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On not speaking 'much' Chinese: Identities, Cultures and Languages of British Chinese pupils

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By

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Abstract

This thesis explores the complexity of identities and the everyday negotiations, as well as struggles that shape the lives of British Chinese pupils in England. It focuses on the links between heritage language education, 'cultures' and ethnicity. It analyses the ways in which values related to identities, bi/multilingualism and British Chinese pupils' positions in multicultural British society, are accommodated, negotiated or resisted. In particular, this research looks at British Chinese pupils with limited Chinese language skills, most of whom are from the 'second/third generation' within the British Chinese 'community'. A qualitative approach is employed to understand the experiences of these pupils by exploring their accounts of experiences in mainstream schooling and in (not) learning Chinese, and their perceptions of their positioning as British Chinese in relational, contextual and socially constructed terms. Identity will be understood as a fluid process involving multiple identifications in line with a poststructuralist view, but also as an active process negotiated by social actors under structural forces. Thus, this conception of identity will move away from essentialist accounts of fixed Chinese/British identities and conceive of the individual as having an active and reflexive role in identity construction. The concepts of 'hybridity' (Bhabha, 1994) and 'Orientalism' (Said, 1978) are used to highlight how the British Chinese pupils are both able to negotiate flexibly their identities but also are confined by certain essentialised, dominant discourses. This thesis argues that there is an emergent British Chinese identity in which young people recognise their flexible and complex, hybridised British Chinese identities, including the possibility of being both British and Chinese. The research contributes to on-going debates on British Chinese young people. The thesis highlights how the new visibility of the British Chinese population brings both risks and opportunities when creating new spaces to allow for the complex and flexible nature of their diverse and shifting identities.

Contents

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis is about the complexity of identities and about the everyday negotiations, struggles and structural constraints that shape the lives of British Chinese pupils. Moreover, this research focuses on the links between heritage language education, 'cultures' and ethnicity, and analyses the ways in which values and norms related to identities, bi/multilingualism and British Chinese pupils' positions in British society are accommodated, negotiated or resisted in the context of their families, schools and wider society. In particular, it looks at British Chinese pupils with limited Chinese language skills, in which most are from the 'second/third generation' and the more 'settled' population within the British Chinese community. This research looks at how these young people are able to fluidly and actively construct and negotiate their identities at the intersection of ethnicity, class, gender, age and place within the context of multicultural Britain. A range of lived experiences and identifications with Chineseness and Britishness emerge in the data and I argue that these identities are often defined in relational terms. While the fluidity, instability and situatedness of identities should be recognised, this study also illustrates the ways in which identities are negotiated and contested within contexts of racialisation and particularly Orientalism.

This research brings together previous literature on British Chinese young people to provide a more thorough-going framework for understanding key issues, processes and discourses relevant to the current generation of young British Chinese. Using a theoretical approach which prioritises more fluid and contextually based articulations of identity, this thesis contributes to on-going debates on 'second generation' minority ethnic identity by mapping the shifting contours of identity among a group that is seen as 'successful' within the

education system in England. This qualitative study explores how British Chinese pupils can negotiate personal identities and social locations within the constraints of larger social structures in the UK and worldwide from the young people's perspectives. In order to contextualise the above, this introduction will set out the background and rationale for the thesis and then describe the focus of the study presenting the main thesis aims and objectives. The last section sets out the structure of the thesis giving a brief description of the content and purpose of each chapter.

1.1 Background

This research builds on the findings of a recent ESRC-funded research on British Chinese pupils and complementary schooling (Francis et al, 2008) that I previously worked on. A number of recent studies (Martin et al, 2004; Creese et al, 2007) have explored the social and educational significance of complementary schools, both within their 'communities' and in wider British society. One interesting finding that emerged from the Chinese complementary schooling study is the very high importance placed on speaking the Chinese language by many of the pupils at Chinese complementary schools. I am therefore interested in the experience of British Chinese pupils that have limited knowledge of the Chinese language and/or have had limited or no Chinese schooling, and how they construct their identities within the British Chinese community and multicultural Britain. I am especially interested in how these young people relate to 'Chineseness', particularly aspects that are often promoted in Chinese complementary schools (e.g. Chinese languages, customs, traditions, 'culture', national pride).

The Chinese community in Britain has traditionally received limited popular and academic attention, and Chinese studies in the UK as an academic discipline largely focuses on issues

in China rather than British Chinese people. However, the educational success of British

Chinese and the rise of China as a global power have sparked interest in China and Chinese

people in recent years (e.g. Mansell, 2011; Ritchie, 2011). British Chinese pupils are

collectively seen as an educationally high achieving group within the mainstream education

system in England and are generally positioned as a problem free group in schools. In

contemporary media and policy debates, some minority ethnic pupils are frequently

described as deviant, underachieving and having low aspirations (Haque, 2000; Crozier,

2005; Cabinet Office, 2008; Dewitt et al, 2011), while British Chinese pupils do not fit into

this discourse and are often being perceived as hard working and successful (Archer and

Francis, 2006).

Until recently, the majority of the British Chinese population were linked to migration from

Hong Kong and Southeast Asia after the Second World War. The experience of these post-

war Chinese migrants contrasted to other minority ethnic groups arriving in the UK who

were recruited by the British government to ease the labour shortage in the post-war boom,

while Chinese migrants organised their own journeys to Britain and their own employment

through kinship and personal connections. The 1985 Home Affairs Select Committee Report

on the Chinese in Britain is a prime example of how the Chinese community have been seen

as a 'model minority'[1] group: 'we believe that the integration of the Chinese into British

society could be one of the success stories on the road to a truly multi-racial society' (Home

Affairs Committee 1985; lxxix). The self-reliant depiction and relatively low public profile of

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[1] The term 'model minority' was first used by sociologist William Petersen in a 1966 *New York Times Magazine* article titled "Success Story: Japanese-American Style," to describe Asian Americans as ethnic minorities who were disciplined, assimilated, motivated by success, committed to family values and, despite marginalization, had achieved success in the United States. The term is used to describe 'successful' ethnic minority groups in the US and other developed countries, such as the Jewish population in Britain (Kahn-Harris and Gidley, 2010).

the geographically dispersed Chinese population in the UK contributes to the 'successful' and trouble-free group image yet also hides on-going experiences of racial harassment and inequalities (Adamson et al, 2009).

It has been half a century since the start of post-war Chinese migration into the UK, and the children and grandchildren of these migrants have entered the British school system and now form part of a 'second' or 'third' generation in multicultural Britain. In recent years, notions around the cultural identity and belonging of younger generations from migrant groups have been a contested topic in debates about citizenship and nationhood, and particularly through concerns about security, citizenship and community cohesion (Finney and Simpson, 2009). Speaking English is given high importance as an indicator of being integrated into British society (Blackledge, 2009). In Francis and Archer's (2005) study on British Chinese pupils in London, those who were recent migrants experienced ridicule due to their accented English, seen as a sign of their foreignness and a reason to question their belonging in Britain. Therefore, it is useful to examine the experiences of British Chinese young people who are born/raised in the UK and use English as their dominant or only language to see how integrated or accepted they have become into mainstream British society.

On the other hand, the dominance of the English language also signals a shift from Chinese monolingualism to English dominant bilingualism within the British Chinese population (Li, 1994) and sometimes a loss of Chinese language(s) within the younger generations (Modood et al, 1997). The attendance of complementary schooling, which is also popular among other ethnic/linguistic minority groups in the UK, aims to help British born/raised Chinese to 'preserve' their heritage language but the results for Chinese language(s)

attainment are a mixed picture (Mau et al, 2009). One interesting finding that emerged from the Chinese complementary schooling study (Francis et al, 2008) is the very high importance placed on speaking the Chinese language among the pupils at Chinese complementary schools, with the ability to speak Chinese seen as a strong requirement for an 'authentic' Chinese person. Therefore, my contribution to these ongoing debates aims to examine the complexity of identities and the everyday negotiations of British Chinese pupils with limited Chinese knowledge, and how they attempt to integrate into the multicultural British society as well as constructing their Chinese identities.

The notion of the 'not speaking much Chinese'

The notion of 'not speaking much Chinese' is borrowed from the title of Ien Ang's (2001) book, *On Not Speaking Chinese: Living Between Asia and the West*, which engages with questions of identity in an age of globalisation and diaspora. Although sociolinguistic concepts are used in this thesis, this notion of 'not speaking much Chinese' or being 'bad' in Chinese was largely based on the participants' own perception of their Chinese language abilities rather than an actual linguistic assessment. I am interested in how having limited/no Chinese language knowledge relates to issues of identity, authenticity and cultures. Languages, and especially heritage languages, do not solely have an instrumental value for communication, as they are often strongly tied to history, politics and cultural/ethnic/national boundaries. So are British Chinese youths who only speak English, or use English as their dominant language, completely accepted as being British and not a 'foreigner'? And would their lack of or limited Chinese language abilities make them feel less Chinese? Those are some of the questions that are explored in this thesis.

The terms 'second' or 'third' generation and 'British born Chinese/BBC' were specifically not used in the title of this study as they could not adequately describe the participants in this study. This inadequacy relates to the increased complexity of global migration. It is difficult to categorise the 'generation' of the children when their parents had different migration trajectories. Although most of the participants in this study were born in the UK, a small minority were born outside of the UK, and some have lived in more than two countries or were UK-born but lived abroad for short periods. The globalisation of the market economy and labour market makes the traditional linear migration model, departure from country of origin to host country settlement, increasingly inadequate to examine migrant populations' experiences. Furthermore, the 'second generation' cannot be understood as a homogenous group but is significantly shaped by interactions with a range of different processes. The focus of this study was on young people from the more 'settled' population of the British Chinese community; however, there are limitations on the term 'settled' for the reasons just mentioned. Generally speaking, this study looked at British Chinese pupils who are not recent migrants from Hong Kong or China, and some of the participants had Chinese parents who were born/raised in the UK.

Research aims

In order to gain a better understanding of the lived experiences and identity constructions of British Chinese pupils with limited Chinese language knowledge, the study aims to explore the significance of mainstream schooling experiences from the young people's perspectives, their engagement and experiences of (not) learning Chinese, and their self-perceptions of Chineseness and Britishness. A particular concern will be on how British Chinese pupils, who do not fit within the existing discourse about educational under-

achievement of minority ethnic populations in Britain, fit into the 'integration' discourse (Blair, 2006; Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007), their particular experience of exclusion and racism in the British society, and their positioning within the British Chinese 'community' and the Chinese diaspora. In this study I intend to achieve a thorough understanding of the experiences of these British Chinese by exploring their own accounts of their experiences in mainstream schooling and in (not) learning Chinese, and their perceptions and experiences of their positioning. This will include an exploration of the social structures and processes which shape their identity and sense of belonging, and how individuals creatively interact with these to negotiate new forms of identities and belonging as active social agents. Identity here will be understood as a fluid process which involves multiple identifications in line with a post-structuralist view, but it will also be understood as an active process worked on and negotiated by social actors though also governed by larger structural forces. Thus, this conception of identity will move away from essentialist accounts of fixed Chinese and British identities and conceive of the individual as having an active and reflexive role in identity construction.

These aims can be formulated into three overarching research areas:

• To investigate British Chinese pupils' experiences of growing up with no/limited Chinese language abilities, and the apparent impact on their constructions of learner and social identities;

• To explore their perspectives on 'Chineseness' and Chinese and British 'culture' relating to the role of languages within the Chinese 'community' and greater British society;

- To relate findings to broader issues of 'race', gender and class identities and achievement in complementary and mainstream schooling.

The research is intended to contribute to existing literature concerning the users of Chinese complementary schooling and argues for changes in understanding of bi/multilingualism to suit the needs of the diverse linguistic backgrounds within the British Chinese 'community'. In this way the study seeks to contribute to wider debates concerning ethnicity, social class, gender and educational achievement in Britain. The research will make a theoretical contribution in identifying the various discourses drawn on by British Chinese pupils in discussion of their experiences in the British educational system, and in their constructions of social and educational identities. It will also develop work on the impact of identity constructions on learning and attitudes to education.

Findings concerning British Chinese pupils' experiences of mainstream schooling, and its role in their constructions of social and educational identities, will be of significance to practitioners, policy makers, and researchers working in the area of ethnicity, social class and education, and may shed new light on the latter debates. The research will interest users of research and academics working in the field of complementary education and/or ethnicity and educational achievement. I envisage that my findings will also be of interest to minority ethnic community groups. It is hoped that in this way the research will impact on policy concerning school bullying and racial relations policies, the education of minority ethnic pupils and the complementary schooling sector. As recent studies (Creese et al, 2008; Francis et al, 2008) have highlighted the potential benefits and growing popularity of complementary schooling for minority ethnic pupils, it is worth investigating the reasons why children in certain sectors of the British Chinese population do not attend such schools

or attend only briefly. Additionally, this research can contribute to the body of literature addressing the politics and ethics of social research, particularly on research involving racial and ethnic difference/commonality and insider/outsider positionings.

1.2 Thesis structure

The thesis is organised into two main parts; Chapters 2-4 provide the background and context for the thesis and outline the theoretical and methodological approach taken by the study, and Chapters 5-9 consist of an analysis of the empirical data and an evaluation of the applicability of theoretical tools. The contribution of individual chapters will now be discussed:

Chapter 2 provides the context and background to the study by focusing on the conditions of migration and the long history of settlement of Chinese coming from a number of former colonies and other regions. In this chapter, I will outline the specific experiences of Chinese migrants in post-war Britain and point to the social composition of a diverse population coming to the UK. By analysing the characteristics and experiences of the Chinese in Britain, the chapter provides an explanation for the issues affecting the community today and points to how this experience may shape the experience of the British Chinese pupils. The chapter identifies key tensions and divisions within this heterogeneous community, such as place(s) of origin, languages, social class, and cultural practices. These themes will be drawn upon here to be developed analytically in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3 is a review of the literature and provides the theoretical frame for the thesis. Literature on identities, cultures, Chinese diaspora, heritage language education, and experiences of other minority ethnic groups in the British education system and wider

society will be examined. There is a small body of work relating to British Chinese young

people, and the literature review will also include some work on Chinese in North America

and Australia to provide a more rounded account of spheres relating to the experience of

the Chinese disapora. This chapter will explore existing approaches to researching minority

ethnic groups, particularly as regards issues of identities and culture, and critique recent

approaches to understanding their experiences and to theorising their identity formation. It

will chart similarities and differences in accounts across contexts and point to issues raised

in existing research. This will provide a rationale for my theoretical approach to researching

the identities and experience of British Chinese pupils. The chapter will flag up key themes,

issues and discourses which are useful for researching British Chinese youths.

This chapter will also highlight the particular theories and theoretical framework that I will

draw upon in this thesis. Instead of using one overarching theory, I will use the theoretical

tools that are best suited to understand and interrogate different aspects of lived

experiences and identities of minority ethnic pupils within 'superdiversity' (Vertovec, 2007),

which constitutes a new level of complexity of 'a dynamic interplay of variables' as new

migrants originate from a wide of locations across the world entering the UK through

different channels and are driven by a variety of motives. In line with a post-structuralist

approach to exploring identities, this chapter presents my engagement with the concept of

identity and ethnicity in non-essentialising ways. In relation to this, I will also discuss a range

of related concepts, including hybridity (Bhabha, 1994), intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991),

and performativity (Butler, 1993). The chapter also draws upon Edward Said's (1978) theory

of Orientalism as part of a discourse which constructs ethnic difference and will explore the

relevance of Orientalism to the study of British Chinese pupils. The chapter will set out the

contribution of my research to gain further insight on the experience of minority ethnic

pupils in Britain and the study of Chinese diaspora.

Chapter 4 will provide a rationale for the main methodological approach used to research

British Chinese pupils with limited Chinese knowledge and a summary of the demographic

information of the participants. An account of the practical steps taken in the research will

include how the research was conducted and analysed, and a discussion of methodological

issues, problems and limitations. The chapter discusses the process and challenges of

researching young people within a hard to reach population, particularly for research

relating to an issue, not speaking Chinese, which could be sensitive to some people within

the British Chinese community. Specific attention will be given to examining my role as an

insider/outsider as a researcher. This chapter sets the scene for an examination of the

complexity of identity and lived experience among British Chinese young people.

In the next part of the thesis, the empirical research data will be analysed through three

main themes: mainstream schooling experience, heritage language learning, and the

construction of Chinese and British identities. These are explored in Chapters 5-7.

Chapter 5 examines British Chinese pupils' experience in mainstream schools in England

based on the research data. The discussion will focus on their integration in schools and also

racism/racialisation that they have experienced, which links to their sense of belonging in

Britain and identities. The analysis will draw on previous research of young British Chinese

and compare their experiences and ways to deal with racism/racialisation. There will be

special attention paid to discussing the generally more subtle and 'positive' types of racism

and racialisation that are commonly experienced by British Chinese. This chapter will focus

on racialised encounters in schools by analysing narrative accounts of participants' micro-level interactions. An exploration of the narrative data will reveal how processes of racism/racialisation, stereotyping and 'Othering' are linked to practices of agency and form processes of identity construction.

This will form part of an exploration of the usefulness of Orientalism as an analytical tool for understanding the complex and contradictory nature of racialising discourses experienced by British Chinese young people in at school and the wider society. The chapter traces experiences of racism and Othering and argues that these pupils are still not completely accepted as full members of British society despite their high academic achievement and apparent integration in schools. This chapter sets the scene for an examination of the wide range of experiences among this group within the education system and the impact of racism and racialisation on their sense of belonging in multicultural Britain.

Chapter 6 focuses upon (dis)engagement with heritage language learning among this group of British Chinese young people. This chapter will first look at the language environment within their homes, particularly the flexible bi/multilingual practices at home described by some of the participants. This chapter will also look at participants' experience and perception of learning Chinese, and examine their (non)participation at weekend complementary schooling. I will especially draw attention to learning and practicing a minority language within an English language dominant environment, and to the monolingual-based expectations that are being imposed on, and in turn being internalised by, young people who are in the process of becoming bilingual.

Chapter 7 explores the diverse range of identity and positioning discussed by British Chinese pupils. This chapter explores the complex, relational, contradictory and fluid processes of identity formation and negotiation engaged with by participants. In analysing narratives around individual aspects of identity, it explores subjective understandings of positionality and how individuals locate themselves within British society, often within a Chinese and British/Western binary. The chapter explores how participants understand and identify with different aspects of Chineseness and Britishness. The notion of agency is developed to challenge essentialised ideas of Britishness and Chineseness, particularly the notion of speaking Chinese as a requirement for Chinese authenticity. It shows how these negotiations and contestations are taken up and drawn upon in the narratives of participants. Although the notion of speaking Chinese is still strongly linked to Chinese identity, some participants found ways to challenge this belief and construct their sense of Chineseness in other ways. The participants in this study generally hold a weaker link to the places of origin of their Chinese parents/grandparents and a weaker connection with Chinese media from Hong Kong or China compared to earlier generations of British Chinese, and they expressed a stronger rootedness and sense of belonging in the British society. However, there are still challenges to being accepted as both British and Chinese by mainstream British society and within the British Chinese 'community'. This chapter, as well as the previous chapters, also reveals the importance of understanding the complexity and diversity of the British Chinese experience and the potential for a fluid positionality of British Chinese young people.

Chapter 8 will provide a discussion by drawing together the key findings of Chapter 5-7 and discussing their contributions to answering research questions. It will draw out insights

gathered from the theoretical frame and the central concepts used. It will assess the contributions these conceptual tools have allowed me to make and any insights I have gained on using these concepts. The chapter will also reflect upon the research process and recommend improvements.

Chapter 9 will draw together the arguments from previous chapters and discuss suggestions that could be adopted by both the mainstream society and those within the British Chinese 'community'. There is an urgent need for newer understanding and processes to deal with racism and racialisation within the education system to address 'newer' and more subtle forms of prejudice and inequalities, for both British Chinese and other minority ethnic pupils within the increasingly diverse British society. Within the discourse of integration and multiculturalism, there is a need for more attention to the structural inequalities that are preventing British Chinese from being able, and being seen as able, to fully participate in British society, despite their own individual efforts to integrate and establish a sense of belonging in the UK. This chapter will also include critique of the research and recommendations for future research.

In order to understand the issues that are affecting and shaping the experiences of British Chinese pupils in schools and in the wider British society, the next chapter will introduce the context and background to the present day British Chinese community.

Chapter 2: The British Chinese Community

Although the Chinese population in the UK is small in size compared to its counterparts in North America and Australia, it is one of the largest and oldest in Europe. The British Chinese population is diverse in socio-economic backgrounds, origins, linguistic heritages and many other aspects. The history of Chinese in Britain dates back to the seventeenth century (Benton and Gomez 2008), and the population size and constitution have been changing constantly over time due to events both in the UK and abroad, as different groups have arrived via different routes for different purposes. In the 2001 Census, Chinese only made up 0.4% (about 250,000) of the total UK population, and the Chinese population in the UK is smaller than those of some other minority ethnic groups, such as Black and South Asian. However, the number of Chinese in Britain has increased significantly in the last decade and the 'community' has become one of the fastest growing groups (Large and Ghosh, 2006). According to the most recent estimate, almost 1% of the population in England (439,500) are Chinese (ONS, 2011). And despite its smaller size, the British Chinese 'community' has received occasional attention from wider mainstream society. Increasingly this attention is associated with the high academic achievements of British Chinese pupils at school and the growth of China.

2.1 Chinese migration and settlement in Britain

2.1.1 Pre Second World War migration and communities

The early history of the Chinese in Britain is largely unknown or forgotten. Michael Shen Fuzong, a Catholic mandarin, was one of the few visitors from China prior to the nineteenth century, and arguably the most prominent; he arrived in 1687 and was received by James II

(Batchelor, 2006). A significant portion of the Chinese migrants to the UK from the late eighteenth century to the Second World War were Chinese seafarers, including many who fought with the British in the Napoleonic Wars and the two World Wars (Benton and Gomez 2008). Their contribution to the UK and their subsequent appalling treatment by the British government is not a widely-known story (Chen 2007; Benton and Gomez 2008); however, their presence led to early Chinese settlements in the main port cities.

The Chinese population found in the dockland areas of cities such as London, Cardiff and Liverpool was initially transient, but small Chinese communities were gradually formed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Parker 1998). The 1911 census records 1,319 Chinese born residents in Britain and 4,595 seamen of Chinese origin serving in the British merchant navy (Clegg, 1989). Tens of thousands of labourers from China were also recruited by the British to serve in the First and Second World War. However, most who survived the wars faced hostility, unequal pay and few opportunities in the UK and returned or were repatriated to China (Benton and Gomez 2008). Besides providing services, such as boarding and catering, to the mobile Chinese population, Chinese residents entered the laundering trade in these British port cities as they were largely excluded from other occupations (Waller, 1985; Wong, 1989; Benton and Gomez 2008).

Although there was no legislation banning Chinese immigration in the UK, unlike the US and Canada with their Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) and Chinese Immigration Act (1923) respectively, Chinese migrants were often viewed negatively by the British public. At the turn of the twentieth century, China and Chinese people were largely seen as a threat to the West (Benton and Gomez 2008). Imageries of an exotic and dangerous Chinese people and 'Chinatown' were propagated in press and literature, such as in Sax Rohmer's 'Fu Manchu'

novels (1913-1917) and Thomas Burke's *Limehouse Nights* (1916) (Seed, 2006). Unfortunately, elements of the 'Yellow Peril' image still live on to the present day, as British Chinese continue to be portrayed as the archaic, exotic, 'Oriental' Other in the mainstream British media. An example was recently seen in the representation of Chinese in 'The Blind Banker' episode of the award winning television drama Sherlock (BBC, 2010), which is ironically supposed to be a contemporary re-envisioning of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Victorian stories (Knox, 2011).

Despite the general sinophobic atmosphere in the early twentieth century, some Chinese residents managed to establish links and relationships with the locals. Among the Chinese men that settled in these port communities, some set up homes with local White working class women, though not all got married since women marrying foreign husbands lost their British citizenship and became 'aliens' themselves (McIntyre-Brown, 2001; Foley, 2011). The demise of these early Chinese/Anglo-Chinese communities came when about 1,000 Chinese seamen were repatriated (official papers do not reveal the exact number), both voluntarily and forcibly, between 1945 and 1947 (Benton and Gomez 2008; Foley, 2011). The children of their mixed unions were among the early generations of British born Chinese/mixed Chinese, but their stories within British Chinese history are difficult to trace and sometimes hidden or forgotten (Chen, 2008; Foley, 2011). Attempts were made to recruit participants linked to these early generations of British Chinese for this study, but yielded no success.

Blitz damage, a decline in population and the dispersal of the remaining residents to suburbs and other parts of the UK caused the end of the era of early British Chinese dockland communities (Ng, 1968; Shang, 1984). Early contributions to arts and culture by Chinese in Britain have also since been forgotten or hidden. Examples include the once

highly visible but now largely unknown writer, Shih-I Hsiung, who shot to worldwide fame

with his play *Lady Precious Stream* (1943), which ran for 1,000 nights in London's West End,

was revived several times during the war and was a staple of repertory and school

productions (Yeh, 2013). A new chapter for Chinese diaspora in Britain began after the end

of the Second World War, while pre-war stories and contributions from the Chinese

population have been largely forgotten in modern British history.

2.1.2 Post Second World War migration and settlement

The establishment of new Chinese communities took place when large waves of Chinese

began to arrive in the 1950s and 1960s, and most of the participants in this research and

their families are linked to the post-war migration into Britain from a number of regions.

The migration of Chinese was a male dominated phenomenon until the 1970s. In Benton &

Gomez's (2008) comprehensive study of Chinese in Britain, they highlight the fact that

Chinese differed from most of post-war Britain's immigrant minorities, largely from the

Commonwealth and Europe, because the Chinese migrants were not recruited by the British

government to ease the labour shortage in the post-war boom. Instead, Chinese from a

number of countries organised their own journeys to Britain and their own employment

through kinship and personal connections.

The majority of the post-war Chinese migrants came from then colonial Hong Kong, and

many who left Hong Kong originated from the rural area of the New Territories region,

where job prospects were deteriorating due to deteriorating farming conditions and the

arrival of a large influx of refugees from revolution-torn Mainland China (Watson, 1977;

Parker, 1999). A UK restaurant boom and the development of tastes for new cuisines after

the Second World War provided new business and job opportunities for Chinese people to

work in the catering industry in the UK (Benton and Gomez 2008). A smaller portion of Hong Kong people also came to the UK as students, and some settled after completion of their courses. The 1951 census recorded a big increase in Britain's Chinese population to 12,523, and the 1961 census saw a further increase to 38,750, with a fivefold increase in Hong Kong-born residents in London (Clegg, 1989). Additionally, some of the China-born migrants from Hong Kong were not British Hong Kong passport holders; they later came to the UK through the work permit system as they were hired by Chinese catering employers in Britain to evade the restrictions imposed by the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962 and Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1968 (Benton & Gomez 2008).

Towards the end of the millennium, the Chinese population in Britain became increasingly diverse as a result of more migrants arriving from other parts of the world, especially in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Ethnic Chinese from Malaysia and Singapore, many of whom possessed qualifications or entered Britain as students, also made up a significant portion of the post-war Chinese migrant population (*ibid*). A small percentage of ethnic Chinese from the Caribbean, Mauritius and other former colonies also formed part of post-war migration (Owen, 1994). Additionally, about 22,000 Vietnamese refugees were admitted to Britain from the 1970s to the 1990s, and a significant portion of these migrants were ethnic Chinese (Bang & Finlay, 1987; Hale, 1992; Sims, 2007). A significant number of research participants in this study hold familial connections from these regions outside of Hong Kong/China. Furthermore, a small number of overseas students and professionals from Mainland China and Taiwan settled in the UK throughout the later half of the twentieth century (Benton and Gomez 2008).

2.1.3 British Chinese population in the 21st century

Recent migrants from Mainland China have further changed the British Chinese population. A new wave of migrants originating from various parts of China have come into the UK as scholars, economic migrants, students, asylum seekers and illegal immigrants since the 1990s (*ibid.*). The flow of economic migrants from areas of Mainland China without previous migratory links to Britain has boosted the UK Chinese population. Although this group of new arrivals are not the focus of this study and more research is needed to gain further insight into this more recent phenomenon, their presence has brought changes (e.g. places of origin, languages, demographics, and needs) and new dynamics (e.g. relationship among new and old migrant groups, business competitions) within the British Chinese population.

It is difficult to establish the exact demographics and numbers of Chinese in Britain before 1991, because previous censuses only recorded country of birth but not ethnic origin. Ethnic Chinese who were born outside Hong Kong or China were therefore missed in those censuses. The 1991 census records 156,938 identified as Chinese, representing 0.3% of the UK population. Within that British Chinese population, 34% originated from Hong Kong, 13% came from Singapore and Malaysia, and 28% were born in the UK (Owen, 1994; Chan and Chan, 1997). The Chinese population has since increased steadily as a result of natural growth and immigration. According to the 2001 census, the Chinese population in the UK had grown to 243,000 (approximately 0.5% of the UK population). Within the 2001 British Chinese population, 29% were born in the UK, and the other main countries of birth were Hong Kong (29%), China (19%), Malaysia (8%), Vietnam (4%) and Taiwan (2%)(National Statistics 2006).

The 2011 census data is not yet available, but according to the experimental data release

from the Office for National Statistics (2011) from mid-2009, the Chinese population in

England alone has risen to an estimate of 439,500, making up almost 0.85% of the total

English population. Although the group is still smaller in size than some other minority

ethnic groups (6.11% British Asian and 2.94% Black British in England), the Chinese

population has most likely almost doubled within a decade. In fact, according to an estimate

by the Chinese Embassy in London, the figure might have already exceeded 600,000

(including some 100,000 students but excluding irregular migrants) (Wu, 2009). The ONS

experimental data shows a higher concentration of the Chinese population in the south of

England with close to a third of the Chinese population in England living in the Greater

London area (see table below). All of the participants in this study came from these areas

with larger Chinese populations in southern England.

Region in England	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East Of England	London	South East	South West
Percentage	2.6%	9.1%	7.4%	7.3%	7.5%	13.8%	31.3%	13.9%	7.1%

Source: Office for National Statistics (2011) - PEEG, Current Estimates, Population Estimates by Ethnic Group
Mid-2009 (experimental), England and Wales, Population Estimates by Ethnic Group for local authorities by
age, sex and ethnic group.

Although Chinatowns are symbols of Chinese settlements, and sometimes also partially the

legacy of historical exclusions from the wider society in many diasporic Chinese

communities, Chinatowns in British cities differ from their North American counterparts in

the sense that present day British Chinatowns are largely a commercial space and an ethnic

symbol without a residential element (Watson, 1975; Parker, 1995; Pieke, 1998). The

residential component existed in the early quayside quarters, but current Chinatowns were

moved from their original locations or only emerged in the latter half of the twentieth

century, and families in the catering trade have often settled dispersedly in post-war

migration. Chinatowns in Britain are largely a place for 'Chinese days-out' for both non-

Chinese people and most British Chinese; they are not generally places of residence or

regular socialising for the majority of the Chinese population in Britain (Sales et al, 2009).

Nevertheless, they are public and work spaces where Chinese identity can be expressed and

celebrated, and as Christiansen (2003:5) describes, Chinatown is 'an urban space for people

from different Chinese backgrounds at the same time as it is a miniature replica of an

imagined "China"'.

2.1.4 The rise of China and its impact on Chinese diaspora

For many of the post-war Chinese migrants China might have been a spiritual homeland, but

it was also seen as a backwards country due to the devastation caused by the Chinese civil

war (1927–1950) and subsequent Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). For many children of

post-war Chinese immigrants, their understanding of Chinese 'culture' and identities was

heavily based on their connections to Hong Kong (e.g. via 'home' visits, Hong Kong media,

family members). Parker's (1995) study of young British Chinese found that many of his

respondents had a strong sense of being 'Chinese' but also showed disidentification from

Mainland China. In fact, the 'Chinese' food that has become part of British life is essentially

Anglicised Hong Kong Cantonese cuisine, which originates from Guangdong (Canton)

province, bordering Hong Kong in southern China (Muston, 2012). To some young British

Chinese, Hong Kong has also been perceived as a place for them to 'return' to for self-

discovery, to escape racism in the UK (Parker, 1995), or to find employment opportunities

(Francis et al, 2009). The 'Chineseness' that has been constructed and expressed by post-

war migrants and their families is strongly and specifically rooted in Hong Kong customs and

cultures.

The growth of China's economy since former Communist leader Deng Xiaoping opened the

country up in the early 1980s has set China on a different path, and China's incredible

acceleration and massive economic growth in the last decade has not only transformed the

global economy but also the political stage. The rise of China as a new world power has also led to increased interest in Chinese politics, language, culture and people, and the spotlight on China and anything 'Chinese' has an impact directly and indirectly on the British Chinese 'community'. China, instead of Hong Kong, has increasingly become viewed as the place for future opportunities among British Chinese, as illustrated in the discussions among adult and pupil respondents in the recent study on weekend Chinese schools (Francis et al, 2009). Mandarin is becoming seen as an advantageous skill to facilitate working with Chinese businesses in the UK or working in China, and the demand has grown among British Chinese for Mandarin classes, instead of Cantonese, for the younger generations irrespective of their familial dialect(s). Chinese festivals are now publicly celebrated at places like schools and city centres, which increases the visibility of the 'community' within wider British society. Some British Chinese, such as London parliamentary candidate Merlene Emerson (of Singaporean Chinese origin), feel that the economic growth of China has given British Chinese 'a greater level of self-confidence' (Bartram, 2012).

2.2 Living in the British society

2.2.1 Employment
The catering business

The British Chinese community has been strongly associated with the catering trade, and 'helping out' at the family catering businesses has been a common experience for many young British Chinese who grew up in the UK. The key feature of the settlement of UK Chinese people is that they were concentrated in or near major cities such as London, Manchester, and Liverpool and were also scattered in smaller towns and large villages across the country (Chan *et al*, 2007). This pattern is partially due to the position of the Chinese catering industry as survival strategy among post-war migrants. Early Chinese transients and settlers were mostly confined to seafaring and the laundering business within the British economy (Benton and Gomez 2008). The decline of hand laundries came at a time when commercial catering began to grow and British consumers' taste in food became

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more adventurous (*ibid.*). Alan Yau, the Hong Kong-born restaurateur who opened the popular Wagamama chain and Michelin-starred Hakkasan and Yauatcha, is arguably the most successful and well known British Chinese business person within the industry (Curtis, 2008), but the majority of Chinese catering businesses have taken the form of more humble family takeaways (Benton and Gomez 2008). In fact, Yau, like a significant portion of young British Chinese, used to serve in his family's restaurants and takeaway in his youth (Renton, 2004).

Benton and Gomez (2008) suggest that it is significant to highlight the intra-ethnic competitions and conflicts that prevent Chinese in the catering sector from working together to protect their common interest, and this pattern has had lasting effects in the British Chinese 'community' to the present day. The social and economic structure of post-war Chinese restaurants with proprietors, managers, chefs and service staff who often came from different backgrounds (e.g. region, class, education), and sometimes spoke mutually unintelligible Chinese dialects, created sub-ethnic divides (*ibid.*). Working conditions, especially before labour/immigration restrictions, were poor and the exploitation of low or unskilled employees has been an on-going issue, particularly for those with limited means in the UK (e.g. work permit holders, Vietnamese Chinese refugees, illegal immigrants) (*ibid.*). Many post-war migrant workers who were channelled or recruited into the trade sought to become independent once more settled in Britain, including those who were employed by kin and compatriots from the same region (Watson, 1977).

The Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1968 introduced constraints on the entry of Commonwealth non-UK-born children, and the Immigration Act of 1971 further restricted the rights of Commonwealth citizens to settle in the UK. One aspect of the legislation, which

came into force in 1973, were further conditions applied to the wives and children of Commonwealth citizens who wished to settle in the UK. This incoming restriction prompted many Chinese men who initially came to make a living in Britain on their own to bring their families over from Hong Kong before the 1973 change. This trend further changed the demographics of the Chinese population and the nature of the Chinese catering trade. The increasing number of Chinese family units that were formed in the UK or through reunifications from the Far East helped to give rise to the family takeaway in the 1970s. A takeaway could be opened for a lower cost with more flexibility of location, and the (free) family labour offered competitive advantages economically. This form of self-employment seemed to be 'the only viable and conceivable' option that offered financial rewards and security for those with limited English knowledge in the face of racial discrimination in the wider labour market (Song, 1996). The shop setup, often with a residence above, provided accommodation and allowed families with young children to continue to work (Benton and Gomez 2008). A number of participants in this research come from families who are takeaway owners, some where the ownership was shared with extended family members.

However, the success of the family takeaway is not without its costs. Self-reliance saved wages but also contributed to self-exploitation of the owners and their family members with labour intensive preparation work and long opening hours. Shop owners and their families had to move into towns and villages across the country in order to avoid or reduce competition, and the results of these spatial requirements make the Chinese population one of the most dispersed ethnic minorities in Britain. The catering trade provided an escape from competition with the majority population and from racism in the labour market (Baxter, 1988), but on the other hand the ethnicised niche and the geographical isolation

brought on other types of marginalisation and issues such as lack of co-ethnic support (Chau

& Yu, 2001) and needs (e.g. health, education) being overlooked by local authorise and

service providers due to small numbers (Chan and Chan, 1997).

The practice of 'helping out' at the family takeaway might seem less common among some

younger British Chinese nowadays and particularly among the participants in this study

(more discussion on this topic in later chapters). However, working at the family takeaway

counter has been an integral part of the British Chinese experience for a significant number

of those who grew up in the UK, as documented by researchers such as Chan (1986), Parker

(1994) and Song (1997). Some studies, such as Sham and Woodrow (1998, 2001), suggest

that the lifestyle of 'helping out' at the family business possibly restricts or hinders the

integration of British Chinese children and youths into British society.

Additionally, the success of family-run takeaways took away customers from Chinese

restaurants and reduced the labour pool (Benton and Gomez 2008); this intra-ethnic

competition undoubtedly created further divisions among the British Chinese catering

sector. Nevertheless, for the migrant generation, the takeaway was a means to an end,

serving as a 'launch pad', most importantly, for the upward mobility for the second

generation *(ibid.)*. The family takeaway model and the catering restaurant businesses

evolved throughout the last quarter of the twentieth century, and a number of studies

confirm that many young British born/raised Chinese have opted for other career paths

(Lee, 1993; Liao 1992; Song, 1996).

Beyond the takeaway

Towards the end of the twentieth century, an increasing number of British Chinese were

engaged in non-catering employment or trades. Many of the British born Chinese and professional class newcomers entered middle class occupations, and there have been high concentrations in accountancy, consultancy and technology-based sectors (Benton and Gomez 2008). The population within the British Chinese 'community' who are engaged in these non-ethnicised, middle class occupations is of particular interest in this research, and a number of participants have parents being employed in a range of non-catering industries.

However, some believe that much of the new diversification within the UK Chinese employment is more to do with the arrival of newer, well-funded and highly resourceful migrants and transnational businesspeople from East and Southeast Asia, rather than the maturation of the settled communities (Chan & Chan, 1997). Some newer migrants with economic capital and entrepreneurial skills started new Chinese/East Asian catering enterprises/chains, creating further competition with the established Chinese caterers. On the other hand, some of these middle class newcomers invested in a range of non-ethnicised businesses. Interestingly, these more sophisticated operations and investments, which are more integrated in the mainstream British economy, are more driven by market principles and have not particularly contributed to promoting British Chinese interests or business networks (Chen & Zhang, 1998). The British Chinese population is now an even more heterogeneous and fragmented 'community'.

2.2.2 Chinese organisations and networks in Britain

The UK Chinese population does not form a cohesive integrated community, as the group comprises of a complex mix with ethnic, linguistic, class, cultural and professional differences. 'Chinese' identity seems to serve a limited purpose within the British Chinese economy due to the diversity of the population and intra-ethnic competition, and forms of

Chinese organisation show mixed results in bringing together Chinese in Britain. Unlike British South Asians who drew more on ethnic and family networks in business (Ward & Jenkins, 2010), the relatively small population, dispersed settlement pattern and intra-ethnic tension among Chinese prevented the post-war migrant generation from banding together. Further class and sub-ethnic differences, along with new types of business competition, prevented Chinese people from fostering strong intra-ethnic ties (Benton and Gomez 2008).

Religion plays a much less unifying role among British Chinese compared to other ethnic groups. Over half (58%) of the Chinese population claim to have no religion, and among believers, Christianity predominates over Buddhism and indigenous Chinese faiths by 23-19% (Modood, 1997) and has gained a greater following than in the past across generations (Luo, 1981). Chinese churches and temples serve as religious and Chinese spaces only for a section of the population. However, anecdotal evidence emerged during the research process suggesting that a sizable number in the younger generations are Christians, and a number of the participants reported attending Chinese Christian churches (more discussion on this in later chapters); further research could investigate this phenomenon.

There were a few Chinese social associations formed in pre-war Britain to provide support and social spaces for transients and settlers, but large scale post-war migration led to the establishment of a range of new Chinese organisations. These groups were originally organised around clans, 'native place', trade and business interests and social welfare, but some of their functions have become less relevant to later generations (Benton and Gomez 2008). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, local Chinese Community Centres (CCCs), some of which received support from local authorities, emerged in different regions of Britain in

response to changes in demographics. These centres provided a range of social services, such as interpreting and activities for the elderly (Murray, 1994). The newer CCCs served as 'a bridge between Chinese and the local society' (HoC, 1885). However, the majority of British Chinese are not closely connected to any Chinese organisations, either old or new. A study in the 1990s found that CCCs play little or no role in the lives of 77% of Chinese people, and that young people and those who were British born were far less likely to visit them (Pitson, 1999).

Nevertheless, a significant portion of British Chinese young people have some experience with a form of service being offered at Chinese organisations – weekend Chinese schooling. These weekend Chinese schools provide learning and social space for British born/raised Chinese children to learn Chinese language(s) and 'culture' and also to meet Chinese peers (Francis et al 2008). However, a section of the population does not seem to participate in this type of schooling for long or at all, and these young people who are exposed to limited or no Chinese schooling are the focus of this study.

Since the end of the twentieth century, new virtual based groups and networks have emerged, such as britishbornchinese.org.uk, Dim Sum, British Chinese Network, and other internet media such as blogs, chatrooms, Facebook groups and YouTube channels produced by young British Chinese. These outlets have provided important forums for many in the British born/raised generations to explore British Chinese issues, organise social events, meet other British Chinese and express new forms of identities (Parker & Song 2007; Yeh, 2011). Attempts were made to recruit participants via these online channels but did not bring much success. Parker & Song (2007) recently looked at British Chinese voices in public culture in relation to participation in British Chinese online discussion forums; however,

further examination is needed to gain more useful insights into this fast growing and

evolving phenomenon and its role in connecting and representing British Chinese.

2.3 Education of British Chinese children and young people

2.3.1 Mainstream schooling in England

Although British Chinese pupils are now widely seen as high achieving and successful in

schools, only a few decades ago their academic prospects and well-being were in fact a

worrying concern for both educationists and the government. Some children, who were

born in either the UK or Hong Kong and had been raised by families/relatives in Hong Kong,

came to the UK in the 1970s to be reunited with their parents; they entered UK schools with

limited English and were targets of bullying (Benton and Gomez 2008). Jackson and Garvey

(1974) expressed concerns that the educational needs of Chinese children were not being

met in the British school system due to their English language difficulties and the negative

impact of 'helping out' in their family catering business. In London in the early 1980s, only

52% of Chinese pupils at secondary school were fluent in English (Chan, 1986; Dummett &

Lo, 1986; Wong, 1992). A House of Commons report in 1985 highlighted concerns over

English ability among British Chinese children, particularly those who had spent their early

years abroad. Some teachers also worried about the impacts of the takeaway lifestyle

(Jackson & Garvey, 1974; Baxter, 1988). The arrival of Vietnamese refugees, many of whom

were ethnic Chinese, also prompted authorities to look at how to meet new educational

needs of the changing demographics in the UK (Benton and Gomez 2008). Chinese youths

were also represented in the popular media as being associated with triad gangs after the

murder of a London school headmaster by a triad-style gang in 1995 (Parker 1997), even

though the pupils involved were of Filipino, not Chinese, descent (BBC news, 2011). The

perceived issues of British Chinese youths' ability to integrate and possible links to criminality positioned them as potential outsiders in British society.

On the other hand, the family enterprise strategy from these post-war economic migrants, which aimed to provide social mobility for the second generation, eventually paid off. By the 1990s, Chinese pupils became proportionally more likely than the general population to stay on at school and to get further or higher education (Owen, 1994; Pittson, 1999). By 2000, Chinese pupils outperformed every other ethnic minority group at every age (National Statistics, 2004). In the most recent data (February 2012), Chinese pupils are the highest attaining ethnic group across the board, with 78.5 per cent achieving 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and mathematics GCSEs, compared to the average of 58.2 per cent (DfE, 2012). However, a portion of those children and teenagers who arrived in the 1970s and 1980s with limited English skills underperformed at school, and some of these young adults with limited employment prospects remained in the ethnicised catering trade (Shand, 1984; Chan, 1986; Pang, 1996). Nevertheless, the general change in academic achievement for British Chinese pupils reflects changes in demographics with higher portions of young people who were born/raised in the UK and a tendency within British Chinese families to invest economic capital in education, irrespective of their social class backgrounds, as most adult migrants came as economic migrants aiming to improve the life chances for themselves and/or their families.

Some suggested that a higher than average proportion of Chinese pupils attended private schools (Shang, 1984; Demack et al, 2000). On the other hand, Francis and Archer (2007) found that parents across class backgrounds purchased additional support to improve their children's educational achievement; for parents who lacked the cultural capital to provide

practical assistance, buying extra tuition was one way to help ensure upward mobility for

their offspring, along with having high expectations (more discussion on parents' choice and

family strategy in education will come in later chapters).

2.3.2 Complementary Schooling – learning the 'mother tongue'

In additional to getting supplementary tuition on mainstream school subjects, a significant

portion of British Chinese pupils also attended weekend Chinese lessons, commonly known

as 'Chinese school' or 'Saturday/Sunday school' among the UK and other diasporic Chinese

communities, to learn Chinese language and 'culture'. This form of Chinese complementary

schooling has a particularly long history in Britain. In 1928, Chung Hua Chinese School, one

of the earliest Chinese schools in the UK, was first set up in East London (Wong, 1992;

Jiaoyu, 2000). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, a number of Chinese classes started

informally within existing Chinese associations (Mau et al, 2009). By the mid to late 1970s,

many children of post-war migrants reached school age, including those who came from

Hong Kong for family reunion, and the demand for Chinese education to preserve language

and culture steadily grew. A greater number of these voluntary, community-based, Chinese

schools have been established since that period. Due to the dispersal settlement pattern,

some children (and their families) travel considerable distances to these classes every

Saturday or Sunday (Wong, 1992). Some pupils feel that Chinese school helps to promote

their success in mainstream schools, others appreciate it as an alternative learning space,

and more often young people enjoy it as a social space to meet and interact with other

Chinese children. However, a significant portion of children also dislike aspects of attending

Chinese school and/or learning Chinese (Archer et al, 2010).

The effectiveness of transmitting Chinese language skills through these weekend classes is debatable (Wong, 1992; Verma et al, 1999). Most of the UK schools were initially formed to serve the population with connections to Hong Kong. Therefore the 'mother tongue' language, Cantonese, the official Chinese language of Hong Kong and lingua franca of the British Chinese community at the time, was taught at these schools. However, a portion of the migrant families from the rural New Territories region of Hong Kong spoke as their home language a different, mutually unintelligible dialect, Hakka, which is commonly seen as a lower status language (Mau et al, 2009). This practice undoubtedly created barriers and disinterest for some children from Hakka speaking households, and the dominance of Cantonese has seemingly contributed to the decline of the Hakka language within the British Chinese community (*ibid.*). A smaller number of schools teaching Mandarin, which is spoken by Chinese from Taiwan and sometimes Southeast Asia and is the official language of China, were also set up in the 1970s and 1980s (Hu 1989; Zhang et al 1992). Within the last decade, the arrival of newcomers from Mainland China and the rise of China as a global power has led to the further growth of Mandarin schools, as well as new provision of Mandarin classes at the established Cantonese-based Chinese schools, to suit new demands.

2.4 Invisible minority to model minority

2.4.1 Integration and acceptance into British Society – mixed blessings

The UK Chinese 'community' has become even more diverse in recent decades as a result of more Chinese being born/raised in the UK and the influx of new migrants. On the one hand, the British Chinese are perceived as self-sufficient and are successful in education, businesses and some professions. A well educated Chinese middle class has emerged from

the UK born/raised generations and the more recent arrivals of highly skilled migrants, and

increasingly British Chinese are engaged in non-ethnically based occupations and trades. On

the other hand, the 'community' is also associated with low-paid catering workers, illegal

migrants and triads. Today, the 'settled' British Chinese community, the focus of this

research, largely represents those who migrated from Hong Kong and Southeast Asia in the

post-war decades, yet there is still great diversity within this population socially, culturally

and economically, as explained earlier in this chapter. The heterogeneity of the population

is certainly reflected in the sample in this research. Additionally, the 'success' of the group

often masks some of the barriers that hinder British Chinese in becoming fully accepted and

participating as equal members of the society.

The perception of some migrants as unwilling or unable to integrate into British society and

participate in the economy (e.g. having no or limited English language skills, not mixing with

people from outside of their community) has caused concerns among some in the British

public and government (Finney and Simpson, 2009). Although some Chinese migrants in the

earlier generations faced language barriers, many young British Chinese who have grown up

and been educated in the UK are English language dominant, and some are monolingual

English speakers with little or no knowledge of any Chinese dialect. According to the Fourth

National Survey of Ethnic Minorities (Modood et al, 1997), there has been a significant

decline in competence in Chinese language among the sample, far greater than among

South Asian counterparts. Li Wei's linguistic research on the Tyneside Chinese community

also observed a shift from Chinese monolingualism to English dominant bilingualism, also at

faster rate than among South Asians (Li, 1994). A growing number of British Chinese are also

engaged in relationships with non-Chinese. 'Mixed race' is the fastest growing ethnic group

in Britain (Song, 2010). In the 2001 census, within the 'Mixed' categories (e.g. White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African), people who ticked the 'Any other mixed background' category were asked to give further details, and the most common written description was 'Chinese and White', comprising 10 per cent of the 'Other Mixed' answers (Owen, 2007). The growth of interracial relationships is seen by some scholars as evidence of growing 'integration' in Western multi-ethnic societies (e.g. Alba and Nee 2003; Peach 2005). Thus, British Chinese might appear to be a 'successful' and 'socially integrated' group within the British society based on the increasing rate of intermarriage, though the meaning of 'integration', as well as the link between intermarriage and integration, are contentious, as suggested by Song (2009).

However, on the other hand, in a recent citizenship survey (2010) conducted by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), Chinese people were reported to be the least likely to feel part of British society (83%) or a sense of strongly belonging to Britain (67%). The results from the Chinese respondents stood out compared to the average figures among all minority ethnic groups of 92% (feel part of British society) and 85% (a sense of strongly belonging to Britain) respectively and White of 93% and 84% respectively (DCLG, 2010). Research has suggested that the Chinese population is one of the UK groups most under-registered to vote (Electoral Commission, 2012). BC Project, a non-partisan, voluntary project to promote the UK Chinese community's political participation, reports that 30% of the British Chinese population are not registered on the electoral register (Wu, 2008). The representation of British Chinese in arts and literature in the wider society is limited and restricted (Benton and Gomez 2008), and younger generations generally tend to enter only certain professional career paths.

2.4.2 The perception and representation of British Chinese people

The educational achievement of British Chinese young people, economic success in certain

sectors in the UK labour market, and a comparatively small population contribute to the

British Chinese 'community' being seen as a 'trouble-free' and 'successful' group. A recent

government-funded report, *Hidden from Public View* (2009), published by The Monitoring

Group-Min Quan Project, reveals substantial levels of racism experienced by members of

the UK Chinese community, especially those working in the catering industry. However, such

incidents are often not taken seriously by the authorities. Francis and Archer's (2005) study

on British Chinese pupils in London also found that pupils reported experiencing subtle or

seemingly 'harmless' racism regularly at school and that teachers generally failed to notice

such issues.

Furthermore, the portrayal of British Chinese in the public discourse is still largely drawn

from essentialised and stereotypical 'Chinese/Oriental' imaginaries which reinforce the

image of perpetual foreigners polarised between rich 'traditional' cultures or criminality. A

Channel 4 documentary/comedy, *The Missing Chink* (2004), written and performed by two

British Chinese comedians, Paul Courtnay Hyu and Paul Chan, aimed to highlight the fact

that Chinese people's contribution in sports, entertainment and the wider society have been

largely overlooked in Britain. With few exceptions, representation of Chinese people in

British media is limited and often exhibits stereotypical associations (Chan, 2012; Pratten,

2012). British Chinese/East Asians are rarely presented as regular citizens of British society

in mainstream media without being reduced to racialised subjects. In an unusual attempt to

use a predominantly East Asian cast, BBC children's programme, *Spirit Warriors* (2010), is an

'action-packed martial arts fantasy drama' that is 'inspired by ancient Chinese myths and

legends'. Although the series' effort to include East Asian young people and showcase

Chinese 'culture' should not be dismissed, the premise is still principally linked to the

stereotypes of 'kung fu' and dragons.

Spirit Warriors press release photo from BBC
(http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2009/12_december/21/spirit.shtml)

The rise of China as a world power inadvertently puts the spotlight on the British Chinese

'community', and the educational achievement of Chinese children, both in the UK and

around the world, has attracted some public attention. Pupils in Shanghai and Hong Kong

scored best in the results of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's

(OECD) international tests (Sharma, 2011). The strict and controlling 'Chinese style

parenting' that is supposedly linked with the high academic success among Chinese heritage

children, as discussed by Chinese-American writer Amy Chua in her book *Battle Hymn of The

Tiger Mother* (2011), prompted interest and debates around the world about the

effectiveness of such parenting tactics. The phenomenon of high educational achievement

of Chinese heritage young people draws attention to British Chinese pupils and their 'secrets

to success' (Mansell, 2011; Ritchie, 2011). While this interest undoubtedly raises the profile

of the British Chinese 'community', the stories of success further mask the issues that affect

British Chinese young people.

2.5 Study of British Chinese pupils from the 'settled' population

As stated in Chapter 1, this research attempts to explore how British Chinese pupils from the more 'settled' population in England, especially those with limited Chinese language abilities, negotiate their learner and cultural identities within this context in twenty-first century multicultural Britain. Given the fact that many were born in the UK and that all have been growing up in the UK and are generally performing well at schools, do they feel more a part of British society? What is their experience growing up with Chinese heritage in multicultural Britain? How do they view and negotiate their British and Chinese identities? And what is their relationship with their heritage language(s)?

Although many British Chinese young people might be British citizens and/or define 'home' as England, with the recent influx of new Chinese migrants and foreign students and the spotlight focusing on China, British Chinese are often indiscriminately not portrayed or accepted as British citizens or full members of the British society. 'Chinese', along with other categories such as 'White', 'Black-Caribbean', 'Black-African', and 'Indian', was included in the 1991 census when the ethnic group question was first introduced in England and Wales (ONS, 1991). In the 2001 Census ethnic group question, while the updated categories included 'Asian or Asian British' and 'Black or Black British', Chinese people in England and Wales were only given the option of 'Chinese or other ethnic group', not 'British Chinese' *(ibid.).* Although people of Chinese descent are grouped under 'Asian' in places such as the USA, Canada and Australia, within the British context the category of 'Asian' has generally been used only to describe people of South Asian origins and excludes East and South East Asians. Interestingly, the 'Chinese' tick-box was moved to the 'Asian/Asian British' heading in the 2011 census. It is perhaps too early to comment on the implications of the changes

and results, but the modification appears to be a step towards being more inclusive of the British East and South East Asian sub-groups.

For the purpose of this study, the pupils interviewed are collectively called 'British Chinese'. However, I acknowledge the limitation of the label which cannot adequately reflect the diverse ethnic and cultural heritages associated with these pupils, especially those who also have non-Chinese parentage and/or non-British nationalities. In the coming chapters, the term 'Chinese' is loosely applied to these young people of Chinese descent, no matter how close or distant their connections are to Hong Kong, China or other places associated with their Chinese parents/grandparents' origins. In fact, one of the aims of this research is to examine the diverse construction and contestation of the meaning of the terms 'Chinese', 'British Chinese' and 'British/English' among these young people.

Chapter 3: Literature review

In this chapter I present the paradigm, theoretical frameworks and key concepts guiding my research and discuss how these will be used in the thesis. This chapter will discuss the substantive theoretical frameworks and concepts which are most useful in interpreting and theorising the lives of ethnicised, 'raced', gendered, classed subjects in British society. The discussions will centre on concepts of identities, 'race'/ethnicity, heritage language learning and their links to identity. This interpretivist research builds on previous qualitative work (Parker, 1995; Francis and Archer, 2005; Francis et al, 2009) investigating British Chinese young people's constructions of identities. I am particularly interested in the experience of British Chinese pupils that have limited knowledge of the Chinese language and have had limited or no Chinese schooling, and how they construct their identities within the British Chinese 'community' and multicultural Britain. I am especially interested in how these young people relate to 'Chineseness' and 'Britishness'.

3.1 Theoretical Paradigms and Perspectives

The research paradigm, also known as the theoretical framework, influences the way knowledge is studied and interpreted, and it also determines subsequent choices regarding methodology, method and research design. Different scholars have provided a range of definitions for its application. Bogdan and Biklen (1998, p.22) defines the term 'paradigm' as 'a loose collection of logically related assumptions, concepts, or propositions that orient thinking and research'. Mackenzie and Knipe (2006, p.194) describes that a research paradigm 'sets down the intent, motivation and expectations for the research'. A number of major theoretical paradigms are discussed in the literature such as positivist/postpositivist, constructivist, transformative, pragmatist and deconstructivist (Guba and Lincoln, 2005;

Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006; Mertens, 2010). However, research often does not fit neatly within one paradigm. As Guba and Lincoln (2005) suggests, the lines between postmoderen paradigms become more muddied as the landscape of social science research is constantly evolving, and various paradigms are beginning to 'interbreed' (p.192) to inform each other. Although this study generally falls within the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm with a post-structural approach, it has also drawn some influence from other theoretical perspectives.

This thesis is an exploration of the construction of identities among British Chinese pupils as individuals and as a collective group, within a shifting social landscape of 'race' and ethnicity in multicultural Britain and a globalised world. This research focus required an understanding of the social world as emergent and changing, in addition to an understanding of individuals and groups as complex, differentiated and located within the social world in specific ways. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p.24), the constructivist stance 'assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (knower and respondent co-create understanding), and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures. This research followed the interpretivist traditions in relying upon 'the participants' views of the situation being studied' (Creswell, 2003, p.8), as the aims were to explore these British Chinese young people's identities and their own views on languages, 'cultures' and lived experiences. Building on previous work on British Chinese young people (e.g. Francis and Archer, 2004; Francis et al, 2008), this research takes social constructivist and post-structuralist approaches. Social constructivist thinking proposes that social identities and practices are not fixed or innate, and most taken-for-granted knowledge, such as 'Chinese people should know Chinese', is derived

from and maintained by social practices. Unlike a positivist/postpositivist approach, the intention of the interpretive paradigm is not to test any theories; this research aimed to 'generate or inductively develop a theory or pattern of meanings' (Creswell, 2003:9) throughout the research process.

Although this study is based on the understanding of identities being fluid, illusory and socially constructed, they can have real impacts on individuals' lives. Analysing the social and political contexts and structures involves acknowledgement of some form of 'realities', such as inequalities, and looking at how society and its structures operate. This realist underpinning seemingly contradicts the poststructuralist approach, which underlines that there are multiple and changing 'realities'. However, the use of both interpretivist and poststructuralist approaches was driven by elements from transformative paradigms – the notion of social justice and the need to listen to multiple and perhaps sometimes 'silenced' voices to challenge the dominant discourses and structures. There were some transformative elements in the study when linking the research context and findings to the educational system and wider British society, particularly issues relating to 'race' and ethnicities (and intersectionality with other socially and culturally constructed categories, e.g. class), social justice and equalities. Although I acknowledged that the 'inquiry needs to be intertwined with politics and a political agenda' (Creswell, 2003, p.8) and hoped that the knowledge produced could contribute to debates on socially just educational policies and other issues affecting the British Chinese community and other minority ethnic groups, this research did not have an explicit action agenda for direct reform. However, the knowledge gained, such as insight on subtle racism and racialisation, heritage language learning, and

identity construction relating to British Chinese pupils, could bring British Chinese experiences into the wider debates on 'race', education, and integration in British society.

Standpoints such as Critical Race Theory (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Gillborn, 2005; Warmington, 2012) and Black feminist standpoints (Young, 2000; Maylor, 2009) were not used as the main frameworks in this research. Although the focuses of marginalisation and asymmetric power relationships within the mainstream society were crucial in understanding British Chinese experiences, some of the intra-ethnic issues, such as the constructions of 'Chineseness' within the British Chinese 'community' and Chinese diaspora context could not be adequately addressed by just those approaches. However, the general principles of CRT and Black feminist methodology of problematising dominant White, male, Eurocentric discourses and constructing alternative ways of theorising the realities of non-White people's lives, as well as commitment to social justice and deconstruction of oppressive social structures, served as valuable reference points.

Young people experience only limited aspects of the world in their individual contexts, and some of what they experience could be based on falsehoods embedded in some of the discourses (e.g. 'race', genetic notion of 'Chineseness'). However, the impact of these constructs, which create the social structures that people inhabit, is 'real' and therefore required close examination. In line with a post-structuralist approach to exploring identities, this chapter presents my engagement with the concept of identity and ethnicity in non-essentialising ways. In relation to this, I will also discuss a range of concepts relating to identity constructions, including hybridity (Bhabha, 1994) and intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991). However, while recognising that concepts such as 'race' and ethnicity are not 'natural' but only socially constructed, experiences of and the impacts from these socially

constructed discourses and structural inequalities are 'real' to the social actors. Therefore,

examining the social context on micro and macro levels and how they shape these young

people's lived experience would also be crucial to gaining a more comprehensive view on

British Chinese pupils and twenty-first century British society. Additionally, given the focus

of this current research is on the relationships between (British/Chinese) identities,

'cultures' and languages, I am interested in, and attuned to, the role of languages and

culture in the (de)construction and maintenance of educational and cultural/national

identities.

3.2 Identity, ethnicity, and culture

3.2.1 Identity

This thesis is an exploration of the construction of identities among pupils within the

'settled' British Chinese population in England. What does the word 'identity' mean?

Identity is a term used throughout different social science disciplines, such as psychology,

anthropology and sociology, relating to an individual's comprehension of oneself. As Lawler

(2008) describes, 'identity' is a difficult term in that most people know more or less what it

means, but its precise definition proves to be slippery. An identity is not confined on a

personal level, as there could be a shared common identity with others within a group, for

example, Britishness.

How is an 'identity' formed? Stuart Hall (1990) described the two models generally used for

the production of identities. The first model, which seems to fit the common understanding

of identity, assumes that there is some intrinsic and essential content to any identity which

is defined by either a common origin or a common structure of experience or both. This approach to identity formation seeks to discover the 'authentic' and 'original' content of the identity. One of the problems in adopting this model is to assert the sameness – the 'intrinsic' or 'essential' content of an identity. What constitutes the 'sameness' or 'generic' character in forms of identification is often highly debatable and could change over time. For example, the on-going attempts to try to define 'Britishness' in the twenty-first century (Kearney, 2005; BBC 2007; Madood, 2007; Cruse, 2008; Sandbrook, 2012) in the government and media have not produced much general consensus on what Gordon Brown described as 'a golden thread which runs through British history' (Holland 2008). Social class identities would be another example of identities being reworked over time; class identities since post-war Britain has been shifting from an ascribed product of birth and upbringing to a reflexive and individualised account of individual's mobility between class positions (Savage, 2007).

This thesis draws on another model that links to the concept of identity as a process of 'becoming' rather than 'being' (Hall 1996), and this model of production of identities, which challenges the simplistic notion of the sameness and fixity of 'identity', emphasises the impossibility of such fully constituted, separated and distinct identities. This approach rejects the 'existence of authentic and originary identities based in universally shared origins or experiences' (Grossberg 1996: 89). Individuals can be the 'same as' or 'different from' other individuals or groups of individuals in various dimensions. For example, a person can be a woman, daughter, mother, student, worker, middle-class, British, etc., so these different *identifications* of 'sameness' (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity, etc.) could be used by each person to associate with their different *identities*. Therefore, everyone must,

consciously or subconsciously, possess more than one and, in fact, multiple identities

(Lawler 2008: 3).

The complexity of identities is intensified by the fact that these identifications do not sit

neatly independent from each other and the identifications (and the meaning of these

identifications) evolve over time. In contemporary feminist scholarship, many have used the

term 'intersectionality' to refer to the interactions between gender, race, social class and

other types of difference in 'individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and

cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power' (Davis 2008:

68). Intersectionality fits Lawler's (2008) argument that the different identities do not simply

combine in an 'additive' way with one identity 'in addition to', or 'on top of' another; rather,

they can impact each other and result in different experiences or meanings to the

individuals. For example, a White woman's and a Black woman's experiences and their

access to higher education cannot be explained solely in terms of gender – class, race,

ethnicity, culture, religion, and other factors all come together to create different forms of

inequalities and privileges, which in turn divide women from each other and create very

different experiences. Nayak (2003) indicates that post-structuralist analyses investigate the

multiple interconnections between race, gender, sexuality and social class, to ask how these

processes can be seen to interact and inflect one another. Hall (1996) remarks that

identities are in fact 'never singular but multiply constructed across different, often

intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions'. Kobena Mercer calls this

necessity when discussing multiple identities 'the challenge is to be able to theorise more

than one difference at once' (Mercer 1992: 34). Essentialist notions of identity are rejected

by revealing the impossibility of retracing a single or fixed origin, and identity does not

signal that stable core of the self in this understanding of identity as a process. Identities are not something simply 'generated' internally from within an individual; they are also shaped, maintained, and arguably imposed on them, externally.

The complexity of identities, however, is not only attributed to the fact that identities are multi-faceted and ever evolving; the process that forms or constructs identities which involves the interactions between an individual and the external elements is also an on-going development. Hall (1996) argues that this fluid concept of identity is therefore not essentialist, but a strategic and positional one. For example, Davies (2003) argues that sex and gender are elements of the social structure that are created through different discursive practices. While individuals cannot 'float free from social structure' (p12), one can possibly choose to reject certain discursive practices or elements of these practices. Her research demonstrates how children gain knowledge of the discursive practices of their surroundings and learn to position themselves correctly as boy or girl, since 'that is what is required of them in order to have recognisable identity within the existing social order' (Davies 2003: 137).

However, the sameness and differences that form these identifications or elements of social structure are not necessarily 'natural' or apparent. Lawler (2008) suggests that in a similar vein to Freud's (1918) term 'the narcissism of small differences', people magnify small differences until they become defining characteristics by playing down certain shared traits and emphasizing the differences, at times to the point that some elements or identifications seem 'opposites' (e.g. male/female, East/West). Using the example of gender identities, although the biological differences between the socially constructed categories, such as 'boys' and 'girls', are often highlighted, there are also a lot of biological similarities between

the two. Yet, specific differences are picked out to differentiate people and perhaps make them to appear more 'different' than they actually are. Furthermore, elements of gender identities, such as playing with cars/dolls and wearing blue/pink, are not 'naturally' connected to the small biological differences, instead, they were created and maintained in discursive practices and further integrated into socially constructed binaries of 'masculinity' and 'femininity'. This exaggeration of differences could be applicable in the East/West dichotomy where the 'Oriental' Other (i.e. British Chinese) is seen as different from the White British majority.

To gain further understanding or to unpack identities, Hall (1996) agrees with Foucault that the process of 'subjectification' and 'subjectivity' is 'not a theory of the knowing subject, but rather a theory of discursive practice' (Foucault, 1970, xiv.). He recommends that perhaps 'an attempt to rearticulate the relationship between subjects and discursive practices that the question of identity recurs', and to examine 'the process of subjectification to discursive practices, and the politics of exclusion which all such subjectification appears to entail, the question of identification'. (Hall 1996: 2) This thesis particularly focuses on identifications of ethnicity and culture.

3.2.2 Race, ethnicity and culture

The concept of 'race' has tended to refer to a biologically distinct sub-population of the human species (Cornell and Hartmann 1998). Most social scientists would agree that race is a social construct, and some argue that 'race' does not exist as physical differences widely vary across and within 'races' (Hall 1992; Jackson 1999). Although I reject the notion of the existence of biological or innate 'races', there is a strong discourse of the 'Chinese race' based on possessing an unbreakable Chinese 'bloodline' and physiognomy (e.g. black hair,

'yellow' skin) used by many Chinese in East Asia and diasporic communities (further discussion in 3.3.1). Additionally, racism and discrimination within British society still strongly relate directly to 'race'. As Gilroy (2000, p20) suggests, the relationship between cultural differences and racial particularities is complex, so issues relating to 'race' should be considered in order to examine the contexts and experiences of racialisation.

On the other hand, the notion of ethnicity could possibly include shared ancestry and cultural heritage. Similar to the rejection of the biological construct of 'race', the approach of defining ethnicity using static and naturalistic accounts has largely been discredited (Horowitz 1985). Ethnicity has generally been linked to a sense of collectively shared origins and more symbolic elements such as history and culture (Bulmer 1986). Ethnicity is often thought to be socially-defined and constructed on the basis of cultural criteria (Jones 1991). Hrabra (1979, p27) describes ethnic groups as 'self-conscious collectivities of people, who on the basis of common origin or a separate subculture, maintain a distinction between themselves and outsiders.'

However, some also challenge the idea of ethnicity on the basis that 'ethnic communities' are deeply divided (Anthias and Yuval Davis 1992, Bradley 1996, Brah 1992). For some individuals, ethnicity has been conceptualised as a symbolic (Gans, 1979) or optional (Waters 1990, Song 2003) identity. Barth (1969) has focused on the construction of ethnic boundaries among different groups. However, ethnicity can still risk falling prey to forms of cultural essentialism, where ethnic groups are attributed or are believed to hold a set of static, essentialist cultural values and practices, rather than continually in the process of transforming (Gilroy 2000). For example, with the example of British Chinese, they are often portrayed as conforming to Confucian values (Francis and Archer 2005).

So what is 'culture'? Smith (2001) suggests that, from its earlier associations with 'cultivation' a few centuries ago to its reference to intellectual development or artistic activities, the term 'culture' has increasingly become used since the twentieth century to reflect 'the entire way of life, activities, beliefs, and customs of a people, group or society', especially in the studies of sociology and anthropology (Smith 2001: 1-2). According to Jackson (1999), culture is 'a set of patterns, beliefs, behaviors, institutions, symbols, and practices shared and perpetuated by a consolidated group of individuals connected by an ancestral heritage and a concomitant geographic reference location.' (Ani 1994; Diop 1991; Holloway 1990; Levine 1977; Nobles 1986, in Jackson 1999: 33) Similar to the earlier discussion of ethnicity, in contrast to dominant views of 'culture' as something fixed and static, I adopt a post-structuralist approach in viewing 'culture' as fluid, performative, and produced by discourses and that are infused with desire and morality (Foucault, 1972). The usage of dominant discourses on 'culture' is evident in findings emerged in the British Chinese complementary schooling study (Francis et al, 2006), in which parents and teachers were eager to pass down and preserve certain fixed and essentialised versions of 'traditional culture', which included Chinese language skills, to the younger generations. My approach recognises that the construction of boundaries around 'culture', as well as ethnicity, is a social and political process (Chun, 1996).

3.2.3 Ethnic or cultural identity

Eriksen (1993) identifies three important characteristics of ethnic identity: firstly, ethnic identity is socially enacted in interactions, there is a perceived difference that is noticeable to the interactants; secondly, ethnic members have a perceived common origin, and finally,

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elements such as language, religion and kinship are important aspects of ethnicity, particularly during periods of migration, or in economic or demographic situations. Although the notions of ethnicity and culture are different, identities that are based on shared ethnic origins and cultural practices are often intermeshed. Ethnicity and culture are often closely linked, though they are not always interchangeable and do not always carry the same definitions. As a result, it is sometimes difficult to define or differentiate ethnic identity and cultural identity in late-modernity, as there are numerous definitions for these commonly used terms of culture, cultural identity, ethnicity, and ethnic identity. In some contexts, ethnic identity is discussed interchangeably with cultural identity. Jackson and Garner's (1998) extensive literature review surmised that the terms *ethnicity* and *race* are still used but are less commonly referred to in the area of intercultural communications (p.44), and therefore, *culture* is increasingly becoming the preferred term (Fong 2003: 6) to some scholars. On the other hand, Hall (1988, 1989) treats ethnic and cultural differences as synonymous, as both notions relate to origins, roots, traditions, and identities. Ethnic and cultural identities construct a sense of belonging and commonality, as well as creating boundaries and exclusion. For example, the category 'Black' as an ethnic or cultural identity may be used to specify the construction of a community, and through the common experience of racism among ethnic minorities, 'Black' could also be used a political identity among people from non-Black ethnic backgrounds. Chinese identity undoubtedly is linked to one's ethnic and cultural associations and it is impossible to untangle the different elements. However, it is important to understand that even the notion of 'Chinese' could possess a range of socially constructed meanings to different people.

