on calendars ensures that Lin family members do not forget important appointments and commitments. Niknik and Anna consult Chinese medical books for advice on how to treat minor ailments in the family, and Anna uses Chinese cookbooks a lot in preparing food. Hua used the Chinese Yellow Pages to try and locate a Chinese speaking doctor for her husband. Siu's instructions for taking his medicine, and Sheng's plan to limit abuse of his video game help them both organize their everyday lives.

**Critical/educational Reading**

This includes reading to increase one's ability to consider and discuss political, social, aesthetic, or religious knowledge, and reading to build and maintain one's career and/or to fulfill educational requirements. Examples include reading books of various types, magazines, and newspapers.

Anna and JP try to encourage their children to read, both English and Chinese, to increase their general knowledge as well as to help them with their schooling. JP said that one needs to know about the world to have a topic for discussion when one meets with others. Long Wang also sees a need to know what is going on around him so that he can talk to people. One of the reasons that Niknik likes historical novels is that she can learn something about history from them. Siu continues his studies of palmistry and calligraphy through reading books on these subjects he brought with him from China.

Hua also thinks that Sheng has been helped at school in Hawai'i because his extensive reading in Chinese has given him a good basic general knowledge. He continues to study in Chinese because of his interest in history, myths, and traditional stories; but he also has to read in English for school. Like Rebecca, Richard, and Janet, most reading connected
to formal schooling is in English, though Richard and Janet do have to read Chinese for their Chinese classes.

Many of the adults in the families see a need to improve their English. This was the main reason I was allowed to visit them at home in the first place. Chinese reading is used to help them. Apart from dictionaries, including electronic versions, Niknik and Long have bilingual Chinese/English texts, which we use when we study together. They consult the Chinese version to translate the English. Siu also has a bilingual text which we used once, but the most often used bilingual texts in the family are the three volumes of a Chinese high school text book which Yan used in the PRC. I have recorded parts of these volumes and they are extensively used by both Sheng and his mother. They particularly like the fact that the grammar notes are in Chinese. As in educational writing, being able to read one's own language can be a big asset when learning English.

The only person to use Chinese a lot in relation to her job is Hua. She does a lot of reading in the preparation of lessons and tests, and in marking student work.

**Confirmational Reading**

This relates to reading to check or confirm beliefs or facts, often from archival materials stored and retrieved on special occasions. Examples include consulting religious texts and some books, such the *Chinese Yellow Pages* and dictionaries, checking information in the newspaper, or on Richard's schedule for Chinese school, and referring to diplomas and other official documents in Chinese.

Niknik has a number of Buddhist texts which she used to look at in the PRC, and Anna reads the Bible when she goes to church. Weekly church services typically base their
central theme on one or more written passages read from the Bible. When I visit various families we sometimes look up Chinese words in dictionaries. More often, however, we look up English words to see the Chinese equivalent, often using the electronic dictionaries. Monolingual Chinese dictionaries and other reference books are also used to find and/or confirm various points of information. The *Chinese Yellow Pages* and the newspapers can also be consulted to check on specific details, such as an address or the time of an event. Diplomas and school reports from the PRC are kept in the Chen and Wang families. The records Anna has for her children are mostly in English.

The use of written texts to confirm and verify facts and beliefs is an example of the way the written word is seen as providing a reliable record and is considered superior to the oral channel for the preservation of significant facts. Clanchy (1993) describes the gradual development of this view in England in the Middle Ages. This has resulted in the frequent need for something to be "put in writing" before it can be officially acted upon.

**Environmental Reading**

This refers to the reading of print in the environment. Examples of this kind of reading include signs, notices, and decorative calligraphy in Chinatown, at Chinese organizations, churches, schools, restaurants, and businesses, and pieces of calligraphy and other decorative character writing in the home. Apart from these particular situations, most environmental print in Hawai‘i in English.

**Sociohistorical Reading**

This is reading to explore one's personal identity, and the social, political, and economic circumstances of one's everyday life. It also includes the keeping and rereading of writings, usually by family members.
Examples of the latter are found in the Lin family, where Anna has kept a diary since she was a teenager. She also keeps the greeting cards that Janet makes for her, partly due to Janet's insistence that she do so. The reading tastes of many of the first generation family members also show a general interest in current events in their countries of origin and their neighbors. Some also read in relation to Chinese art, traditions, history, and cultural practices. This includes reading related to calligraphy and literature (which is largely confined to the Chen family), martial arts, cooking, history, Chinese proverbs, and Chinese medicine, including hand massage. These interests are indicated by which Chinese newspapers, and which parts of these are selected for reading, and the types of magazines, novels, and various reference and non-fiction books that are read and consulted on a regular basis. All these can be linked to the idea of identity.

The role that reading can play in shaping a reader's ideas of his or her own identity and/or place in the world relates both to the role of literacy in socialization and to its role in the maintenance and promotion of Chinese cultural values and identity. These aspects will be considered further in the context of language maintenance and loss in chapter 10.

**Work Related Reading**

This relates to reading at, or for work. Only Hua reads Chinese materials to any extent for work. She reads poetry and story books which the family brought from the PRC, the text books used at school, and newspapers to prepare lessons for the classes she teaches. She also needs to correct student work. Niknik reads her own record of work done at the hotel if any queries arise about the rooms. This record was also used to find the facts necessary for the report she once wrote for her supervisor. JP and Anna may also have
cause to refer to some patient details written in Chinese at JP's office. Little reading is done at, or for work by others. Any reading that does take place is mainly in English.

Financial Reading
This is reading related to the economic circumstances of one's life, and reading to fulfill practical (financial) needs of one life. Examples include reading bank accounts, invoices, and bills. Most financial reading is in English. Numerals are usually Arabic rather than Chinese.

Discussion
The above analysis indicates the range of uses of reading and writing Chinese in the families I visited. Reading and writing play a vital role in scheduling and organizing everyday life, and are also involved in activities which can help to build and maintain social relationships. Reading is part of many recreational activities, and is also an important avenue for obtaining news of what is happening in the wider community and accessing information in general. Writing is not so important in these kind of activities. This is related to the fact that material which is read in the families originates from many sources, and the writer is often not known to the reader. Such texts allow access to a wide range of information. In addition, the printed word is imbued with a special sense of inherent worth over and above oral language, so reading is also used to check and confirm facts and beliefs. Other functions are restricted more to writing, which can be used to organize one's thoughts and as a means of self expression. Both these types of writing are produced both by, and for the writer, and the focus is on the writer's own needs. As in the previous chapter then, the data show that reading and writing need not be mirror images of each other. Even where their functions parallel each other, their frequency of use may
not be the same. For example, recreational reading is quite common in the families, but recreational writing is rare.

In addition to differences between the types and uses of reading and writing, the data also show that the English written code is more important in some activities than in others. There are also differences in the role and significance of Chinese and English writing in the lives of individual family members. Not all use Chinese writing to the same extent or for the same purposes. They may choose the English written code instead, or prefer to use other verbal or non-verbal channels. Chinese reading and writing cannot be considered in isolation. These aspects will be addressed in the next chapter.

If we compare the uses of reading and writing found in the Chinese families in this study with those described in Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988), there are striking similarities. I found only two uses which they did not list, and one of these is, I think, present in their work but was just not given prominence. Of their categories, only one, "public records writing" was not represented in my data. This was not because Chinese writing cannot be used for this purpose, but just reflects the fact that no family member in the study is at present in a position where they have to write public notices and announcements. Not only were the uses of writing and reading similar, but so also were the types of writing which exemplify these. For example, Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines also found that letters and cards to family and friends, notes to negotiate family responsibilities, the helping of children with homework, and flyers, announcements, and newsletters from various organizations were all used to build and maintain social relationships. All this seems to indicate that reading and writing, in whatever language, can be used for similar purposes to meet similar needs.
Of the two additional uses which I found in my data, the first is the most important, since it relates both to the nature of the Chinese language and to the multilingual communicative situation in which the families live and operate. The data shows that writing can be used to clarify, as well as reinforce the spoken word. Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines note that writing can reinforce an oral message, but this is usually in connection with an official or legal need to "put something in writing." In the Chen and Wang families, however, writing is regularly used to aid communication between myself and the adults. As noted in Chapter 7, the written code is used as an extra channel to maximize our chances of communicative success. This use is therefore connected to our lack of proficiency in speaking each other's languages. In addition, the actual way in which vocabulary items are written reflects something about the nature of the Chinese script. It is easier and quicker to write a Chinese character for someone than to explain to them how to write it themselves. This contrasts to the situation in English, where it is quite easy to spell out words for others to write, even if they are not very proficient writers of the language.

I had thought that the use of writing to facilitate conversation might have been encouraged by the fact that Chinese people themselves sometimes resort to writing to communicate with each other. I have certainly seen this in the PRC, and have heard other foreigners report this phenomenon anecdotally. Given the mutual unintelligibility of many dialects and the common form of standard written Chinese, this would seem to be a very practical way to communicate when two Chinese speakers who cannot understand each other want to get a message across. Interestingly, both families assured me they rarely used Chinese writing in this way. They felt confident they could usually manage with the oral channel alone, choosing different vocabulary or phraseology if their first efforts met with no success.
In some uses of reading, however, it is clear that the particular feature of written Chinese mentioned above, namely that the accepted written standard transcends spoken dialects, is exploited to aid communication. This is exemplified by the use of subtitles in standard Chinese in movies, videos, and television programs. This practice is quite widespread, especially in Taiwan. Hua confirmed Irene’s observation that subtitles are not used as much in television programs in the PRC. In addition, videos and film from Hong Kong are sometimes subtitled in colloquial Cantonese rather than standard Chinese. When written in standard Chinese, however, subtitles help speakers of Mandarin to understand dialogue in other Chinese dialects and vice versa. Not surprisingly, subtitles are not mentioned by Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines. Films, television, and videos subtitled in English are not that common. While the number of foreign films and television programs with non-English dialogue has increased in recent years, they still tend to be associated with a rather restricted range of content and potential audience.

The other use of writing not noted by Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines is the use of writing to help organize one’s thoughts. This could be seen as part of other activities, such as when writing is used to clarify, reinforce, or substitute for oral language, to aid memory, and for work or education, but I consider it to be different enough in type and function to warrant special mention. While not recorded as such, writing to organize one’s thoughts is inherent in many of the categories of use defined by Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) and Heath (1983). For example, both note the use of drafts in preparation for some final piece of writing. In addition, Heath describes how the mill executive, as part of his everyday work, makes notes based on written information he receives from the central office and on the subsequent telephone conversations he may make to clarify these. He then reorganizes and incorporates these into a sequence of topics which he can use in oral and written briefings for the mill managers. Such activities can be seen as examples of how writing
helps the writer to organize his or her thoughts and prepare for future action, even though neither of the two studies looks at them in this way. In Heath's case, this is probably because she is focusing on the interrelation and interaction between talk and writing, rather than on all the possible functions of writing itself.

There is one other significant difference between the types of writing found in the Chinese families in this study and those listed by Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines. This relates to the use of calligraphy. The nearest form to this in Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines is "penmanship," a school writing activity. In the Chinese families, however, calligraphy plays a more prominent role in everyday life. It is particularly salient in the Chen household, where Siu spends many hours practicing calligraphy. He uses his skills for a number of purposes: practical, recreational, social, and creative. Although she does not like writing calligraphy, it also impinges on Hua's life. She has to produce some exemplary pieces for her class at Chinese school. None of the other family members actively practices calligraphy, but examples can be seen in all the homes, either as pieces of calligraphy, or as parts of paintings or other decorations. Family members may not pay much attention to the presence of this kind of writing, and in the case of Janet and Richard, may not be able to read it. But calligraphy is, nevertheless, an integral part of the home environment.
CHAPTER 9
READING AND WRITING: PATTERNS OF USE

In this chapter I will look at some of the ways in which the reading and writing activities described in the previous chapters are carried out by family members in this study. First, I will consider to what extent reading and writing are regarded as solitary, private activities and to what extent they are collaborative in nature. The general patterns found will then be compared with those described in other studies, with special attention given to seeing how they relate to the nature of the Chinese written script and/or the multilingual situation in which the families find themselves. I will then go on to consider patterns of use from the point of view of the extent to which individual family members utilize their literacy skills. Some of the factors which influence the choice of the written channel will be examined, and the behavior and attitudes of family members towards reading, as opposed to writing will be compared. Finally, I will examine the patterns of use of the Chinese and English written codes, and consider the factors determining why, and under what circumstances these two codes are accessed and/or produced.

