

# Parent-child interactions from language and literacy skills in Hong Kong Chinese children

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# Outline

- Advantages of story-book reading
- The dialogic reading technique
- Previous findings from Hong Kong Chinese children
- Dialogic reading in L2?
- Results and discussion
- Q & A



# Advantages of story-book reading for language development

- Promotes parent-child interaction, e.g., attachment (Bus & van IJzendoorn, 1988)
- New situations → Stimulate the imagination and language use
- Repetition is often appreciated in younger children (e.g., Senechal & LeFevre, 2001)
- Good focal point for child and parent together



# “Danger” of story-book reading (for Hong Kong Chinese parents)

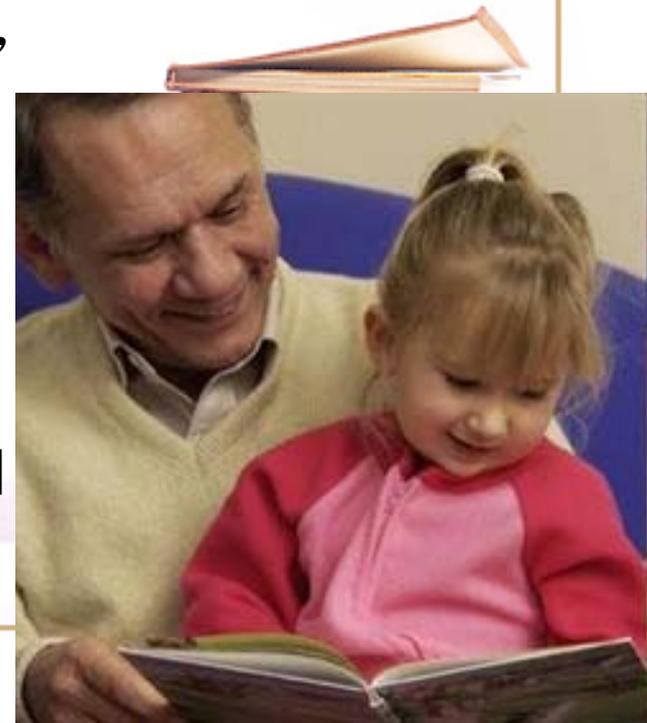
- Focus on “correct” answer only?
- Can focus attention onto word reading and away from communication



# The dialogic reading technique

(Whitehurst et al., 1988)

- Goal: The child becomes the storyteller
- Discussions of the story via open-ended questions
- Focus on talking, not on “right” answers
- Use of a variety of prompts, including who, what, why, how, when
- Parental extensions encouraged



# Previous findings

- Chow & McBride-Chang (2003):
  - Compared to a TR group, the DR group improved in vocabulary and word reading skills over 8 weeks
- Fung, Chow, & McBride-Chang (2005):
  - In the hard-of-hearing population, the DR group improved on vocabulary skills, compared to a TR group, after 8 weeks of training
- Chow, McBride-Chang, Cheung, & Chow (2008):
  - Consistent improvement in vocabulary knowledge in DR groups



# Dialogic reading in L2?

- How do Hong Kong Chinese parents and teachers approach English?
- How do Hong Kong children learn L2 English in school?
- Will open-ended Q & A work in this context?
- Can we find parents who are willing to try?



# Approach

- Only parents who rated themselves as comfortable using English with K3 child
- Randomly assigned to TR, DR, or control group
- Reading training for parent groups for 1 hour (TR & DR)
- 1 book, 15-20 min. 2x per week for 12 weeks



# Results

(Descriptive Statistics on the Demographic Measures)

Frequency	DR	TR	Control
<i>Sex</i>			
Male	7	8	7
Female	10	9	10



# Results

## (Descriptive Statistics on the Demographic Measures)

<b>Median</b> (range in parentheses)	<b>DR</b>	<b>TR</b>	<b>Control</b>
Maternal education	4 (2-5)	4 (2-4)	4 (2-5)
Paternal education	4 (2-6)	4 (1-4)	4 (2-5)
Family income	6 (4-6)	5 (4-6)	5.5 (4-6)
<i>English</i>			
No. of storybooks	4.5 (3-5)	4 (2-5)	3 (2-5)
Frequency of parent-child reading	5 (4-5)	5 (3-5)	5 (3-5)
Parents' own daily reading habits	2 (1-5)	2 (1-4)	3 (1-5)
Parent-child daily conversation time	2 (2-3)	2 (1-5)	2 (1-4)
<i>Chinese</i>			
No. of storybooks	4 (3-5)	4 (3-5)	4 (3-5)
Frequency of parent-child reading	5 (4-5)	5 (3-5)	5 (4-5)
Parents' own daily reading habits	3 (2-5)	3.5 (2-5)	4 (3-4)
Parent-child daily conversation time	4 (3-5)	5 (3-5)	5 (4-5)



# Results

(Descriptive Statistics on Children' s Age, IQ, and Reading Interest at Pre-test)