3.2.4 National identity, ties to nation-state

In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson (1983; 2006) proposes that a nation is in fact an 'imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign' (p.6). To complicate matters even further, an ethnic or cultural identity could also include associations to a national-state or political region. The notion of a particular 'nation' could be complex, debatable and evolving (e.g. Taiwan). There is a common assumption that people originate from or connect to the same nation share the same culture. Gellner (1983) argues that 'nations are the artefacts of men's convictions and loyalties and solidarities', and 'a mere category of persons (e.g. occupants of a given territory, or speakers of a given language,) becomes a nation if and when the members of the category firmly recognize certain mutual rights and duties to each other in virtue of their shared membership of it' (Gellner 1983: 6-7). National identities offer both membership of the nation-state and identification with the national culture. However, a national culture has never been simply a point of allegiance, bonding and symbolic identification, as it is also a structure of cultural power that represents members as unified – 'one people' (Hall 1992: 296-7) through forcible suppression of difference. Gilroy (1987, 1993) argues that late twentieth-century British racism was founded on discourses of cultural difference, which cast Blacks (and other ethnic minorities) as permanent outsiders of the dominant (White) culture. Modern nations, including Britain, are in fact all cultural hybrids, and the idea of 'race' and the discourses of nation, nationality, and national belonging play a significant role in discourses about British Chinese identities in this thesis. Post-structuralist approaches can contribute to more fluid conceptions of identities and have enabled analyses of the subjects' negotiation of ethnic/cultural identities. In this thesis the term ethnicity also will be used to refer to Barth's (1969) conceptualisation of ethnicity as a process of boundary making (e.g. authentic

Chinese subject) on the basis of socially constructed shared origins, histories, culture and identity. In this thesis, the term cultural identity will be used to describe experiences of pupils in relation to their experiences as British Chinese; however, I am attuned to the ambiguity and complexity of these terms, and particular attention will be utilised to examine young people's own understanding of these concepts.

3.3 Identity constructions

3.3.1 Link to the past

Hall (1990) explains that that there are generally two ways of thinking about cultural identity, similar to his conception on formation of identities in general. The first position defines cultural identity in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves', which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common. Within the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as 'one people', with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history. This 'oneness', underlying all the other, more superficial differences, is the truth, the essence, of for example, 'Caribbeanness' (which Hall has challenged) or 'Chineseness'. It is this identity which a diasporic individual must discover and bring to light. Hall believes that a conception of cultural identity played a critical role in all the post-colonial struggles which have so profoundly reshaped our world (Hall 1990: 223).

Drawing from Phinney's (1993) model, Fong (2003) spoke of the three stages of cultural identity development in an American context, which fits into this mode of identity formation and the fixed, essentialised stance on identity and culture. In the first stage, the

unexamined cultural identity stage, young children typically do not question their cultural

ethnic or racial identity, are not aware of differences, and rarely show interest in discovering

their backgrounds. Eventually the children get older and reach the cultural identity search

stage; children experience personal events that make them become aware of cultural,

ethnic or racial differences and begin to explore aspects of identity. Fong explains that some

people experience 'identity crisis' at this stage, when there is a conflict between their

subjective identity (how one perceives oneself) and objective identity (how others perceive

a person to belong to a particular group based on observable characteristics).

Fong discusses how an ethnic minority person 'who denies his or her ethnic, cultural or

racial identity is known to have an identity crisis', and how support, activities and friendship

from their same cultural/ethnic group could help to develop a 'healthy ethnic/cultural

identity' (p21). Fong also suggests that if a person does not have exposure to his or her

people and culture or does not have a support system, perhaps as seen in the examples of

some of the participants in this research, the deficiency will prolong the person's identity

struggle. The final phase is cultural identity achievement – the person reaches a state of

clarity, confidence, understanding, appreciation, and acceptance of that identity (Fong

2003: p.20-21). Although Fong's model sees cultural identity as a result of some form of

transformation, Fong asserts that there is some ultimate fixed stage of 'cultural identity' to

be achieved, and if one does not have enough input from his/her 'people', such individuals

would experience an 'identity crisis' that hinders the quest to find his/her cultural identity.

Effectively, this model maintains certain essentialised qualities of one's culture and the 'final

stage' of identity, and it also presumes that an 'identity crisis' has to result from 'denial' of

some form of ethnic or racial identity and that the solution can only come from one's 'own' 'people' and 'culture' and the assumptions of these cognitive stages.

Following a similar way of viewing cultural identity and culture, when Patrick Yu, former Chairperson of the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities and former Commissioner of The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, discussed the difficulties faced by the Chinese community in the region, he commented that the alienation and confusion particularly felt by Chinese teenagers in Northern Ireland were due to:

> ...[T]hey have not only lost most of their original Chinese culture but the Western culture which they have adopted in this place is not being easily accepted by their parents. The identity confusion can become the core of family disputes if the importance of communication and understanding is not appreciated (Yu 1994).

These young people were thought to be 'originally' possessing Chinese culture but somehow have 'lost' it while adopting Western culture, and as a result, the loss leads to 'identity confusion' that affects intergenerational relationships. As pointed out by Delargy (2007), the language barrier between the migrant parents (often with limited education and knowledge of English) and Northern Ireland born/raised children (often with limited knowledge of Chinese) undoubtedly caused communication problems which could lead to further issues. As a result, Chinese schools were established in the region aiming to 'preserve the Chinese language and culture among the younger generation' (Delargy 2007: 134), similar to the situations in other parts of the UK. It is unclear whether Yu is referring to these youths innately possessing 'Chinese culture' due to their ethnic background, or their exposure to only/largely Chinese familiar environments during early years creating a Chinese cultural connection. However, there is still an assumption that instinctively

problematises the loss/lack of minority ethnic identity/culture (i.e. confusion, crisis) and essentialises both 'Chinese' and 'Western' culture.

Although Fong's model does not indicate a 'natural', biological link to the minority culture, an ethnic minority youth's identity could be complete or well-balanced until acquiring connections to his/her 'own' culture. The notion of a Chinese heritage person is inextricably linked to 'Chinese culture' and having a 'Chinese identity' is commonly communicated in literature on Chinese diaspora, and rejection of 'Chineseness' seems almost impossible.

The discourses of 'Chineseness' are complex within Chinese language and context, and the English word 'Chinese' simply misses and cannot convey different meanings that reflect racial, cultural, ethnic, and national attributes relating to different forms of Chinese and non-Chinese identities within Chinese language. The name China, *Zhongguo*, literally translates into 'central country/nation', commonly known as Middle Kingdom. As suggested by Wu (1991), the traditional view of being at the centre of existence and belonging to a long and unified civilization has always been seen as an important aspect of being Chinese. This China-centric view is based on a deep-rooted sense of belonging to a unified civilisation (though undoubtedly questionable), as the nation was imagined as descended from a mythical common ancestor (of Han people, the dominant ethnic group in China), the Yellow Emperor, and can boast several thousand years of history (Wu 1991; Louie 2004).

Wu suggests that such a sense of unity and continuity was, until recently, shared among Chinese in China and abroad (p.149). According to Wu (1991), the term *Zhongguoren*, Chinese people/person, relates to China as a nation and carries the connotation of modern patriotism or nationalism (p.149). The Chinese people also see themselves as being

members of the Chinese race/nation, *Zhonghau minzu*, a term that was first used during the time of the early Republic of China (p.150). Wu suggests that both *Zhongguoren* and *Zhonghau minzu* represent an identity based on concepts of cultural and historical connection rather than the more conventional modern notions of nationality or citizenship that are used in the West. However, ideas about the Chinese race or nation seem to predate the modern Chinese nation-state. In Dikotter's (1992) detailed analysis on the history of racial discourses in China, he demonstrates that a very Han Chinese (the dominant ethnic group in China) centric view was established, and those who did not follow 'Chinese ways' were considered 'barbarians'. In fact, it was also believed that ethnic minority, non-Han groups in China, such as Mongolians and Tibetans, had been assimilated into the Chinese culture 'because of the irresistibly superior Han civilisation that had carried on unchanged for thousands of years' (Wu, p.151). This racial form of identification, as explained by Wu (1991), therefore sought to classify people of Chinese descent, regardless of their place of birth or residence, as racially 'Chinese', and the overseas Chinese are still natural members of the 'Chinese nation'. There are a number of different terms in Chinese to describe people of Chinese descent in and outside of China.

Louie (2004), who conducted extensive ethnographic research on Chinese-Americans and Guangdong (Canton) Chinese in southern China, argues that the ideology of 'the Chinese race' developed in multiple stages which, based on an essentialised understanding of shared heritage and 'blood', promoted the colour 'yellow' to be used to represent a 'racial' (biological) cohesiveness that would subsume regional alliances (p.51). Possessing the allegedly racial markers of the Han Chinese, black eyes and yellow skin, is seen as a reason for British Chinese to study the Chinese language (Archer et al, 2010), and why the Chinese-

American tennis player Michael Chang was thought to love China by Louie's interviewees in southern China (Louie 2004: 51). Louie comments in her research that this racial discourse has permeated all levels of Chinese society (in China). These two physical characteristics, black eyes and yellow skin, were cited repeatedly in both official and informal discussions to explain overseas Chinese's 'natural' associations with China or Chineseness (*ibid*.). This biologically based perspective not only disregards other ethnic groups that possess similar physical traits and communicates an indicator of cultural superiority, it imposes imagined connections on people of Chinese descent, including some who are two or more generations removed from China and have little association with the 'motherland'.

In fact, people of Chinese descent abroad are commonly thought to be connected to their 'native places' and 'motherland', even though they have never visited China. In the book, *The living tree: the changing meaning of being Chinese today* (1994), Wang uses a 'living tree model' to discuss Chinese 'roots' and different types of Chinese identity, as well as links between overseas Chinese and their 'motherland'. The different categories of disaporic Chinese identities, particularly those in the US, include: 'the sojourner mentality', 'total assimilations', 'accommodation', 'ethnic pride and consciousness', and 'the uprooted' (p.197-211). Wang (1994) explains that the loyalty to one's ancestral home village (for those inside and outside of China) is deeply entrenched in Chinese history and traditions, and this ideal, which has a racial, cultural, and sometimes 'ethnocentric, chauvinistic and racist' basis, is vital to the structuring of one's existence and to the formation of one's identity' (p.200). Similarly, Louie (2004) finds that 'native place' ties, which transcended national boundaries to become central to the organisation of overseas Chinese communities, have historically been at the root of social organisation within China. She explains that ties to

native place, or to ancestral villages/districts, are inherited, so that even migrants to other parts of China would still claim their grandfather's native place as their own place of origin, even if they had never been there (p.46). In Watson's (1975) study of British Chinese migrants from a particular locality in rural Hong Kong, he also observes that the notion of ancestral origin/native place 'has very strong psychological connotations relative to security and kinship' (p.129). However, this very localised, ancestral link is conflated to an imagined connection with a vast country or civilisation, and to many of the young Chinese that are born/raised in the UK and other overseas localities, it is debatable how much they feel connected or know about their native place or 'China'.

Although Wang's 'Living Tree' model recognises of a range of (dis)identifications with Chineseness, this perspective still centres 'China' as the source of Chinese identifications and a person of Chinese heritage is inescapably connected to his/her 'roots' and the 'motherland'. This 'obsession with China' (Chow 1991) as 'homeland' or 'motherland' also places diasporic Chinese as outsiders. Ang (2001) argues that 'Chinese' identity becomes confined to essentialist and absolute notions of 'Chineseness', and when the source of which can only originate from 'China', to which the ethnicised 'Chinese' subject must adhere to acquire the stamp of 'authenticity' (Ang 2001: 30). Therefore, the culture of Chinese living overseas, when compared to 'authentic' Chinese 'culture', as Louie describes, it then 'becomes something that is impure, diluted, and devolved' (p.106). This notion of being 'not proper' and 'inauthentic' Chinese an area being explored in this research, particularly in relation to the relationship between Chinese language ability and Chineseness.

However, this China centric discourse perhaps also reflects the disadvantaged position of China as a country and Chinese people in nineteenth and twentieth century. Cohen (1994)

suggests that the notion of China becoming 'weak' and 'inferior' in modern colonialist

history led to ideas of China as a nation-state with interests that must be protected and

advanced in competition with those of other countries. Nationalism and pride in a 'Chinese

identity', for a nation with a proud and long history but dwindling global power until recent

times due to foreign invasions and internal turmoil, is therefore reframed as a question of

national preservation because love for one's country was equated with love for one's 'race',

ai zhong ai guo (love Chinese/'Middle', love nation) (Louie 2004: 51) – an outlook that is

often shared by Chinese abroad as well.

As described in Chapter 2, overseas Chinese suffered significant level of racial

discrimination, and racism continues to be concern for the British Chinese community

(Adamson et al, 2009). In Western contexts where Chinese people are often minoritized and

marginalised, the older generation's wish to preserve and 'pass down' idealised versions of

Chinese culture and values could be understood and interpreted as a way to resist racist

discourses and to cultivate a sense of pride, instead of shame or embarrassment in their

heritage (Lu 2001; Hall et al, 2002; Francis et al, 2010). Therefore, the reassertion of proud

origins and traditions is part of a cultural reaction against the 'sick man of Asia' image.

Nostalgic clinging to China's glorious past and the moral obligation for British Chinese (and

other diasporic Chinese subjects) to embrace 'China' have to be understood within the

historical, social and political context of modern China and Chinese diasporic communities.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Orientalism discourse (Said, 1978) positions British Chinese as

cultural outsiders with static cultures within the mainstream society. As illustrated in this

discussion, there is also a strong tendency within Chinese communities to engage in 'self-

Orientalization' (Ang 2001: 32). However, the fixation on an unchanging origin and culture,

as well as a linear view of identity construction, prohibits the development and understanding of new Chinese identities within the twenty-first century British society.

3.3.2 Past and future, always changing

Cultural identity, in a different approach that Hall (1990) describes, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being' and belongs to the future as much as to the past, unlike the linear progression that Fong discusses. Hall asserts that cultural identity is not an essence but a positioning; it no longer addresses us as a simple, factual 'past', and it is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. Hall acknowledges that it is perhaps more difficult to understand its formation as identity does not proceed, in a straight, unbroken line from some fixed origin. Cultural identities have histories but also undergo constant transformation. According to Hall (1990), far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Rather than being grounded in a mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity (as described in the 'cultural identity achievement' stage in Fong's model), identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. Hall argues that it is only from this flexible position that we can properly understand the character of 'the colonial experience' and that the ways in which ethnic minority people were 'positioned and subject-ed in the dominant regimes of representation were the effects of a critical exercise of cultural power and normalisation' (Hall 1990: 225).

Cultural identities are the points of identification, and these unstable points of identification are made within the discourses of history and culture. This situational and fluid view of cultural identity is much less familiar, and more unsettling, 'messy' and difficult to

understand. One approach suggested by Hall (1996) is to consider 'routes' not roots. He urges that one should not be seeking an elusive 'return to the roots', but coming to terms with ones' routes. Although identities seem to invoke an origin in a historical past with which they continue to correspond, identities 'are about using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves.' (Hall 1996: 4) As discussed earlier, identities are linked to culture and 'traditions', and such customs and traditions, both historical and recently invented, are often imaginary or idealised. A number of cultural theorists have elucidated the fluid and unstable status of 'culture' (e.g. Chun, 1996; Anthias, 2001).

The new ways of understanding cultural identities have employed concepts such as hybridity (Bhabha, 1994) and new ethnicities (Hall, 1988) which emphasise the process of identity formation, focusing on commonality of experience rather than the more essentialist preoccupations with 'origins'. These perspectives are useful in challenging essentialised and one-dimensional views of Chineseness, particularly the 'requirement' of possessing Chinese language skills to achieve 'authentic' or 'proper' Chinese personhood, and those questions of language are a focus of this research.

3.4 British Chinese identities

3.4.1 Emergent generation

The literature on the 'second' and 'third' generations of young British Chinese positions them as an 'emergent' generation (Parker, 1995; Parker and Song, 2009), a group which is still in the process of establishing a position in mainstream debates about identity and belonging in British society (Parker, 1995; Yeh, 2000). Parker has described the British Chinese as: '…perhaps the least noticed of all communities in Britain' (Parker 2000).The literature on the British Chinese generally points to their exclusion from the main debates about minority ethnic groups and racism in Britain (Parker, 1995; Song, 2001; Archer and Francis, 2007; Adamson et al, 2009). This has been seen as reflecting assumptions about the British Chinese 'community' being a trouble-free 'success story' academically and economically, and its dispersed settlement which results in small numbers in most localities, further contributing to the low profile of the Chinese population within British society prior to recent interest in China. David Parker and Miri Song, who have conducted substantial research on British Chinese youths and young adults, have argued that the invisibility of the Chinese in British society has been an important factor contributing to the marginalisation of the British Chinese. The small and dispersed population pattern makes fair and meaningful representation particularly difficult in various types of survey data, e.g. health (Jones 1998) and crime (Adamson et al, 2009). These factors have led to British Chinese being an 'invisible', 'hidden' or 'silent' ethnic minority group that is not well understood.

As first noted by Parker (1995), a number of British Chinese individuals, such as actor and director David K.S. Tse (2003) and parliamentary candidate George Lee (Zeng, 2010), have commented on the lack of representation of British Chinese people within mainstream

British cultural and popular life. This sense of invisibility and marginalisation which shapes

the sense of Otherness experienced by young British Chinese has been noted in the

literature. Les Back's (1993) study in South London found that Vietnamese Chinese young

men were sometimes marginalised by both their Black and White peers. Parker (1995) notes

the tendency for British Chinese young people's identities to compartmentalise into a

private Chinese and a public British world, as their identification with Hong Kong-based

popular culture could only be experienced and expressed in Chinese networks but carried

no cultural currency among their peers or in the wider society. Chau and Yu (2001)

highlights that the necessity for many Chinese families to secure their economic position not

only keeps them at a distance from mainstream society but also from their own ethnic

community. I will consider to what extent this captures the experiences of marginalisation

and the sense Otherness of my participants in this current study.

The effect of domestic and international media images on British Chinese has been

acknowledged by Parker (1995) and Song (1999) who have spoken about the ways in which

these have affected constructions of the British Chinese identities. Up until the recent

spotlight on China, perceptions of British Chinese have been statically linked to the catering

trade, and the processes of racialised and sexualised Othering has drawn upon a feminised

construction of the Chinese people and associations with notions of subservience and

servitude strongly linked to their connection to ethnicised catering work (Song 1999; Barber,

2011). On the other hand, Chinese in Britain have also been subject to 'Orientalised', hyper-

masculinising discourses, which focus on notions of criminality and threat through the

stereotypes of the triads and martial arts (Parker, 1997; Archer and Francis, 2005). Media

coverage, such as on criminal gangs linked to the Morecambe Bay tragedy in 2004 (BBC,

2004; Watts, 2007) and the periodic police raids on 'illegal' workers in Chinatown (e.g. Pai, 2004; BBC, 2007) have contributed to this threat of criminality from Chinese migrants, and such negative images of Chinese people affect both new and established residents indiscriminately as racialised subjects. Experiences of marginalisation, racialisation and racism from British Chinese pupils' perspectives will be explored in Chapter 5-7.

Since the mid 1990s there has been an increase in scholarship focusing on the identities of young British Chinese and how these have been shaped through experiences in education (Archer and Francis 2005, 2006, 2007), new identity formations in the cultural sphere (Parker 1998 and 2000), and formation of new ethnicities (Parker and Song 2006, 2007, 2009). Parker's (1995) important study of young British Chinese offered a vital contribution to uncovering the more complex experience of racism and exclusion among young Chinese and their sense of cultural identity and sense of belonging within British society. Parker (1995 and 1998) found the role of Hong Kong-based popular culture and political relations between China, Hong Kong and Britain significant to the identity constructions of British Chinese young people. Parker (1995) has analysed British Chinese identities through the notion of 'partial' or 'segmented' identifications and the subjectivity of 'conditional belonging' in which young people's experiences with and resistance against everyday racism shaped the views of their future (e.g. move elsewhere or contest against racism in Britain). His research made an important contribution in the literature as it documented the emergence of some forms of British Chinese identities though without the hybridisation or syncretism seen in Black British (Gilroy, 1987; Hall, 1991) and South Asian youths (Modood, 1992; Dudrah, 2002).

More recent studies within the British Isles show a further development and multiplicity of

diasporic Chinese identities. Yeh (2000) explored the notion of 'British Chinese-ness' with a

number of British Chinese artists. Yeh draws out the complexities of the notion British

Chinese in terms of subjectivity, identity and politics and argues that there is not yet a

British Chinese syncretic culture as there is no fusion of the two identities but instead mainly

a duality or sometimes conflict. The issues of transnationalism and ethnic identifications

were examined by Yau's (2007) exploration of Chinese identities in Ireland. Yau (2007)

found that young Irish Chinese people commented on their multiplicity of identity of being

Irish and Chinese. However, their self-identifications were also closely linked to how they

and other Chinese people were perceived by mainstream society. Both Yau and Yeh argue

that a British Chinese consciousness has less to do with an homeland, whether actual or

imagined, and instead is more shaped by constructions of 'Chineseness' circulating in the

Western social imaginary. Yeh (2000) however found parallels between Chinese artists with

the Black British artists in Hall's 'new ethnicities' (1989) in their search for a 'politics of

difference' through building forms of solidarity and identification making a common struggle

and resistance possible, but at the same time allowing for heterogeneity of interests and

identities.

Both 'new ethnicities' and culturally hybridised identities have been found to co-exist

among the British Chinese according to Parker and Song (2007, 2009). In their analysis of

young Chinese peoples' participation and engagement in British Chinese online forums,

Parker and Song (2007 and 2009) note how social networking and discussion sites provides a

unique public forum for the negotiation and expression of identities previously unavailable

to many young British Chinese who are dispersed across the country. These findings suggest

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the importance of paying attention to the different social spheres in which identity is constructed and maintained.

Overall, the literature on 'second' or younger generation British Chinese discussed so far has contributed to new ways of understanding and researching identities which challenge homogeneity or fixed definitions of Chinese 'culture' and identities. Instead, these studies have conceptualised British Chinese identities as highly contingent upon their experience in British/Irish society where racialisation is a common feature. The issue of invisibility has been an important theme in the literature. Parker's notions of 'partial identifications' and 'conditional belonging' reflect what might be understood as the contingency of identities of British Chinese. In particular they reflect how a lack of position within mainstream society may shape identities and constructions of Otherness. These approaches provide a useful lens through which to think about new groups and the possibilities and resources for these groups to clearly identify themselves in Britain within the landscape of dominant discourse, in which they do not have a place.

3.3.2 Racialisation and homogenisation of British Chinese

In the UK, Chinese 'tradition' and 'culture' highlighted by Chinese and non-Chinese often consisted of Chinese art and high culture (e.g. Chinese dance, calligraphy, prestigious Chinese dialect(s), Chinese 'virtues'), and they were seen as something that needed to be 'preserved' and celebrated, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Popular ideas about 'Chinese culture', such as kung fu and Chinese dance, are comprised of often essentialised and static representations of 'Chinese tradition' seen through an Orientalised lens. Notions of 'success'

have been a key defining feature of the Chinese experience in Britain in recent years, and the success stories have been identified in the literature as pertaining to levels of socio-economic and academic achievement working to position the Chinese as a 'model minority'. The recent rise of China as a political and economic power further adds to the perception of Chinese people being a successful ethnic group.

Although there is a vast quantity of literature on the educational experiences of minority ethnic pupils in the UK, there has been limited research on British Chinese pupils, as their small number and the academic success of the British Chinese collectively place them outside of the on-going debates on a number of issues; they have not been positioned as educationally or socially problematic to the same extent as other some minority ethnic groups. In UK educational policy, issues of race/ethnicity are predominantly discussed in relation to drives towards raising aspirations and achievement among minority ethnic groups (e.g. Strand, 2008), and increasingly White working class (Demie and Lewis, 2010). As discussed in Chapter 2, the academic 'success' of British Chinese prompt questions such as, 'Why do Chinese children do so well at school?' (Mansell, 2011), and therefore, the high achievement of British Chinese pupils collectively is taken to indicate that they do not constitute or experience any significant problems at school. However, evidence indicates that British Chinese people are subject to considerable discrimination and inequalities (Song, 1999; Parker, 2000; Chau & Yu, 2001; Adamson et al, 2009), and Francis and Archer's (2005) research on British Chinese pupils in London illustrates that these young people regularly experience racism at school, contrary to their teachers' assumptions. Limited theoretical or policy attention has been given to British Chinese pupils' identities and experiences of education, and British Chinese remain defined in restricted and homogenous

terms (e.g. successful, hard working) and lack the power to present themselves within dominant discourse as complex and diverse, with needs which are not being met in the educational system.

A growing body of work has critiqued such narrow, homogenising and stereotypical representations of British Chinese as ignoring the hidden marginalisation and inequalities being experienced by the population (Benton and Gomez, 2008; Archer and Francis, 2005 & 2005, 2006, 2007). Benton and Gomez argue that although an educated British Chinese middle class has emerged, there are divisions between those who are trapped in the ethnicised catering trade and those who have moved up, and many educated British Chinese are concentrated in certain professions and have experienced the glass ceiling. In Francis and Archer's (2005) study of British Chinese pupils in London schools, while teachers assume Chinese pupils do not experience racism due to their high levels of achievement and small numbers, the pupils provide strong evidence of experiences of 'mundane everyday racism' (Essed 1991), which included subtle and overt, new and old forms. These findings on both British Chinese pupils and young adults illustrate a lack of recognition or consideration of negative experiences of the the British Chinese 'community', which is a key factor underpinning perceptions, exclusions and shaping the identities of young Chinese in Britain. Archer and Francis (2007) explored the range of forms of racism experienced by British Chinese pupils, distinguishing between 'old' and 'new' forms of racism. Traditional racism is experienced as embodied difference and Otherness. 'New racism' in relation to 'culture', language, accent and fluency is used as a marker of difference used to question British Chinese young people's 'right to belong' in Britain.

Archer and Francis (2007, 2006, 2005) have explored this process in relation to the existence

of a range of educational myths shaping Chinese pupils' experience within schools in

England. Archer and Francis (2007) also found evidence of specifically gendered forms of

racism among their participants which were based on distinct dichotomous gender

stereotypes. Male stereotypes drew on dichotomous feminised/hyper-masculinity

discourses. On one hand, the discourses of hardworking, diligent polite boys' position these

pupils as feminised, uncool and passive. On the other hand, the discourse of the 'laddish'

boys, linked to the stereotypes of martial arts and triads, position these pupils as having

'gone bad', negatively influenced by friends from a mixed ethnic backgrounds (Archer and

Francis, 2007). The gendered dichotomised discourse for British Chinese girls often portray

them as being passive, quiet, hard working and high achieving and the cause of this

femininity is perceived as located in family structure and 'traditional' Chinese culture.

Archer and Francis suggest that British Chinese femininities are popularly represented as

'repressed bearers of culture' (2007), drawing upon Brah's critique of how Asian femininity

is positioned as exoticised and 'ruthlessly oppressed' within Western discourse (1994; 158).

Their conceptualisation of both male and female stereotypes for British Chinese young

people is very useful for examining the experience and positioning of these pupils at school.

However, young people are seen challenging the dominant and often homogenising

discourses. Archer and Francis (2007) have reflected upon the agentic capacities of young

people and ways in which some pupils actively resist these stereotypes. While some boys

counter the 'passive geek identities' through performing popular 'laddish' masculinities,

some girls reject the 'quiet, passive' stereotypes by 'being lively', talkative and opinionated.

This notion of agency is crucial in extending understandings of how subjects engage with

discourses rather than as simply passive subjects. However, it is also important to understand that their resistance could be restricted by their racialised subject positioning, along with other factors such as gender, class and appearance. This study builds on these findings to examine the experiences of seemingly 'integrated' British Chinese pupils from the more settled population.

In conclusion, the literature has provided ways of understanding processes of racialisation and racism which draw upon a range of complex forms key to shaping the experience of the British Chinese young people. Using an approach which draws upon a range of different racisms to explain the Orientalist discourse found in Archer and Francis (2007), including biological and cultural racisms and gendered constructions, will be an important consideration in my thesis in order to capture the complexity and nuanced experience of sometimes ambiguous and contradictory positions by British Chinese young people. Importantly, the literature has explored how young people understand forms of stereotyping and how they might engage with and subvert these as active social agents. Issues of invisibility, dichotomised identities (e.g. Western/Oriental), and lack of understanding of the subtle forms of racialisation and racism are particularly demonstrated in this section as a commonality with the UK literature. These issues have been explored in this research, though the situation of invisibility has somewhat changed due to the recent interest in China, which throws in new complexity regarding the positioning of British Chinese people. The new spotlight on China has also led to an increased interest in Mandarin Chinese, the official language of China, both within mainstream Britain society and the British Chinese 'community'. The role of language in identity construction is also a focus in this research.

3.5 Language and identity

3.5.1 Language as identity

Proficiency in Chinese language is seen as an important signifier relating to 'Chineseness'

among Chinese diaspora (Ang, 2001). In recent Chinese complementary schooling research

(Francis et al, 2008), it is evident that a significant number of British Chinese pupils, parents

and teachers view the concept of authenticity and of being 'full' or 'proper' Chinese, as

being closed linked to one's Chinese language ability. Language appears to subsume and

express culture and identity, rather than the other way around (Francis et al, 2009). To learn

and be proficient in Chinese language emerged as grounded in powerful moral discourses of

duty, identity and inclusion/exclusion, and the lack of Chinese language skill could induce

powerful emotions, including shame, embarrassment and disgrace, for British Chinese

young people. The notion that Chinese people should be able to speak Chinese was a taken-

for-granted position that appeared to retain a profound hold on the experiences and

understanding of identity of pupils across social class groups at Chinese complementary

schools in England. On the other hand, Francis et al's study also found a smaller number of

English-dominant pupils attending Chinese classes felt that learning Chinese was irrelevant

to their lives growing up in the UK and saw little point of maintaining the 'mother tongue'.

Consequently, this research seeks to investigate how young people of Chinese heritage who

have limited knowledge of or/and contact with Chinese language (and 'culture') construct

their identities and how they view Chinese language(s) and 'culture'.

The emphasis on language as an identity marker, which is imposed by the Chinese

'community' perhaps both in the UK and elsewhere, results in some British Chinese young

people feeling inauthentically Chinese when judged according to these criteria (Francis et al,

2009). Yet at the same time, these young people feel inescapably Chinese because the processes of racialisation mark them as inherently 'Chinese' within British society. The conflicting and competing assertions of Chineseness, on one hand, conceives Chineseness as something natural and innate. However, without having knowledge of Chinese 'culture' and language, a British Chinese person can also be deemed as unauthentic, 'not properly Chinese'. In fact, they can be viewed as not quite 'human' – 'gwei/ghost', a deprecatory term that Cantonese speakers use to describe foreigners/Westerners. Within this context, Chineseness becomes a measurable and commodified form of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984). Some people have more Chinese 'culture', while others have less or simply have 'lost' it (Louie 2004: 106). However, obtaining and maintaining a minority language within an English dominant environment is a challenging task for many British Chinese youths who are born/raised in England.

3.5.2 Multi/bilingualism, language maintenance and language shift

The Fishman model of language shift (1965, 1972), originally used to describe European immigrants in the US, argues that adult migrants continue to use their mother tongue in most domains, especially at home, and therefore transmit the mother tongue language to their children. Second generations, many of whom become bilingual in the dominant language and home mother tongue language, tend to shift to the dominant language in all domains by the time they are adults, including in the home domain, which is generally the last domain of minority language use. As a result, the third generation has little opportunity to learn or use the minority language (Lopez 1996: 146). This model also accurately describes the situation in European immigrants in Canada and Australia (Evans 1987; Noro 1990), and research done in the late 1970s and early 1980s indicated that East Asian

languages had a similar fate to that of European languages in the US (Lopez 1996: 147).

Research has shown that the rate of language shift and the potential for stable bilingualism

is affected by demographics, contextual (e.g. visits to 'homeland'), and, more recently,

political factors (e.g. growing tolerance, or respect, of bilingualism/multilingualism and

language rights) as well as by individual desires (Lopez 1996: 147-8).

Besides the instrumental function to communicate with co-ethnics, languages could carry

symbolic cultural and political significance. In Li Wei's (1994) study of Chinese families in the

North East of England, he observed changes in language choice preferences across different

generations. Li (1994) argues that given the monolingual and unicultural tradition of Britain,

the choice between English and minority languages, which are sometimes socially

stigmatised, has taken on special symbolism. It is 'an act of identity' for individual speakers

and a potent reminder of the competing cultural values for the British society as a whole (Li

1994: p2). When a language is linked to a national identity, the symbolic status of a language

can 'create identity and discontinuity, and can both unite and divide, as it can become a

battleground, and object of oppression and a means of discrimination' (Blommaert and

Verschueren, 1998, in Blackledge, 2004:71). Language, in a similar manner to cultural

practices, is used to draw boundaries and mark differences in 'culture' and 'values' in other

ethnic/linguistic communities in the UK. Recent research on Polish communities in the

Manchester area (Temple 2008) suggests that language was used to identify 'us' and 'them'

in terms of perceived everyday values (e.g. Polish values vs. English values) both within

Polish communities and outside of them. Therefore, language could be seen as part of the

package to form an essentialised version of an identity, and in the context of this study, a

Chinese identity. Bourdieu's analysis of the creation and reproduction of language

ideologies suggests that the unification of the cultural and linguistic market contributes to the construction of 'national identity', or 'legitimate national culture' (1998:46). The 'homogenization of all forms of communication' (1998:45) contributes to a national habitus, which impilicity shares common principles of vision and division. (in Blackedge 2004: 72). As discussed in Chapter 2, the British Chinese 'community' also lacks unifying elements such as religion, national dress to form distinguishable commonality among its members. Language, along with 'values', therefore becomes an important marker for Chinese identity. Pride in the language's long history and sophistication undoubtedly contributes to its symbolic value. Therefore, British Chinese young people who do not possess adequate Chinese skills could be seen as a threat to the idealised Chinese identity.

In fact, not learning/knowing Chinese among the younger generations of Chinese diaspora is perceived as a 'problem' to some. G. Wang (1991) writes about establishing Chinese language schools as a way for many diasporic Chinese communities to minimize this problem and migrant families to 'become Chinese' and to 'remain Chinese'. In a study of New Zealand born Chinese in Auckland (Sun, 1999), second generation Chinese respondents were asked whether they would 'regard a complete ignorance of Cantonese in their children as undesirable'. Although the respondents expressed an inner desire to have their children being able to speak Chinese, they no longer saw such pressure from the community. Sun perceived these respondents as having given up hope on maintaining Chinese language and describes the situation as 'scary'. As discussed earlier in this chapter, there are historical, cultural and political reasons for the Chinese diaspora, especially those from the migrant generation, to hold onto an essential and idealised notion of Chineseness. However, this study seeks to explore ways how British Chinese young people who are generally less

connected to 'homeland' might construct their identities and view the role of Chinese

language in their lives growing up in England.

3.6 Beyond East meets West

There is a small but growing literature about the Chinese in Britain that looks beneath the

stereotypes and fixed ideas of Chineseness. The work of researchers such as Parker, Song,

Archer and Francis illustrates how a 'second/third' generation of young British Chinese has

emerged and, specifically within the last decade or so, a 'British Chinese' identity can be said

to have emerged. This body of research touches on the home (Verma et al, 1999), the

takeaway (Parker, 2000, Song, 1995), the internet (Parker and Song, 2006, Parker and Song,

2006, Parker and Song, 2007), mainstream schools (Archer and Francis, 2006, Archer and

Francis, 2007, Francis et al, 2008) and complementary/Chinese schools (Archer et al, 2009,

Francis et al., 2009, Mau et al, 2009). In all cases that research has been keen to stress a)

diversity/heterogeneity within the settled Chinese community, and b) the need to take

seriously issues of racism and inequity. Despite the positives, such as academic achievement

and movement away from the ethnicised catering trade, there is on-going worry about the

'hidden' racism found in the education system and labour market. With the recent influx of

Chinese migrants and the rise of China, the positioning of the British Chinese within the

increasingly diverse British society is also changing.

Explorations of identity construction within a changing social landscape require sensitivity to

the complexities of contemporary cultural identities and a critical engagement with more

fluid, situational, and multiple forms of identification. Attention will be paid to the

'culturally entangled' (Hesse, 2000) nature of British Chinese pupils' identities and the ways

in which such identities are located and constituted across time, space/place and between

social axes of 'race', class, gender, age, and other aspects of social identities (Hall, 1992; Martin et al, 2004).

Ang (2001) argues that although the 'no-win', double-bind problem of 'too Chinese/Westernised' or 'not Chinese/Westernised' can be shared by other diasporic populations in the West, there is a particular phenomenon in Chinese diaspora of the 'exceedingly strong originary pull of the "homeland" as a result of the prominent place of 'China' in the Western imagination' (Ang 2001: 32). In the case of Chinese-Americans, Louie (2004) argues that they are made to define their differences in cultural terms and that the hybrid blend that Chinese-American culture has become is not recognised by mainstream US society or by Chinese-Americans themselves as legitimately 'Chinese' (p.104). In fact similar to British Chinese, Chinese-Americans critically described one another as 'not being very Chinese' or 'being too Chinesey'. Some are accused of being *jook sing* (hollow bamboo) (Louie 2004: 106); others are characterised as 'Twinkies' (a snack cake that is yellow outside with white cream filling) and 'bananas', a term also used and understood in the British Chinese community. The findings in this research will contribute to further understanding of this often contradictory and 'impossible' positioning[2] (Butler, 1990) of British Chinese young people and how they negotiate their identities beyond an Oriental/Western binary, within multicultural and multilingual twenty-first century Britain.

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[2] Butler (1990, p.142) argues that people (e.g. transgender) who move across or beyond the preconceived gender binary (male/female) may risk being put on the borders of the human and be seen as abnormal. Equally, the binary East/West construction and hegemonic Chineseness/Britishness silence other identifications as legitimate positions.

Chapter 4: Research Methods and Methodology

Following on from the previous chapters, which set out the theoretical perspectives and background for this research, the aim of this chapter is to present the methodological approaches used in the study and demonstrate how the methods enable epistemological and ontological theoretical perspectives to be practically applied. This chapter will outline in detail my research procedure and research process as well as presenting a rationale for the use of methodology, including a qualitative interviewing approach for researching British Chinese pupils' identities and lived experiences and the data analysis process. The first section will include a description of my research approach and give a justification of methods chosen and how they relate to the theoretical framework. The second section will present my data collection methods and give an account of my research procedure and how I conducted research in practical terms. The third section outlines the methods of analysis and details the process of analysing the data.

4.1 Design, theoretical perspectives and methodological frameworks

This interpretivist research sought to explore the experiences of British Chinese pupils with limited Chinese language abilities, examining their social and learner identities and lived experiences. As mentioned in Chapter 3, I have adopted interpretative/social constructivist and post-structuralist approaches in this research. Given the focus of this study on the relationships between (British/Chinese) identities, 'cultures' and languages, I am interested in, and attuned to, the role of languages and culture in the (de)construction and maintenance of educational and cultural identities (further discussions in Chapter 5-7). Important methodological lessons were learnt through utilising a range of strategies in sampling a hard to reach target population, and critically examining the 'positionings' (Song

and Parker, 1995) of the researcher in relation to the participants/gatekeepers, from the research design stage through the data analysis process.

The interpretative/social constructivist and post-structuralist perspectives influence the way knowledge is studied and interpreted. The constructivist paradigm calls for a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative methods, including interviews, observations, and document reviews were used to suit the interpretative paradigm, and these are applied in correspondence with the assumption about the social construction of reality such that research can be conducted only through interaction between and among investigator and respondents (Lincoln and Guba, 2000). This research followed the interpretivist traditions in relying upon 'the participants' views of the situation being studied' (Creswell, 2003, p.8), as the aims were to explore these British Chinese young people's identities and their own views on languages, 'cultures' and lived experiences. A post-structuralist approach to discourse analysis is also needed to draw attention to the workings between power and resistance to examine the complexity of social positionings.

An 'integrative methodological framework' (Saukko, 2005), which is used in cultural studies, provided useful reference points in guiding my methodology design and interpretation of data. Saukko suggests that this approach combines a hermeneutic interest in lived realities (e.g. growing up as British Chinese), a poststructuralist critical analysis of discourses (e.g. essentialised versions of 'Chineseness') that mediates the experiences of lived realities, and a contextualist investigation of social structures of power (e.g. racism). The integrative approach was useful in addressing the 'tension between the humanistic study of lived experiences (meaning), and the more structural cultural studies project that highlights the

structural and material determinants (race, class, gender) and effects of experience' (Denzin

and Lincoln, 2005; p.25). Bringing in different theoretical perspectives can help to address

the dual concerns of recognising the British Chinese young people as active agents, as well

as examining the locations of individuals and groups within wider social structures and how

young people are shaped by the discourses produced by and within their social contexts

(Archer & Francis 2007).

Saukko's (2003) discussions on employing 'new ethnography' in cultural studies were also

useful and applicable to this study. The term 'new ethnography' refers to a turn away from

the authorial and privileged voice represented in established modes of ethnographic writing

(e.g. Clifford and Marcus 1986), and the two-faced project of new ethnography aims to be

'true to different lived experiences and to critically interrogate concepts that we have used

to categorise those experiences' (Saukko 2003, p.56). Although the design of this research

did not suit traditional forms of ethnography as opportunities for conducting observations

was not available with each participant, the research employed ethnographic approaches

and methods, such as the study of everyday contexts and participant observations, to

attempt to hold a commitment to be 'truer' to lived realities of the people being researched.

Within the interpretivist paradigm, understanding the lived experience of these young

people demands a phenomenological approach that aims to understand lived realities from

the participants' perspectives – their accounts were expressions of their lived reality. In

particular, the interpretive/hermeneutic phenomenology tradition that derived from

Heidegger's (1962) ideas and some elements of critical hermeneutics (Lopez and Willis,

2004) was adopted. Unlike the descriptive phenomenological approach which seeks to

uncover essences of phenomena, the interpretive/hermeneutic tradition is useful in

examining contextual features of experiences. As Heidegger asserts, people's narratives imply what they experience every day, and individuals only have situated freedom, circumscribed by the specific conditions of their daily lives (*Ibid.*). Additionally, the critical hermeneutics approach challenges the dominant ideologies and probes beneath belief systems taken for granted. To study the embedded viewpoints that mediate the way in which the research participants and myself understand identity and culture, critical examination of discourses on Chineseness, Britishness, and multiculturalism in the British educational system, as well as in the UK society and globally, was required.

Additionally, encounters with others who were indirectly involved in the research but were part of the participants' social worlds, such as their peers, parents and gatekeepers, were useful to reflect on other perspectives in their lived environments. Furthermore, information (e.g. census data, school data) related to youth cultures and the British Chinese population (e.g. British Chinese online blogs) were also examined to produce a more comprehensive picture of the wider lived environment. These accounts were interlaced with local and global discourses, such as achievements and ethnic identifications, which are 'socially organised patterns/frameworks of language, knowledge and meaning' (Archer and Francis, 2007, p.26).

The multiple perspectives can complement and enrich one another but contradictions, tensions and uncertainties could arise and such challenges should be clearly acknowledged and addressed throughout the research process. As discussed in Chapter 3, the use of both social constructivist and poststructuralist approaches was influenced by the notion of social justice in transformative paradigms and standpoints (e.g. Critical Race Theory) and the need to listen to multiple and perhaps sometimes 'silenced' voices to challenge dominant

discourses and structures. The interest in discourses that mediate the way in which the

pupils, and the researcher, understand the British educational system and society, required

a post-structural analysis of 'truths' or ways of approaching the reality. The post-structural

approach can also be used to examine young people's resistance to certain discourses, such

as 'Chineseness'. Equally, narratives from the young people also articulated wider social,

political and global contexts and structures that need to be critically evaluated.

Significantly, I recognised the impact on the research of my own background, experiences

and positionings throughout the research process. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000),

interpretivists believe in the possibility of understanding the subject meaning of action while

doing so in an objective manner, and researchers must employ methods to maintain

research rigor and to demonstrate trustworthiness and authenticity (Guba and Lincoln,

1989). The challenges to maintaining objectivity and reflection of my positioning in

different aspects of the research process will be discussed in this chapter and in Chapter 8.

Reflexivity, the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher (Guba and Licoln,

2005; p.210) was an important component throughout the research for both ethical and

research rigor considerations.

4.2 Methods and Data Collection

Interpretivist/constructivist paradigms generally operate using predominantly qualitative

methods (Cohen and Manion 1994; Silverman, 2000; Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006; Mertens,

2010). A strong rationale existed for choosing a qualitative approach in this study, as the

study aimed to provide interpretation and understanding of how these young people

interpreted and constructed their situations, which required a hermeneutical approach. As

discussed earlier, the study's goal was not to produce comprehensive generalisations. The

research aimed to discover patterns and contextual findings emerging after thoughtful

analysis of the qualitative data, which came from participants' own words. Nevertheless,

quantitative data, such as demographics, family migration history (from the interviews) and

school data (from published reports and statistics), was useful to support the qualitative

data analysis and deepens the description.

4.2.1 Participants and access

(i) Sampling

The British Chinese population has been considered a hard to reach group by researchers in

various disciplines for a variety of reasons (Li, 1992; Song & Parker, 1995; Tso & Chung,

1996). Barriers to access are not necessarily linked to researchers' ethnicity (Tso & Chung,

1996). Compared to the US or Australia where the Chinese populations are the prominent

sub-groups among large 'Asian' populations (Skeldon, 2011), the British Chinese and other

British East Asian populations are a numerically smaller group (also see Chapter 2 on the

British Chinese 'community'). The populations of some other post-war colonial migrant

communities are much larger, for example those of South Asian and of African Caribbean

heritage. As discussed in Chapter 2, the British Chinese population has a dispersed

settlement pattern that makes fair representation particularly difficult. They have been left

out of various surveys and have remained virtually invisible for this reason (Jones 1998).

That relatively scattered distribution reflects the fact that a high proportion of post-war

Chinese migrants from Hong Kong and Southeast Asia set up catering businesses in places

where there was little competition (Benton & Gomez, 2008), but the recent wave of

migration from mainland China might be producing a different settlement pattern. The

southeast region of England has a sizeable British Chinese population, with London

accommodating about one third of the UK's Chinese residents and a further 14% living in the rest of the Southeast of England, according to the 2001 census (CRE, 2006). Although efforts were made to recruit interviewees from across England, most of the participants reside in Southern England (I will elaborate the relation between this outcome and my recruitment and data collection process later in this chapter).

British Chinese pupils are normally the 'minority within the minorities' in English schools; accessing the pupils was extremely onerous during Francis & Archer's research (2006) even within schools in London, where there is a higher concentration of the UK Chinese population. I was aware of the added challenges in locating pupils that fit the requirement of speaking limited Chinese. I sought to interview 30-40 young people in secondary or sixth form education in England, and completed 38 interviews. A small-scale interview-based qualitative study can go into considerable depth with a smaller sample, and well-executed, manageable small-scale educational research can contribute to the field, which values the accumulation of evidence across many studies (Punch 2009; p.42-43). Since the target population, British Chinese pupils with limited Chinese language knowledge, and British Chinese pupils in general, are relatively small groups, a sample size of 30-40 would provide participants from a range of backgrounds.

This particular age group was chosen because of the perceived accessibility of pupils since most would be in compulsory education or sixth form/college. Additionally, university life can expose British Chinese youths to a larger Chinese student population from a wider range of backgrounds and to new ethnic networks (e.g. Chinese student associations), as China, Hong Kong and Malaysia are amongst the top sources of overseas students in the UK (UKCISA, 2012). These elements might create new perspectives and experiences relating to

cultural identities and 'cultures', and British Chinese's experience in HE is an area worthy of future investigation in future studies. Attempts were made to include participants from a range of different backgrounds, in line with the different characteristics of the overall British Chinese population (see Chapter 2). Participants from a number of locations, including urban and non-metropolitan areas in southern England, were interviewed to produce a more diverse sample that represented British Chinese recruited through different channels and from a variety family backgrounds and localities.

I was primarily planning to interview young people with two parents of Chinese origin, but I also decided to include some pupils with mixed Chinese heritage to reflect the change in demographics in the UK. The sample of 38 pupils included 10 young people with mixed Chinese heritage. 'Mixed race' is one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in Britain. In the 2001 census among the 'Mixed' categories (e.g. White & Black Caribbean, White & Black African), people who ticked the 'Any other mixed background' category were asked to give further details, and the most common written description was 'Chinese and White', comprising 10 per cent of the 'Other Mixed' answers (Owen, 2007). Additionally, as Song (2007) rightfully argues, relatively little is known about the experiences of mixed heritage people despite their growing presence in official data. Extra considerations were made when analysing data involving mixed heritage pupils in the sample; however, I also agree with Song's suggestion not to treat mixed heritage people as a completely distinctive or separate group. The British Chinese population is far from being mono-origin or monolingual, with many from bi/multicultural and bi/multilingual backgrounds (e.g. Hong Kong Chinese, Malaysian Chinese, and Vietnamese Chinese). In many respects, mixed heritage people's experiences may not differ significantly from those of many mono-racial

minorities, for example, in terms of their being regarded as minorities, or being the targets of racial prejudice. Further understanding of their experiences and views on cultural identification is necessary to create cultural competency within public services such as education.

According to an informant who was involved with Chinese complementary schooling, British born Chinese (BBCs) generally fall under three categories: 1) speak and write Chinese (a few), 2) speak but cannot write Chinese (quite a few); and 3) cannot speak/write Chinese (many). However, to locate and speak to the 'many' young people that have limited Chinese language skills was a difficult task. In contrast to other minorities, British Chinese have lacked the unifying forces of a shared religion or a strong British based popular cultural form to mark out a distinctive public profile (Parker & Song, 2007), and are thus less easily located within certain social domains. Although I had built up some contacts via Chinese complementary schools and Chinese organisations in the previous research (Mau *at el*, 2009), my target sample were less likely to be at Chinese schools. In fact some of them (or their parents) might not be associated with any Chinese organisations, which made them even more difficult to locate. When I approached a couple of the contacts via Chinese schools, I was recommended to find my participants in mainstream schools. Both general and minority ethnic/cultural-based networks, particularly more creative methods, were used to recruit interviewees. I encountered a number of difficulties in gaining access and experienced similar challenges to those described by Sin (2004) regarding researching minority ethnic older people. Similar to Sin's experience, the absence of a comprehensive and reliable infrastructure creates difficulties that prevent the construction of an adequate and reliable sampling frame for hard to reach people, for example, those who are not

connected to any formal Chinese/East Asian networks or organisations within a population that has a dispersed settlement pattern. As Sin (2004) suggests, the inclusion of people living in areas of a scattered population produces high costs, in terms of time and effort associated with finding and contacting potential participants.

The recruitment challenge leads to a shortage of research on hard to access individuals and a relative abundance of research on the easy to reach members of a 'community', and this scenario is particularly true when community organisations of specific minority ethnic populations (e.g. Chinese community centres) exist and offer a convenient way of accessing their members (Sin 2004, p.266). I agree with Sin's comment that different sub groups of a minority ethnic population could be in touch with different community organisations, so sampling across several domains can yield a more robust and diverse sample for a small qualitative study. For example, Yu's (2000) study of Chinese older people in London, Glasgow and South Yorkshire employed many sampling points including casinos, social centres, luncheon clubs, Chinese churches and even McDonald's restaurants. To obtain participants from different sections of the British Chinese community, both general and minority ethnic based channels/sources were used to access the participants in this study. A list of interviewees with comprehensive demographic information can be found in Appendix 4.

As this was a qualitative study focusing on meaning and the subjective experiences of a specific group within the British Chinese population, measures of reliability and validity that are normally associated with positivist and quantitative research did not apply directly. Alder and Alder (2012) suggest a sample of around 30 for graduate students, while a smaller number of cases could be extremely valuable and represent adequate numbers for studying

hidden or hard to access populations. In fact, Springer (2009) suggests larger sample sizes are often undesirable or even counter-productive if the focus is to learn much about a few people. More importantly, 38 qualitative interviews would be sufficient to address the purpose of the research and research questions to be addressed within a hard to reach sample. Although a larger sample size could be useful, the result would be counterbalanced by the difficulty of accessing more young people, which will be further explained throughout this chapter. In addition, the process of increasing the size of the sample may not necessarily increase the opportunity for targeting those who are very difficult to reach or unwilling to participate.

Searching for participants of Chinese heritage who spoke limited Chinese was not only challenging due to the difficulty in identifying an even smaller section of a hard to reach group, but also the fact that the criteria of 'speaking limited Chinese' could be complicated and potentially a sensitive topic among some members of the British Chinese community. A self-identification criteria was used, so the definition of 'speaking limited Chinese' and participants' Chinese language knowledge varied across the sample. A number of participants did not know the Chinese language at all, and some could understand a little but did not really speak it regularly; yet a few of them attended Chinese schools and even completed Chinese GCSE exams but felt that they did not speak Chinese fluently for a variety of reasons. One participant, whom I communicated with directly via a number of emails before our meeting, described herself as speaking fluent Chinese during the interview but then considered herself 'not very Chinese'; perhaps the feeling of being not very 'Chinese-y', as she put it, made her feel that she should participate in the research. However, in some instances, gatekeepers selected or communicated with the young people

on my behalf, and as a result, some of the participants turned out to be relatively fluent in Chinese.

Additionally, some people of Chinese descent view language as the signifier of ethnic authenticity (Francis *et al*, 2009), and the inability to speak Chinese could be seen as being 'embarrassing' and even 'shameful' by some British Chinese. In written or oral communications to the gatekeepers or young people prior to the interviews, I tried to make it clear that the questions were mainly about everyday life (school, hobbies, friends, and etc.). I explained that the reason for speaking to this group of young people specifically was to gain a further insight into different sectors of the British Chinese community, and also the fact that I had already spoken to a number of young people that were fluent in Chinese in my previous research. However, undoubtedly, despite the best intentions and efforts, some young people might still feel uncomfortable speaking to a researcher, particularly relating to an area they might feel uneasy about, and hence may have been deterred from participation. A mixed heritage (Chinese and White English) contact (female, early 20s) who was supportive of the research aims reflected on her own experience:

> I know that my own poor Chinese language skills is something that I deeply regret and I'd maybe even go so far as to say that I'm ashamed of. So perhaps that could be affecting numbers [of people who are willing to be interviewed]. I don't know, but I think when you say that you are asking about everyday things like hobbies etc it's reassuring, or it would put me at ease if I was going to do the study anyway. Probably because we, or at least I know I am, often bombarded with the question of why I don't speak Chinese, which although a reasonable question, can become a sensitive subject after so much repetition.

I was highly conscious of the potential sensitivity towards the subject and was made particularly aware to use language (and body language) that was non-judgemental and neutral sounding when discussing this issue before and during the interviews with the

participants, their parents or gatekeepers. On the other hand, one participant, who was

presented to me by a gatekeeper, questioned my intention of only speaking to those with

limited Chinese knowledge. After I offered her explanations, and after her subsequent

identification as speaking fluent Chinese, she was however still very interested in being

interviewed.

(ii) Negotiating access

Crozier (2003) describes that in negotiating access, the researcher is asking for the

participants (and gatekeepers) to trust him/her, especially if the research involves disclosing

personal experiences. As seen in previous research by other minority ethnic researchers

(Phoenix, 1994; Mirza, 1998), shared ethnicity does not guarantee access or trust from

potential participants. Different strategies were required to establish trust and points of

connectivity in different contexts in which I was positioned and different identities in which I

was placed.

When introducing myself and my research to most contacts, gatekeepers and potential

participants, my self-described role was as a 'researcher/PhD student from Roehampton

University, London'. Similar to Egharevba's (2001) use of official university stationery to

facilitate initial access for her doctoral study, my association with the university and

doctoral degree course was aimed to produce a level of trust and credibility, especially with

gatekeepers. It is perhaps difficult to assess the 'effectiveness' of the association. Some

seemed to perceive this positioning as legitimising my research and role, particularly with

those adult contact/gatekeepers that had knowledge or experience of research. However,

being part of the privileged, 'white, middle-class' establishment and engaging in 'research'

might have potentially alienated those who were unfamiliar with or held negative views on such associations.

Furthermore, the name and the geographical location of 'Roehampton' was not familiar to some of the contacts or gatekeepers, and a few (both from London and elsewhere) mistakenly thought I was from Northampton or Wolverhampton. Griffiths (1998) alludes to how association with prestigious institutions and central government agencies might bring an advantage in social standing. When a number of gatekeepers asked for additional information on my study, I highlighted the fact that this research was building on a research council funded project on the British Chinese population that I was previously involved in. Although people might not be familiar with 'the Economic and Social Research Council', I was hoping the association with a government funding body would increase the worthiness of my cause and my credibility as a competent researcher. After all, the 'benefits' of the research might not be apparent to all, and some probably simply saw little point in the research subject matter. Perhaps sharing Mirza's (1998) sentiment of the position as a young, female, (possibly inexperienced) researcher/PhD student carrying little/no status to convince others, my attempt to alter my positioning aimed to gain gatekeepers/contacts' trust to invest their time and effort to assist me.

Furthermore, while I did not indicate my Chinese heritage when making initial written communications, my name, though not completely apparent as 'Chinese' sounding, most certainly gave some clues to my ethnic background to some of the recipients. My presented and perceived ethnic identities, alongside with other intersecting identities, were sometimes made relevant or useful to the research process and will be discussed when examining the different stages of the research process. In the end, a range of methods and

channels were used in recruiting interviewees, and some methods were specifically

targeting Chinese organisations/networks.

Methods used to recruit British Chinese pupils

Recruitment Routes	Number of participants
Mainstream schools	3
General youth-based organisations	1
Parents' online forum	1
Chinese/East Asian associations or schools	12
Chinese Christian churches	7
British Chinese personal 'networks'	4
My own personal 'networks'	5
Snowballing via participants	5

General/ non-minority ethnic based access

During the recruiting in general/non-minority ethnic based channels, I contacted numerous

secondary schools and youth organisations/activities clubs in the London and South East

region; I also posted my request on a number of online forums/message boards, specifically

targeting parents, pupils/students, and youth interests. One of the reasons for choosing

secondary/sixth form aged young people over university students was the assumption that

this age group would be in compulsory education and would be easier to access. However,

in reality gaining access to mainstream schools was extremely problematic. There were a

number of issues which made accessing pupils through mainstream schools challenging and

ineffective. Many staff members at schools have demanding workloads (Lipsett, 2008), so it

is understandable that additional, non-compulsory, and perhaps seemingly unimportant,

requests cannot always be met. Most schools did not answer my request, and one school

replied and stated, 'To protect staff who are under enormous pressure the Headteacher has

decided that at [said school] we will only complete compulsory surveys required by the [Department for Children, Families and Schools].' And with one exception, the few schools that I managed to get in contact with were referred by an established contact person and I communicated with a specific person at those schools (as opposed to a general request sent to the school). However, not all these yielded positive results for finding pupils that fit my specific criteria. Cold calling schools without a contact person proved to be ineffective under these circumstances.

As mentioned previously, most schools only had a small number of pupils of Chinese heritage, if any, and often information on pupils' ethnicities or backgrounds might not be comprehensive. For example, unpublished statistics on Chinese pupils in one of the central London boroughs from 2008 (generated by an education/children services team, obtained through an informant[3] in the health services) indicated that only 1.3% of the children in all the schools were recorded as Chinese, and only two of the secondary schools in this borough contained over 20 Chinese pupils (about 2-3% of the total population of those schools). These low numbers are despite central London being a region with a high concentration of the UK Chinese population. The officer that provided the statistics acknowledged that the information failed to include any pupils who were recorded under any other ethnicity, such as mixed White and Asian, mixed Black and Asian, etc. Another issue was the difficulty in identifying the pupils of Chinese heritage within the schools that fit the language criteria for this research, as such information might not be collected by schools. One of the contacts, a deputy headteacher, passed on the request and related

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[3] Ethical consideration - name of borough withheld, as information was obtained through a second-hand private email correspondence (BERA Ethical Guidelines, 2011).

information to pupils/parents at the school with Chinese surnames on the school register; pupils with non-commonly known Chinese sounding surnames or who have mixed heritage with a non-Chinese surname could be excluded in this approach, unless the school officials have comprehensive knowledge of the pupils' ethnic backgrounds.

However, during another instance, a teacher, who was an established contact through a colleague, informed me that no pupil at the school was suitable after consulting the EAL (English as an Additional Language) support. After trying to clarify with said teacher that the potential participants would be unlikely to need EAL support, she stated that EAL would 'have instant access to pupil background/ethnicity.' Although the Annual Schools Census (ASC) ethnicity and language data can provide some indication of the ethnic backgrounds and the range of languages to be found amongst pupils, the data should be read with caution (CILT, 2010). The data collected on 'First Language' only records the number of children with a first language other than English, which is largely defined as exposure to a non-English language during early development (DfES, 2005); it is not compulsory for the schools to record the data on the non-English language, and the information does not seem to accurately reflect bi/multilingualism and subsequent language development. In the end, only three of the participants were accessed via one mainstream school, and the connection was referred by one of my contacts who worked with schools in that region. My school contact, the deputy head teacher (non-Chinese), had been actively involved with a China/UK schools partnership project and was planning to participate in an exchange trip to China to their partner school; perhaps his interest in Chinese related culture and issues prompted his assistance to my research.

I also contacted many predominantly London/Southeast-based clubs and organisations (youth or youth activity related), mostly via contacting the individual co-ordinators and I posted a few requests on Facebook groups. A number of contacts were responsive and helpful by passing along the requests or suggesting other clubs/groups to contact. However, most did not seem to have members that fit the methodological criteria or no one at those organisations came forward to participate. Only one participant was directly recruited via a contact at a youth advocacy group. An additional participant was also recruited via a request posted on an online parents' forum. However, a request posted on The Student Room, a UK based online forum with over 470,000 members and more than 25,000,000 posts, yielded no comment or response at all.

Minority ethnic based channels access

More successful recruitment came via Chinese/East Asian cultural based connections and groups. There was a mixed rate of success with Chinese associations/Chinese schools, Chinese churches, British Chinese online forums/websites, BBC (British Born Chinese) Facebook groups, British Chinese bloggers, 'Asian' websites, Euroasian website, BBC organisations, Chinese and Vietnamese language meet-up groups, Chinese Malaysian/Singaporean organisations, Chinese health organisations, and very importantly personal contacts/networks.

Although Chinese associations would undoubtedly provide access to the Chinese population (a few of the general youth organisation contacts suggested contacting the local Chinese associations), there are several issues in recruiting through these organisations. According to Benton and Gomez (2009), British Chinese associations are largely voluntary based and

fairly inactive, especially outside the big cities. A number of emails sent to some of the regional Chinese associations were bounced back as the websites/emails were not functioning properly, and many requests to groups were either ignored or not followed through by the largely part-time, voluntary based official/members. However, the few organisations that I got in contact with were helpful and some managed to find some participants from their groups. The problem with relying on Chinese associations is that the population that are associated with these groups only represent a certain section of the British Chinese community, and as mentioned in Chapter 2, most British Chinese are not involved heavily, or at all, with either traditional Chinese associations or newer, local based Chinese Community Centres. Young people and those who are UK born are far less likely to visit a Chinese community centre or association (Benton 2008, p.169), and a large number of the Chinese associations also run Chinese classes, which means the young people associated, personally or through their parents, might be more likely to be attending the Chinese school. Additionally, it was a potentially awkward environment to identify suitable participants that 'speak limited Chinese', when these organisations and schools tend to actively promote Chinese 'culture' and languages. Extra effort was made to explain that the language criteria was not judgemental but merely designed to reach different sectors of the British Chinese population; sometimes further explanations (e.g. particularly looking for pupils that did not regularly speak Chinese at home) was used to help the gatekeepers to understand the criteria, but a couple of the participants that were presented/selected turned out to identify themselves as speaking reasonably fluent Chinese.

One informant rightfully pointed out that the headteachers or gatekeepers might not be as knowledgeable of the pupils' linguistic backgrounds and practices as the class teachers. As

the research at Chinese schools demonstrated, Chinese knowledge levels varied greatly

even within the same classroom, and some pupils admitted to struggling to understand

teachers' instructions at times even after attending for a number of years (Mau et al, 2009).

However, some headteachers/gatekeepers might not be aware of individual pupils'

progress, or not want to admit to having pupils that seemed to be 'failing' at learning

Chinese. Additionally, activities or Chinese classes at these organisations normally only take

place at weekends, and Chinese school hours are only 2-3 hours long; therefore it was more

difficult to meet and find the time to speak with the pupils compared to interviewing pupils

at mainstream schools, and additional visits were sometimes required. In the end, 12 pupils

were recruited directly through four Chinese associations (one of them was an East Asian

organisation but seemed to have a mainly Chinese focus) or Chinese schools, and

unsurprisingly, the majority of them had at least a basic command of oral Chinese.

Similar to Chinese associations, Chinese Christian organisations also seemed to be one of

the obvious sources to access the British Chinese population. As discussed in Chapter 2,

Christianity predominates over Buddhism and indigenous Chinese faiths among the UK

Chinese population. This observation was also supported by a comment made by one of the

British born Chinese contacts (male, aged 20s) that 'many BBCs are Christians'. Groups with

English congregations (services conducted in English) and/or youth groups were specially

targeted, and the response rate was substantially higher than the Chinese associations, as

most Chinese Christian organisations seemed to have more fulltime or dedicated staff

members. Although the Chinese Christian groups provided relatively successful access, the

recruitment and interviewing process was also time consuming. I attended the youth

group/services at two of the churches numerous times after gaining permission from the

youth group leaders; the repeated visits helped to make myself known to the young people and make them feel comfortable about my presence. The repeated visits were also necessary in order to find the time between activities for interviewing. Such visits to organisations that are far away would be difficult or impossible. Seven pupils from three churches (2 in London, 1 in the South East) were interviewed.

Recent development of internet forums and social networking groups has promoted the emergence of British Chinese websites and online groups; these new organisations are significant in offering widely accessible public platforms for the articulation of British Chinese issues and viewpoints. These new social institutions could connect a geographically dispersed population, and their increasing presence may be a sign of 'a growing, specifically "second generation" civil society of institutions reflecting the experiences of British born young people who do not feel catered for by the community organisations established by their parents' generation in the post-war decades' (Parker & Song, 2007). Requests for participants were posted on the forums of such sites, such as the widely used Dimsum (www.dimsum.co.uk), British Born Chinese (www.britishchineseonline.com), and Facebook BBC groups, or sent to the editors/organisers to be posted on their website or circulated among members. Messages were also posted on/sent to other Chinese/Asian related sites or circulated among their members, such as Asian language meetup groups, Asian popular culture forums, a Eurasian forum and BBC university organisations, to request assistance with the research. Additionally, flyers were handed out at two face-to-face meetups organised through these sites. The British Chinese specific websites, like Dimsum, were suggested by many of the Chinese contacts to advertise my search, and the view counts of

the forum/message board posts showed that these messages were read by a fair number of people. However, I only received four responses, none of which led to an actual interview.

Nevertheless, the new online culture facilitated recruitment of participants during some more targeted, personal correspondence. A number of self-identified 'British Born Chinese' bloggers were found by internet searches and were contacted for assistance; although no participant was recruited through these individuals, they were all very responsive and seemed interested in the research, and some made suggestions to the promote the search or offered to pass on the request to their circle of contacts. I also contacted one individual via a British Chinese website, Visible Chinese, which profiled individuals that 'have contributed to the UK's Chinese Culture'. This contact has established a personal Chinese network, and she was instrumental in gaining access to one of the Chinese schools and also circulated my request to her network, and as a result, two British Chinese adults got in touch and were interested in assisting, and one of them introduced me to four participants. Additionally, said contact further circulated the request to her circle of associates, and one more person contacted me, though the interview did not eventually materialise.

On the other hand, although I am not personally involved with any British Chinese organisations, I participate in a UK-based Japanese youth/street fashion online community, which has users from a mix of East Asian and non-East Asian backgrounds who are mostly female and aged from their teens to 30s or 40s. Through the online 'community', I was acquainted to various degrees with a number of young British Chinese users. I communicated my request to these British Chinese and a few other school/university age users (whom I was already acquainted with through the community) individually. One of these users fit the profile and participated in the study; another acquaintance was older

than the criteria, but she was extremely supportive by introducing me to her sisters and cousin to be interviewed. Additionally, a few non-Chinese personal friends were also mobilised to ask their British Chinese contacts for assistance, and as a result, one participant was directly recruited. Other researchers have spoken about the difficulties of accessing minority ethnic communities and having to try alternative, more creative approaches; when Bhophal (2010) failed to access Asian women in higher education through official channels for her study, she had to utilise her personal contacts in other universities that had large intakes of minority ethnic students for help.

When designing the research, snowball sampling was anticipated to be a useful method to generate additional participants through the interviewees, as some of them might have siblings, relatives or friends that might fit the criteria. Snowball sampling is a method for obtaining samples of numerically small groups or when there is no adequate list to use as a sampling frame (Arber, 2001). However, in practice it only produced limited success with five additional pupils recruited through the participants. Some of the participants or the parents were helpful in referring their family members or friends to speak to me; however, some of them simply did not know anyone that fit the criteria for a number of reasons. Snowball sampling is useful to obtain further sample members, and personal recommendations from interviewees (or parents/gatekeepers) might help put potential participants at ease. However, this method might create a bias of only including those within a connected network (Arber, 2001, p. 63).

(iii) Experience gained through this process

In order to get a varied range of pupils of Chinese heritage who speak limited Chinese, a

range of methods were used to access the young people that were perhaps associated with different sectors of the British society, and sometimes different parts of the British Chinese 'community'. Traditional and newer methods were utilised to access potential participants, and sometimes the process took a number of referrals, which often built on established trust and personal relations. Face-to-face encounters yielded more success, but could be time consuming and geographically limiting for logistic reasons. The time and effort to establish contacts and build rapport with informants, contacts, gatekeepers, and potential participants, alongside with conducting fieldwork, in similar types of research is worth serious consideration at the research planning stage. The more effective opportunities to establish contacts and solicit participants were those made during personal visits at organisations (e.g. attending youth groups at churches, hanging around Chinese schools). Sin (2004) rightly argues that researchers and research funding bodies need to recognise the legitimate and necessary extra costs involved in sampling hard to reach population groups, so such research projects can be adequately planned, supported and funded.

While Chinese based organisations were extremely useful in accessing British Chinese young people, I have to acknowledge that people that are involved with such groups only represent a portion of the British Chinese community. The emergence of online forums/organisations, and particularly British Chinese based websites/groups, provided platforms to reach a nationwide audience easily. However, their effectiveness as a tool to recruit young people for this research purpose was debatable. The internet is a popular space for young people, and emails, Facebook, and message board type tools undoubtedly aid communications; nevertheless, it could be difficult to engage people's interest in the midst of the constant bombardments of new emails, updates, information, and so on. It can

also be an ineffective way to recruit particularly for interviews for young people because firstly, the researcher has to rely on the audience actively making contacts for further information, and secondly, it creates complications when potential participants are not in the local area or/and under 16. With a wide range of activities people could be engaged with online, taking the effort to inquire for further information would require someone being relatively interested in the research.

Most people who responded to my online requests were adults. One potential participant apologised that she could not take part because she was under 16 and it was 'a bit too complicated to speak to her parents about it', and another person in Manchester suggested a telephone interview but then did not respond further when I tried to make more concrete arrangements. Besides the obvious complications and ethical/safety issues, some young people might simply feel uncomfortable or be unwilling to speak to a stranger, especially a faceless one from the internet, either on the phone or in person. Perhaps internet recruitment might generate a higher success rate for less direct participations, such as online surveys, or 'faceless' interactions on a forum. Additionally, there could be a potential class bias as internet users generally tend to be young and educated, and users on ethnic/cultural based sites might be more involved with the Chinese 'community' or 'Chinese issues' (Parker & Song, 2007). Sampling using mixed methods could hopefully ease any potential bias across the board.