Reading and Writing as Collaborative Events

As noted in chapter 2, modern schooling in the West tends to regard reading and writing as solitary, private pursuits. The reader is alone with his or her book or newspaper, and the writer labors alone in his or her writing endeavors. Ethnographic and other studies have shown that this solitary view is relatively recent, culture bound, and somewhat elitist. It ignores many of the ways that reading and writing are actually used outside of the school environment. Many literacy activities are essentially collaborative in nature "regularly [occurring] in the social context of more than one person" (Reder 1987: 255). That is to say, more than one person is present and active in the event at the time of reading or writing. Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) note that group reading of
newspapers, and/or reading aloud articles from newspapers and magazines often form the
basis for group discussion and opinion sharing. This was a frequent pastime in some of
the Black families they visited, and seemed to play a role in the building and maintaining of
social relationships. In some communities solitary reading and writing is frowned upon
and can be considered antisocial.

In the four Chinese families in the present study, solitary writing and reading is common.
Janet and Richard Lin usually go to their rooms after they return home from school and
either do homework or read books of their choice, the latter usually being novels or
stories written in English. Even if they read in the company of others in the lounge area or
at the dinner table, they usually read silently. Their father enjoys reading the Chinese
newspaper in the isolation of the bathroom. The bathroom is also a popular place for
private reading in the Young household. Simon says he finds it easier to read there since
there are no distractions. When I visit the Wangs Rebecca is usually in her bedroom,
sleeping, reading, or working on some handicraft project. Once, when I went to ask her
something, she was in her parent’s bedroom reading her father’s kungfu magazine. In the
Chen’s studio apartment there have been occasions when I have been working on English
at the table with Hua, while Siu was writing at the desk, and Sheng and Yan were sitting
on the sofas engrossed in their own reading.

This is not to say that family members do not talk about what they read. Anna said that
Richard sometimes tells her (in Chinese) about stories he has read (in English). She also
often tells the family about some news event she thinks they ought to know. For example,
she told her husband that the public golf courses would be closed because of a local
government employees’ strike, an item of considerable interest to him since he plays golf
twice a week. Simon confirmed that Anna “likes to make noise” while she reads the
newspaper, telling other people who happen to be present something she thinks is of interest. Irene said she and Simon might occasionally tell each other about an item they have read, but they would usually paraphrase it, not read it out word for word. Hua and Niknik sometimes read out parts of letters from relatives to other members of the family, but this is not the regular practice. They are just as likely to pass around the letter for others to read for themselves.

Other types of reading might regularly involve oral instructions or discussion, for example, telling family members of appointments noted on calendars, helping children with homework, and deciding what to eat in restaurants. The data also highlights three particular situations where group reading is required to show that one is an active participant in the event in question. These are at Chinese school, where the students are expected to recite new texts in chorus, usually following the teacher's example; in church, where the congregation sing hymns together, and read some texts in unison; and during karaoke singing in the Lin household, where the singers read the lyrics on the television screen.

A similar range of behaviors is associated with writing activities. Some kinds of writing are usually carried out by one person without involving others in the process. Long and Niknik both write to Long's parents, but not at the same time. They take turns. One of them sits down with the necessary materials - pen, paper, and usually the previous letter from the parents - and writes the letter, starting with the appropriate salutation, continuing with the body of the letter, and finishing with a suitable closing. The other is not necessarily in the same room or may not even be at home while the letter is being written. Anna also writes letters alone, often after the rest of the family have gone to bed. Likewise, JP does not involve anyone else in the actual writing process, though he later
hands most of his letters to Anna for checking. On other occasions, oral instructions or discussion might accompany writing, such as when writing notes or shopping lists when the addressee is present, and when helping children with homework.

The above shows that there is a range of behaviors in relation to written language depending on the situation and the purpose of the activity which involves reading or writing. In this, the members of the families, when writing or reading a language in which they are proficient, resemble the townspeople in Heath's study more than the working class communities she describes. Like the townspeople:

There are occasions when adults read for pleasure or instruction as individuals and do not share the contents of what they read with others: ... On other occasions, adults read for guidance of future behavior: ... This knowledge is often talked over with others who are present, especially if decisions affect them. On yet other occasions, adults read aloud and share the specifics of the written information socially.

(Heath 1983: 257)

Heath identifies the townspeople with "mainstreamers," whom she characterizes as:

literate, school-oriented, aspiring to upward mobility through success in formal institutions, and looking beyond the primary networks of family and community for behavioral models and value orientations. (ibid.: 392)

They differ from most townspeople, however, in that two different written codes are regularly involved in family life, English and Chinese. The fact that most family members are more proficient in one than the other is reflected in the nature of certain collaborative reading and writing events, which I will discuss below. Consideration of these events again highlights some of the differences between reading and writing.

The help of others is frequently needed when family members are faced with a written task which they feel they cannot deal with alone. I have often been called on to help compose
letters in English. I helped Niknik write letters to cancel her credit card, and to the mail order firm about a query over payment. Anna and I wrote letters to a traffic office protesting a parking citation, to a medical insurance firm about their accounting practices, and to magazine companies telling them not to send any further unsolicited copies of their publications. I also helped Irene draft a letter to her husband's customers advising them that he would be operating from home instead of from his shop in the future. The usual procedure was for the writers to tell me what they wanted to say, in Mandarin in the case of Niknik, and in English in the case of Anna and Irene. I would then check orally that I had the right message, write it down for them, and then check again that what I had written was what they actually wanted to say. We would go on like this until the letter was finished. They would then copy out the letter, usually after I left.

Reading English can also necessitate calling on others to help. As noted in chapter 6, the families receive a lot of printed material in English, from junk mail to important messages from schools, business firms, insurance companies, and government departments. Yan helps his family to sort through these and to deal with application forms, while I am sometimes called on to help Niknik and Long with such matters. Rebecca helps to the extent to which she is able and/or willing. For example, she tells her mother what the notices about school trips and excursions require by way of signatures of approval and money. Anna and Irene can usually manage to decipher most documents written in English, but may need help with those that are not written in everyday language and/or require a thorough and detailed understanding. An example of this was seen with the documents connected with buying and selling real estate. When the real estate agent came with forms for Anna to sign she carefully went through them all, giving a detailed oral explanation in Mandarin so that Anna knew exactly what she was agreeing to when she signed and initialed the places indicated by the agent.
When it comes to Chinese, the children in the families need more assistance than the adults and call on them for help. For example, when Rebecca writes a letter in Chinese to her grandmother or her former teacher she goes to her parents and asks them how to write words she has forgotten, or does not know how to write. I noticed that her parents write out the characters for her, like they do for me, rather than telling her how to write them. Rebecca does not often ask for help in reading. Niknik says that she used to ask about certain *fanti zi*, but is now usually content to read on her own, working out from context the meaning of any unfamiliar characters. Janet often asks Anna and Irene for help with her Chinese homework. Again, writing is more troublesome than reading.

This difference between reading and writing is also found among the adults. They seldom ask each other about what a written character means. They can usually guess this from overall context. It is easy to forget how a particular character is written, however, especially if one does not write very often. Niknik says she usually asks Long when she is writing a letter, only using the dictionary as a last resort. When writing a character to help me understand a particular Chinese vocabulary item, however, she usually just tries one or two versions to see which one looks right. This is the same technique that Richard discovered, and proclaimed proudly to Irene (see chapter 5). In the Chen family, Hua has occasionally corrected the characters that Siu has written for me. As for Irene Young, she says that in casual personal letters she often uses *zhuyinfuhao* to write any word she does not know how to write in characters, either because she has forgotten these, or because the word is "slang" or Taiwanese and therefore has no standard written form. She says her sister does the same.
In all of the above examples of collaborative reading and writing, participants pool their skills to achieve the task at hand. Yan, myself, and Rebecca (though to a lesser extent) are expected to take on the role of English interpreters. In a similar way, those proficient in writing Chinese help family and friends with less skills in this area. Such cooperative use of literacy skills has been noted by others such as Shuman (1983) and Weinstein-Shr (1989), whose studies consider multilingual, multiliterate situations, and by Fingeret (1983), who describes how illiterate adults cope with the literacy demands of everyday life.

Reder (1987) points out that the roles adopted by the participants in a collaborative reading and writing event may be due to differences in status rather than, or in addition to differences in their reading and writing skills. In the above cases, however, it seems that proficiency in the relevant language, or genre of language, is the main factor. Reder also suggests that the various participants can bring different types of knowledge to the literacy situation. He distinguishes between functional knowledge, which is knowledge of how writing is used for various purposes; social knowledge, which includes knowledge of which language and style is appropriate for the task at hand; and technological knowledge, which is the knowledge of how to directly manipulate the required written code. All three types of knowledge are needed, but any one participant need not possess all three. This is a useful view to use in considering the cases above. Where family members wanted to write letters in English they had the necessary functional knowledge, since they have a literate background and know the kinds of purposes written language serves, and they had social knowledge, in that they knew English was the required code, based on their assessment of the nature of the task at hand, the addressees involved, and the accepted

1 Status is a factor in other situations. For example, in church the Minister and/or leaders of the service for that day lead or introduce Bible readings and hymn singing.
rules of interaction. However, they lacked the necessary level of technological knowledge.

The use of signatures by Anna and Siu is a good example of how writers know the functional implications of what they are doing, but lack the technological skills to always complete the task satisfactorily. Anna often has to wait while her signature is checked with the central branch of the bank, while Siu once had to write his name in Chinese characters to prove his identity. An example which shows that the writer had the necessary social knowledge, while lacking the technology to write in English, is seen in the letter that Siu wrote to his English teacher and classmates to thank them for their help and concern while he was sick. When he wrote the initial draft in Chinese, which Yan later translated into English for him, he used the salutation qinaide 'dear'. This would not be appropriate in such a letter if it were destined to be sent in Chinese. He used it because he knew that 'dear' is the appropriate English term in such a situation.

Choice of Channel and Choice of Code

In this section I will first look at the factors which affect the choice of written language as the channel of communication, and then consider the circumstances surrounding the differential use of the Chinese and English written codes by family members.

The data show that not everyone uses writing to the same extent or for the same purposes. Only a few family members write because they like the activity. Others see it as an effort, something to be avoided if at all possible. Most write because they feel they have to. Situations where writing is necessary are seen most clearly where a written act is needed to meet the demands of work or education, or where something needs to be "put in writing" before it can be officially accepted and/or acted upon. In other cases, such as
writing personal letters, one has choices. If one does not feel the need or the obligation to keep in touch with family and friends one can simply not contact them at all, or one can use other means.

In the Young family, Irene does not like writing, so she relies on the telephone to maintain social contact with family and friends, even when this entails long distance calls to Taiwan, Europe, and Japan. Simon does not keep in touch with any relatives or friends outside Hawai'i. Niknik and Long Wang also dislike writing letters, which is seen as an effort. If Niknik is tardy in replying to her friends from the PRC she explains this is because she has been lazy. Despite the effort, letter writing is the preferred means of communication over long distances. The telephone is only used on special occasions, such as Chinese New Year. Cost, of course, is also a factor. In the Lin family, Anna routinely writes to friends and family abroad, but telephones family in California. The rest of the family do not write much, and the letters they do write are often a result of Anna's prompting. She and Hua Chen are the only family members who say that they actually like writing letters.