Mean	DR	TR	Control
<b>Age in months</b>			
<i>M</i>	63.00	61.59	63.53
<i>S.D.</i>	2.65	3.48	3.18
<b>IQ (RCPM raw scores)</b>			
<i>M</i>	12.94	13.24	12.53
<i>S.D.</i>	2.86	3.44	2.27
<b>Reading interest</b>			
<i>M</i>	3.18	3.53	3.29
<i>S.D.</i>	0.43	0.38	0.51



# Results

## (Improvements after training)



	DR	TR	Control
<b>English word reading</b>			
<i>Pretest</i>	9.18 (10.8)	11.59 (8.9)	9 (11.16)
<i>Posttest</i>	11.53 (10.39)	15.71 (8.92)	10.41 (11.91)
<i>t-value (if significant)</i>	2.76	3.8	n.s.
<b>English receptive vocabulary</b>			
<i>Pretest</i>	41.24 (18.58)	40.18 (18.12)	36.82 (15.61)
<i>Posttest</i>	44.94 (2.01)	46.47 (24.01)	40.24 (19.32)
<i>t-value (if significant)</i>	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
<b>English phonological awareness</b>			
<i>Pretest</i>	13.18 (7.72)	14.06 (7.77)	13.76 (8.68)
<i>Posttest</i>	16.47 (6.85)	15.65 (6.84)	15.53 (8.69)
<i>t-value (if significant)</i>	3.63	n.s.	n.s.



# Results

## (Improvements after training)



	DR	TR	Control
<b>Chinese character reading</b>			
<i>Pretest</i>	49.65 (25.87)	44.59 (18.68)	50.88 (39.35)
<i>Posttest</i>	62.71 (27.11)	56.82 (22.76)	59.94 (36.76)
<i>t-value (if significant)</i>	4.2	7.32	4.64
<b>Chinese receptive vocabulary</b>			
<i>Pretest</i>	35.88 (6.77)	35.82 (5.32)	37.06 (4.24)
<i>Posttest</i>	39.76 (8.69)	37.12 (6.33)	40.71 (6.11)
<i>t-value (if significant)</i>	2.26	n.s.	3.02
<b>Chinese phonological awareness</b>			
<i>Pretest</i>	13.35 (9.69)	15.71 (9.67)	15.35 (8.72)
<i>Posttest</i>	17.12 (8.7)	18.18 (9.71)	17.35 (11.48)
<i>t-value (if significant)</i>	2.6	n.s.	n.s.
<b>Storybook identification</b>			
<i>Posttest</i>	9.41 (3.1)	9.65 (2.91)	0.59 (1.06)



# Summary

- Parent-child reading enhanced word reading in L2
- Dialogic reading promoted phonological awareness in L1 and L2, probably because vocabulary knowledge and phonological awareness are linked in both L1 and L2

(Chow, McBride-Chang, & Cheung, 2009—  
online—Journal of Research in Reading)



# Future directions/critiques

- More fidelity “checks” are preferable, e.g., videotapes
- Along with emphasis on questions, a de-emphasis on print might be better: What about picture books?
- Try this among teachers who feel comfortable using English?



# Discussion

- Results highlight how L2 English is taught in Hong Kong
- Evolutionarily “secondary” skills were promoted more than “primary” ones in this study, almost the opposite of the majority of findings in L1



# Q & A

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[hcheung@psy.cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:hcheung@psy.cuhk.edu.hk)

See <http://psy.cuhk.edu.hk/~qef>  
for tips on dialogical reading.



# Q & A



# Supplementary information

- The maternal and paternal educational levels were entered as follows: 1 = primary, 2 = secondary, 3 = preparatory, 4 = college, 5 = postgraduate.
- The family income per month was entered as follows: 1 = <HK\$5000 (US\$641), 2 = HK\$5000 - 9999 (US\$641 - US\$1282), 3 = HK\$10000 - 19999 (US\$1282 - US\$2564), 4 = HK\$20000 - 39999 (US\$2564 - US\$5128), 5 = HK\$40000 - 59999 (US\$5128 - US\$7692), 6 =  $\geq$ HK\$60000 (US\$7692).
- The number of storybooks was entered as follows: 1 = none, 2 = <10, 3 = 10-29, 4 = 30-49, 5 =  $\geq$ 50.
- Frequency of parent-child reading was entered as follows: 1 = none, 2 = <10 times in a year, 3 = once a month, 4 = once a week, 5 = >once in a week.
- Parents' own daily reading habits was entered as follows: 1 = none, 2 = 1-14 minutes, 3 = 15-29 minutes, 4 = 30-59 minutes, 5 = 1-2 hours, 6 = >2 hours.
- Parent-child daily conversation time was entered as follows: 1 = none, 2 = < 30 minutes, 3 = 30-59 minutes, 4 = 1-2 hours, 5 = >3 hours. This item asked the parent to rate the conversation time with the child by himself/herself as well as his/her spouse.