4.2.2 Demographics of participants

The sample of 38 pupils comprised 13 boys and 25 girls (a comprehensive table with respondents' characteristics can be found in Appendix 4). All pupils were in secondary or sixth form education; 14 were aged 11-14, and 24 were aged 15-18. Although efforts to

recruit participants across the country were made (as discussed in the access section), all

the participants lived in the Southern and Midlands regions of England. Five pupils were

from the Greater London area, 18 from across the South East region (Berkshire,

Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Kent and Surrey), five from the South West (Bristol, Dorset,

Somerset and Wiltshire), nine from the East (Essex and Hertfordshire), and one from the

West Midlands (Warwickshire). The pupils lived in a range of settings, from cities to

suburban towns to villages on the outskirts of metropolitan areas.

(i) Ethnic background/heritage

The majority of the pupils (33) in the sample were UK-born, and four of the five non-UK-

born pupils (birth places comprised Hong Kong, Malaysia, Australia and the USA) moved to

the UK by age 5. The majority of the pupils (28) had two parents of Chinese heritage, and 10

pupils were of mixed Chinese heritage (with white British or other ethnic backgrounds). It is

difficult to categorise some of the pupils in terms of which 'generation' they would belong

to in describing their settlement in the UK, as information on places of birth of the pupils

and their parents does not completely reveal the complex migration history/pattern and

experiences in some of the families. For example, three of the British-born pupils reported

moving to Hong Kong for a period of time during their early years, and two who were there

during school age, attending international schools. Also, a number of pupils had parents

with different migration histories, and one pupil in particular could possibly be described as

being in a 'transnational' family. The traditional ways to describe and to understand

migrants and migrant families cannot adequately reflect their experiences within the

contexts of globalisation.

The parents of Chinese heritage came from a range of Chinese backgrounds and linguistic

environments. 10 pupils had one or both Chinese parents born/raised[4] in the UK, and

almost half of these pupils (4) also had a non-Chinese parent. A large number of the pupils

(23) had family connections to Hong Kong (i.e. parents or grandparents from there), and

seven pupils reported having Hakka heritage[5] present in their families alongside Cantonese,

which was formerly the exclusive official Chinese language of Hong Kong and is the

unofficial lingua franca of the established British Chinese community. Additionally, a

significant number of the pupils had one or both parents who are ethnic Chinese from

Southeast Asia, with 12 pupils describing having connections to Malaysia/Singapore/Brunei

(most of these parents could speak Malay, Cantonese, Mandarin and often another Chinese

dialect, Hokkien[6]), and five had ties to Vietnam. While six pupils stated that one of their

parents was born in Mainland China, the Chinese language these families used was

Cantonese, not Mandarin, as most were from the southern regions of China. Only one

participant had both parents from a Mandarin speaking region. Until recently, Chinese

migrants who came from, or who are descended from, Mainland China constituted a

relatively minor proportion of the British Chinese community, and their experience differs

significantly from the earlier migrants from Hong Kong and Southeast Asia (Zhang, 2005).

Five pupils revealed that their Chinese parents spoke limited or no Chinese (in any dialect).

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[4] I am including parents who moved to the UK before the age of 10 as 'raised in the UK'.

[5] A large portion of the post-war migrants from Hong Kong came from the rural New Territories area, and they primarily spoke the Hakka dialect, which is mutually unintelligible with Cantonese and has been perceived as an invalid, low-status 'peasant' language by some. The language seems to be losing its importance in the British Chinese community, and even among Hakka families (Francis, Archer, & Mau, 2009).

[6] Hokkien is another Chinese dialect that is also mutually unintelligible with the other dialects/languages mentioned. Many of the ethnic Chinese migrants in Southeast Asia came from Hokkien speaking regions in Fujian province on the southeast coast of China.

Those parents who could speak Chinese also represented a wide range of fluency in Chinese and bilingual/multilingual abilities. For the 10 mixed heritage pupils, six had White British/English fathers, two had Italian fathers, one had a Greek Cypriot father and another had a Pakistani father; only one of the non-Chinese fathers was reported as having learnt Chinese. The complex language practices in the participants' families will be discussed further in the next chapter.

(ii) Social class

In addition to different ethnic and linguistic heritages, the pupils also came from a range of social backgrounds.
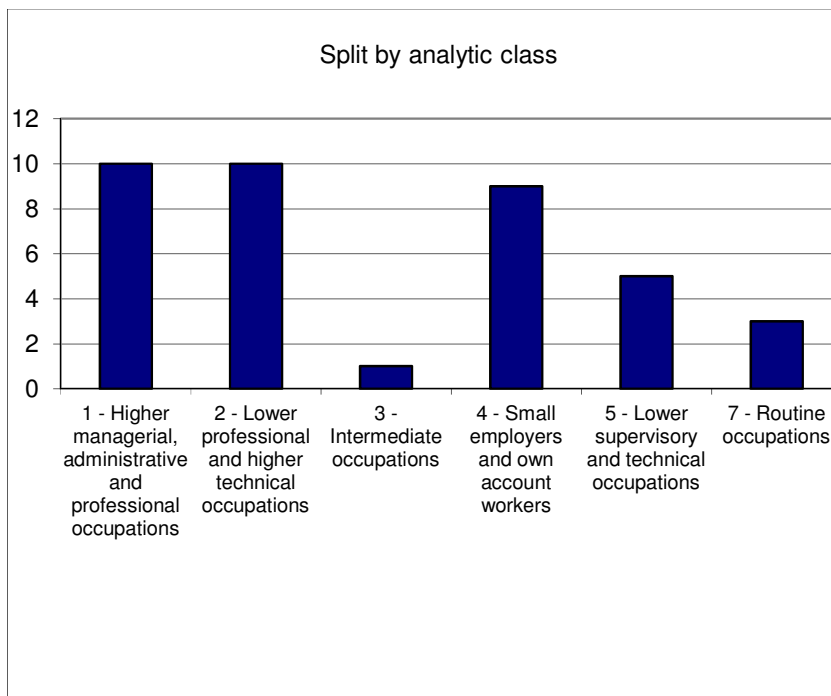
The National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) reduced derivation classification was used to classify participants' socio-economic backgrounds, and the chart above shows a breakdown using the 8 class system. There were equal numbers (10, 26%) of

participants grouped as 'higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations' (e.g. doctor, accountant, university lecturer) and 'lower managerial and professional occupations' (e.g. quality assurance engineer, export agent). One participant came from an 'Intermediate occupations' background. 25% (9) had backgrounds categorised as 'small employers and own account workers' and 13% (5) as 'lower supervisory and technical occupations'. A further three interviewees' backgrounds were classified as 'routine occupations' (e.g. driver and dinner lady).

As Archer and Francis (2007) have observed, there are specific complexities to analysing social class in the British Chinese case, and in applying an Anglo-centric Registrar General Scale model to diasporic populations. Occupationally speaking, the British Chinese population has a strong historical link to the catering trade due to their specific diasporic trajectories in post-war Britain. The trade, or the 'low-paid, racialised catering class' termed by Tam (1998), is a product of particular racialised and classed inequalities and histories (Archer & Francis, 2007). 15 pupils (39%) in this sample had one or both parents in the catering trade (all Chinese cuisine), and nine of these families own and operate their own restaurants or takeaways (sometimes with other family members). Although the figures might not be suitable for direct comparisons, the 39% figure is significantly lower than the 62% of participants from catering backgrounds in the Chinese complementary schooling research sample. Interestingly, though not surprisingly, none of the parents that spoke limited or no Chinese were engaged in this sector of work; all the Chinese parents with limited/no Chinese knowledge were employed in non-ethnicised, higher professional occupations. In Benton's comprehensive survey on the Chinese in Britain (2008), he claims that studies in the 1990s pointed to a large outflow from catering of British-born Chinese

and concluded that only Chinese with few job options, who are more likely to have been raised outside the UK, to speak limited English and to lack schooling, continued to seek work in the catering sector, which serves as a safety net against unemployment and discrimination in the manual-jobs market. How social class links to education, languages at home and other factors will be fully explored in chapter 5-8.

(iii) Education

Among the 38 pupils, five attended independent schools, eight were in academically selective/partially selective state schools, and the other 25 attended non-selective state schools. 16 attended single-sex schools. Further evidence on educational experiences and achievement and information on their attendance of Chinese complementary schools will be discussed in the Chapter 5 and 6.

(iv) Religion

As discussed in Chapter 2, Christianity predominates over Buddhism and indigenous Chinese faiths and transmits more robustly across the generations in the British Chinese community, and one of the British Born Chinese contacts commented that 'many BBCs are Christians'. 15 of the participants reported attending church activities regularly. Although this number is partially due to some of the pupils having been recruited through Chinese Christian churches, a few other participants recruited through non-church contacts also reported attending church (with families or attending youth groups) even though the information was not explicitly solicited. Perhaps it would be interesting to examine the social roles of Christianity within the British Chinese community, and especially Chinese Christian

organisations which tend to focus on Chinese issues and to promote diasporic awareness

(Benton & Gomez 2008, p.276).

It is important to note that 10 of the participants were sibling pairs from 5 different families.

For all except one of the pairs, both siblings attended the same school. Although siblings'

similar backgrounds and environments produced some similarities in experiences between

siblings (e.g. not speaking Chinese at home), some aspects of their lives, such as their feeling

of Britishness/Chineseness, views about learning Chinese, and encounters with racism at

school, exhibited differences. Further details about their individual experiences in different

areas will be discussed in Chapter 5, 6 and 7.

4.2.3 Methodolgy

(i) Data Collection

Entering and staying in the 'field'

Although there was some success in recruitment through the use of media (e.g. websites,

emails, etc.), the more successful encounters involved more personal, and often more time

consuming, contacts made in person (e.g. attending church services, visits to organisations).

Due to the age of my participants, gaining access to these young people often heavily relied

on their parents or gatekeepers of these cultural based organisations. Although the young

people made the final decisions regarding participation, I depended on the gatekeepers

(and sometimes other sub-gatekeepers, such as Chinese school class teachers) to give me

access to these young people and to facilitate the fieldwork. My relationships with these

contacts/gatekeepers had a huge impact on my access to the participants and would also

impact potential further research relating to the British Chinese community. Bhopal (2010)

discusses how her research on Gypsy families needed the full cooperation and blessing from

a trusted Traveller Education Service (TES) contact and the community matriarch.

> The TES gatekeepers held the keys to the community and influential community
> members held the keys to the families. At each stage of the gatekeeping process,
> approval had to be obtained, it was only then that the interviews with the families
> were able to take place. (p.3)

Besides making practical preparations for fieldwork, I also had to prepare 'myself', the

'human instrument', for the gatekeepers and participants. Mirza (1998) rightfully points out

that the presentation of self impacts the access negotiations and the actual interview

process, and ultimately the data obtained. The pressure to present the 'right' image was

further heightened when visiting Chinese organisations or contacts, probably due to the

realisation of my rather powerless status as a PhD student and often unclear

insider/outsider positionings. While Reay (1996) had the option to withhold her working

class identity from her respondents, I had limited choices in mediating my presented and

perceived ethnic/cultural identity, which at times seemed to become relevant during the

research process. The 'natural' racialised commonality between me and the Chinese

community brought extra layers of identifications of commonality and difference, as

discussed in the work of Song and Parker (1995) and Mirza (1998). My ethnic background

might have been beneficial in gaining access to my participants in some cases; however,

points of commonality between gatekeepers, respondents and interviewer do not

guarantee shared interests, and as Archer (2002) suggests, sometimes can provide moments

of conflict. Archer argues that inter-relationships of 'race' and gender between researcher

and participants are produced through power-structured interactions in multiple and

contextual ways. As suggested by Song and Parker (1995), more attention needs to be given

to how assumptions made by the participants (both interviewees and gatekeepers)

regarding the cultural identity and values of the researcher shape the data collection process and accounts.

Unlike in Parker (1995) or Mirza's (1998) experiences with older respondents, none of my interviewees openly asked or commented on my background or appearance. Although my own background could be perceived as similar to my participants in some aspects, my own experience in school and growing up was in a non-UK context and I can speak Chinese (Cantonese). However, some of these differences perhaps were not always obvious to the participants or gatekeepers. Perhaps my background was a non-issue to my participants, or the young people gathered enough information from my appearance, clothing, language, etc., or they withheld their comments or questions. With some young people that I had the opportunity to casually chat to before/after the interviews, I talked a bit about myself when appropriate to gain rapport and attempt to overcome the researcher/researched hierarchical relationship. When I met a few of the older pupils independently outside of schools or other organisations, I dressed casually to present a more approachable self, perhaps looking not too different from the young people themselves. In fact, a 'group membership' was also gained during a few visits at a Chinese church youth group, for which everything was in English (one of the leaders was White British), and the youth group members attended the English services. A group of girls were casually talking about their schools and exams before the formal youth group discussion, and I was sitting in informally to wait for the discussion. One girl said that her school was 'quite bad'. A conversation followed:

Another girl: Are there a lot of 'hak yan' [Black people in Cantonese]? (this act of code-switching will be discussed in Chapter 6)

One of my participants: Why did you say that in Chinese??
The original girl: Yeah.

It would be almost certain that if I was a non-Chinese person, I might have been excluded in this conversation. Perhaps I blended in well enough in age and appearance that the young people simply did not take much notice of my presence in the group. Similarly, in my previous research of the British Chinese community, some Chinese participants made some judgemental/questionable comments about Chinese and non-Chinese people to me (perhaps assuming that I might share similar views), and I suspect that the situation might be different if it was with a non-Chinese interviewer. The effects of the 'race' and gender of the researcher, especially through participants' unwillingness to speak to interviewers of a certain gender/race, was discussed by Archer (2002). Overall, the relationships with the participants mostly felt relatively non-hierarchical.

However, when entering into situations with gatekeepers/parents involved, the positioning and placing of myself became more complex and I sometimes felt added pressure to present and disclose a 'correct' self to gain credibility and trust. Sometimes an instant 'closeness' seemed to occur in these encounters due to our shared ethnic background. On one occasion, I was invited to come along to a celebration event at a local Chinese association/school by a contact (non-Chinese committee member and user of the organisation), after he spoke to some of his contacts there about my intentions. Although I was not part of the association, no one questioned my presence and I 'blended in' quite well. I was subsequently introduced to some users/parents there. When discussing with a parent (Chinese mother) when I should come back to interview some young people there, my contact was slightly apprehensive as he had not yet consulted with the Chinese school headteacher – a consent and ethical issue (BERA, 2011) However, the parent commented,

'Well she is female, and she is Chinese, so I'm sure she will be ok! If she [the headteacher]

questions, just say you are my friend! She can do the interview in my car.' Such co-operation

and embracing of an almost stranger was undoubtedly influenced by my ethnic

background/appearance.

Occasionally, the parents or gatekeepers I met at these organisations would ask questions,

such as whether I was Chinese, where I was from, if I spoke Chinese, or what I was doing at

university. Although much of the conversation seemed to be friendly chatter, as Crozier

(2003) remarked, disclosing yourself is not entirely without its dilemmas, and the

'disclosure' with gatekeepers felt especially uneasy at times due to different sets of power

dynamics. Upon meeting one gatekeeper, a Chinese woman, she not only asked about my

age, where I was from, where I lived and my work at the university, but asked if I was

married or dating someone, and then the ethnic background of my partner. When I told her

that my partner is (White) English, she said that she did not mind interracial relationships

and commented a bit further on the topic. Similar to Mirza's (1998) experiences of being

questioned about her hair, lifestyle, etc. by her South Asian women respondents, I felt that

personal characteristics which seemed to have little or no relevance to my work were being

drawn into my professional life, which at times was uncomfortable.

While it is generally considered taboo and intrusive to ask strangers about topics such as

age, wage and marital status in British or European culture, such questions are normal for

opening conversations or making small talk with strangers for Chinese (Coonan, 2008).

Studies of business practice (Woo, 1999; Ann, 2003) discuss challenges faced by European

negotiators in China, emphasising the Chinese cultural practice of placing a higher

importance on knowing someone personally and the prevalent negotiation characteristics,

such as status, 'face', trust, friendship and networks. Blackman (1997) remarks that 'in developing business relationships in China, establishing a long term relationship of friendship and trust is a pre-requisite to building business relationships'. Although social and business practices in China undoubtedly cannot be directly compared with dealings with British Chinese people or organisations, perhaps certain differences in cultural practices and expectations should be considered and cultural frame switching was sometimes required. Our shared ethnic identity, seeing me as 'one of us', might have given them the liberty to ask personal questions upon first meeting, which might seem inappropriate with a non-Chinese person within general British social conventions. Additionally, gatekeepers or others at these organisations might make general comments and discussion relating to Chinese culture or general topics where I felt like I had to refrain from expressing my personal opinions in order not to cause disagreement or offence. While I felt 'normal' and comfortable communicating with British Chinese young people, my unfamiliarity and uneasiness with certain cultural differences when dealing with the some of the adults contributed to my anxieties over my perceived identities. I did not want to send any 'wrong' messages that would sabotage my chances to access participants.

However, such breakdown of trust or relationships does occur. A Chinese mother, whom I met through a contact that has an extensive Chinese network, 'Chinese contact mailing list', was initially very supportive and enthusiastic about my research. She invited me to her home, introduced me to her children and some other young people at a local martial arts group; she also circulated my request to her own network. After our meeting and the interviews, she even suggested maybe we could work together and bid on some funding for some future work, as she is a community worker (for non-Chinese). She expressed interest

in my work on the Chinese complementary schooling project. However, after sending her a report and a paper, she ceased all communications. There was no way of telling what exactly caused this possible upset, but I could speculate that perhaps it was due to certain criticisms on aspects of Chinese schooling (Francis *et al*, 2008). Nevertheless, incidents like this are perhaps a reason why I felt that I needed to tread so carefully when dealing with gatekeepers, when such liaisons are built on personal relationships with sometimes assumed shared interest, values, and so on.

Interviewing – speaking to the young people

Data was collected via semi-structured individual interviews (Newby 2010; Punch 2009), and this approach has proved effective in previous work with minority ethnic pupils (e.g. Archer, 2003; Crozier, 2005; Francis & Archer, 2004; Francis et al, 2008), and specifically British Chinese pupils. An interview is a form of discourse and a joint product of what interviewees and interviewers talk about together and how they talk with each other.

The semi-structured format of the interviews means that respondents are all asked the same core questions, aiding numerical analysis (e.g. discussion of proportions providing particular responses), and comparability of the different discourses drawn on by interviewees in response to particular questions (Francis, 1999). The semi-structured approach also enables the probing of responses (Robson, 2011), and the format can allow the interviewer to interpret both explicit and 'between the lines' messages and 'send it back' to the interviewee for an immediate confirmation/disconfirmation (Kvale & Brinkman 2009, p.30). The interviews enquired about pupils' experiences, the effects of having limited Chinese language abilities on their social and educational identities, their mainstream educational experiences, and their perceptions of themselves as 'British Chinese'.

A phenomenological approach was taken during the interview to understanding themes of the lived everyday world from the participants' own perspectives (Springer, 2009). The interview schedule (see Appendix 3) consisted of questions chosen to address the research aims. These included demographic information, experience in mainstream education (both academic and general well-being), experiences and views of learning Chinese, attitudes towards 'Britishness' and 'Chineseness', and overall experience growing up in the UK. The more factual questions such as family background (e.g. place of birth of participants and parents) and school information were asked during the earlier part of the interviews to ease participants into the process, while the potentially more sensitive and complex questions, such as those related to racism at school, their views on learning Chinese, and their sense of being 'British Chinese', appeared later in the interview.

A pilot interview was conducted with someone that was very similar to the target sample (except she identified herself as speaking quite fluent Mandarin). Piloting the interview schedule served as a useful practice to test out the questions (i.e. if participants would understand them clearly, how they would flow together) and the length of the interview. I did not probe extensively during the pilot since my supervisors and I were all conscious of the length of the schedule. However, the pilot interview was quite short, and the result gave me the reassurance to probe further during the actual interviews. The practice also allowed me to be familiar with my questions.

This study involved working with young people and potentially sensitive topics (see 'Sampling' in 4.2.1). Therefore, extra care was put in during the planning and data collection process and reflexivity has played an integral part of my methodology and analysis. It was inevitable that some (potential) participants were uncomfortable being interviewed or

speaking to a stranger, especially about a subject they might not be interested or feel easy about. Before each interview, I emphasised to each young person that the interview was not a 'test', rather it was more like a 'chat' to see what they thought, with no right or wrong answers. To my knowledge, two potential male participants, who were identified by their family members, chose not to participate; it was very possible that some other young people were deterred by the 'hassle' or the approach and decided not to take part.

The interviews' length ranged from 14 minutes to 49 minutes and the average was between 20 to 30 minutes long. Interviews were conducted in English, though a handful of participants code-switched to Cantonese in short phrases or words when discussing topics relating to Chinese language or culture (e.g. Mid-Autumn Festival, the region a participant's mother was from in China). The interviewing environments varied due to the different circumstances in which the interviews took place, and sometimes I had limited control over the situations and setups. When the interviews were conducted inside an institution (e.g. school, church), I sought to conduct the interviews in a separate room if possible. Finding an empty classroom was not an issue at the mainstream school I visited, but such setups could not always be found at some other organisations. A few interviews had to take place in make-shift spaces, such as a store room, a communal area and a 'quiet' corner inside a classroom, where other people/noise might be present in the background or occasional interruptions occurred. Such environmental conditions might impact on the quality of the interview, especially when discussing potentially sensitive topics, in this case for example racism or their opinions on learning Chinese. When speaking to a young girl inside the 'common room' at a Chinese school, I noticed her voice got quieter when other people in the room became less noisy. Similarly challenging interviewing conditions (e.g. interviewing

on a staircase, in a noisy corridor) were frequently encountered in the Chinese complementary schooling research I was previously part of, since community based organisations often had limited resources (Mau *et al*, 2009). Additionally, interviews recorded in such conditions are more difficult and time consuming to transcribe. Such considerations should be factored into the research design and planning of fieldwork, and a researcher should be prepared for unexpected circumstances in the field and try her/his best to ensure a positive interviewing process for all parties involved.

Among the interviewees, a number of them were very enthusiastic or willing to talk, while a few seemed less comfortable, especially those who were accessed through a gatekeeper. All the young people were relatively responsive, though I found the interviews for which I had more control over the overall process, such as the time limit and making prior contact with the young people, went more smoothly. Self disclosure was limited during the interviews mainly due to the time constraint (e.g. pupils had to return to class), and I felt it might cause interruption of their ideas. It happened at opportune moments, such as commenting that 'my grandma was also from Singapore', or when one interviewee described disliking the mean and gossipy atmosphere at her girls' school, I offered my sympathy and told her that I also went to a girls' school. Another participant talked extensively about the troubles he had at school due to several racist incidents. Although I personally never had such experiences, after the interview I thanked him for sharing his stories and shared with him that some other young people I interviewed also experienced varied levels of racism at school. After all, researching personal experiences is intrusive (Crozier, 2003). Extra care was exercised when probing on the more sensitive questions regarding racism and speaking limited Chinese to be sensitive to people's experiences and appear non-judgemental. I considered

presenting myself as a neutral yet approachable and empathetic interviewer was appropriate for the circumstances and useful to explore the 'truer' lived experiences of these young people. The interview method and process overall enabled me to gather very rich qualitative data; however, the format might not be suitable for all people or all circumstances despite employing the appropriate methodological techniques.

Group discussions or focus groups were considered as they could have allowed the interviewees to ask questions of each other and discuss attitudes within the 'group' and possibly talk about different interpretations/experiences, while the interviewer could step back and see, hear and analyse aspects that do not surface in individual interviews (Alasuutari 1995, p.92). However, since most of the participants were not connected and their locations spread across southern England, logistically it was unfeasible to arrange sizable group meetings without meticulous planning and funds to pay for participants' (and some of their parents') travel costs and time. However, such an arrangement might be useful for another study that involves a number of participants that attend a common school, church or organisation or in the same geographical area. Due to the same conditions, it was also not workable to conduct any meaningful observations that involved all the interviewees, but informal observations of some of the interviewing settings (e.g. church, schools) were recorded in the research diary/field notes.

Along with what I saw and heard in the field, how I behaved and was treated by interviewees, gatekeepers and others during the recruitment and data collection processes was also valuable information to be recorded as part of the analysis (Silverman 2005, p.158-159). A research diary was useful for keeping track of thinking during the data collection and analysis phases of research, not only to document the action as it happened, but also to

capture informal observations, communication outside of the interviews, and self-reflection

and interpretations at points along the way. Keeping a research diary was also an essential

part of undertaking the reflexive process. It offers possible insights into phenomena that

were not obvious or predictable when the research journey began, and it also serves as a

tool to help discovery of new information and assessing/ re-assessing data collection

strategies (Altrichter 2005, p.27). The examining of my own involvement and positioning in

these interactions, recorded in the research diary, will be discussed further in Chapter 5 to

8.

(ii) Ethics

Ethical issues permeate the entire research process. Since this project involved human

participants, and specifically young people, ethical approval from the university was

required to ensure ethical dilemmas and issues were thought through in advance and

addressed. Kavle & Brinkman (2009) rightfully point out that in spite of the bureaucracies of

ethical review procedures and in spite of a conspicuous gap between abstract ethical

principles and concrete moral practices, professional ethical codes can serve as contexts for

reflection on the specific ethical dimensions throughout an interview inquiry. An ethical

researcher needs to be aware of typical moral issues that can arise at different stages, and

one needs to be able to make reflective and reflexive choices while designing a study and to

be alert to critical and sensitive issues that may arise at any point during and after data

collection (Kvale & Brinkman 2009). Ethical guidelines from professional bodies can be

helpful in giving an overview of some of the common questions that may arise in specific

fields of research. I consulted the ethical guidelines for research involving children from the

British Educational Research Association (2011) and Barnardo's (2006) and continued to refer to their guidelines throughout the research process.

Informed consent means that those interviewed or observed should give their permission in full knowledge of the purpose of the overall research and the consequences for them of taking part, including any potential risks and benefits. However achieving informed consent is not a straightforward process (Simons 2005, p.56). During initial recruitment, in person or via written communication, I tried to explain the background of my project to potential participants, gatekeepers or contacts and to give them details of what their involvement would consist of. An information sheet about the proposed research and the optional nature of participation was provided in both oral and written form and presented in accessible and age-appropriate language. When possible, I sent the information sheets to the potential participants (and their parents or gatekeepers) via email or post in advance before the interview. The information was written in an age appropriate language for young people (Noret, 2012) to read, and a parent/guardian version was also provided. The informed consent of young people was actively and explicitly sought, and consent from their parents/guardians was also obtained if they were under the age of 16. Informed consent should be seen as an ongoing process throughout an interview, and the voluntary nature of participation was explicitly explained to everyone (i.e. young people, parents, gatekeepers, contacts, etc.) involved. The option to withdraw from the research at any stage was clearly communicated. Before each interview commenced, I always verbally explained the purpose of my study and interviewing process again, and particularly explained their rights to withdraw, not answer any of the questions and to ask questions. Participants were encouraged to question the researcher about any aspects of the research if they chose. A

couple of the participants were interested in hearing about my research, and one

interviewee initially questioned my reasons for only picking pupils with limited Chinese

knowledge and we had a discussion about the issues. The practice of actively involving

research participants (i.e. to be given the power to raise questions, instead of being solely a

respondent) could help to shift the balance of power away from a position of the researcher

being entirely in control. As Alderson (2005) points out, in the case of children, they may

enjoy the process more as a result and the results should be more meaningful. I am aware

of the debates on whether young people can give consent to their own involvement in the

research process or whether their parents or carers would need to give permission on their

behalf (Piper 2005, p. 60). I also provided my contact email and number to all participants

(and their parents) in case any future questions might arise. Efforts were made to minimise

possible coercion from parents, teachers, and other adults, such as by asking the young

person's permission directly and emphasising it was a voluntary act to 'help me out'.

The personal safety of the researcher and the participants is a consideration in one-to-one

interviews with people not previously acquainted. Care needed to be taken in agreeing

locations to protect the safety of both parties, for example by meeting in public places. I

have kept all meeting arrangements on record. I also carried a mobile phone when

conducting fieldwork and always left the details of meeting locations and contact

information with someone in case of emergency. To reassure parents, contacts and

gatekeepers of my authenticity as a researcher, I always used my university email for

correspondence and at times provided them a link to my university staff page as a proof. I

also obtained an updated Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) certificate (my previous check was

done more than three years ago); two organisations requested CRB clearance, and one of

them also wanted proof of ethical approval from the university. When parents or gatekeepers were involved, most seemed at ease with my presence, but one cautious mother, who raised a lot of questions and requested to be present at the interview, probably felt uneasy about the whole arrangement and decided to withdraw from the study.

Issues of confidentiality and anonymity are very important in social research (BERA, 2011). Confidentiality is the principal that allows people not only to talk in confidence (e.g. explaining to the participants that I do not report what they say back to their parents or schools), but also to refuse to allow publication of any material that they think might harm them in any way; anonymisation is a procedure to offer some protection of privacy and confidentiality (Piper & Simons 2005, p.56). There are also legal implications researchers have to consider, for example the Data Protection Act 2003 (Information Commissioner's Office. I explained these issues on the information sheet I provided to potential participants, and I always verbally explained to them again before starting my interviews, an important aspect of providing informed consent. However, I am aware of the possibility that confidentiality and anonymity cannot be completely guaranteed in some cases. For example, individuals living in areas of scattered and low density ethnic minority population could be a highly visible group and may possibly be easily identified (Sin 2004, p.265). Extra care and effort was employed to ensure that anonymity was maintained when discussing my findings and analysis, and this is particularly important when statements or extracts of conversations may appear in public reports. However, in some situations, the context and personal details, unless significantly disguised, often reveals clues to identity even when

names and places are changed, especially inevitable to those individuals who are closely connected to the participants or participants' networks.

As Kvale and Brinkman (2009) argue that researchers' work in the qualitative interviewing area should conceptualise these issues as '*fields of uncertainty*', which are problem areas requiring ongoing addressing and reflecting rather than just 'solving' them once and for all, so the process should go beyond the ethical guidelines and principles and demand 'ethical capabilities' of the researchers. After an interview at a Chinese school, I was walking to the bus stop with the participant and chatted about his sister that used to attend the same school. He revealed to me that his sister stopped attending partially because of her struggle with learning Chinese, but that another reason was due to her teacher pressuring her to get private tuition (from said teacher). I was appalled by such conduct by the teacher, but I was not sure if it was my place as an outsider to bring the matter up with the headteacher, as I did not have full details of the events and did not know if perhaps the behaviour had been dealt with. Furthermore, I did not want to cause trouble to the pupil, as he might have considered our conversation private, not under the scrutiny of authority, similar to the interviewing conditions. In the end, after conducting ethical reflection to balance the potential risks against the likely benefits to all parties involved (Flewitt, 2005), I concluded that the correct thing to do was to do nothing regarding this dilemma.

Reciprocity

Reciprocity is a way to 'pay back' or thank the respondents and gatekeepers for their time and effort and create a two-way relationship in the research process. Both Mirza (1998) and Egharevba (2001) describe offering some practical help to their participants, such as providing academic advice. With my respondents, there was no obvious service I could

offer, even though I mentioned to some of them that they could contact me if I could be of any help to anything. When meeting with participants (and their parents) individually, sometimes I presented them with small gestures, such as buying a coffee, giving a box of biscuits, to express my appreciation of their assistance. When visiting Chinese organisations, similar gestures, such as bringing a box of biscuits during Chinese New Year, was sometimes used; gift giving is also part of Chinese culture to show respect/'face'. Ocassionally, gatekeepers asked me to get involved, or 'help out', at some of the Chinese organisations. The 'take and leave' research practice seemed to reinforce the unequal researcher/researched roles, and the added sense of 'guilt' came from my understanding of these community based organisations and the situations of complementary schooling. On the other hand, I feel like I do not have the time or resources to commit myself to regular Saturday morning duties, or the desire to participate in events such as karaoke fund raising events.

(iii) Out of the 'field'

I faced a range of methodological dilemmas as someone of Chinese heritage researching the British Chinese community. I want to examine my experiences and the effects as a 'BME' or 'Chinese' researcher of researching 'my own people', during and beyond the research process. My focus is not only on the data collection and analysis process, but also on the complex issues in accessing minority ethnic/ hard to reach groups (e.g. relationship with the gatekeepers) and concerns beyond the research process.

There were a number of issues regarding my assumed/perceived professional and personal identities during the research process. Am I a researcher? A 'Black' researcher? 'Chinese'

researcher? Or did I have a choice? My research interest in the British Chinese 'community' was probably both professional and personal, and my position as an 'insider' or 'outsider' was not always clear during the research process. During the course of recruitment and data collection, I played or was assigned a range of different roles depending on the circumstances. I was the researcher, PhD student, 'Chinese' PhD student, 'friend', 'friend of the family', 'staff/volunteer' (I was once asked to sit in a classroom at a Chinese school because the teacher was late), church worshiper, etc.; these roles might sometimes impact on the research process positively and negatively. The constant 'power shift' from being in different/changing roles could be challenging and also can be mentally exhausting.

As discussed earlier, although the 'insider' status provided benefits in some instances in gaining access and trust, the insider/outsider identities and fieldwork situation were often complex and fluid (Song and Parker 1995; Archer 2002; Yip 2008). As a result, my professional and personal lives, public and private profiles, sometimes intermixed. Occasionally, I had to employ some personal connections to aid getting access, and therefore, my professional, researcher identity could not be completely ignored during my personal, 'down' time. Importantly, I was made aware of my 'visibility' in the 'community' – being a minority ethnic researcher, and particularly being a Chinese researcher made me become more visible or 'memorable', unintentionally or perhaps involuntarily, within certain sectors of the British Chinese 'community'. In Zubair *et al*'s (2012) study on older Pakistani Muslim women and men, Zubair's experiences as a young female Pakistani Muslim researcher researching in her local 'community' highlight the significance of 'self' to fieldwork processes and relationships; her personal characteristics intersected to produce shifting insider/outsider boundaries as well as different experiences of power and

vulnerability within research relationships. My own experience researching the British

Chinese population echoes Zubair's experience of various multi-layered and complex

insider/outsider boundaries and the fact that 'insider' relationships require continuous and

active negotiation in the field through particular presentations of the self.

My 'visibility' was amplified because the British Chinese 'community' or 'spaces' (e.g.

Chinatown) are small and limited. There were incidents of running into or being seen by

former participants or individuals associated with the Chinese schools/organisations I visited

in an out-of-work context, such as in London Chinatown, at a gaming/comic convention, or

on public transport. How I appeared in these situations could be perceived as fitting or

conflicting with my professional or 'Chinese' identity, which might affect my relations with

members of the 'community' and future access to the 'community'. I was made aware of

the potential impact of the presentation of my private/non-professional self in public

spaces, including the internet, and how it might affect my future work/contacts with the

British Chinese 'community', especially when such connections rely heavily on interpersonal

networks. The constant shifting of my own positionings, while challenging, led me to

constantly reflect on the complexity of construction of British Chinese identities and my own

identities.

4.3 Data Analysis and Interpretation

This qualitative research was conducted from a mainly sociological perspective that

foregrounds issues of identity, language, culture and education. As discussed earlier in this

chapter, the integrative framework can bring in different theoretical perspectives to address

the dual concerns of recognising the British Chinese young people as active agents, as well

as examining the locations of individuals and groups within wider social structures and how

young people are shaped by the discourses produced by and within their social contexts, as well as my own role in the research process.

The focuses on identity and culture required a post-structural approach to challenge and disrupt dominant discourses (e.g. definition of 'Britishness') and hegemonic practices (e.g. Chinese people should speak Chinese); however, elements of social structures (e.g. racism, globalisation) could impact on young people's perceptions of 'reality', how they experience life (e.g. treating racism as normal) and how they see themselves (e.g. seeing themselves as part of the global Chinese diaspora). It is therefore necessary to attend to both post-structural and structural concerns to address the tension within the analysis, in order to understand how these young people positioned themselves and were being positioned within this context. The relationship between the discursive and the structural can be contradictory, but it is also essential to use both perspectives to understand the subjectivities and (individual and collective) agency among British Chinese young people. Similar to Davies' (2004, p. 384) argument that 'we must accept that the self both is *and* is not a fiction', while it is necessary to deconstruct 'Chineseness/British Chineseness' in both British and globalised contexts, categorising these young people as 'British Chinese' in a non-essentialised way is also crucial to examine their diverse lived experience and resistance as racialised subjects in England. The tensions in this process also reflect the often complex and sometimes contradictory situations that young people experienced. Additionally, some sociolinguistic concepts (e.g. multilingualism, heritage language learning), drawing on existing work relating to British minority ethnic pupils, such as Li (1994), Blackledge and Creese (2008), were used to analyse the data relating to pupils' (dis)engagement with Chinese language.

Theoretical perspectives	Examples of data and concepts being applied on
Post-structural concerns	'Culture', identity, 'Britishness', 'Chineseness', language
Structural concerns	Racism and racialisation, social integration, class relations, globalisation

Data analysis was applied using a social constructionist and post-structuralist perspectives (Burr, 2003). A discourse analytical approach was adopted to address the post-structural concerns. Discourse analysis is sensitive to how spoken and written languages are used, and how accounts and descriptions are constructed, and to the complex process for producing social meanings (Tonkiss, 1998). The qualitative analysis primarily involved Foucauldian analysis of discourse (Foucault, 1980; Burman and Parker, 1993; Francis, 1999). Foucault examines how historically and culturally located systems of power/knowledge construct subjects and their world (Silverman, 2010). The Foucauldian conception of power (Burr, 1995) sees power being produced via discourses, and discourse analysis provides a useful way for looking at the complexities of power and its role in creating and sustaining relationships.

I also employed a Bourdieuian analytic lens to facilitated structural analyses, particularly in relation to young people's experiences of the educational system and extended to observe the interplays of ethnicity, gender, social class, languages and other characteristics. Analysis would thus identify British Chinese young peoples' constructions of education, learning, Chinese language(s) and 'culture', teasing out the ways in which these were inflected by their constructions of local context and their constructions of/ positioning in terms of ethnicity, social class, gender and other relevant elements. Responses were analysed according to ethnicity, family history, gender, social class, language(s) at home, geographic locations, and schooling. Where appropriate, responses and other information were

compared to similar findings obtained in previous studies of British Chinese pupils, to build up a picture of some of the changes in demographics, values, attitudes and aspirations within the British Chinese population.

Particular themes and questions emerging from the research aims and from the data itself were pursued, and the various discourses underlying respondents' talk about specific issues were identified and analysed (Burman and Parker, 1993; Francis, 1999). This approach aimed to address the discursive construction of identity and culture. The consequences of the use of various discourses for pupils' power positions will also be analysed (Francis, 1999).

Interviews were fully transcribed as detailed transcription is an important part of the analytic process (Gilbert 2001: 328). Although the accounts were not as detailed as transcripts used in conversation analysis with particulars on time gap and intonational shifts, the 'emms, 'errs', silence, cut-offs, laughs, and other non-lexical sounds were included as much as possible to produce a detailed and rich transcription. The interview transcripts and fieldnotes were processed and analysed using the NVivo software, in order to aid the organisation of the qualitative data. Using a CAQDAS (Computer Assisted/Aided Qualitative Data Analysis) software program made handling and sorting large volumes of data less time consuming, and rigorous analysis was greatly facilitated by the systematic coding, counts and comparisons functions in the software (Silverman 2010: 253-256). I adopted a thematic approach to identify emerging and relevant key themes. Coding was a starting point to manage the data into analytic categories prior to analysis. While a 'code then analyse' sequence might suit more structured responses, for example surveys, the process might be more fluid while coding an interview transcript or fieldnotes (Fielding, 2001).

In terms of the reliability and validity of the data collected, because the focus of this

research was on understanding narratives and lived experiences from the participants, I was

not looking for the 'truth' in their narratives (as there were instances of contradictions in

their stories) but rather their 'meaning' for the respondents. All interview data collected

must also be understood as product of a co-construction between the individual

respondents and the interviewer (Birch and Miller 2000), at times also influenced by the

gatekeepers. The research did not aim at achieving a generalisability of findings to represent

all British Chinese young people, as narratives produced by participants were closely related

to their own individual circumstances. Indications of the perspectives (e.g. most, some, few)

and not exact quantifications are used when discussing some of the responses from the

participants as this is not a quantitative study. 'Most' equates over 50% of the interviewees,

'some' means 20-49%, and 'few' represents under 20%. Nevertheless, their stories would be

valuable to gain further understanding into the diverse range of experiences of growing up

as British Chinese and a minority ethnic young people in England.

Additionally, reflexivity continued to play an important role in the analysis stage, and the

multiple selves (both respondents and researcher) created in the process generated 'more

dynamic, problematic, open-ended, and complex forms of writing and representation

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In order to represent the 'truer' voices and experiences from the

participants, the critical assessment of the researcher's role(s) and effects on the research

process is crucial. The researcher, the 'human as instrument' (Guba & Lincoln, 1981),

becomes part of the system being studied, and the practices of reflectivity and reflexivity

should be embedded in the research principles and methodological framework. Reflexivity is

a consistent and continuous self-interrogation of the researcher's own socio-political

positions, personal values, and limitations of the research. As strongly formulated by Smyth and Shacklock (1998):

> For us, being reflexive in doing research is part of being honest and ethically mature in research practice that requires researchers to `stop being "shamans" of objectivity' (Ruby, 1980: 154). To not acknowledge the interests implicit in a critical agenda for the research, or to assume value-free positions of neutrality, is to assume `an obscene and dishonest position' (ibid). (Shacklock and Smyth, 1998: 6-7)

A reflexive researcher is consciously aware of the self as both inquirer and respondent, and the process helps one to reflect not only on choices made relating to others involved in the research process, but also with the researcher's own multiple identities 'that represent the fluid self in the research setting' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). During the research process, my own ideas and assumptions about Chineseness and language learning were being challenged and re-examined as an on-going practice. I was also conscious of the particular settings and my particular role in each interview and how these elements might have impacted on the process.

There were many possible readings of interview transcripts and fieldnotes, and the researcher had the power to select which data to use and how the data to be interpreted. Reay (1996) discusses the difficulties of interpretation in terms of the 'danger' of the proximity' that she feels to the accounts of the women who came from a similar working class background to hers in her study. She suggests that her personal closeness to certain accounts could result in the objectification of both the researcher and participants in interpretation and analysis of the data. And although speaking specifically about writing ethnography, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) warn that the more self-conscious literary forms based on reflexivity could possibly make the researcher's voice more dominant, ahead of the participants' compared to the older, impersonal style. The recognition of

power and power dynamics, with the participants and often the gatekeepers, hopefully

could help inform the interpretation of research data (Holland & Ramazanoglu, 1994) and

achieve more balanced representations for all sides involved in the research process.

I am very conscious of trying not to 'speak for' the British Chinese community, but it is

difficult to tell if others perceive me as doing so. Sharing the same heritage with the

researched community added personal/professional tensions for my role as a researcher. I

can relate to Chang's (2008) argument that American minority ethnic women writers are

frequently caught between efforts to accurately represent experiences of minority ethnic

women – often autobiographically, or influenced by their own histories – and pressures

from members of their respective ethnic groups to combat popular stereotypes and refrain

from presenting negative cultural images. Chang cites the writer Amy Tan's response to

criticism:

> When you have just one person from a culture, people in the culture end up saying,
> "this is terrible. This is a stereotype. My mother didn't speak broken English!" I could
> never explain to people that I wasn't writing about Chinese culture. I was writing
> fictional stories that were informed by my own family… And my mother did speak
> broken English (quoted in Chang, 2008: 3).

Being Chinese perhaps gave me some liberty and authenticity to speak about certain issues.

On one hand, I did not want to uncritically 'celebrate' the minority ethnic lived experiences,

and at the same time I was aware of the 'baggage' or difficulties when my discussions might

not agree with or promote certain values that are held by some in the 'community' –

instead of being accused of being 'racist' if coming from a non-Chinese person, I could be

seen as portraying the community/people inaccurately/negatively, betraying 'my own

people'. For example, Tan's work and the film adaptation of her book, *The Joy Luck Club*

(1989), have received criticism on the accuracy of her presentation of Chinese 'culture',

possibly linked to Tan being second generation Chinese-American, being perceived as not understanding 'authentic' Chinese culture.

As discussed earlier, being an 'insider' gave me an advantage in gaining trust or acceptance as I was being seen as 'one of them'. However, the insider position could also prevent participants from discussing certain issues that might seem sensitive among British Chinese. Being a Chinese person researching British Chinese issues might give an impression of being 'pro-Chinese', and therefore, individuals with negative views towards aspects of Chinese 'culture' might be deterred from speaking to me or be reluctant to freely express such views. Additionally, taken-for-granted beliefs might not be explained thoroughly by participants since there could be an expectation of common understanding. My perceived identities to the gatekeepers and participants inevitably shaped the kind of data I was able to collect, and as explained earlier in this chapter, upon reflection, I consciously tried to assert a desirable identity in order to secure their support. However, it is also important to acknowledge that ethnic/cultural identity is not the only form of social identity upon which trust and rapport can be built; over the course of the interview many different aspects of identity come into play to affect the ability of researcher to build rapport, for example identities such as age and gender (Phoenix 1994).

The integrative methodological approach facilitated the empirical investigation of the social and learner identities and lived experiences of British Chinese pupils with limited Chinese language. Their educational experiences and identities will be discussed in the next chapter, followed by their (non)participation in Chinese language learning and an examination of social and cultural identities and their relations to 'culture'. The findings will be further

related to broader issues of 'race', gender and class identities and achievement in a British

educational context by linking to existing school and social policies.

Chapter 5: British Chinese pupils' experience in mainstream education: wellbeing, integration and marginalisation

This chapter examines British Chinese pupils' experiences in mainstream schools in England.

The discussion focuses on their integration in schools and racism/racialisation that they

have experienced, which links to their identities and sense of belonging in Britain. British

Chinese pupils have been seen as a 'successful' group in the British education system in

recent times. As discussed in Chapter 2, the low English language proficiency and the

lifestyle of 'helping out' at their family takeaway businesses previously drew concerns from

educationalists and the government over the educational welfare of the children of the

post-war Chinese migrants. However, as the population became more settled in the UK,

British Chinese pupils' school results have been steadily improving, and their test results

have been higher than those of White British group. In 'How Fair is Britain?' (EHRC, 2010),

published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the report highlights a large

difference in the percentage of pupils achieving 5+ good GCSEs including English and Maths

between ethnic minority groups in England. In 2009, a high proportion of Chinese[7] (72%)

and Indian (67%) pupils achieved 5+ good GCSEs including English and Maths, while the

proportion of Bangladeshi, Black African and White British pupils was close to the average

(of 51%). Unlike other ethnic groups, pupils of Chinese descent seem to perform well across

all socioeconomic backgrounds. However, the high academic achievement masks the

challenges or discrimination that British Chinese pupils might face at schools.

The UK Chinese are often perceived by the general public as a silent and self-sufficient

community (Chan et al, 2007). Compared with other minority ethnic groups in the UK, the

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[7] The categories of 'Chinese' and 'Indian' were used in Department of Education's data.

Chinese community is more dispersed geographically and therefore tends to make up only a small number in each locality. It is in some ways less visible, and this pattern often leads to them being neglected, for example in terms of service provision, as low numbers do not make them a priority group (Department of Health, 2004). Research suggests that British Chinese young people have experienced significant levels of racism and discrimination (Parker, 1995; Verma et al, 1999; Archer & Francis, 2004), but perhaps due to low visibility, British Chinese pupils are frequently absent from discussions around racism and inequalities. In Francis and Archer's (2004) study, teachers seemed to assume that British Chinese pupils did not encounter racism while the parents and young people interviewed illustrated a different story. The 'hidden' problems experienced within the education systems are perhaps a reflection of issues experienced by the UK Chinese population in the wider British society. A growing number of individuals within the younger generations of British Chinese, including actress Elizabeth Chan in her recent Guardian article (11/01/2012), have voiced their concerns over how the British Chinese population has stayed 'invisible' and has put up with racism for too long. This chapter aims to explore the mainstream schooling experience of those pupils from the seemingly more settled/integrated population within the British Chinese 'community'.

Additional, recent concerns on migration often reflect a perception that some migrants are unwilling to 'integrate' – for example, to learn English and to mix socially with people from outside of their ethnic community. However, there is a lack of consensus on the objectives of policy intervention and the definition of 'integration' within academic, policy and general debates (Spencer, 2011). Trevor Phillips, the former head of the then Commission for Racial Equality, warned that Britain was 'sleepwalking to segregation' (Casciani, 2005). More

recently, Prime Minister David Cameron declared that state multiculturalism had failed, and that 'different cultures have been encouraged to live separate lives' (BBC news, 2011). Like the participants in this study, many British Chinese pupils who are born/raised in the UK use English as their dominant language and many have mixed friendship groups. This chapter also explored if their seemingly 'integrated' status enables full participation in school life and for them to be treated as full members of British society.

5.1 General wellbeing at school

5.1.1 British Chinese Pupils' Academic 'Success'

Perhaps unsurprisingly, most of the participants in my sample of 38 pupils appear to be high achieving academically. Among the 34 pupils who were set in different subjects at their secondary schools, 18 reported being in the top sets for all set subjects, while a further 12 were in a mix of top and other sets, and four stated being in middle sets. Four participants either had no setting at their schools or were unsure about their sets. When being asked if they saw themselves as good pupils, the majority (79%) of the participants gave a 'yes' answer. Most of other pupils still felt generally positive but gave less definite answers on how they viewed their learner identities. Neve (age 15) and Sun (aged 16), both grammar school pupils, self-described as 'not bad' and 'good slash average, depending on the subject', respectively. Calum (aged 13) regarded himself as 'alright' at school, as 'I don't get into trouble much, and I'm nice to other people'. Louise (aged 17), who was house captain and very active with a range of extra-curricular activities, felt that she was very involved and engaged in lessons but was 'really terrible at doing homework'. Ian (aged 17) felt that he worked pretty hard academically, but he was also aware of some of the troubles he got into at school (this will be developed later in this chapter). Livia (aged 13) shared a similar

sentiment and acknowledged having 'a bad spot when I got myself in trouble' but generally was 'quite a good student'.

On the other hand, a few considered themselves less than a 'good' pupil. Nicky (aged 16), who reported that her parents thought she was going to fail her GCSEs, felt that she was an average pupil – 'not the best but not the worst'. Dac (aged 17), who was unhappy with his GCSE results, described himself being 'kinda a lazy bum' in his former school but had been trying harder since getting into sixth form college. Josephine (aged 14), who viewed herself as being 'a bit of a rebel', was the only one that gave a definite 'no' answer; she admitted not concentrating and not completing all her homework.

Interestingly, when the participants were asked if their parents saw them as good pupils, the answers were more mixed and varied. While White middle class parents are seen to have the appropriate knowledge and level of engagement with their children's schools and learning (Reay, 1998; Crozier 2000; Reay et al, 2011), their minority ethnic counterparts tend to be pathologised in the British education system. Although some BME parents are blamed for the apparent low aspirations and/or under-achievement of their children (e.g. Phoenix, 1987; Crozier 2003, 2005), Chinese parents are often portrayed as being too oppressive and pushy for their children to succeed (Archer & Francis, 2007). The recent interest in 'Tiger Mother' (Chau, 2011) has helped to perpetuate the stereotype of strict, 'Chinese style' parenting. Intriguingly, the 'tiger' parents seemed to be largely absent according to the participants' descriptions within this sample.

More than two-thirds of the pupils interviewed felt that their parents saw them as good pupils to various degrees. Christine (aged 12) believed that her parents were 'quite pleased'

with her, as 'they see me improving and stuff'. Daniel (aged 17) also thought that his

parents were happy with him because 'we get like reports and they're generally very happy

with them'. In fact, a few pupils' portrayal of their parents defies the 'strict' and 'pushy'

Chinese parent stereotypes. Christina (aged 16) recalled her parents (one of them being

non-Chinese) telling her not to worry about other people's results as long as she did her

best. Although Jackie (aged 17) only thought her parents 'probably' perceived her as a good

pupil, she described them as not being 'typically Asian' and would not 'go A*, A* all the

time'; she commented that while her mother would only give the occasionally 'mmm', her

father would just encourage her to 'do your best'. And despite having disappointing GCSE

results, Dac (aged 17) felt that his mother did not give up hope in him; he saw his mother

still believing in his potential and having chats with him to encourage him to improve his

studying habits. On the other hand, a few interviewees revealed that there was some

pressure or high expectation to perform well from their parents. Grace (aged 14) revealed:

> Most of the time they'd like me to be top of the class so a bit of pressure, but
> generally yeah, they don't really mind about the effort as long as I get good marks,
> they're fine with it.

Vivien (aged 13) also believed that her parents usually perceived her as a good pupil as 'my

reports are usually alright'; however, she anticipated her mother to raise the question, 'well

why didn't you get 100%?', when she got less than top marks. Patrick (aged 17), who

reported sometimes having disagreements with his parents about the level of effort he put

into schoolwork, believed his parents were generally satisfied but 'they don't like to show it'

and would 'like to push me more and more'. A few other participants claimed that they

were not entirely sure of their parents' views towards their learner identities; most

suspected that their parents were probably satisfied. For example, Callum (aged 13)

described that his mother never commented much on his reports and would only say 'oh you need to try harder in this subject'. Additionally, two pupils, both of mixed heritage, reported feeling that they outperformed their parents' lower expectations of them. Nicky (aged 16) described her parents as being really proud of her GCSE results, since they saw her being 'a bit lazy' and thought she might fail. Matilda felt that her parents got her lots of tutoring because they were not completely confident about her ability to pass the 11-plus exam or do well at school, but ended up winning a scholarship to a prestigious independent school. A further five participants felt that their parents were dissatisfied with their performance at school. Arthur (aged 12), Sun (aged 16) and Winnie (aged 13), all seemed to agree with their parents' assessments and concluded that perhaps they could indeed work harder. However, Alice (aged 14) and Ian (aged 17), both felt they were good pupils, appeared a bit disappointed that their parents did not seem to think they worked hard enough. In contrast, Josephine (aged 14), who reported not liking schoolwork, laughed off her parents' remarks about how 'you are not really going to like, go anywhere' and labelled their expectations as due to them being 'Chinese parents'.

Previous research on British Chinese (Pang, 1999; Archer & Francis 2007) found that Chinese parents, many of whom worked long hours in the catering industry and had limited English language knowledge and/or education, attempted to compensate for their lack of social capital or ability to provide hands-on help with their children's education by stressing high expectations and/or purchasing additional support. When the participants in this study were asked if they got any help with their schoolwork from their parents, some of them did explain that their parents or one of their parents was unable to help due to their limited knowledge of English/school subjects or long working hours. Most of the participants felt

that they managed to complete their schoolwork on their own and did not generally need any assistance. Nevertheless, a number of pupils mentioned getting some help from their parents. Christine (aged 12) said her Hong Kong Chinese parents, who both spoke fluent English, sometimes helped her with reports by reading them and would 'go on the computer' with her. Louise (aged 17) reported that her UK raised/educated mother would help her if she was 'really stuck'. It was evident that some of the participants in this study had Chinese parents who were university educated and/or UK born/raised who were more able to provide practical support.

The participants' depictions of their parents' views and their own views on their learner identities seem to illustrate a diverse picture that challenges the supposedly homogenous, 'Chinese style' approach towards education. Although a few young people seemed to express different attitudes and expectations towards their schooling compared with their parents, most appeared to feel positive about fulfilling their own and their parents' expectations. Valuing education could perhaps be perceived as part of the Chinese or overseas Chinese identity by both Chinese and non-Chinese people (Francis & Archer, 2005). The strong emphasis in education in British Chinese families perhaps might have been influenced in part by the long history of scholarly meritocracy systems in Chinese societies. For example, the imperial examinations system that selected state officials irrespective of their family pedigree, or colonial Hong Kong's diglossic/bilingual (So, 1989) education/society that highly rewarded those with English language education. However, more importantly, educational achievement is a way to achieve social and economic upward mobility.

The majority of postwar migrants of Chinese descent were not recruited by the British government like other non-white migrants. With the exception of the Vietnamese Chinese who arrived as refugees, these migrants (e.g. rural residents of Hong Kong, educated ethnic Chinese from Southeast Asia, students from Mainland China that settled) organised their own entry into the UK for better opportunities for themselves and/or the next generations. The concerted effort to facilitate their children's educational achievement, which ultimately translates to employment success, could form part of the families' migration strategies, irrespective of the parents' social class or education level. Also, this discourse of 'Chinese valuing of education' could also be a pragmatic approach to social mobility in the face of discrimination in the job market in British society. Furthermore, this discourse of 'Chinese values' is also a way to construct ethnic boundaries, separating from both the White majority and other minority ethnic groups in the British context (Archer et al, 2010).

Participants in this study were highly aware of the image of the 'high achieving Chinese', though most did not express experiencing huge pressure to perform well at school. Some pupils, such as Grace and Patrick, talked about high expectations from their parents, and a few young people also commented on not being allowed to go out as much as their White British schoolmates. However, the sense of 'oppressive home cultures' or 'Tiger Mother' style, ultra-strict parenting that is popular in the dominant discourse about Chinese parents/families was not representative of these participants' experiences. The accounts from many of these interviewees seem to challenge the notion of a homogenous, 'Chinese' approach to educational achievement and the tight control that Chinese parents apparently have over their children (Sham & Woodrow, 1998; Chua, 2011).

5.1.2 Happiness and sense of belonging at school

The participants were asked about their happiness and sense of belonging at school. A large majority, 34 (89%) of the participants reported feeling 'happy' to various degrees at their schools, and nine of these pupils expressed being 'really' or 'very' happy at school. Some interviewees enjoyed the relationships they formed at school. Grace (aged 14) felt that 'everyone's really friendly there, you feel like you're part of the community, and um yeah you can get involved in a lot of stuff.' Some pupils were pleased with their learning or school facilities/resources. When being asked the best aspect of their schools, a number of participants felt that their teachers, who were described as being helpful or passionate about learning and teaching, were the best feature.

Three pupils told of not feeling entirely happy at school. Callum (aged 13) and Ian (aged 17), both with mixed Chinese and White British heritage, reported being bullied at their school. Ian attended a different sixth form college at the time of the interview; he did not enjoy his experience at his former school:

> I had a good friend group but I had a lot of um, just various problems and um things whilst I was there, plus the bullying it didn't stop throughout the entire time I was there, you know there was always something, something that someone wanted to pick on me.

Fiona (aged 14), who attended an independent girls' school, acknowledged that her school was 'good'; however, she found that her school was 'really strict about stuff, is really annoying' and some of her schoolmates 'are really really mean to you'. Josephine (aged 14), stated outright she was 'quite miserable' at school, as she found it difficult to cope with all the pressure from schoolwork and exams.

The participants were also asked about if they fitted in or felt they belonged at their schools. An even higher portion of the pupils (36, 95%) said they generally fitted in or had a sense of belonging at their schools. Siuking (aged 17) commented on how he felt part of his school and regularly helped out at events, and Emma (aged 17) liked the fact that she had good friends and didn't 'feel lonely at lunch times'. Despite disliking school itself, Josephine described fitting in at her school as 'I have quite a lot of friends'. However, a few young people highlighted that fitting in was a gradual process, sometimes requiring additional effort on their parts. Christy (aged 16) described feeling comfortable at her school, but she recounted that 'of course in Year 7 it would be a bit scared, cos like it's something new, but then you have to adapt to it'. Catherine (aged 16), who admitted being very shy and not having had many friends in primary school, felt that she undergone a 'personality change' in Year 7 and steadily started to make more friends and fitted in. Louise (aged 17) recalled a similar experience:

> I was the only person from my [primary] school who came to [her current school], and I sort of made a positive decision when I was 11, saying, 'I'm going to be completely different, I'm going to talk to everyone, I'm going to be really like enthusiastic and make lots of friends', and I think that's really helped by trying to be really active it has helped me and because I do lots of clubs and stuff I have lots of friends who I know because I've worked with them.

Among the participants, only Callum (aged 13), who was regularly bullied, disclosed feeling that he did 'not really' fit in at all. He believed that his Chinese heritage made him a target for ridicule at his school within a mostly White British pupil population in a semi-rural area (Callum's experience will be discussed further later in this chapter). Alternatively, Ian, who was also bullied at a school with largely White British schoolmates, felt that he somewhat fitted in:

I felt like I belonged, but it felt like other people didn't want me to belong. Not everyone cos, obviously you know, there's only the small amount who erm are like that, but it did feel like sometimes like um a lot of people, a lot of the, er more racist people would just kind of drive me and a lot of people who weren't English away.

On the other hand, the sense of fitting in could be situational for Fiona (aged 14). She commented that 'sometimes I do, and then sometimes I don't' fit in at her independent school with pupils from UK and abroad. She sometimes felt 'left out' or not included in certain activities, such as weekend parties. Although she viewed her schoolmates as generally being 'really nice', she also revealed that 'sometimes they can be mean like, just like a girls school, and it's like… is really, sort of quite mean (laughs)… the rumours and gossips.'

Most of the pupils commented how they fitted in socially at school through having friends and a sense of being part of the school; the few pupils who felt that they did not fit in partially or generally were also related to social aspects of schooling. Most pupils did not explicitly talk about their sense of belonging in terms of their learner identities. The majority of the participants felt positive about their learning, and the complaints they had about their schools were generally about structural and administrative problems, such as timetabling and facilities. The only exception was Catherine (age 16), who moved from a 'rubbish' comprehensive school to the sixth form of a high achieving grammar school. She made some scathing remarks about the attitudes towards learning and behaviour in lessons of some of the pupils at her former school, while saying that she felt very happy and at ease since she entered the new sixth form and a different learning environment.

5.2 Integration at school

There have been on-going debates about whether members from minority ethnic communities do integrate into British society, for example, South Asian pupils have been criticised for not mixing with their White peers and not fully participating in school (Crozier & Davies, 2008). The British Chinese 'community' has been perceived as keeping to themselves. Although their isolation is not generally seen as a 'threat', such as in the case of the British Muslim community, the ability of the British Chinese to integrate was questioned, especially for the younger generations. In their research on British Chinese families and pupils in Greater Manchester conducted in the late 90s, Sham and Woodrow (1998 and 2001) concluded that British Chinese children appeared to live in a 'cocoon' within British society under distinctive socialisation practices. However, the findings from this current study paint a very different picture, as most of the participants appeared to be highly integrated into their school lives.

In Woodrow and Sham's study (2001) on British Chinese secondary school pupils, which drew from a sample with an overwhelming majority linked to the catering trade, British Chinese pupils (39.4%) were less likely than British European pupils (60.5%) to join in school activities at lunchtime and/or after school. Sham and Woodrow reported that many of their British Chinese interviewees chose to spend time with their Chinese friends at lunchtime or to go home either to help at their parents' business or to do homework. Woodrow and Sham (2001) also suggested that this tendency to non-participation was possibly linked to Chinese viewing sports and extra-curricular activities as frivolous play and a waste of time and energy, according to research on Hong Kong Chinese (Lee, 1985).

The findings in this study with British Chinese pupils from a varied range of family backgrounds revealed a very different picture; 79% of the pupils (30) interviewed had participated or were still participating in school activities (e.g. clubs, teams, orchestra, etc.), and a few were highly involved in these 'enrichment' activities. The pupils joined a wide range of clubs/teams, such as in sports, performing arts, academic studies, religion and charity. Some participated in general school wide activities, for example being the house captain or making the school website. A number of the participants were in fact extremely active and involved in many activities at school. For instance, Emma (17) was in the school orchestra, badminton team, film society and also helped to raise funds for a national charity. Patrick (aged 17) was a prefect and used to be in the football and basketball teams, while Neve (aged 15), Louise (aged 17) and Jackie (aged 17) all belonged to a number of musical groups at school.

However, it is noteworthy that among the eight pupils who never participated in any school activities, all except one of these young people were from a family linked to the catering trade. Christy (aged 16) explained that she was asked by teachers to assist newcomers from China to adjust to school life; however, she could not have further involvement after school because she had to help out at her parents' takeaway. Lab Ky Mo, a British/Irish born Chinese filmmaker from Belfast with a family catering background, felt that some British Chinese were 'socially crippled' because their obligations to work in the family takeaways 'curtailed their ability to integrate' (Tse; 2003). Overall, out of the nine pupils with families operating their own catering businesses, five were involved in school activities or clubs. There could be a number of reasons why certain pupils chose not to participate in extra-curricular activities; however, the obligation to work at family catering establishments did

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not seem to be a major determining factor within this sample. In fact, Daniel (aged 17), who

did not participate in any school activities, admitted that while he occasionally had to help

out at the family business his action was often to 'don't really go, I avoid it, say I have some

work to do'.

The pattern of helping out at the family business that was prevalent in Woodrow and

Sham's (2001) sample and earlier generations represented only a very small minority within

this study from more diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and families that have become

more financially settled. Perhaps it was unsurprising that the few pupils that were

exceptionally active at school, such as Emma and Louise, were from higher socioeconomic

backgrounds, undoubtedly linked to having more economic and social capital from their

families and schools. However, it seems like all the participants, across a range of

socioeconomic statuses, generally appeared to have more freedom and resources to fully

participate in school activities than previous generations.

Additionally, the friendship group patterns of this study differ significantly from Woodrow

and Sham's (2001) findings. Their findings from Manchester illustrated that British Chinese

pupils preferred spending time with their Chinese friends during lunchtime, rather than

joining in activities. Amongst the participants in this study, the majority of pupils described

having school friends from either non-Chinese backgrounds or a mix of ethnicities. Only two

pupils mentioned having friendship groups that consisted of mostly Chinese – Jackie (aged

17), who reported hanging with 'a particular bunch of people and they're mostly like

Chinese or Asian', and Shirley (aged 13), who described 'most of my friends are like Chinese,

and I have not very much friends in English school'. As explained in Chapter 2, the British

Chinese population is smaller than some of the other post-war migrant groups and the

settlement pattern was dispersed; as a result, British Chinese pupils generally only make up a small number, if any, at a school. Having non-Chinese school friends was conceivably not completely a personal decision for some of the young people living outside of metropolitan areas where there were few Chinese or minority ethnic pupils. However, a high number of pupils described their friendship groups as consisting of people from a mix of ethnicities. Matthew (aged 15) depicted his friendship group as 'erm, really mixed, I've got white friends, Indian, Chinese', while Winnie (aged 13) simply said that her school friends were 'all different races'.

Sham and Woodrow (1998) maintained that the lack of social mixing with British White children, sometimes influenced by deliberate parental decisions to avoid the perceived dangers of contamination from White British youths, created further isolation for British Chinese young people. Shirley (aged 13), as discussed previously, was the only participant that possibly resembled the British Chinese pupils in Woodrow and Sham's research. Her father, also British born, worked in a multi-generational operated takeaway. Shirley did not join in any extra-curricular activities and felt closer to her Chinese friendship groups that were based at her Chinese weekend school and Chinese church. However, this tendency of non-participation and keeping within Chinese peers at/outside school appeared to be the minority or exception within this current study. In fact, the majority of the pupils seemed to be well integrated at their schools and engage in social mixing, far from living in the 'cocoon' that Woodrow and Sham (2001) describe. Kinming (aged 15), who reported being 'very happy' at his school with supportive teachers and friends, felt very much part of his school community:

Yeah I mean when you were born here, you know, speak the language, integrating with the others, I mean I get on well with people in this, in the school, get on well with people with the same nationality, yeah, it's not bad.

5.3 Marginalisation and racism at school

By achieving academic 'success' and being part of their school communities, are these seemingly 'integrated' British Chinese pupils free from marginalisation and racism? In Francis and Archer's study on British Chinese pupils in secondary school in the London area (Archer & Francis 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Francis & Archer 2004, 2005a, 2005b), teachers that were interviewed tended to assume that British Chinese pupils did not experience much racism, while, on the contrary, British Chinese pupils described how racism formed a backdrop to their everyday school lives. Some of the pupils who came from outside the UK and/or with English as an additional language were ridiculed on their accent and fluency in English. As Archer and Francis (2007) argue, language was used as a marker to question British Chinese young people's 'Britishness' and their right to 'belong'. Therefore, it would be useful to see if the young people in this research, who had English language as their only or dominant language and were apparently well 'integrated' at school, according to their own perspectives, would be positioned differently and how much they are being accepted as 'British' by their peers.

5.3.1 Racism

Data revealed by the BBC (2012) under the Freedom of Information Act showed 87,915 cases of racist incidents, which can include name calling and physical abuse, were recorded in primary and secondary schools between 2007 and 2011. Although the high figure may reflect the increase in number of incidents as well as the awareness of the problem in

schools, the statistics reflect that race relations remain a serious issue in school. Gillborn

(2008) argues that race inequality is so deeply entrenched in British schools that it is deeply

embedded as a permanent feature of the system. There is a substantial body of literature

documenting the experiences of racism among minority ethnic pupils in secondary schools

(e.g. Archer, 2001; Crozier & Davies, 2008; Bhopal, 2011). As noted earlier, despite their low

numbers in individual schools and high academic achievement, British Chinese pupils are

not exempted from experiencing racism at schools.

The participants in this study were explicitly asked if there were issues of racism at their

schools and also their experiences of growing up in the UK with Chinese heritage. While 15

pupils felt that racism was not an issue at their school, 13 said yes, and a further 10 gave

equivocal answers. Among the interviewees that felt racism was an issue at their school,

some reported incidents that had happened to other pupils at their schools, and some

revealed their own experiences with racial abuse. Although it is useful to document the

racist encounters experienced by pupils of Chinese heritage, it is equally important to

deconstruct the way in which racist behaviours took place and the impacts on British

Chinese young people and their peers. Archer & Francis (2007) highlight that pupils could

experience different forms of racism – 'traditional' forms, which are explicit forms of abuse

centred around embodied differences (e.g. appearance, accent), and more subtle and

complex forms, which are grounded in perceived cultural differences (e.g. 'Chinese values').

The table below illustrates the types of incidents experienced by the participants at school

relating to their Chinese background. Only some of these incidents were identified as

relating to racism by the pupils affected, and a number of the participants experienced

more than one form of these incidents at school. It is important to note that although some

of the pupils were very open to sharing their experiences, some were vague with their

descriptions. Some young people might find it difficult to talk about possibly embarrassing

and confusing encounters, and great sensitivity was applied when discussing these topics.

There was not a 'list' of incidents to be asked or checked off, so understandably this is not a

comprehensive list that captured all of the incidents encountered by the participants, as

some simply might have chosen to omit certain information, and the constraints of the

interview setting prevented further probing in some instances. Nevertheless, the list gives

an overview of the types of marginalisation British Chinese pupils encounter at school.

Types of incidents experienced by participants at school relating to their Chinese heritage	Number of participants
Asked to perform their Chineseness (e.g. speak/write Chinese, demonstrate knowledge of Chinese culture)	23
Being called 'Chinky'/ 'yellow'	3
Non specific description of racism	3
Mocking 'Chinese' sounds/accent	2
Called by names of well known East Asians	2
Subjected to Chinese stereotypes (e.g. good at maths)	2
Physical attack	2
Told to 'go back' to own country	1
Given 'dirty look'	1
Being told they did not look 'British'	1

(i) 'Traditional' and overt racism

Although all the pupils in this study were fluent in English and almost all were born/raised in

the UK, Chinese appearance/ancestry remained a source of marginalisation and abuse in some of the pupils' experiences. Eight pupils out of the sample of 38 reported experiencing direct/explicit racism towards them in various degrees. Jo (aged 14), who attended a local girls' school in a large town in South West England, gave an account of an one-off incident in which she was told to 'go back to [her] own country', and the perpetrators 'started throwing bits of their lunch at me and stuff, and they all spat in a cup and poured it on my bag and my head and stuff'. Ian (aged 17), with Chinese/White British heritage and who grew up in a town in South East England, felt that he was bullied regularly during the earlier years of secondary education due to being overweight and not considered being 'fully English'. He also admitted that he was involved in a lot of fights at school defending Nepalese pupils, who were newcomers to the area at the time, from racist abuse. Callum (aged 13), also of Chinese/White British heritage, was often picked on due to his small build and got called 'Yellow' and 'Chinky' at his school in a different town in the South East. Jessica (aged 16) revealed that she experienced racism in Year 7 as she was the only Chinese pupil in her year in a predominately White British school, located in the outskirt of a city in the South West region. She said that it was a difficult year, but she also felt that pupils later 'got used to her' and she 'wasn't bothered about it'. These four pupils all attended schools that were located outside major urban areas[8], with mostly White British pupil populations and below national average percentages of minority ethnic pupils[9].