In the above, we are talking about lengthy pieces of writing which need time and effort to accomplish. Other writing involves much less time and preparation. Short notes, memos, and jottings on calendars may not even be regarded as writing at all. When I asked Hua what she wrote she only mentioned letters and the writing she does for Chinese school. When I asked her about notes, since she seems to be the most prolific writer of these in the four families, these were dismissed as putongde 'everyday' things. They did not count as writing. Nevertheless these short pieces of writing are important in planning and organizing everyday activities. Who makes use of writing for these ends depends partly on personal choice and partly on circumstance. Hua writes a lot of notes because the schedules of the various family members mean that they are not physically present, or not
awake, when she wants to tell them something. She wrote far fewer notes before Siu found his job. When he was at home he could pass on messages orally. School vacations also see a reduction in the number of notes. Sheng is home from school for at least part of the day, and there is also not as much need to write to him or Yan about topics related to his education. Personal preference is also a factor. Hua uses writing a lot, not only in notes but also to organize her own thoughts and to prepare for future action. The other families see less need to write notes to each other. They may also not be so predisposed to using writing to transmit messages. Irene prefers to use the phone, while Rebecca just waits until she sees the other person to give them the message.

A good example which indicates that personal choice is a major factor in deciding whether to write or not is shown by Niknik. There is no apparent need for her to continue to keep a record in her own notebook of work she has done at the hotel. In fact, keeping this means that she is recording some information twice since she also has to fill in the computer-generated list supplied daily by the management. Nevertheless, she chooses to keep her own record. She says this is partly through habit. She is continuing the practice she started when she was acting as supervisor. In addition, she was used to keeping work records in China. She also sees the more detailed information she records as useful. She has called on it to defend herself against criticism of work not completed, and also to back up her claims of irregularities that she noticed while working. Other examples which clearly show the role of personal preference are seen in the actions of Anna Lin and Siu Chen. Anna regularly writes in her diary, again largely due to habit, she says. She enjoys writing letters and also writes stories which few other people ever see. Siu spends hours each week practicing calligraphy, which he then uses for practical and artistic purposes. These two individuals thus write for pleasure or to fulfill some need not imposed by outside circumstances.
When we turn to reading, the patterns of use are somewhat different. While people can often circumvent the need to write, some kinds of reading are a necessary part of everyday living. Daily activities in Hawai‘i, such as traveling from place to place by car or bus and shopping, involve some reading, most of this being in English. In the households where notes and memos are written, these also have to be read by the designated addressees, and responded to and/or acted on in the appropriate manner. Formal education also requires reading. Much of Hua's reading follows from the demands of her teaching job at the Chinese school.

Unlike writing, most family members often read by choice during their leisure time, though they do not all read to the same extent or for the same purposes. Niknik prefers to relax watching television and sleeping, while Long finds reading to be restful. As in the Young family, recreational reading is largely restricted to newspapers and magazines. Novels and other books are more popular in the Chen and Lin families. Outside pressures also affect how much time people have to read, and these may change with time. Hua feels harassed by work and family commitments and does not read as much as she used to in the PRC. Niknik and Long also read more before they came to the United States. Work was not so demanding or so tiring in the PRC. On the other hand, before he got his present job, Siu was able to read books he had had in China for some time, but never had time to read.

Some family members read to find out about world events and current affairs. Others, like Niknik and Siu, rely more on the television or other people to get this type of information. Individuals also differ in the emphasis they put on the importance of keeping abreast of the news. Some, like JP and Long, think it forms the basis for meaningful discussions with others. Simon is keen to keep up with the latest developments in economics and applied science, the latter also being useful for his job. On the other hand, the children in the
families are not very interested in the news, especially politics. While all the children read to some extent out of choice, much of their reading is mandated by school, or in the case of Richard and Janet (especially Richard), by their parents.

Thus, as with writing, some reading is carried out through necessity. Unlike writing, however, a great deal of reading is also done by choice in the families. This is because of a general view that reading is an appropriate leisure time activity and that the content of certain texts can be interesting, and a general belief that reading can be a source of useful information and knowledge.

I will now go on to look at the factors which influence the choice of Chinese or English when the written channel is chosen rather than, or in addition to, the oral channel of communication. While it is beyond the scope of the present study to detail all the factors relevant to each activity involving reading and writing in the families, I will make some general statements on the patterns which emerge from the data, giving some specific examples to illustrate these.

In reading, the knowledge and abilities of the participants are important factors influencing language choice. All family members except Janet and Richard find it easier to read Chinese than to read English. Rebecca says that she can read both equally well. Given the choice then, most family members would prefer to read Chinese since this involves less effort. This is one of the reasons why they read Chinese newspapers rather than those written in English, and why they read novels in Chinese. Even Irene, who has been in Hawai'i for ten years and attended university, has difficulty reading novels in English. When adult family members read for relaxation, therefore, they are more likely to read Chinese than English. For Janet and Richard the picture is reversed. They find it easier to
read English and will therefore choose this code where they have the choice. This is especially true for Richard.

In addition to reading proficiency, the purpose of the reading, the topic and message content, and the setting are important. Chinese publications are not only read by the adults and by Sheng because they find them easier to read than English, but because their content is seen as interesting and relevant to the present needs and background experience of the readers. This explains why Yan reads so little Chinese; he sees English as much more relevant to his needs at the moment. Other family members also read English texts to gain access to information which is not readily available in Chinese. For example, Simon reads car, computer, and electronic magazines written in English, managing to make out the details he needs and/or wants to know. Irene subscribes to an English language woman's magazine for its practical household tips. Anna and JP Lin read the English language newspaper for its local news. In addition to these types of texts, which are actually chosen by the reader, all family members have to deal with various documents and printed material in English which they are faced with every time they open the mailbox or need to deal with a non-Chinese organization or individual in writing. They have no choice here. If they cannot decode the message themselves they must enlist the help of others who can. Living in Hawai'i, they also have to handle English print in the street, at work, when shopping, and at home when dealing with everyday products. Irene says that when her mother is visiting from Taiwan she is instructed not to use any powders or liquids in the kitchen when Irene is not there. She keeps all the detergents, bleaches, disinfectants, and other household products together, and is worried that her mother will use the wrong one since she cannot read the labels. Even pictures and illustrations may not provide enough information, as was seen when Hua tried to use drain cleaner to scour the toilet bowl.
Turning to writing, the data show that the skills and expectations of the reader are again crucial factors in the decision about whether to use Chinese or English. Family members recognize that English is required to write to American businesses, firms, and organizations. Examples of this were seen in relation to the letters that I was called on to help compose for Niknik, Anna, and Irene. Recognizing the need for a written communication in English, they took the necessary steps to get assistance since they felt they could not complete the writing task satisfactorily by themselves. Another example of this attention to audience was shown by Niknik when she was the supervisor in the hotel and had to check the rooms after they had been cleaned by the other housekeepers. She recorded in a notebook she had purchased especially for the purpose the jobs that still needed doing. She wrote in English so that she could tell the other workers, none of whom spoke Chinese, what they had failed to do correctly. When I asked her how she knew the relevant vocabulary, Niknik showed me a list of about forty things that she thought were necessary to prepare a room for new arrivals. She had compiled this by going around to the rooms with the manager and pointing them out one by one. The manager had written these down and then typed them up for her. Niknik had then written the Chinese translation next to each typed entry and used this as her guide when inspecting the rooms. The same attention to audience is seen with the check list that she completes for the management each day. Notes for the maintenance man are written in English, notes for herself in Chinese.

Attention to audience also means that personal letters, cards, and notes to friends and relatives who read Chinese will be written in Chinese. The adults in the families are more proficient in Chinese than in English and find it much easier to write, though, as noted previously, writing may still be regarded as a chore by some. For less proficient writers of
Chinese, such as Rebecca, writing Chinese involves even more time and effort and entails asking her parents for help. Where the writer is also the reader, the writer usually uses the code which comes most easily at the time of writing. Thus, the various memos, reminders, plans for future action, and writing to organize one's thoughts written in the Chen household and by Niknik are all in Chinese. Niknik also now writes in her notebook at work in Chinese, since the record is now just for her own information. Anna writes her stories and diary in Chinese, though she may use some English when jotting down reminders on the calendar depending on which vocabulary item comes to mind at the time.

JP and Irene also use English in their Chinese writing. Where this is destined for other eyes besides their own they do consider the ability of the readers to understand the English vocabulary. It should also be noted that key (i.e., emotional tone) is also relevant in these cases. Including English words in a basically Chinese text is taken as a sign of informality.

In addition to the knowledge and skills of the participants, the purpose of the writing is also a factor in the choice of code. If Anna had just been concerned with the ability of the reader she would have written the note to her daughter about wearing a jacket for school in English. She writes notes to Richard in English because she knows he does not understand written Chinese. Even though she feared that Janet might not understand, as shown by the fact that she included some English translation in the note (see figure 6), she chose to use Chinese. She said she did this to encourage Janet to use her developing Chinese literacy skills. Since the time of this note Janet has continued her Chinese studies, so Anna now writes most notes to her in Chinese. Thus her notes have more than one purpose. They not only communicate the content of a message, but also make a statement about Janet's entry into the Chinese literate community. In a similar way, the letter that Janet wrote to her mother one evening (see figure 1) had more than one purpose. If she
had just wanted to communicate a referential message she could have done this in English. She chose Chinese partly because she knew that this would please her mother.

If one has some level of mastery of both written codes, Chinese and English, one can draw on this for creative and emphatic purposes. Perhaps the best example of this is seen in Janet's writing when she corresponds with her mother. Biliteracy can also serve more practical purposes. English may be used to designate non-Chinese addresses and place names, and things which have no exact Chinese equivalent. Alternatively, the writer may find some things quicker and easier to write in English. I have also seen Hua Chen and Long Wang make use of their knowledge of both Chinese and Arabic numerals to enable easy labeling of subdivisions in lists, as follows:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Finally, there is one type of writing found in the families which demands the use of written Chinese. This is Chinese calligraphy. As noted previously, this can be used to serve a variety of purposes: practical, social, recreational, and creative. Whatever the purpose, it is an art form connected with the Chinese written language.

Discussion
The data in this chapter indicate that, in some ways, the families in this study resemble literate middle class Americans in the way they relate to activities involving reading and writing. They differ, however, in the fact that, though the adults are all literate, their
literacy skills are usually greater in Chinese than in English. This is especially true in the case of the parents in the Chen and Wang families. This means that they may lack the necessary technological knowledge for certain literacy tasks and need to call on others in their social networks for help. Being literate in Chinese, however, gives them some functional and social knowledge about reading and writing. This is useful since they know many of the potential roles and functions of written language and can access and utilize these, either directly or, if they lack the technological skills, indirectly with the help of others. It also provides a literate environment for their children, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Just because people can read and write a certain language, it does not mean that they will necessarily use these skills. Even when they do, there will be differences in what kinds of things they read and write, how often, and for what purposes. The data show that this is particularly true for writing. Family members associate this with fairly long texts, such as letters, and consider it something of an effort. Most only write because situational factors force them to. They may need to write for work, for formal education, for official reasons, to organize and plan their everyday life, or because of social obligations. In many cases, however, personal attitudes towards writing and assessment of the situation at hand also play a part in influencing whether any particular situation warrants a written response or not. The data also show that reading is a necessary part of daily living. In many ways it is more important than writing, since it is difficult to operate in a society like Hawai'i without some reading. In the families in this study, however, most individuals also actively choose to read for various reasons. Again, what kind of things they read, why, and how often varies between individuals because of personal background, views, and preferences. External constraints, like time, can also be a factor.
Despite these differences between the individuals in the families, their patterns of choice of the Chinese or English code are influenced by similar factors. In general, the adults prefer to read Chinese texts during their leisure time provided the topic and content are in line with their interests and current needs, since reading Chinese is less of an effort than reading English. Similarly, when they write they will choose Chinese if they know that the addressee, who may be themselves, understands this. The patterns for the children in the families differ, especially as they become more proficient in written English. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter since it relates to language shift.

There are other reasons why the Chinese written code may be chosen. In the case of calligraphy, this is Chinese by definition, since it is based on the Chinese characters. Other reasons are related to language promotion and the link between the language and Chinese identity. Examples which illustrate these aspects include Anna's increasing use of written Chinese when writing to her daughter, and Janet's use of Chinese when communicating with her mother.

Biliteracy offers the opportunity to use both written codes in the same piece of writing. The use of English vocabulary in basically Chinese texts can be related to a number of factors, some practical and some creative. The very fact that the two codes are both used can also transmit meaning beyond the referential. For example, it can make a statement about the writer's, and/or addressee's bilingual and/or bicultural background.