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[8] Categories are according to Rural/Urban Local Authority (LA) Classification (England) by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), post April 2009.

[9] This information is derived from School Census returns, collected by Department of Education, in January 2010. In state-funded secondary schools 21.4 per cent of pupils (of compulsory school age and above) were classified as being of minority ethnic origin.

The dispersed settlement pattern of British Chinese undoubtedly results in a portion of

young people growing up and attending schools in areas outside of major cities where there

are few inhabitants from Chinese or other minority ethnic backgrounds. Due to the lack of

highly visible pupils from minority backgrounds in mainly white areas, schools might dismiss

race equality issues as irrelevant (Gaine, 1987, 1995, 2005; SRTRC; 2011). In a study

conducted by Troyna and Hatcher (1992) of mainly White primary schools (with 14-25%

minority ethnic pupils), they concluded that 'race' and racism are 'significant features of the

culture of children in predominantly white primary schools' (p.195). In a more recent study

(Cline *et al*; 2002) published by DfES on minority ethnic pupils in mainly White primary and

secondary schools in England (with only 4–6% of pupils were from minority ethnic

backgrounds), a significant proportion of the minority ethnic pupils surveyed experienced

some form of race-related abuse at school. Cline *et al* (2002) found that while very few were

physically harassed in racist incidents (as seen in Callum and Jo's cases in this study), over a

third of the children reported experiences of hurtful name calling and verbal abuse either at

school or during the journey to or from school, and about half of the pupils stated that the

harassment was continuing or had continued over an extended period of time.

The research also found that many teachers in mainly white school schools minimise the

significance and value of cultural and ethnic diversity, and staff are frequently not

sufficiently aware of racism in the school population and in the local area. The research

highlighted that the official procedures to deal with racism often relied on pupils and

parents to report such problems, but strong factors such as lack of confidence in the schools

to deal with problems effectively, and the existence of local hostility to their presence,

undermined their willingness or ability to do so. Perhaps under these conditions, it is

unsurprising that Cline *et al*'s (2002) study found that some pupils were reluctant to talk about racial insults or even acknowledge it. Although it was not a regular occurrence, Shirley (age 13), who attended a predominantly White school in a town in the South East, described older pupils making 'Chinese sounds' to mock her and teachers 'don't really do anything about it' despite witnessing these incidents. Interestingly, although she discussed these remarks as 'really offensive' and as contributing to her feeling of it being 'sometimes quite difficult' being British Chinese and growing up in England, she did not report racism being an issue at school when initially asked the question in an earlier part of the interview. Therefore, it is possible that other British Chinese pupils in this research could have played down or chosen not to identify racist encounters in their interviews. As Cline *et al* (2002) further suggests, some might feel uncomfortable to speak about such humiliations or want to avoid further attention that highlights their perceived difference or vulnerability. The point about not reporting or labelling racism among all pupils irrespective of their school population will be revisited later in this chapter.

On the other hand, having ethnic or cultural diversity does not translate into creating a racism free environment. Other British Chinese pupils from more ethnically diverse localities and schools also reported being marginalised due to being Chinese. Federico (aged 15), of Chinese/Italian heritage, described feeling very angry from an one-off incident of being called 'Chinky' by someone 'who thought that he could take me' at his comprehensive school in a large town near the Greater London area; the perpetrator was later 'scared off' by Federico and his group of friends. However, other pupils interviewed generally took a more accepting approach towards such incidents. Patrick (aged 17), who attended a school in the Greater London area, recalled that during Year 7, a particular older pupil 'would like

constantly call me these Oriental footballers names' when playing football, but he felt that

the situation at school 'wasn't that bad' and believed that that such incidents would not

happen again since he has moved into the upper years. Catherine (aged 16), who lived in a

large urban area in the South East, gave descriptions of her experience at her former

secondary school (now attending sixth form at a high achieving school) and reflected a

typical sentiment among some of the participants:

> Catherine: The other school was, yeah, you know like cos I'm Chinese and then er, some kids they just come round and they go 'errr Chinky' and all that, it's like yeah. That's about it really.
>
> Interviewer: And that happen regularly or once in a while?
>
> Catherine: Once, like once every, twice a year, not that you notice it sometimes. Yeah that doesn't like affect you, doesn't have much effect on you really.

Siuking (aged 17), who lived in the same urban area in the South East, also described being

'used to it' and not too affected by racism at school. Additionally, he felt that 'if you try and

resist, there's no point in resisting because, well you see them every day, more or less

anyway.' In fact, he concluded that such experiences were relatively minor compared to

racism one might experience in the 'real world'.

Young people like Catherine and Siuking appeared to have accepted that receiving some

racism was part of the experience of growing up as British Chinese, and ignoring or paying

little attention to such encounters seemed to be a way to cope. Crozier and Davies (2008)

reported a similar finding of regular racist abuse at school among some South Asian pupils in

their research, and these pupils often expressed a resigned acceptance to these incidents.

This attitude of 'ignore it' was discussed in earlier research on British Chinese young people

by Parker (1995) and Archer & Francis (2007). Parker found that an important defence

against racism for his respondents was to 'downplay its significance, not to talk about it and

put it to the back of the mind' (1995). In a study on Asian American students studying at predominantly White universities, Osajima (1993) also found some students describing that the key to dealing with instances of racial discrimination was to ignore them, to walk away and treat it as 'not that big a deal'.

Although young people from other minority ethnic backgrounds might also use such strategies in dealing with everyday racism (e.g. Crozier & Davies, 2008), there are certain reasons why some British Chinese pupils are more likely to adopt such approaches. Since the number of pupils with Chinese or other East Asian heritage at any given school could be very small in most parts of England, British Chinese young people often face racial abuse without the potential backing of schoolmates with a similar background, as suggested by Parker (1995). The critical mass, which is sometimes present for South Asian and Black pupils, could be useful in resisting racism or providing support in dealing with shared negative experiences, as seen in Ian's example of bonding with Nepalese pupils who were also targets of racism at his school. Additionally, some pupils might feel that their schools do not understand or could not adequately address these issues, as demonstrated in the treatment of Ian and his Nepalese schoolmates. As mentioned before, Cline *et al* (2002) found that parents and pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds might lack confidence in schools' ability to effectively tackle racial abuse. In Archer and Francis' (2007) study, the school teachers interviewed were largely unaware of the everyday racism that British Chinese pupils were reporting. And in a recent study conducted by the campaign against racism in football and society, Show Racism the Red Card (2011), some of the school staff interviewed felt that racism was no longer an issue which needs to be dealt with.

As a result, some pupils might find accepting or tolerating a certain level of racial abuse in an environment without a strong co-ethnic support network and/or effective school interventions to be the most rational option, and perhaps also a way to avoid drawing further attention to self and to fit in. Siuking succinctly explained the pragmatic approach to these negative experiences, 'If it's not that bad, then there's no point in trying to make it, make the situation more awkward.' Additionally, some young people might also be regularly confronted with racism in other domains of their lives outside of the education system, especially those with families connected to the catering trade. Parker (1995) and Song (1997) document how some young British Chinese experience regular harassment working at their family takeaways, and Min Quan (2009), project of the Monitoring Group, found that a significant portion of the British Chinese people surveyed had experienced racial crime or harassment, in which 'verbal abuse' (71%) and 'damage to business property' (41%) were the most frequently mentioned types of incidents. Siuking, whose family operated a takeaway, had possibly witnessed or even experienced more severe types of abuse outside the school realm, which he insightfully identified as the 'real world'; casual name-calling inside school perhaps seemed inconsequential and bearable in comparison.

On the other hand, in other participants' narratives, their attitudes towards remarks with racist connotations appeared to go beyond just mere tolerance. A further three pupils, Fiona (aged 14), Nicky (aged 16) and Daniel (aged 17) described not experiencing racism at school, as they did not find any comments towards them hurtful or offensive. Although Daniel (aged 17), from a large urban area in the South East, alluded to experiencing some racism, he concluded that it was not an issue at his high achieving school:

Erm no I don't think so, not that anything that would, I haven't had anything that would like erm, not like hurt me or anything, erm I wouldn't feel, I don't feel, yeh, there's any problem with it in the school.

Since these incidents did 'not like hurt me or anything', Daniel felt that they were minor, insignificant and therefore not really an issue. Both Fiona and Nicky commented on casual remarks as 'jokes' among pupils at their schools. In fact, viewing arguably racist comments as acceptable remarks or jokes seemed to be a prevalent view among a high number of the participants. Over 60% (24) of all the participants conveyed that some forms of racism either happened to them or other pupils at their schools. A number of pupils described seeing others making racist jokes among friends or doing it themselves. Grace (aged 14), who attended a local comprehensive in a town in South East England, observed that the Year 11 pupils on the bus could act 'a bit racist but in a jokey way', and as a result, people would just 'laugh it off'. Sun (aged 16), a pupil at a grammar school in a suburban town near London, explained that everyone would understand such comments were not serious and 'just take everything lightly'. Christina (aged 16) candidly expressed how such remarks were acceptable, and perhaps necessary, in her experiences at a London state school:

Interviewer: Are there any issues of racism at your school?

Christina: Erm…well, it's hard to say, because the thing is like, there's that, its not, I'd say people joke about stuff, but that's like say, say we're, we're friends and we're joking about things, I think that's okay because you know, it's say if you have a bit of comedy you like, you can't not say things, so…

Interestingly, Fiona (aged 14), who attended an independent girls' school with a high population of overseas pupils in a large town located in South West England, revealed that some British pupils would use name calling and mock Chinese accents to tease the foreign Chinese pupils. While she understood remarks from her British friends would 'normally be a joke', she acknowledged that many of these overseas pupils got offended by such actions

but concluded that the issue was partially because these overseas pupils 'don't really understand English humour'. In a study of Asian American university students, Osajima (1997) suggests that simply not to think of themselves as different (i.e. Asian Americans) and to blend into the mainstream is a way to ignore discrimination. As demonstrated in the narratives by some of these British Chinese pupils, racist humour was seen as part of the social norm and 'English culture', and therefore, accepting or buying into such 'humour' could be a way to be socially integrated into the majority population or be accepted to be 'one of us'. Such perceptions of racist comments as humour and 'comedy' material contribute to trivialising the hurt experienced by victims and normalising racialised abuses at school.

Another pupil, Emma (aged 17), also reported no racism at her very high achieving independent school, which had a higher than average Indian and Jewish population. Her accounts, of 'jokey, very mild' comments where 'everyone knows that they're just jokes', also echoed this prevailing view from other participants. Furthermore, Emma maintained that these comments were directed to 'everyone, whatever race you are'. The seemingly non-malicious, 'joking', and perhaps sometimes 'equal opportunity' nature of these incidents might preclude young people from identifying or labelling these incidents as racism or considering such behaviours as an issue at all. However, there is the risk of crossing the boundary from being funny to offensive with making such jokes, and the conditions are not always clear. Christina (aged 17), who attended a London comprehensive with a very diverse pupil population, depicted that it was an acceptable joke when her friend got called 'Paki' once but repeated usage of the word was 'not funny anymore, cos once you've said a joke that's done, don't keep saying it and saying it, it's quite annoying'.

The intentions and perceptions of such comments are not always straightforward and sometimes difficult to untangle.

Nevertheless, poking fun of oneself and others sometimes seemed to be a way to create bonds with fellow pupils, perhaps especially among minority ethnic pupils who might have a shared experience of marginalisation. Anthias (1999) suggests that racism may function 'psychically as a means of bonding as well as being part of a negotiation of identities and testing grounds for those friendships'. Louise (aged 17) described pupils making racial stereotyping comments and jokes at her very high achieving independent girls' school, with a high Indian population:

> [Such comments] only from friends, like from my own friends when they say… […] yeah they might just make a joke about oh, it's as much as how all the Indian people in my school say that, oh they love curry, or 'Are you going to go home and eat curry?'

In this example, Louise and her friends were fully aware of the stereotypes of Indian people produced by the dominant discourse that is prevalent in the wider society, and they were using the stereotypes with humour and sarcasm to counter the negative connotations among 'safe' company. Jackie (aged 17), who reported previously experiencing racism at primary school due to being one of only three Chinese pupils, had been attending an ethnically diverse and very high achieving secondary school at the outskirt of the Greater London area. She revealed that after meeting more Chinese at her secondary school, she started to embrace Chinese culture and began to feel good about being Chinese. She explained how she would happily make fun of her Chineseness:

> Sometimes I use racism as like a joke, sort of like I always say that 'I'm Yellow' and things like that, and we just like talk about Asian parents but it's fun, it's not like racist abuse.

Jackie admitted previously not wanting to be Chinese, something that made her feel

different, in her earlier years. However, she has grown to become proud and confident

about her Chinese heritage after having that critical mass peer group in her secondary

school, and she appreciated her 'difference' as something that made her 'interesting'.

Therefore, her act of calling herself 'Yellow', in which 'Yellow' as something seen with pride,

could be interpreted as a resistance to the racist language towards Chinese or East Asian

people through creating a form of 'reverse discourse', a Foucaultian concept (Foucault,

1978). The usage of reverse discourse to mobilise resistance or reclaiming racist terminology

will be discussed further later in this chapter.

(ii) 'Unwitting' and covert racism

Furthermore, beside experiencing explicit racist and other forms of bullying, British Chinese

pupils also recounted undergoing regular, seemingly harmless types of marginalisation. The

Macpherson report in February 1999, which followed an inquiry into the Metropolitan

police's investigation of the murder of a black teenager, Stephen Lawrence, has been

regarded by many as a defining moment in British race relations (Gillborn, 2008; Race,

2011). Macpherson stated that institutional structures and everyday practices normalised

the notion of 'Whiteness' and worked against the interests of minority ethnic groups in

'unwitting and unconsciously' ways:

> Unwitting racism can arise because of lack of understanding, ignorance or mistaken
> beliefs. It can arise from well intentioned but patronising words or actions. It can
> arise from unfamiliarity with the behaviour or cultural traditions of people or
> families from minority ethnic communities. (Macpherson 1999: 22)

This understanding highlights the complexity of the process of racism; racist outcomes could

result from unintentional ignorance and taken-for-granted beliefs. Much of the more covert

type of racialisation of British Chinese pupils could fit this description. As Archer & Francis'

(2007) previous research on British Chinese pupils in London highlights, in additional to the

overt racism, such as racist name calling, young people often encounter more subtle and

complex forms of racism, which they describe as 'local/micro' Orientalism. This local/micro

Orientalist discourse builds on Said's (1978) conceptualisation of Orientalism, which divides

the world into the superior 'us' (the West/Occident) and the inferior 'them' (the

East/Orient) and persists to produce homogenous, fixed and static representations of the

'Orient'. Archer & Francis (*ibid.*) argue that British Chinese pupils, as a result, are being

exoticised and homogenised in two key components (1) 'negative-positives' (e.g. clever-

geek, hard-working/quiet-passive/repressed; (2) cultural exoticism (e.g. perform

Chineseness). Although none of the participants in this study actively labelled such

encounters as racism, a significant number of pupils recounted such treatments at school

and their reactions also varied.

Similar to Chinese/Asian American counterparts who have been portrayed as a 'model

minority' in education, British Chinese pupils are positioned as being 'clever' and 'hard

working' because of their generally high academic achievements. Although the 'model

minority' discourse places British Chinese pupils in an advantageous position within a

meritocratic education system, the 'positive' stereotype undermines the individual

achievement of British Chinese pupils (i.e. as something expected and 'natural') and

marginalises those who do not fit this 'high achieving' narrative. British Chinese young

people are clearly aware of the 'positive' stereotypes that are cast upon them collectively,

as seen in Francis and Archer's (2007) study and this current research. Kinming (aged 15),

who described being very happy at school and was in all top sets, said maths was one of his

favourite subjects (as well as history) and commented that 'must be the Asian I guess'.

However, some other interviewees were less comfortable with such positioning being cast

on Chinese pupils. Josephine (aged 14), who attended a local state school, self-identified as

'a bit of a rebel' as she disliked schoolwork and felt that she did not live up to being a

'typical Chinese person', who, unlike her, would be 'good at maths and stuff at school'. The

common sense of a binary construction of East/West most likely contributed to Josephine

locating herself as feeling more British and seeing herself acting 'in a British way', as she did

not fit the expectation of a high achieving Chinese pupil (further discussion on how this

dichotomy relates to identities will follow in Chapter 7). Louise (aged 17), who was a high

achieving pupil at a selective private school, took extra effort to distinguish herself from the

clever/repressed stereotypes. She explained:

> Sometimes I've had people's parents say to me 'Oh are you very good at maths?' or
> 'Are you going to become a doctor?', that sort of thing, and no I'm not. And I guess
> because of all the stereotyping I faced when I was younger, I tried very hard to not
> do that, so that's why I want to go and do an arts degree at university and why I kind
> of say I hate maths all the time. And um I think also Chinese people are often very
> stereotyped as people who don't take part in community, in the wider community
> activities, in the British community, which is why I try to do a lot of volunteering at
> the library, and in Guiding. Because in Guiding, at the district meetings, every single
> volunteer there is Wh[ite]- is Caucasian, there aren't any Indian or Chinese
> volunteers there at all, and I remember thinking it was really strange when I was
> younger, and it's not the reason why I volunteer at Guides but I think it's something
> that I have in mind, it's kind of like I don't like being stereotyped as someone who
> would just go home and do maths homework which is what a lot of people perceived
> of me.

Louise was one of the most active participants involved with numerous activities inside and

outside school. She was highly aware of the problematic racialised labels that were placed

upon her, and she tried exceedingly hard to challenge such assumptions. Whilst Louise

might have successfully defied the stereotypes, her case also illustrated that she felt this

burden to persistently prove them *wrong* within this racist discourse, not only on her behalf, but perhaps also for other Chinese pupils.

Louise's thoughtful reflection also highlighted that this seemingly encouraging stereotype of 'good pupil' is in effect not entirely 'positive'. British Chinese pupils might be successful academically, but they are still being pathologised as the 'wrong' type of learner (Archer & Francis, 2007) – they are repressed/quiet and are too focused on academic studies (i.e. 'just go home and do maths homework' and 'people who don't take part in community'). Archer & Francis (2007) found that although teachers praised this cultural valuing of education from Chinese families some expressed concerns that these values and practices could potentially be too pushy and restrict children's overall development.

As I noted earlier, Sham and Woodrow's (1998; Woodrow & Sham, 2001) study on British Chinese pupils in Manchester produced findings that seem to confirm such stereotypes of pupils and their families. Their research found British Chinese pupils being heavily conditioned by traditional Chinese behavioural rules originated from their home environment. As a result, Sham and Woodrow (1998) found British Chinese pupils have distinctive forms of learning styles (e.g. prefer to work on their own, uncomfortable in group discussions) compared with their British European counterparts. Sham and Woodrow (1998) also expressed concerns that these children lived in 'a cocoon within British society under distinctive socialisation practices in terms of language and heritage, cultural values and a set of behaviour rules from their family' (Woodrow & Sham, 2001). The difference in time, localities and demographics of the sample undoubtedly contributed to the divergence of the findings between Woodrow and Sham's work (2001) and this study.

Additionally, although some characteristics might be more prevalent in certain cultural groups, it is important to understand that these characteristics are not innate or 'natural' and the context of such differences should be carefully examined. Such 'Chinese' ways or learning styles of being quiet and hard working at school should not simply be seen as a product of 'Chinese culture'. They are in fact part of the strategies for survival (e.g. keeping quiet) and the hidden cost of racial inequalities (e.g. downplaying their harm). Even though most of the participants did not suffer from overt racial abuse, a significant portion of the sample was regularly reminded of their Otherness at school and they were asked to perform their Chineseness by teachers and other pupils. Archer and Francis (2007) argue that such performances demand young people to present 'pure' and 'exotic' representations of their Chineseness/racialised Otherness.

The most common occurrence was being asked to speak/write Chinese by classmates or teachers, and the interviewees' reaction towards such demands ranged from feeling normal to okay, annoyed, embarrassed or worried. Michelle (aged 15) described feeling 'just hmmm' and being not too bothered about her schoolmates occasional requests to write their names in Chinese. Ian (aged 17) reported being asked 'Do you speak Chinese?' frequently but also accepted that it was generally an 'innocent' query and 'a fair question to be asked'. Another comment/question he regularly encountered was, 'Oh, you're like Jackie Chan, can you do, like martial arts?' He considered those asking such questions holding 'stereotypical views' though not generally 'nasty'. Neve (aged 15) also got asked questions about her Chinese language knowledge regularly and similarly felt that it 'doesn't really bother me at all because I'd probably do the same thing [to other people]'. However, she

commented on not hearing the similar question being posed to British Indians as frequently

and concluded:

> I guess it's because Chinese is seen as quite different so, the scripts and stuff so, I think a lot of people find it, from what I find at school, they find it quite cool to be able, like me, they find it pretty awesome.

On the other hand, some young people felt less positive about such questions about their

Chinese knowledge and recounted their embarrassment or dismay at being called upon to

publicly perform their Chineseness. Jessica (aged 16) stated that she regularly got asked to

speak Chinese publicly:

> Erm because at my school, they erm had an international language day, like sometimes in September, and then they used to call me up because I spoke Chinese (laughs), and like, 'Oh speak a bit of Chinese Jess!', in front of like a whole assembly, that's what I used to do.

Jessica generally perceived such situations as 'alright', but she admitted feeling that

sometimes such requests 'just comes out of the blue' to put her on the spot. Kinming (aged

15) reported not minding questions about his Chinese language knowledge in general,

especially if people expressed a real interest in learning. However, he confessed that such

recurring requests were 'sometimes a bit of a bother, it does get a bit repetitive' and would

get him 'a bit um frustrated sometimes if they ask me too much'. For Amy (aged 15), she

reported finding the requests to speak Chinese or translate names of schoolmates

'annoying' and would 'just tell them to go away, I don't want to deal with that'. Charlotte

(aged 14) felt that some schoolmates 'feel that I should know and stuff, ask me about it

[Chinese]'; although such incidents did not take place regularly, she revealed 'feeling a bit

embarrassed' about such situations. Under similar expectations, Dac (aged 17), who was

struggling to learn Chinese for a while, said in the past he would just lie to make up answers

to some of the questions about Chinese language, reflecting his sense of guilt of not knowing the language better and also an easier way to deal with such expectations from non-Chinese peers.

On the other hand, Alice (aged 14) described some people at her school as 'so horrible' and would 'tell me to say it [Chinese] to them but I'm shy, cause they gonna like, take the mick out of it and stuff'. She admitted such harassments made her feel 'scared and worried and stuff'. Another pupil, Kit (age 15), echoed Alice's sentiments on being confronted by such demands:

> Yes, when they find out that I can speak Chinese, they be like, 'Oh say something to me in Chinese!', like 'How do you say my name in Chinese?' And 'Say hello in Chinese', and I, I don't know what to do because I feel like shy and embarrassed.

Evidently, each participant's school environment was different, and their reactions and strategies to deal with such demands also differed. Some like Ian, Neve and Kinming felt that such questions were non-malicious and based on curiosity, and Neve even felt that people were expressing interest because they admired Chinese 'culture' or language, which seemed to be a positive point in her view. In fact, a number of pupils, including Neve, reported feeling happy about their Chinese heritage because their 'difference' made them feel 'special'. On the other hand, even well-meaning, innocent questions would become repetitive, as Kinming put it, and could develop over time into a source of irritation or embarrassment for some British Chinese. For some of the participants, such repeated incidents of being asked to perform their Chineseness created anxieties, as seen in Charlotte and Alice's narratives. For some young people, such experiences made them feel weary about having to explain themselves repeatedly or/and uneasy at being singled out.

Furthermore, such encounters are not only limited to these young people's lives at school. Josephine (aged 14) recalled how random strangers in town sometimes spoke to her due to her ethnic background:

> This girl came up to me, 'Oh are you Chinese?', and I go yeah, and they go 'Oh, can you speak some?' and I just [inaudible] them, there were just so amazed by it! And I'm just like, kinda like… a Chinese person going up to someone, 'Are you English?' and stuff, and ask if they speak English.

Josephine seemed to be baffled by the unwanted attention and also pointed out the absurdity of such requests. Arthur (aged 12) recounted a similar situation when someone of African descent asked, 'Can you say, can you say some Chinese to me?' He refused and ridiculed the speaker by asking 'Can you speak African?' These examples from inside and outside school lives illustrate that these seemingly innocuous incidents could contribute to the systematic marginalisation that British Chinese young people have to experience regularly in everyday life. The act of cultural exoticisation, within the discourse of 'New Orientalism' (Archer & Francis 2007), is often subtle and not overtly alarming but, similar to the process of bullying, the embarrassment or distress is perpetrated repeatedly and the effects become more potent over time.

5.3.2 The hidden cost of racism

'Being different wears you down' - Japanese American poet Garrett Hongo writes in 'Lost in Place' (1998), reflecting on his and his mixed heritage son's experiences of living in a predominantly White area in America. Being seen as and feeling 'different' was described as something positive relating to their Chinese identity by some of the British Chinese participants. However, some of this perceived difference was also a source for others to question their Britishness (see further discussion on identities in Chapter 7). Hongo (1998) recounted how a seemingly innocent 'match the baby photo' school project unintentionally

highlighted and painfully reminded his son of his anxieties on being 'unique' and not quite fitting in. Although some of the young people accepted such demands to perform their Chineseness and some even took them in their stride, the recurring acts of cultural exoticisation undoubtedly caused significant distress among some of the participants. Even though each individual incident might have seemed harmless and insignificant, the amalgamation of years of subtle marginalisation could in fact 'wear you down' (Hongo 1998) and create profound psychological effects on a young person.

The potential negative effects of the repeated subtle marginalisation could be contextualised through examining my interview and encounter with Kit (aged 15), whose uneasiness ('I feel like shy and embarrassed') of being put asked to perform her Chineseness was discussed earlier in this chapter. She reported that her teachers commented on her being 'quiet', but in the few hours I spent with her and a few other British Chinese young people in a local youth martial arts/activities group, she did not appear to be particularly quiet or shy compared to other interviewees I encountered. She was accommodating and seemed comfortable answering all the questions in the interview, expanding on some answers without probing. In the school context, the quietness or shyness of some British Chinese pupils cannot be understood as simply a result of Chinese home 'culture'; maintaining a low profile and keeping to oneself could be a survival mechanism for some to avoid such continual, awkward confrontations in their everyday encounters. However, as Osajima (1993) argues, 'shyness also has its costs'. Osajima suggests that young people could suffer from long term 'hidden injuries' while regularly attempting to ignore overt or subtle racism or downplay its negative effects, and this sense of powerlessness is further

amplified especially when teachers and the perhaps the wider society do not understand or

even acknowledge these issues.

As a consequence of regular cultural exoticisation, some young people might attempt to

move away from the cultural stereotypes, as seen in Louise's example above, and distance

themselves publicly from elements that would highlight their Otherness. Besides finding

schoolmates asking about Chinese words annoying, Fiona (aged 14) admitted feeling

uncomfortable with overseas Chinese pupils speaking to her in Chinese at her private girls'

school:

> It's like English people are around, I think it's quite rude. Because sometimes some
> English people think they are talking about them and get really annoyed and stuff
> like that.

Fiona spoke about some of the English pupils at her school mocking Chinese accents and

upsetting some of the overseas Chinese pupils; she understood why the Chinese pupils were

offended but also condoned such gestures as 'English humour'. On the other hand, she

seemed to be more concerned about causing offence to her English schoolmates, probably

the more dominant group numerically and socially at school. She admitted occasionally

feeling left out socially when her classmates discussed things, such as parties that she was

not invited to. It is understandable that blending into the mainstream would be important

to fitting in during teenage years, and speaking Chinese, especially with the overseas pupils,

could potentially jeopardise her positioning as 'one of us', British/English pupils, and lead to

being seen as 'one of them', the foreigners that her schoolmates made fun of.

The issue of the increased number of pupils with additional languages in schools in England

is often portrayed as a problem for teachers and a strain on public resources within the

public discourse (Payton, 2010; Eccles, 2011), and often minority ethnic pupils are all lumped into the same 'deficit' (i.e. lacking English ability) category, regardless of their individual immigration history, language development and linguistic repertoire at home. During the recruitment stage of this project, one of the school contacts informed me that she would consult the EAL support to check if they would have any potential participants, even though my specific request was for pupils with little or no Chinese knowledge. Pupils with non-English home languages are regularly being negatively depicted as 'foreign' and not integrating (e.g. Blackledge, 2004). Fiona reported being able to speak some Chinese and considered learning Chinese quite interesting, but there were a few factors that could have contributed to her uneasiness of speaking Chinese in front her non-Chinese peers. Her concern about excluding her non-Chinese speaking schoolmates was legitimate, especially when she was also conscious of feeling left out in social events. The general unwelcoming attitude towards non-English speakers in the wider society and the racist incidents towards the foreign Chinese pupils perpetuated by her British schoolmates might have also played a part in her being uncomfortable.

Apprehension over speaking Chinese at school was also communicated by Kit (aged 15). As mentioned above, she described feeling embarrassed and shy as result of the repeated harassments such as 'say something to me in Chinese'. Although Kit also could speak some Chinese, she equally acknowledged not feeling comfortable using the language in front of non-Chinese people for different reasons:

> Kit: I don't know I just feel a bit weird if I spoke Cantonese, erm… I don't know, but some of my friends, they are more willing to speak Chinese freely and so, they have no problem with it, but I just find it a bit… don't know…
>
> Interviewer: Okay alright, fair enough, but you feel okay speaking it at home then?

Kit: Yeah

Interviewer: Are you comfortable, what about with your family, parents, friends and other Chinese people then?

Kit: Erm, what do you mean?

Interviewer: Like if you're amongst like other Chinese people, like your parents' friends and stuff, like would you feel comfortable speaking Chinese then?

Kit: I would, yeah

Interviewee: Yeah okay

Kit: Because… they would understand, so…

Interviewer: But not like when you're at school and put on the spot then? Right

Kit: I think I would feel more comfortable if I was talking to another Chinese person, but not if I was just saying to someone doesn't understand.

Although Kit described appreciating her East Asian background, which made her feel 'kind of special in a way because you're not English like everyone else', the embarrassment of being awkwardly singled out to perform her Chineseness/Otherness in front of her classmates contributed to self-consciousness of her minoritised and exoticised position at school.

Additionally, perhaps Kit was painfully aware of the potential of being ridiculed. As discussed earlier, Shirley (aged 13), who was born and raised in England and revealed not having many friends at her mainstream school, recounted being made fun of for speaking Cantonese by people from her school and in the streets, a similar experience seen with Fiona's overseas Chinese schoolmates. Such humiliating experiences could induce fear, embarrassment and possibly shame in young people when it came to showing their Chinese identities publicly. Callum (aged 13), who reported suffering from overt racism at his school, revealed that he would 'rather be English than Chinese' so perhaps he could escape the painful taunts, even though he appreciated doing Chinese cultural activities at the local Chinese association. As discussed by Parker (1995), British Chinese young people, like

Callum, Kit and Shirley, could be pressured to hold their Chinese identities within an inner/private space, either at home or in Chinese-only contexts as a result of marginalisation and relative isolation in everyday interactions. Being generally small in numbers, some British Chinese pupils might find schools to be a potentially unsympathetic space to express, not the exoticised or stereotypical images, but their own sense of Chineseness.

In some cases, young people might be compelled to deny or reject aspects of their identities or backgrounds. Vivien (aged 13) generally refused to speak Chinese with her bilingual parents. When asked about her reasons for not speaking Chinese, she claimed, 'I don't know, in England like no one speaks Chinese apart from my parents, yeah, I don't say it to them'. She reported feeling more English than Chinese, especially at school:

> Yeah I do [feel Chinese] because like, when we have dinner we always have rice and stuff. But when I'm at school [I] just, don't know, don't really feel anything.

In Vivien's narrative, her Chineseness was only confided to her home, and her distancing and dismissal of the Chinese language showed how she viewed it as having little value in the mainstream society. This rejection or denial of the parental minority culture is by no means universal but can be seen in some ethnic minority children.

Furthermore, unlike Neve (aged 15) who felt that other people found Chinese culture 'cool' and 'awesome', some of the participants sensed such interests in Chinese language or 'culture' from some of their peers to be superficial and disingenuous. Similar to the perception of Alice (aged 14) that her schoolmates would 'take the mick' when bullying her to speak Chinese, Kit probably felt that those demands like 'say hello in Chinese' were primarily for her schoolmates' amusement, rather than them being genuinely interested to understand Chinese culture/language. Fiona (aged 14) expressed her slight annoyance with

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the regular questions on Chinese language and doubted the sincerity of others trying to

learn about Chinese language or 'culture':

> Interviewer: Do you think they are actually interested, or they are just being annoying?
>
> Fiona : I think they are interested about it, but… it's just like, I'm pretty sure they'll forget it by the next day, so… is really no point really telling them (smiles).

Grace (aged 14) recounted how many of her schoolmates often asked her about Chinese

language and 'culture', for example, 'Oh, it's Chinese New Year today, do you get money or

something?' Although she admitted finding such questions 'quite interesting' initially,

similar to a number of other interviewees, she admitted that 'when everyone else comes up

it just gets annoying in the end, have to repeat yourself'. Perhaps the annoyance also

stemmed from others treating her 'culture' like some form of entertainment or trivia; she

recalled:

> […]then my friend came up to me and said 'Happy Chinese New Year!', like 'it's not Chinese New Year today'.

The trifling questions (e.g. 'Do you get money or something [for Chinese New Year]'?) or

comments (e.g. giving Chinese New Year greetings indiscriminately) seen in Grace's

narratives perhaps helped to explain Fiona's sentiment on how she felt that her non-

Chinese classmates would 'forget it by the next day' and that there was 'really no point

really telling them'.

The superficial expression of interests in Chinese 'culture' is largely based on its

unfamiliarity and exoticness. 'Cultural' events at schools, such as Chinese New Year

celebrations or 'language day', as mentioned by Jessica (aged 16), could raise the profile of

the British Chinese 'community' and introduce Chinese 'culture' to the wider public.

However, these events could potentially fall into the superficial and tokenistic 'saris, samosas and steel bands', 'multiculturalism' approach (Troyna, 1983; Race, 2009), if they are simply ostensibly reinforcing and promoting fixed and essentialised exotic imageries, without meaningfully connecting with British Chinese pupils' everyday experiences and their heritage. As suggested by Archer and Francis (2007), without engaging with the complexity of racialised identities and inequalities, schools may unwittingly reinforce oppressive relations by asking pupils to publicly 'perform culture', as illustrated in Jessica's example of 'oh speak a bit of Chinese' during language days. When Chinese language and 'culture' is only being recognised for its novelty value to be performed by the 'authentic' Chinese subject, as it is often seen in the mainstream society (see further discussions on performing Chineseness in Chapter 7 and 8), it is understandable that pupils would feel embarrassed or awkward to be associated with it or to be defined in those terms.

In addition to essentialising Chinese people and 'culture', a couple of participants also commented on the tendency for non-Chinese to homogenise everything and everyone 'Oriental'. Patrick (aged 17) complained about an older pupil 'would like constantly call me these Oriental footballers names', such as Park Ji-Sung (a South Korean footballer who played for Manchester United), during football practices. Siuking (aged 17) insightfully questioned the common practice on how some people simply would lump all people of East Asian heritage as 'Chinese':

> Er yeah the thing is, it's a weird thing because when people see that you're, you have er, you're from East Asia they would immediately think that you're Chinese but you might not be. And so you get people asking 'are you Chinese?' or, yeah, just as an out of interest sort of thing. And then they will just go on to ask do you know, yeah, do you know Chinese, do you speak and stuff.

In Barber's (2011) study of British Vietnamese young adults, many of the interviewees spoke

of frequently being misidentified as Chinese. Situated within the more dominant racial

discourses in Britain heavily focusing on Black/White binaries and increasingly South Asian

issues in recent years, British Chinese and other East Asians still remain largely unfamiliar in

the wider British society. Ali's (2005) work on mixed heritage individuals argues that

encounters with strangers are always structured by the fact that 'the limited understandings

of "race" and visible difference position the unidentifiable mixed, non-white person into an

identifiable category'. This practice of arbitrarily placing individuals into fixed, simplistic

categories to make sense of the unfamiliar could equally apply to describing the experience

of Chinese and other East Asians in the UK. As a result, 'Oriental' people, irrespective of the

vast diversity of national, ethnic and cultural differences, are often indiscriminately 'raced'

as 'Chinese', an identity which is not well understood but arguably the most 'identifiable' in

the public eye. The following photo and excerpt originate from Saint Paul's Catholic High

School's website, Greater Manchester (2011), showcasing their Chinese New Year

celebrations:

'The pupils enjoyed traditional Chinese food – cake, steamed buns, fortune cookies and sweets, eating only with chopsticks! All took part in making traditional Chinese decorations and New Year cards, they also produced some beautiful Chinese calligraphy and origami.'

The reference to 'eating only with chopsticks!', highlights the perceived excitement and

exoticness of this practise. The absurdity is, however, that those items listed, 'cake, steamed

buns, fortune cookies and sweets', most likely would not be served with chopsticks at a

Chinese home or restaurant. Also, the fortune cookie is in fact an Asian American invention,

which is commonly served at the end of meals in Chinese restaurants in the United States

and thus not a 'traditional' or festive Chinese food item as described. The pupil in the

photograph is shown wearing a Beijing Opera mask and holding a Japanese origami crane,

both items with no connection to Chinese New Year celebrations. However, all things

'Oriental' and 'unusual' were arbitrarily put together to represent this imaginary

'Orient/China' traditional festival. School activities organised in this manner hold little value

to educate pupils about different cultures and only further reinforce the exoticised and

essentialised images of British Chinese and East Asians.

5.4 New attitudes towards marginalisation and racism

As seen in many of the examples that have been presented in this chapter, British Chinese

pupils regularly faced a range of racist encounters and used different strategies to deal with

these situations. Although some chose to ignore or brush off racism like the previous

generations of migrant and British born Chinese (Parker, 1995; Archer & Francis 2007), some

of the young people in this study, who seemed socially integrated and confident about their

identities, viewed and dealt with marginalisation and their positioning at school and in the

wider British society in different ways. It is important to acknowledge that while some of the

participants described feeling uncomfortable or hurt by racist name calling or

marginalisation, a significant portion of the interviewees appeared to tolerate or accept

such treatment, and some of them even seemed to be happy using such terms in jokes or to identify themselves.

As discussed earlier, although Callum (aged 13) despised being called 'Yellow' by his schoolmates, Jackie (aged 17) reported that she would humorously identify herself with the same term. While 'Yellow' was used as a casual racist insult by Callum's schoolmates, Jackie chose to describe herself with the same term, though with a sense of humour and pride in her Chinese heritage to reject the inferiority and negative connotations associated with the word in Callum's context. As noted earlier in this chapter, Jackie's interpretation and usage of 'Yellow' could be seen as an act of resistance to the racist discourse, producing what Foucault (1978) terms 'counter discourse' or 'reverse discourse' to oppose the dominant truths. Christina (aged 16), of Chinese and Greek Cypriot heritage, stated that she would jokingly call herself 'half Chink and half bubble (rhyming slang for Greek)'. The pilot interview participant, Beibi (aged 15), who is a personal acquaintance of mine, would regularly call herself a 'Chink' and describe Chinese/East Asian things as 'Chinky'. She professed that she did not find the term offensive or understand why it would be. In these instances, it is perhaps disputable whether these young people were merely brushing off the negativities or using such 'humour' as a way to cope with racialised experiences or to fit into the mainstream society. Some of them appeared to be truly comfortable with their ethnic identities and felt that they could take ownership of the racial stereotypes or language associated with their heritage or 'culture'.

Similarly, a British born Chinese internet personality, 'MissYau' (aged 22), who has been running her YouTube channel since 2008 (http://www.youtube.com/user/MissYau) with 17,664 subscribers and 452,834 channel views (as of 14/10/2011), routinely finishes her

videos by performing her signature catch phrase 'Asian, SuperAsian! Asian SuperAsian!'

while pulling up the corner of her eyes (see example below) to accompany the phrase

'SuperAsian'.

MissYau (left) and Ralphie, cellmate89 (right) in MissYau's video 'You teach me and I'll teach you ~ (AUSSIE + CANTONESE)', 16 Aug 2011 (http://youtu.be/hszf5J1SBp8)

The similar 'slanty eye' pose was exhibited by non-Chinese/East Asian public figures,

including the 2008 Spanish Olympic basketball teams and teen star Miley Cyrus, and both

parties were being accused of mocking East Asians. Miley Cyrus later claimed that she was

not being offensive but simply 'making goofy faces' with friends (Vena, 2009). Akin to Black

entertainers or artists who call themselves or other Black people 'nigger', MissYau's Chinese

background conceivably gave her the 'license' to re-interpret a racist and offensive gesture

as a fun, 'goofy face'. She also appeared to be exhibiting pride in her Asian-ness while doing

so, redefining the disparaging and offensive gesture that is associated with Chinese/East

Asian people to become a source of a positive, 'super' sense of being 'Asian'.

Her videos include themes based on her life and also content that assertively displays her

British Chinese background, such as comically teaching her viewers 'scary/real' Cantonese

and making fun of her 'really Asian bargain-hunting mother'. Her humour and

representation of Chineseness seem well received among the commenters on her YouTube

and Facebook pages, which seemed to include people from different backgrounds (based on

their account pictures and names) though a significant number appeared to be of young

people of East Asian descent. Her YouTube channel ranks 72nd in 'Most Subscribed (All

Time) – Comedians' on the website. This confidence in exhibiting Chineseness and playing

on stereotypes among some of the British Chinese young people is a shift from those who

either resort to keeping their Chinese identities in private/Chinese-only spheres or

helplessly accept racial abuse as it comes, and arguably also a sign of 'integration'.

This self-assertion and reclamation of negative racial slurs or racist gestures could be

interpreted as a confidence or pride in the culture, as seen in the linguistic reclamation of

'nigger' and 'queer' in black and gay communities. Such actions conceivably resonate with

British Asian broadcaster Sarfraz Manzoor's (2004) comment:

> There is something deliciously defiant about young Pakistanis proudly proclaiming
> they are Pakis; where their parents and older siblings may have worn their ethnicity
> with shame, their children can be more assertive.

So instead of holding their heads down or hiding in shame like the previous generations,

some British Chinese young people, including some of the interviewees discussed

previously, readily express themselves using otherwise conventional racial stereotypes/slurs

to talk about themselves or people from a similar ethnic background. Stuart Hall (1988) used

the term 'new ethnicities' to describe the expression of new hybrid identities by the

emerging cohorts of second and third generation Black British. Parker's (1995, 1998)

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research on young British Chinese discussed an emerging generation of British-born/raised young people with substantial links to Hong Kong who lacked a British base for new forms of identifications. Until recently, research on young British Chinese found little evidence of 'new ethnicities' or 'hybridisation' (Watson, 1977; Parker, 1995, 1998; Song, 1997), and rather, a polarisation of separate or compartmentalised British and Chinese identities (Parker 1995; Song 1999), which involved confining their Chinese identity in private/Chinese-only spaces. Therefore, this new confidence to publicly assert their British Chinese identity, as seen in the examples just mentioned above, illustrates a further development of British Chinese identity among the British born/raised generations (see Chapter 7 for further discussions on identities).

Being British Chinese (or being in other ethnically marginalised positions) seems to not only give young people the freedom to produce a counter discourse, the embodiment also appears to give them the authenticity or 'street cred' to ridicule things relating to their own heritage openly in ways which might be deemed unacceptable when performed by people of other backgrounds. Christina (aged 16) described how she and her classmates could mock their own 'culture' or communities:

> Yeah, like I was in music and we were talking about pentatonic scale, it sounds Oriental, so I was like, 'Ting, ting, tong, tong!' (laughs) My teacher was like that's so racist, but I was like yeah but I'm being racist to myself, so it's alright. (laughs) So it's like, if we're just joking like that, then it's all good. Or say like my Black friends were talking about how people talk in Black churches (laughs a bit), and they're like, 'Praise the Lord!! Amen!! (doing an imitation)' and stuff, it's all jokes.

It is clear that Christina, who reported feeling proud of her Chinese heritage, believed that it was her right to make fun of her own 'culture', similar to her Black friends mocking worshipers at Black churches. Among like-minded people, such expressions should be

interpreted as non-malicious humour and not racism or a sign of shame of one's own

background. In 'Takeway' (2011), branded the first British Chinese musical, which was

written by an Asian American with a predominantly British Chinese cast, one of the songs,

'Ching Chong Chinaman', consists of 'Ching chong ching ching chong' for much of its lyrics.

However, one of the issues with this self-parody is that the contextual shift and

irony/humour might not be shared or understood by everyone involved, as was shown by

the discomfort expressed by the teacher in Christina's example. Also, the potential effects of

such humour based on ethnic stereotypes are not always clear, as suggested by Malik

(2002). Malik articulates the dilemma in relation to black clown stereotypes in comedy:

> The central question has always been one of whether images of Blackness in television comedy 'play on' or 'play off' the long-established Black clown stereotype, and whether we are being invited to laugh *with* or *at* the Black comic entertainer. (2002: 92, original emphasis)

Besides the possibility of the intention or outcome of such expressions being ambiguous, it

is also unclear that who should be included/excluded in making or laughing at such jokes.

Furthermore, is laughing at jokes that poke fun of their own 'culture', or accepting and even

embracing a proud 'Chinky' identity, a sign of these young British Chinese being socially

integrated into the British society? Is this a way to be accepted as 'one of us' within the

racist discourse against people of Chinese/East Asian descent? Or can 'reclaiming' terms like

'Chinky' or 'Yellow' subvert the original hurtful meanings behind these terms? Gaining

further insight on young people's attitude and understanding of 'race' and 'racism' is

needed to explore some of these intricate issues.

The term 'racism', which was raised in one of the interview questions and was mentioned by

some pupils regarding their schools' anti-racism policies, appeared to communicate a range

of meanings and interpretations among the interviewees. This ambiguity and complexity raises the question of how useful the term and its related school policies could be in relating to young people's experiences in education and outside schools. As seen in earlier discussion in this chapter, the term 'racism' seems to be largely understood in relation to crude, obvious acts of race hatred, but marginalisations that stem from more subtle and hidden operations of power (e.g. cultural exoticisation) are often not picked up by pupils or their teachers. With the few pupils that reported racism being an issue at their schools, they were able to give examples of incidents of physical fights between pupils from different backgrounds or sometimes overt racist name calling. However, when it came down to casual use of racist terminology or more subtle forms of marginalisation, the attitudes towards such usage became more ambivalent, as illustrated in some of the examples just mentioned above.

5.5 The complexity of racism

5.5.1 Racism intersects with other forms of bullying at school

Racist behaviour can be complex and ambiguous. It is important to acknowledge that the marginalisation experienced by the participants at school could stem from a web of other interrelating factors alongside their perceived racial/cultural differences. Attitudes towards racism by young people could be extremely complex and sometimes contradictory, often also quite context specific; as a result, it can be challenging to examine and understand the causes and responses to racism or other forms of marginalisation from the participants' point of view. When Siuking (aged 17) was asked about whether racism was an issue at his school, he eloquently explained:

Er yes there has been. It [issues with racism], it was a mix between racism and er, bullying and because um, long term er, bullying, it er, turned out quite nasty. But as for usual um, usually um, there is racism all around the school but er, it's kind of, a deal with it situation, like attitude. Cos if you don't it just gets worse sometimes. And it just, er, it's usually more of a, don't know, some groups of pupils it's normally joking around, for others it's a more er, it's a way of bullying maybe; it's with any group; the worst cases are usually many picking on one and as for the more joking around ones it's more between each other and between everybody, it's more of a joke kind of.

Siuking highlights that the subtlety of some on-going joking/bullying could be very damaging but also extremely difficult to identify and untangle. Although some young people were singled out because of their Chinese background/appearance, some of them perhaps experienced marginalisation as a result of other kinds of bullying interrelated to and bound together with racism. Ian (aged 17), of Chinese and White British heritage, revealed that he was the target of bullying at the beginning of secondary school:

In Year 7 I was bullied a lot because I used to be quite a lot bigger, I used to weigh 12 stone but be a lot shorter, so I was quite big, I used to get picked on a lot for that, I wear glasses but obviously [inaudible], and that used to get me picked on but the main thing was the fact that I wasn't fully English, was a big point that um, I was picked on for […]

Being overweight and wearing glasses, combined with being part Chinese, made Ian an easy target for bullying in a White British majority school in a town in South East England. Callum (aged 13), who was also of mixed Chinese/White British heritage and from another town nearby, was regularly harassed for the opposite reason, being small, along with being Chinese. Gok Wan, fashion guru and presenter of Chinese/White British heritage, recalled that while growing up, he was bullied heavily due to being overweight, gay and Chinese. 'The intelligent bullies managed to find a way of having a go at me for all three,' says Gok (Morgan, 2009). Picking on someone's racial difference can be a convenient way to also

attack their perceived differences (e.g. weight, sexual orientation) and highlight their overall

positions of not fitting in.

Livia (aged 13), of Chinese and Italian heritage and attending a Catholic state school, gave an

example to illustrate how intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) could create a system of

oppression, in this case, for a South Asian pupil at her school:

> He has parents from Pakistan and they bully him due to the colour of his skin, they
> call him like, not trying to be racist here but like 'Paki' and stuff like that, and it's not
> nice but like, and he's quite, and it's the due to what they like, I mean he likes
> dinosaurs, I mean it's not nothing bad to be about, it's nothing to be ashamed about,
> but if you bring them in you think, because he brings them in and starts playing with
> them and stuff, you kind of start to think he's a bit weird, that's the reason why they
> bully him. But like they wouldn't do it due to anything else, like they wouldn't do it
> to me, they wouldn't start calling me like 'Chinky' or 'Eye-tie' or anything like that,
> but they know that they wouldn't be doing the right thing if they were calling me
> that. But it comes to people who act strange and weird then they will start like
> saying that and I don't think there's anything to be racial about because like there's
> not a lot of racial people in our school and if you started to call people like 'Eye-tie',
> Italian, then you'd just like kind of be racist to like half the people in the year, cos like
> they're all Italian or something, nothing too bad.

Livia felt that although that pupil was racially abused, the reason was more down to him

being 'strange and weird' and not so much with his ethnicity; the racial slur became a

convenient and more powerful way to torment the victim. It is notable that she highlighted

how she would not expect anyone calling her 'Eye-tie' because of the significant Italian

population at her school, while the lone South Asian pupil did not have the critical mass to

form the same defence mechanism against racism. Although Livia was not entirely blaming

her schoolmate for his social awkwardness, she was excusing the abuse on some levels by

suggesting that racism was not *really* an issue for other people, including herself, who

generally did not receive any racism. This downplaying of racist motives functions as

tolerance for racist slurring — implying that the comment was simply like other disparaging remarks but just happened to be racial.

As discussed previously, British Chinese pupils are usually the minority within minority ethnic pupils. Although teacher interviewees in Archer and Francis' (2007) study assumed that the small number of British Chinese pupils did not attract much attention and were consequently less likely to be bullied, pupils in their study and this current research all told a different story. In fact, the small size possibly could make some of them more vulnerable, especially if they hold other attributes that are deemed to make them easy targets for bullies. In Livia's example, although it might have been the 'strange and weird' behaviour that ultimately triggered the abuse for her schoolmate, his ethnicity (Pakistani in this example) was an easy focal point and became what the abuse was centred around. In a similar manner, the combination of Callum and Ian's other attributes (i.e. size) and their Chinese heritage made them easy targets to be harassed as the small minority in their school population, and racist name calling became a convenient way to bully them even though the underlying reasons for the abuse might not have been solely based on their ethnicity.

5.5.2 Patterns and explanations of racist behaviours

The participants who reported experiencing racism and marginalisation also represented a pattern of being targets during their earlier years in secondary school, though a few participants also mentioned being subjected to racism in primary school. For example, Jessica (aged 16), being the only Chinese in her year, was bullied in Year 7 and said people later got used to her, and Patrick (aged 17) stated that the harassment of being called names of East Asian footballers would not happen again since he moved into the upper

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years. This pattern matches research (James, 2010) on general school bullying, which observes a trend of victimisation decreasing with age and that there is an initial peak during the transition from primary to secondary school. However, the complexity, and sometimes subtlety, of such race related bullying shaped by multiple forms of inequalities makes it even harder for pupils and school staff to understand or tackle.

The complexity of the discrimination is also a way for some of the participants to explain or downplay the racist motives behind the abuse, for example in the case illustrated by Livia of her schoolmate. In some cases, participants attributed racism or negative behaviours to the general ignorance and sometimes the socioeconomic backgrounds of the perpetrators. Callum (aged 13), who was called 'Chinky' and 'Yellow' at his predominantly White school, felt that the perpetrators might have expressed racist views but were not 'genuinely' racists:

> Well they're not like full out racist like proper bad, it's like they, cos like kids at my school they watch too much adult kind of TV and stuff, so they get it off like the TV so they make like horrible jokes about Jewish people and stuff. Like 'how many does it take to fix a shower?' and stuff like that.

Although Callum disliked the taunts, perhaps he perceived that a 'proper bad', 'full out racist' was someone that would be engaged in more extreme forms of abuse, such as physical violence. In his views, his schoolmates' behaviours were more a consequence of their ignorance, which was heavily influenced by the normalisation of 'horrible jokes' and casual racism in the media. When being asked about racism at her school, Jessica (aged 16) replied:

> Erm most of my school is from [city in South West], so part of where they came from [said city] is quite rough, so you do get like now and again, some racism at my school.

Jessica, who suffered from some racist bullying in Year 7, coped by largely ignoring the

abuse but also rationalised the experience as an inevitable outcome with schoolmates

coming from 'rough' areas. Catherine (aged 17), who received occasional racist remarks at

her former, low achieving comprehensive school, described her former school as 'rough'

and 'bad rubbish', and she portrayed many of the pupils there as 'stereotypical chavs' and

the worst aspect of the school as the unruly pupils. Like Jessica, she also brushed off the

occasional racist remarks as not having much effect on her. She also did not think racism

was a significant issue at her school and perhaps also felt that people were not genuinely

'racist', as she explained through the treatment of a new migrant pupil:

> In the previous school like when a new Chinese girl from China immigrated from
> there, she know[s] no English, no English whatsoever, she had to have some tutorials
> to learn English and then er, everyone, although they find it funny because she
> couldn't speak English well and she tries to, yeah, but um they still stayed friends
> with her, they went out with her and everything else, yeah, so it was alright. They
> don't like um avoid you or think 'oh, you're different from me'.

Although the pupils found it 'funny' that the new pupil did not know English, Catherine

interpreted that the newcomer was still largely included among the schoolmates as the

newcomer did not experience any overt discrimination. The intermittent racist name calling

and other disruptive incidents was just part of the package of the troublesome behaviour

from some of the pupils from 'rough' backgrounds, a stark contrast from the grammar

school where she attended sixth form, which she depicted as a 'well disciplined' school with

'more polite, well-mannered students'. Similarly with Shirley (aged 13), although she

reported being mocked at school when speaking Chinese and found it offensive, she too

indicated that racism was not a significant issue at her school, which had a predominantly

White British population which she described as 'most of them are quite chavvy… like, most

of them swear a lot'. Perhaps similar to Catherine, Shirley linked the offensive behaviours to

the general 'chavviness' of the perpetrators, rather than specifically their racist attitudes. These pupils' narratives seemed to suggest that they viewed racist behaviours, along with other undesirable actions at school, was associated with the working/lower class backgrounds ('chavs') of some of these pupils.

Yet again, Alice (aged 14), who attended a low performing school in a deprived area of London, described some of the pupils at her school as 'cruel' and 'horrible' and, like Catherine, stated the worst aspect of her school were the pupils there. She revealed that there were racist incidents at her school as there were fights among pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and across age groups, but she did not identify any negative treatments she received, such as being bullied to speak Chinese, as racism. Alice spoke about how some pupils were 'so horrible to me and my friends and they call us stuff' and admitted that growing up with Chinese heritage could be a bit difficult because of 'the way, you know, people speak'. However, understandably, she was unable or unwilling to articulate further details about how 'people speak' to her when being asked to clarify.

Accordingly to Alice's narratives, her school appeared to be an unwelcoming environment, and racism was just in the mix with other types of harassments in these upsetting and yet seemingly common abuse she got from other 'horrible' and 'cruel' pupils. In these instances, everyday racisms were often mixed in with other forms of negative behaviour at school, which made identifying racism difficult or perhaps irrelevant in this context to some of these pupils, like Alice. Participants in the earlier years in secondary school seemed to be more likely to become targets of bullying, including racist bullying. Some of them also appeared to downplay the impact of racist insults by positioning, sometimes condemning, the perpetrators as the sort of people who were 'rough', 'horrible' or 'chavvy', sometimes

associated with those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Consequently, insults from

the chav/Other were just part of the social fabric of the school and therefore these racist

insults and other forms of harassments from these 'rough', underclass people could be seen

as less personal, unworthy of concern or perhaps easier to ignore or dismiss.

5.5.3 Lack of deeper understanding of race and equality issues

Moreover, the issue with ambivalent or misinformed attitudes towards racist language and

racism undoubtedly reflected a general confusion or lack of understanding of racist

terminology/behaviour among young people, and also, to a greater extent, teachers and

wider society. The research conducted by Show Racism the Red Card (2011) reveals that

many teachers and pupils do not know the appropriate language to talk about issues of race

and ethnicity. The research finds that whilst some teachers or pupils do not intend to sound

racist, they do not hold knowledge of the correct terminology to use and some would adopt

what is said by others around them as the norm. This issue of not knowing the appropriate

language to talk about 'race'/ethnicity was certainly demonstrated in the discussions with

some of the British Chinese interviewees, even among the older participants. Ian (aged 17)

described his recent realisation of the meaning of the term 'half-caste':

> Well this is kind of funny because for a long time, whenever people asked me I said
> that I was half-caste and I didn't realise until literally like a few months ago that
> apparently that's like an offensive term, and I didn't know this for such a long time
> and whenever people asked me I'd say that I'm half-caste, I'm half Chinese, you
> know. So yeah that's how I've always described myself and it wasn't until I was, it
> was actually when I signed up for my Taekwondo club and I wrote down on the list
> that I was half-caste and my teacher was like, 'You can't say that!', I'm like, 'Why
> not?', he's like, 'It's an offensive term!' I'm, oh, whoops! And so I have actually
> always described myself as being half-caste. I guess if someone were to ask me now
> I'd say I'm half Chinese.

In another example, Siuking (aged 17) appeared unsure on how to describe ethnicities of his

schoolmates:

Siuking: The majority of people in this school are, er, English or at least um yeah um and then there's a lot of er… [long pause] I don't want to say this in a kind of bad way, er…

Interviewer: It's alright.

Siuking: Like kind of coloured people.

A similar situation happened when Christina (aged 16) depicting the pupil population at her

school:

Erm, well we have mainly Turkish-Cypriots, um quite a lot of… dark skinned people, I don't wanna use any words, no, I mean Black, it's just, it's just describing word isn't it?

Although both Suiking and Christina understood that there were words which would be

considered offensive or inappropriate to describe people's backgrounds/ethnicities, they

seemed to lack confidence and knowledge in using the suitable terms. These examples

illustrate that young people might have some basic understanding of racism and equality,

but often lack a deeper comprehension and awareness of why some terms are deemed

'bad' or how certain terminology/behaviour reinforces prejudices. The fact that these young

people are from minority ethnic backgrounds and/or have been exposed to racism

themselves does not automatically equip them with knowledge and sensitivity on dealing

with issues relating to 'race'/ethnicity. Worryingly, school, however, does not always seems

to be the place to learn about or explore these issues. Show Racism the Red Card's (2011)

findings indicate that some teachers simply cannot see a problem with the use of racist

terms and consequently will not challenge such usage among pupils, while others feel that

they do not have the language or training to confidently discuss issues on race and ethnicity

with their pupils. As a result, pupils, regardless of their background, could encounter mixed

messages and approaches on racist attitudes from pupils and teachers at school but also

would lack the opportunity to explore these complex and important issues openly and constructively.

A number of pupils cited the fact that racism was not an issue at their schools due to their schools having pupils from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Here are some of the statements from the pupils about their views on racism and their school populations:

> No I don't think so [racism is an issue], there's so many diverse people. (Amy, aged 15)

> I don't think it's that bad, I think it's just because we're so multicultural, I mean if everybody was kind of racist then and I don't think the school would be okay. (Christina, aged 17)

> No, I, no […] It's quite, it's quite a multicultural school, like we have like multicultural week where if I'm being honest, no one really likes it but you know the teachers organise it and like in, they have a specific day where they do, they serve multicultural food at the canteen and all your lessons are based on other countries and stuff. (Andrew, aged 15)

> There will be racism, I mean if there is it's very minor , it's not very um, a major issue in our school, being a Catholic school and everything and er you know cos there's so many people from um different countries in our school, I mean everyone gets on well. (Kinming, aged 15)

Interestingly, these pupils showed a common sense understanding that the terms diversity and equality can be used interchangeably. Having pupils from a range of ethnic backgrounds and learning about different cultures (even though the value of such 'multicultural' events was debatable, as seen in Andrew's example and the previous example on Chinese New Year celebration) would translate to producing understanding or respect among different ethnic groups and racial equality. However, as illustrated in the examples mentioned in this chapter, pupils both in schools with predominantly White British population and in schools with a diverse ethnic makeup reported racial abuse or marginalisation taking place. As suggested by Sivanandan (1980), 'Just to learn about other peoples' cultures, is not to learn

about the racism of one's own. To learn about the racism of one's own culture, on the other hand, is to approach other cultures objectively (cited in recent re-statement, Sivanandan, 2006).' The examples illustrated in this chapter demonstrate that these tokenistic ethnic holiday or food festival exercises perhaps even fail at fulfilling the basic goal of teaching pupils 'other people's culture', let alone engaging in any further understanding of 'multiculturalism'. These issues highlight how introducing strong multicultural education has the potential to help to tackle racism, and it is also challenging for schools and teachers to be fully engaged with the fluid and complex nature of British cultural society and society in order to bring substantial changes in discourse and practices.

5.5.4 Attitudes towards racism within the British Chinese 'community'

Furthermore, young people's attitudes towards 'race' and racism could undoubtedly also be influenced by discourses in the mainstream media and in their home environments, as suggested by some of the participants. To complicate matters further, some of the British Chinese young people could also be predisposed to the discourses on race and ethnicity within the British Chinese 'community'. In the Chinese complementary schooling study (Francis *et al*, 2008), some of the teachers and parents interviewees explicitly presented Chinese 'culture' and 'values' as relationally superior to a Western Other (Francis et al, 2010). In this current research, one of the participants, Jackie (aged 17), casually described her mother's occupation as '鬼佬工/gweilo gung' (ghost/White man's job), as her mother worked in a non-ethnicised field, unlike her dad who worked in catering. This discourse of '鬼/gwei', or usually '鬼佬/gweilo' (ghost man) originates from the colonial Hong Kong era and has been used among Cantonese speakers to describe the 'White/Foreign Other'. The term 'gwei', which loosely translates to 'ghost' or 'foreign devil', was used as a derogatory

remark historically, but some argue that the expression no longer has an offensive or racist overtone (Leonard, 2010; CBSC, 2000), and the term is still commonly used in colloquial Cantonese and occasionally even endearingly embraced by some White Westerners who have contact with Hong Kong or the language. Jackie was most likely introduced to this discourse and language through her family and their Chinese network.

At an informal observation/participant observation of chattering of youth group members at a Chinese church, one of the girls in a group I sat at described her school as 'bad', which prompted another member to ask if her school had a lot of '黑人/hak yan' (meaning 'Black people', the only part of her question that was in Cantonese). This incident reminded me of Parker's (1995) recollection of his participant observation in a Chinese youth project, where he saw a heated debate among young people on whether non-Chinese could become members. Parker noted that one member commented that 'it would look funny with a picture of a 黑鬼/hak gwei (Black ghost/devil) on a Chinese youth project card'. The final decision resulted in excluding non-Chinese on the grounds of parental concern, as one member argued, 'our parents are racist, they wouldn't like it, they mightn't let us come' (Parker, 1995). Both Parker's and my examples show how British Chinese young people's attitudes on 'race'/ethnicity could be inextricably shaped by both discourses within the Chinese communities and the wider British society they inhabit. To some of the participants, racial prejudice was perhaps something being normalised in both the Chinese context and the wider British society. These examples highlight the complexity of how British Chinese young people construct their views on 'race' and racism. Furthermore, it underlines that racism and prejudice could be an out-group attack as well as an in-group issue.

The issue of using the appropriate terminology or using the 'right' language is not about

being polite or 'political correctness', which is what some of the teachers in the Show

Racism the Red Card (2011) study felt. Confusion or inability to grasp the appropriate

language to discuss race and ethnicity reflects the fact that some of the pupils and teachers,

irrespective of their ethnic backgrounds, do not fully understand the overt and hidden

harms that using racist terminology could cause and the prejudices that such language or

behaviour perpetrates, whether that is towards others or within their own ethnic group.

More importantly, it further illustrates that racist discourse is taken for granted, normalised

and internalised in everyday life, and it becomes more difficult to challenge the 'norm' when

people fail to recognise such inequalities as still relevant and important issues.

5.6 Racism towards British Chinese: from school grounds to the wider society

5.6.1 A hidden and ignored problem: racism against British Chinese

On the surface, British Chinese pupils from the more settled population in the 'community'

generally seem satisfied, well integrated in their school lives and high achieving

academically. However, upon closer examinations of their experiences in this research,

many participants continued to face different types of racism at school. Their 'success' in

being socially integrated perhaps partially contributed to some of the young people's

internalisation of racism, especially when racist 'humour' is seen as 'normal' and part of the

British society. Although some pupils exhibited new levels of confidence and resistance to

reject the dominant racist discourse against Chinese, it is debatable if such approaches, such

as reclaiming the term 'Chinky', could effectively tackle racism. Although the experience of

'traditional' racism is not universal to all British Chinese young people, this research shows

that racism, both in explicit or subtle forms, still has a pervasive impact even among those

British Chinese pupils who are assumed to be immune from it due to their low profile and 'success'.

The Stephen Lawrence murder, which finally resulted in the convictions of two of the murderers after 18 years in January 2012, highlights the tragic reality of how two forms of racism existed side by side for Stephen and his family - the crude, violent racism of Stephen's killing and the more complex and less direct racism, which as a result of an inquiry into the initial trial was widely identified as 'institutional racism', which caused a delay and injustice in the investigation of his death. Human rights Barrister, Matthew Ryder (2012), who was part of the legal team for the trial, recently articulated how the legacy of the Stephen Lawrence case should confront the public about the complex nature of racism, especially the subtle and covert forms that impact the everyday lives of many people from ethnic minority backgrounds:

> That subtler form of racism is well known to minorities, but had always been so difficult to express. We experience it at the hands of public officials, at school, at work. You have a sense that you are battling against stereotyped preconceptions but cannot shift them. Sometimes, such experiences are because of race; sometimes, they are not, which is what makes it so pernicious. (Ryder in *Observer*, 08/01/2012)

The often complex yet covert forms of marginalisation of British Chinese pupils which have been discussed in this chapter chimed with Ryder's comment. Newer forms of racial oppression that perhaps do not originate from intentional hostility but more likely from unawareness and indifference are challenging to identify and reconcile. As seen in examples in this chapter, participants largely only understood racism in the crude and overt forms, but often those who encountered racism that lingered in the shadows (e.g. cultural exoticism) failed to recognise or identify it. Also, perhaps British Chinese pupils' 'success' and 'blending in' further disguises the often hidden but insidious problems some may face.

Some teachers and media commentators might feel that teasing of any nature is inevitable in school and 'children grow out of it'. Some would dismiss the harm of racist name calling, claiming words such as 'Gyppo' and 'Paki' are no worse than general name calling like 'four-eyes' or 'fatty', and ignoring the fact that racism victims are attacked not as an individual but a representative of a particular group (DfES, 2003). However, seemingly harmless casual racial slurs should not be a laughing matter as evidently some young people do not 'grow out of' such prejudiced attitudes, and the abuse could lead to real physical and psychological harm to their victims, as seen in Stephen Lawrence's killing by racist youths. In a more recent example within the UK Chinese population, the appalling murder case of Simon San in front of his family's Chinese takeaway in Edinburgh in 2010, which received little media coverage, showed how racist motives were erroneously ignored by the police – a painful reminder that racism against British Chinese is often hidden, downplayed or ignored.

Although witnesses testified that Simon was called 'Chinky' by his White teenage attackers, and detectives also found that one of perpetrators had previously been reported for a racist offence, while another two had previously been charged for attacking another Chinese shopkeeper, the police only treated the case as a 'robbery' and one senior officer simply claimed Simon was 'in the wrong place at the wrong time' (Carrell, 2011; BBC News, 2011). It also emerged that the police had wrongly described Simon, who was a British citizen of Chinese descent born in Vietnam, as 'Vietnamese' (Christie, 2011; BBC News 2011), which reflected their lack of understanding and respect of the diversity of Chinese and East Asian populations in the UK and general negligence and ignorance over a serious crime towards a British/East Asian Chinese victim. While the police eventually admitted their failure to treat

the case as a racist murder a year after Simon's death, the apology did little to reverse the offence and injustice that was suffered by Simon and his family, and to a greater extent, the British Chinese 'community'.

Some people might simply view racism, especially in subtle forms, towards British Chinese as 'not that 'bad'. Although most British Chinese do not suffer from explicit racist violence, it raises serious questions that even in an extreme case of physical attack such as Simon San's murder, authorities could still downplay or brush off the blatant racist component of the crime. For a range of reasons, racism against the British Chinese population is often not adequately acknowledged by authorities such as the police and schools. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that in Min Quan's (2009) research on racism against the UK's Chinese population, focus group participants reported being hesitant and/or did not inform the police of their problems. One of the reasons was because such incidents, which included theft, intimidation and damage to property, were seen as 'too minor'. Similarly, the findings in the in-depth interview portion of the same research were that most respondents felt that schools failed to take effective actions for them or their children against racial harassment. Therefore, it is understandable why some British Chinese young people, as seen in the examples in this chapter, have been conditioned to downplay racism or ignore their own negative encounters as they have learnt that pleas from the British Chinese population are often not clearly understood or taken seriously by the authorities. Unfortunately, this under reporting or non-reporting of racist incidents or behaviour at school or in the wider society further perpetuates the myth that British Chinese pupils are immune from racism – a vicious cycle.

5.6.2 Schools' responses to racism and bullying

Among the participants, the experiences of how their school treated racism varied according the interviewees. On a more positive note, a number of pupils in this research believed that racist incidents would be effectively dealt with by school officials. Callum (aged 13), who reported suffering from substantial racist verbal abuse at school, was pleased that his teachers were helpful in dealing with the bullying and taking actions against the perpetrators, and the headteacher was in contact with his mother to discuss the issues further. Josephine (aged 14) reported the racist harassment she experienced in the canteen, and a pupil was suspended. In some instances, young people in schools with more robust support could perhaps effectively utilise their racialised positioning to retaliate at their bullies. Louise recalled her experience in primary school:

> It wasn't real racism or anything, it was just when children poke fun at each other, like people would say things like, they'd make like Chinese sounds and stuff when I'd come up, and that was very easily dealt with by just crying and then saying to the teacher 'they're making fun of me because I'm different' and then those children got very quickly told off, and I wasn't actually that hurt, I just wanted to get them told off.

Louise admitted not feeling too offended by the action of her schoolmates and considered it to not be 'real' racism but just children mucking about. It could be argued that she was 'playing the race card' to strategically use her positioning to get revenge on the perpetrators. However, the outcome, that she 'wasn't actually that hurt', did not change the racial nature of the action conducted by the dominant group. Additionally, not being 'that hurt', which possibly could be a coping mechanism as discussed previously, did not stop her from realising the Othered position she was subjected to. This was also another example to illustrate the complexity of the processes, structures and outcomes of racism.

However, a number of other pupils were less optimistic about how their school handles race relations issues. For example, Winnie (age 13), who described her local school as 'bad', did not report experiencing racism herself but felt that racism and bullying was common place:

> I mean racism you can find it anywhere and bullying you can as well, but I don't know how the school will stop it because I still think the school has a lot of issues with [inaudible].

A few other pupils also mentioned an issue with non-race based bullying; a couple of the interviewees commented on how pupils who were 'Emo' (who are usually associated with a particular fashion and music subculture) were targets for bullies. These narratives illustrated that harassment in various forms is an unfortunate reality for some young people in English schools. Although it was an exception within this sample, pupils like Ian (aged 17), who suffered from racial bullying throughout secondary school, could decide to take matters into their own hands if they felt that the school could not address the issues adequately. He admitted regularly getting into fights with White British pupils who were attacking him and some of the Nepalese pupils. He was frustrated by the on-going racism and the school's apparent failure to tackle the issues effectively:

> If I see someone being picked on, I can't just stand by and let it happen, I always barge in and you know.

As a result, he got into some vicious fights, at times with substantial injuries. Perhaps his teachers and school officials were sympathetic towards his intentions; he acknowledged that he was 'lucky' that at times he did not get punished for the fighting while the instigators did. However, he was told by his teachers that he had 'too strong sense of…[omission by Ian]' – justice, perhaps?

Conversely, some other pupils described that minor, less tangible incidents, usually the

more subtle type of harassments such as mocking Chinese sounds, did not get reported or

most likely would not have be noticed by teachers. Incidents of cultural exoticisation could

be complex and inconspicuous hence making it even more difficult for pupils to raise

objections. The issue becomes more awkward or impossible for pupils to challenge

especially when it is school officials or teachers who, often unintentionally, impose such

oppressions, as illustrated in Jessica's (aged 16) experience of being asked to perform her

Chineseness on language day. In Archer and Francis' (2007) research on British Chinese

pupils in London schools, one of the teachers interviewed described her confusion and

frustration with British Chinese pupils' apparent disinclination to present assemblies for

Chinese New Year to 'celebrate all cultures'. Such practices could be well meaning but fail to

consider the oppressive effect of demanding pupils to publicly perform essentialised and

simplistic forms of 'culture'.

Bad Education: Episode 1: Class Wars
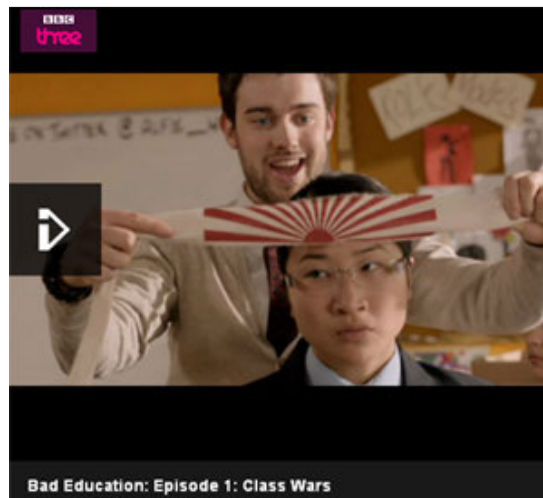
Bad Education (2012), a BBC3 sitcom written by Jack Whitehall, is set in a fictional state secondary
school and is about 'the worst teacher ever to grace the British education system' (show description

from BBC3 wesbite). One of the characters, Jing, is a hardworking yet unfashionable Chinese pupil who sometimes bursts into Mandarin when being angry at her incompetent teacher. A running joke in the show is that her teacher keeps thinking she is Japanese – while this is presented as 'the worst teacher ever' some of the examples in this chapter illustrate that it is not that far from reality in some cases.

5.7 Conclusion

Perhaps due to being smaller in number and the public perception of 'success', British Chinese pupils are often absent from discussions around racism in an educational context. Although there are signs of new forms of resistance among some British Chinese pupils against stereotypes or racism, a significant number of the young people continue to cope by playing down, accepting or internalising racism. Racism is identified as one of the key issues increasing the risk of mental health problems among British Chinese people (Li et al 1999). Some research (e.g. Furnham & Li, 1993; Balls Organista, Organista, & Kurasaki, 2003) suggests that although second or later generations migrants are more likely to feel part of the 'host' community than the first generation, they are in fact more likely to experience psychological issues. The more integrated generations, such as the British Chinese pupils in this study, are more likely to identify with the mainstream culture than their parents/grandparents as they are also generally less knowledgeable on the minority culture (e.g. heritage language, practices); however, paradoxically, as discussed in this chapter, they may not 'be treated as "full" members of the mainstream culture' thus 'increasing their likelihood of feeling rejected and abandoned' (Hong et al, 2006). More detailed discussions on how these young people relate to British and Chinese cultures will take place in Chapter 7; nevertheless, it is clear that some of the participants experienced a substantial level of psychological strain due to experiences of marginalisation or being questioned on their right to 'belong'.

As discussed earlier, the term 'racism' in its current form within the school context seems to have become less productive or relevant in relating to the complex forms of racially prejudiced marginalisation and racialised identities experienced by the participants at school, especially in relation to experiencing more subtle forms of racism, which is commonplace for British Chinese. As I noted earlier in this chapter, a portion of teachers and pupils, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds, lack confidence and knowledge to discuss 'race' and related issues at school. A newer comprehension and better vocabulary for understanding racism and identities is urgently needed to effectively tackle racial inequalities and improve pupils' wellbeing at school. An up-to-date and more sophisticated framework in the education system to understand racism and other forms of marginalisation and bullying of pupils from different backgrounds is urgently needed to address these issues, not just for the benefit of British Chinese pupils, but for all pupils (Gilborn, 2008; Bhopal & Preston, 2011).

A significant of other participants mentioned seeing general bullying at school, such as picking on people who were 'emo' or 'weird'. It could be possible that some of the participants who reported no racism at school might have considered incidents as general bullying rather than racism because racialised incidents could be very subtle though long term, often intersecting with other elements of young people's lives. Racialised incidents at school, whether unintentional or malicious in nature, draw young people's attention to their Chineseness; although the immediate effects might be undetectable or subtle, over time these experiences could impact on young people's constructions of their British and Chinese identities, which will be discussed in Chapter 7.

As demonstrated in participants' discussions of regularly being asked to 'perform' their

Chinese language skills, Chinese language is often seen as a key marker of Chinese identity

among both Chinese and non-Chinese people. The British Chinese pupils in this study came

from a wide range of linguistic backgrounds; their experiences in (not) learning a minority

language at mainstream and complementary schools would give further insight into the

lived experiences of growing up as British Chinese in twenty-first century multicultural

Britain.

Chapter 6: (Not) Learning Chinese

This chapter focuses upon (dis)engagement with heritage language learning among this group of British Chinese young people. This chapter will first look at the language environment within their homes, particularly the flexible bi/multilingual practices at home being described by some of the participants. This chapter will also look at participants' experience and perception of learning Chinese, and their (non)participation at weekend complementary schooling will be examined. I will especially draw attention to learning and practicing a minority language within an English language dominant environment and also the monolingual, essentialist-based expectations that are being imposed on, and in turn being internalised by, young people who are in the process of becoming bilingual.

6.1 Bi/multilingualism in the UK

The English language has a strong ideological role in British society, and the immensely diverse language repertoires and practices of school pupils and their families are seldom recognised in the largely monolingual mainstream education systems. Although many different native and foreign languages/dialects (e.g. Welsh, Cornish, Gaelic) have been part of the history of the UK, the English language, which itself was originated from and has been shaped by a fusion of languages that appeared in the history of the British Isles, has become the dominant language and the use of other languages, including indigenous languages such as Gael and Welsh and regional English dialects had been discouraged or intolerated (Kandler et al, 2010). Bi/multilingualism has traditionally been, and arguably is still to some extent, considered in negative terms in Britain.

6.1.1 Bi/multilingualism the English education system

The first official recognition of the positive value of linguistic diversity appeared in the

Bullock Report (1975:293-4), which described bilingualism as 'an asset, as something to be

nurtured, and one of the agencies which should nurture it is the school'. Subsequent

research (Cummins 1984; Swain & Cummins 1986) highlighted the cognitive and intellectual

benefits of bilingualism and attempted to shift the view of language interference to

language transference skills among education professionals (Edwards & Alladina, 1991).

Linguistic minorities have gradually begun to assert their rights to use their languages;

bilingual education programmes have been developed in Wales and Northern Ireland, and

different migrant groups have organised mother tongue education for the younger

generations in their communities.

However, official policies and general attitudes towards bi/multilingualism have been mixed

and ambivalent up to the present day; schools and policy makers might also show a marked

hierarchy of preferences in their attitudes towards different non-English languages (*ibid.*).

While pupils who speak or learn one of the traditional Modern Foreign Languages, such as

French, German or Spanish, would be seen as an asset, people with knowledge of some of

the non-Western European languages have been ignored, marginalised or even demonised.

For instance, after the riots that occurred in Northern England in the summer of 2001, the

lack of a good level of English and growing up in Punjabi or Bangla speaking households

were identified as some of the causes of young Asian men rioting and joining criminal

activities by a local MP in Bradford (Blackledge, 2004). In 2002, the Home Secretary, David

Blunkett, suggested that British Asian families should speak English at home to 'overcome

the schizophrenia which bedevils generational relationships' (Hinsliff, 2002). Recent reports

of increasing numbers of school pupils with a non-English first language frequently portray

the situation as a threat to the native/monolingual English speaking pupils and a strain on

the educational system, rather than acknowledging the additional linguistic and cultural

resources these pupils could bring to the classrooms (Paton, 2010; Loveys, 2010). Such

inconsistent and often still negative attitudes towards bi/multilingualism, closely linked with

other current social and political issues such as immigration policies and the concept of

Britishness, not only fail to consider the complexity of bi/multilingualism and language

development in young people, they can also create an unwelcoming environment for

children to use or learn their mother tongue or community languages.

Research on issues of English as an additional language (Leung et al., 1997; Conteh, 2007)

highlights the myth of 'an idealised native [English] speaker' and the diversity of the

sometimes homogenised 'other' pupils who are from non-English speaking backgrounds,

bilingual, or English as an additional language (EAL), L2 (second language) learners. The

complexities of language learning and language use in contemporary multicultural Britain

are hardly recognised in the mainstream education system (*ibid.*), and pupils who are

'bilingual' or 'EAL' by definition have been conceptualised as someone learning English as a

'social and linguistic outsider', as opposed to an 'idealised native speaker' (Leung et al.,

1997). Conversely, due to the dominance of English language in education and everyday life

in England, many British born/raised pupils from linguistic minority families (as seen in this

study and other previous research such as Li, 1994; Creese & Blackledge, 2010) often only

attain a certain level of knowledge of their parents and/or grandparents' language(s) while

English is their more dominant or developed language, even though they were initially

taught the non-English language at home.

Maintaining the minority language, which is often described as a 'mother tongue', 'family/community language', or 'heritage language', is a source of concern for many migrant and minority ethnic groups in the UK and around the world. The term heritage language, which originated from the US, will be used in the following chapters.

The widely accepted definition of heritage language by Valdes (2001) describes a heritage language learner broadly as an individual in an English dominant country who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, and who speaks or at least understands the language and is to some degree bilingual in the heritage language and in English. However, other scholars consider learners as heritage language learners regardless of their level of proficiency or whether the language is spoken at home at all; the language instruction is part of a larger effort to pass on cultural connections to younger generations. More specifically, these learners see their heritage language 'with a particular family relevance' (Fishman, 2001). Furthermore, the heritage language learner potentially manifests a set of ambiguities and complications (which will discussed in this chapter), which are perhaps less salient in the second or foreign language learner or mother tongue learner, and which can be sources of both challenges and opportunities (He, 2008).

The supplementary school 'movement' that started flourishing in the UK after the second World War was a response from ethnic and linguistic minority groups to set up community based schools and learning opportunities to meet educational needs, including teaching of heritage languages, that were not fulfilled by mainstream schooling. Creese and Martin (2006: 1) use the term 'complementary schools' to describe these heritage language schools in order to highlight 'the positive complementary function between these schools and mainstream schools for those who teach and learn in them' and 'their contribution to

political, social and economic life in the wider community'. A significant number of British

Chinese parents send their children to these weekend complementary schools, as they hope

to 'preserve' and 'pass down' Chinese language skills to the next generation (Francis et al,

2008). Some parents, as demonstrated in Francis et al's (2009) research, feel that learning

Chinese could instil a Chinese identity in young people.

6.1.2 The 'threat' of the language shift/loss and 'inauthentic' Chinese identity

Mesthrie (1999:42) defines language maintenance as 'the continuing use of a language in

the face of competition from a regionally and socially powerful or numerically stronger

language', and many voluntary, community based schools are set up in the UK by specific

linguistic, cultural or religious communities for the maintenance of their heritage language

and cultures to prevent these being lost over generations. Maintaining or preserving the

Chinese language seems to be particularly important in the Chinese diaspora around the

developed world (Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002; Verkuyten & de Wolf 2002; Mah, 2005;

Francis et al, 2009), as young people of Chinese heritage attending extracurricular, weekend

Chinese classes in the US, Canada, Australia or the UK seem to be a key aspect of of the

Chinese diasporic experience. In the recent Chinese complementary schooling in England

study (Francis et al, 2008), one interesting finding emerged is the very high importance

placed on speaking the Chinese language among the pupils, parents and teachers. Many

participants see Chinese language as a maker of ethnic or cultural identity, and some of the

adults feel that a change in language behaviour could result in someone 'without a (Chinese)

identity' or possessing an 'inauthentic' identity (Francis et al, 2009). Besides instrumental

and pragmatic purposes, for example to facilitate family communication and future

employment opportunities, many of the pupils also saw Chinese language and the ability to

speak Chinese as integrally bound up with identity. Many felt that not being able to speak

the language is embarrassing or shameful and that a non-speaker is not considered

authentically or 'properly' Chinese (*ibid.*). One of the aims of this research is to find out

whether this 'language as identity' belief is also prevalent among British Chinese youths who

have limited Chinese language skills (especially those who do not attend Chinese schools),

and the findings will be discussed in this chapter.

Language shift has been taking place in many minority language communities in the UK, and

the change of linguistic patterns has been significant in the British Chinese community. In

the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities (Modood et al,1997), a process of

community/heritage language linguistic decline was observed among most of the groups

that were surveyed, which included Indian, African Asian and Pakistani. The Bangladeshis,

being a more recent migrant group, were the only South Asian group not yet to experience

such linguistic decline at the time of the survey, and the decline in use of heritage language

went the furthest with the Chinese respondents. For the South Asian groups, while nearly all

aged 16-34 sometimes used a familial language when speaking with older family members,

only about half of the Indians and African Asians, 60% of Pakistanis and 85% of Bangladeshis

used an Asian language with family of their own age. Among the Chinese respondents, just

over 40% spoke Chinese with family of their own age, and nearly a quarter reported not

being able to speak a Chinese language (or Vietnamese in the cases of Vietnamese Chinese

families).

Li Wei's (1994) study on language choice and behaviours of different generations of British

Chinese residents in Tyneside saw a rapid inter-generational language shift from Chinese

monolingualism (grandparent generation) to English-dominant bilingualism (child

generation) take place in the community. Age was found to be the most significant factor

associated with this change in language choice and ability, as the younger, British born

children were educated in the English education system, while migrant generation

grandparents or parents had limited English language education or general schooling in

some cases. However, Li found variations existed both within and across generations. In that

study, the majority of the child generation were bilingual Cantonese and English speakers

that spoke English most of the time; nevertheless, some members became what Li

described as 'the functionally monolingual "host" language speaker', who used English as

their primary language for communication in all key social contexts and had limited

knowledge of Chinese. Li found that differences in language choice patterns were closely

related to speakers' network ties. Many in the grandparents' and parents' generation spoke

only or mainly Chinese and interacted only or mainly with other Chinese across different

generations and remained psychologically attached to their distant relations in Asia. The

children who adopted the English-dominant language choice patterns, similar to the

participants in this study, seemed to have moved away from community/ethnic-based

networks and developed extensive ties with non-Chinese peers from their own generation.

Studies of heritage language acquisition and instruction have examined the linguistic,

pedagogic, social and political issues related to heritage language learning (Creese & Martin,

2003; Creese et al, 2006; Maylor et al, 2010). Efforts to understand heritage language

learning should require examining (non-)learning in both formal, institutional settings (e.g.

schools) and informal settings (e.g. home, consumption of media) to gain a more thorough

picture of the language development process. Many of the British Chinese participants in

this study came from home environments that would define them as heritage language

learners, who have initially acquired certain levels of linguistic and cultural competence in a non-dominant language (i.e. any Chinese dialect) mainly through interactions with family and community members. However, in practice, their experiences often seem to fit somewhere between being a heritage language learner and a foreign language learner, who comes from a family who usually speak the dominant language (i.e. English) only and has chosen to learn a secondary language (i.e. Chinese) in mainstream and/or complementary schools (Kondo-Brown, 2006). The learning contexts at home, school and the wider communities or environments in the young people's lives greatly shape their attitudes towards the Chinese language(s) and their experiences in learning it. Moreover, as seen in this research, these learning contexts change and evolve over time in these young people's lives, so their heritage language development is also constantly changing. Although complementary schooling in the UK is still an under researched area, there is now a critical mass of recent and ongoing research (e.g. Creese et al 2008; Francis et al 2008; Kenner et al 2007; Creese and Martin 2006) on complementary schools among different ethno-linguistic communities. A number of studies explore the social, cultural and linguistic significance of complementary schools both within their communities and in wider society, and investigate how linguistic practices of minority ethnic pupils and their environments are used to negotiate their multilingual and multicultural identities (Lytra & Martin, 2009). This research attempts to examine an undocumented area - why some children do not attend these schools despite their apparent benefits. I am interested in finding out why certain sectors of the British Chinese population do not attend such schools (or attend only briefly), or are not engaged in learning Chinese at all. The findings related to the non-attendance of complementary school will be discussed in this chapter.

Although the original intention of this research was to speak to British Chinese pupils who had limited or no Chinese knowledge, the difficulties in sampling (as discussed in detail in the Methodology chapter) resulted in drawing a portion of the participants from Chinese organizations. As previously discussed, due to the interviewing circumstances and the recruitment process sometimes being heavily moderated by organisation gatekeepers, a number of young people who self described as being able to speak Chinese quite fluently (though their abilities and literacy knowledge varied) were interviewed. Their narratives would still be useful to be compared with those with limited Chinese knowledge and to give further insights into British Chinese young people's experiences. In fact, my own person understanding of 'not speaking much Chinese' changed over the course of the research, as I discovered and reflected the complexity of the young people's own perception of 'not speak (much) Chinese'.

6.2 Chinese knowledge and language practices at home
6.2.1 The linguistic diversity within the British Chinese 'community'

The British Chinese 'community' is far from being a homogenous group, and people originate from a range of migration trajectories and have varying levels of economic and cultural capital even just within the established population. While a family from Cyprus in the UK might speak Greek, Turkish, Armenian and/or English at home (Edwards & Alladina, 1991), a family of Chinese heritage could be from a number of geographical locations and may use a variety of Chinese dialects and non-Chinese languages. The wide range of linguistic heritage from the participants' Chinese families included Cantonese, Mandarin, Hakka, Hokkien, Malay, Vietnamese, Indonesian, French and a few other more localised Chinese dialects. Similar to some other community languages in the UK, such as Bengali,

certain Chinese forms/dialects, such as Mandarin, are considered 'standard' and have higher

status, while some others, for example Hakka, do not seem to be as valued. It is important

to emphasise that although Cantonese has been the unofficial lingua franca of the

established British Chinese community for the last few decades, a number of other mutually

unintelligible dialects, many originating from different parts of southern China, are being

spoken within the community. This reflects the fact that many British Chinese from Hong

Kong and other Southeast Asian countries are migrants or descendents from mainland

China. However, with the recent influx of migrants directly from mainland China and the

growth of China's economic power, Mandarin, also mutually unintelligible with Cantonese,

is rapidly gaining status within and outside the British Chinese community.

Meanwhile, the Hakka dialect, often the first language which was/is spoken by a large

number of post-war migrants from the rural areas of Hong Kong and some ethnic Chinese

from Southeast Asia, seems to be on the decline due to its lower status and Cantonese's

prior dominance in UK Chinese education. A large number of the pupils (23 out of 38) in this

study had family connections to Hong Kong (i.e. parents or grandparents from there), and

seven pupils reported having Hakka heritage present in their families alongside Cantonese.

Six pupils stated that one of their parents was born in Mainland China; however, the

Chinese language these families used was Cantonese, not Mandarin, as most were from the

southern regions of China. Only one participant had both parents from a Mandarin speaking

region.

Additionally, a significant number of the pupils had one or both parents who were ethnic

Chinese from areas outside Hong Kong/China. 12 pupils described having connections to

Malaysia/Singapore/Brunei (most of these parents were multilingual with knowledge of

Malay, Cantonese, Mandarin and often another Southern Chinese dialect, Hokkien), five had

ties to Vietnam and another pupil was linked to Mauritius. Their families were ethnic

Chinese whose ancestors migrated and sometimes settled abroad in previous generations;

their relationships to the ancestral 'homeland' and cultures could be different from those

who directly originated from Hong Kong/China. As a parallel, according to Bhachu (1985),

East African Sikh migrants in Britain were described as having a weaker orientation to a

'home country' and lower retention of the 'myth of return' compared to the direct migrants

from the Indian sub-continent. The fixed ideas in mainstream discourse about

'Chineseseness' might be even less applicable in describing experiences and identities of

people from transnational backgrounds. Moreover, four of the mixed Chinese participants

had non-Chinese parents that were from non-British backgrounds, so they had additional

heritage languages present in their families.

6.2.2 Participants' Chinese language skills and language usage at home

Even within a sample of 38 young people, the respondents represented a fascinating range

of home linguistic practises and language abilities. It is important to note that the pupils'

language abilities largely were based on their own descriptions and occasionally on other

information provided in the interviews. This is not a linguistics based study, so a formal

assessment to measure their abilities was not conducted as in Li's (1994) research. The

research focus is on how the individuals viewed their own language abilities, their attitudes

towards the language(s) and their experiences with the heritage language(s). The notion of

what it means to 'know' Chinese or be competent in the language might represent different

things to different people or communities. For example, although I realise that I normally

would describe myself as 'not knowing Mandarin', I can in fact generally manage ordering

food in Chinese restaurants and communicate in Mandarin to explain my vegetarian dietary

needs. I regard my Mandarin skills as rather minimal, so I present and see myself as 'not

knowing' the language, even though someone with a similar level of knowledge might well

describe him/herself as knowing 'some' Mandarin.

And during the research planning stage, I was introduced to an adult British Born Chinese

contact, whom I was told did not know/speak Chinese. It was later revealed upon meeting

him that he could understand and spoke some Hakka, but due to the language's 'peasant'

association and declining status in the British Chinese community, his knowledge of Hakka

may not have been regarded as knowing a 'real' language or Chinese. Nevertheless, besides

the young people's own reporting of their Chinese language knowledge, additional

information was sought, for example, 'So can you understand Chinese TV?', 'Can you read a

menu?', to contextualise their own descriptions. The table below shows the range of

Chinese language abilities of the participants.

Chinese knowledge (in any dialect)	Number of pupils (N=38)
None/ very limited	9
Some listening comprehension but limited speaking	9
Some knowledge of comprehension and speaking	13
Fluent or quite fluent speaking (abilities & literacy varied)	7

(i) 'I speak like no Chinese' – virtually no Chinese language knowledge

Nine of the participants had virtually no or very limited Chinese language (in any dialect)

knowledge. Three of these young people attended Chinese schooling (the duration varied,

will be discussed further later in the chapter), and perhaps unsurprisingly, almost all of

them, eight out of nine, were of mixed Chinese heritage. None of these nine participants'

parents were linked to the catering trade, and all of their Chinese parents were engaged in

non-ethnicized professional or technical occupations. Six were from twice migrant Chinese

backgrounds (Malaysia/Singapore and Mauritius) and five reported that their Chinese

parents, all UK born/raised, had limited or no knowledge of Chinese.

Federico, Livia, Nicky and Matilda, all mixed heritage with Malaysian Chinese mothers,

reported having limited contact with Chinese language at home for a number of reasons,

even though their mothers had knowledge of more than one Chinese dialect. Both Nicky

(aged 16) and Matilda (aged 12) revealed that their older siblings had higher commands of

Chinese. Brother and sister Federico and Livia (aged 15 and 13), reported not speaking

Chinese but using Italian at home sometimes as their Italian grandmother occasionally

stayed with them, and they were both learning Italian at their mainstream school. On the

other hand, brothers Ian and Dan (aged 17 and 15), of Chinese and white British

background, explained that their Chinese mother was born in Hong Kong but was adopted

by a White English couple from a young age and did not know any Chinese. For Callum (aged

13), he described his mother's Cantonese knowledge as 'basically know[ing] the stuff of an 8

year old' since she also moved to the UK from Hong Kong at a young age. Neve's (aged 15)

London born mother was from a Chinese Mauritian background and knew French more

fluently than Cantonese, according to Neve. Neve who said that her own knowledge of

Cantonese was limited to certain Chinese food items, such as dim sum, through eating with

her Chinese grandparents and visiting Chinatown.

Louise (aged 17), whose parents were both Malaysian/Singaporean Chinese, was the only

non-mixed heritage pupil among those who reported little/no Chinese knowledge. She lived

with her UK raised mother and also stated that her Chinese knowledge was limited to food

items and a few other things. She revealed the reasons for her mother's limited Chinese

knowledge:

> my mum's Chinese is sort of limited to how good she was when she was two,
> because she, when she, she only spoke Chinese when she was a child, but when she
> started primary school she used to get bullied for not being able to speak English
> good enough, so um she sort of, her older sister only started talking to her in English
> so she wouldn't get bullied as much, and um so by the time she left primary school,
> she mostly, she could hardly speak any Chinese and spoke a lot of English.

Although racial relations and attitudes towards bi/multilingualism have changed over the

years in the UK, participants in this current research still reported incidents of being

ridiculed for speaking Chinese at school (see Chapter 5 on racist/racialised experiences at

school). Such negative experiences, brought out by racism and inadequate understanding of

bi/multilingualism, people like Louise's mother were discouraged from relating to or

embracing their heritage language(s) and culture. Parker's (1995) study of British Chinese

young people found his respondents only expressed their Chineseness in Chinese only

environments (e.g. home, extended family). Ching-He Huang, Taiwanese-born British food

writer and TV chef, recalled that as a teenager growing up in England, she desperately

wanted to hide her Chineseness and thought of dying her hair to blend in with her White

peers (BBC2, 2012). In addition to the situation of having fewer Chinese complementary

schools established in the 1970s/1980s and prior, some of the British Chinese parents who

were born/grew up in the UK might have faced with the greater pressure to assimilate, as

seen in Louise's example, to the monolingual ideal and did not have the opportunity to learn

or use Chinese.

(ii) 'I can't really speak, I can't hold a conversation' – limited Chinese speaking skills

A further nine young people described themselves as having some listening comprehension of Chinese but did not/could not speak it. These nine young people were of full Chinese heritage; most of their parents were Hong Kong Chinese but a few also had connections to Malaysia and Vietnam. All of the pupils' parents were fluent in Cantonese, and sometimes with additional Chinese dialects and other languages. Most of these parents were fluent in English; two pupils described their parents' English as 'average' or 'okay'. Five of these young people attended Chinese school. Siblings Emma and Matthew (aged 17 and 15), whose professional/middle class parents, from Hong Kong and Malaysia, came to the UK for university as young adults, reported speaking virtually only English at home. Emma and Matthew, who both attended Mandarin Chinese schools for a number of years and passed their Chinese (Mandarin) GCSE exams, described themselves only understanding some Chinese but barely being able to speak any (before 2009, speaking skill was not required in order to obtain a full certificate). Emma explained that the only occasions she would speak Chinese was talking to her grandmothers who did not speak English:

> I speak to my grandma in Cantonese but its very limited, erm because she only speaks Cantonese […] my other grandma only speaks in Mandarin [and Hokkien, which Emma did not know], but I find it really hard to communicate to her…so we kind of just like use gestures and use very few words in her language

Seven other pupils revealed that their parents would speak to them in Chinese or a mixture of Chinese and English, and they would reply mostly or only in English. These young people could be classified as what linguists would call 'passive' or 'receptive' bilinguals (Romaine 1995). Four of these participants had parents working in the catering trade, and the other

pupils' parents worked in a range of lower middle or working class professions. Although a number of these pupils said their parents tried to encourage them to learn and speak more Chinese, some young people, like Sun (aged 16), felt that they 'just haven't got used to like speaking it normally'. Such sentiment might seem surprising coming from children raised by Chinese speaking parents; however, the language environment at home could be more complex than it seems on the surface.

As seen in a number of language shift models (Kondo-Brown, 2006; Fishman, 2001), when children start socialising in the dominant language outside home, the child's first learnt non-English language(s) may remain strong or could gradually become secondary to the dominant language. Winnie (aged 13) described her Vietnamese Chinese father and Mainland Chinese mother, who worked at a restaurant and salon respectively, as speaking English that 'ain't that good'. However, they would speak to her in Cantonese, and she generally replied back in English, which her parents could understand. When their parents can speak/understand English, there is arguably a weaker pragmatic 'push' and less incentive for the young people to speak Chinese at home. Similarly, sisters Josephine and Christine (aged 14 and 12), who had Cantonese speaking parents originated from Hong Kong, never attended Chinese schools and both identified themselves as only knowing how to say a few things in Cantonese.

In contrast, their adult sister, Elizabeth, could hold basic Cantonese conversations. Their parents, who owned and ran a Chinese restaurant, believed the difference in their daughters' Chinese abilities was explained by the fact that they spent more time with their eldest daughter in her early childhood, while when they later started their catering business, the other two daughters were partially taken care of by an Eastern European childminder,

and as a result had less contact with the parents and Cantonese in their early years. The catering trade generally has long and sometimes unsociable hours, and a typical working day at a Chinese takeaway, often a self-reliant family business, might last as many as 16 hours (Benton & Gomez, 2008). Such a demanding work pattern would undoubtedly limit the time that parents in this sector could spend with their children and help to develop their children's Chinese language development, while English is normally present in much of the daily activities (e.g. school, seeing friends) and surroundings (e.g. shops, television) in a child's life. The fact of having Chinese speaking parents does not always guarantee having a robust Chinese language environment to develop Chinese fluency. Among the five sibling pairs from the same family in this study, they all only had either no or limited Chinese language, and there was no significant differences on their language skills or views on learning Chinese between each pair.

And as illustrated in Josephine and Christine's example, the heritage language development process at home is complex, and Chinese language skills among siblings from the same family could vary. Bon (aged 16) and Daniel (aged 17), who both reported having Chinese comprehension but limited speaking ability, also revealed that their older siblings had higher commands of Chinese. In fact, a few studies (Leopold, 1949; Manaster et al, 1998; Kamada, 1999) that researched the disparity in bilingual proficiency in siblings of the same family found that firstborns were more likely to acquire a higher level knowledge of the minority language. It is likely that British Chinese parents, irrespective of their occupations, would have less time to help develop their children's Chinese knowledge with subsequent offspring and might have less energy for the cause, especially if previous efforts with the older children seemed futile. Bon recalled that since his older brother and sister attended

Chinese school and did not like it, his middle class, Hong Kong Chinese parents hired him a

private tutor instead, though the tutoring only lasted for two months. He felt that his

parents would like him and his siblings to learn Chinese and had attempted to help;

nevertheless, they 'accept that it's kind of hard for us to learn it'.

Additionally, there are other factors that could contribute to less favourable conditions to

for young people to learn or practise Chinese. While Bon expressed a disinterest in learning

languages in general and a difficulty in getting used to speaking Chinese, Daniel (aged 17)

articulated a higher level of reluctance in speaking the language. When asked about his

Chinese knowledge, he admitted:

> I have no problem really understanding it, but umm I'm not that confident in really
> speaking it… err, that's the only problem really.

His parents, who moved from Hong Kong in their 20s and owned/ran a takeaway, would

usually speak Cantonese to him, and he described that they would understand his English

responses most of the time. The family had Chinese satellite TV stations at home, and Daniel

said he would occasionally watch Cantonese programmes with his parents, which reflected

that he had a decent level of comprehension and did not seem to hold particular negative

feelings towards the language. Furthermore, he even revealed that when looking back, it

seemed advantageous to know Chinese and he perhaps would have tried to 'get my Chinese

up to a better standard'. However, when probed if he would ever speak Cantonese, he

acknowledged that he rarely did and would 'try to avoid it'. He said the only time he would

speak the language was if he was visiting Hong Kong (he visited once) 'where I'd have to

actually talk in Cantonese cos they wouldn't understand in English'. He knew that his

parents, especially his father, tried to encourage him to speak more Chinese; however, he

recognized that he usually just avoided trying. When he was asked to further explain his

reluctance in speaking Chinese:

Daniel: I just don't think err, the fluency's there, err if, when you speak it doesn't really sound that right… And err, rather than embarrass yourself, just speak in English the language that you're comfortable with

Interviewer: Mmmm, has anyone like commented that you don't sound fluent enough or something? Like gave you the idea or…

Daniel: Err…well, sometimes my [older] brother is like, err… 'Are you even Chinese (laughs)? You can't really speak it properly…'

Interviewer: Mhmm

Daniel: And then I'm like, oh well, erm oh well… I just don't really mind it

What Daniel described as 'doesn't really sound that right' was echoed by a few other more

fluent participants, who reported being told that they spoke Chinese 'with an accent'. Even

Louise (aged 17), who grew up in an English speaking household and had limited knowledge

of Chinese, depicted her Chinese knowledge as:

> I know what Chinese is meant to sound like even though, like, I can tell if someone's saying something wrong, like if someone's saying something with a really bad English accent I can tell. I can hear the intonation.

While some British Chinese are ridiculed by non-Chinese people for speaking Chinese or

speaking Chinese accented English, those who speak Chinese with a non-'proper', 'really bad

English accent' that 'doesn't sound that right' could face the reverse stigma from within the

British Chinese 'community'. Although Daniel brushed off his brother's mocking of his

authenticity as a Chinese person, he was clearly affected by the potential embarrassment

that could be caused by his level of command of spoken Cantonese. Spoken Chinese, a tonal

language, is considered to be a difficult language for native English speakers; while tones in

English can be used to communicate an attitude, different tones in Chinese convey

completely different words/characters. Fiona (aged 14), who knew more Chinese than the

participants that have been discussed so far, described herself regularly using some Chinese but speaking with 'a huge accent'. She expressed her frustrations with learning the language and difficulties in getting the right tones:

> It's hard... ermm and sometimes I think it's like impossible! Cos it's just so many characters, and so many different strokes we have to learn and stuff like that, sometimes if you speak it wrong it sounds like a different word and just gets really annoyed with that...

Linguists such as Fishman (1971) argue that the notion of mastering both languages equally with native-like competence, often referred to as 'balanced bilingualism', is an ideal because bilinguals are rarely equally fluent in both languages in all contexts, and Romaine (1995) further suggests that this ideal is largely 'an artefact of a theoretical perspective which takes the monolingual as its point of reference.' The unrealistically high expectations of British born/raised Chinese young people to pronounce the correct tones and speak like a native speaker from Hong Kong or China place pressure on young people to conform to certain essentialised ideas of being Chinese. The notion of an 'idealised native speaker' (Leung et al., 1997) and accent will be discussed further in relation to Chinese education later in this chapter.

Although other pupils might also have experienced similar, or some level of negative sentiments towards their perceived inadequate Chinese knowledge, they might not have been willing or able to discuss these issues. This sense of guilt or embarrassment might have prevented some other potential participants from wanting to take part in the research, as was suggested by one of the contacts/informants (see Methodology in Chapter 4). On the other hand, not all participants who had limited Chinese abilities would feel negatively about their situation or think much about their language skills at all. Emma's brother,

Matthew (aged 15), felt that 'I'm Chinese and it'd be quite nice to be able to talk Chinese',

and he spoke candidly about thinking that perhaps it 'is really bad' that he did not speak

Chinese and his family did not celebrate Chinese holidays. However, he did not seem to

experience the deeper sense of internalised shame that some other young people felt. And

for Vivien (aged 13), she described feeling more British than Chinese and communicated

that she was not that interested in learning Chinese. Although she talked about how some

of her Hong Kong Chinese mother's friends were surprised to find that she did not speak

Chinese, she did not seem to be affected by such encounters. She revealed that she could

understand a fair amount of Cantonese that was spoken by her parents at home but did not

speak it:

Vivien: But like I would be able to [speak Chinese] if I wanted to, but I don't really do it that much.

Interviewer: How come?

Vivien: Because I don't really, I don't know, in England like no one speaks Chinese apart from my parents, yeah, I don't say it to them.

In Vivien's perspective, perhaps she did not view a high importance in the Chinese language,

and therefore her inability to speak it seemed inconsequential. Leung *et al*. (1997) looked at

experiences of South Asian pupils in London and saw a number of young people claimed

only a minimum attachment to their supposed mother tongue or family language; some also

described having a higher competence and interest in English and schooled modern

foreign/European languages. Although Vivien probably realised that it was in effect untrue

that 'no one speaks Chinese' apart from her parents, as in point of fact she mentioned her

meetings with her mother's Chinese speaking friends, perhaps she deemed these

encounters as largely insignificant compared to their daily interactions with her English

speaking friends, from a school with a largely white British population in an affluent suburban area. A wide range of factors, such as the young people's age, family backgrounds and experiences in learning and using Chinese and English, all play a role in shaping their Chinese language development and their on-going relationship with the language. The complex and often paradoxical relationships between languages and identities, especially related to the notions of 'Chineseness' and 'Britishness', will be further discussed in the next chapter.

(iii) 'Sometimes my accent's not that good or I don't know hard words' – some Chinese language skills and fluency

A further 13 pupils described themselves as being able to understand and speak some Chinese, with varied levels of ability, though not to a fluent level. Two of these pupils were mixed Chinese heritage with non-white British fathers (one Greek Cypriot and one Pakistani), and three other pupils had one or both of their Chinese parents that were born/raised in the UK; all had Hong Kong connections. 11 of them reported having at least one Cantonese speaking parent and using Cantonese at home; most of these parents had links to Hong Kong, and two pupils were of Vietnamese Chinese backgrounds while four had one or both parents from Malaysia (who all also spoke other Chinese dialects and Malay). Two other pupils reported using Mandarin at home; one pupil's parents were both from the Mandarin speaking region in North-eastern China, and another pupil's mother was from an ethnic Chinese family that settled in Brunei. Six of the young people described one or both of their parents as speaking limited or non-fluent English; half of these young people had one or both parents working in Chinese catering and another pupil described her father spending much of his time working in Hong Kong. Among the group, about half of them (six

pupils) had parents working in the catering trade and other parents worked in a range of jobs, from professional/technical to working class/low skilled occupations. All 13 young people attended or were still attending Chinese schools; the length of schooling varied though most attended for at least a few years. Most of them also had some Chinese literacy, though their abilities also varied.

The language practices at home reflected an even more diverse range of multilingualism and code switching among these 13 participants. All the young people described speaking only or mainly English with their siblings at home (if applicable), though a few said they would occasionally mix in some Chinese. Eight young people reported that their Chinese parents spoke mainly Chinese to them at home, and they also talked Chinese to their parents, though a number of them described also mixing in English. Jackie's (aged 17) Malaysian Chinese mother knew English, Malay and a few Chinese dialects and worked in the public sector, but her father, who came from Hong Kong and worked as a chef at a takeaway, only had limited knowledge of English. She described her Chinese knowledge as 'alright' and occasionally had difficulties with 'hard words'; when communicating with her parents at home, she would 'speak a mixture of Cantonese and English back. Sometimes if I don't know the word in Cantonese I substitute it in English and stuff like that. I call it Chinglish!'

Fiona (aged 14), also reported speaking Cantonese mixed with English to her parents; she added that, 'sometimes my dad [a doctor] speaks to me in English if I don't understand what they're talking about.' On the other hand, Alice (aged 14), who described her spoken Chinese as 'not very good' but could understand Chinese reasonably well, spoke just Cantonese with her Vietnamese Chinese parents, a chef and housewife, as their English was 'not good'; she found learning Chinese at weekend classes was useful in family

communication and described having to translate for her parents at times. Although many

of these young people most likely learnt Chinese as their first language in their early years at

home, their second language, English, has become the dominant language and their Chinese

knowledge arguably did not develop at the same pace due to a number of reasons. The

weakening, or possibly loss, of the first language, termed as 'first language attrition' (Seliger

& Vago, 1991) by linguists, probably could be used to describe some of the young people's

experiences, as seen in Jessica's (aged 16) example:

Jessica: Um, I can speak [Cantonese] quite fluently, but since I've entered secondary school, it's kind of like gone down, so I am speaking more English around the house now. […]
Interviewer: Can you read or write then?

Jessica: I used to… (laughs) But like I said, when I've gone to secondary school, kinda all changed, so I don't have time to get on my [Chinese school] studies, have gone down.

According to Jessica, her Hong Kong Chinese parents' (takeaway owner/operators) English

was 'a little bit iffy' but they would mix in some English when speaking to her. She had been

attending Chinese school for about 10 years but admitted not having as much time to spend

on her Chinese school homework when mainstream school studies became more

demanding. She felt that her parents had given her more pressure to learn Chinese in the

past, but 'now they're kinda like give me some space, so I can like get my GCSEs over and

done with and get better grades.' The increasing frequency of use and function of English

outside, and sometimes even inside, the home environment inevitably might lead to the

diminishing role of Chinese and possibly loss of knowledge. In a study on Asian American

university students (including American born and East and South Asian migrants) conducted

by Hinton (1999), the phenomenon of first language attrition was discussed in almost all the

participants' recollection about their personal language history. Therefore, one's knowledge

and proficiency of his/her heritage language is not fixed over time. As seen in these examples, young people do not inherently become fluent in their parents' or grandparents' language, and their heritage language development is an-going process, in which bilingual learners can improve or lose their language knowledge over time due to change of circumstances.

For five other young people, the language choice patterns at home were even more complex and intriguing. Dac (aged 17), became more interested in learning the Chinese language in recent years and described trying to speak Cantonese to his Vietnamese Chinese mother, who worked as a catering assistant at a school and a waitress in the evening, while she, on the other hand, was seeking to improve her English and tried to speak English with Dac. He felt that his Chinese was not very fluent and often asked his mother for assistance to build up his Chinese vocabulary. Another pupil, Amy (aged 15), reported that her whole family communicated mostly in English at home though sometimes mixing in Cantonese. Both of her parents had Hong Kong connections; while her father was born and raised in the UK, her mother moved to England at the age of 10. Interestingly, although her father was apparently not fluent in Cantonese while both parents were fluent in Hakka, they chose to use Cantonese and rarely spoke Hakka at home (more on the use of Hakka will be discussed later in this chapter). Michelle (aged 15), also described generally communicating in English at home with her UK born mother because 'it's easier that way.' However, her father, originally from eastern China, spent much of his time working in Hong Kong and 'doesn't speak English'. Michelle would speak Cantonese to her father whenever he was home in the UK but explained 'like sometimes my Cantonese isn't that great so, yeah.'

For Jameela (aged 11), who was born in Australia to a Pakistani father and Bruneian Chinese mother, English was also the main language that was spoken in her transnational and multilingual family. She described how her mother used to teach the children spoken Mandarin at home and would sometimes communicate in simple phrases in Mandarin with the family; her father, who worked for an international company, also learnt some Mandarin. Jameela also spoke about her parents' occasional use of Malay when trying to exclude the children; however she revealed that, 'I can understand some Malay, so I can understand what they say.' In Christina's multilingual household, she mainly communicated in English with her Greek Cypriot father, though she said he would sometimes include some Greek words. She described that her Malaysian Chinese mother could speak English but not to a fluent level; her mother tended to speak Cantonese to her, while she would reply in Cantonese to some extent and would supplement with English. She also wanted to learn Mandarin so sometimes asked her mother to speak Mandarin to her as well.

(iv) 'I'd say I'm quite fluent in Chinese yeah' – confident Chinese speakers

Although this project set out to explore the experiences of young people of Chinese heritage with limited Chinese knowledge, a number of pupils who self-identified as being fluent/quite fluent in spoken Chinese were interviewed due to a number of reasons previously discussed in the Methodology chapter. Their relational positioning as 'fluent' speakers could serve as useful points of reference and comparisons. Seven participants described themselves as understanding and speaking Chinese fluently/quite fluently. All the young people in this group except for one had at least some literacy skills and attended/had been attending Chinese school for an extended period of time. Four of these pupils had links to Hong Kong, and a few had backgrounds linked to Vietnam, Malaysia and southern China;

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two pupils also had UK born/raised parents. All but one of the participants (the same exception as above) were UK born and had one or both parents working at a takeaway (most were owned by the families); the family of the other pupil, Sarah (aged 18), moved from Hong Kong, where her father was in the public service under the former British government, to the UK in her early years. It appeared that those young people who have developed higher level of Chinese skills were more likely to be from families who were engaged in catering businesses.

Most of these young people reported that their parents spoke mainly or predominantly Cantonese to them and they replied in a similar manner; a few even reported using Chinese with their siblings occasionally. Catherine (aged 16), reported that her family communicated in half English and half Chinese at home, though she revealed that Cantonese was her first language and was the dominant and stronger language when she was younger. Four out of the seven pupils described one or both of their parents as speaking non-fluent or limited English, but some other parents possessed some proficiency or were fluent speakers. It is perhaps significant to note that although the parents' language abilities and attitudes generally seem to affect the language choices and patterns at home, there are incidents, though none in this sample, where children and parents speak different languages and exhibit communications difficulties. During the Chinese complementary schooling research (Francis et al, 2008) that I was previously involved with, one mother I spoke to confided her frustration with the communication breakdown between her son and husband, as her son refused to speak Chinese, while her husband did not speak English.

One of the participants of this study, Christy (aged 16), felt that her Chinese was constantly improving through Chinese schooling and regular practice with her Vietnamese Chinese

parents, who spoke limited English. Similarly, Siuking (aged 17) felt that the regular Chinese

television viewing with his parents at home also helped his Chinese knowledge. It is

noteworthy to point out that all the relatively fluent speakers had access to Chinese

language media, for example the satellite Chinese channels, and quite a few of them, like

Siuking, talked about watching Chinese programmes with their parents. In fact, Jessica (aged

16), who identified herself as not very fluent and believed her Chinese knowledge had 'gone

down' as a result of entering secondary school and spending less time on Chinese

schoolwork, considered watching Chinese television with her parents as significant in

helping her to learn and maintain the language in her earlier years. She explained:

> Yeah, we used to like watch it [Chinese channel] every evening and stuff like that […]
> Yeah, I used to watch them when I was younger, that's how my Chinese got better
> when I was younger. But soon my parents left me at home (smile) to like study, so I
> haven't got to watching them, so my Chinese has like gone down after that.

Additionally, all the fluent/relatively fluent participants had visited Asia, where they had

family relations, more than once and some reported going regularly. In the Fourth National

Survey of Ethnic Minorities (Modood et al, 1997), the Chinese and Pakistanis were most

likely to have visited their places of origin among the surveyed ethnic minority groups, and

British Chinese were most likely to have made more than one visit within a five year period.

In the study on Chinese complementary schools (Francis et al, 2008), a number of pupils

spoke about the application of Chinese learnt in complementary schools in Britain in

accessing current popular culture in the Far East and during travel to Hong Kong (Francis et

al, 2009). Interfacing with Asia or contact with Chinese 'culture' could improves and

maintain young people's Chinese language skills, and the impact of these activities on young

people's Chinese language learning and identities will be further explored in the next

chapter.

6.2.3 Bi/multilingual space at home

As seen in this group of participants, all except two participants (brothers Ian and Dan) lived in families where more than one language was used to various degrees. Around England, many children and adults from linguistic and/or ethnic minority backgrounds use a range of languages, including English, naturally and flexibly to mediate and negotiate the range of social practices and contexts they encounter. Bi/multilingualism is a natural part of their lives, as it is for many people around the world. Many young people (32 out of 38) in this study reported some level of bi/multilingualism as taking place in their homes and sometimes with their extended families and gave interesting examples of code switching and language mixing. Language mixing and 'crossing' (e.g. Rampton, 2005) have been observed in among members from other ethnic minority communities in Britain. Bi/multilingualism in various degrees is an ordinary experience at home for many people linked to migrant backgrounds.

Christy (aged 16) said she mostly communicated in Cantonese with her Vietnamese Chinese parents; however, she explained that her father liked to give her exposure to other languages as well and would occasionally speak some Mandarin and Vietnamese at home. Christy appeared to enjoy improving her Cantonese with the help of her parents and by attending Chinese school; she also appreciated the fact that she could use a bit of Mandarin and Vietnamese, in additional to Cantonese, to communicate with different people in her visits to China and using Mandarin to help some of the newcomers from China at her mainstream school. Christina (aged 16), of Greek Cypriot and Chinese heritage, attended both Greek and Chinese schools and used some Cantonese with her Malaysian Chinese mother. She spoke candidly about how she and her brother normally communicated in

English 'but we cuss each other in Chinese, but then he cusses me in Greek because he knows I won't understand as much.' Catherine (aged 16) described how her family enjoyed watching East Asian drama series (not limited to Chinese language ones) and they would regularly pick up words and phrases in different languages, like Japanese and Korean, and use them at home. The use and mix of multiple languages, including English, is part of family and daily life for some of these young people.

On the other hand, not all languages in the family's linguistic repertoire are 'passed down', used or even acknowledged. English, being the dominant language in the UK society, was used in all the families, even though the usage was more restricted to the younger generations for those with parents with limited English proficiency. Cantonese, arguably the lingua franca in the established British Chinese community, was the most mentioned language reported being used by all the participants and their family members. Hakka, the first language of many post-war Hong Kong migrants originating from rural areas, is often seen as a low status, 'useless' dialect; the decline of the language and a shift to Cantonese has been observed among families settled in the UK (Francis et al, 2009). Among the eight pupils that reported one or both parents as being from a Hakka background, five described having varied levels of knowledge of the language and only three of these people could speak it. Siuking (aged 17) stated that his parents used Hakka at home when he was young but switched to Cantonese since. Kinming (aged 15) revealed that he used to speak Hakka but 'I don't remember anymore'. Shirley (aged 13), who seemed to have a stronger Chinese network (i.e. extended family in the UK, attended Chinese school and church, admitted to socialise more with Chinese friends) than most other participants, was the only person that

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have maintained the Hakka language, along with having some knowledge of Taishanese, another regional dialect from Southern China which was spoken by her mother.

Hokkien, another southern Chinese dialect that is used by many Malaysian Chinese, was reported spoken by one or both parents among seven of the participants. None of these young people could speak Hokkien and only two pupils, Christina and Nicky (both aged 16), described having very limited knowledge of it. This might be partially due to the fact that most Malaysian Chinese, as seen in the sample, could speak a few Chinese dialects, along with Malay and often at least some English. Their ethnic Chinese status and multilingual repertoire in Southeast Asia probably makes language maintenance an even more complex matter.

'Passing down' all the heritage languages is undoubtedly neither practical nor desirable, and the decision to maintaining certain languages over others is a political act. The growing interest in Mandarin (will be discussed further in this chapter) might see the marginalisation of Cantonese language. The language hegemony links to power and status issues, and the production of a particular version of 'culture' and 'heritage language' is part of a complex process through which diaspora Chinese sought present a particular version of Chinese identity (as seen in Chinese schools) and a more homogeneous group identity (Francis et al, 2009). Nevertheless, young people's home environment serves as an important space for many to learn and explore different languages and linguistic, and arguably ethnic identities, which will be discussed in Chapter 7.

6.3 Chinese schooling and pupils' attitudes towards learning Chinese

6.3.1 Experience of learning Chinese

Chinese schooling/education	Number of pupils*
Never had any Chinese lessons/classes	8
Home lessons by parents	3
Informal lessons at mainstream school	2
Formal lessons at mainstream school	1
Private tuition	4
Attending Chinese school	10
Attended Chinese school but did not finish	12
Finished Chinese school	6

* Some pupils had more than one form of schooling

While the majority of the participants received at least some exposure to the Chinese language at home or from their extended friends and family network, many of them also had Chinese language schooling in more formalised settings. The most popular form of Chinese education is attending weekend Chinese schools, which generally take place once a week on Saturday or Sunday and last for 2-3 hours. However, other forms of Chinese tuition were also used by a few other young people, and a small portion of the interviewees never received any form of Chinese schooling.

(i) Chinese complementary schools

Complementary schooling has a long history in Britain. These schools, which are set up by linguistic and/or ethnic minority communities to address needs not met by mainstream education, are known by a variety of terms, such as 'supplementary', 'mother-tongue' or 'community' schools. Chinese complementary schools have a particularly long history in the

UK, as records show that Chinese classes held to teach British Chinese children were first started in the early twentieth century, and the major development of Chinese schools started when the post-war migrant population's demand for Chinese education steadily grew. Due to a number of political and social reasons, Cantonese has been the chosen language to be instructed at the majority of the older Chinese schools since their inception (Francis et al, 2009). However, in recent years, newer Mandarin schools were established in the UK, some of the Cantonese based schools have added Mandarin classes to accommodate the 'Mandarin trend', and in acknowledgement of the changing population demographic, as more Mainland Chinese enter Britain. These schools are organised and run by voluntary based Chinese associations, religious groups, or concerned parents, and their staff, facilities and resources could vary significantly (Mau et al, 2009). Over 70% (28) of the participants had attended or were still attending Chinese schools learning Cantonese or Mandarin Chinese. Six of the older pupils finished at their Chinese schooling (classes, or graduation, usually end at Chinese GCSE level; a small number of schools offer Chinese A-Level curriculum), and ten pupils were still attending Chinese schools. Eight of these participants took GCSE Chinese (Cantonese or Mandarin) exams. A further 11 young people stopped attending before they finished due to a variety of reasons.

Among the 28 young people that had Chinese schooling, 10 reported having an overall positive experience at their weekend classes, four described their experiences as neutral, 12 revealed feeling negative about their time at Chinese school, and a further two explained their feelings changed during their time at Chinese school. The pupils that communicated having a positive experience at Chinese weekend classes found the schooling enjoyable. Amy (aged 15) said, 'it's fun coming here and it's different [from English school].' Christy

(aged 16) 'quite like[d] Chinese school' because 'every time I learn like a, another language, I find it quite interesting, and I actually quiet enjoy it, and plus like having friends I meet.' Research in Chinese complementary schools found many pupils spoke of the social function of Chinese school to facilitate friendship, importantly Chinese friendship (Archer et al, 2010). Since most British Chinese pupils are relatively isolated geographically compared to others in established minority ethnic groups and are often in a minority of minorities at their mainstream schools, Chinese schools could be seen as 'safe spaces' away from racism (Creese et al., 2006) and materialise the imagined ethnic community, the British Chinese collective (Archer et al, 2010).

Jessica (aged 16), who had been at Chinese school for 10 years, admitted that she did not like the schooling when she was younger; however, she eventually accepted this Sunday morning routine as part of her life and felt having friends there made the experience 'alright'. Siuking (aged 17), who attended for 10 years and completed his Chinese GCSE exam, also perceived Chinese school as 'more of a routine' that he just 'got along with it'; however, he felt generally positive about the experience as it was not so demanding that otherwise would affect his mainstream schoolwork, and he also could 'learn about my own culture.' Christina (aged 16), who was of Chinese and Greek-Cypriot heritage, commented that she liked learning the language and especially enjoyed doing the Chinese songs in early years and dancing (which is usually taught separately from the language lessons). For Grace (aged 14), she spoke highly of her Chinese school experience, describing the lessons were 'quite well structured' and 'the teachers are really nice, they like volunteered, and erm, yeah people here generally really nice as well.' In fact, both Siuking and Grace's mothers had taught at their Chinese schools.

Almost all the Chinese complementary schools in the UK are organised by groups of individuals, or as part of an existing Chinese community or religious organisation and most receive limited or no financial support from the local authorities; staff members, most of whom do not hold formal teaching qualifications, usually work as volunteers or only receive a stipend (Mau et al, 2009). One of the interviewees, Alice (aged 14), who decided to stop attending her Chinese lessons due to loss of interest after being at the school for seven years, was asked to stay to help out as a teaching assistant in a lower year class. Many such community based schools undoubtedly were well managed and have very dedicated staff supporting the cause of teaching language and 'culture' to the younger generations; however, as observed in recent research (ibid.), staff at these organisations often felt that the teaching and development of the schools was hindered by issues of funding, resources, facilities, staffing and the relatively short-lesson time (2-3 hours a week during term time). The less formal learning space can enable closer interpersonal engagement and relations between teachers and pupils, which was highly valued by pupils in the previous study (Archer et al, 2009). However, similar to the situation in mainstream schools, not all complementary schools have equal levels of funding and resources, and there has been scepticism (and some criticism) of the quality of teaching at such 'amateur', community based schools, which constantly face various challenges to keep the schools running (Mau et al, 2009).

Perhaps significantly, among the 11 participants who articulated having an overall negative experience at Chinese school, many of their dissatisfactions were related to the teaching and learning. Similar to the pupils in the Francis et al's (2008) Chinese complementary schooling research, a number of the interviewees complained about learning Chinese being

boring or difficult (Archer et al, 2009). A few interviewees in this study went even further to depict their schools as 'not good', and some were quite negative in saying they 'hated' the experience and describing the schooling as 'a waste of time.' Both Michelle and Kit (both aged 15) complained about being in classrooms among pupils who were too disruptive and did not want to learn. A number of young people also felt that the limited contact time they had at Chinese school, usually only two or three hours a week during school term time, was insufficient, and many 'forgot' what they learnt easily. Arthur (aged 12) explained that, 'when we learn stuff we don't properly memorise it in our heads and normally I forget it the next week, yeah.' Winnie (aged 13) felt that the lessons were too short, a sentiment shared by Chinese complementary school teachers (Mau et al, 2009), and believed she could learn more if they were longer. Perhaps as a result, those who do not completely follow the lessons might become further disengaged and disinterested in the learning and fall further behind.

Siblings Emma (aged 17) and Matthew (aged 15), who grew up in a predominantly English speaking family, both described being 'bad' at Chinese school and not learning much, or in Matthew's case 'didn't learn anything', after being there for six years or more. Matthew, who was a high achieving pupil at a selective independent school and also studied German and French there, admitted finding learning Chinese very hard and having much difficulty with the non-alphabet based text. Although both of his professional class parents spoke some Cantonese to each other, they generally only spoke English with Emma and Matthew with only occasional household use phrases, like 'sic fan (eat rice/have a meal)'. Both Emma and Matthew appeared to have limited contact with the Chinese language on a regular

basis. The family attended a Chinese church, but both young people participated in the English speaking youth group and English congregation.

Matthew, who resented missing his rugby matches due to Chinese school attendance on Saturdays, described that he 'used to just sit there and talk with my friends the whole time' at Chinese class. He acknowledged that although he got assistance on homework from his mother, he completed his homework and tests without actual comprehension of the material. Emma recalled panicking two months before her GCSE Chinese exam upon a suddenly realisation of how ill prepared she was for it and did not want a low mark to 'go down in my record'. Consequently, her parents hired a private tutor to help her to learn all the necessary vocabularies, and she passed the exam with a satisfactory mark. Matthew had a similar experience of passing the exam after tutoring, but both admitted that they have forgot almost everything since. However, both young people expressed positive attitudes towards learning Chinese, especially Emma, who hoped to learn more in the future (e.g. at university) and did not think her experience at Chinese school 'was the best way' to learn. Matthew added that he did not have the regular opportunity to use Chinese and felt that he 'never really learn any grammar so I can't, I can't really talk', even though he had some vocabularies required for the exam.

Due to the nature of the language (i.e. non-phonetic written script, tone based pronunciations), learning Chinese requires a certain amount of didactic, 'rote' learning that might appear alien to UK educated pupils (Mau at el, 2009). Although many of the Chinese complementary school teachers previously interviewed acknowledged that the traditional teacher centred, didactic methods used in Asia needed modifications to suit British educated children, Chinese language at Chinese complementary school seemed to be taught

as a 'mother tongue', often expecting the children to possess some knowledge of the language when entering and parental involvement and extended learning at home. Certain knowledge, such as grammar which Matthew felt ignorant of, therefore, might not be explicitly taught at these schools due to time constraints, lack of teaching resources and presumed prior knowledge learnt at home environment.

Almost all the pupils that expressed having a positive experience at Chinese school regularly used at least some Chinese with their families, and many had access to other Chinese language media at home (e.g. Chinese television, pop music, books). In fact, against the general consensus, two of these pupils, Kinming (aged 15) and Charlotte (aged 14), reported not finding learning Chinese difficult. Both Kinming and Charlotte lived in predominantly Cantonese speaking families from catering backgrounds, and they both described even using Chinese with their siblings sometimes, which was unusual within this sample and the general trend of fewer people from the younger generation speaking the minority language with family their age (Li 1994). As Li (1994) suggests, language choice patterns were closely related to speakers' network ties, so perhaps these participants were more closely linked to Chinese speaking family and friends networks than other young people. Conversely, some of the young people who had more limited contact with the Chinese language commented on how the more 'traditional', 'mother tongue based' teaching style did not sufficiently facilitate their learning of the language. Federico (aged 15), of Italian and Chinese heritage, who stopped attending Chinese school after half a year, found that the 'Chinese (language) only' policy in the classroom and the more 'traditional Chinese methods' did not suit him:

> They were very almost Chinese schooling in terms of what they do, they force the language down your neck basically. Not enjoyable. We weren't actually allowed to talk English, we had to talk Chinese sort of thing. Didn't enjoy at all. Er, I did witness

another class and they were actually teaching it properly, like they should do, in terms of you know say and repeat, understand how the language works and all of that. And the school, the [mainstream] school I attended before school, the sort of Breakfast Club, also they did it very well, I learnt a lot of Chinese through that as well.

Although the Breakfast Club Mandarin class he attended was also an extracurricular activity, Federico found the education, which taught Chinese as a foreign language, to be much more enjoyable and effective. Callum (aged 13), of white English and Chinese heritage, also dropped out of Chinese school after being there for six years. He articulated that his French teacher at his mainstream school gave comprehensive explanations and background information of the language, of which seemed to be absent at Chinese school in his experience. Callum echoed Federico's sentiment on the teaching was not 'proper' at Chinese school, since he saw most of the teachers did not have 'proper teacher training' and were 'just Chinese parents and stuff that go in there and teach.' He went on further to speak of his frustrations with the schooling despite wanting to learn Chinese:

> I did try and do like Chinese school but I did not, I didn't like it, the way they're teaching was completely different to like English way, so I found that quite hard, cos they expect too much like, cos I don't speak Chinese at home so it was harder and I didn't get very much time to practise and stuff.

Callum's UK raised mother only had limited Chinese knowledge herself, and as a result, he felt that his home environment put him at a disadvantaged position in this 'mother tongue' style education. He recalled:

> She [teacher] um, didn't explain it very well, like the work, and she talked to most people in Chinese, but a lot of the other people actually spoke Chinese at home, cos they had both parents Chinese, it was like some of them. Then they made a special class for like people that don't speak Chinese at home, and that didn't last very long, lasted about a week. Two weeks.

Callum's frustration with not understanding the teacher and the lesson was understandable. Although classes at Chinese schools are generally organised by ability rather than pupils'

age, the pupils' Chinese abilities could still vary considerably within the same classroom. It is undoubtedly an extremely challenging task for the schools and teachers, who generally are not trained language teachers or specialists, to cater for pupils with a wide range of needs within such a short time period and with very limited resources. Running separate classes for pupils from non-Chinese speaking home backgrounds, as mentioned above, might not be feasible or manageable at all schools. However, with increasingly number of 'third' generation British Chinese with UK-born/raised parents have reached school age and a growing number of mixed Chinese heritage children, along with the newer migrants from mainland China and a small number of non-Chinese wishing to learn Chinese, Chinese complementary schools undoubtedly face more new challenges to cater to the ever more so diverse potential users. Moreover, the bi/multilingual practices at home and a more holistic view of bilingualism should be further incorporated into such learning spaces to support these bi/multi-cultural and lingual young people within an increasingly diverse British society.

It is interesting to point out that Cantonese was the main Chinese language used at home or by the Chinese speaking parents for all but two pupils (26) who attended Chinese school; however, eight of these pupils studied only Mandarin/both Cantonese and Mandarin at Chinese school. Five of these pupils passed their GCSE Chinese Mandarin exams, but perhaps partially due to the absence of the speaking assessment for the test until recently, siblings Emma (aged 17) and Matthew (aged 16) both reported not really being able to speak much Mandarin or any Chinese language in general, and Andrew (aged 15) believed that his spoken Mandarin was still nowhere as proficient as his spoken Cantonese, which he used at home with her parents regularly. When asked why they studied Mandarin instead of

Cantonese, both Emma and Matthew explained that their parents thought Mandarin was more important and useful, as Matthew said, 'Mandarin is Chinese, like Cantonese is just dialect.'

This gradual shift to learning Mandarin was observed at the Chinese complementary schooling research (Mau et al, 2009). Cantonese based schools began offering Mandarin curriculum in recent years, and many adults and young people linked the importance of learning Chinese to China's meteoric rise as a global economic power. A number of young people in that study indeed communicated a 'doomed' future of Cantonese, given Mandarin is the official language of China and the language non-Chinese people are learning (Francis et al, 2009). A similar trend in increasing popularity in Mandarin classes is apparently also happening in Scotland (Seawright, 2009), where Cantonese is the most commonly spoken language amongst Scotland's Chinese inhabitants. By learning Mandarin, these young people are debatably no longer learning a 'mother tongue' language that would be commonly used by their parents or extended families; instead they are learning a language that is linked to their ethnic origin and symbolic to their cultural identity. Further discussions on links between language and identity will be in the next chapter.

(ii) Home learning, private tutors and mainstream schools

Besides Chinese complementary schooling at the weekends, a number of young people attempted to learn Chinese via other channels. Besides providing the day-to-day Chinese language environment and informal/ad hoc teaching and corrections in conversations at home, parents of three participants reportedly conducted some structured teaching at home. Arthur (age 12), Vivien (age 13) and Kit (aged 15) all attended Chinese schools for relative short periods of time. Siblings Arthur and Vivien stopped going to Chinese school

because their school closed down. Their mother bought textbooks and attempted to teach them like teachers at Chinese school; according to Vivien, their mother got them 'to copy it[the text] down and [do] dictation and stuff'. However, she admitted that she did not take her mother seriously as a teacher, and both young people did not feel it was too effective and the sessions were sometimes irregular. For Kit, she did not enjoy her brief few months at Chinese school and said that she preferred learning at home from her parents 'because they would know like how far I am in Chinese, and they could probably explain it better because they know me.' Kit recalled her mother having a lot of Chinese books at home, and her mother would use them to read stories to her and teach her how to write the words; though this teaching had stopped. Parents who teach children their minority language at home require a great deal of time and effort, and many parents would not have the time, knowledge, skills or resources to undertake such a potentially rewarding but challenging task.

Four other participants reported receiving private Chinese lessons from tutors in the past. Three of them had the private tuition to supplement what they learnt at Chinese complementary schools. As mentioned earlier, Emma and Matthew had tutors to help with preparation of GCSE Chinese exams. Patrick (aged 17) thought Chinese school was 'okay', but he admitted to learning more with the one-on-one lessons. On the other hand, Sun (aged 16), never attended Chinese complementary school, received private tuition for a couple of months and stopped. He recalled that his older brother and sister had attended Chinese school but did not like it; therefore, his parents did not send him to Chinese school and hired a private tutor instead. However, he felt that he did not really learn much and stopped soon after, possibly because the tutoring did not suit his way of learning. He

believed that knowing Chinese would be useful for future employment and for when he went on family visits to Hong Kong every few years. Nevertheless, he did not find learning Chinese or other languages interesting and found it difficult to concentrate in a non-formal setting where he was 'like not forced to do it' or 'not really forced to sit there and learn'.

Although private tutoring, or learning Chinese for that matter, did not suit Sun, the one-on-one lessons seemed to benefit the other participants, especially Emma and Matthew, who claimed they learnt 'nothing' during their time at Chinese school. The mode of learning is undoubtedly more personalised and convenient (i.e. as Chinese schools can be far away from home), but the education is also certainly more costly than the fees being charged at non-profit community schools. Therefore unsurprisingly, these four pupils all had parents came from professional backgrounds. With the rise of China's economy and increasing popularity of Mandarin, a growing number of non-community based, more commercialised Chinese education institutions, which teach Chinese (predominantly Mandarin) as a foreign language to both Chinese and non-Chinese, have emerged in the UK and the West in the last decade. Many of these offer children's classes/private tuition and support for Chinese GCSE and A-Level qualifications. With the general trend of private tutoring to supplement mainstream school learning for middle class families (Paton, 2011), it would be worthwhile to see how many British Chinese families and individuals are opting for this kind of more costly Chinese education in the increasingly marketised and globalised world of education.

The Mandarin trend has certainly reached the mainstream school sector, as Mandarin is being taught at a growing number of schools in the UK. In 2010, former schools secretary, Ed Balls, said that children needed to learn the languages of countries where Britain had 'very important business contacts' and all secondary schools should offer lessons in

Mandarin, one of the most demanded languages by employers according to a poll conducted by Confederation of British Industry's in 2009 (Shepherd, 2010). Two pupils, Louise (aged 17) and Federico (aged 15), reported taking some Mandarin lessons in the extracurricular clubs that were held at their schools, an independent girls' school and a high achieving Catholic comprehensive school respectively. On the other hand, Fiona (aged 14) had been studying Mandarin at her independent school as a formal school subject. She previously attended a Chinese complementary school learning Cantonese, which was spoken by her parents; however, she was getting confused with two different writing systems (traditional vs. simplified scripts) being taught at the two settings, and her father decided to let her stop going to the weekend Cantonese classes and concentrate on Mandarin learning, perhaps arguably a more saleable qualification.

Matilda (aged 12), also attending an independent school, expressed interest in taking Mandarin when it would be available in the upper years. On the contrary, Dan (aged 15) also welcomed the idea of learning Mandarin at school, but despite being at a state specialist language school, Mandarin was not being offered there yet. In 2010, there were only around 100 qualified secondary school Mandarin teachers in England, and only 16 per cent of secondary schools offered Chinese language teaching in 2009 (Directgov, 2010).Unless the government is providing sustainable support for this 'demand' for Mandarin at schools, the unequal funding and resources for Chinese language learning and development would prevent pupils across the board from being able to access this Chinese education for either a credential or heritage language learning.

6.3.2 Never had any Chinese schooling

Eight pupils reported never had any Chinese schooling in any form. All of these young people could speak very limited to no Chinese at all, and five of these participants are of mixed heritage. Brothers Dan (aged 15) and Ian (aged 17), of white British and Chinese heritage, could not speak any Chinese, as their mother was an adoptee from Hong Kong growing up in a white English family. Although both of them seemed to embrace their East Asian heritage and thought it would be a nice to be able to speak Chinese, they never had the opportunity to learn and felt that they did not have any pragmatic reasons to do so. Neve (aged 15), of white British and Chinese heritage, seemed to share similar sentiments. Her British born, Mauritius Chinese mother had very limited Chinese knowledge. She saw her Cantonese speaking Chinese grandparents regularly; she was taught names of some food items but otherwise they would all communicate in English. She appreciated celebrating Chinese cultural events, such as Chinese New Year; however, her mother never sent her to Chinese school. She was often very busy with her music related extracurricular activities after school or at the weekends, so learning Chinese was something would have been 'really cool' but, on the other hand, unlikely to have been a top priority. Matilda (aged 12), who lived with her white English father and only saw her Malaysian Chinese mother on the weekends, was awarded a scholarship to attend a prestigious independent school. She had an older sister that attended Chinese school for a short period and could speak Chinese reasonably well; she was unsure why she was not sent to Chinese school but concluded that she was 'probably busy with other tutors and stuff'.

For a number of other young people that did not keep up or fully engaged with their Chinese schooling, they appeared to be very active in a range of extracurricular activities,

which possibly might deem more important to their academic careers and personal

interests. Daniel (aged 17), whose parents were Hong Kong Chinese, described that no one

in his family attended Chinese school. Daniel, who attended a selective grammar school,

believed that his mother just 'didn't wanna put too much workload on me, cos it would,

err… it might just, err, you know…err, put me down too much.' To compensate for not

learning Chinese, which is something that deemed significant, he 'just perform well at

school instead', something that would be generally agreed to be more important by pupils

and parents. Despite recent research in complementary schooling that identified ways in

which such education aided pupils' mainstream educational achievement, there was also a

common recognition that this schooling could be an added source of pressure (Archer et al,

2009). Jessica (aged 16) spoke about how her Chinese learning had suffered and 'gone

down' since entering secondary school, as she did not 'really have time to do much stuff

with like the Chinese language'. In Livia's (aged 13) situation, her older brother attended

Chinese school briefly and did not enjoy it, so perhaps that was the reason why their mother

did not send her there. However, she had regular contacts with her other heritage language,

Italian; she had been learning Italian as a subject at school, and would use it when her

Italian grandmother, who stayed with the family part of the year. Italian, being a closer

language to English than Chinese, was more readily available to her to learn and certainly

seemed to have a higher instrumental value.