Since the adults are living in the United States there are many situations which call for the need to read and/or write in English. In general, it seems that reading English is the more vital skill for everyday life. Whether or not the adults have the necessary technological knowledge and skills to meet these demands, they have some functional and social
knowledge of literacy which helps them to recognize when the rules of interaction and the
norms of the situation call for the production of written English, and to understand the
potential roles and functions of various written texts.

Finally, this chapter again highlights the difference between reading and writing. In
general, reading is a more vital practical skill than writing. It is also seen as less onerous.
This is one of the reasons why reading is more often considered as a pleasurable leisure
time activity than writing. The data also point to a special difficulty connected with
writing Chinese. Unlike reading, where one can guess the meanings of unfamiliar
characters from context, one needs precise knowledge of the form of a character to write
it. Since the phonetic component of a character only gives some indication of its
pronunciation, it is difficult to guess how to write a word that one only knows how to say.
This makes writing difficult for learners. It can also cause problems for adults, who
sometimes forget how to write certain characters. There are several strategies for dealing
with this problem. If the situation calls for correctness writers can seek help from a
dictionary or ask other writers. Alternatively, they can try to rephrase what they want to
write so they avoid the troublesome character/s. If the writing event is more informal they
can resort to using some alternative script, such as the phonetically-based zhuyin"fuhao
system, or use a character which, although not the correct one, is pronounced the same as
the one they require (i.e., it is a homonym but not a homograph).
CHAPTER 10
LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AND SHIFT

In this chapter I will look at the data from the point of view of language maintenance and shift, particularly with regard to the children in the families in this study. The general trend in the United States of rapid shift to English in most immigrant groups has been noted by many interested in the area (see for example Fishman et al. 1966, Veltman 1983). While there have been periods of quite virulent suppression of non-English languages, much of this shift has occurred because the immigrant groups themselves have encouraged their children to improve their skills in English at the expense of their other language/s. English proficiency is seen as the key to educational and occupational opportunity. In the first part of this chapter I will consider the attitudes of family members towards the need for knowledge of the English language, and how this is reflected in their efforts to improve their own, and their children's English language skills. Since language shift relates to change in language use, I will then look at the roles that Chinese, particularly written Chinese, play in the lives of the children in the families. The impact of the parents' actions and attitudes towards the use of Chinese will be considered, as these are factors which play a vital role in intergenerational language maintenance or shift. I will then look at the data I collected in the families and in the language schools I visited during this study in relation to other studies and research in the area, with special regard to what these tell us about the role of reading and writing in language maintenance and shift.

The Need for English
All the parents in the families see the English language and education in the mainstream schools as important for their children. They demonstrate this in various ways. One of the first things that Anna did when arriving in Hawai'i was to ask friends and
acquaintances, who were mostly Chinese, about good kindergartens and schools ("good" in the sense of being recognized as providing quality, mainstream, i.e., English language, education). Both children were sent to preschools early, by the age of 3, so that they could begin to learn English. Apparently it was a year before Richard spoke to anyone there. He told his mother he understood nothing. The children had been brought up speaking Mandarin because Anna was not confident of her ability in the English language and did not want them to copy her bad example. Janet's teacher at kindergarten suggested that Janet needed help in English, and advised Anna to speak English at home to the children. Anna employed a private tutor for Janet, and continued to speak Mandarin. When I asked her why she had not taken the teacher's advice, Anna said that Janet's English seemed to progress rapidly, so she thought that Richard would not be held back too much if she continued with Mandarin. Both children were sent to a small private church school when they reached school age. Janet passed the entry test for an academically more challenging school in grade eight. Richard is currently trying to gain entry to the same school. During the school year Anna and JP religiously attend open house days at both their children's schools, though JP sometimes questions why they should as the teachers always have nothing but praise for the two. Both children are routinely sent to summer school.

In contrast to the Lins, private schools were not an option for the other two families. Hence, the two school age children, Rebecca and Sheng, were enrolled in the nearest public schools when they arrived in Honolulu. They both received help under the Students with Limited English Proficiency Program (SLEP). Hua has been more active than Long and Niknik in trying to ensure that Sheng gets all the assistance he can from the teachers. She enlists the help of others to make contact with the school and to get necessary information. For example, she asked me to go with her to the SLEP meeting at the
school. She often gets Yan to phone the school about various things, and also sends Sheng to school with notes telling him what to ask to teachers. She also enrolled him in two sessions of English at summer school. She feels she needs to push Sheng because he is lazy. She said Yan was the same in the PRC. His teachers there were always telling her that he was not handing in his written work. In Hawai'i she has let Yan pursue avenues for entry to university or community college for himself, and has concentrated her energies on Sheng. Niknik and Long are more content to let things take their course. They are happy with the grades Rebecca gets on her school reports, and see no need to be overly concerned in a system which they feel they know little about. They trust their daughter to let them know what is going on at school, and only went along to the open house day because I had said it was a good idea and volunteered to go with them. They would be willing to pay for summer school, but as Rebecca did not want to go, the question did not arise.

If we look specifically at reading and writing English, the data I have collected indicate that many of the reading activities and the majority of the writing activities in which the children participate are related to school work. Their parents assist with written homework as much as they can, or at least ask about it and make sure that it is being done. Parents also see extra curricular reading as English practice and as part of general education. They all encourage reading to varying extents. During school vacations, for example, Anna expects Richard and Janet to read a number of books each week, preferably one a day. Hua is happy to see Sheng use the local library regularly. He often studies there in the afternoons after school. Niknik has bought Rebecca a few books, mostly requested by Rebecca herself, but most English books that I have seen in the apartment are school library books. Rebecca is not keen on joining the State library, and Niknik does not press her.

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Many of the adults in the families have felt disadvantaged because of their own limited English. In the Wang and Chen families, the parents are constrained in terms of employment because of their low level of English. Hua, in particular, is anxious to get a job in teaching so she can use her other languages. With fluent Vietnamese, Cantonese, and Mandarin she thinks she could be of assistance to migrant children. But she needs more English to get this kind of position. Lack of English not only limits one's employment possibilities. It affects other aspects of life. The Wangs, and Niknik's sister, Susan, have said how isolated they feel in some ways. Long felt it was a real limitation that they could really only communicate with Mandarin speakers. The Lins do not suffer from a lack of friends, but Anna feels that her lack of "correct" English puts her at a general disadvantage. On several occasions she has felt humiliated and/or frustrated because of her accent, faulty grammar, and lack of the correct response for the situation at hand. People have called her a foreigner and told her to go back home, or loudly told her to go and learn English when they could not understood what she was saying.

It is clear from the above that all the families accept the educational, economic, and social advantages that proficiency in English can bring when dealing with the wider community. The main reason that the Wang and Chen families left their homelands was for their children. So they are particularly anxious that they make the best of all the opportunities that American society has to offer them. It is against this background of the general acknowledgment of the importance of the English language that I will go on to consider the role of the Chinese language in the lives of the children in the families. I will look at how the parents' attitudes and actions have influenced, and continue to influence, this role, and how this impacts on intergenerational language maintenance and shift. First I will look at oral Chinese and then at written Chinese.
Chinese Language Acquisition and Use

The children are all native speakers of Chinese. All but Sheng were brought up in Mandarin speaking households. Sheng spent two years, from the age of one to three, with his Cantonese speaking grandparents. When he returned to his parents in the Northern province of Shandong, however, he quickly forgot his Cantonese, and had to relearn it when the whole family went back to Guangdong several years later. Janet and Richard were also exposed to both Cantonese and English when they were very young. They had a Cantonese speaking nanny in Hawai'i, and heard English at their kindergartens and in the wider society around them.

In all four families Mandarin is the usual language of the home, though there is considerable code switching in the Lin family, with a lot of English vocabulary being used. Once, when Janet returned from school I heard her telling her father, in English, that she was worried about an algebra test she had taken that day. Her choice of language may be related to the topic they were discussing. Irene says that she thinks the children use more English when they are talking about school. In general, however, most of the conversations that I have heard in the Lin family in which I am not directly involved are in Mandarin. The children prefer their mother to speak Chinese. Anna said that Richard groans if she tries to speak in English, and Irene says that both children laugh at Anna's English accent. She certainly speaks more Mandarin to me when the children are present. Anna is quite happy that they speak Mandarin, and hopes that they will marry Chinese speakers so that she can communicate with their spouses.

Not only do Janet and Richard speak Mandarin with their parents, they also usually speak to each other in Mandarin. From conversations with other parents, and from the results of a small survey I carried out among people of Chinese background in Honolulu, this seems
rather exceptional among second generation Chinese today. Children born in Hawai‘i, or those that have been here since they were very young, usually speak English with their siblings. They usually only speak Chinese (where they speak it at all) with parents and older relatives and friends of the family. In some cases, children refuse to speak Chinese, even if they have the ability to do so. One of the teachers at the school where Hua teaches complained that her children would not use Cantonese at home, even though she and her husband speak nothing else. They understand, but will only respond in English. Anna says that Richard’s best friend at school, Tom, who was born in Taiwan, will no longer speak Mandarin to his parents.

Once free of family and their parents’ circle of friends, however, Janet and Richard speak English to friends of their own age. This is usually from necessity. Their friends cannot, or in the case of Tom, will not speak Mandarin. Likewise in the Wang family, Rebecca has few Chinese speaking friends at school, so she speaks English during the day. When they phone, often about homework problems, Niknik says Rebecca always speaks to them in English. Sheng Chen is somewhat handicapped by his lack of proficiency in English, but has a few non-Chinese speaking friends at school who try to help him with the language. In all three families then, spoken Chinese is very much the language of the home. Outside the home it is used mainly with parents and their Chinese speaking relatives, friends, and acquaintances.

The children were all raised in homes where reading and writing Chinese were part of everyday life. They were all read to by their parents before they went to school. Niknik said that this is quite frequent now in the PRC. The one-child policy means that most parents pay great attention to the health and welfare of their children. Reading to children at home is seen as a way to help them do well at school. Niknik used to read to Rebecca
most evenings in the PRC. There were fewer distractions from the television in Beijing because there were not many programs for children. Hua used to read to Yan and Sheng when they were small. She thinks this practice is common among intellectuals in the PRC. She said they are more likely than other parents to buy books for their children rather than, or in addition to giving them the best food and consumer goods they can. Anna was not so regular in her bedtime reading sessions with her children in the United States, though she read more with Janet than with Richard. When he was young (two or three years old) Anna often left him with a story book and a tape to listen to by himself. Anna still has these short books and tapes, which were sent to her from Taiwan. When she did read to the children, she always read in Mandarin, even if the stories were written in English. She said that she and Janet would turn the pages together and Janet soon learned to turn back to page one to start the story again. Most of the books were in Chinese, however, brought or sent from Taiwan.

All the homes also had plenty of reading material around. Long and Niknik say that they used to read more in the PRC. They had more time and were not so tired after work. They used to read three daily papers and were also both studying part-time for their university degrees in the three years before they emigrated. Hua Chen was teaching and had lots of books in the home, mostly literature, science, and history. She also used to receive the newspaper every day. There have also always been plenty of books and daily papers in the Chen household, nearly all of these in Chinese. In addition, the children born in the PRC were exposed to Chinese print at kindergarten there. Rebecca and Yan were sent at two years old, and Sheng at four. (Janet and Richard, on the other hand, went to kindergartens in the United States and were exposed to English print.)

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Rebecca completed grade two in the PRC before immigrating to Hawai'i and thus had a good grounding in reading and writing. As seen in the previous chapters, she has continued to develop her reading skills in Chinese. This is not due to parental encouragement. In fact, Long has complained that she spends too much time reading Chinese. The main motivating factors seem to be interest in the material at hand, and, in the case of the Chinese newspaper, the influence of peers at school. Rebecca also reads messages from family members, in the form of letters from family in the PRC, and the occasional note from her parents. Writing Chinese is a different story. She does not do very much, as the process is slow and arduous. Again there is little encouragement from her parents. They seem to think that it is quite natural to forget how to write if the writing system is not used. Niknik says that she is also forgetting how to write some characters. This loss of skill does not seem to worry any of the family unduly. Niknik can ask Long how to write characters she is not sure of, and both she and Long can help Rebecca, should she wish to write Chinese. At present the family is more concerned with English.

Sheng completed grade 7 in the PRC, so he is a fluent reader of Chinese and quite a proficient writer, though his mother says that he writes very slowly. He likes reading, his tastes being more literary and serious than Rebecca's. He also regularly reads notes from his mother, and the occasional letter from a relative which his mother or father receive. Although anxious that he concentrate on his English school work, his parents see his Chinese literacy skills as an asset which can help his studies in the United States. Hua says that his reading has helped increase his general knowledge. It is also useful for learning English. He can use bilingual dictionaries, including the electronic one his mother has. He also reads stories in English which he has already read in Chinese. Knowing the content helps him understand the written English. In common with most other family members he only writes when he needs to. He does not write for the sake of writing. His mother
equates his lack of writing with laziness. When he does write, he uses Chinese if at all possible (for example when writing to himself or to his brother), since his written Chinese is much better than his English. He also uses his writing skills to help him with his English study. For example, he records the meanings of English vocabulary items for later memorization or review.

Janet and Richard learned to read and write Chinese at Saturday morning school. Anna said that she did not see it as her job to teach them, and in any case it was too difficult. Janet was sent to Chinese school when she was five. Richard started when he was three, largely from convenience. It seemed just as easy for Anna to leave him at the school with Janet as to keep him with her while she waited for class to finish. Richard does not seem to have benefited much from the classes at first. Anna says that the Principal refunded her half of the fees for two semesters. He did not think it was fair to keep the money as Richard had learned nothing. After a few years at the first school, Anna moved the children to another, since the original school seemed to have a problem with staff. Janet once had three different teachers in one semester. The second school was recommended by Irene, who takes Simon's niece there every Saturday morning. The school is held on Saturday for two and a half hours from 9.30 A.M. to 12 noon. Janet continued to level eight before giving up this once-a-week class for the more intensive program at her private day school. She was put into the third level of Chinese there. Her teacher said that this was quite unusual. Most of the students (nearly 100% of whom are of Chinese background) know little Chinese language. In the few cases that they do it is usually only oral, so it is difficult to place them as they do not have the literacy skills appropriate to their spoken level. Richard continues to attend Saturday school, though he now says that he wants to leave. He has just completed level four.
Unlike Sheng, Janet and Richard are much more proficient in reading and writing English than they are in Chinese. This is especially true for Richard, who really only reads and writes Chinese in connection with his classes. The only other time he writes Chinese is when he signs his name. He is exposed to Chinese writing at home, at church, and in Chinatown but pays little attention. For example, he says he never reads Chinese subtitles. He just watches the action on the screen and guesses at the meaning if he does not understand the dialogue. His reading is almost exclusively confined to school texts. Janet uses her reading and writing abilities in a wider range of activities. In addition to school work, she reads Chinese subtitles to help her understand Chinese television programs, films, and videos, especially when the spoken dialogue is not in modern Mandarin. She also follows the Chinese text of the hymns at Cantonese church as others sing them and reads notes from her mother. Despite her mother's encouragement, however, and the abundance of attractive reading materials in the home, Janet does not read Chinese stories or articles for pleasure. She much prefers English. Most of her writing in Chinese is for school, but she also uses Chinese in her recreational and creative writing, usually when writing to her mother. As with Richard, however, most reading and writing is in English, and this written code performs more functions than does Chinese.

The limited functional load carried by the Chinese written code does not seem to concern Janet and Richard's parents. Anna sees any knowledge of Chinese reading and writing as better than nothing. She said that she sent the children to Chinese school so they could learn something, however little. If they were taught ten characters, they might remember five, or just three. It did not matter as long as they learned something. It was better than sitting home watching television. They are Chinese, so they should know something of Chinese writing. No matter how restricted Richard's knowledge of the written code, his diligence in his studies brings its rewards: parental approval, praise from their friends, and
kudos at Saturday school. In spite of the fact that he wants to give up Chinese classes, Richard continues to study hard, and was pleased to get first place in his class in Spring semester 1994. Similar rewards are also felt by Janet, to an even greater extent, since her accomplishments are greater and Chinese is now part of her mainstream education. Her level of ability in reading and writing seems to have come as somewhat of a surprise to Anna. It is an unexpected bonus. The possibility that studying Chinese might lead to a marketable skill was not really anticipated.

Before moving on to the next section, I would like to contrast the parents' views and expectations of their children's literacy in Chinese with those that they hold of literacy among adults who have received a Chinese education. Irene said that she could not imagine that anyone from Taiwan could not read. The constant use of subtitles alone, not to mention universal schooling, made this inconceivable. Writing too, though she does not do too much of this, was as easy as speaking. She might occasionally forget how to write a character and have to resort to using zhuyin/fuhao, but anything she can say, she can write. She has a poor opinion of Simon's siblings who speak Lao rather than Mandarin but can not read or write either language. Anna also found the idea that some Chinese people could be illiterate in Chinese hard to grasp. She said all her friends could read and write. In the Wang family, Long and Niknik look down on country people from Guangdong province who are illiterate in Chinese. Long was anxious that people in Hawai'i should not presume that just because he had not been in the country long and could not speak English well, he was uneducated like these other newcomers. All, therefore, assume that literacy is quite normal, and expect that everyone should be able to read and write. However, as Long pointed out, without proficiency in English, literacy in Chinese counts for very little in Hawai'i.
Relation to Other Studies

Much of the research on intergenerational language maintenance and shift is at the macro level, usually being based on analysis of census data and large scale surveys of language attitudes and use. It has also concentrated almost exclusively on spoken language. Such analyses have identified several factors which seem to correlate with language maintenance. These include parental language use, direct promotion of the language by parents, parental education level (often linked to measures of social economic status), demographic factors (such as size and concentration of the population), mother tongue education, and positive evaluation of the language in question, both by the groups that speak it and the wider community. I will look at each of these, particularly in relation to the Lin family, who seem to have been successful in promoting the use of Mandarin by their second generation children. Special attention will be given to what other studies say about the written language, and the role of this in language maintenance.

Veltman (1983) looks at shift to English among first generation immigrants. This is also called Anglicization. Such shift is important because "parental language use exercises the most important control on the language use of children" (Veltman 1983: 126). In other words, it directly relates to the extent of intergenerational language shift. He examines the rate of Anglicization by looking at the proportion of immigrants who reported (in the 1976 Survey of Income and Education, which only asked about spoken language use) that they were English monolinguals or were bilingual and usually used English. He found that the majority of immigrants who arrived prior to 1960 reported that they used only English by 1976. The group with the lowest rate of Anglicization, however, was the Chinese, over half of whom said that they still usually used Chinese. This pattern of language retention was also seen among Chinese speakers who emigrated during the 1960s and the 1970s. Anna and JP have been in the United States for 15 years and still use Chinese as their
everyday language. JP says he speaks more Chinese in Hawai‘i than he did when the family lived on the mainland United States. He had more non-Chinese friends there, and fewer of his patients were Chinese. Irene and Simon have also been in Hawai‘i for over ten years, but Irene says that she only speaks English at work. Thus, the language behavior of these two long-term resident families follows the general pattern noted by Veltman.

The fact that Anna and JP, and their close friends, the Youngs, speak Mandarin at home has encouraged its use by Janet and Richard. Of course, as Veltman points out, parental language use is not the only factor. If it were, children of parents speaking ethnic languages would have a zero rate of English monolingualism and this is not the case. As I noted above, some children refuse to speak Chinese to their parents, even if they are consistently addressed in that language. Cheung (1981) looked specifically at which parental variables most influenced language retention by children of Chinese background in urban Canada. He found that direct promotion, which he measured by three indicators: speaking to the children in Chinese, insisting that they answer in Chinese, and actual teaching of the language, was the most important factor. Other factors which correlated with direct promotion included the parents' ethnic community involvement and their lack of knowledge of either of the main languages of Canada, i.e., English or French. These factors all play a part in the Lin household. Anna says that when the children tried to speak to her in English she often did not understand, so they were more or less forced to use Mandarin. I find her English quite good, but she and her children do not think so. The children criticize her accent. Richard complains when she speaks English and tells her

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1 The actual questions in the interview schedule were "What proportion of time do you use Chinese when you speak to him/her (oldest child)?", "Do you ever insist that your children speak to you in Chinese?", and "Have you tried to teach your children by using books?" (Cheung 1981: 39).
to speak Mandarin. As for ethnic community involvement, Cheung (1981) measured this by looking at the number of Chinese friends respondents had, the relative proportion of Chinese people visited by respondents, and the frequency of reading Chinese publications. Taking these types of measures, Anna and JP would rate highly. In addition, they are involved in community organizations and have contact with Chinese speaking staff and clients at work.

It is also interesting to note that Veltman (1983) finds that the language used by the mother exercises greater control over the language behavior of her children than the language used by the father. It is thus significant that Anna is reluctant to use English with the children, and that they encourage her to speak Mandarin. She also spends more time with them than their father does, picking them up from school, ferrying them to activities such as piano lessons and basketball games, and spending time with them after school before JP returns from work.

As far as socioeconomic factors are concerned, there is some indication that for Chinese and other high status groups the higher the parent's educational level the less the degree of Anglicization (see Veltman 1983: 142, Li 1982: 116, Reinecke 1988: 117). The correlation is not totally consistent or linear, since there are so many other variables which could affect the situation, the most important being parental language use and attitudes. It is interesting, of course, to notice that the Lins are a professional family, with high income and high levels of education. On the other hand, Tom's parents are also professionals and yet he no longer speaks Mandarin.

Cheung's examination of the positive correlation between the level of Chinese community involvement and language maintenance is particularly relevant to the Lin family.
(1981) emphasizes the importance of the nature of the parents' social networks. This kind of information is not accessible to studies based on census data, but such studies have suggested that demographic factors are important. Li (1982), building on the work of Leiberson (1970), suggests that the concentration of Chinese immigrants in Chinatowns slows the shift to English among immigrants and their children. In other words, it supports the maintenance of Chinese. One could say that the social results of this kind of residential segregation are not dissimilar to the result of choosing to mix socially with one's own ethnic group. The Lins have never lived in a Chinatown, nor have they had many Chinese-speaking neighbors, but their choice of social contacts has provided them with a type of community in which Chinese is the usual language of communication. Such a community is not based on locality, but is a kind of virtual community.

The availability and accessibility of Chinese language broadcasting, video, films, and press, and the large number and variety of Chinese associations and organizations in Hawai'i also provide a network for those who wish to join. In the age of motor cars and mass transportation, people like Anna can easily get to Chinese-speaking churches at some distance from their homes, take children to Chinese schools, and go to Chinatown to eat, shop, or attend the movies. As noted in chapter 3, such amenities and services also relate to demographic factors, both current and historical.

**Written Language**

As regards written language, apart from Fishman's work, most studies of maintenance and shift only mention this in passing. For example, Veltman's study concentrates on spoken language. As noted in chapter 2, however, one of the data sources he used did give information on reading and writing abilities. This showed that the fourteen to sixteen year olds who were surveyed reported that they understood the ethnic language better than
they spoke it, and, in turn, spoke better than they read, and read better than they wrote.
The same hierarchy of skills was found in their responses to questions about the English
language, but in this case the decline in competence was not so rapid from one skill to the
next.

This hierarchy is also apparent in the Chinese language skills of Rebecca, Janet, and
especially Richard. It is not a coincidence that it correlates with the frequency of use of
the various skills and their perceived importance in everyday life. Face to face
communication through speech is more frequent and important than either of the literate
skills. In addition, as noted in chapter 9, reading is more vital than writing. Writing tends
to be something which most people avoid if they can. It is looked on as an effort. These
factors are even more salient when it comes to the Chinese written code. Written English
is the language of the wider community and hence of the environment and most official
organizations, while written Chinese is restricted to particular situations. All the school
children, except perhaps Sheng, spend more time reading English than Chinese. Most
writing that is required of them is also in English, so this is the written code which is more
relevant for their everyday life. The fact that Rebecca, Janet, and Richard find English the
easiest language to write also means that this will be the code chosen unless Chinese is
specifically required (for example, for Chinese school or social interaction).