However, for sisters Christine (aged 12) and Josephine (aged 14), on first impression, there

seemed to be no 'obvious' reasons for why they did not attend Chinese school, as their

family seemed to fit the 'typical' complementary school user 'profile'. Their parents both

moved to the UK from Hong Kong as young adults and have been operating a small but

successful Chinese restaurant. Both parents were proficient in English, and they spoke a mixture of English and Cantonese to their children at home. I had the opportunity to meet and chat with the whole family informally for a little, and their father, Mr Leung, who spoke to me in English, commented that they were the 'odd ones' because most other Chinese families they knew sent their kids to Chinese schools. He jokingly explained that, 'maybe because we were lazy!' The truth was that they were far from being 'lazy' – Mr Leung admitted that they had more time with their eldest daughter, Elizabeth, who could speak basic conversational Cantonese, in her early years. However, they later became busy building the restaurant business, and the work was long and tiring and often left him and his wife exhausted and had little time for their daughters.

The family did not have satellite Chinese television channel at home, though Christine said that she would occasionally join her mother watching Hong Kong films on the internet. Their family visits to Hong Kong were infrequent compared to other first generation migrants; Christine and Josephine only had been there once. Mr Leung's extended family all settled in the UK. I observed the parents speaking some Chinese to their daughters, who replied back in English. Mr Leung also concluded that since his children were living in the UK, Chinese was perhaps their 'second language'. Christine said that it might be good to learn Chinese because her mother told her about the rise of China, 'so it would be handy if I learned the language, like if I go there.' However, learning the language did not seem to be an immediate concern to her. Older sister, Josephine, felt that she tried to learn some Chinese through her parents though without much success; she acknowledged that learning the language could be useful in some occasions, such as when they were with her parents' Chinese speaking friends, but she 'don't really mind whether I know it or not.' The family

also attended church regularly. Therefore, upon closer inspection, the family did not seem to have strong links to the 'homeland' and possibly could be seen as being 'integrated' into the British society. While the parents encouraged the daughters to learn more about Chinese language and 'culture', perhaps they did not view maintaining Chinese proficiency was essential or a high priority in their lives in the UK.

6.4 Conclusion

6.4.1 Different experiences, different needs

Within this diverse sample representing a range of backgrounds and experiences, those pupils with higher levels of Chinese knowledge tended to come from specific diasporic trajectories, often in families in catering trade (especially the family run takeaways), had closer links to Asia and perhaps unsurprisingly, parents speaking Chinese at home. Mixed heritage participants seemed less likely to have regular exposure to Chinese language and more likely to disengage with learning at Chinese complementary schools. As seen in cases of some of the participants, parents speaking Chinese at home do not necessarily raise children with Chinese fluency. There seems to be a wide range of reasons contributing to whether young people were engaged in learning Chinese or not. The rising status of China as a political and economic power on the global stage has thrown an interesting twist to the perception of learning 'Chinese'. The original goals in setting up these community based schools to learn 'family language' or 'mother tongue' as a way to aid family communications and to 'preserve' Chinese 'traditions' and 'cultures', and the 'mother tongue' arguably should be Cantonese, Hakka or even Hokkien among the settled British Chinese population, And increasingly, some pupils and parents also view Chinese language skills could serve as

extra credentials (e.g. GCSE) for university applications or job applications, especially linking to the recent interest in the growing Chinese economy (Francis et al, 2009).

However, interestingly, although many of the teachers and parents I previously talked to at Chinese complementary schools greatly emphasised the importance of the younger generations learning about Chinese 'culture' and traditions, such as festivals like Chinese New Year, Mid Autumn/Moon Festival, some of the participants in this research seemed to downplay such significance (more on this issue in next chapter). Emma and Matthew revealed that their family did not normally celebrate Chinese New Year or Mid Autumn Festival much, though they 'would have like the occasional mooncake (a traditional food for Mid Autumn Festival) because someone brought it for us'. Dac explained that his families 'more or less' tried to keep to these traditions; nevertheless, sometimes they celebrated these traditions only 'when we get to it', instead of following the set dates due to other priorities in life, such as work. On the other hand, Chinese New Year undoubtedly has gained its 'mainstream' status, as it is commonly celebrated in many mainstream classrooms by Chinese or non-Chinese pupils.

6.4.2 On not speaking 'good' Chinese

A number of the British Chinese pupils in this research described their spoken Chinese as 'not very good', and some explained that they 'have an accent'. Although some of these participants spoke Chinese regularly, they perceived their English-accented Chinese as a sign of having limited Chinese competence. Michelle (aged 15), who moved to Hong Kong for a number of years and attended international school there, believed her spoken Chinese was quite good due to her residency in Asia. However, her Chinese language skills allegedly has been challenged:

Erm, yeah… but like because I've been living in England for quite a while now, so I'm starting to get an English accent, according to some Chinese people. Yeah, sometimes I get laughed at for it but oh well.

He's (2006) discussion on Chinese heritage language learning in the US points out that even learners with robust Chinese language home environment (i.e. family members who are native speakers, are literate in Chinese) may still acquire a so-called 'overseas Chinese' accent, which was referred as having a 'bad' or 'English' accent by the young people in this study. Additionally, speakers that are raised in the West might also engage in discourse norms that differentiate them from the native Chinese speakers in their families' speech community (He, 2006). One American born, university student that was cited in He's article revealed that despite being described as having very good pronunciations when visiting relatives in China, the speaker was still branded as speaking Mandarin in a strange way and sounding 'like a foreigner' by the locals. The speaker later realised that common social practices in the US did not translate across languages and cultures, as saying 'dui bu qi (excuse me)' after sneezing and asking 'wo keyi wen ni yige wenti ma? (Can I ask you a question?)' before asking a question resulted in getting laughs or strange looks (*ibid.*) Another participant in this study, Jackie (aged 17), also reported other Chinese sometimes commented on her accent being 'not good' and admitted that she could hear the difference between herself and someone from Hong Kong; however, she acknowledged that people could understand her despite her non-native like accent.

In another recent study (Creese et al, 2007) of complementary schooling in England, Li and Wu (2009) found that British Chinese pupils at weekend Chinese schools using flexible, creative bilingualism to challenge the traditional conventions of 'One Language Only' (OLON) or 'One Language at a Time' (OLAT) bias in their classrooms. They argue that code-

switching is an important symbolic and creative capital that the pupils own and use to undermine the OLON and OLAT policies and ideologies, which view mixing of languages negatively. Similar to the notion of having 'good' Chinese accent, these essentialised ideas are based on language purity and monolingual models which do not allow hybridised expressions in language and being for British Chinese youths living in multilingual and multicultural environments. Li and Wu also suggest that this creativity and the use of code-switching in the Chinese complementary school classroom also challenge the stereotypical view of British Chinese children as 'polite' but passive learners.

However as illustrated in the examples discussed in the chapter, an essentialised view of language learning that is based on monolingual norms was often used to evaluate these young people's Chinese abilities by people within the British Chinese 'community', and sometimes, painfully, by their own families. Such views are evidently internalised by bi/multilingual speakers (including myself admittedly at the start of the project) as they rarely evaluate their language competence as adequate and strive to reach the 'pure' monolingual standard (Grosjean, 2008). Grosjean also argues that this approach is negative and often destructive, and conclusions about 'language deficit' in children who are still in the process of becoming bi/multilingual would be an unfair assessment. The notion of an 'idealised native speaker' (Leung et al., 1997) that was discussed in relation to English learning in mainstream schooling can be equally useful when looking at Chinese language education. Hall (1988) suggests that members of minority communities are not simple inheritors of fixed identities, ethnicities, cultures, and languages, but are instead engaged in a continual collective and individual process of making, remaking, and negotiating these elements. However, some of the participants, such as Dac (aged 17), evidently viewed their

'bad' Chinese as an indicator of being a 'lesser' Chinese within this essentialised Chineseness discourse.

Ethnic minority pupils are often assumed to inherit, or are born into, language traditions that 'transcend questions of the actual language use of individuals and collectives' at mainstream schools, and they are commonly thought to possess expertise in their home or community language (Leung et al., 1997). This expectation or automatic assumption of knowing one's heritage language, in this case Chinese, also seems to be shared by many within the wider Chinese diasporic community. Cultural thinker, Ien Ang, who is an Indonesian Chinese migrant who grew up in the Netherlands and cannot speak Chinese, recalled being told by a taxi driver from Mainland China in Sydney that it would be easy for her to learn Chinese because 'after all, you have Chinese blood' (2001). Being ethnically Chinese somehow should give one 'natural' abilities to learn or speak Chinese no matter where the said individual were born or raised, and failing to so could be seen as unnatural and even disgraceful. In the research on Chinese complementary schooling (Francis et al, 2008), many young people indeed expressed a taken for granted concept that Chinese people should be able to speak Chinese, and a number of them felt that the inability to do so could be seen as embarrassing or even shameful. Louise (aged 17), participant of the current study, articulated the disapproval she received in the past due to her limited Chinese abilities:

> Sometimes if you meet um, like some old aunties and things, they'll sort of look at you and shake their heads, and the older people tend to, quite, they think it's sort of, there's something quite wrong with me for not being able to, and a lot of people think it's very strange.

The ability to speak Chinese, and possibly having a 'good' accent, is sometimes seen as a requirement to be an 'authentic' Chinese person. It was intriguing that although Dac (aged 17) self-described his Chinese as 'not good', a school official at his Chinese school told me that actually Dac's spoken Chinese was 'quite good'. The school official was probably assessing Dac's level of proficiency as a British born Chinese and giving considerations to the language environments he grew up in, while Dac compared his ability to native Chinese speakers from Asia. He explained:

> I'm Chinese, but when you see proper Chinese, or people that actually speak more Chinese than me, or are really better than me, I can see the major difference, I can see how I'm not, you know especially when I had a supply teacher last time for my class [at Chinese school], and she told us that we have a accent when we read, cos of the way we talk, and how when she read it, you could clearly hear the difference, so erm, yeah I do think I'm Chinese but not fully Chinese I guess, or not proper Chinese.

The sense of deficiency, possibly shame and guilt, could be a very powerful emotion that could affect young people's attitudes towards using Chinese or their learner identities as a heritage language learner.

Nevertheless, having such essentialised standards and ideas about Chinese culture and 'Chineseness' is not unique to the British Chinese 'community', as illustrated in Ien Ang's example. Louie (2004) found that most of the Chinese-American young adults she interviewed felt less authentic as Chinese and inadequate with their Chinese knowledge, no matter how fluent they were in the spoken language. British Chinese young people are being positioned as linguistic and cultural outsiders; the idealised native Chinese speaker, someone from Asia with the standard Hong Kong or Putonghua accent, is something 'the outsider imperfectly aspires to' (Leung et al, 1997). As described by some of the participants, their Chinese language abilities occasionally get laughed at or criticised;

therefore perhaps unsurprisingly, some young people, such as Daniel (aged 17) who was discussed earlier, might simply choose to avoid speaking Chinese altogether to evade such ridicule. Young people like Daniel might like the opportunity to speak Chinese, but some might feel like being trapped in a catch-22 dilemma – while they require more practice to improve their fluency, the potential embarrassment of exposing their 'bad' Chinese, whether it was limited vocabulary or incorrect tonal pronunciations, could discourage them from doing so.

However, for Emma and Louise (both aged 17), they both appeared to have overcome the negative emotions associated with their Chinese abilities. Emma described that her inability to speak Chinese 'is not something that I'm deeply ashamed of but it's just something that I would love to be able to do'; when she went to China for holiday, she 'did try and practise some Mandarin'. While Louise admitted feeling very embarrassed about her Chinese skills when she was younger, she has grown to realise that it was in fact perfectly reasonable to not know much Chinese:

> I've lived in Britain my whole life, and even if I could speak Chinese I'd only speak it at home and it wouldn't, I wouldn't have that much vocabulary. There isn't a really good reason why I should be able to speak good Chinese, but I think I'd quite like to learn Chinese for my own interest and also just because, I think I've always wanted to learn cos I felt like there was something wrong with me that I'm not able to.

Both Emma and Louise seemed to have reconciled some of the tensions stemmed from their identity and position as British Chinese and the pressure to know/speak Chinese; however, the sense of 'duty' and compulsion to be a 'better' Chinese person could still be felt in their narratives. The powerful moral discourse is something sets heritage language learner apart from general second/foreign language learner.

For many language learners, the language community is one of the imagination—'a desired community that offers possibilities for an enhanced range of identity options in the future', and 'in essence, an imagined community assumes an imagined identity' (Norton, 2006: 04). He (2006) suggests that heritage language learning is often motivated by neither strictly instrumental nor integrative goals; their learner motivations 'are derived not merely from pragmatic or utilitarian concerns but also from the intrinsic cultural, affective, and aesthetic values of the language'.

Although learning Chinese is undoubtedly closely bounded to the participants' Chinese heritage, their experiences and learner identities can be very different due to the different family/friends networks and Chinese language resources they were connected to. Their identity as a Chinese heritage language learner in turn could have an effect on their social and cultural identities. As discussed previously, language development is an on-going process, influenced by the learner's individual circumstances but also the greater social and political changes. Changes to adapt or evolve, such as the shift from Hakka to Cantonese and certainly the shift to English in the British Chinese 'community', have been taking place throughout the last century. How young people relate to these 'new' and 'old' ideologies of being 'Chinese' in the UK will be fully explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 7: British Chinese Identities

This chapter explores the diverse range of identity and positioning discussed by British Chinese pupils in this study. The complex, relational, contradictory and fluid processes of identity formation and negotiation engaged with by participants will be examined. In analysing their narratives around their multiple identities, this chapter explores subjective understandings of positionality and how individuals locate themselves within British society, along with ways in how participants understand and identify with different aspects of Chineseness and Britishness. Although the notion of speaking Chinese is strongly linked to Chinese identity, this chapter looks at how some participants found ways to challenge this essentialised belief and construct their sense of Chineseness in other ways. The notion of agency will be examined to find out how these young people challenge essentialised ideas of Britishness and Chineseness. As discussed in Chapter 5 and 6, these young people faced challenges to be accepted as authentic British and Chinese subjects; however, a British Chinese identity has slowly emerged.

Stuart Hall (1993) asks 'What is this "black" in black popular culture?' in the time of post-modernity. Similarly, one might ask, what does being 'Chinese' mean in the twenty-first century Britain? As suggested by Ang (1998), being Chinese outside China cannot possibly mean the same thing as inside. The experiences of being Chinese undoubtedly vary across different parts of the world and also change over time; therefore, in this paradigm, there are different Chinese identities under different local circumstances, and Chineseness is not a fixed concept. The narratives by these British Chinese pupils reveal the importance of understanding the complexity and diversity of the British Chinese experience and the potential for a fluid positionality of British Chinese youths. The notion of Chineseness was

constructed through a number of ways by these participants, and Chinese language skills

was only one of the cultural markers.

7.1. Language as the dominant identity signifier

7.1.1 Chinese language as culture

Chinese culture is generally configured in various ways, for instance values, customs, arts,

history, and cultural practices. Involvement in the social life and cultural practices of one's

ethnic group is the most widely used indicator of ethnic identity, and language is the most

widely assessed cultural practice associated with ethnic identity (Phinney 1990). In much of

the literature about language maintenance and language shift, some scholars argue for a

strong link between language, ethnocultural identity, and group membership (e.g. Fishman

1991; de Vries, 1990; Schmid, 2002). In this view, particular languages are linked with

particular cultures because they are lexically the most appropriate to express culturally

embedded concepts (Fishman 1991) and because they are symbols or markers of ethnicity

(de Vries, 1990). Some feel that language shift can lead to a loss of ethnic identity, cultural

fragmentation and 'non-authentic' expressions of ethnicity (Smolicz 1992). However, such

essentialised views on heritage language have been criticised for casting groups who do not

maintain a heritage language as 'inauthentic' and therefore lesser member of the group

(Myhill 2003).

Grounded in ethnography, the language socialization branch of linguistic anthropology

focuses on the process of becoming culturally competent through language use in social

activities (see e.g. Ochs, 1990, 1996; Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986, 1996). Language

socialization considers language acquisition and socialization as an integrated process.

Within this theoretical model, some may view interaction as language practices, which serve

as resources for socialising social and cultural competence, and interactional competence itself embodies both cultural knowledge and linguistic knowledge (He 2008). Tse's studies of Asian Americans (1997, 2000) suggests that for many, the heritage language is closely associated with the ethnic group so that attitudes toward the ethnic group and its language speakers also extend to the narrators' own language ability and their interest (or lack of interest) in maintaining and developing their heritage language.

In the Francis et al's (2008) study of British Chinese pupils at Chinese complementary schooling in England, an overwhelming majority of pupils interviewed saw learning the Chinese language as important, and when asked why, issues around identity emerged as a strong theme (Francis et al, 2009). For these pupils, the Chinese language appears to be a key delineator of Chinese identity, and language appears to subsume and express identity. Many pupils in the study responded that they needed to learn the Chinese language simply because they were Chinese. Of these pupils, along with their teachers and parents, many held a 'taken-for-granted', unquestioned position that as Chinese people they ought to be able to speak Chinese. Indeed, the perceived necessity for young people of Chinese origin to be proficient in the Chinese language emerged as grounded in powerful moral discourses of duty, identity and inclusion/exclusion, which appeared to retain a profound hold on the experiences and understanding of identity among pupils across social class groups. As discussed in Chapter 6, the moral duty to know Chinese was articulated by some of the young people.

This notion of proficiency in the Chinese language as constituting 'Chineseness' was also evident in the concept of 'full Chinese' (or 'not full Chinese') emerging in some pupils' interviews in this study (e.g. Dac felt that he was not 'proper' Chinese). Interestingly,

although this essentialised attitude did not appear to be as strong among the sample of

young people that tended to possess less Chinese language knowledge in this current study,

a portion of pupils in this study still communicated explicitly or implicitly that knowing

Chinese was an important part of their, or a, Chinese identity. Those who clearly articulated

this supposition seemed to be among those with a higher level of Chinese knowledge

among the participants. Kinming (aged 15), who had been attending Chinese school for 6

years and regularly used Cantonese at home, seemed to demonstrate the strongest sense of

connection with Chinese heritage and culture out of all the participants. When he was asked

about what he thought of learning Chinese, he stated:

> We all know why we should learn it, you know obviously because we're Chinese, we
> want to understand more of our culture, so we can understand like you know if we
> ever go on holiday or move back you know we can interact with other people in the
> country, and obviously China being a, becoming bigger and everything, you know.
> It's obviously, I mean it might not be Cantonese, it might be Mandarin in the future
> maybe, depends, but yeah we all know we do Chinese, why we want to do it.

Kinming communicated a firm, 'obvious' and fact-like expectation that 'we', as in people of

Chinese heritage, should learn Chinese and want to gain more knowledge of Chinese

culture. Although my own ethnic or cultural backgrounds were never discussed in this

interview, it was fair to guess that there was an assumption that I was also Chinese, and the

use of 'you know obviously we're Chinese' perhaps implied that I would understand or share

this opinion. This powerful moral discourse of duty and obligation compels one to connect

with some form of Chinese language, Cantonese or Mandarin, and 'culture'. He further

explained that he 'obviously' felt Chinese even though he was born in the UK:

> I think you know, like you know that Chinese bloodline, from China, I mean learning
> the language, you know interact with people, you know like festivals here, I mean in
> [city in southern England] we you know we do like Chinese New Year and everything.

> I think it's important to realise that even though we're in another country, that we're still ethnically Chinese.

Even though he was born and raised in the UK and indicated having no definite plans to move to China/Asia, his positioning of 'we', as in people in the UK that possess the 'Chinese bloodline from China', being 'in another country', away from the *homeland*, reflected a China-centric and deterministic orientation. His sentiment also implied that if people do not learn the language and participate in Chinese culture, they might forget that they are 'ethnically Chinese', breaking this bloodline linkage. Additionally, he felt that 'it'd be very disappointing if they [British Chinese] don't do Chinese'; he acknowledged that UK born Chinese should learn English, but preferred that they should at least learn to speak some Chinese because he believed that 'it's important to you know keep and sustain the fact that you're Chinese'.

In contrast, when being asked if he felt British/English, Kinming did not exhibit the same level of passion and connection to this identity. He felt that he probably would say he was British since 'well why not, I mean I'm born here and I learnt the language' but that this was 'not a big concern' to him. Although he was indisputably both born in the UK and born ethnically Chinese, he viewed pursuing Chinese interests, including learning Chinese language, as *instinctive* and essential to him (and other Chinese people) to actively bring his Chineseness into being, while being or feeling British/English was something more optional. Jackie (aged 17), who finished her Chinese schooling and passed her Mandarin Chinese GCSE exam, also viewed learning Chinese as something she inherently ought to do. She thought learning Chinese was quite interesting and that it was generally beneficial to know an additional language; she also added that, 'and obviously I'm Chinese, I should know the language, sort of my culture so I should embrace it.' Although Jackie possibly did not show

as strong a connection to Chinese culture (i.e. only 'sort of my culture'), she internalised the obligation to take up Chinese as part of being Chinese.

Tse's research (2000) on Asian American adults shows that for many, the heritage language is closely associated with the ethnic group so that attitudes toward the ethnic group and its language speakers also extend to the individual's own language ability and his/her interest (or lack of interest) in maintaining and developing the heritage language. This ethnic/cultural pride was also discussed by Kit (aged 15), who could hold general home conversations in Cantonese but had no Chinese literacy. She thought that it would be slightly embarrassing and awkward for a Chinese person not to able to speak Chinese because he/she would not be able to communicate with other Chinese people and 'if you have Chinese heritage I think you should be proud'. In these young people's views, speaking and knowing Chinese was an expression of their Chinese identity and pride in being Chinese.

On the other hand, a few young people who had limited or no Chinese language knowledge equally expressed ethnic pride and close connection to their Chinese heritage. Christine (aged 12), who could understand some Cantonese but could not speak it, said she felt Chinese but not really English/British; she could not quite articulate why she felt Chinese, possibly due to her age, except giving the explanation of 'knowing I am Chinese'. She expressed positive attitudes towards learning Chinese and engaging in Chinese culture related activities, such as celebrating Chinese holidays, watching Cantonese films with her mother and visiting Hong Kong. For a couple of the older participants, they were more ready to elaborate on their sense of Chineseness. Although Emma (aged 17) acknowledged that both herself and her UK university-educated parents were 'very Westernised', she felt Chinese and was proud of her heritage. She believed that certain cultural practices, such as

eating rice and respect for elders, were 'ingrained' in her and would 'always make me Chinese'. She described being very proud of being Chinese and enjoyed occasionally giving her non-Chinese friends 'a little snippet of Chinese culture', such as by taking them to dim sum[10].

Louise (aged 17) rejected the question of her authenticity as a Chinese person by explaining that her inability to speak Chinese was 'only one part of something a lot bigger' in being Chinese, as she felt that 'everything else about my [English speaking] family is Chinese, apart from language'. She described feeling 'very Chinese' because her family celebrated all the festivals, ate Chinese food regularly, and met and ate with their extended family every Sunday like many other Chinese families. She added that their practice of Chineseness probably went beyond the common traditions and followed some of the more traditional conventions, such as taking Chinese tonic soup instead of western medicine when ill. He's (2006) discussion of language socialisation theory looks at how learners are socialised to use language and to be competent members of the target culture through language use, as 'language and culture are reflexively and systematically bound together and mutually constitutive of each other' in this perspective. However, both Emma and Louise felt that despite their limited Chinese skills, their active practising and embracing of Chinese culture originating from home should give them authenticity as Chinese persons, especially in Louise's case, maintaining that immersion in particular traditional customs should justify her claim to be a competent member of the cultural group.

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[10] Dim sum is a staple of Cantonese tea house and dining culture for breakfast or lunch but now also served throughout China. It has also become a popular and trendy type of Chinese cuisine in major cities worldwide.

For other young people with limited or no Chinese knowledge, they seemed to express less

solid or more ambivalent connections to their Chinese identities for a number of reasons.

Although none of these participants felt that they had no connection to their Chinese

background at all, some depicted their associations as limited and peripheral. Arthur (aged

12) said he only felt 'a bit' Chinese 'only cos my parents speak to me in Chinese quite a lot';

generally he felt English when outside home and at school. A couple other respondents

cited eating Chinese food at home regularly was source of connection to Chinese culture,

but otherwise they did not feel closely linked to feeling or being Chinese. Matilda (aged 12),

of mixed white British and Chinese heritage, mostly lived with her white British father. She

described 'not really' feeling Chinese and feeling more British, though she acknowledged

her Malaysian Chinese mother's origins. She explained:

> I think you've got to feel reasonably Chinese to be Chinese, and to have origins from there and stuff like that and do some of the cultural things and stuff, feel to be Chinese.

She felt that she did not do enough 'cultural things', such as speaking Chinese, visiting Asia

(she had never been), celebrating Chinese holidays, to 'feel enough Chinese'. From the

perspectives of these young people, including those who felt Chinese and those who felt

less so, the mere fact of being ethnically Chinese was not sufficient to 'feel Chinese'; the

active engagement, which required additional effort and commitment, with Chinese cultural

practices, artefacts and signifiers was key to 'feeling and being Chinese'. This sentiment was

echoed by a number of others young people who possess more Chinese knowledge, who

linked their regular Chinese cultural practices, often stemmed from their families, to their

sense of Chineseness. Nonetheless, some of the young people with limited Chinese

imagined that they might feel more Chinese if they spoke more of the language.

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On the other hand, a couple of the young people with some Chinese knowledge specifically articulated that their non-fluent, non-native like level or usage of Chinese made them 'less Chinese'. As discussed in Chapter 6, Fiona (aged 14), who had been told that her Cantonese had a 'huge' English accent, believed that she was 'more English than Chinese' and felt that other British born Chinese were 'more Chinese' than her. She described how those who were 'more Chinese' would regularly communicate with other Chinese peers, use Chinese slang, and 'keep saying like "lah"s and stuff like that' (adding 'lah' at the end of an English or code mixed sentence could be considered a form of 'Chinglish'; also a common practice in 'Singlish' and 'Manglish'). Dac (aged 17), who had been attending Chinese school for 10 years but only gained interest in learning the language in recent years, also considered himself as 'not proper' or 'not fully' Chinese because he noticed the differences when he interacted with Chinese from China/Asia, who would speak fluent Chinese and know more about Chinese cultures. He felt that growing up in the UK made learning Chinese as something like a 'background sort of thing, at a side'. Applying the language socialisation approach, He (2006) discusses that linguistic meanings and practices are seen as embedded in cultural systems of understanding; however, He (2006) also suggests that even for Chinese heritage language learners who have adequate support in the home environment, pupils may still acquire a so-called 'overseas Chinese' accent and discourse norms that differentiate them from native speakers (see Chapter 6 for further discussions on accent and native speakers). Both Fiona and Dac had been made aware of their linguistic differences by native or more fluent Chinese speakers, and this perceived 'foreignness' in their Chinese speech seemed to have an effect on how they viewed their Chinese identities.

Therefore, in these young people's narratives, Chineseness is a social construct that is constructed in relation to other people's Chinese fluency or accent.

Conversely, Sarah (aged 18), who had no Chinese literacy but considered herself fluent orally, acknowledged feeling Chinese 'to an extent' due to her Chinese home life and upbringing; however, she described feeling more British and not 'that Chinese-y'. For Sarah, who was born in Hong Kong and moved to the UK before school age, her solid knowledge and exposure to Chinese language and culture did not necessarily produce a dominant Chinese identity; she felt that her personal connection to being British emerged as stronger. Alternatively, this sense of personal choice and agency in construction of identities also occurred in Dan (aged 15), who arguably was almost an 'opposite' of Sarah. Dan, of mixed white British and Chinese heritage, did not know any Chinese and had virtually no Chinese influence in his upbringing at home, due to the fact that his Chinese mother was an adoptee that grew up in a white English family. However, his mixed background, lack of Chinese language and cultural knowledge did not prevent him from having a strong sense of Chinese identity. He articulated that 'I know, I'm not really [Chinese] but I do like to think I am'; feeling Chinese/British was 'kind of just a choice thing', and he would 'like to consider myself more Chinese just cos I think it's a bit more interesting'.

According to Yang (2011), an American writer and columnist, a growing number of Americans with less than 50% Asian heritage, often with non Asian surnames and appearance, are embracing an Asian American identity in the increasingly mixed Asian American population. Yang discusses a folk singer, Meiko, who is one-quarter Japanese, does not speak Japanese and has never been to Japan; however, she finds her Japanese heritage to be a source of strength and a creative inspiration. For writer Lisa See, who is

one-eighth Chinese and self-described growing up as a part of a very large Chinese-American extended family in Los Angeles, she wrote a line in her first book that sums up her feeling: 'I don't look very Chinese, but I'm Chinese in my heart' (Yang 2011). Consequently, language and cultural knowledge, and even genetic make-up, do not seem to always determine or correlate to one's feelings towards a certain culture and identity, as seen in Sarah and Dan's examples. This sense of choice and agency in young people's identity constructions will be discussed further later in this chapter.

7.1.2 Chinese 'culture' being expressed in Chinese language

On the other hand, language is more than the functional speech and text elements, it also carries specific embedded cultural and political meanings within the associated linguistic group and the speakers' identities. For example, the term 'communauté' in French is very often identified with the English word 'community' and sometimes its connotations of ethnic or racial groupings, but in recent times, a pejorative nuance has been associated with the term in France (Sauvage, 2010). This particular idea of 'community/communauté', societal togetherness of groups, does not seem to fit the 'values of the Republic' (*ibid.*) and the conception of individual integration into social organisation, leaving behind historical references to cultural or regional origins, as well as group affiliations that could be identified as ethnic (Bauhardt, 2008). As a result, the term 'community garden' becomes 'jardin partagé', shared garden, in Paris, and not the literal translation, 'jardin communautaire', which might contain an inappropriate political interpretation (*ibid.*). Therefore, learning a language also allows the speaker to understand certain embedded cultural specific concepts in that culture.

When Tse (2008) talks about the language divide between British Chinese families in the BBC Radio 4 programme 'Beyond the Takeaway', he duly highlights that language carries greater emotional and cultural significance; hence, knowing Chinese goes beyond its mere functional purposes to also link one to the cultural knowledge that is embedded in the particular language and its usage. In a study of 'Hafu' (Lise & Willer, 2008), half Japanese people, one adult respondent, who is Japanese and English, says:

> I think I've got a slightly different personality when I speak in Japanese, which is strange. A different side of me comes out. (Edward Masaaki Arihara)

As a bilingual person, I share this sentiment because certain concepts are simply different or do not directly translate in cross-cultural contexts. In the study of language, the structural linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) suggested that meaning was to be found within the structure of a whole language rather than in the analysis of individual words.

Although the use of Chinese in speaking with the participants was limited in this research, some incidents of code-switching did take place and were worthy of closer examination in relation to identity expression. When I asked Jackie (aged 17) if she felt Chinese, she explained her feelings were situational, and then she asked if I know Cantonese. After my confirmation, she said:

> Quite 鬼妹 (gwei mui/'ghost girl'). Like British sort of like because obviously my [Chinese] accent's not good and I'm from like England and the culture's a bit different, so I feel a bit like English, or, I don't know the difference between English and British but I feel a bit…

She used the term 'gwei mui' most likely because she expected me to understand the 'White Othering' discourse of 'gwei', or generally 'gweilo' (ghost man), among Cantonese speakers. Throughout the periods of both colonialism and territorial rule in Hong Kong, the white British have, in their turn, been constructed by the local Chinese as Other, and the

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term 'gwei' and the associated 'gweilo/gweipor/gweizai/gweimui', which loosely translated to 'ghost' or 'foreign devil' man/woman/boy/girl, are used by Hong Kong Chinese to construct a subject position for non-Chinese, White people (Lai et al, 2009; Holdsworth, 2002). While historically, the term was used as a derogatory remark, some believe the expression no longer has an offensive or racist overtone (Leonard, 2010; CBSC, 2000), and the term is still commonly used in colloquial Cantonese. Nevertheless, racist or not, the term is premised on the notion of Other/belonging and insider/outsider. The term 'gwei' can also be used to describe ethnically Chinese people that are thought to be 'Westernised', such as someone like myself, in my own experience and as illustrated by Jackie, as cultural outsiders. The code-switching not only functioned as 'we-code/they-code' between us (as Cantonese speakers), it also served to contextualise this, perhaps part internalised and part prescribed, 'gwei mui'/ghost or 'white' girl identity in a Cantonese context that conceivably does not easily or completely translate into English due to its specific embedded cultural meanings.

When Jackie described her parents' occupations, she described her mother having a '鬼佬工/ gweilo gung (ghost/white man's job)', as her mother worked in a non-ethnicised field/workplace, unlike her dad who worked in a takeaway. The term is most likely used by her parents or other Cantonese speakers she encountered to describe this type of work, a discourse among Chinese migrants who historically were linked to the chain migration into catering and had limited opportunities in other sectors in the UK. 'Gweilo gung' also signifies a job that has less gruelling working conditions and is perhaps better paid, requires a higher level of education and English proficiency, and places the job holder in a more integrated position in British society. It is interesting that although Jackie could have described herself

as 'quite British/Westernised' or her mother held a 'non-Chinese job', the code-switching

and usage of these specific Cantonese words in our conversation that highlight the 'white

Otherness' from a Chinese cultural perspective was particularly powerful and effective in

the bilingual/bicultural framework of our interview.

Another noteworthy code-switching incident took place during an informal

observation/participation at a Chinese Christian Church, which was previously mentioned in

Chapter 4. I attended the English speaking Youth Group, of which one of the main leaders

was white. I visited the church a few times during my data collection, and I was asked to join

one of the discussion groups with some teenage girls and a young adult facilitator/leader.

Before the formal discussion began, the girls were talking about their schools among

themselves. One girl commented that her school was 'really bad'. Another girl then asked,

'Are there a lot of 'haak yan' (black people)?' One of my interviewees, Emma (aged 17), who

was in this group, immediately raised the question in a slightly displeased tone, 'Why did

you say that in Chinese?' Her question went unanswered, and the original speaker replied,

'yes'. Although I do not intend to unpick the technicality of this code-switching incident

since this is not a sociolinguistics based study, I am interested in the usage of 'haak

yan/black people' in Cantonese in this incident. Bond and Lai (1986) and Javier and Marcos

(1989) show that bilinguals may code-switch to their second language to distance

themselves from what they say. I am imagining that the speaker perhaps considered linking

'black people' and 'bad school' would seem questionable in the general British context that

she was familiar with at school or outside her home environment. However, labelling black

people as 'haak yan' might create a conceptual shift to a Chinese cultural context. Ideas that

would be too disturbing when expressed in the first language are less anxiety provoking in

the second language (Dewaele 2004), and making a remark in her perhaps less dominant language, Chinese, might distance her from the questionable, racist connotation associated in the English context.

Additionally, the social norms in discussing topics relating to ethnicity or cultural groupings could be different in a Cantonese Chinese cultural context that the speaker was familiar with (i.e. at home or with Chinese relations), as seen in the widespread use of Othering or prejudicial terms, such as 'gweilo' to refer to white Westerners and the derogatory discourse of 'Big Six people' (pun on the term 'Mainland' and the homophone of 'land' in Cantonese) as 'backward' Mainlanders, originated from Hong Kong Cantonese speakers. Parker (1995) also documented a similar incident during his participant observation at a British Chinese youth project. In a discussion about membership, one youth claimed that it would look funny with a picture of a 'haak gwei' on a Chinese youth project membership card (haak qwei, which loosely means black ghost/foreign devil). Another youth also rejected the inclusion of black youths, argued 'our parents are racist, they wouldn't like it, they mightn't let us come' if blacks were accepted (Parker, 1995, p.227). As illustrated in this example, the racist discourse applied to black people or 'haak gwei/black devil' is being presented as normalised at home or among some Chinese people, though undoubtedly linked to the racist discourse in the wider society. Therefore, perhaps the shift in language also signals a change in cultural norms and context in the speaker's comment on 'black people' and 'bad school'. Similar to Edward, the Hafu research respondent quoted above, seeing a different personality coming out when speaking Japanese, British Chinese young people undoubtedly could utilise Chinese language or code-switching as an effective way to express 'a different side' or another aspect of their identity that is linked to their Chinese

connections. Sociolinguists like Creese (2011) might even describe such complex interplay

of codes and conventions as heteroglossia and translanguaging, rather than simply mixing of

codes. However, language was not the only way young people use to forge their

Chineseness, as the participants considered a range of other lived experiences that are

associated with their Chinese heritage, which will be discussed later in this chapter, also

make them 'Chinese'.

It is evident that although some young people in this research drew their Chinese

(dis)associations from more easily identifiable elements such as ancestries, Chinese

proficiency and customs, some seemed to challenge certain beliefs of what constituted

being Chinese, or British. Although the notion of Chinese language as a Chinese identity

signifier did not come out as strongly as the previous study with Chinese complementary

school pupils, a sense of 'duty' or expectation as someone with Chinese heritage to learn

Chinese language and embrace Chinese culture was still communicated explicitly or

implicitly by most participants. Many felt that it would be 'good' or 'nice' to acquire

more/better Chinese for a variety of reasons, and some people who thought that perhaps

they were not as connected to the culture as they ought to be, for example Matthew (aged

15) expressed feeling 'bad' about being 'not really that Chinese'; nevertheless, a few also

acknowledged the difficulties and unlikelihood for them to take actions to remedy the

perceived 'deficiency' in either Chinese language or culture. While Chinese proficiency

seemed to be an important component linked to Chinese identity, a number of other both

traditional (e.g. celebrate Chinese festivals) and contemporary (e.g. watch Chinese/Asian

drama series) cultural practices, of which many influenced by home culture, also appeared

to make up this 'package' of being Chinese in the UK. However, as seen in the range of

responses from these young people, these variables are not a check-list, rather they often

are interactionally linked with each other and the young people's environments and

individuals relate to them differently. Equally noteworthy, many young people cited their

reasons for feeling British/English as speaking English and growing up in England, though the

level of connection also varied among the participants.

7.2 Pupils' constructions of Chineseness in the British context

When the young people talked about how they felt Chinese or British, they cited what they

saw as Chinese or British 'culture' and their (dis)associations to such 'cultures'. 'Chinese

culture' was portrayed as a range of tangible or intangible things – from dim sum, Chinese

New Year and Chinese pop music to respect. Although language was one of the major

signifiers which the young people saw as linked to Chinese identities, a range of other

practices were also deemed 'Chinese' in their views. Such 'cultures' and practices, including

languages, are all socially constructed, and while some customs seem more traditional,

others emerged more recently either in Asia or elsewhere. These cultural markers represent

both real and imagined connections to their Chinese heritage.

7.2.1 'We always eat rice' – Chinese food as Chineseness

The consumption of Chinese food was something frequently mentioned by participants as a

strong link to their Chinese heritage, and a number of them felt that the food culture was

closely linked to their Chineseness. Bergquist (2006) suggests that although language is

widely considered the transmitter and marker of culture, within the context of diaspora

food, arguably more portable and adaptable, endures when languages are lost or use is

limited or restricted. Vietnamese American filmmaker Paul Kwan echoes a similar sentiment

in his film *The Anatomy of a Spring Roll* (1993), which documents his journey to reconcile his

Vietnamese roots with his American life and in which he declares 'food is everyone's first language' (Kwan and Iger 1993). The result in this sample agrees with Bergquist's theory, as many young people mentioned eating Chinese food, regardless of their level of Chinese language abilities. Even though Chinese cuisine is popular among the general British population, eating Chinese food every day or regularly, especially eating rice as mentioned by a few participants, was communicated as being distinctively or authentically Chinese.

Emma (aged 17) explained that as much as she and her family were westernised, she 'can't live without rice'. Neve (aged 15), of mixed white British and Chinese heritage, described normally eating a wide range of cuisine due to her parents' love of travel, but nevertheless she highly valued the Chinese meals with her Mauritian Chinese grandparents every weekend. Their descriptions of home Chinese meals might also imply that they were consuming 'real' Chinese food, which is relatively different from the modified and adapted dishes, such as crispy seaweed and crispy aromatic duck, which cater for non-Chinese customers' palettes in UK restaurants (Hom 2007). At two of the Chinese Christian churches that I attended services, I saw Chinese food (simple home-style cooking charged at a low price) was served to the members at lunch.

Furthermore, food can evoke strong and long-lasting associations and memories. Some scholars consider the connection between food, culture, and identity as inseparable (Counihan and van Esterik 1997). Lockie (2001) describes this consumption of food as both 'intensely personal and profoundly social' (p. 239). The social aspect is further heightened in Chinese dinning among family members or family relations at the table, as it is customary to share food from communal plates, usually on a bite-by-bite basis instead of dividing out individual servings of the dishes at the beginning of the meal. As mentioned previously, a

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couple of the young people who did not feel strongly connected to being Chinese cited that

eating Chinese food was the limited way they were connected to the culture. Therefore,

Chinese food was powerfully both a cultural marker and a gateway to consuming Chinese

culture to some of these young people.

7.2.2 'We go to like festivals with dragon dancing and stuff' – Cultural celebrations as Chineseness

Another cultural symbol that was repeatedly mentioned was traditional Chinese

holiday/festival celebrations. During the Chinese complementary schooling research, the

perpetuation of Chinese culture was seen by teachers and parents as a key purpose of

Chinese schooling along with language teaching, and many felt that it was highly important

for young people to learn about these Chinese holidays at Chinese schools (Francis et al,

2010). Although almost all participants in this study described celebrating some of the

festivals, and some attributed such practices as contributing to their Chineseness, such

significance did not seem to be universally adopted by the young people and their families.

Chinese New Year, the most important holiday in the Chinese calendar, is increasingly being

celebrated in recent years by both Chinese and non-Chinese people in mainstream culture,

such as at schools, in town centres and in the media. Almost all of the young people

reported having some Chinese New Year celebrations within their families, and a number of

pupils also talked about attending public events.

Regarding the less significant holidays that are less commonly mentioned in mainstream

culture, many young people expressed a more ambivalent attitude. The second most

celebrated holiday, Mid-Autumn Festival (sometimes also known as Moon Festival in

English), was mentioned by a number of respondents and some talked about eating the

traditional festive food, mooncake. On the other hand, some other young people were less

concerned or well-informed about this festival. A few expressed some uncertainty about the

name of the festival, others called it by self-made up names, such as 'mooncake day', 'the

whole moon thing'. One respondent forgot the name of 'mooncake' and mistakenly thought

that it was something consumed during Chinese New Year. Perhaps this lack of knowledge

and understanding of Chinese festivals or traditions exhibited by some of these British

Chinese youths support the Chinese school teachers' concern about the need to disseminate

and preserve such knowledge to the younger generations (Francis et al, 2010).

Nevertheless, it appeared that some of the young people and their parents view these

traditions as less relevant or important to their lives in the UK. Siuking (aged 17), who

appeared to have many strong links to Chinese language and 'cultures' at home, saw

keeping the traditions, which included celebrating the festivals, as 'part of my lifestyle'.

Kinming (aged 15), as discussed earlier, viewed keeping up with the traditions was

important to sustain the Chinese identity in the UK. On the other hand, other young people

described such celebrations in their families, including Chinese New Year, as 'not big' or 'not

massive'. Daniel (aged 17), said his family rarely celebrated these traditional festivals other

than Chinese New Year 'because they [other festivals] are not really that big in err, the UK

here'. Even Michelle (aged 15), whose family moved to Hong Kong for a period and whose

father still worked there for part of the year, described that the traditions and sense of

occasion had been diluted over the years in her family:

> [Chinese New Year] It's kinda like not as exciting as it was at the beginning when we
> first came to England and so, now we just get 'lai see' (lucky money from parents
> and elders) and that's about it, and we make some like, traditional Chinese food for
> New Year and that's about it.

She also stated that her family generally did not celebrate the other festivals 'anymore'.

The logistics and practicality to continue these traditions possibly pose challenges to some families; Dac (aged 17) felt that other aspects of life, such as work, took priority, while Christina (aged 16) candidly commented on the hugely inflated prices of imported mooncakes in Chinatown. Chau & Yu (2001) suggests that the lives of Chinese in Britain are actually highly influenced by economic factors instead of being tightly attaching to traditions, especially since many of those migrants came to Britain due to economic reasons. While these festivals are public holidays in Asia, where these holiday goods are widely available, a higher degree of effort and commitment is required to honour these customs and practices in the UK. Some of the holidays, such as Ching Ming/Qing Ming Festival which relates to visiting ancestral graves, might not seem relevant, applicable or possible in their lives in the UK.

Additionally, a portion of the participants reported attending church (Chinese Christian churches and non-ethnic based churches), as discussed in Chapter 2, Christianity appeared to be more popular among UK Chinese than those in Asia. Certain customs, such as ancestral worship and various new year 'superstitions', could be perceived as incompatible with Christianity by Chinese Christians, so some might be selective in passing on Chinese cultural customs (Yang 1999). Besides Ian and Dan's family (with mother as an adoptee), Emma and Matthew's family was the only one reported not celebrating Chinese New Year or any other Chinese holidays; however, they regularly celebrated Christmas and Easter. Emma and Matthew's professional, middle class family regularly attended a Chinese Christian church, though it is unclear whether their more Westernised/assimilated lifestyle was directly linked to their Christian beliefs. On the other hand, research in America also

shows that Asian families view the ethnic churches as a way to preserve certain aspects of their traditional values (Chai 1998).

Nevertheless, these socially constructed traditions undoubtedly are constantly evolving over time, and the notion of how these old practices have been neatly preserved and should be passed down to future generations is highly idealistic. For instance, new flavours of mooncakes, which cater to younger or more health-conscious tastes, have become available in Asia in recent times (and also in the UK Chinatown shops, with a much higher price tag). Another major festival which was mentioned, though only by two of the respondents, is the Dragon Boat Festival, which traditionally commemorates the death of the ancient poet and statesman Qu Yuan (c. 340 BCE – 278 BCE) but gave rise to a new international sport, modern dragon boat racing, that has been popular among many non-Chinese, largely due to a marketing ploy by the Hong Kong Tourist Association to promote tourism in the 1970s (DBA 2011). In fact, some of these traditional holidays, such as Ching Ming Festival, were officially suppressed by the PRC government and only been reinstated as a public holiday recently (Du 2008), so many younger Chinese in China have little experience of celebrating the Ching Ming holiday. Whether driven by political, commercial or societal changes, these old and new 'traditions' are evolving across time and locations, and what constitutes 'authentic' or 'traditional' culture is contestable. As much as some of the respondents felt participation in cultural celebrations with their families served as a meaningful and important access point to their heritage and a sign of 'being Chinese', other young people and their families might see limited relevance or significance in doing so in the UK.

7.2.3 'When I go home, my parents are Chinese, they were brought up in Asia' – Chinese home background as Chineseness

The home life also provides other points of significances to their sense of Chineseness on more individual and micro levels. A number of participants described their families as being 'traditional' or 'following traditions', explicitly or implicitly saying their upbringings were different from their non-Chinese peers. Besides the food and holidays discussed above, some participations viewed certain 'values' that were held by their parents or in the family as associated with being Chinese. Federico (aged 15) highlighted his understanding of his Malaysian Chinese mother's culture which included 'the whole respect to your elders is paramount.' 'Some attitudes that some Chinese, that the Chinese have like I really like,' Emma (aged 17) explained, 'the kind of importance of respect, especially for the elders.' Sarah (aged 18) felt that the notion that 'education is really important' was something which emerged from her Chinese home culture.

Louise (aged 17) suggested how a strong sense of family commitment and obligation was shared by her British Indian friends at the independent school that she attended but not thoroughly understood by her white British peers:

> If I say that I can't go to something because I have a family thing, they [British Indian friends] will say 'Oh that's alright!' straight away, whereas the, sort of the middle class, the girls who've grown up in sort of white middle class, they're sort of 'Can't you just say no? Can't you just not go to your family event?' It's like no, I can't just not go.

Although they all seemed to come from similar economic backgrounds, Louise observed cultural differences in family relations compared to her white British school friends. Bhopal's (2010) study on South Asian women in higher education find that most participants developed close friendships with women from similar backgrounds, and these valuable friendships provided them with a sense of support. Despite not having schoolmates from Chinese or East Asian backgrounds, Louise found her British Indian friends to shared

understanding of their family obligations, which was not well understood by her White middle class peers. Christy (aged 16), one of two pupils in the sample who mentioned having to help out at a family takeaway, described not having the time to do any after school activities due to her family obligation and also did not generally go out much 'because my parents have already been like, getting protective, so they don't actually, they wouldn't actually want me to do anything besides like stay at home.' Two other participants also mentioned similar conditions relating to parental controls. Although these young people were aware that aspects of their lifestyles, which were closely tied to their Chinese home backgrounds, were different to some of their peers, they appeared content with their way of life and showed positive attitudes towards growing up as British Chinese.

However, one respondent, Josephine (aged 14), reported that such cultural differences created tensions between her and her parents. She said their 'completely different views' caused clashes, and they 'kinda have a lot of arguments and stuff.' She described identifying with being British more than Chinese and generally 'act[ing] in a British way'. She portrayed 'a typical Chinese person' as living up to the 'stereotype saying you're good at maths and stuff at school', while she depicted herself as 'being a bit of a rebel' and did not work that hard or enjoy schoolwork. When being asked to further define 'British ways', she found it difficult to explain but concluded that it possibly meant 'being really confident kind of thing, like just... go out and have a laugh in a way, and just normal English teenagers in a way like that, so... yeah.' Josephine's disassociations with what she perceived as Chineseness – do well in maths and at school (she disliked maths and schoolwork), not confident (most likely linked to the stereotype of British Chinese pupils being quiet), working hard (i.e. not having a laugh) – perhaps gave her a stronger sense of identification of being British. Although she

admitted some of the supposedly Chinese characteristics were stereotypes; nevertheless,

she also appeared to be buying into such ideas.

Patrick (aged 17), who was UK-born but attended international school in Hong Kong in his

primary school years, described himself feeling 'quite British' and that his 'mindset is more

of a British one', sharing some similar sentiments with Josephine. He depicted a 'Chinese

mindset' as being competitive and also involving much focus on grades, something which he

did not deem 'very important', and a 'British mindset' as being 'more relaxed', which he

interestingly suggested as a reason for train delays in the UK, juxtaposing the efficient

transport system he missed from Hong Kong. Although Patrick seemed to be a high

achieving pupil and saw himself being more academic than his predominantly White British

school friends, he felt that he did not identify with the deep fixation on grades among

Chinese people, including his parents. He also echoed Josephine's remarks on being able to

'go out and have a laugh' and having cultural differences at home:

> Every now and then [the two cultures] would clash, so like if I'm, say I wanna go out
> and they will say you need to revise, it's like well […] so it's like, so she will say revise,
> grades, and then I think like, you need time to relax and stuff as well

There are undoubtedly observable differences in parental styles and family dynamics across

cultures and social class, though parent-child conflicts of a similar nature, especially during

adolescence, also occur in Chinese families in Asia (Yau & Smetana, 2003; Hong Kong

Federation of Youth Groups, 2006) or white British families in the UK (Judd, 2009).

Nonetheless, literature on Asian Americans suggests that immigration and exposure to US

cultural precepts can accelerate and exacerbate such intergenerational tensions (Kirbria

1997; Min 1998). And such clashes in migrant families tended to be framed in terms of

ethnic retention (traditionalism) and assimilation (Americanization) and thus undertake a completely different meaning in the diasporic context (Pyke 2005). It is difficult to dissect how factors like age, personality, individual experiences, or acculturation interactionally contribute to the divergence in attitudes. However, such binary discourses, Chinese/British or East/West, are often highlighted to interpret identities and behaviours. Such oppositional constructions of Chineseness and Britishness were also seen in interviews with Chinese complementary school parents/staff in the previous project: they talked about children learning 'Chinese values', such as self-discipline and obedience, which was deemed different from the more unruly 'Western culture' in their mainstream schools (Francis et al, 2010).

Catherine (aged 16), who attended Chinese schools for 11 years and grew up in a household with sustained interfacing with Asia, expressed a solid sense of Chinese identity but felt that she did not completely fit into British culture. She explained:

> I'm brought up like disciplined, I don't think that drinking alcohol all the time, every [inaudible] or something is a good thing.

Catherine depicted her former comprehensive secondary school, which had predominantly white British pupils, as 'rough', and she felt that the worst aspect of that school was the pupils:

> Worst aspect is students because, or how they're brought up really. No offence, but then this area is actually really, really like rough and everything, and then there are, like, say 10 to 5% is all really, really, er stubborn and, er very, was it ignorant or? Ignorant, like they think they know it all or everything. Or is it arrogant? I can't remember. And then they're like, er, I think they're like, it's their parents, they don't really care about their kids. Like my, because I'm brought up in quite a disciplined family, er then you can see a difference.

It is unclear whether her comment about binge drinking, which was a characteristic she viewed as part of the British culture, was directly linked to her former peers at school;

nevertheless, she clearly saw herself as being different from her schoolmates in terms of behaviour and family background. Even though a number of factors, for example social class or locality, could be related to the sorts of behaviours to which she referred, she credited the discipline that she received in her Chinese family, which others seemed to be lacking due to their allegedly uncaring home culture, as setting her apart from some of her white British peers.

In Song's (1997) study of British Chinese young people in the catering trade, different siblings were linked with polarised ideal-typical cultural identities within their families, where 'good' children were being seen as more 'Chinese' and more committed to 'helping out' at the family takeaways, and the 'bad' children were positioned as being 'British/Western' and selfish, individualistic, rather than valuing collective, family needs. Additionally, the practice of cultural collective identity construction is used not only to produce a sense of cultural pride or distinctiveness (i.e. particular values are used to symbolise Chineseness) but as part of a relational Othering to draw boundaries between ethnic/cultural groups (Archer et al, 2010). It is significant to consider that the value of discipline has been commonly constructed and identified as a 'Chinese value' by both Chinese and non-Chinese people, as demonstrated in the recent international interest/furore/controversy around the book *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*, by Chinese-American writer/law professor Amy Chua, and its discussion of a strict 'Chinese parenting style' (as opposed to a lax western approach). It is possible that British Chinese young people, such as Catherine, have internalised such views or stereotypes about Chinese/British cultures that have been perpetuated in their home and public domains, and

their personal experiences might then further reinforce such beliefs and a perceived British or Western/Chinese dichotomy.

7.2.4 'We do watch Chinese TV, like TVB (Hong Kong satellite TV channel)'- Chinese popular culture as Chineseness

Parker's (1995) study on young Chinese people in Britain highlighted the importance of Hong Kong popular culture in British Chinese families' daily lives and young people's Chinese identity formation. Although virtually invisible in the mainstream British society with some recent exceptions of martial arts based films (e.g. Jackie Chan films, or *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*) that reinforce certain stereotypes, Chinese films or soap operas, rented from Chinatown video shops, was a major source of family entertainment and ritual to many. Additionally, they also served as a resource and inducement for young people to learn Cantonese (Parker, 1995). However, the days of renting video tapes and buying music cassettes from Chinatown shops are long gone; overseas Chinese can now keep updated with Chinese/Asian entertainment and trends easily via satellite channels and the internet.

In the study of Chinese complementary schooling, many young people interviewed identified the consumption of contemporary East Asian popular cultural forms closely associated with their sense of Chineseness, in which Chinese schools became a possible and legitimate space to express and share such interests with fellow Chinese friends (Archer et al, 2010). As Parker (1995) suggests, contemporary Hong Kong cultures provide a resource for the articulation of a youthful Chinese identity. As mentioned earlier, young people such as Fiona (aged 14) and Dac (aged 17) expressed sentiments of feeling 'less Chinese' due to seeing themselves speaking Chinese differently and being less in touch with popular/youth

cultural practices in East Asia, compared with their peers who originated from Asia. Dac saw

himself as not 'proper Chinese':

> When I just see the way they [Chinese person from China/Asia] can talk about, for instance Asian superstars or Asian celebrities, I probably wouldn't know them, and I probably would know very little of them or understand them that much, that's how I see erm, you know I'm Chinese but not the cultures of it, I don't er, know their culture, yeah.

Among the families Parker (1995) surveyed, of which 75 percent were in the catering trade,

60 percent reported watching Chinese videos at least weekly. Interestingly, among the

young people in this study, most certainly from a wider range of socioeconomic

backgrounds than Parker's sample, only about one quarter reported having Chinese satellite

television at home. Among these pupils with Chinese television, all except two were from

families in catering. Grace (aged 14), from a middle class background, however, had the

Mandarin channel, Phoenix CNE, and not the Hong Kong based TVB satellite channel (also

known as the Chinese Channel) that is popular among Cantonese speakers; her parents

were professionals migrants that came from mainland China, representing a different

migration trajectory within the British Chinese community. A few other participants without

Chinese satellite television also talked about their parents' or their own occasional

consumption of Chinese media through the use of the internet. The family activity of

watching Chinese videos that was common among many overseas Chinese has been

transformed to viewing programmes on the more readily available satellite channels or

internet downloads. Siuking (aged 17), whose parents ran a takeaway, acknowledged

watching Chinese television regularly 'because my parents watch it quite a lot so being at

home, just naturally, just yeah.' A number of the interviewees reported watching Chinese

programmes, mostly through satellite television, with their families; some described finding

these programmes enjoyable or interesting and a couple, such as Siuking, commented that the exposure helped their knowledge of Chinese language.

On the contrary, Sarah (aged 18), from a non-catering background, reported having the Chinese Channel at home though personally preferred English television. While some British Chinese young people in the sample enjoyed maintaining contact with East Asian popular culture through activities like watching Chinese and other Asian drama series (particularly Korean drama, which has become very popular throughout East Asia), Chinese pop music and anime[11], other participants did not have convenient access to this form of contemporary culture or were simply not interested in it. Jackie (aged 17) used to listen to some 'C-pop' and had seen a couple Taiwanese dramas because her older sister was a fan, but she admitted not keeping up with such things anymore. Some participants like Sarah (mentioned above) or Michelle (aged 15), were simply not interested. Michelle's dad sometimes watched Hong Kong television online, but she personally did not watch these programmes 'because like, I don't know, I just don't really like it.' Alternatively, Jessica (aged 16) revealed that her parents recently cancelled their Chinese Channel subscription due to its costs. For families that have limited financial resources or time to engage in keeping in touch with Chinese media, some might simply opt out of the commitment of subscriptions and settle on cheaper or 'free'/illegal with less regular consumptions, if they do keep up with Asian media at all.

Also, although it is undoubtedly quicker and easier to access such entertainment via the internet nowadays, such interest could be difficult to cultivate or sustain without an

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[11] A style of animation developed in Japan, which is popular in Japan and other East Asian countries and have also cultivated a following around the world.

environment or network, such as family members or friends, to support amid a sea of incredibly fast-changing information and trends available online. Amy (aged 15) said that her cousin in Hong Kong kept her updated with the latest entertainment news there via email (in English), while Christine (aged 12) occasionally joined her mother when she watched Hong Kong films on her laptop. On the contrary, Dac, seemingly without such input from his familial or peer networks, explained his brief and failed attempt to connect with Chinese popular culture:

> I mean I did try to look for some [Chinese pop] music, because I don't know how to, it's that if you [inaudible], it will limit you to some stuff, especially how English on so many things, like when I, I use their English names, or type in English words to find their songs, to find, because I wasn't up to date or I wouldn't know that much, it'd be quite hard to find, so I pretty much given up back then, so, no I don't know much modern stuff.

His apparent lack of knowledge of Chinese/English names of the artists/titles, what was deemed popular or 'good', and also the lack of easy access (e.g. via satellite television or Chinese DVDs collection) made it difficult for him to navigate the overwhelming amount of online information and be meaningfully engaged with the trends from Asia, without any support or shared interests from his family or friends. Parker (1995) suggests that although this form of youth Chinese identity that is linked to contemporary Chinese culture is perhaps 'independent of parental sanction', it actually sometimes require parental, and increasingly nowadays real life or virtual peer assistance.

Unlike Black or South Asian youth cultural forms, such as Bhangra, rap or reggae, which have established some credibility in the mainstream British society, much of the Chinese popular culture has limited cross-over appeal and is unfamiliar to most outside the British Chinese community (Parker, 1995). Christina (aged 16), of Greek Cypriot and Malaysian Chinese

heritage, believed that she had some knowledge of the trends in Asia, though she admitted

that, 'I mean I wish I had more, like Oriental friends that I could just jam with and like talk

about things we have in common.' Christina's sentiment echoed one of Parker's (1995)

respondents, describing her consumption of Hong Kong music was 'like a hidden part of

you'. This limited or private expression of their Chinese interests and identity probably

contributes to the compartmentalisation of their Chinese/British identities in some young

people. The lack of peer-cultural capital for some of the participants prevented them from

developing and maintaining interests in Chinese popular culture.

Significantly, to be engaged with Chinese media, a certain level of Chinese language

knowledge is generally needed to at least partially comprehend or enjoy the content. In

recent times, English language websites such as, Asianfanatics.net, DramaWiki, have

emerged to provide information or internet forums on East Asian entertainment to many

overseas Chinese and other East Asians, mainly from North America. Although Hong Kong

films always include English subtitles, English translations for Chinese drama series, whether

included by the official sources or provided by amateur fans online, are not always available

or easy to find, based on my own experience in searching for certain popular programmes.

Interestingly, Parker, who is of white English and Chinese heritage with limited Chinese

language skills, was unaware of the importance of this phenomenon within the British

Chinese community before he embarked on his research (Parker, 1995). Such consumption

was such an integral part of family lives within a sizable sector of the diaspora population in

the UK for earlier Chinese migrants. With little knowledge of English they could only depend

on imported programmes from Hong Kong for leisure. In contrast, some British Chinese

young people who do not have much Chinese knowledge or interface regularly with Asian

relations are now arguably more integrated into the mainstream British culture. Therefore

they might have little interest in connecting with this type of contemporary Chinese cultural

form, or might lack the opportunity or need to do so.

However, the growing popularity of other forms of Asian, predominantly visual and

consumption based youth cultures, such as video gaming, anime, and fashion, which

generally have non-Chinese origins but possess broad appeal among younger generations

within the East Asia region, are representing a less specific and localised (e.g. Hong Kong

Chinese) identity but a more general and globalised pan-Asian connection. Inter-Asian

cultural flows of popular culture (e.g. fashion, pop music, celebrities) have been taking place

since the 1980s, but modern technologies and changing societal conditions probably further

promote these exchanges. Such Asia rooted contemporary cultures also have a niche but

sizable diasporic East Asian and non-Asian heritage following outside the region, and this

twenty first century multi-directional global flow of cultural consumption is being described

as 'pop cosmopolitanism', by media scholar, Henry Jenkins (2007).

Cosmopolitans often are associated with acquiring knowledge and experience in 'high

cultures', such as traditional art and overseas excursions, which took them beyond the

borders of their local community (Calhoun, 2008). However, 'low' or contemporary popular

culture increasingly performs this same function for a growing number of young people

around the world nowadays (Jenkins, 2007). Kinming (aged 15), who had a very strong

Chinese identity, enjoyed learning more about Chinese language and history, though he also

articulated an interest in other Asian cultures, particularly Japanese. He described reading

manga[12] as a hobby and said he 'wouldn't mind moving to Japan' in the future. Within the last decade, the internet has allowed fans across the world to import, translate and distribute (or pirate) up-to-date information and materials and provide a useful platform to discuss their interests transnationally at a grassroots level; and sometimes larger commercial operations capitalise on and facilitate these growing interests (Jenkins, 2007).

This recent global phenomenon also allows people with no or limited Asian language skills to participate in this form of Asian origin cultural consumption because translated news or material generally can be obtained relatively easily with the aid of the internet and technology. Moreover, in some cases, such as fashion or idol/image centred pop music (J-pop, K-pop), translation is not essential to enjoy the cultural form. Matthew (aged 15), who had very limited knowledge of Chinese, reported watching anime. Louise (aged 17), who also could not speak Chinese, was so engaged with some of the Asian youth cultures that she even ran an anime club at her school and a manga club at her local library. She described enjoying the friendships she formed through going to anime conventions and related activities. From my own occasional participations at these UK conventions/events and an unsuccessful participant recruitment at an UK based anime online forum, anecdotal evidence showed a significant number of British young people that are interested in these Asian youth cultures are of Chinese heritage, though there seems to be a gender divide across different types of activities. Although the levels of engagement vary across individuals and genres (e.g. from occasional entertainment usage to organising a local club), young people are taking an active role in connecting with forms of popular culture

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[12] A Japanese genre of cartoons or comic books which has a significant worldwide audience, generally young people

originating from outside of the UK or mainstream Western media. While the viewing of Chinese television is something most likely initiated, promoted or guided by the older generations at home, reading translated manga and dressing in Japanese street fashion are activities that the young people themselves actively seek to explore and partake.

The reasons or motivations for British Chinese young people to be engaged in these cultural forms in the British context is complex and worthy of a further examination and discussion in a different study. Some youths possibly became interested through their Chinese connections. For instance, Catherine (aged 16) commented she loved visiting Hong Kong, and especially Mongkok, a popular youth shopping area, where 'they have um, I think they're more updated in like fashion, erm and, er all the things that Asian culture has like anime, manga and everything else, er, toys.' Although some of these products or hobbies have origins from countries like Japan or Korea, they are also popular around the East Asian region and have been part of the local youth culture in places like Hong Kong. Other young people might have been initially exposed to Asian imports through the few products that have made a cross-over, mainstream appeal, such as Pokemon or Hello Kitty, and later be drawn to embrace a broader range of Japanese or Asian youth cultures. Whatever prompted their initial interests, their awareness and identification with a less specifically Chinese, though more globally prominent Asian cultures is a further development from the Chinese identity via Hong Kong pop culture that Parker (1995) discussed.

Although these pursuits are still partially separated from the mainstream British society, with the exception of some children's animations and certain genres of video games which have been popular with the general public, such interests now can be shared with certain non-Chinese/East Asian friends in person or virtually across the country/world, no longer

only limited to a narrow field of family relations or Chinese peer groups with the case of

Hong Kong videos and music in the past. For instance, Louise candidly claimed that all her

non-Chinese friends she met at her Guide group were 'all quite geeky, so they're also all into

manga as well.' These subcultures are most likely deemed 'strange' or 'geeky' by some in

the public sphere, but also to 'cool' to certain sectors in the UK society. In fact, localised or

hybridised forms of some of these cultures have emerged in the UK, such as Sweatdrop

Studios, a UK based publisher for original manga-style comics in English, and multi-genre fan

conventions are regularly organised across the UK to foster UK fans networks and

exchanges. It is debatable whether this 'pop cosmopolitanism' can lead to genuine

appreciations of the Other culture or simply segmented knowledge, and possibly a new

form of Orientalism. Nevertheless, these East Asia originated youth cultures are not

restricted to be only 'a hidden part of you' (Parker, 1995) but can provide an alternative

source of cultural perspective and identification for some British Chinese young people.

7.3 On being Chinese and British

The following table shows a loose interpretation of how pupils described feeling Chinese

and/or British. Since many pupils described their identity was often situational and

relational, this interpretation has its limitations to capture the fluidity of their identities.

Feeling Chinese/British	Number of participants (n=38)
Mostly British, a bit Chinese	8
Mostly Chinese, a bit British	6
A bit British and a bit Chinese	11
Strongly both British and Chinese	9
Quite Chinese, a bit Greek, not really British/English	1
Quite Italian and English, only a bit Chinese	1

Do not have strong feeling towards any particularly culture	2

7.3.1 'You can be British and Chinese right?' – Chinese and British identities in flexible and relational terms

Most of the participants reported feeling British/English to various extents, often in conjunction with feeling Chinese. A large number of the young people attributed their sense of Britishness to being born in the UK/holding UK passports, speaking English, and growing up/going to school in UK. Amy (aged 15) articulated this popular view by saying that 'school, education, like I know about the news and um I've got, I know about Britain and I live here, so I feel British', and Charlotte (aged 14) felt that the fact that 'I fit in with my English [school] friends and stuff' made her feel British. For those who had visited Asia, some described their sense of Britishness as being brought out in relation to the less familiar Chinese/Asian cultures and environments there. Many of these young people expressed feeling a mix of both British and Chinese, and this mixture was generally described as being fluid and changeable (will be discussed further in the next section). Matthew (aged 15), who was born in the US and lived in the UK since he was a toddler, explained:

> I live in Britain, I've lived in Britain for so long, so I, when I think of myself I think I'm British… slash Chinese… so yeah

A few young people did show reservations identifying as 'English' and chose to say 'British, as they felt 'English' representing a white English ethnic group, but some others were at ease saying that they felt 'English'. Such hesitation to claim an English identity is understandable – although endless public debates on 'Britishness' and 'Englishness' over recent years generated little consensus on their definitions, 'Britishness' generally seems to

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communicate more civil identification, while 'Englishness' is sometimes more likely to be

linked to a white English ethnic membership (Fenton 2007; Kumar 2003). Besides the

occasional associations with or hijack by far right groups, Englishness is also sometimes

linked with an idealised but backward-looking imagery – picturesque rural villages and

gentle rolling countryside[13].

 Alternatively, a few participants felt that their British identity was mainly limited to having a

British nationality, and two expressed not particularly feeling British overall. Shirley (aged

13) described 'not really' feeling British. Her background perhaps represented a more

'typical' profile of post-war Chinese migrant families that came from Hong Kong via catering,

and she not only had knowledge of Cantonese, she could also speak Hakka, which was

unusual among the second or third generations given the general decline of the language

within the British Chinese community. Her granddad and her British-born father both

worked in the family Chinese takeaway, while her stay-at-home mother, who moved to the

UK from Southern China upon her marriage and spoke limited English, raised Shirley and her

siblings since her father was 'always at work'. When being asked to describe herself, she

said 'like mainly Chinese' and explained that 'most of my friends are like Chinese, and I have

not very much friends in English school.' She attended a local school which had an almost all

white British population in a significant rural area near a city in southern England. She

reported having a generally positive experience at school, though she commented on most

of her schoolmates being 'quite chavvy' and the racist incidents that happened to her and

her Chinese friends on some occasions; she did not participate in any extracurricular

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[13] In the recent controversy related to the television show, Midsomer Murders, in which the former producer suggested that there was no place in the programme, which he termed the 'last bastion of Englishness', for ethnic minorities characters (Singh, 2011)

activities or clubs at school. On the other hand, she attended Chinese school on Saturday and Chinese church on Sunday, and she maintained contacts with her Chinese peers through her weekend activities via the internet during the week. Although she could be considered a third generation British Chinese through her father's side, her weak sense of belonging to Britain was probably shaped by her experiences of marginalisation and limited integration into her immediate environment (and may also reflected her foreign born mother's experience), while finding more comfort within her own family and Chinese peers that perhaps were in similar circumstances.

Alternatively, Federico (aged 15), of Malaysian Chinese and Italian heritage, acknowledged having influences from his parents' cultural backgrounds and the UK surroundings but described feeling something neither Chinese nor British, or Italian, which shall be further explored in a later section:

> I don't really feel any sort of culture. I don't really feel any sort of ethnicity. I feel myself because of my mixed race, because I'm a sort of half-caste thing, I don't feel that I really belong to any country at all. I just feel a person of the world really.

Federico, who grew up in a major urban area, did not reject his heritage or physical connections; however, he felt like he was a unique combination of those influences and part of the globalised humankind but not a tied to specific connection. His identification as 'a person of the world' resonates with the description of a 'third culture kid' -

> *A third culture kid is a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside their parents' culture. The third culture kid builds relationships to all the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the third culture kid's life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of the same background (qtd. in Pollock and Van Reken, 2001, p. 19).*

Although the term is generally used to describe people who grow up in cross-cultural settings and high mobility, Federico's mixed heritage, regular visits to his parents' home countries and multicultural living environment gave him a more global perspective on how he saw himself. The concepts of 'hybridity' and 'third space' in relation to British Chinese will be discussed further later and in the next chapter.

7.3.2 Feeling Chinese/British can be flexible, but is it a free choice?

Most of the young people interviewed saw themselves as being informed by both Chinese and British cultures and acknowledged the actual complexity and multiplicity of their own cultural identities. Many spoke about their cultural identity in complex and situational terms. Their identifications with different cultures could also change over time. Participants' narratives communicated the relationality of ethnic identity. For example, Jessica (aged 16) described now feeling more British than in the past, 'since my Chinese has gone down' and since her parents had given her more freedom to go out, like her school friends. As discussed earlier in this chapter, some of the participants reported feeling Chinese when at home (e.g. eating Chinese food, being around their parents) and around Chinese people, and feeling British/English when at school and with their British school friends. However, some other young people, who seemed to have a weaker identification with what they deemed 'Chinese', felt the opposite in similar circumstances. Nicky (aged 16), of white British and Malaysian Chinese heritage, identified as 'mostly feel[ing] more English', depending on where she was. She had limited knowledge of Chinese, though she attended Chinese school at the local Chinese association for a few years and also did Chinese dancing there for a longer period. She described feeling a bit more Chinese when with her English

friends 'cos they're a lot more English' and feeling more English around her Chinese friends.