As for the relation between spoken and written skills, Veltman found that those teenage
respondents in the survey who spoke a minority language as their first language as a child
reported that their levels of skill in reading and writing were higher on average than those
whose first language was English. In all cases, however, the level of proficiency of the
written skills in the minority language was low, averaging between "not very good" and
"pretty good." In contrast, the average self assessment of written skills in English,
whatever the mother tongue of the respondents, was nearer "very good" than "pretty good" (Veltman 1983: 156). Much depends on the individual's schooling experience, however, since it is generally accepted that the teaching of reading and writing is the province of the school.

Veltman also notes a link between schooling and spoken proficiency. He found that "the number of years of minority language education plays a significant role in the retention of minority language skills" (Veltman 1983: 192). By "skills" he means the ability to speak. The wording of the question on which this finding was based and the subsequent discussion seem to concentrate on full-time education, that is to say, schooling in the home country before arrival in the United States, or bilingual programs within mainstream schooling in the U.S. The results of Rebecca's two years of schooling in the PRC certainly seem to be long lasting as far as speaking and reading are concerned. After four years of education in Hawai'i Rebecca still enjoys reading Chinese, and says that her English and Chinese reading proficiency levels are about the same. Reading in Chinese is also helping Sheng to continue to add to his general knowledge and to his knowledge of the Chinese language. For both children the ability to read Chinese gives them the opportunity to continue to develop their skills in Chinese independently of their mainstream education.

As for part-time after-hours community language schools, Fishman has written most on their role in both the teaching of literacy and in the maintenance of language and ethnic identity (for example, Fishman 1972, 1980a, 1980b, 1985). His main tenet is that though

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2 The question read "Thinking about all the courses you had in each of those grades listed below, how much of the teaching was done in that language?" (Veltman, 1983: 177,8). The grades listed were 1 through 6, 7 through 9, and 10 through 12; and the word that referred to the minority language previously identified by the students.
they can assist in language maintenance, they cannot do so alone. The minority language
must also have a meaningful place in life outside the school, e.g., in the home, in religious
organizations, and in community resources such as periodicals and television. Cheung
(1981) also sees ethnic schools as playing only a subsidiary role in language promotion.
Sending children to such schools is not as effective a method for language retention as
direct promotion, such as speaking the ethnic language at home. Fishman does not want
to overemphasize the limited role of part-time language schools however. Besides
teaching language they can contribute to the socialization of children into both the cultural
traditions of the old country and a sense of ethnic community in the new.

From the observations I have made at a number of Chinese language schools in Hawai'i, it
is rare for students other than those who have had at least some period of full-time
education in Chinese outside of Hawai'i to attain a sufficient level of reading proficiency to
be able to read Chinese texts other than those they read at school. Attendance at Chinese
schools does seem to promote the use of the spoken language however, at least within the
confines of the classroom. It also exposes children to information about Chinese history,
culture, and traditions through the content of the school texts they study and/or through
background information and stories provided by the teachers. It is also clear that Chinese
school is a place to make friends. Richard's one regret about giving up Chinese classes, if
his mother will allow him to, is that he will miss his friends. Hua complains that some of
her students do not come to school to study, but to find and chat with friends.

As far as Anna and JP are concerned, however, they do not seem very interested in the
cultural component of Chinese schooling. Neither seem to think it important for their
children to learn about Chinese traditions or history. They want the children to learn
everyday useful language. When I asked Anna why she sent the children to Saturday
classes she did not mention culture at all. Perhaps she thinks her children have learned all they need to about values and behavior at home. More Americanized parents may see the role of Chinese schools differently.

Another factor that can assist language maintenance is the usefulness of the language for employment or business. One of the reasons the Chinese language continued to flourish in Hawai‘i in the 1930s was that it was an advantage in commercial life (Reinecke 1988: 117). Simon said that an important goal of his Chinese education in Laos was to give him the necessary writing skills for him to be able to help his father in his wholesale business. He had many Chinese customers, so invoices and other correspondence needed to be written in Chinese. Several students at the Chinese community schools I visited in Honolulu said that they thought Chinese might be useful in their future jobs, though they were not clear about the exact nature the language could play. Anna is now also beginning to think that Janet's growing proficiency in reading and writing Chinese might have future employment implications. She said that Janet might find a position with a Taiwan-based firm, for example.

Reinecke (1988) and Fishman (1985) note that the fact that a minority language has a standard written form increases its status. It also allows for the possibility of the foreign language press and other publications. The current study has shown that literate parents who read in the home make print available to the children. This may have little effect on the children's reading habits, as in the Lin family, or it can encourage continued reading in Chinese, as was the case with Rebecca and Sheng. The availability of newspapers and other publications in the minority language also allows adults who are literate in their own language to keep in touch with affairs relevant to their particular ethnic group. Cheung (1981) listed the frequency of reading ethnic publications as one of the measures of ethnic
community involvement. As for the effects of status, Paulston (1994: 15,16) gives an example from Pittsburgh where the Greek ethnic group showed a slower shift to English than the Italians. One of the causal factors was that the Greeks had "knowledge and access to a standardized, written language with cultural prestige and tradition, ... The Italians in contrast speak/spoke a non-standard, non-written dialect with no prestige."

Speakers of all Chinese dialects accept a standard form for modern written Chinese. This is the form used in formal texts, for example in schools and church, no matter which spoken dialect is used. Classical Chinese is the other accepted norm. Both use the same script, which can itself be associated with Chinese culture, history, and being Chinese. Writing can therefore take on something of a symbolic significance. This can lead to the view that some knowledge of the script is inherently worth learning, whether it is really considered feasible to achieve some usable level of literacy or not. Evidence of this is seen in the Lin family. While not being concerned with its historical or traditional aspects, writing does seem to be associated with being Chinese. The parents are happy that the children go to Chinese classes and have learned at least a little of the written language.

Calligraphy adds another dimension to this symbolic aspect. It can be valued and admired, whether or not one can read it. Practicing calligraphy may be only marginally connected to actually writing Chinese. It is certainly not thought of in the same way. Hua says that her students enjoy their weekly class, mainly, she thinks, because they do not have to use their brains to copy the characters. I have also been attending a Saturday morning class in Chinatown, which is eagerly attended by Chinese youngsters, most of whom do not understand what they are writing. But they enjoy it; and it is Chinese, carried out in a Chinese setting among other Chinese children and adults, so this pleases their parents.
Decorative texts written in calligraphy are often written in classical Chinese rather than modern day *baihua*. As Hsu (1971: 17) points out, classical writing is important for ritual and ceremonial functions, and may be the most common form of written Chinese encountered and used by people of Chinese background who have become well incorporated into the American way of life. The data in the present study indicate that classical Chinese is not seen as very relevant for family members. It is too different from the language they use in their everyday life. The parents in the Wang and Lin families are not concerned that their children are unfamiliar with classical forms. Anna even complained to her son's teacher when Richard had to spend time memorizing classical Tang poems. These may, however, be the very types of texts that carry symbolic meaning for later generations of Chinese.

Discussion

The data in this chapter have shown that, as far as the spoken language is concerned, all the parents in the families think that it is good and quite natural that the children speak Mandarin at home. This is the language the parents understand and also the first language of the children. The Lin family is of particular interest because their children were born in the United States and yet still speak Mandarin at home and to each other. Most of the factors that have been identified in previous studies as encouraging, or at least correlating with language maintenance can be seen to apply in the Lin family. The parents speak Mandarin at home, and the mother is not confident in her level of English proficiency so avoids using it whenever possible. The parents' social network, together with their work and business contacts consist largely of Chinese speakers. Anna and JP belong to various Chinese organizations, read Chinese publications, and watch Chinese language television programs, videos, and films. In addition, the children were sent to Chinese schools at an early age despite the fact that they were having difficulties with their English language.
education. They were also encouraged to continue their studies in Chinese despite the parents' obvious concern that they succeed in mainstream schooling. This all means that Janet and Richard have not only been exposed to, and encouraged to use Mandarin in the home, but also in a number of other contexts.

Anna mainly sent the children to Chinese school to learn to read and write, since they were already fluent speakers of Mandarin. However, it seems that her expectation of the level of proficiency that the children would reach in Chinese was not high. She just wanted them to know something of the written language. Thus, Chinese writing was not really seen as an alternative channel of communication which the children would actually use.

In the Chen and Wang families the situation is different. The parents are not concerned about their children's written Chinese abilities except as they interact with the learning of English. Mastering English is seen as the overriding priority. In the Wang family, Long disapproves of Rebecca's choice of Chinese reading matter and the time she spends on it. Both parents accept the fact that she is forgetting how to write Chinese as a matter of course. Nevertheless, the presence of Chinese written materials in the homes has allowed Sheng and Rebecca, who learned to read in the PRC, to continue to read and develop their Chinese language skills.

As far as language shift is concerned, the prerequisites for this are present. The parents accept the social, economic, and educational advantages of proficiency in English, and see a need to promote this in the children. Once outside the home, extended family, the parents' circle of friends and acquaintances, and specific centers where Chinese is the norm (such as Chinese societies and schools), the children find themselves in a world where competence in English, both spoken and written, appears vital for success. The data on
the use of written Chinese shows that the children read and write Chinese in less contexts and for fewer functions as proficiency in English increases. This is an indication of language shift in progress.\(^3\) Just as a shift to English is mainly determined by pragmatic factors, retention of written Chinese depends on whether it is seen as performing some useful function. For the adults in the families and for Sheng, Chinese is extremely useful, usually being their main written code. For the other children, however, English seems to have far more practical value.

This is not to say that Chinese writing has no practical value for the children. Being literate in Chinese gave Sheng and Rebecca functional and social knowledge about the possible uses of reading and writing. Their reading abilities also give them potential access to a wide range of information. Being able to read and write Chinese can also help Sheng on a very practical level in his English study. For all the children biliteracy can prove an asset in business and in procuring employment. The ability to write Chinese is also useful for personal correspondence with family and friends who know no English. It is useful, but not necessarily essential. As noted in chapter 9, those not proficient in written Chinese can enlist the help of the more proficient to accomplish the task at hand.

Researchers, such as Fishman, have pointed out the symbolic function that a written language can have for minority groups. This is a function that English cannot fill, and thus can be a potent factor in language maintenance. Written Chinese, including calligraphy, is certainly believed by many to be inextricably bound up with Chinese literature, tradition, history, and/or Chinese identity. These are among the reasons why parents continue to

\(^3\) One has to be cautious in interpreting synchronic data diachronically. For example, children may not need to use writing for the same purposes as adults. When they themselves become adult, however, the situation may change because of the needs of work or family, or because of new interests.
take and/or send their children to Chinese community schools and calligraphy classes. The adult first generation Chinese in this study, however, seem to view written Chinese as a practical tool and a necessary part of their everyday life, rather than a symbol of history and culture with a capital "C". Hence their interest in baihua rather than classical Chinese. The Lin family, with their American born children, constitute a kind of transitional case. While Anna and JP do not see knowledge of classical Chinese as being of any benefit, and seem unconcerned about the cultural maintenance side of Chinese community schools, Anna did not really expect her children to use Chinese reading and writing for any practical purpose. She sent the children to Chinese school because she thought that it was good for them to know something of the written language in addition to being able to speak it. This is an indication that she considers Chinese writing, to some extent, to be bound up with being Chinese.

In general then, it seems that the significance of written Chinese is not the same for all people of Chinese background. On the basis of the data in the present study and the findings of other researchers, we can hypothesize that literate first generation Chinese immigrants who predominantly use Chinese in their everyday lives view literacy in Chinese as a practical tool, one of the possible channels of linguistic communication. It is of use to them but less useful for their children, especially as they become more proficient in written English. Other Chinese immigrants who are more Anglicized, together with later generations of Chinese may be more concerned with the symbolic and traditional importance of Chinese writing. They may associate it with the standard language, literature (and hence high forms of language and culture), tradition, history, and/or ethnic identity. The relative importance of these different views cannot be determined a priori. They are a matter for empirical investigation.
CHAPTER 11
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The main aims of this study were to investigate the place of written Chinese in the overall communicative economy of the members of four families of Chinese background in Hawai‘i, and to consider values and beliefs, and/or any special uses or features associated with written Chinese which affected its use, maintenance, and promotion as a minority language. I called on a number of areas of research and scholarly inquiry to formulate research questions and guide my research. These included literacy, and its functions and use in everyday life as well as in relation to formal schooling, the ethnography of communication, language maintenance and shift, and the nature of the Chinese written code and its particular historical and cultural traditions. I looked at the findings from a number of angles and analyzed them at various levels. Concepts taken from work in the ethnography of communication were particularly helpful in both data collection and analysis. In this chapter I will summarize the main findings of the present study with respect to the overall aims, show how they relate to reading and writing in general and written Chinese in particular, suggest some areas for future research, and finally, make some concluding remarks.