She saw herself as being different from her Chinese friends:

> I dunno, like I think their conversations are different to like my English friends, like English friends, I dunno, Chinese, like, Chinese friends like take loads of pictures and stuff, and all like all about like fashion, like cute dresses and stuff, er so I could say that's more Chinese, they're like into Chinese music and stuff and a lot more girly or, yeah more girly and like preppy. Er, whereas my English friends are a bit more like laidback, erm we just talk about anything really, feel a bit more comfortable with my English friends.

Nicky's unfamiliarity and disengagement with contemporary Chinese/East Asian youth culture (e.g. media, fashion, technology), which is popular among some British Chinese young people, made her feel 'less Chinese' among her Chinese friends. Young people like Nicky probably felt their disconnections with certain aspects of 'Chineseness' were heightened by the presence of other Chinese people.

On the other hand, some other pupils sensed their difference, in this case being Chinese, among non-Chinese people. Jackie (aged 17), who grew up in an urban area near London, described her feelings changing in different situations, and said that she felt Chinese at school 'because other people are English, or like Indian or whatever.' And for the interviewees that had visited Asia, some highlighted the fact that how they were often seen as 'Chinese' in the UK but identified as 'British/English' or 'Western' when in Asia. Even for Catherine (aged 16), who saw herself being more 'Chinese' and not fitting in what she constructed as 'British culture', she acknowledged that her positioning as a Chinese person in UK was different from Chinese living in Asia:

> I'm more like a foreign Chinese because I don't, I'm not brought up there. I get used to the English culture, like British culture, more than the Chinese culture, so when I get back to, erm Hong Kong, I'm actually fascinated by it, like other English people would if they go back, if they went to China, Hong Kong, they'd be fascinated.

Catherine was born and raised in one of the home counties; nevertheless, she described her

regular visiting to Hong Kong as going 'back', a term commonly used by other British born

Chinese, to reflect the perceived close connection with her parents/grandparents' origins

and the 'homeland' positioning that such places represent. Although most of these young

people felt positive about their visits to Asia and described the trips as 'good', 'fun' or

'interesting', many, like Catherine, also commented on how these locations were quite

different from what they were familiar with at home in England. The feeling of shifting

positioning and identifications probably stems from both feedback from others around

them and the young people's own self awareness, which might be influenced by their

interactions with others and the structural forces of the dominant racial discourse in British

society (Song, 2010).

7.3.3 On being 'different'

A few respondents said that their experience of growing up in the UK with Chinese heritage

was not something they had consciously examined or appeared out of the ordinary. Jessica

(aged 16) revealed that she 'not really thought about it' and viewed her upbringing as

'normal', even though she/her family might do certain things differently to her friends.

Sarah (aged 18) also felt that her background was 'quite normal, it's just so many people live

here are Chinese, so it's not a big thing, so yeah.' However, it was notable that a high

portion of participants acknowledged feeling or knowing they were 'different' due to their

Chinese backgrounds. Australian celebrity chef, Kylie Kwong, who is fourth generation

Australian Chinese, described always feeling different from other children when growing up

in a suburb, 'I certainly felt different when I'd go to school and open the lunch box and there

I'd have last night's rice and soy sauce chicken wings and my friend had the Vegemite

sandwiches' (CNN, 2010). The mirror, experiences at schools, the media and interactions with friends or strangers could all serve as reminders of their Otherness. Christy (aged 16) found coming from a Chinese family 'quite good', as 'I don't find any problems with our lifestyles' – her reference to 'our' lifestyle distinguishing British Chinese from the majority culture. Similar to Kylie Kwong noticing the cultural difference in the lunch boxes, Kit (aged 15) also felt growing up with Chinese heritage in England was 'different to normal English people because, because it's not like their lifestyle': and notably on 'English lifestyle', is projected as 'normal', and seen as the standard against which Kit's background is measured.

Other young people commented on the fact that they undeniably looked different. Siuking stated that 'appearance wise you're going to be different from others'. Josephine (aged 14), who identified more with being British and self-described generally acting in 'British ways', admitted that 'I still look Chinese, I can't exactly change that kind of look, and I can't exactly deny the fact that I'm Chinese.' Jackie (aged 17) recalled being asked 'why do you look like this?' when she was one of the three Chinese pupils at her primary school, and such experiences undoubtedly would make young people become aware of their perceived differences. Certain migrant groups, such as the Irish community, continue to face barriers in British society (Pemberton & Mason, 2007); however, their appearances, and possibly language, make their minority status 'invisible', while British Asian or British Chinese people's perceived migrant status or 'foreignness' remains visibly identifiable, including for the settled or British born generations. Even for Neve (aged 15), who had white English and Chinese parents and did not have an unmistakable Chinese/East Asian appearance, her claim to be British had been challenged. She shared that occasionally 'I'd say I'm British, and then they'd say oh you don't look British'; such response implied that she could not be a

'real' or 'authentic' British person due to her looks not matching certain essentialised ideas of a British person, which seemed to be based on skin colours/physiognomy in these encounters.

Although there are undoubtedly some recognizable differences in lifestyles among different cultures, being visible minorities and the experiences of racism or racialisation, as discussed in this and earlier chapters, might have further highlighted some young people's sense of Otherness and being different. The 'perpetual foreigners syndrome', which was termed by American legal scholar Frank Wu (2002), captures a predicament faced by Asian Americans that they are routinely treated as though they are foreigners and do not belong in America as much as many other Americans. When claiming a British identity is recurrently being questioned, or at worst denied, British Chinese youth's self perception would undoubtedly also be affected by such on-going, often subtle but significant processes of Othering. Dac (aged 17) seemed to have accepted the 'reality' of being seen as Other and not as British. Even though he felt mainstream British culture, such as television and holidays, was part of his normal life, he revealed that he had 'never actually said I was British before to be honest':

> Normally I just do say I'm Chinese, because… maybe just normally people assume I'm Chinese or Asian because my colour, but erm, they don't know…

Dac implied that describing himself as 'British' would not be a viable option, as perhaps from his experience, others would generally only see him as 'Chinese' or 'Asian' and not acknowledge his claim to be British. He would describe himself as a BBC (British born Chinese) among Chinese people; however, he felt that it would be virtually meaningless to mention the fact that he was English born to non-Chinese, as 'they wouldn't really see the

difference, if British born Chinese, or Chinese person, most of friends wouldn't see a difference really.' In Dac's view or experiences, Chinese, or East Asian, no matter where they were born/raised, would be perceived as a homogenous group of outsiders in British society. In fact, Siuking (aged 17), as previously mentioned in Chapter 5, articulated that sometimes he felt that some people would see all individuals with East Asian appearances as belonging to an indistinguishable group and would be automatically assigned with the more recognisable or dominating 'Chinese' label regardless of their backgrounds. On the other hand, as discussed earlier in this chapter, some within the British Chinese 'community' might also seek to fix minority ethnic groups, including 'Chinese', in cultural terms; such practices in constructing a collective 'Chinese' identity could possibly be a way to produce a sense of cultural distinctiveness and also conceivably as a response to challenge the dominant discourses that position the British Chinese people in questionable and derogatory ways (Bradley, 1996; Archer et al, 2010).

Hence, young people of Chinese heritage are made aware of (and made to feel) their right to belong or a legitimate claim to 'authentic' British identity are sometimes challenged or denied, by both the dominant discourse and within the British Chinese community. In the *Citizenship Survey: 2009-10 (April 2009 - March 2010), England*, conducted by the Department for Communities and Local Government (2010), people in the diverse 'Chinese/Other' group (76%) were the least likely to feel a strong sense of belonging to Britain among other groups, compared to 90% of Pakistani people and 88% of White people surveyed reported to feel a strong sense of belonging to Britain. Although the figure of 76% would have to be interpreted with caution as it included 'Chinese' and 'Other', the weaker sense of belonging among some in the British Chinese population is reflected in this finding.

The questioning or denial of claim to Britishness would undoubtedly affect one's sense of belonging to Britain. It is interesting to further explore why the British Chinese 'community' might feel a weaker sense of belonging compared to other ethnic minority groups. Further discussion on young British Chinese's position in the wider British society will take place in the next chapter.

7.3.3 Best of both worlds?

Nevertheless, the participants in this study generally seemed to have a positive attitude towards being Chinese and 'different', though some admitted the experience included some difficulties. Many young people felt that growing up with Chinese heritage made them 'special'. Daniel (aged 17) deemed himself 'quite lucky' growing up as British Chinese because 'not everybody gets to, erm come from Hong Kong to here, err to England and settling in quite, that well.' Neve (aged 15) thought it was 'quite cool' that she got to celebrate Chinese New Year and receiving celebratory items, such as red lanterns and hand drums, made her felt special and proud. Jackie (aged 17) described her being Chinese as making life 'more interesting', as sometimes her English friends would say 'oh I wish I could speak another language', something she appreciated. Grace (aged 14) also considered her Chinese background made her life more interesting through being 'slightly more different and unique or individual compared to other people around you.' Catherine (aged 16) enjoyed the fact that being Chinese made her 'special' and stand out among her friends, and Dan (aged 15) similarly also liked that fact that he was half Chinese for the same reason. Emma felt being British Chinese gave her the 'best of both worlds', as she got to 'pick up the really good parts of the Chinese culture and kind of fuse them with parts of English.'

However, some participants also articulated the tensions and complexities they had to cope with by being in 'both worlds'. Callum (aged 13) appreciated that he got to 'do lots of different things other people don't get to do' due to being part Chinese, but there was a downside as 'people aren't too nice at school and stuff.' Kit (aged 15) shared similar sentiments; she described that 'there might be some points when it's hard like bullying and racism, but other times it feels good to be different.' Christina (aged 16) also conveyed that there were 'pros and cons to who you are'. She described feeling 'great' being part Chinese, and she especially enjoyed the fact that many people found her Greek Cypriot and Chinese mixed heritage particularly unusual and interesting. However, she also acknowledged that her uniqueness, on the other hand, could also be viewed negatively:

> Sometimes people just, I don't know, its hard to explain, depending on how people view you, cos, loads of people, because some people might not really like Oriental people, or like some people I know are like, 'oh my God, I hate Greek people! They are like so loud', or like some people, I think, people might see me in the street and be like that's not Chinese, are you a mix or something or get annoyed.

Dan (aged 15), who liked feeling 'different', described that his experience growing up being half Chinese had been 'quite easy', though he recognised that 'say my friends were a bit iffy about it, then it would have been difficult.' Although some of the young people expressed feeling positive about being Chinese, they were also aware of how stereotypes or racial prejudice could affect them.

It is also apparent that the positive feeling towards their Chinese identities, though sometimes mixed with certain negativities, often appeared to be the result of an on-going journey or process of negotiations or reconciliations among the different elements intersecting in their experiences. Some of the participants described being Chinese in England as something that one 'gets used to'. When being asked about her feelings on being

someone growing up in the UK with Chinese heritage, Catherine (aged 16), who reported

experiencing occasional racism in her former school (see Chapter 5), commented that:

> It's just like, you get used to it really, cos it's not like er, racial inequality is still existed. Well it's still existed but not like legally.

Siuking (aged 17) concluded that growing up was not particularly hard; he accepted that he

could be seen as different but 'you just get used to it', including the occasional racism at

school that he discussed. Neve (aged 15), who had mixed heritage and described having to

defend her claim to be British from time to time, spoke about how she developed a coping

mechanism:

> Ever since I was young, I never took things personally, I thought, I always believed as a child, well not believed, but I mean, some people kind of took the mick out of me when I was younger, so I kinda always been a little bit, erm, I don't know, not hard on the outside but kind of a little, there are things, I don't take things to heart as easily as say some other people do… I think that's quite useful to me, erm so I just, I just say you know… Also the juniors school that I went to erm, I managed to develop quite a, quite strong form of sarcasm, so I tend to, erm, get my own, my own back in that way (smiles), and that's not a great thing either but I, I don't ever take anything personally.

Young people like Neve and Siuking, found ways to 'deal with' some of the negativities they

were faced with during negative encounters. Despite repeatedly getting into trouble with

racist schoolmates at school, Ian (aged 17) still felt glad to be half Chinese, something he

'wouldn't change'. However, he admitted thinking:

> If I was English it might have been a bit easier, but then again I guess that it makes you who you are so, um. Yeah um I'm not sure, it must have made life a little bit more difficult but not unbearable and it, you know it's like an interesting point about myself that I'm not, you know that I'm half Chinese.

For some of these participants, they have developed an acceptance or even strength

towards their Chinese identities, in spite of the problems they encountered due to being

Chinese. Equally, there seemed to be a certain level of resignation of the inevitability of

racism or injustice one had to 'get used to' or overcome as part of the British Chinese experience. Even for Nicky (aged 16), who felt her upbringing was normal, she described how she 'didn't feel uncomfortable, I felt like everyone else. I didn't, no one really was like horrible to me because I'm Chinese or left me out because I'm Chinese.' – her comment suggested that being marginalised was a distinct possibility. As illustrated in this and previous chapters, different participants might chose to ignore, accept or resist such treatments, it was evident that British Chinese pupils continued to experience marginalisation in the British society, whether overt or subtle, intentional or unintentional, even though they are often being portrayed as a successful and 'trouble-free' group in the dominant culture. The high academic achievement and seemingly well-adjusted/integrated façade of the group hides the less observable but continual struggles that some of these young people are confronted with at schools or in other environments. 'It makes you who you are', as Ian claimed, but is not always without its costs.

7.4 Ethnic options

7.4.1 The racialised body and options to choose/contest

How much agency do British Chinese youths have to define themselves? Callum (aged 13), who is of mixed white British and Chinese heritage and was bullied at school due to being Chinese and probably his small size, stated that he would rather be English if he had a choice. Although he enjoyed regular participation in the cultural activities (e.g. martial arts) at the local Chinese association, he described not feeling 'that Chinese' and would rather be 'English and learning Chinese stuff, cos I don't like being discriminated and stuff, at school'. He felt that by being English, 'hopefully I'd be bigger, cos that's one of the reasons, and they wouldn't call me Chinky'. Feelings of inferiority (e.g. being small and being discriminated

against) and dissatisfaction of one's ethnic identity (e.g. would rather be English than

Chinese) could be seen as some form of denial or rejection of one's ethnic identity, which

has been discussed extensively in some of research on ethnic minorities in the US (Kim

1981; Phinney 1990).

Tse's study (2000) of Asian American autobiographies examined the manner in which these

informants viewed their heritage language in a period of their ethnic identity development

she terms 'Ethnic Ambivalence/Evasion' (EAE), where ethnic minorities favour identification

with the dominant ethnic/cultural group over association with their minority ethnic group.

One narrator expressed disinterest in learning his heritage language, while a couple of

others felt that the minority language, a sign of being 'foreign', was a source of

embarrassment, and another person recounted his pride in his inability to speak Japanese

and in his fluency in English (Tse, 2000). The desire to be accepted and to be part of the

dominant culture translated into ambivalent or even negative feelings toward the minority

language and culture. However, it is significant that although Callum would rather be

identified with the dominant English culture and avoid being marginalised, he did not

completely reject Chinese culture as a result. Although he had very limited knowledge of

Chinese and strongly disliked the teaching style at the Chinese school he attended for about

six years, he still held a relatively positive attitude towards learning the language. On the

other hand, Ian (aged 17), who also had mixed white British and Chinese heritage and

suffered from racist bullying at school, chose to distance himself from the dominant, in his

view often racist, culture. He had no Chinese language knowledge and did not experience

Chinese cultural practices at home due to his Chinese mother being an adoptee, though he

had a great interest in traditional forms of Chinese and Asian cultures (e.g. martial arts) and

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attributed the initial interest as coming from being part Chinese. He was slightly ambivalent

about 'feeling Chinese', but he had strong reservations about identifying as English/British.

He explained:

> I don't know, in a kind of weird way because I've grown up with all of the English,
> British people around me being quite prejudiced, and you know representing a lot of
> things I hate, I kind of don't like to be associated, saying that I'm English or I'm
> British, because in my mind I think that being English as opposed to being Chinese
> means that you're going to have like prejudiced views because you know, that's
> what was all around me for a long time. Because all of the English people didn't like
> people from other cultures, so that's always been a bit… I don't know, that's why I
> don't like to be seen as English, or entirely English.

He felt content about being different, half Chinese and not 'entirely English', as he was able

to be identified as being different from the majority of the people around him and their in

his opinion undesirable characteristics. Callum would rather choose to be 'English';

however, he had limited say about how people decided to label him as 'Chinese' (sometimes

in derogatory terms) in his experience, even though he had a White English father. On the

other hand, Ian chose to reject Englishness to distance himself from the negativity he

associated with English people he encountered.

Optional ethnicity, as described by Mary Waters (1990), confers White Americans with

European ancestries, the dominant group in the US, with the latitude to choose the

ethnicities they are associated with, and their voluntary adoption of ethnic identities, such

as Irish Americans, is often symbolic (Gans 1979), recreational and without real social cost.

Similarly, Song (2003) suggests that many White English people have the option to celebrate

their European heritages, or can simply claim an English or British identity. On the other

hand, non-White, visible minority ethnic individuals are often defined racially in American

and British societies and have fewer or no options to choose or reject such ethnic/cultural

identities that are constantly imposed upon them, as illustrated by examples cited by the

participants in this study. Nevertheless, the experiences and meanings of being visible

ethnic minorities in the UK could differ significantly across and within different groups. As

seen earlier discussions, young people in this study had a range of experiences and showed

often complex and relational identifications with Chineseness and Britishness. While some

young people, such as Dac, accepted only their Chinese identity would be validated or

recognised in the common sense approach of ethnic/cultural identity, others like Neve

attempted to assert their identities and choices. Neve described how she challenged people

who did not think she looked 'British':

> Yeah you definitely, and then you get people who argue with you and they say you
> can't be like Chinese and British, and you like, 'Oh yes I can!' (laughs), you clearly
> can.

Louise (aged 17) was highly aware of the racial stereotypes associated with being Chinese

and took an active stance to resist and re-define what being Chinese could mean. As

discussed in Chapter 5, she became heavily involved with activities inside and outside,

partially as a response to resist the assumptions of being 'very good at maths', wanting 'to

become a doctor', and not taking part in the community. The degree of choice of British

Chinese exercise, as well as mobilising the collective identity as 'British Chinese' to challenge

dominant discourses, will be further explored in the following chapters.

7.4.2 Mixed heritage pupils

The narratives of the 10 participants of mixed heritage told of a range of experiences

growing up being part Chinese. These young people expressed varied patterns of identifying

with Chinese, British or other cultures, and the issue of identity became more complex

when the mixing consisted of non-White British heritage. Traditionally, societal attitudes

typically position mixed people to be seen in only one 'race' (Spickard,1989; Waters, 1990),

but recent studies (Waters, 1990; Song, 2003) have demonstrated that mixed people can

and do make choices to express more fluid forms of ethnic/cultural identities. Among these

10 British Chinese pupils interviewed, some asserted closer identification with one of their

heritage backgrounds, while some other expressed blended, mixed identifications; yet a

small minority claimed an identification which transcends ethnic and national

categorisations altogether. However, similar to participants with 'full' Chinese ancestry,

these young people's choices and flexibility in negotiating their identities and positioning

were also mediated by their appearances, age, gender, class, upbringing, location and

individual circumstances.

As discussed in Chapter 6 and earlier this chapter, most of the mixed heritage pupils tended

to have a lower level of Chinese language skills and less contact with Chinese 'cultures'.

Most of these young people were more ambivalent about 'feeling Chinese', but the majority

felt at least some connections to their Chinese backgrounds. Similarly, participants like Nicky

(aged 16) and Christina (aged 16) articulated that their ethnic/cultural identifications were

relational and highly context specific. However, since the prevailing social norms are still

tied to racialised notions about whether someone looks 'British' or could be considered fully

British, mixed heritage young people could also face similar challenges in negotiating and

asserting their identities as youths of 'full' Chinese heritage. As discussed earlier, Neve's

(aged 15) claim to be British had been challenged due to her 'not looking British'. On the

other hand, Nicky (aged 16) and Dan (age 15), both with non-Chinese surnames,

commented on how their friends thought they 'tanned' well, without realising their Chinese

ancestry. Their varied and sometimes ambiguous appearances allowed some to 'pass' as

White or non-Chinese, while others were confined to being seen as 'Chinese' or 'not British' within mainstream society. At the same time, their claims to be Chinese could equally be questioned by some among the British Chinese 'community' (Parker & Song, 2007). In Song's (2010) study on mixed heritage siblings, she found that the different racial assignments by wider society of siblings from the same mixed families 'fundamentally bifurcated their social experiences, and ultimately, their own sense of "raced" selves (p.280).' The embodiment of difference, which applied to participants with 'full' Chinese ancestry as well as some of the mixed heritage interviewees, was often highlighted by mainstream society's perception of them being seen as part of a homogenous group of 'Chinese' people.

However, two of the mixed participants communicated identification which transcends racial, ethnic and national categorisations. Jameela (aged 11), of Pakistani and Bruneian Chinese heritage, had lived in three different countries and self-identified as 'quarter Chinese, quarter English, quarter Pakistani, and quarter Australian'. Along with attending Chinese school, she was also learning Arabic at a mosque; she described that it was 'fun to learn different cultures and different language'. Perhaps due to her age but more likely due to her international background, she stated that she was not concerned about being British or not. Her multi-national, cosmopolitan associations and upbringing conceivably gave her a worldly perspective on her own positioning which was not particularly restricted to one culture or geographical location.

Similar, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, Federico (aged 15), of Malaysian Chinese and Italian heritage, described himself feeling like 'a person of the world' instead of being tied to any particular culture or country. His racially ambiguous appearance might not immediately

stand out growing up in a multicultural town near London, and his rich experiences with a range of cultures linked to his parents' backgrounds and growing up in the UK gave him a sense of self that was more individualised. At the same time that sense of self went beyond national boundaries and particularly East/West or Chinese/Western binaries. I would argue that his ambiguous appearance, which in turn allowed him to escape the conventional racial assignment, along with his own multicultural upbringing in a metropolitan setting, all gave him more freedom to think of and define himself in terms of a wide range of personal attributes, rather than along racial, cultural or national lines. Other participants who were more susceptible to British Chinese and wider society's perception of them as 'Chinese' were faced with more challenges to define themselves free from the East/West binary and social costs (e.g. seen as a 'bad' Chinese).

7.5 Conclusion

As illustrated in the discussion in the chapter, British Chinese pupils discussed a diverse range of identity and positioning in a range of settings growing up in the UK. Their narratives show the complex, relational, contradictory and fluid processes of identity formation and negotiation within mainstream British society and British Chinese 'community'. In analysing narratives around individual aspects of identity, it explores subjective understandings of positionality and how individuals locate themselves, often within a Chinese and British/Western binary. Although language was considered one of the makers for Chineseness, young people discussed other aspects of their lived experiences in how they related to and identified with Chineseness, as well as Britishness. The notion of agency strongly emerged in some of the narratives to contest essentialised ideas of Britishness and Chineseness, particularly the notion of speaking Chinese as a requirement for Chinese

authenticity. Although the notion of speaking Chinese was still seen as being strongly linked to Chinese identity, some participants found ways to challenge this belief and construct their sense of Chineseness in other ways. Unlike earlier generations of British Chinese (Parker, 1995), young people in this study exhibited more freedom in expressing their sense of Chineseness in the public domain, though generally still within niche or limited circumstances.

The participants in this study generally hold a weaker link to the places of origin of their Chinese parents/grandparents and a weaker connection with Chinese 'culture' compared to earlier generations of British Chinese. Overall, they expressed a rootedness and sense of belonging in the British society. However, the simplistic and essentialised notion of Britishness and Chineseness, which are tied to dominant discourses in 'race' and 'culture', often hinder these young people from being accepted as both British and Chinese by mainstream British society and within the British Chinese 'community'. Some participants with mixed heritage appeared to have more freedom in constructing their identities; however, others experienced similar issues to their 'full' Chinese counterparts due to their physical embodiment of difference. This chapter, as well as the previous chapters, revealed the importance of understanding the complexity and diversity of the British Chinese experience and the potential for a fluid positionality of British Chinese young people. Next chapter will provide a discussion by drawing together the key findings of Chapter 5-7 and discussing their contributions to answering research questions.

Chapter 8: Discussion

This research explores the lived experiences and identities of British Chinese pupils with limited Chinese language abilities through looking at their mainstream schooling, (dis)engagement with Chinese language learning, and their own perspectives on 'Chineseness' and 'Britishness'. Language is often strongly associated with cultural and/or national identities. While the ability to speak English is closely linked to integration into British society, as illustrated in the previous chapters, the loss of Chinese language among the younger generations of British Chinese is frequently seen as a loss of 'culture' and 'identity'. Findings in this study demonstrate that young people's own views of 'not speaking much Chinese' were complex, and heritage language development was not always a straightforward linear process. This research brings to light the diverse ways that British Chinese youths negotiated their British and Chinese identities and established a sense of belonging in British society. However, despite young people's apparent academic 'success' and gaining partial acceptance in mainstream society, their experiences are still affected by structures of discrimination and racial inequality (e.g. marginalisation against British Chinese being seen as less serious). With the rise of China as a global power, the status of British Chinese has become more prominent within British society but the attention could be a mixed blessing for British Chinese youths.

This chapter takes social constructionist and post-structuralism (Burr, 2003) approaches towards theory by drawing upon a conceptual eclecticism rather than adhering to fixed theoretical frameworks. These approaches are used to enable the flexible use of concepts which best reflect the modes of theorising relevant to researching the lives of ethnicised,

'raced', gendered, classed subjects in British society. The mixed perspectives are important for capturing the way in which British Chinese pupils can fluidly and actively negotiate their identities, amid essentialised ideas on Chineseness and Britishness in their everyday lives and under the confines of certain structural forces in the UK and globally.

This thesis is an exploration of the lived experiences and construction of identities among individuals and groups within a changing social landscape of 'race' and ethnicity in Britain. This research focus requires an understanding of the social world as emergent and changing, in addition to an understanding of individuals and groups as complex, differentiated and located within the social world in specific ways. The complex, contradictory and fluid nature of the social phenomena requires theoretical tools which lend themselves to a nuanced exploration of social processes. A post-structural approach (Foucault, 1980; Hall, 1992) is useful to disrupt 'old' or 'set' world views to adapt new ones which may be more appropriate to understand and reflect the social world as it is on the ground. This is of particular value in my research as I am seeking to find complexity, contradiction and heterogeneity.

The tensions I faced in examining the experiences and identity formations of the British Chinese interviewees perhaps reflect the conundrum faced by British Chinese young people. One of the aims of this research is to challenge the view of an essentialised and unchanging Chinese identity, which is often held both by Chinese and non-Chinese people. The concept of a certain 'culture' and certain 'values' as inherently possessed by British Chinese or anyone of Chinese descent simply through having Chinese 'blood' or being brought up by Chinese parents is too enclosed and rudimentary. After all, their Chinese parents represented a range of country of origins, migration history, linguistic repertoire, and

socioeconomic backgrounds. As seen in the young people's narratives, being Chinese in England served a range of meanings to them and could change at different points in their lives. For some of the participants, their Chinese identities were closely related to their everyday existence, whether it was eating rice or being bullied, but to some it was not something they consciously thought about at all. The pupils presented a wide range of identifications and ambivalent positions, and these identities were far from the simplistic categorisations of 'Chinese', 'British/English' or 'a bit of both'; a significant number of participants articulated the fluidity and openness of their identities, sometimes not confined by just being either British or Chinese. Therefore, at times, casting the labels 'Chinese' or 'British Chinese' on them felt arbitrary or seemed to be centring or imposing 'Chineseness', as their Chinese heritage might be far from being a defining characteristic of their lives or identities. After all, as seen in the examples in previous chapters, not all pupils of Chinese descent living in England share the same experience of 'being Chinese'; shared ethnicity does not necessary produce commonality as different experiences are produced by the intersections of class, gender, ethnicity, location, appearance, and other factors.

However, as Ang (2001) asks, can one say no to Chineseness? Although a young person with Chinese ancestry and/or 'Chinese' appearance could refuse Chineseness by choice, it would be challenging to escape the Chineseness being imposed by both Chinese and non-Chinese in the wider British society, as illustrated by discussions in the previous chapters. The concept of Orientalism (Said, 1978) that constructs Chinese in Britain as the racialised Other is helpful to explore the racist discourses that construct and shape their experience as a racialised subject within the British society. Despite their apparent integration and high achievement in mainstream schools, British Chinese pupils continue to be positioned as

racialised subjects, experiencing intersecting inequalities based on their 'race', class, gender and other factors. Participants were highly aware of the 'positive' and negative stereotypes being associated with them and the British Chinese collective, and the expectation to perform Chinese language skills or cultural practices, regardless of whether of not they actually held such knowledge, was a source of annoyance or embarrassment to some. A number of the pupils experienced hurtful racist harassment directly related to their Chinese background at school. Neve (aged 15), who had mixed Chinese/White heritage and did not have an obviously East Asian appearance, recalled how she was sometimes challenged by others of her identification as British as they felt that she did not 'look British'. The lived experience as a racialised subject is part of their 'reality' within the mainstream society no matter how abstract or meaningless their Chinese ancestry is to them. Their embodied difference imposes certain prescribed roles for them within the school system and wider society, which restricts them from fully participating in British society (e.g. in politics and arts).

On the other hand, there is also pressure for some young people from within their families and the wider British Chinese 'community' to conform to certain essentialised ideas of being 'authentically' Chinese, including knowing Chinese language. A number of young people spoke about the anxiety and impossibility of mastering a 'good' Chinese accent. Some recounted being told that their accent or Chinese was 'bad', which signified them as being a lesser or inauthentic Chinese person. Some who did not speak Chinese expressed varied levels of shame or obligation to learn the language, even though it might not always translate into actions to learn the language. The expectations to live up to the norm of the 'essential Chinese subject', a term paraphrased from Hall's (1996) notion of the 'essential

black subject', come from both Chinese and non-Chinese people around them and in the wider society. Conversely, certain commonalities, such as resenting Chinese school, eating Chinese food, and celebrating certain Chinese holidays, which were not universal but shared by a significant portion of the interviewees in various degrees, were strongly linked to their experiences growing up with Chinese heritage in the UK, and some young people drew strength and ethnic pride from some of these observable differences, even though these events might not be central to their daily lives.

Nevertheless, British Chinese young people are sometimes simply put in impossible and contradictory positions – they are expected to be fully integrated into the mainstream society on one hand but also remain an exotic Other on demand. Some within the British Chinese community criticise the younger generations as 'Westernised'. The terms 'banana' and *juk sing* 竹升/昇 (roughly meaning hollow bamboo) were not mentioned by any of the participants in this research, yet they are well known phrases among the Chinese diaspora to describe those who are of Chinese ancestry and have grown up in Western countries with limited knowledge of Chinese language and/or culture and are perceived as 'yellow' outside and 'white' inside. Therefore, British Chinese young people could be awkwardly positioned as too 'British' to be properly 'Chinese' but too 'Chinese' to be properly 'British'; their authenticity as either or both is questioned.

Given these issues faced by British Chinese pupils, utilising the terms 'Chinese' and 'British Chinese' in a non-essentialist stance is still highly relevant to negotiate and contest the definition of 'Chineseness', along with 'Britishness', in British society, and also to gain further insights into their racialised experiences and find ways to tackle these issues. British Chinese young people often attempt to disrupt the hegemonic definition of identities that

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are narrowly based on traditions and ancestry by using their agency, as seen in examples

cited by some of the participants. Nevertheless, their subjectivities are inevitably still

located within the dominant discourse of Britishness, Chineseness, Orientalism, 'race' and

other societal forces, such as discrimination in the employment market and globalisation.

'Chinese' in this context lies within a notion of post-modern identity, as suggested by Ang

(2001), which is experienced as a 'provisional and partial "identity" which must be

constantly (re)invented and (re)negotiated.' 'Chineseness' is used as a strategy to challenge

essentialism and understand the relationships of power in the context of this research. As

Ang, who came from an Indonesian Chinese family that migrated to the Netherlands and

later moved to Australia, powerfully says:

> if I am inescapably Chinese by *descent*, I am only sometimes Chinese by *consent*.
> When and how is a matter of politics.

8.1 Experiences of growing up with no/limited Chinese language abilities and the apparent impact on constructions of learner and social identities

As discussed in previous chapters, besides having either direct or distant ancestral links to

China, there are no strong ethnic markers, such as religion, national dress, that bind all or

most people of Chinese heritage in Britain. Therefore, Chinese language, which strongly ties

into the perception of China as 'homeland', is seen as a central marker of Chineseness

among the extremely diverse British Chinese 'community' and the Chinese diaspora in

general. As discussed in the previous chapters, the participants from this research came

from a range of backgrounds within the British Chinese population, and the notion of

knowing limited or no Chinese language was played out differently in their lived experiences

in relation to their family origins, class, gender, locations and other factors. Their

perspectives of 'not knowing any/much Chinese' also conveyed different levels of speaking,

listening and reading skills for Chinese language(s), illustrating the complexity of the

heritage language process.

8.1.1 Mixed Heritage British Chinese pupils – less pressure to speak Chinese and options to choose identities?

For some of the young people with no/limited Chinese language skills, not knowing the

language was largely inconsequential to their daily life as there was little or no need for

them to use Chinese with their immediate or extended families; this was particularly true to

most of the participants who were of mixed heritage. As discussed in previous chapters,

mixed heritage British Chinese participants are included in this study to be considered as

'British Chinese'; however, I am highly aware of the debates on authenticity and group

membership and whether mixed heritage individuals can be included/excluded as 'British

Chinese' or 'Chinese'. This was highlighted in Parker and Song's (2007) study on British

Chinese online forums, which found much discussion on mixed relationships/mixed race

children. For some of the young people with limited contact with Chinese language 'culture'

and language, such as mixed heritage pupils Neve (with a White British father and a British

born Mauritian Chinese mother) and brothers Ian and Dan (with a White British father and a

Chinese mother who grew up as an adoptee in a White English family), their identification

with Chineseness could be seen as what Gans (1979) describes as 'symbolic ethnicity'. Gans

applies this term to third or later generation descendants of white Europeans in America, in

which he defines 'symbolic ethnicity' as an ethnicity characterised by:

> [...] a nostalgic allegiance to the culture of the immigrant generation, or that of the old country; a love for and pride in a tradition that can be felt without having to be incorporated in everyday behaviour (Gans 1979 :9).

Although Neve, Ian and Dan did not speak any Chinese, all of them expressed pride in their Chinese heritage and thought learning Chinese would be something 'cool' if the opportunity arose, though not essential or a priority to them. While they have been asked, 'Do you speak Chinese?' by their peers or strangers, their weaker connection to Chinese networks and their mixed heritage (and their less identifiable appearance as 'Chinese' to a larger extent) produced less pressure and expectation for them to 'know Chinese'. Intermittent identifications and expression of Chineseness, such as celebrating Chinese New Year and eating Chinese meals occasionally, are linked to enjoyable, leisurely aspects (Gans, 1979) and a feeling of 'specialness' (Alba, 1990) of being Chinese. On the other hand, two other pupils, Nicky and Matilda, also of White British and Chinese heritage and with virtually no Chinese language knowledge, generally felt a stronger identification with their British identity than Chinese. Matilda (aged 12), who only lived with her Malaysian Chinese mother part-time, concluded that one ought to feel reasonably Chinese through having Chinese connections, such as having Chinese origins and doing 'some of the cultural things', to be Chinese, and therefore, she concluded that did not 'really feel Chinese'.

The notion of choice is undoubtedly less straightforward and more complicated in the case of mixed heritage British Chinese pupils in comparison with White Americans or Britons with European descent. Depending on their lineage, appearance, gender, location, and socioeconomic backgrounds, these young people could be seen or positioned as being 'Chinese' or 'non-White' by their peers and the mainstream British society. Consequently, the option to express their Chinese identity could be *symbolic* on an individual level, but

unlike White Americans who could voluntarily celebrate aspects of their symbolic ethnicity, as Gans (1979) put it, without 'social costs', British Chinese young people are more confined as racialised subjects regardless of how much or little they may choose to identify with 'Chinese culture', due to the prominence of 'China' in public consciousness and their 'Oriental' embodiment. Those participants of part White British/European heritage without Chinese names and a less identifiably 'Chinese/East Asian' appearance, such as Matilda as mentioned above, could arguably 'pass' as 'White' and not be perceived as 'Chinese' by both Chinese and non-Chinese people; under these circumstances, mixed heritage young people like Matilda do not see their Chinese ethnicity and identity as having a significant influence on their daily lives and their (dis)association with Chineseness could arguably become a personal choice without 'social costs'. Nevertheless, a mixed Chinese heritage person with 'White' or non-Chinese/East Asian appearance who knows Cantonese or Mandarin might not be readily perceived or be accepted as Chinese, as illustrated by an Eurasian performer, Veronica Needa. Her performances (Needa, 2009 & 2011) discuss how despite her upbringing in Hong Kong and her strong sense of Chineseness 'inside' she is regularly positioned as non-Chinese both in Hong Kong and in the UK due to her non-Chinese features. In fact, people are constantly surprised and confused by her ability to speak fluent Chinese (*ibid*).

However, for most of the other mixed heritage participants in this study, the experience of being 'raced' as 'Chinese', 'not British', or something ambiguous at school and in other environments, either on occasions or regularly, was more commonplace irrespective of their Chinese culture and language knowledge. As discussed in Chapter 5, Ian's not 'particularly Chinese' appearance, and lack of Chinese knowledge and, in fact, any tangible Chinese

connections except for a biological one (due to his mother being an adoptee growing up in a White English family), did not inhibit his White British peers at school regularly unleashing racial abuse at him. As a result, he wanted to be disassociated with being English or British and felt more positive about his Chinese identity. One the other hand, Callum, who also experienced racism at school, reported feeling more British and in fact would rather be just White British, even though he had more contact with Chinese culture and networks and enjoyed doing Chinese cultural activities.

Additionally, a few of the mixed heritage participants had other non-English, minority languages and 'culture' present in their families. Their constructions of cultural, ethnic and national identity became more complicated and differed significantly in ways linked to their different personal and local circumstances. Federico, Livia and Jameela (who had some knowledge of Chinese language and was attending Chinese school) all expressed only weak connections to their Chinese heritage, and for Federico and Livia, they discussed having closer ties to their Italian networks. On the other hand, Christina, who was ambivalent about feeling British growing up in a multicultural area of London, reported feeling quite connected to her Chinese side, as she could speak some Chinese and felt that her mixed heritage appearance was appreciated by Chinese people, while she felt less Greek due to her embarrassment of her limited Greek language skills and her experience of being less accepted as Greek by other Greek people. These young people's more complex family backgrounds and more ambiguous appearances perhaps placed them further outside of the simplistic East/West or Chinese/British dichotomy.

Overall, among most of the mixed heritage participants, their lack of/limited Chinese language knowledge evidently did not produce a sense of embarrassment or shame that

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was present among those participants with two Chinese parents (though Christina expressed shame for her limited Greek knowledge), nor a strong desire or sense of duty to learn a Chinese language. Chinese language skills did not appear to be a marker central to their sense of Chineseness. Their limited Chinese language skills might have an impact on their association with Chineseness, but the comparatively weaker connection to their Chinese identity was possibly tied to their more limited exposure to Chinese networks and everyday practices (e.g. eating Chinese food regularly, hearing the Chinese language) as a whole compared to some of their counterparts with two Chinese parents. The constructions of their cultural and ethnic identities were shaped by their different experiences influenced by the intersecting factors in their individual circumstances, including their experiences of (not) being 'raced' as a Chinese or minority ethnic person.

8.1.2 'Full' British Chinese – Ethnicity and speaking Chinese not optional?

The notion of having no/limited Chinese language abilities markedly manifested different effects on the experiences and identity constructions of British Chinese pupils with both parents of Chinese descent. Their Chinese ancestry and phenotypical features are used to categorise them as 'Chinese' by the dominant discourse held by both Chinese and non-Chinese people, regardless of their individual history and experiences. While individuals with part Chinese heritage are largely positioned as complete or partial outsiders as Chinese subjects both culturally and linguistically by other Chinese people, those of full Chinese descent are seen by both Chinese and non-Chinese people as inextricably tied to the ethnic membership and having a duty to fulfil the associated intrinsic qualities, such as speaking Chinese and holding 'Chinese values'. The ability to speak Chinese is displayed as a moral issue, as seen in the case of Chinese identity in Singapore (Chan, 2009), to differentiate the

authenticity of Chineseness among those being ascribed the Chinese identity. This taken for

granted belief was evidently well understood, sometimes internalised, by the full Chinese

participants. Those who did not speak any or much Chinese, such as siblings Emma and

Matthew, recognised that it would be 'nice' and 'good' if they learned more Chinese, in turn

becoming closer to the idealised Chinese person, even though it was neither a necessity nor

priority in their situations. Learning and speaking Chinese, therefore, is not merely an

instrumental act but a powerful psychological, moral discourse; possessing Chinese

language skill would make one a *better* Chinese, and conversely, not speaking Chinese

would make one a lesser, or as Chan (2009) describes, an 'inferior' Chinese.

Although most of the interviewees (both full and mixed Chinese) were happy with and

confident about their learning at mainstream school (as discussed in Chapter 5), the

majority of the full Chinese participants exhibited less positive learner identities as heritage

language learners. Among the participants that spoke some Chinese, being told their accent

or Chinese was 'bad' or not good enough did make some of them, such as Dac, perceive

themselves as less Chinese as a result. While Dac strove to work hard to improve his Chinese

to sound more like native speakers from Asia, other young people seemed to accept the

impossibility of being 'good' at Chinese. They had other priorities at school and extra-

curricular activities, plus a lack of interest and/or practical 'push' (i.e. parents spoke or

understood English). Most of the young people agreed that learning Chinese would be a

'good' and/or 'useful' exercise, especially given the potential of providing future links to the

growing global power, China; however, learning and speaking 'good' Chinese served as an

ideal and aspiration, rather than the norm or something always achievable in practice.

Furthermore, the sense of embarrassment and awkwardness associated with speaking 'bad'

Chinese did not always serve as a push factor for young people to improve their Chinese knowledge. In fact, a few of the participants just chose to avoid speaking it altogether. Perhaps this 'burden' of knowing Chinese language and 'keeping the culture' serves an almost opposite scenario of 'Postcolonial shame' (loosely based on the title, *The Event of Postcolonial Shame,* Bewes, 2011) - one is involuntarily connected to a major civilisation and a language that has a long history and prominent profile in the public's imagination, and the simultaneous impossibility of identifying and disidentifying with one's alleged 'origin' and 'your own language' could invoke anxiety and shame.

Even though some of the full Chinese participants with limited/no Chinese skills might feel less 'proper' or authentically Chinese as a result, they also ultimately acknowledged that they could not completely detach themselves from their ethnic membership, no matter how *un-Chinese* they acted or felt. Young people like Josephine, who self-proclaimed as 'a bit of a rebel' and largely identified as being British, might be fully aware of their lesser or deviant Chinese identity; however, they also expressed that that they were inescapably 'Chinese' through their embodiment and descent. When Daniel, who avoided speaking Chinese and was mocked by his brother about his Chineseness, reported feeling Chinese and was asked about in what ways he felt Chinese, he struggled a bit to explain but concluded that:

> […] the err look you know err, just knowing that you're Chinese. [pause] And err…knowing that you're different in the school just makes you feel kind of like different.

This sense of 'difference' was communicated by many of the participants and is closely linked to both the individual's own perceptions (e.g. 'knowing you're Chinese') and the outcome of interactions with one's environment (e.g. 'makes you feel kind of like different'). It marks a distance from their perception of 'Britishness', and in turn, is seen as a sign of

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'Chineseness' to many of the participants. This British/Chinese or East/West binary served

as a framework for many of the young people to construct their sense of being and

positioning. Interestingly, while Chinese language ability could influence one feeling

more/less Chinese or British, and individuals, like a couple of the participants, could even

contest the relevance of this ethnic marker, ultimately their racialised position, coupled with

other essentialised ideas of Chineseness/Britishness, often restricts how British Chinese

pupils could negotiate and express their social identities within the British society. Critical

engagement with young people's perspectives of 'Chineseness', along with an examination

of the British/Chinese dichotomy, is useful to explore and gives space to negotiate new

forms of identities for British Chinese youths that represent a diverse range of experiences

of being 'British Chinese'.

8.2 British Chinese pupils' perspectives on 'Chineseness' and Chinese and British 'culture' relating to the role of languages within the Chinese 'community' and British society

In the 1980s, Hall used the term 'new ethnicities' to describe the expression of new hybrid

identities by the emerging cohorts of second and third generation Black British young

people (Hall, 1988). Earlier research on British Chinese commented on the absence of British

based Chinese culture (Watson, 1977; Parker, 1995) and a concern at a lack of integration

among the younger generations of British born/raised Chinese (Sham and Woodrow, 1998;

Woodrow & Sham, 2001). However, as discussed in previous chapters, this current study on

British Chinese pupils shows that young people are highly integrated into mainstream British

society and relate to their sense of Chineseness and Britishness in a variety of ways. A

'British Chinese' identity has definitely emerged among those young people who come from

the more settled population within the British Chinese 'community'.

8.2.1 Being, feeling, doing and becoming British

Many participants felt the fact that they were British citizens, spoke English and were being

brought up and educated in this country gave them their sense of Britishness. While most

participants felt that speaking Chinese was strongly linked to Chineseness regardless of their

own ability and association with Chinese identity, the ability to speak English was frequently

cited as a source of their British identity. Within the dominant discourse, the ability to speak

English was seen as key to integration within British society. Being schooled in England and

being around their peers there was also commonly seen as knowing and being part of

'British culture'; some also described their identification with British culture in process

terms (e.g. becoming more British).

Most participants gave neutral comments about British culture, seeing it simply as

something familiar and generally around them. Some made further positive remarks (e.g.

being more confident, being more relaxed) or negative remarks (e.g. being racist, lack of

discipline) about certain aspects of what they perceived as British culture and how they

related or not related to those characteristics or practices. However, a few young people

mostly viewed their British identity in terms of their nationality; speaking the language and

growing up in the UK did not necessarily bring a strong identification with the culture or

country for a number of reasons.

8.2.2 Relational and flexible Britishness/Chineseness

British Chinese pupils discussed drawing their sense of Chineseness from 'doing' Chinese

through tangible practices, such as eating Chinese food regularly, speaking Chinese,

celebration Chinese holidays, and conversely, a weaker sense of Chineseness and stronger

sense of Britishness generally emerged through disengagement with such practices. Feeling

Chinese could also stem from feeling less British or 'different' in relation to their peers at school and the dominant culture in certain contexts. Feeling and being 'different', which was described as closely linked to their ancestry, appearance, home practices or racialised position, could be a positive, negative or neutral experience as explained in previous chapters; being or feeling different was something commonly cited as part of the lived experience of young British Chinese. Overall, speaking English/Chinese was generally linked to participants' identification with the related culture; however, there were individuals who chose to define their own sense of (dis)identification in other ways.

Additionally, a number of participants clearly communicated that their sense of feeling of Chinese/British was context specific and could change in different situations and over time, sometimes feeling both simultaneously. A few young people commented on not being able to explain their identifications clearly; it reflected the complexity and 'messiness' of their identity construction. A small number of pupils commented on the possibility of being something beyond Chinese/British, and some were simply not that concerned about feeling either British or Chinese. Their perspectives on British and Chinese cultures might be closely linked to their ancestry (i.e. Chinese) and location (i.e. born/raised in England); however, the different ways of identifications were greatly shaped by their different experiences. Those experiences in turn were influenced by the intersecting factors in their individual circumstances and larger structural forces. In recognising the fluidity, instability and situatedness of identities, this study shows how Chineseness, along with Britishness, is negotiated at the intersection of ethnicity, class, gender, age, appearance and place and enacted within contexts which are themselves subjected to racialised processes.

8.2.3 Chineseness and Chinese 'culture' – home as a site for Chineseness

Besides viewing Chinese language as an ethnic marker and a source of Chineseness, participants reported a range of ways in which they associated with Chinese culture on personal and collective levels. As discussed in Chapter 7, a significant number of interviewees reported that their connection with Chinese culture took place at home. Irrespective of their abilities to speak Chinese and identification with 'Chinese culture' as a whole, Chinese cultural practices occurring at home (if any), generally instigated by their parents, greatly shaped their individualistic understanding of Chinese culture.

In Parker's (1995) earlier research on young British Chinese, 'Chineseness' was generally very specifically connected to Hong Kong and was greatly confined in a home/Chinese only space. Regular contact with Hong Kong popular culture (in Cantonese) at home, often an integral part of family life, was a way for many of his respondents to gain Cantonese skills and develop a distinctly Hong Kong based Chinese identity, even though such knowledge of Hong Kong is mediated and partial. Young people's Chinese identity was closely linked to Cantonese and Hong Kong culture and was only expressed within Chinese networks or in private.

Among the participants in this current study, the direct connection with Hong Kong or China is significantly weaker comparing to Parker's cohort. Although some of the young people have visited places connected to their families' origins, many did not visit regularly like the earlier generations, and some had never been at all. Whereas a few reported having the Chinese satellite channels at home, it was no longer the norm due to a small portion of the Chinese parents having limited Chinese knowledge and some parents (e.g. from South East Asia) who were also less directly connected to Hong Kong or China. Regular exposure to

Chinese language through Chinese television and music at home arguably created a more conducive and immersive environment to facilitate and maintain Chinese language development for earlier generations of British Chinese. The lack of Chinese language exposure, or more limited exposure, being experienced by a number of participants in this study made it challenging for them to acquire and retain their Chinese knowledge. However, even in environments where Chinese language was limited or absent, young people identified other aspects of home life as providing them with an understanding of Chinese culture and sense of Chineseness.

8.2.4 'Cultural China' and 'Chinese Dream' in the UK

The complex workings of identity negotiations and 'culture' on personal and individualistic levels also takes place along with, and within, a macro-level discourse around Chineseness and Chinese culture within the British Chinese 'community', Chinese diaspora and China. China continues to play an important role in promoting and constructing particular versions of 'Chineseness' and Chinese culture for both people within and outside China (Chun, 1996). Tu (1994) discusses that the project of 'Cultural China' shifts the focus away from the Chinese state as the core; however, China, as a political entity or an imagined cultural community, is still largely being constructed as the 'motherland' of Chinese culture and Chinese people. The attempts made by Chinese parents and teachers in Britain to pass on Chinese language(s) and aspects of Chinese culture to younger generations at home and at Chinese complementary schools were intended to 'preserve' their Chinese 'roots' and continue the connection with 'cultural China'.

The prominence of China on the global stage within the last decade has provided new ways of connecting to a celebratory, China-based Chinese identity and representation within

mainstream society. Mandarin has been promoted at British mainstream schools (Muffett, 2010) in recent years and is seen as a key to access the Chinese market, though the uptake is still low (Garner, 2012). Some of the participants discussed learning Mandarin at mainstream/complementary school or their desire to learn Mandarin in the future; a couple of the respondents talked about their parents' encouraging them to learn Mandarin as way to increase their cultural capital given the rise of China. Cantonese, the former lingua franca of the British Chinese community, is being slowly replaced by Mandarin, the official language of China, as Mandarin is gaining importance as a language to make links with China and is also spoken by many of the newer Chinese migrants entering the UK. When learning the family Chinese language, such as Cantonese, becomes less relevant or holds less instrumental value among partially or fully English speaking households, learning Mandarin can serve as a symbolic tie to their Chinese heritage, regardless of their original family dialects, and as a possible asset in the job market in the future.

Besides the mainstreaming of Mandarin, expression of Chineseness is also no longer narrowly confined to private/Chinese only spaces, as described by Parker (1995), and can be publicly displayed and enjoyed by both Chinese and non-Chinese. Partially serving as a strategy to build UK-China relations and partly as a multiculturalism exercise, Chinese cultural festivals, notably Chinese New Year, have gained mainstream status. Celebrations are now held in major UK towns and cities and in classrooms across the country, as discussed in Chapter 5. A number of participants spoke of how aspects of being Chinese made them feel 'special', for example getting festive goods linked to Chinese holidays. The celebratory and leisurely aspects of being Chinese shown at these public activities could, on one hand, provide a sense of pride in their Chinese heritage and connection to the larger

Chinese 'community' for some young people, but on the other hand, the attention could

also become a source of embarrassment and irritation, when they were asked to 'perform'

or impart cultural knowledge.

Pictures of Chinese New Year Celebration at the British Museum, 2008. (picture taken from British Museum website http://www.britishmuseum.org/the_museum/news_and_press/latest_news/chinese_new_year.aspx)

As mentioned in relation to school celebrations in Chapter 5, the Orientalist discourse

continues to be reinforced in such events, generally representing Chineseness or anything

'Oriental' as possessing a long history of traditions and exotic yet alluring customs (see

example in photo above). Chinese culture or people are rarely portrayed as part of modern

or contemporary society in these public displays. Interestingly, this portrayal of Chineseness

that is deeply rooted in the celebratory past has been promoted by both Chinese and non-

Chinese people. This self-Orientalism perpetuated by members within British Chinese

communities and overseas entities produces a changeless, nostalgic, mythical 'China' with

its 'authentic' traditions. This representation feeds a Western Oriental imagination and

functions as a display of pride in the historic culture, as well as a marketable, non-

threatening Otherness for Western consumption (Yan, 2009). It is important to understand how certain commercial and political interests, coming from locally and abroad, help to shape the construction of this particular version of Chineseness.

Wu (1994) suggests that two sentiments identify those who see themselves as 'Chinese': firstly, a feeling of connectedness with the fate of China gives a 'a sense of fulfilment, a sense of being the bearers of a cultural heritage handed down from their ancestors, of being essentially separate from non-Chinese', and secondly, a sentiment of seeing themselves as being members of 'the Chinese race' or 'Chinese people'. The ready embrace of Mandarin and/or China reported by some of the participants differs considerably from Parker's (1995) respondents, many of whom felt attached to Hong Kong but not China as 'homeland'. Given a significant number of participants in this study reported having weaker links to their parents/grandparents' origins, and in some cases the place of origin was outside Hong Kong/China, China and its associated 'Chinese culture' can readily stand in as an imaginary or spiritual homeland and point of reference for Chineseness.

Some of Parker's respondents in earlier generations saw China as something holding more 'real and pure' Chineseness than Hong Kong, but others viewed China as a backward Communist country. Although it is uncertain how much British Chinese young people in this study related to China as a nation state, the emergence of China as a global power and the lack of first hand contact or knowledge of China among this cohort possibly removed many of the negative associations that were observed among Parker's respondents. There has been a long-standing Hong Kong-Mainland China divide due to political, economic, social and cultural differences, and there is a tendency of people from Hong Kong expressing deeply entrenched bias against Mainland Chinese and China to this day (Kaiman & Demick,

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2012). The young people in this study are more removed from holding a vested Hong Kong Chinese identity or disdain of China either through Hong Kong culture or personal family history like earlier generations.

The prospects of being connected with cultural 'China', a homeland with such wonderful history, traditions, and now the possibility to become the most powerful country in the world, is extremely appealing. Lord Wei, a British born Chinese, the youngest Lord in the UK parliament and the most senior politician in the UK and Europe of Chinese descent, calls on Chinese and non-Chinese to join him in pursuit of and to develop a 'Chinese Dream', which through the development of China, brings 'peace and prosperity' both to China and around the world (Wei, 2011). He encourages British Chinese to learn Mandarin and particularly urges the Chinese diaspora to 'take hold once more of our historic role as overseas Chinese; let us support our young leaders and work with them to shape the solutions we and Britain will need in the twenty-first century' (*ibid.*) Ang (2001) suggests that this 'myth of consanguinity', termed by Rey Chow (1993) could provide diasporic subjects with 'a magical solution to the sense of dislocation and rootlessness that many of them experience in their lives'. Promising hopes and dreams of modern China acts as a powerful uniting force to bring all Chinese together, and the lines between cultural, political, and enterprise 'China' became increasingly blurred.

Nevertheless, twenty-first century China could readily serve as a symbolic source of ethnic pride and cultural identification through an affinity to the imagined homeland for many Chinese in Britain, irrespective of any tangible ties to this historic homeland. The positive and celebratory aspects of Chineseness are undoubtedly much more exciting to be part of, and a welcoming change from negativity being associated with British Chinese culture and

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people (e.g. a foot and mouth outbreak, illegal immigrants, racism) for a community that is

often seen as 'hidden' within British society. However, this highly idealistic, China-centric

version of Chineseness poses risks in fixing and essentialising Chinese culture, as well as

sidelining other versions of Chinese and East Asian identities. For example, other ethnic

groups, including Vietnamese and Koreans, also celebrate the same lunar New Year as an

important holiday, but public celebrations in the UK are virtually only known or branded as

'Chinese' New Year – the priority to highlight a particular version of 'Chineseness'

marginalises other ethnic Chinese and East Asian communities. Moreover, the exotic Other

representation of Chinese culture and people, whether it is being imposed by non-Chinese

or self-inflicted, reinforces the Orientalism discourse that a number of young people in this

study tried to resist. Although there is perhaps a shift from the lack of visible expression of

Chineseness in the public realm that Parker (1995) spoke of, the exotic and Orientalistic

representation of Chineseness in the public domain is more a hindrance than a support in

British Chinese young people's effort to redefine and negotiate new forms of identities

(Benton & Gomez, 2008).

8.2.5 The 'Model Minority'

The 'model minority' (Petersen, 1996) standing of British Chinese as racialised subjects in

Britain is a precarious position. Prior to the September 11 attacks and the London bombing

by Islamist terrorists, British South Asian families too were regarded as upstanding members

of society and a 'model minority' (Alexander, 2000; Back, 2002), and South Asian pupils

were perceived as 'good' and well behaved (Crozier & Davies, 2008). However, after changes

as a result of those events, the shift in discourse in education and mainstream society now

frequently portrays South Asian youths as 'troublesome', and in some cases, 'aggressive and

threatening' (*ibid.*). Although British Chinese, being inextricably linked to China both

voluntarily and involuntarily, undoubtedly gain social standing due to the rise of China, any

future events that might position China (and Chinese people) as a social and political threat

(as seen in the US, e.g. in CNN poll, 2010) rather than a powerful economic partner could

easily reverse attitudes towards the Chinese back to 'Yellow Peril' stereotype. And even if

such events were not to take place, the success of China might happen at a cost for Britain,

such as losing UK jobs or an increase of businesses owned by overseas Chinese investors.

The British Chinese communities could potentially become an easy target for resentment

from other Britons who are disempowered and lose out in the process of globalisation and

economic changes, similar to the situation seen in the tragic death of Vincent Chin, a young

Chinese-American who was murdered in Detroit by two White autoworkers at the height of

anti-Japanese sentiments arising from massive layoffs in the auto industry in the US in 1982

(Lam, 2009). Being racialised subjects in these circumstances means holding little choice to

alter their positioning and limited power to resist these dominant discourses.

As illustrated in various parts of this thesis, being British Chinese represents a wide range of

positive, negative, and normal or mundane lived experiences. A range of learner and social

identities emerged in the findings, and these identities are defined and resisted in relational

terms, to different ways of being Chinese, British or other identities, as negotiating varied

forms of British Chinese ways to belong. Similarities and differences could be drawn in

comparison with other minority ethnic young people living in Britain. Nevertheless, a

multidimensional analysis of power structures is needed to examine all the dimensions of

power, and other social categories where power and oppression operate, such as gender

and class, in relation to the racialised experience of British Chinese.

8.3 Relating findings to broader issues of 'race', gender and class identities and achievement in complementary and mainstream schooling

8.3.1 Mainstream schools

Schools are complex educational and social spaces where young people spend a significant amount of their time and where young people are actively engaged in the production and contestation of British Chinese identities. The intersection of 'race', gender and class identities, along with the school environment, mediates the school experiences for British Chinese and other minority ethnic pupils.

(i) Still the Other

As discussed extensively in Chapter 5, racism is still a significant issue for British born/raised Chinese pupils in their mainstream schools, though it was not universally experienced by all the participants in this study, especially in 'traditional' and overt manifestation. Racism, racialisation, and racial stereotypes towards British Chinese were reported at all types of schools across different performance levels and admission statuses. Incidents involving physical contact were experienced by two participants at lower achieving schools. While there were no such physical incidents reported by pupils attending independent schools and selective schools, a number of young people at these schools communicated that more subtle and regular level of 'jokes' and racialisation took place. Although those pupils at these very high achieving schools were less likely to report personally experiencing or witnessing any form of racism, they were still not entirely immune to racist or racialisation treatments at school, in schools that supposedly meet higher standards and possess better resources.

While more girls than boys were interviewed (13 boys and 25 girls), five out of the eight

pupils that reported experiencing direct/explicit racism at school were male; however, there

were other racist/racial harassment incidents described in the interviews that were not

identified as 'racism' by the participants. It is remarkable to note that among the four mixed

heritage boys that took part in the study, three of them reported receiving racist abuse at

their school due to their Chinese heritage and two described the harassment as taking place

regularly. However, while older brother Ian (aged 17, mixed White British/Chinese) depicted

a very racist school environment due to changes in the local population, his younger brother

Dan (aged 15) felt that race relations at school had improved, and he was not exposed to

the same kind of harassment as Ian. Their examples illustrated that sometimes how

individual circumstances (e.g. class, gender, appearance) intersect with other specific

external factors (e.g. local condition, societal attitudes) could produce very different lived

experiences even for those from similar backgrounds.

Interestingly, when I was around Callum (aged 13, mixed White British/Chinese) and his

younger sister, who was not interviewed, at a social gathering organised by their mother, I

observed his sister receiving praise about her beauty by other adults. Chinese/East Asian

femininity is stereotyped as pleasing, enchanting and exotic in the Western dominant

discourse (Ang, 2001), and Chinese/East Asian men are contradictorily positioned as either

the effeminate Other or 'hard' martial arts/triad types (Archer and Francis 2005). Callum's

mixedness and small size made him an easy target for a racial abuse at school. Two of the

mixed heritage female interviewees commented on how their mixed heritage appearance

was an asset in their experience; however, the ambiguous, less 'masculine' appearance

might not be as advantageous for the male participants. Ian in fact suspected that he

probably suffered worse racism than his East Asian school peers due to being not quite

Chinese (feminine and Oriental hardness) but also not fully English (normal masculinity), not

fitting in either forms of masculinity within the dominant Western discourse, in the eyes of

his White peers.

When it came down to more subtle forms of racism at school, such as cultural exoticisation,

the participants exhibited a range of positive, negative or indifferent reactions towards

requests from peers and teachers to speak Chinese or perform Chineseness. While both

male and female interviewees describing finding such requests annoying or exasperating,

these incidents seemed to create more anxiety among girls, and a few of them reported

feeling embarrassed, uncomfortable or scared. Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) argue that

women are often seen as the 'cultural carriers' of their ethnic group, and therefore, these

young participants predictably felt more pressure to fulfil the expectation or were

demanded to perform their 'culture' more frequently than boys. On the other hand, the

boys generally appeared to be less psychologically affected by these incidents through

brushing it off, or taking approaches like Dac (aged 17), who revealed that he would simply

make something up to his non-Chinese peers if needed. The anxiety caused by these

encounters and the inability to 'fight back' could contribute to and reinforce the stereotypes

of the 'shyness' and 'quietness' among Chinese girls, as discussed in Chapter 5.

Intriguingly, none of the boys in this study appeared to be engaged with forms of 'Chinese

laddism' that were observed by Archer and Francis' (2005) among some British Chinese boys

in London. This particular form of masculinity generally includes a particular look (bleached

hair and cool, Hong Kong style fashion), a strong interest in gadgets/technology, and

engagement with a *milder* version of laddism (e.g. truancy, mucking about). This form of

masculinity also seems to be linked with a particular type of migrant family trajectory, in

which the parents are often busy with the demands of the catering trade and young people

are more in tuned with Hong Kong/East Asian trends and culture (Archer & Francis, 2007).

The majority of the participants in this study were outside of London and some were in

more suburban or rural locations, and the majority were not from a catering trade

background; therefore, as a result, perhaps a lack of critical mass of other Chinese, a weaker

interest in/knowledge of Hong Kong/East Asian trends, and different types of parental

involvement in their children's education made the formation or adaptation of such an

identity less likely.

(ii) 'White' middle class habitus?

British Chinese pupils are collectively seen as an educationally successful group within the

mainstream education system in England and do not fit into the general discourse of low

achievement among minority ethnic pupils or not integrating (e.g. South Asian pupils, in

Crozier and Davies, 2008). Most of the pupils in this study were high achieving, and the

majority of the young people in this study had mixed friendship groups at school and took

part in extra-curricular activities.

Archer and Francis (2007) suggests that British Chinese families irrespective of their class

positioning adopt strategies which are similar to the 'white-middle class' habitus approach

to manage their children's aspirations and education through strategic planning and making

choices in their children's education, holding high expectations, purchasing tutoring support

and engaging in enrichment activities. On the other hand, their success is also seen as

deviant from the white middle class ideal, as British Chinese pupils are negatively perceived

as working too hard, and their parents as too strict or pushy. Archer and Francis (2007) also highlight the anxiety of maintaining the 'success' among parents and pupils due to feeling inauthentic or insecure of their class positioning linked to their migration history.

Some of the participants in this study came from middle class backgrounds and some of their parents were raised or partially educated in the UK. So would a relatively more secure middle class background enable them to experience the English school system and British society 'like a fish in water' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.127), rather than just 'playing the game' as middle class subjects? Louise and Emma (both aged 17), both attending private schools, appeared to fit in this 'white middle class' model and shared some similarities in their backgrounds. Both Louise and Emma were high achieving academically, very active with extra-curricular activities, spoke English at home and also had very limited Chinese language skills. Their parents attended university in the UK (one parent was also raised in the UK) and were employed in middle class occupations. Despite not speaking Chinese, both of them also reported feeling Chinese and having a strong identification with Chinese culture.

However, their identifications with Britishness/Englishness differed somewhat. Although Emma acknowledged that she and her family were quite 'Westernised' in many ways and her upbringing gave her great familiarity with English culture, she felt that she could never be fully integrated into parts of English culture due to her home background and parents' Chinese/Asian upbringing. She commented that if she were at an occasion with 'really upper class English people who have their like their habits and things', she would not fit in. Although it was not explicitly stated, Emma's comment implied that particular practices and lifeworlds of *White* upper/middle class people, which might seem more natural to her White

middle class peers, was something she was not accustomed to and could not be authentically part of. This despite her holding a range of supposedly (White) 'middle-class' capitals, values and tastes and engaging in various middle-class practices.

In Archer's (2011) study on minority ethnic middle class identities, histories of migration and the diasporic experience were significant factors in not only shaping non-White families' 'objective' class locations within British society but also in explaining the mismatch between some participants' ambiguous socioeconomic locations and their 'middle-class' aspirations, educational values and practices. The 'Western-ness' that was described by Emma, which was based on her family's 'not very Chinese' practices, such as not speaking Chinese and not celebrating Chinese holidays, and living and being educated in the West, is not sufficient to enable one to become 'fully' or authentically British/English due to the embodiment of a non-Western/British past and present. This notion of being 'Western' but not 'fully' either British or Chinese challenges the British/Chinese and East/West binaries, but it also highlights issues for some British Chinese young people, along with other UK ethnic minorities, with being able to feel or identify with being 'truly' British, as well as being recognised by others as 'truly' British, despite 'ticking all the right boxes'.

On the other hand, Louise self-described as being 'very British' and said that she had come to the realisation that that she was not confined to choosing between being British or Chinese and instead can be both. However, this identification and self-discovery was not completely without cost. Although she did not experience much racism in traditional forms, except for fellow pupils making 'Chinese sounds' in primary school, she spoke about being very conscious of the stereotypes of Chinese people, such as being good at maths, that were imposed on her and others, and as a result, she 'tried very hard' to challenge those

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assumptions. Archer and Francis (2007) found that some of the London British Chinese pupils in their study disrupted the narrow and racist discourse through asserting themselves as 'being otherwise'; for instance, some of the boys actively resisted the 'passive' and 'geek' identities through the performance of 'laddish' masculinities.

As discussed in Chapter 5, the burden and necessity to 'be otherwise' as a racialised subject weighs heavily on each young person individually, such as Louise, to challenge these stereotypes, but not all British Chinese pupils had the same resources and opportunities to resist the dominant racist discourse and stereotypes. Louise, who occupied a privileged position, had the economic and cultural capital to participate in a wide range of extracurricular activities inside and outside school as her way to reject the positioning as 'someone who would just go home and do maths homework'. The breadth of curriculum and the variety of extra-curricular activities on offer could differ significantly among different schools, and pupils like Louise and Emma at fee paying schools undoubtedly have more choices in these enrichment activities. Louise commented that one of the best aspects of her school was the freedom and opportunities it offered, which included having 'lots of clubs and things' and even the possibility to 'start your own club'. Some other pupils, such as another participant Christy (aged 16) who had to help out at her family takeaway after school, might not enjoy the same access to resources or opportunities to participate or the luxury to be 'otherwise'.

Louise also explained that her plan to pursue an anthropology degree at university, after her gap year, was also a reaction to the 'maths' and 'doctor' sort of stereotypes associated with Chinese people. In the discussion around future aspirations in Archer and Francis' (2007) study, there was a preference for 'known' or 'safe' careers, such as the professions, among

British Chinese pupils, and their parents' preferences for them, as a strategic tool for achieving social mobility and avoiding discrimination in the labour market. Pupils were also discouraged from pursuing 'unknown' and 'untested' routes to avoid economic and/or social hardship, which was often experienced by the migrant generation. Louise's relatively secure middle class positioning, and perhaps her status as a youngest child, allows her more freedom to choose a 'riskier' aspiration, while some other British Chinese young pupils might be more constrained in their choices by their socioeconomic backgrounds and family circumstances and 'play it safe'.

(iii) The hidden costs of being the 'model minority'

In effect, the perceived academic 'success' of British Chinese pupils, and to a large extent British Chinese young adults, further disguises the marginalisation that is experienced by the group and other minority ethnic communities. One might ask, what is the harm of these 'positive' racial stereotypes? Being accountants and doctors cannot be all that bad? Why should British Chinese pupils like Louise contest these perceptions? The extraordinary story of Jeremy Lin, who became the first American of Chinese/Taiwanese descent to play in the NBA basketball league in the US, clearly illustrates the problems of 'positive' stereotypes and pigeonholing individuals into places in society. Despite displaying exceptional talent in basketball in high school and university, he did not receive any university basketball scholarship offers (a traditional route into the profession) and continued to be overlooked during his university sport and early professional career (Parungao and Lee, 2012). The breakthrough eventually came after he joined the New York Nicks and was given the opportunity to showcase his skills and instantly became a national sensation – the phenomena was known as 'Linsanity'.

Lin's ethnicity and 'positive' stereotypes hindered his opportunities and trajectory in a career path in which he was perceived not to belong. Chinese-Americans are also generally high achieving academically and suffer from similar stereotypes as British Chinese. Chinese-Americans could be good scientists or great with the violin; however, a Chinese/Taiwanese American as a professional basketball player just did not compute in the popular imagination. 'It's a sport for white and black people,' Lin said. 'You don't get respect for being an Asian American basketball player in the US' (Chu, 2008).

The stereotypes of Chinese boys, both in the UK and US, as being geeky, academically-oriented, weak, and effeminate simply do not correspond with the profile of a masculine, strong, professional basketball player. Ironically, Chinese boys, including some of the participants in this study, are regularly being stereotypically linked with Kung Fu/martial arts, an activity which also requires great physical strength and power; the often contradictory and illogical nature of stereotypes and racist discourse positions minority ethnic individuals in confined and impossible spaces. Lin has been accustomed to getting regular racist abuse on the court; whether it is 'go back to China' or 'orchestra is on the other side of campus' (Chu, 2008), his presence in a 'Black and White' sport disrupts the dominant discourse – as one journalist concludes, 'American culture tells us […] that Lin shouldn't exist' (Yu, 2012). The 'positive' stereotypes that Chinese should be good at maths and become doctors or accountants narrowly positions them into certain ascribed roles at school and in society, while such views create obstacles for British Chinese's integration into the wider labour market and keeps them out of 'untested' routes. Therefore, it is entirely understandable why some British Chinese pupils and their parents would favour the younger generation choosing 'safe' routes to avoid potential struggle and disappointment

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and to minimise the impact of prejudice/discriminations. In turn, though, it also inadvertently perpetuates the stereotypes in an almost self-fulfilling prophecy manner, and the lack of representation in 'non-traditional' subjects/careers persists. As discussed above, not all British Chinese pupils enjoy the same access or freedom to explore or pursue different kinds of aspirations to challenge the 'positive' stereotypes. Breaking down the barriers for British Chinese young people, as well as youths from other minority ethnic groups, to participate and be accepted into the wider society is an important social justice issue.