Function and Roles of Written Chinese in Everyday Life

Chapters 5 and 6 described a range of reading and writing activities which were found to be part of the everyday lives of the family members in this study. Chapter 8 looked at the functions of these. I concentrated on the roles of written Chinese, but also compared these with those of written English. One of the major functions of written Chinese in the study families was to establish, build, and maintain social relationships. Communicating with others via letters and cards provided a reasonably priced way to keep in touch with
family and friends. Reading and writing Chinese also helped to organize, regulate and/or plan the life of the writer and his/her immediate family. A written text (which may just consist of a note jotted on a calendar) can be accessed at a later date by the writer or another and serve as a record or reminder. Comparison of the participants involved, and the content of the messages showed that the mothers in the families made the most use of writing to assist them in the smooth running of the household. This reflects their pivotal position in the families in terms of day to day household management. In addition, writing can be used to help clarify and organize one's thoughts. Some family members also wrote Chinese for the pleasure of the activity and/or found it to be a creative outlet. Little written Chinese was used at work except in the case of Hua, who teaches in a Chinese community school, and Niknik, who keeps a work record largely for her own reference.

The ability to read and write Chinese was also seen as an aid to learning English. It allows learners to use bilingual dictionaries, record notes for later review, and assists in memorization. Being literate in Chinese also implies a certain amount of formal schooling and some knowledge of the roles of reading and writing in a modern literate society. Some of the major functions of reading Chinese in the families did not necessarily involve writing. Reading was generally seen as easier and more pleasurable than writing and thus often constituted, or was part of a recreational activity. Chinese publications were a major source of information, which could be seen as entertaining and/or educational (the latter being understood in the broadest sense of the word, i.e., not necessarily connected to formal schooling). Reading also allowed interested family members to keep in touch with current events in Chinese speaking countries and with various aspects of Chinese culture, both popular culture and more traditional aspects, such as art, medicine, and history.

Comparison of the above functions with those recorded in the ethnographic studies of the everyday use of reading and writing in English in the United States by Heath (1983) and
Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) showed that there were more similarities than differences in both the types of reading and writing and their uses. This indicates that the Chinese families in the present study use their literacy knowledge and skills for similar purposes and to meet similar needs as families in the United States who are literate in English. It also emphasizes the many uses of reading and writing in general in everyday life in the United States.

In addition, it was seen that the four families who were the focus of this study shared some of the attitudes towards literacy characteristic of the mainstream middle class families in Heath's (1983) study. This was especially true of the Lin and Chen families. In general, all the parents accept literacy as the norm and as part of everyday life. They are educated, school oriented, and look to education as a route to upward social mobility. While their social networks may be somewhat limited due to shortness of time in Hawai'i and/or a reliance on family and Chinese speaking friends, this does not limit the Chinese parents' aspirations for their children. There are plenty of examples in Hawai'i of very successful Chinese business people and professionals.

On the other hand, I know that not all first generation Chinese immigrants in Hawai'i are educated. Some may not be able to write and/or read. I also know that some children of Chinese background do not follow the commonly held stereotype that Chinese children are diligent students who do well in school. They are failing at school and are at risk in the community. The role and significance of Chinese literacy in the lives of such immigrant families can be expected to be different from my findings in this study. This could be an interesting area of further research. It would not only extend the findings of the current study but, like Heath's work, could lead to understandings that could improve the schooling experience of the children in these families.
Comparisons with the findings of Heath (1983) and Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) also highlight differences in the way the members of the four families in this study interact with the written word. These were found to be related to two main factors. The first is that the family members are operating in bilingual or multilingual situations and differ in terms of their levels of proficiency (both written and spoken) in the two main languages involved, English and Chinese. The levels of skill in English of the parents in the Chen and Wang families are particularly low. The second is that Chinese is the primary language of literacy for most of the family members, and this non-phonemically based script with its own particular social and political history affects how it is viewed and used by its users. Both these factors will be discussed below.

The Place of Written Chinese in the Overall Communicative Economy
Although the focus of this study is the role of written Chinese, the study shows that this cannot be considered in isolation. Its structure and use are affected by, and interact with other languages, most notably English, and other channels of communication, most importantly the oral channel. These other codes and channels therefore also need to be considered.

Interaction between Written and Oral Language
As in the mainstream families described in Heath's study (Heath 1983), many of the literacy activities in the Chinese families in the current study were solitary in nature in so far as individuals read and wrote in private without involving others in the actual process of encoding or decoding the relevant text. Even in these cases, however, the reader or writer sometimes told others or discussed with others the content of what he/she had written or read, or was in the process of reading.
Some communicative events involved both the written and spoken channel of the language/s involved, the two channels accompanying and reinforcing each other. For example, Hua and Niknik often gave instructions or information orally to the addressee while writing a note for him/her to refer to later. Some situations regularly call for group reading. This was expected and indicated active participation in the event. Examples involving Chinese in the data were reading aloud and singing in church services, the recitation of texts in Chinese community school, and karaoke singing.

The importance of the written texts in church and school activities is an example of how some written texts become identified with authoritative versions which are used as guides and references. The general belief that a written document is more reliable than a spoken account also leads to writing being used to reinforce the spoken word. Niknik's manager asked that her oral report be submitted in writing. The letter I helped Anna write protesting her traffic citation was in response to a request by an official in the traffic office whom we spoke to by telephone that the details be put in writing.

The data in this study also show that the written form of language is used to clarify the meaning of the spoken word. This was one of the functions of Chinese reading and writing which differed from the uses of English that had been identified in previous ethnographic studies of literacy in the United States. Examples from the data include the routine use of subtitles in Chinese films, videos, and television programs, especially from Taiwan, and the use of writing during conversations between myself and the adults in the Wang and Chen families. These patterns of writing both relate to the fact that the individuals involved in the communicative events described are operating in multidialectal and multilingual situations and are not fully proficient in the various dialects and languages.
being used. The prevalence of Chinese subtitles in movies and television programs with Chinese dialogue is also related to the fact that speakers of all Chinese dialects, many of which are mutually unintelligible, all accept one standard written form for modern Chinese.

Although both Long and Siu assured me that the use of writing to assist oral communication was unusual between speakers of Chinese, my own observations in China and anecdotal evidence from other China observers suggest that Chinese speakers may be particularly disposed to exploit the written channel (provided they are literate, of course) when oral communication breaks down. This could be partly due to the general acceptance that the written form subsumes the spoken dialect. It would be interesting to see to what extent writing is used in this way in bilingual situations where Chinese is not one of the languages involved.

The data also showed examples where lack of proficiency in the written code led to collaborative reading and/or writing, where more than one person was an active participant in the encoding or decoding process. Family members helped others write Chinese characters which they had forgotten or did not know how to write. Help with reading Chinese was less often sought, except by me. Spoken language is necessarily involved in these kinds of collaborative events since the person who wants help has to explain his/her need orally to the more proficient writer or reader. The latter, in turn, usually needs to give an oral response. Such sharing of knowledge and skills is not restricted to Chinese. I was often called on to help family members read or write English. Likewise, Yan helps his family, and JP helps some of his patients to decipher the meaning of written English. As noted in the next section, the need to deal with written English is a pressing one for immigrants living in Hawai'i where English is the dominant language.
The above all show the close interrelationship between the written and oral channels of language. Information available in the literature on language use in both English-speaking and multilingual situations in the United States shows that this interrelationship is a common phenomenon. Written language often accompanies and/or reinforces spoken language. It is not a question of one or the other. Both are often involved in a communicative activity, thus blurring the dichotomy between orality and literacy on which many of the pronouncements about their fundamental difference in nature are based.

While not a focus of this study, the findings also indicate the influence of written language on language knowledge in general, again blurring the distinction between the two channels. For example, reading can increase knowledge and understanding of vocabulary. This aspect of reading is well known to the parents in the families in this study, hence their encouragement of their children's reading, usually in English. Sheng and Rebecca also continue to increase their Chinese language knowledge by reading Chinese texts. These observations are also pertinent to the area of language maintenance and language shift, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The Relation between Written Chinese and Written English

The study identified the factors involved in the choice of the Chinese written code rather than, or as well as written English by comparing the use of the two codes in the context of the various reading and writing activities in which family members took part. The relative proficiency of the participants in the two written codes was found to be an important factor. Thus, the adults in the families, together with Sheng, who are more proficient in reading and writing Chinese than English, prefer to use written Chinese wherever this will adequately meet the needs and goals of the particular activity concerned. They write in
Chinese if the addressee, who may be the writer him/herself, can read it, and they read Chinese texts if the content is interesting and/or relevant to the task at hand. However, as the families are all living in Hawai'i, and the dominant language of the overall community is English, they also need to deal with the English written code. Much of the written language which needs to be decoded in the course of everyday life is in English, as is the bulk of written information which readers may want or need to access for personal, family, study, or work related reasons. This is also the code that is required for any written communication with non-Chinese speaking individuals or non-Chinese organizations.

Where a writer is biliterate in Chinese and English he or she may choose to make use of both written codes. For example, Anna deliberately used both to make sure her daughter understood the note she left her (see figure 6). The data also show that English vocabulary items are used in what are basically Chinese texts because the writer finds it easier and/or quicker to write, or because there is no exact equivalent in Chinese that the writer knows of. Alternatively, the writer may use both English and Chinese for emphasis or to exploit his/her linguistic repertoire for expressive and creative purposes. The use of English words in Chinese writing is both a reflection and an expression of the writer's bilingualism. It can also be seen as an adaptive response to the new demands being made on the Chinese language, which is being used in a new social and cultural milieu.

For the children in the families who have had most or all of their schooling in English language schools in the United States (i.e., Janet, Richard and Rebecca) the relation between written Chinese and written English differs from that of their parents. They find English less of an effort to write than Chinese. Richard and Janet also find English easier to read. A comparison of the children's patterns of use of written Chinese and written English shows that the greater the proficiency in the latter the greater the extent it is used.
in the reading and writing activities in which they are involved. This use of English is also encouraged by the fact that their parents view English as the most useful code in which to be proficient to meet the demands of life in Hawai‘i, and to achieve educational and occupational success. Written Chinese is only used in situations which demand its use, or when the children in the study families have a special reason for wanting to read or write Chinese. Examples of the former are found in Chinese classes and when writing to someone who cannot read English. Examples of the latter are seen when Rebecca reads Chinese texts because she is interested in the content, and when Janet writes in Chinese to please her mother or to demonstrate her biliteracy abilities. These differences in the functional load of two written languages between individuals and across generations can be seen as examples of language shift. More will be said about this aspect below.

The Relation between Reading and Writing

The study highlights the differences between reading and writing Chinese, in terms of how the two skills are acquired, used, maintained, developed, and regarded by family members. Some of the differences in their functions in the various literacy activities in which family members are involved have been noted above. Even where they are seen to fulfill the same role, their frequency of use and relative importance in daily life may differ. There are also differences in terms of knowledge of, and proficiency in the two skills. The data in chapter 7 show that the repertoire of forms and styles family members have at their disposal is less in writing than in reading. Reading and writing skills may also develop (or be lost) independently of each other. This is shown clearly in the data by Rebecca Wang. Rules of use also differ. For example, the vertical direction is accepted as the unmarked form in printed texts, but it carries special meaning in texts written in the families. Attitudes towards the two skills also vary. Writing extended texts is usually seen as time consuming and difficult. Few family members write from choice. On the other hand,
reading is seen as less of an effort and, depending on the content, can be regarded as pleasurable. Thus, many family members read during their leisure time. Such attitudes relate to differences in proficiency in the two skills, and to the preferences of the individuals involved.

Many of the above differences between reading and writing are not unique to Chinese, of course, though the details of their manifestation may be. Comparisons with studies of reading and writing in other languages can add to knowledge of the relation between the two in written language in general.

Special Features Associated with Written Chinese
A major aim of the study was to see what effects the history and nature of the Chinese script itself had on its use, role, and/or significance in everyday life in Hawai‘i. I particularly wanted to see if there was any evidence that the often stated link between the Chinese script and Chinese culture, history, and civilization affected how people thought about the writing system and if it encouraged them to maintain and promote literacy in Chinese in the United States.

The data show that the fact that the Chinese script is non-phonemic has some quite specific effects on the way written Chinese is regarded and used. The number of characters and the paucity of accurate phonetic clues to link a character with the spoken word it represents means that learning to read and write in Chinese is seen as a long and difficult process. The non-phonemic nature of the script also makes it difficult to guess how to write a Chinese word that one knows how to say but does not know, or has forgotten how to write. This may make writing Chinese seem more onerous than other languages which use phonologically based systems. One of the results of these perceived
difficulties is that Anna accepts that several years at a part-time Chinese community language school may not result in very high levels of Chinese literacy skills in her children.

The present study showed that it was not only children who needed help with writing Chinese characters. This was especially true for Chinese speakers who do not write in Chinese very often. They are likely to forget characters and often ask others to help. The nature of the written script affects how such help is given. Comparisons with how I told family members how to write English words showed that they were more likely to write the character for the person who needed the information than to tell him/her how it is written. Explaining how to write a Chinese character is not as easy as telling someone how to spell an English word. It also demands greater knowledge of the written system on the part of the addressee.

The fact that Chinese characters vary in their reading pronunciation according to the dialect the speaker is using also causes problems when characters are used to transliterate English proper names. This encourages the use of English in Chinese texts to avoid ambiguity. On the other hand, as noted previously, the fact that speakers of all dialects learn the same standard written form at school can be an asset when it comes to subtitling Chinese dialogue in films and videos. This is one of the features of the script which has a particular affect on the way it is used and regarded by its users.

The idea that there is only one writing system which can represent all spoken dialects is reflected in the way the family members in this study approach the task of reading Chinese. The sociohistorical background of the Chinese population in Hawai'i, the continued migration of Chinese speakers from a variety of countries, and the availability of printed Chinese from a variety of sources means that a number of forms of the Chinese written
code are found. These were detailed in chapter 7. Despite this, I found that family members see only two basic types of written Chinese: modern vernacular writing (baihua) and classical Chinese (wenyanwen). They recognize regional and stylistic differences in the former, but those who want to read texts which use forms with which they may not have been familiar before they came to Hawai'i (for example, fanti zi rather than jianti zi, or colloquial Cantonese expressions) tend to concentrate on the similarities between these rather than the differences. In general, family members believe that a competent reader of standard Chinese who wants to read such texts will be able to do so given sufficient time and practice. Classical Chinese, however, is seen as being very different. One cannot pick up a reading knowledge of this. Serious study, usually in formal education, is required.

As for links between the character script and Chinese history and traditional culture, I found little evidence that this affected the attitudes or behavior of the parents in the families in this study towards language maintenance in their children. In general, the adults in the families had a very pragmatic view of the role of written Chinese. It was seen as a practical tool which they used in their everyday lives. Even in the Lin family, where Anna seemed to accept that written Chinese would not necessarily be a usable channel of communication as far as her children were concerned, she still saw everyday written language as the more important aspect to teach at Chinese school. She could see no point in teaching her children about classical literature.

The one exception to this pragmatic view relates to calligraphy. While only actively practiced in one of the four families, and then only by the parents, examples of calligraphy

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1 Looking at this from the opposite angle, a description of the various forms of written Chinese found in Hawai'i can give information on the history of the Chinese audience at which the publications are aimed and the sources of the publications. This is the way I approached the analysis of the data in chapter 7.
are commonly found as decorations and symbols of good luck in other families. However, the relation of Chinese calligraphy to actually "writing" Chinese is not a simple one. Siu uses calligraphy for a number of purposes, some of which could be carried out by other styles of writing. Others practice, and/or admire calligraphy as calligraphy. They may not understand the meaning of the characters. These different ways of viewing calligraphy can be seen as an example of the way written Chinese can be viewed as a practical channel of communication and/or a symbol of Chineseness. I explore this question further in the next section.

Language Maintenance and Shift
Few studies have focused on the role of written language in language maintenance, promotion, and shift. The data in this study confirms the opinions of researchers, such as Fishman, who have long maintained that the existence, acceptance, and widespread availability of a standard written form is important for ethnic minority language vitality in the United States. A written standard gives a language status, and allows for the possibility of newspapers and other publications in the language, and for the use of written texts in various institutions such as churches and schools. The existence of such resources and organizations is particularly important for the Chinese population in Hawai'i since the majority do not live in Chinatown but are scattered throughout the general community. Such resources and services serve to both reflect and foster a sense of shared interests and group cohesion. Chinese organizations, such as churches and societies, also provide venues where people of similar language and cultural backgrounds can meet and make friends. Those operating in the Chinese language in present day Hawai'i were mainly set up by and for the new wave of Chinese speaking immigrants described in chapter 3. As far as promotion of Chinese among the younger generation is concerned, the above organizations, together with Chinese schools and classes, provide opportunities for
children to hear (and hopefully use) Chinese language outside the home and the immediate or extended family. Chinese language schools, of course, also actively teach the language and set up their own system of internal rewards to encourage the students to learn and use Chinese.

The data collected in this study show that the availability of Chinese texts, such as newspapers and books, in the home can be important for the maintenance of children's Chinese language skills. Children, such as Sheng and Rebecca, who learned to read before they arrived in the United States can continue to use and develop their knowledge of the Chinese language through reading. Research in Canada has shown that the reading of Chinese publications by parents correlates with the use of spoken Chinese in the home, the most powerful factor encouraging children in the family to speak Chinese (Cheung 1981). It is not clear, however, to what extent, if any, the reading of Chinese publications actually promotes the use of spoken Chinese. Reading and speaking Chinese at home may both be a result of the parents' greater facility in Chinese and general preference to use this language rather than English.

As noted previously, the parents' attitudes towards written Chinese and written English also provide information about the process of language shift. The first generation parents in the study generally view written Chinese as a tool with limited usefulness for their children in Hawai'i in comparison with English. The parents in the Wang and Chen families do not actively encourage their children to maintain their literacy skills in Chinese. Anna Lin encourages Janet and Richard to use written Chinese to some extent, but accepts that English is their main written language. A comparison of the functional loads of the two written codes shows that the children in the study who are proficient in written English use this in many reading and writing activities in which their parents would use
written Chinese. This is especially marked in the case of Janet and Richard, whose use of written Chinese is restricted to a few specific functions. This would seem to be evidence of language shift. It can also be seen as paralleling the increasing role of spoken English in the lives of the children as they develop their own circles of friends and interests independent of their parents and their extended families and friends.

The study also indicates that as written Chinese loses its practical function it begins to take on a more symbolic significance. Chinese people who do not actively use Chinese in the family may view written Chinese more as a symbol of traditional Chinese heritage than as a potential practical channel of communication. Anna's view of the place of written Chinese in her children's lives represents an intermediate position. Further research is needed to see if this hypothesis is correct. One could, for example, look at the role and significance of written Chinese in the lives of immigrant families who no longer use spoken Chinese at home, and in second or later generation Chinese families. One could compare their views of the importance of teaching their children about Chinese history, literature, and traditional culture with those of first generation parents like Anna. One could also see whether classical Chinese and calligraphy (as art) are the most common forms of written Chinese encountered in their daily lives.

Concluding Remarks

In this study I have described and analyzed the functions and roles of written Chinese in four families of Chinese background living in Hawai‘i. I have shown that this written code plays a significant role in the lives of those family members who are proficient in reading and/or writing Chinese. It provides an additional channel of communication and contact with the outside world and plays an important part in personal, social, and intellectual life. Comparisons with the children in the study families show written Chinese
performs fewer functions as the children's proficiency in English literacy increases. This was seen as an example of language shift. I compared the use of written Chinese with the use of written English and identified the main factors which influenced the choice of these written codes by family members in various activities. I also found that many everyday communicative activities involved the use of both oral and written channels. I thought that this was particularly important considering the usually clear distinction made between the two channels in much of the scholarly discussion of literacy. In addition, I looked at the relation between reading and writing and found that they are not mirror images of each other. While closely related they can serve very different functions and have different patterns of acquisition and use. Specific features of language use and attitudes due to the particular nature and history of written Chinese were also noted. The fact that Chinese has a standard written form was seen to be important for language maintenance.

However, little evidence was found that the often stated link between Chinese writing and Chinese history and civilization was a factor in language promotion in the study families. There was some indication in the Lin family that written Chinese was seen a symbol of being Chinese in the second generation members of the family. I suggested that this symbolic function might be the predominant one for Chinese families who are more Anglicized than the first generation Chinese immigrants in this study.

Comparison of these findings with those of other studies looking at written language use in social context shows that many relate to the nature and function of reading and writing in general. In view of the extensive use of the written channel in the linguistic repertoire of the individuals in the present study and its importance in personal and social life, this would seem to confirm the need for linguists to take proper cognizance of written language in their research. Comparisons with other ethnographic studies also highlight the
special features related to the fact that the families in this study are operating in bilingual or multilingual situations and that the individuals all have some degree of biliteracy.

Finally, as I indicated in the Introduction, I hope that the findings of my research, which looks specifically at the place of written Chinese in the lives of four families, may be of use to researchers who are looking at written language in other contexts and hence contribute to study in other areas of research.
Hello 妈妈，
我今天要给你写一个中文的信。我写的字好不好看？一定不好看对不对？你要不要买一个房子？在这一回再给你一个！我今 Monda 考的 Algebra 又考了一个 B, 但是中文又考到 A. 每一次都是 A A A ... 很好！也快要 X'mas 了。我希望很多朋友都会给我 “好东西”。爸爸是不是又要去打 golf 了？跟他说 GOOD LUCK！下次再给你两个房子。因为今年有 钱了。我以后一定要比强强有多钱 — 因为他 Maybe 很快就会花光 — 希望不是这样！你以后要不要我当医生？

Figure 1. Janet’s Letter to her Mother (page 1 of 2)
Figure 1. (Continued). Janet's Letter to her Mother
你会给她打个电话，告诉她，我刚才打给她电话，她不在线。这次我将再给她打电话，明天中午一点半或一点半再将再给她打电话。如果这次她有空，我会再打一个。

妈 1.05

Figure 2. Hua's Note to Yan

今天做一部分数学题（从老师给你的暑假数学书上找。

妈 93.3.13

Figure 3. Hua's Note to Sheng
留言书

这里有一张有关体育课的表格，我们看不懂。现在是第三, 四个学期的开始, 今天, 我已经
换了第四节的科目, 体育课是节麻烦的课, 在这张表格的结尾, 我知道, 需要健康保险。我
现在还不了解是个问题, 而且, 还要买运动服, 一套运动装, 运动鞋, 还要钱, 还要讲三
次, 也不知道还有什么东西。

今天，你回来得很晚，也很累，不过还是要请你处理一下，我不怕转科，如果这件事不好
对付，转了就是，这张表明天要交，你务必于明晨前完成，表下有张纸，转科就用它写
封信吧。

签名：——父母其中一角名。
Figure 5. Anna's Notes to her Father and Janet
早上冷
请穿外套
不要生病

Figure 6. Anna's Note to her Daughter Janet
Figure 7. Niknik's Shopping List
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</table>

Figure 8. Niknik's Work Schedule
測驗（六年级）

一、听写:
郑 皇宫 三保太监
率领 朝六甲海峡 印度洋

二、五百七十年前,郑和率领
二万八千艘人,分乘六十一( )
大船,出( )经( ),到
达今( )各地

郑和先辈航海的六次之经
( )国。在海上生活了近( )年

这是世界航海史上的大事。

Figure 9. Hua's Quiz for Chinese School
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