Furthermore, working within such 'positive', or negative, racial stereotypes, an individual's achievement (or failure) is simply reduced down to the *natural* associations with his/her ethnic group. Lin's 'success' is being portrayed as a result achieved through his Chinese/Asian ethos of hard work (Wang, 2012). The 'hard working Chinese' discourse, which is commonly associated with British Chinese's 'success' in education and the job market, does not only negatively marginalise those within the ethnic group who are unable to achieve equal success at school or at work as either not working hard enough or not being 'Chinese' enough. The narrative also demonises other minority ethnic groups that do not share equal success as not possessing the 'right' kind of culture and pays little attention to the different types of structural inequalities and the manifestation of racism experienced across different ethnic groups, as well as the variations of individual circumstances (e.g. class, gender, location). The inconsistent nature of 'positive' (and negative) stereotypes could also reduce Lin's success to being a 'fluke' or a matter of luck, where his perceived lack of *natural* talent is perhaps made up by his 'hard work'.

On a similar note, young British Chinese have encountered barriers in pursuing 'non-traditional' careers and to be seen as a 'normal' member of British society. Actress Elizabeth Chan (2012) recalled while attending drama school (in 2006), she was told that she could not perform in a scene from a play, which involved two girls sitting on a park bench talking about boys, as it was written for 'white' people. At a recent conference, 'Contesting 'British Chinese' Culture: Forms, Histories, Identities'(2011), various visual and performing artists discussed difficulties in being judged by their work rather than their racialised bodies. Similar to Jeremy Lin getting little respect for being an industry for 'Blacks' and 'Whites', British Chinese hip-hop artist, Jay Differ, is faced with perceptions such as 'Orientals can't make music and they can't rap' (Yeh, 2011).

Both positive and negative racial stereotypes are harmful because these attitudes prevent people from being seen first and foremost as individuals rather than members of their alleged (ethnic) groupings. They confine people in their ascribed categories, and in some cases, as discussed above, further perpetuate these unjust beliefs in the process. Stereotypes and racialisation contribute to minority ethnic pupils being pathologised (e.g. British Chinese pupils as 'successful' but Other learners, and Black youths as unintelligent and low ability pupils) as deviating from the 'ideal pupil' discourse, which is based on a male, White, middle class, 'naturally talented' identity. However, unlike a physical assault or hateful speech that is easily detected or acted upon, racial (and other social) stereotypes and biases, which are often not malicious in nature, can be more subtle, complex and seemingly harmless. Hence they are difficult to 'prove' and address. It is much more straightforward for pupils to report and for school staff to deal with name-calling incidents,

than for a pupil trying to report or demonstrate the negative effects and emotions of

repeatedly being asked to write others' names in Chinese or being labelled 'geeks'.

8.3.2 Complementary schooling
(i) Still part of the British Chinese experience?

Findings from the research on Chinese complementary schooling (Francis et al, 2008, 2009)

show that the overwhelming majority of British Chinese pupils attending these weekend

schools see the purpose of these schools (and their attendance of them) as perpetuating

proficiency in their 'mother tongue' language. Although attending Chinese school is still part

of the Chinese diaspora experience for many young people of Chinese heritage growing up

in Western countries, some among the British Chinese community are only partially

engaged with this type of learning (i.e. not finishing the entire school curriculum) or not at

all, as observed in this study.

First of all, mixed heritage pupils appear to have a higher level of dropping out or non-

participation at Chinese complementary schools. Within this study, five out of 10 pupils of

mixed Chinese backgrounds attended or were still attending Chinese school; except for one

pupil that was still attending Chinese school (Jameela, age 11), the other four stopped

attending before finishing or doing their Chinese GCSE exams. The five young people that

did not attend Chinese school at all spoke limited or no Chinese, and three of these pupils

reported their Chinese parents did not speak/knew very little Chinese; the instrumental

function of improving familial 'mother tongue' communication for some first generation or

new migrant families was not applicable in these cases. Most of the community/voluntary

based schools teach Chinese as a mother tongue language (Mau et al, 2009), and this

teaching model is more challenging for those who have limited or no Chinese language

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contact at home or elsewhere. Pupils are often expected to have acquired some knowledge

at home or to receive additional support from their parents, and both Callum (aged 13) and

Federico (aged 15) commented that they felt disadvantaged coming from a non-Chinese

speaking home environment and spoke negatively about the teaching style there; both

dropped out from Chinese school.

Christina (aged 16) appeared to be the most fluent among the mixed heritage participants,

and she was an exception as she reported using Cantonese occasionally with her Malaysian

Chinese mother, whose English was functional but not entirely fluent. The other nine mixed

heritage pupils spoke only or mainly English at home. As discussed earlier, mixed Chinese

young people are sometimes positioned as outsiders linguistically and culturally (and

perhaps ethnically), and there is a lower expectation for them to know or learn Chinese;

therefore, generally they might not have been seen as the main audience for mother tongue

style schools. However, three of these pupils, Christina, Callum and Nicky, took part in

cultural classes (e.g. Chinese dance, martial arts) that were offered at their schools (or

associated local Chinese association). Both Christina and Callum reported greatly enjoying

the cultural classes, and both Nicky and Callum carried on with the activity classes after

quitting the language lessons. Although these 'Chinese cultural' classes only showcase a

certain version of 'Chinese culture', they seem to be a more inclusive way for those from

non-Chinese speaking households to participate in something related to their heritage.

During observations at one of the local Chinese associations/Chinese schools, there were a

number of non-Chinese people participating in the adult classes.

On the other hand, among the pupils with two ethnically Chinese parents, not all with

Chinese speaking parents or living in Chinese speaking household attended or stayed in

Chinese school. There were a range of reasons why people were disengaged, including lack of interest, not enjoying the learning, feeling the education was ineffective, focusing on mainstream school education, and school closures. However, for a few young people, there was no strong reasons for not attending but perhaps simply not viewing learning Chinese as a priority within their families. Although the ability to speak Chinese is commonly seen as an essential quality to Chinese identity and the desire to 'pass down' spoken Chinese skills and literacy remains strong among many within the British Chinese communities, as discussed in Chapter 6, developing language skills of a minority language within the English language dominant environment is highly challenging and in practice works more as an ideal rather than the norm. Across the sample, there was no observable difference along gender lines, as the boys and girls interviewed were similarly interested or disinterested in Chinese schools/learning Chinese.

On the other hand, among the 13 pupils attending the very high achieving schools, in other words the independent schools and selective mainstream schools, more than half of them (eight) either never attended Chinese school or had a relatively short attendance (less then two years), and the majority of these eight pupils either had no Chinese knowledge or were 'background bilinguals' that had various levels of Chinese language comprehension but had limited speaking skills. When focusing on the five pupils at independent schools, only two, siblings Emma (aged 17) and Matthew (aged 15) attended Chinese school for an extended period and all except Fiona (aged 14) spoke no or very limited Chinese, even including Emma and Matthew. In fact, Fiona, who reported having some Cantonese speaking and comprehension skills, only attended complementary school to learn Cantonese for one year because her Mandarin curriculum at her independent school took priority; her father feared

that learning Cantonese, their mother tongue, would in effect become an interference. Complementary schooling, or in fact Chinese speaking skills, seemed somewhat irrelevant to some of these extremely high achieving pupils' success at their mainstream schools. As discussed in Chapter 6, participation was sometimes seen as a hindrance to their mainstream school learning or enrichment activities, which possess higher instrumental value within the wider society. The three pupils that came from selective schools and obtained a good or average level of Chinese spoken and literacy skills all had links to the catering trade. Across the whole sample, those pupils who stayed in Chinese school for long periods and developed higher levels of Chinese language skills were more likely to have ties to the catering trade.

Although there are variations among participants from similar socioeconomic and family backgrounds among all the participants, there were some patterns to their (dis)engagement at complementary schools. Those pupils who attended/have been attending Chinese schools for an extended period of time (4-11 years) to learn their 'mother tongue'/Chinese were more likely to be connected to Hong Kong, China, Vietnam and/or linked to the catering trade, particularly the takeaway business. Among the eight pupils that finished their Chinese schooling and/or passed their GCSE exams, only three were from non-catering backgrounds. These three pupils, Patrick (aged 17) and siblings Emma (aged 17) and Matthew (aged 15), were all from middle class backgrounds, and although Cantonese was their parents' mother tongue/main Chinese dialect, they studied Mandarin, conceivably a more valuable qualification within the wider society, at their complementary schools and also had private tuition. Both Emma and Matthew failed to acquire adequate functional language skills ('I've forgotten everything') despite passing their exams. Patrick, who only

attended for two years, felt that his parents only sent him there for the qualification more than 'really want[ing] me to know the actual language'. In these instances, these pupils and their families' participations in complementary schooling could not be seen as fitting its original purposes to transmit the 'mother tongue' language and facilitate family communications. Rather, they were partially utilising their access to complementary schools as a form of 'ethnic capital', along with private tuition, to gain credentials that would be transferable the wider educational system and job market.

Two other pupils, Andrew (aged 15) and Jackie (aged 17), also came from Cantonese speaking households and studied for their Mandarin GCSE exams at Chinese school. Their social class positionings were a bit more ambiguous due to the discrepancies of the parental occupational class categories. However, both had parents that were fluent English speakers and reported using a mixture of English and Cantonese at home. Although Mandarin is increasingly seen as a sought after skill in the dominant discourse, the subject is still not widely available at mainstream schools; the opportunity to gain the language skill, or at least a credential, through the complementary schooling system was a strategic decision of these young people's parents. It is likely that their social class positionings and knowledge of the British education system and labour market provided them the social capital necessary to maximise the transferable benefits of their ethnic capital through their participation.

The decision on which Chinese language to teach/learn has always been political. In past decades, most Chinese schools focused exclusively on Cantonese, even though a significant number of the migrants from the rural parts of Hong Kong spoke Hakka, a lower status dialect, as their first/main language. The definition of 'mother tongue' has always been contentious in the context of Chinese schools in the UK. With the increase of new arrivals

from Mainland China and the growing popularity of Mandarin with the mainstream British

society, there are new Mandarin schools emerging alongside the Mandarin curriculum being

implemented in traditionally Cantonese based schools. As Cantonese is gradually losing its

status with Mandarin's popularity and the instrumental value of Cantonese is decreasing as

families are becoming less connected with Hong Kong or Cantonese based media (e.g.

television), learning Mandarin is potentially a logical choice that offers both a marketable

skill and a symbolic connection to their heritage for those pupils and families who no longer

use Chinese, of any dialect, as a 'mother tongue'. The then British-Hong Kong government

provided some support to Chinese schools in Britain from the early 1970s to 1994. However,

the support ceased when Hong Kong was preparing for retrocession to China in 1997

(Benton and Gomez, 2008). Sets of UK produced textbooks for both Cantonese and

Mandarin teaching have since been published by the UK Federation of Chinese Schools, one

of the umbrella associations of Chinese schools in the UK (UKFCS, 2012). However,

resources from a locally formed and funded voluntary organisation perhaps cannot compete

with support from the Chinese state government. The Chinese government's Overseas

Chinese Affairs Office Chinese provides a different set of free textbooks to overseas Chinese

communities, and this set of material is supplied through another organisation, UK

Association for the Promotion of Chinese Education, which promotes the education of

Mandarin and simplified Chinese characters, the official script for China (Mau et al, 2009).

Once again, issues relating to cultural, political, and enterprise 'China' are intermeshed.

Additionally, there might be further pedagogical issues in teaching essentially a 'foreign

language' to those young people with no or limited regular contact with the language or

home support (e.g. parents either do not speak Chinese, or speak a mutually unintelligible

dialect) relying on such limited teaching time (2-3 hours once a week during term time) and scarce resources (e.g. staff, facilities) as community based/voluntary organisations, since the language attainment level is a mixed picture even among those pupils with some or robust levels of Chinese language environment at home. Parents with more financial resources, as seen in some of the examples in this study, might simply choose to opt out of the complementary schooling system and choose private tuition or more commercialised institutions that could provide a 'better' education. Community based schools could possibly face even more competition in recruiting pupils and teachers (who generally only receive a nominal fee and sometimes no pay). While some local authorities provide support to complementary schools, with the reduction of council budgets, it is highly likely assistance would be reduced or become non-existent for some councils. The growth of interest in Mandarin may possess both new possibilities and challenges for Chinese complementary schools.

8.4 Emerging British Chinese identities

British Chinese people have undoubtedly gained significant cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1990) in the last decade through their status as academically high achieving and possessing both voluntary and involuntary connections to China. The 'Chinese' identity could largely be perceived as an asset rather than a liability within the multicultural and globalised context of early twenty-first century Britain. British Muslim youth is high on the political agenda and associated with terrorism, alongside Black youth who continue to be pathologised with links to crime and low academic achievement. British Chinese young people, by contrast, are rarely seen as a 'problem'. This ascendance towards mainstream

Britain, though fraught, also reflects the partial and segmented 'success' of integration of the younger generations of British Chinese from the settled population.

8.4.1 'I feel quite… normal really' – a sense of belonging as British Chinese

Despite some of the challenges experienced by some of the young people, most of the British Chinese pupils in this research reported feeling normal about growing up in England with Chinese heritage; some simply stated that they did not think much about it at all, reflecting their positioning as ordinary in many ways. The general feeling of being part of their environment and British society signified rootedness as British Chinese in the UK, a shift from the limited investment in developing a collective consciousness of being Chinese in Britain among many of Parker's (1995) respondents from an earlier generation, who had segmented their lifestyles to regard British and Chinese in separate spheres. The polarisation of being British publicly (i.e. at school) and being Chinese at home still had some resonance for some of the young people in this research. However, these identities were described to be more fluid and open. The strong engagement with Hong Kong popular culture seen within the pupils at a recent study on Chinese complementary schools (Francis et al, 2009) was more so the minority within this sample with many pupils with limited Chinese language skills. The decline in Chinese skills and/or attendance of Chinese schools and less regular (if any) visits to Asian countries related to their family origins and lower consumption of Hong Kong/Chinese popular culture. The changes reflected the weakened ties to 'home' and stronger investment in their lives in Britain. The British Chinese 'community' is seeing the rise of younger generations entering middle class and professional occupations, along with a high degree of inter-ethnic friendships and relationships and business ties (Benton and Gomez 2008). If a sense of commonality and connection appears

to have emerged among the younger generations, it is based on the national belonging as 'British Chinese' or 'British born Chinese/BBC', which is commonly used among the British born generations and many young people in this study.

8.4.2 New ethnicities and possibilities

Chan (2005) discusses the possibilities of one's identity, ethnicity and culture as a consequence of transnationalism. Chan draws on Femminella's (1980) discussion on the dialectics of culture contact and proposes five possible outcomes of the encounter between A, the culture of the place of departure, and B, the culture of the place of arrival (p.2-5):

1. Essentialising: A $\leftrightarrow$ B = A/B, where both A and B are fixed upon encounter, and the perceived differences become sources of stereotypes and prejudice;

2. Alternating: A $\leftrightarrow$ B = A+B, where one alternates and compartmentalises identities A or B according to the occasion;

3. Converting: A $\leftrightarrow$ B = B, where B replaces A, and assimilation or conversion takes place;

4. Hybridising: A $\leftrightarrow$ B = AB or Ab or Ba, where the upper case designates the culture with greater significance to the person, and non-compartmentalised hybridisation takes form;

5. Innovation: A $\leftrightarrow$ B = AB or Ab or Ba $\rightarrow$ C, where the entanglement of cultures within a person maybe results in a new culture.

Applying Chan's theoretical model loosely is helpful in contextualising the emerging identities of British Chinese young people, particularly the hybridised 'BBC/British born

Chinese' identification that was commonly used by the participants in this research and is used by other young British Chinese. As mentioned earlier, Parker's (1995) description of segmented, private Hong Kong based Chinese identities from the previous generations of British Chinese would roughly fit the second option. In this option, A and B, Chinese and British cultures, are kept separate and the person becomes an 'identity juggler', according to Chan. Among the participants in this study, examples of more hybridised identities that resemble option 4 and 5 were observed. Besides one participant, Shirley (aged 13), who had a mostly Chinese network and did not feel British, most other pupils described having a more fluid and flexible mix of Chinese, British/English and other identities in different contexts and at different times. A small number of pupils also discussed their association with a more general (East) Asian identification along with being British, or a more individualised but worldly, cosmopolitan sense of identification, which could be loosely interpreted as 'C' in option 5.

However, it is important to acknowledge that 'A' is always a disputable construction or representation of 'Chineseness' within the British Chinese community. Even during the post-war period in late twentieth century when a significant majority of the British Chinese migrants came from or had immediate connections to Hong Kong, there were still differences within the more homogenous Chinese 'community', and certain characteristics related to the group were privileged (e.g. Cantonese) while others were marginalised (e.g. Hakka). Having a unified representation of Chineseness has always been an ideal rather than the reality. As discussed in previous chapters, the parents and grandparents of participants in the study came from a range of 'Chinese' backgrounds. As suggested by Ang (1998), being Chinese outside China cannot possibly mean the same thing as inside, and being Hong Kong

Chinese, Malaysian Chinese, Mauritian Chinese, or Mainland Chinese has some

commonalities but also different histories and practices. At the same time, certain ideals

and practices which are often deemed 'Chinese', such as filial piety and lunar New Year

celebrations, are in effect shared by people from other East Asian backgrounds. Therefore,

'A', the Chineseness that supposedly ties British Chinese people together in actuality

represents and signifies a diverse range of ideas and histories that are associated with their

own and/or their ancestors' place of origins and their socioeconomic positionings in those

societies for each individual. The 'Chinese' collective group identity that is given to or

asserted by this heterogeneous group of multi-ethnic/national people is a political and

social construction.

Equally, the 'Britishness' that is represented by 'B' could also signify a wide range of

meanings. Even before delving into further social class, gender and other differences among

the participants, the experience of growing up in multi-ethnic/cultural London is likely to be

rather dissimilar to living as a teenager in a semi-rural area in the Home Counties and could

lead young people to perceive and construct what Britishness would be differently based on

their localities and micro-environments. Therefore, according to Chan's model, the A and B

that represent the supposed binaries, in this case Chineseness and Britishness,

hypothetically could be further broken down into A1, A2, A3, etc., and B1, B2, B3, and so on

to represent the intra-group sub-categories, and consequently the hybridisation of these

different version of A's and B's could result in a wide range of possibilities over time.

The concept of hybridity has been used to challenge the static, essentialised and mono-

culturalist view of diasporic identity with an emancipatory element. However, as discussed

in Chapter 2, it is important to acknowledge that the notion of 'hybridity' is contentious

conceptually. In Hall's (1988, 1990) work, hybridity is linked to the idea of 'new ethnicities' to challenge the cultural hegemony from the 'centre' and recognising the Black subject, or the Other, as emerging through different histories and lived experiences on the 'margins'. Bhaba (1994) sees hybrids at 'the in between space' and producing a 'Third Space'. On the other hand, critics highlight the limitations of hybridisation. For example, Friedman (1999) argues that the term serves little purpose as cultures were never pure, and therefore we are all cultural hybrids. Anthias (2001, 2008) finds that the 'pick and mix' of cultural elements of hybridity does not necessarily 'signify a shift in identity' or 'the demise of identity politics of the racist or anti-racist kind' (Anthias, 2008: 628), and the concept cannot adequately attend to crosscutting issues (e.g. religion and gender) and context. Ang (2001) also highlights the danger of the over-celebratory nature of what she calls the rosy, melting-pot vision of 'liberal hybridism', which presents a harmonious fusion or synthesis of mixedness.

It is beyond the scope of this study to provide a thorough discussion of hybridity as a theoretical concept; however, the different perspectives and pitfalls of hybridity are useful in examining British Chinese young people's lived experiences in England. As discussed earlier, as well as contesting the homogeneity of the dominant (British) culture, essentialised definitions of Chineseness (e.g. speaking Chinese) were also challenged by some of the participants, and therefore, their hybridised British Chinese identities should equally be non-static and inclusive. A critical evaluation of this (non) mixing and synergy of 'cultures' is necessary to understand British Chinese youths' negotiation of identities and positioning within the British society. Having 'the best of both worlds', as Emma (aged 17) described her position as British Chinese, is indeed a source of pride and worth celebrating; the desirable aspects of being Chinese in Britain made a number of participants feel that it

was 'special' to be British Chinese. However, as seen in the discussions of participants' experiences in the previous chapters, this sense of 'best of both worlds' simply could not be experienced at all times and was not shared by all participants. Being a hybrid that occupies a 'in between' location or 'Third Space', on the other hand, could result in feeling/being marginalised and inadequate as a Chinese, British or British Chinese subject momentarily for some and regularly for others. The hybridised positioning of being British Chinese, mediated by micro and macro forces, is not always a fusion of harmony but often complex, unstable, relational and context specific.

As Back (2002) rightfully points out, young people are seen as 'the privileged bearers of cultural dynamism and change' (p. 446). They are also inadvertently given the burden to deliver 'newness' and transformation. Therefore, under this assumption within the dominant discourse, young people, like Shirley (aged 13), would be questioned on their apparent inability to mix and integrate, despite being born and raised in the UK, and in Shirley's case having one UK born parent, while limited attention is paid to interrogate the unequal power relationships and histories that possibly contributed to her disidentifications with her English/British surroundings. Moreover, hybridities, as Anthias (2001) suggests, are not necessarily transgressive or progressive. The 'BBC' identity, which is strongly embraced by many of the participants and other British born young Chinese, is a hybrid form by definition. The reclamation of the 'Chink' identity among some young British Chinese that was discussed in Chapter 5 could be interpreted as a result of hybridity, mixing Chinese ethnic pride with English terminologies and 'humour', as well as laughing *with* and *at* the dominant discourses (as illustrated in the example of the 'YOU chink' clip by Chiabie below). This development certainly delivers 'newness', a departure from coping with racism simply

through ignoring it or playing down its significance. However, it is also debatable how

transformative or empowering such a position could be to challenge racism and unequal

power relations within British society.

An example of young British Chinese asserting their BBC identity in social media, in 'YOU chink', by Chiabie, 30/08/2009, parodying stereotypical questions British Chinese get asked (http://youtu.be/e5rSvfJbyBs)

Nevertheless, despite its shortcomings as a theoretical concept, hybridity can still serve a

useful practical and instrumental political stance to examine the construction and

negotiation of British Chinese pupils' identities. Frameworks such as 'intersectionality'

(Crenshaw, 1994) and 'translocational positionality' (Anthias, 2001, 2008) provide means to

critically examine crisscrossing social positions and locations through the interplay of social

process, practices and outcomes. However, as much as British Chinese young people in this

study articulated the construction and experiencing of hybridised or other new forms of

complex identities, which loosely resemble option 4 and 5 in Chan's (2005) model, British

Chinese continue to be seen in essentialised and static terms. Such terms are described in

Chan's option 1, 2 and 3, where identities are fixed or separately compartmentalised

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identities, within the mainstream British society and often also the British Chinese 'community'.

British Chinese also suffer from a similar 'perpetual foreigner syndrome' (Wu, 2002) to their Asian/Chinese-American counterparts, in which they experience subtle, often non-malicious but reoccurring instances in everyday life that question their claim to be an equal member of British society and indiscriminately define their sense of being based on 'Chineseness', regardless of their actual connections to the 'homeland/China' and engagement with Chinese cultural practices. As Ang suggests (2001), using the name of Gilroy's (1991) article, 'It Ain't Where You're From, It's Where You're At', on diasporic conditions, the common practice is to emphasise questioning where British Chinese young people are *really* from or their knowledge of 'traditional' culture (e.g. speaking Chinese) instead of where there are at, or where they might be going. Barber's (2011) research on British Vietnamese young adults highlights how the cultural invisibility of the Vietnamese partially contributes to more complex and fluid selves and identities, as Orientalism within the mainstream society is largely based specifically upon stereotypes and misconceptions of the Chinese and sometimes Japanese rather than other East Asian groups. Therefore, it is inherently more difficult for British Chinese to disassociate from or reject this racialised position as 'Chinese' because of the perceived familiarity and prominence of Chinese people (irrespective of their backgrounds) and 'culture' in the British society and Western imagination in general. Young British Chinese as racialised subjects are still regularly being positioned as the exotic Other that are forever carrying the burden/pride of 4,000 years of history and also the emerging global 'Chinese dream'; young people often have little choice but to be seen and judged firstly by their by their appearance and perceived foreignness. Moreover, the self-

Orientalism that is perpetuated by Chinese communities in the UK or abroad as a way to draw ethnic boundaries, celebrate ethnic pride, or promote political or commercial interests, further confines British Chinese young people in often difficult and impossible positions as simultaneously not 'British' and not 'Chinese' enough. Chineseness is a mixed blessing and double-edged sword that leads young people into a complex and contradictory positioning as 'Other' both in the mainstream society and sometimes within the British Chinese 'community'.

On the other hand, many of the British Chinese pupils in this study were shown to be active agents who attempted to contest old ideas about Britishness and Chineseness, negotiate their personal identities individually, and assert their right to be both Chinese and British. Some of the participants also clearly communicated their identity construction and negotiation as an on-going process. Sometimes coming to terms with being and feeling both Chinese and British, in whatever capacity, was a journey that required challenging cultural hegemony and racism. A wide range of different experiences and identifications emerged from participants' narratives, which illustrated the complexity, diversity, and unpredictability of the process of their identity constructions and issues of belonging.

Through close examination of pupils' (dis)engagement with learning Chinese, which is a strong signifier for Chineseness, this research illustrates that the notion of 'not speaking much Chinese' is highly complex and subjective. A more sophisticated understanding and support of bi/multilingualism is urgently needed both at mainstream and complementary schools amidst the growing diversity of pupil populations and the increasing importance of language skills within the globalised economy/labour market. Although Chinese language is important for developing young people's own sense of Chineseness, participants in this

research demonstrated other ways to identify and/or express their Chineseness. In some

cases, possessing the ability to speak Chinese did not always translate to a strong sense of

Chineseness, and equally, not being able to speak Chinese did not preclude some from

asserting their Chineseness. However, the monolingual-based standards imposed on

emerging bilinguals at times either produced a sense of inadequacy among these learners,

or in more extreme cases led to disengagement or refusal to speak Chinese.

Additionally, there is a fundamental difference between the properties of the terms 'British'

and 'Chinese'. In theory and partially in practice, one could be considered or become

'British' irrespective of their ethnic origins. 'Chinese', on the other hand, functions as a more

exclusive term with stricter sociological boundaries of who can and cannot be Chinese, as

discussed in Chapter 3. As Chan (2005) explains, people are generally 'born Chinese' and

cannot become 'un-Chinese'. However, they can be regarded as 'inferior' or unauthentic

Chinese. Also, people from other ethnic backgrounds who adopt Chinese 'cultural values' or

speak Chinese simply would not be accepted as Chinese. It is this sense of inclusion and

exclusion that holds together the British Chinese 'community' and the Chinese diaspora and

makes contesting taken-for-granted beliefs (e.g. Chinese people should speak Chinese) and

Chineseness challenging.

This research shows that although British Chinese pupils from the settled population as a

group are successful academically and are taking part in their school/local communities,

their perceived embodied difference continues to play a significant role in mediating their

experiences at school and beyond, no matter how 'British', 'middle class', and integrated

some of them have become. Their experiences mirror the situation of British Chinese young

adults, in which many have left the catering trade and become highly concentrated in

certain skilled professions, and their representation and participation in others, for example in arts, mass media and politics, shows limited 'success'. It raises issues in social justice when members of society are being denied the right to be seen as full and equal members of their local community and British society. The 'success' of British Chinese pupils and students in education and now arguably partial or segmented 'success' in the labour market of young adults, along with the rise of China, further glosses over the hidden inequalities that affect the group, especially those with more restricted resources. The 'success' of the younger generations of British Chinese does not necessarily signal social integration, political empowerment and social acceptance for the wider community (Parker and Song 2007).

As much as the British public are being more exposed to images of Chinese 'culture' and people in the mainstream society, for example through Chinese New Year celebrations or internationally successful films like *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) and the remake of *The Karate Kid* (2010); as discussed earlier, the representation of Chineseness in the dominant culture remains problematic and frequently restricted to China's past, old/negative stereotypes and depiction as 'foreigners'. Such depictions rarely reflect the contemporary lived experiences of most British Chinese people. Just as British Chinese pupils are being demanded to perform their Chineseness/Otherness at school, British Chinese are repeatedly narrowly confined to be 'foreigners' or stereotypes in the British media. Although there is a shift from the lack of visible expression of Chineseness in the public realm that Parker (1995) spoke of, the exotic and negative stereotypes of Chineseness in mainstream discourse is more a hindrance than a support in British Chinese young people's effort to redefine and negotiate new forms of identities (Benton and

Gomez, 2008). These representations of Chinese people in the British media inevitably both reflect and influence the image of the British Chinese 'community' and people, and narratives from this research show similar racialised and exoticised treatments of British Chinese pupils at school and in their wider society. With the recent influx of new Chinese migrants and the media spotlight focusing on illegal migrants and foreign students, Chinese people, irrespective of their nationality and origins, are indiscriminately not seen as British citizens. As much as some of the agentic young people attempt to redefine or contest definitions of Chineseness and Britishness, as seen in this research, the 'Oriental' embodiment still automatically serves as a marker of difference and foreignness to question British Chinese young people's right to belong and be accepted as 'fully' British/English.

Furthermore, the associations with 'cultural China' and China as a nation state are becoming increasingly complex and inseparably intermeshed. This sense of unity and continuity shared among Chinese in China and abroad is further heightened by the growing prominence of China - the orientation to the 'Middle Kingdom' for cultural or economic reasons are gaining strong grounds, especially for those no longer have concrete ties to Hong Kong or Southeast Asia. This version of Chineseness rooted in 'China', either as an imagined homeland or the nation state, is becoming a powerful identity in itself that is encompassing yet limiting.

However, being Chinese is most likely not an encompassing aspect of many young people's lives, especially for those participants who were generally integrated into the mainstream society. This points to the heterogeneity of multidimensional identities and cultures that are being formed and highlights the myriad ways in which young people are being British Chinese. Being Chinese could be an important part of British Chinese people's identity, whether it is by choice or imposed, but as Fenton (1999) suggests, ethnicity could be

'situational' or 'part-time' for an individual; their British Chinese identities might be more salient in certain contexts and not at all in others. It is different from the segmented identities observed in Parker's (1995) respondents because their senses of Britishness and Chineseness are not always clearly defined or strictly confined to certain spaces, a sign of hybridised and non-fixed identities. After all, the 'Chineseness' that a significant portion of the participants are connected to is hybridised or localised, such as Malaysian Chinese, to begin with. These diverse formations highlight the multiplicity as well as the contested and multi-layered nature of 'British Chineseness'. The ability to utilise their sense of agency to define their British Chineseness is mediated by their class, gender, appearance and other external factors. The process of identity formation and construction was evidently a constant process. A number of participants spoke about how they became more at ease or confident about being British Chinese at school over time.

The issue of Chinese authenticity, especially the ability to speak Chinese being linked to being a 'proper' Chinese person, is something that informed the research aims. Even though generally the sense of Chineseness among interviewees was still partially informed by this taken for granted position, some were willing to contest this essentialised view and the wider definition of Chineseness. The 'intra-ethnic othering' (Pyke & Dang, 2003) identifications, 'whitewashed/banana' and 'FOB' (fresh off the boat), that are frequently used among young Asian Americans seem to be less common within the British Chinese/East Asian context. As mentioned before, the term 'banana', 'yellow' skin outside and culturally 'white' inside, is a known term among British Chinese young people (was mentioned by one of the participants in the Chinese complementary schooling research), but it did not come up in any of the interviews in this study; although the discussion of not

being 'proper' or 'really' Chinese due to their limited Chinese language skills or knowledge

about Chinese matters was mentioned. It will be worthwhile to examine how maturation of

the settled population, new waves of migration and the increased number of mixed race

people might change the demographics and relationship among the younger generations of

British Chinese in the years to come. Perhaps the debates on 'Chinese' authenticity will

gradually shift to contesting who can be included/excluded as 'British Chinese'.

8.4.3 New spaces for connection, expression and contestation - places for complexities

When examining the narratives of his interviewees, Parker (1995) found that a persistent

theme behind the identity formations was lack of a mixed form in which it is possible to

express the meaning of being young and Chinese in Britain. On the other hand, he felt that it

was premature to describe forms of Chinese identity in Britain as 'cultures of hybridity',

something that was more prominent among Black and South Asian young people. While it is

difficult to pinpoint specific, concretely hybridised British Chinese representation that is like

Bhangra music to the British South Asian culture, the advancement of communication

technology has provided the platform for new social and cultural connections and

formations among British Chinese and with other communities. Previously, British Chinese

who were geographically isolated would most likely only be able to come in contact with

Chinese peers during weekend Chinese schools or visits to Chinatown to obtain new Hong

Kong videos or music. A few of the participants in this study mentioned enjoying 'surfing the

net', and a couple reported keeping in touch with their friends from Chinese school on

technologies like MSN messenger and Facebook. Although specific information about

participants' online activities was not sought, this 'Facebook generation' undoubtedly have

been utilising the internet for both academic and social usages. These new ways of

communications enable easier access to Chinese peers and networks and could potentially

make growing up with Chinese heritage less isolating psychologically and socially (albeit

geographically distant), even if one does not have access to co-ethnic social spaces at

mainstream or Chinese schools.

The internet provides easy access to a wide range of Chinese/East Asian based virtual

networks for the younger generations of British Chinese to connect and to be 'seen' by

other British Chinese. A range of British Chinese (and sometimes East Asian) websites have

emerged in the last decade for the younger generation of British Chinese, and these

websites have been vital in facilitating forms of self-expression and collective identity

production, sometimes including organising offline face-to-face meetups (Yeh, 2011).

Distinct from both mainstream social institutions and the traditional ethnic specific

organisations, like Chinese associations, Parker and Song (2007) suggest that these sites are

'developing as social institutions' and 'helping to define an embryonic second-generation

civil society' (2007). The content of these sites are generally all or almost all in English,

which enables British Chinese, regardless of their Chinese fluency, to participate fully

without a language barrier. The exact proportion of British Chinese teens and young adults

engaging with these web based networks and their level of engagement is unknown, and

further research into these new spaces to express British Chinese identities and discuss

related issues would be useful.

This study finds that British Chinese young people are not so much expressing confusion or

conflict with multiple aspects of their identity, as having issues lying more in frustration at

the inability of others to understand or allow for the complex and flexible nature of their

diverse and shifting identities, communities and cultures. Such positions suggest a

differentiation between ethnic and cultural identities, and the possibility of retaining a Chinese identity while engaging in intra and inter-ethnic networks and being a member of British society. While the formation of British Chinese identities has always been tied both to the inter-ethnic national arena as well as to global transformations (Benton and Gomez 2008, Yeh 2009), this is ever more so for the younger generation, as seen in a significant portion of the participants who had friendship groups with people from a range of backgrounds, and whose lived experiences and life-world are framed by both UK and global cultures. As such, there is no contradiction for many to identify nationally as British and ethnically as Chinese, Malaysian Chinese or mixed heritage and to participate in education and society as a full member of the British society, while expressing and constructing identities that reflect their family backgrounds, British upbringings, and other influences.

Therefore, in some ways, the value of this term 'British Chinese' would appear to lie in its flexibility and inclusiveness, its ability to account for complex migration histories and those whose mixed ethnicities may feel excluded by the terms 'Chinese', 'British' or 'British born Chinese'. However, there are still limitations in using the term to adequately reflect the range of diversity and some might contest the boundaries of 'British Chinese'.   Yet, it has yet to be developed into a *political* identity – political in the sense that it is accepted and understood by institutions such as education, the media, the police and the government. This research brings to light the diverse ways that British Chinese are seeking to carve out a sense of belonging in British society; despite their apparent 'success' in education and gaining partial acceptance in mainstream society, their experiences are still riven by structures of racial inequality and discrimination. Chinese ethnicity in the UK is both involuntary and voluntary, and at the same time non-negotiable and negotiable. As much as

there is an emergent, if contested, British Chinese identity, this research highlights that

there are multiple formations of identity, culture and community that are in the process of

becoming. As suggested by others (Archer & Francis, 2007; Benton & Gomez, 2008), the

celebration of British Chinese pupils' academic achievement and the economic success of

the wider community obscures the persistence of inequalities and partial and segmented

inclusion as members of the British society. Thus, it is important to recognise the multiple

and fragmented forms of identity and diversity of the social and cultural terrains occupied

by British Chinese young people today.

This chapter, along with discussions presented in previous chapters, shows that forms of

hybridised identities and a sense of rootedness in Britain from the younger generations of

British Chinese seem to have finally emerged since the settlement of the post-war migrants.

While there has been success in academic achievement and social mixing, their positioning

in mainstream society serves an interesting case within the discourse of 'integration' and

multiculturalism in the UK, which will be discussed in the final chapter.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

In this thesis, I have explored how social structures and processes, along with the impact of diasporic parental experiences, shape identity construction and a sense of belonging among British Chinese pupils within the more 'settled' population. I am particularly interested in the experience of British Chinese pupils that have had limited or no Chinese schooling and/or have limited knowledge of the Chinese language; the notion of 'having limited Chinese knowledge' encompassed young people with a wide range of proficiency and varied relationships with their heritage language(s). This research explored how these pupils construct their identities within the British Chinese community and multicultural Britain; special attention was paid to examining how these young people relate to 'Chineseness', particularly aspects of Chinese languages, customs, traditions, 'culture', and cultural/national pride. The processes that shape their sense of being as young people growing up with Chinese heritage in England have been explored through their experiences in mainstream education, heritage language learning, and their general lived experience growing up in England, and the results have led to a collection of narratives of identity work, positioning and belonging in the social world.

The thesis has also drawn upon insights from a range of conceptual tools including theories of Orientalism, discourse, power, positionality, hybridity, and intersectionality. These concepts have enabled a more nuanced analysis of the contradictions and tensions in the ways in which British Chinese young people negotiate their sense of identity and belonging in Britain. This conclusion will provide an evaluation and an assessment of key themes and issues arising in the research and assess the theoretical and empirical contributions of the study. In particular, it draws together the theoretical debates raised by the empirical data

relating to discourse, agency, identity and belonging, to explore how these can be understood in relation to the management of identities within a shifting discursive landscape in multicultural Britain.

Ethnic and 'race' relations in Britain have been largely shaped by the legacy of post-war migration. The construction of a black/white paradigm where minority ethnic groups are seen as fitting within either black or white categories has gradually been shifted, as a result of more recent migrations from countries across the world and the growing number of mixed race people born in the UK. However, general discussions about racism and belonging in Britain still tend to overlook the experiences of minorities from less visible groups, such as the British Chinese, which still require better theorisation. The overall high academic achievement of many British Chinese pupils is taken as a false sign of them being free from racial inequalities, hiding the commonplace experience of subtle forms of racism and racialisation. The thesis has made a range of empirical and theoretical contributions to our understanding of the British Chinese, as follows:

- It has revealed a range of social processes within various contexts affecting this group, tracing power relations and positionality in relation to participants' attempts to overcome these in their identity strategies and positioning work

- It has identified processes and structures within mainstream society that marginalise British Chinese by tracing discourses of racism and Orientalism and revealing both the crude and subtle ways in which this has operated and been experienced.

- This research explored the participants' (non)engagement with learning Chinese language. This has been illuminated through examining their language repertoire and practices at home, the pupils' views and experiences of learning (or not learning)

Chinese, the challenge of speaking 'good' Chinese and to fit into a monolingual ideal, and how these results affect their Chinese identity across different settings.

- This study investigated the different ways in which British Chinese young people define 'Chineseness' and 'Britishness' and how they express or relate to these identities in shifting context.

Through developing an understanding of how British Chinese young people are located within discursive frameworks, this research has revealed complex and fluid processes of identity construction and belonging among this group, it has revealed that these young people are able to navigate fluidly between ethnic categories and cultures. On the other hand, essentialised ideas on Britishness and Chineseness are used to pigeonhole British Chinese youths into ascribed positions both within the mainstream and British Chinese 'community'.

9.1 Challenges for schools and teacher education

Schools need to recognise that racism is still far from being a problem of the past for many pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, and this study highlights the various forms of racism and racialisation experienced by British Chinese pupils. Recent research carried out by anti-racism charity Show Racism the Red Card (2011) has revealed that racism in English schools continues to be a significant problem. The overwhelming focuses in educational policy since the 1980s on 'standards and achievement' and 'aspirations', driven by neo-liberal ideas, sidelines other educational needs such as inclusion and equalities.

The Equality Act 2010 (Home Office, 2010) replaced all previous equality legislation, such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act, and Sex Discrimination Act, to provide a single, consolidated source of discrimination law, covering all the types of discrimination

that are unlawful. Under this current and previous legislation, it is a school's duty to record and deal with racist incidents, amongst other incidents. There are issues which urgently need to be addressed in relation to British Chinese pupils, and in fact pupils from all backgrounds.

As suggested by Archer & Francis (2007), the education system as a whole needs to engage more meaningfully with the complexity of racialised identities and inequalities. 'Race' related issues, which include stereotyping, cultural exoticisation, racialisation and racism, that British Chinese pupils experience at school and in the wider British society should be recognised and taken seriously. The complexity and subtlety of the marginalisation British Chinese pupils generally face gives the impression that their experiences are simply 'not that bad' and, therefore, are something they should just ignore or 'get over', which is what some young people do, as seen in the examples cited by the participants in this research and previous studies. The perceived image of 'success' of British Chinese perhaps serves as both a blessing and a curse, masking the inequalities which they experience in education and the labour market (Pang, 1999; Benton & Gomez, 2008). To suggest that other groups suffer 'worse' prejudice and marginalisation is taking a position of a 'hierarchy of oppression' (Song, 2004), or to use a term that is popular in online discourse, 'oppression Olympics' (Peterson, 2008). The rejection of 'hierarchy of oppression' is not to essentialise diverse experiences across different groups and individuals but to state the impossibility of comparing the different dimensions of privileges and disadvantages which one group might have in relation to other groups. The assertion that British Chinese pupils are less affected by prejudice ignores the range of experiences of members of this group; not all British Chinese pupils are high achieving in school and not all have equal power to resist or fight

back against oppression, as illustrated in this research. Members of different groups often experience multiple, intersecting oppressions. Just because British Chinese pupils hold privilege in one area (e.g. academic achievements) does not preclude them from experiencing disadvantages in other areas. This notion of 'hierarchy of oppression' also denies or downplays the prejudice experienced by White and other 'invisible' minorities. Racism and other forms of oppression are not a zero sum game in which when British Chinese pupils experience more prejudice, other groups would become better off. The structural forces that privilege White, middle class, and generally males in the education system and other arenas in British society create different forms of inequalities for different groups and should be addressed to tackle these issues.

A newer comprehension and better vocabulary for understanding racism/racialisation and complex identities is urgently needed to effectively tackle racial and other forms of inequalities and to improve pupils' wellbeing at school. Teachers and pupils from all backgrounds might not mean to cause offense or ignore existing issues; they might simply lack the knowledge and awareness of racial inequalities, as seen in the Show Racism the Red Card (2011) research and in the narratives of participants in this study. It is unhelpful and damaging to label young people 'racist' when their actions and their prejudice would not be adequately explained to them. Another recent study (Hick et al, 2011) also finds that the majority of new teachers, who are predominantly middle class, White, monolingual and female, feel out of their depth in tackling race equality issues, due to their own background and lack of understanding about discrimination. Race equality should be embedded across the ITE curriculum to better prepare newly qualified teachers *(ibid.)*, and schools need to provide productive spaces to explore and engage with these issues effectively through their

curricula, activities, staff development and overall policies. An up-to-date and more

sophisticated framework in the education system to understand racism and other forms of

marginalisation and bullying of pupils from different backgrounds is urgently needed. The

simplistic, 'common sense', dichotomy of racist/not racist is not useful to understand the

complexity of inequalities and racism/racialisation should be viewed as practices and

processes in order to tackle oppression operating on the social structural level of

institutions.

Crude quantification and categorisation also fails to address the often interlocking systems

of oppression, such as 'race', class, and gender. Research on bullying highlights the fact that

achieving a consensus on 'types' of bullying is problematic (Einarsen et al., 2002; Reid, et al.,

2004; Hill et al, 2010). Many incidents of bullying do not fit easily into recognisable

categories and/or overlap between different possible categories. Additionally, the racist

incident reporting system is inadequate and ill-fitted to address subtle forms of racialisation

and racism. How does a pupil report repeated demands to write his/her classmates' names

in Chinese? Could a pupil report an incident of being stereotyped as being good at maths?

There are other complex issues of race equality and their intersectionality with social class,

gender, cultural and linguistic diversity, sexual orientation and disability that would be

difficult to effectively report under the current system. Replacing a surface understanding of

racism and other inequalities, along with replacing additive models of oppression with a

deeper understanding of complex and unequal power structures, could create possibilities

for new paradigms and more effective practices within schools.

The burden for the affected pupils to 'deal with' the marginalisation also needs to change. It

is necessary to challenge 'within child' notions (Hill et al, 2010) to consider how systems

within the school might need to change in response to racism, bullying and other inequalities. The mechanism to report largely places the burden on the affected pupil and unfortunately, as discussed in a previous chapter, there are varying levels of trust in schools' ability to deal with issues effectively. The unreported or unresolved issues leave pupils little choice but to deal with the problems on their own terms – among the participants in this research, the methods could include ignoring or playing down the problems through building their 'resilience' to such negativities, normalising the incidents/abuse, or (metaphorically or literally) fighting back. Although it is important to empower pupils to feel comfortable to confront the perpetrator/situation and raise the problems to appropriate authorities in school if applicable, being afflicted with both abuse and the personal responsibility to cope (often without support), whether it is 'to get over it' or fight back, puts the victim in a doubly disadvantaged position. Schools should pro-actively tackle the issues and support both the victims and the perpetrators. It is important to actively engage with both sides to understand the issues involved.

However, a worrying change in racist incident reporting was brought in by the coalition government. Schools have no longer have the duty to record and report the data, as the guidance allows schools to use their own judgment on how to handle these issues.

9.2 Integration and identities of minority ethnic people into the British society

This research shows that although British Chinese pupils generally hold high academic achievement and participate fully at school, the persistence of the processes of racism and Othering creates barriers for them to be accepted as authentically British and contributes to British Chinese people's partial and segmented inclusion as full members of British society.

The fact that British Chinese young people appear to be 'ticking all the right boxes' and still experience exclusion illustrates the impossibility for individuals from minority ethnic/cultural groups of being accepted as equal members of the society within a system that privileges a certain version of Britishness; integration becomes a futile one sided exercise. The experiences of racialisation and Othering for British Chinese pupils at school reflect the hidden inequalities experienced by the group collectively, and these issues impede British Chinese from participating fully, such as in politics, arts and popular media, and a wide range of occupations in the labour market, as equal members of the British society.

Creating the Conditions for Integration (DCLG, 2012) is a new strategy for integration and cohesion that was recently published. Although there are encouraging ideas such as promoting localism in this paper, the discussion of racism, one of the fundamental obstacles to integration, is conspicuously absent. The omission of this issue is worrying as traditional forms of intolerance continue to persist against descendents of post-war Commonwealth migrants, as illustrated in this research, while Islamophobia (Modood, 2010) and forms of intolerance against Roma, Gypsies and Travellers (Bhopal, 2011), and against recent Eastern European migrants, have increased in the last decade. The rise of far right extremism which has been observed in other European countries could also have an impact in the UK. The report (DCLG, 2012) suggests that 'there are too many people still left outside, or choosing to remain outside, mainstream society (p.6)'. This sentiment completely blames the victim and ignores the fact that remaining on the outside may be a forced option to some within British society, no matter how much they attempt to enter into mainstream society. As seen

in examples in this study, British Chinese young people who have done their part to 'integrate' might still not be accepted as full members of British society.

The fact that the British Chinese population often does not fit the general trends, for example, achievement gap across social class (Strand, 2011) and attendance at pre-92 universities (Conner et al, 2004; further discussion in the next section), perhaps illustrates their position as fitting in the peripheral but not fully. British Chinese pupils, as seen in this study, could be seen as very integrated into British society. Many of them have English/Western names, they are English monolingual or dominant. Although learning Chinese is desirable, some place the value of mainstream achievement and extracurricular activities as priorities. The neo-liberal discourse in the British school system which promotes meritocracy and credentialism works well with the strategy of British Chinese families who generally came from economic migrant backgrounds, and came into Britain for upwards social mobility (often for the younger generation). On one hand, pupils (involuntarily) 'benefit' academically from the 'hardworking' and 'clever' stereotypes as teachers hold high expectations of the group (along with their parents), given they do not quite fit the ideal pupil (naturally gifted, White, male) construction (Archer & Francis, 2007). However, they suffer subtly in social terms, as they are constantly being 'gently' reminded of their perceived difference at school.

Unlike earlier generations who faced regular crude racism working at their family takeaway counters (Parker, 1995; Song, 1999) and felt leaving Britain was a way to escape this predicament, those young people who no longer have to contribute to family labour might find dealing with the more subtle forms of Othering and racism at school more manageable and tolerable. Although there has been progress in race equality issues, the fact that the

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current generation of British Chinese young people have a stronger sense of rootedness in Britain should not make one be complacent about racial inequalities issues affecting the group. The same 'kung fu' stereotypes described by Parker's (1997) respondents in the 1990s still ring true today. Because the nature of racism or racialisation experienced by the group is generally more psychologically-based and subtle, as discussed in previous chapters, the impact could be more difficult to detect. The society's perception of their perceived difference, along with expectations from other Chinese, could gradually reinforce their sense of being 'different', as being described by many of the participants. Being different could be both a source of pride and pain, as articulated by the young people in this research. However, it is also this feeling that prompted contestation by some of the young people of their positioning and belonging in Britain. On the other hand, for those who have limited power to resist, they had to find ways to 'deal' with or 'go around' these issues, similar to the older generations who had to navigate the labour market structure to strategically avoid racism and competition but with heavy social and personal costs. Perhaps it is the strategy of 'going around' the problem and system that allows British Chinese to partially fit in and achieve segmented success but still remain 'hidden' and unrepresented in public life, given the fact that Chinese people have been settling in Britain for more than a century. The more prominent profile of the British Chinese 'community' may provide new opportunities for British Chinese to more assertively express their hybridised identities and be able to enter different sections of mainstream society.

9.3 Further research

This study did not aim to provide a comprehensive discussion of the identities and lived experiences of all British Chinese pupils. Instead, I attempted to illustrate the range of

narratives produced by a diverse group of young people. The evidence in this study shows a mixed picture of belonging and identity construction by these young people in British society, and the study aims to make a contribution to on-going debates on identities, racism, 'cultures', and multiculturalism in education and wider British society.

Although British Chinese pupils excel academically in schools overall and a high proportion also enter higher education, there is limited evidence on how their earlier success could transfer to high achievement in university level and ultimately into the labour market. In fact, evidence (Pang, 1999; Benton & Gomez, 2008) seems to show a continuation of discrimination in jobs and a bimodal concentration of certain highly skilled professions and ethnicised trades (e.g. catering). British Chinese young adults seem to follow routes that would minimise competitive and racial discrimination as a strategy for employment and social mobility. In Connor et al's (2004) study of minority ethnic students in higher education, 'Chinese' as a group were more likely than all (including White) ethnic groups to be studying at a post-92 than a pre-92 university. However, they seem to achieve proportionally fewer first class and upper second degrees than White students, and are more likely to record third class and unclassified degrees than Whites – a distinct change from patterns of high achievement in compulsory education.

Pang's (1999) study on occupations of young British Chinese found that those in the wider, non-catering labour market were vulnerable to many different types of discrimination, including being required to be better qualified, being paid less for the same job as a White worker, and being denied promotion to higher levels. Since Pang's research only managed to look at British Chinese at their early stages of their career in the 1990s, the full extent of racism and discrimination experienced later in their career is not clear. As more British

born/raised Chinese have entered the workforce, it would be useful to conduct an updated research on their experiences and issues of (potential) discrimination. And as discussed in Chapter 8, young people venturing into 'non-traditional' careers reported barriers. Further research into the educational and social experiences and aspirations of British Chinese young adults in higher education and employment would be important to understand the structural inequalities and barriers for full participation in British society for this supposedly 'successful' group.

With the recent wave of Chinese migrants coming from Mainland China and Southeast Asia and increasing numbers of mixed heritage children, the British Chinese population is becoming increasingly diverse (Parker & Song, 2007; Benton & Gomez, 2008). New identities and divisions are emerging in this 'community', and it would be interesting to explore the relationships among newer and older groups within the population and how they collectively respond to external elements that affect British Chinese people as a whole.

Furthermore, new ways of connecting with people of Chinese or East Asian descent and expressing new forms of British Chinese identities are being observed among the younger generations with the aid of new technologies. Although Parker and Song (2007) explored the usage of two high profile British Chinese online forums as ways of participation in civil society for young British Chinese, more research is needed to understand the use of new channels for the younger generations to forge ties with other British Chinese and sometimes other British East Asians. There are signs that newer forms of pan-East Asian/'Oriental' identities (Barber, 2011; Yeh, 2012), which are observed in the US and Australia, are emerging in the UK, and it will be useful to examine if these identities could produce more

valuable political power for these less visible ethnic groups that are often overlooked amidst

the general discussion of minority ethnic people in the UK.

While the evidence produced a mixed picture, we can observe the diverse range of ways in

which young people are actively beginning to carve out their own meanings of what it

means to be 'British Chinese'.

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Appendix 1: Ethics approval

Roehampton University London

ETHICS

APPLICATION FORM

Please read the Notes for Applicants before completing this form

The form should be completed electronically using black size 12 font.

PLEASE TICK THE RELEVANT BOX			
MEMBER OF STAFF	☐	RESEARCH STUDENT (MPhil, PhD, EdD, PsychD)	☑
EXTERNAL INVESTIGATOR	☐	STUDENT (Other)*	☐

*Please note that if you are on a taught course you do not need to complete this form unless your project is worth more than 50% of your total credits or you have been asked to do so by your tutor or School Ethics Committee

SECTION 1: PERSONAL DETAILS

Please complete the header with your name and School

Name (lead):	Ada Mau
Other investigators:	N/A
Correspondence address:	
Telephone no:	
Email:*(all correspondence will be sent by email unless otherwise*	a.mau@roehampton.ac.uk

requested)	
FOR STUDENTS ONLY:	
Programme of study:	MPhil/PhD
Mode of study (full-time/part-time)	Full-time
Director of Studies: (If you are on a taught course please give the name of your supervisor)	Prof Becky Francis
FOR EXTERNAL INVESTIGATORS ONLY (please see Section 4.5 of the Ethical Guidelines):	
Name of Academic Assessor:	

SECTION 2:   PROJECT DETAILS

Title of project:	Identities and Languages: British Chinese adolescents without Chinese heritage language learning
Proposed start date: *(Please note it can take several months to get approval. The Board will not approve a retrospective start date)*	09/2009
Duration:	8 months
Source of funds:	Roehampton bursary and self-funding

Purpose of the proposed investigation :

1) To investigate British Chinese pupils' experiences of growing up with no/limited Chinese language abilities, and the apparent impact on their constructions of learner and social identities;
2) To explore their perspectives on 'Chineseness' and Chinese and British 'culture' relating to the role of languages within the Chinese 'community' and greater British society;
3) To relate findings to broader issues of 'race', gender and class identities and achievement in complementary and mainstream schooling

Outline of project:

Include details of methodology and identify ethical issues.

This research seeks to explore the social and learner identities of British Chinese pupils with limited Chinese language abilities, an undocumented area which emerged as a key issue for future research in a recent ESRC-funded research on British Chinese pupils and complementary schooling (Francis et al, forthcoming). Chinese complementary schools are positioned as providing a pivotal role in the transmission of the Chinese language and culture, and through their provision of an additional source of learning (Francis & Archer, 2005). A number of recent studies (e.g. Creese et al, 2007) have explored the social and linguistic significance of complementary schools, both within their 'communities' and in wider society. One interesting finding that emerged from the Chinese complementary schooling study is the very high importance placed on speaking the Chinese language among the pupils at Chinese complementary schools. Besides instrumental and pragmatic purposes, for example to facilitate family communication and future employment opportunities, many of the pupils saw Chinese language and the ability to speak Chinese as integrally bound up with identity. Many felt that without being able to speak the language one is not considered authentically or 'properly' Chinese (Francis et al, forthcoming). I am therefore interested in the experience of British Chinese pupils that have had very limited or no Chinese schooling, and have limited knowledge of the Chinese language, and how they construct their identities within the British Chinese community and multicultural Britain. I am especially interested in how these young people relate to 'Chineseness', particularly aspects (e.g. Chinese language, customs, traditions, 'culture', national pride) that are often promoted in Chinese complementary schools.

Methods

The research builds on Francis and Archer's previous qualitative work (e.g. Francis & Archer, 2005; Francis et al, forthcoming) investigating British Chinese pupils' constructions of social identity and learning. Data will be collected via semi-structured individual interviews, and this approach has proved effective in previous work with minority ethnic pupils (e.g. Archer, 2003; Crozier, 2005; Francis & Archer, 2004; Francis et al, 2008) The semi-structured format of the interviews means that respondents are all asked the same core questions, aiding ease of numerical analysis (e.g. discussion of proportions providing particular responses),

and comparability of the different discourses drawn on by interviewees in response to particular questions (Francis, 1999). The semi-structured approach also enables the probing of responses (Robson, 2002). The interviews will enquire about pupils' experiences; the effect of having limited Chinese language abilities on their social and educational identities; their mainstream educational and post-educational goals; and

their perceptions of themselves as British Chinese. The research involves human subjects, and as such the project will require approval from the Roehampton Ethics Committee prior to commencement. As well as the issues of consent and confidentiality, I am attuned to the sensitive nature of the research, and the issues of around identity and power between the researcher and the researched: reflection on such issues will be an integral aspect of my methodology and analysis.

Sample

The British Chinese population is a hard to reach group; therefore, I will seek to interview 30-40 British Chinese pupils with limited Chinese language ability, age 11-16, in southeast England. The southeast region is chosen due to the sizeable British Chinese population (33% and 14% of the British Chinese population live in London and the rest of the Southeast respectively) and the manageability of the fieldwork. Participants from a number of locations, including urban, suburban and rural, will be interviewed to produce a more diverse and representative sample. I am primarily planning to interview young people with two parents of Chinese origin and will be attuned to the particular issues of cosmopolitan and hybrid identities. However, I will include young people with mixed Chinese heritage in my sample, as 'mixed race' is the fastest growing ethnic group in Britain (Song, 2009). Attempts will be made to reach more than 40 pupils if possible, bearing in mind the difficult to reach nature of the British Chinese population. The relatively scattered distribution of this group partly reflects the fact that a high proportion of post-war Chinese migrants set up catering businesses in places where there was little competition , and therefore, British Chinese are often a 'minority of minorities' within mainstream education. The sample of age 11-16 would be very useful in comparing the findings with those of the Chinese complementary schooling study (I was a part of this project; ESRC Grant no. RES000231513) with a similar sample age. This choice of this age group is also likely to aid access, since pupils will be in compulsory education.

A number of ethical issues are raised by this methodology:

(a) The applicant recognises the potential power relations and effects involved between the position as a researcher and British Chinese young people (and their parents in obtaining consent), and will therefore be careful to be sensitive to, and to analyse these issues throughout the research process. The voluntary nature of participation will be explicitly explained to everyone involved. Reflections on the power relations will be noted in the research diary and discussed with the supervisors and in the analysis if applicable.

(b) Issues of confidentiality and anonymity of participants and secure storage of data and personal details: Interviews will be audio-recorded, subject to participants' approval. Interview summaries will be fully transcribed. Pseudonyms will be used in any publications to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Data storage procedure will follow data protection act guidelines.

(c) The personal safety of the researcher is a consideration in one-to-one interviews with people not already known to her. Care will need to be taken in agreeing locations if outside schools. The researcher will keep all meeting arrangements on record; she will also carry a mobile phone with her and will check in with her supervisor and family members regularly during the data collection process.

SECTION 3: USE OF PARTICIPANTS

- You should download the Participant Consent Form Template and amend it if necessary
- You should also attach any other information to be given to participants
- You should consider carefully what information you provide to participants, e.g. scope of study, number of participants, duration of study, risks/benefits of the project
- If images or anything else which might allow the identification of participants is to be publicly accessible (e.g. on the web), further written consent must be secured

Give details of the method of recruitment, and potential benefits to participants if any:

Potential participants will be reached through contacting secondary schools in southeast England and through online media for the British Chinese population (e.g. Dim Sum and British Born Chinese websites). Additionally, I also have established helpful contacts within a number of Chinese organisations during the Chinese complementary schooling study who may aid me in accessing participants. Each potential participant and his/her parents will be sent a letter (through his/her school or my contacts) explaining the intention of the study and requesting access.

The knowledge gained from their experiences will help to add knowledge on the British Chinese population. Individual participants will not receive any payments for their participation.

Will you be using participants who are aged under 18?

YES   NO

If you have answered Yes please highlight the particular issues raised by working with these participants and how these issues have been addressed.

I have consulted the ethical guidelines for research from British Educational Research Association and Barnardo's and will continue to refer to their guidelines throughout the research process. The informed consent of young people will be actively and explicitly sought, and consents from their parents/guardians will also be obtained. If an interview will take place at school, head teacher's permission will be obtained as well. Information about the proposed research and the optional nature of participation will be provided in both oral and written form and presented in accessible and age-appropriate language. Attention will be paid to minimising possible coercion from parents, teachers and other adults, and to minimising the influence of peer pressure; informed consent should be seen as an ongoing process throughout an interview. I am aware that the practice of actively involving research participants (i.e. to be given the power to raise questions, instead of being solely a respondent) could help to shift the balance of power away from a position of the researchers being entirely in control. As Alderson (2005) points out, in the case of children, they may enjoy the process more and the results should be more meaningful. Participants will be encouraged to question the researcher about any aspects of the research if they choose. The option to withdraw from the research at any stage will be clearly communicated.

Please also see attached information sheet for pupils and parents. Information sheets will be provided to potential participants and their parents; age appropriate language has been used to explain the project, participations and implications to the young people. Participants will sign consent forms before interviewing begins; and if the participants are under the age of 16, consent from the parents/guardians will be obtained (via signing a consent).

SECTION 4: HEALTH AND SAFETY

- **You must download and complete the Risk Assessment Form and attach this to your application.**
- You should be able to demonstrate that appropriate mechanisms are in place for the research to be carried out safely
- If necessary the University's Health, Safety & Environment Manager should be consulted before the application is submitted

Will any of your project take place outside the UK?

YES   NO

If you have answered yes please list the countries below and refer to Section 4.2 of the Ethical Guidelines:

Is this a clinical trial or a project which may involve abnormal risk to participants?

~~YES~~   NO

If you have answered Yes please refer to Sections 3.5 and 4.2 of the Ethical Guidelines

SECTION 5: PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

How will you disseminate your findings? (e.g. publication)

PhD thesis and peer reviewed journals

How will you ensure the anonymity of your participants?
(If your participants do not wish to remain anonymous you must obtain their written consent.)

Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. I shall also ensure that other details/descriptors that might jeopardise anonymity are not revealed.

SECTION 6: STORAGE OF DATA

Section 2.7 of *Roehampton University Code of Good Research Practice* states the following 'research data must normally be retained intact for a period of at least six years from the date of any publication which is based upon it. Researchers should be aware that specific professional bodies and research councils may require a longer period of data retention.'

Describe how and where the following data will be stored and how they will be kept secure:
Raw and processed data   Access to data held on computer, external data storage devices and manual files must not be allowed to any other person. Researcher is the sole user of the laptop computer used for her PhD studies, and folders containing data will be password protected; said computer is not shared with anyone else and only be used at the researcher's residence so it is unlikely to be lost or accessed by others. Manual files will be kept in a locked cabinet in the office of the Director of Studies or locked drawer at home.
Documents containing personal details of any participants   Access to data held on computer(s), external data storage devices and manual files must not be allowed to any other person. Manual files will be kept in a locked cabinet in the office of the Director of Studies or locked drawer at home.

SECTION 7: EXTERNAL GUIDELINES AND APPROVAL
Are there any relevant subject-specific ethical guidelines (e.g. from a professional society)?   If so how will these inform your research process?   BERA (2004) ethical guidelines have been perused in constructing the proposal, and will be applied to the methods concerning negotiation of access to schools and subjects, to data processing, reporting and storage, and to the intended conduct during fieldwork and data analysis.
Has/will the project be submitted for approval to the ethical committee of any other organisation, e.g. NHS ethics approval?   (Please see Section 4.3, Ethical Guidelines)   What is the outcome of this?   N/A

Appendix 2: Consent Forms & Information Sheets

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM PRO FORMA

Title of Research Project: Education, Identities and Languages: British Chinese adolescents with limited Chinese knowledge

Brief Description of Research Project:

This research seeks to explore the social and learner identities of British Chinese pupils with limited Chinese language abilities. I am therefore interested in the experience of British Chinese pupils that have had limited or no Chinese schooling, and have limited knowledge of the Chinese language, and how they construct their identities within the British Chinese community and multicultural Britain. I am especially interested in how these young people relate to British and Chinese cultures. Please refer to the Information Sheet for further details on the project.

Investigator Contact Details:

Ada Mau

School of Education, Roehampton University, Roehampton Lane, London SW15 5PJ

a.mau@roehampton.ac.uk

Consent Statement:

I agree to take part in this research, and am aware that I am free to withdraw at any point. I understand that the information I provide will be treated in confidence by the investigator and that my identity will be protected in the publication of any findings.

Name …………………………………..

Signature ………………………………

Date ……………………………………

Please note: if you have a concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator. However if you would like to contact an independent party please contact the Dean of School (or if the researcher is a student you can also contact the Director of Studies.)

Director of Studies Contact Details:
Prof Gill Crozier
School of Education
Roehampton University
Email: g.crozier@roehampton.ac.uk
Telephone: 020 8392 3321

Dean of School Contact Details:
Dr Jeanne Keay
School of Education
Roehampton University
Email: j.keay@roehampton.ac.uk
Telephone: 020 8392 3571

PARENT'S CONSENT FORM PRO FORMA

Title of Research Project: Education, Identities and Languages: British Chinese adolescents with limited Chinese knowledge

Brief Description of Research Project:

This research seeks to explore the social and learner identities of British Chinese pupils with limited Chinese language abilities. I am therefore interested in the experience of British Chinese pupils that have had limited or no Chinese schooling, and have limited knowledge of the Chinese language, and how they construct their identities within the British Chinese community and multicultural Britain. I am especially interested in how these young people relate to British and Chinese cultures. Please refer to the Information Sheet for further details on the project.

Investigator Contact Details:

Ada Mau
School of Education, Roehampton University, Roehampton Lane, London SW15 5PJ
a.mau@roehampton.ac.uk

Consent Statement:

I agree to my child, _____, taking part in this research, and am aware that he/she is free to withdraw at any point. I understand that the information he/she provides will be treated in confidence by the investigator and that his/her identity will be protected in the publication of any findings.

Name ………………………………….

Signature ………………………………

Date ……………………………………

Please note: if you have a concern about any aspect of your child's participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator. However if you would like to contact an independent party please contact the Dean of School (or if the researcher is a student you can also contact the Director of Studies.)

Director of Studies Contact Details:	**Dean of School Contact Details:**
Prof Gill Crozier	Dr Jeanne Keay
School of Education	School of Education
Roehampton University	Roehampton University
Email: g.crozier@roehampton.ac.uk	Email: j.keay@roehampton.ac.uk
Telephone: 020 8392 3321	Telephone: 020 8392 3571

Information sheet for pupils

4th January, 2010

British Chinese Pupils' Identities, Education and Language Research Project

Hello!

I want to tell you about the research project I will be carrying out about young people with Chinese heritage. I would like you to help me in this study by telling me your experience of going to school and growing up in the UK. Please read this information sheet and let me know if you have any questions!

Who am I?

I am a PhD student from Roehampton University in London. I am working on my PhD project on British Chinese pupils' identities and I want to find out more about young people's experiences of growing up in the UK.

Why am I doing this study?

In a previous study that I worked on, I spoke to many young people that attended Chinese schools/classes on weekends to learn Chinese for a number of years. I now want to speak to other young people with Chinese heritage who do not attend these classes/ have attended these classes for a shorter period and mainly/only use English at home. I am interested to find out what you think about British and Chinese cultures, and your experience of going to school and growing up in the UK.

Do you have to take part?

It's your choice! If you decide to help me with my study you are still free to stop taking part at any time and you won't have to give a reason. This study is not connected to your school/organisation and your decision will not affect your school work or marks in any way.

What will happen if you take part?

You will be one of a number of young people (age 11-18) who will be interviewed in England.

During the interviews, I will be asking you about what you think about your experience in school and family life. You can ask me questions and don't have to answer any questions you don't want to reply to. This will not take more than 30 minutes, and I will be recording our conversations so that I can remember what you said.

These are the sort of questions I will be asking you:

- What do you like the most about school?
- How would you describe the pupil population at your school? Are there any other British Chinese pupils?
- What language(s) do your family members speak?
- Do you feel English, British, Chinese, or a mixture of all three? Is this important to you?
- What do you like to do in your spare time?

How will the interviews be used?

The interviews will help me to get a better understanding of the experiences of young people with Chinese heritage and limited Chinese language knowledge. Our conversations during the study will be kept strictly private. All information gathered will be kept safely, and no one else will have access to the information collected. When I write about what you have told me, I will change all the names, so no one can be identified.

What to do now?

I would really like your help! If you would like to participate, please pass on this information sheet and other forms I have given you to your parent or carer to read. If you and your parent/carer are happy about you taking part, please sign the Participant's Consent Form attached and ask your parent/carer to sign the Parent's Consent form as well if you are under the age of 16.

Thank you for your help! If you or your family have any questions or would like to find out more about this project, please phone Ada Mau at 07XXXXXXXXX, or email a.mau@roehampton.ac.uk.

Thank you!

Ada Mau (School of Education, Roehampton University)

Information sheet for parent

4th January, 2010

Dear Parent/Guardian

British-Chinese Pupils' Identities, Education and Language Research Project

I am a PhD student from Roehampton University in London and would like to invite your child to participate in a research project. On a previous research that I worked on, I spoke to British Chinese many pupils that attended weekend Chinese schools for a number of years. In this project, I aim to speak to pupils that speak limited/no Chinese and to explore pupils' views on education and British and Chinese cultures.

I would like to interview a number of 11-18 year-old pupils in England. I hope you will allow your child to take part. Each child will be asked some questions about their experience of going to school and growing up in the UK. This will not take more than half an hour. Interviews will be tape-recorded, but your child will not be named – everything they say will be treated confidentially. Please find more information about the project on the information sheet provided to your child. If you would like to discuss this further with me, please get in touch.

Your child's participation is entirely voluntary. He/She is free to stop participating at any time without giving a reason. This study is not connected to your child's school and it will not affect your child's schoolwork or marks in any way.

All of the information that I collect during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. When I write about what I was told in interviews, I will change all of the names, so no one can be identified. All information will be kept securely in accordance with university regulations and the Data Protection Act, and only I will have access to the information collected.

I do hope that your child will be able to take part in this project. If you are happy about this, please have your child sign the Participant's Consent Form and if your child is under the age of 16, please sign the Parent's Consent. (A stamped addressed envelope will be included) Thank you for your help! If you have any questions, please phone Ada Mau at 07XXXXXXXXX, or email a.mau@roehampton.ac.uk.

With best wishes,

Ada Mau (School of Education, Roehampton University)

Appendix 3: Interview Schedule

1. Can you tell me your name and how old you are?

2. Could you tell me where you were born?

3. Could you tell me where your parents were born?
(If parents born outside of the UK: Where your grandparents were from? When they moved to the UK)

4. What languages do your parents speak? Do they speak Chinese (any dialect)?

5. If your parents can speak Chinese, do they speak Chinese to you at home?
(Prompt if mentioning other family members: What languages do your grandparents speak?)

6. Do you understand or speak any Chinese?

School & learner identity
7. What school do you go to? (name/area/type of school – public, comprehensive, etc.)

8. Could you describe to me what kind of pupils are at your school? Are there any other pupils who are also Chinese at your school? (probe: ethnic backgrounds and class)

9. What are your favourite subjects? Why?

10. What are your least favourite subjects? Why?

11. What streams/sets/bands are you in?
(Prompt: What did you get for your SATs/GCSEs/A-Levels?)

12. Do your parents help you with your schoolwork?

13. Do you see yourself as a good pupil at school? (why/why not?)

14. Do your parents see you as a good pupil at school? What do they think?

15. Do you belong to any clubs/teams/groups at school?

16. How happy are you at school?
(probe: How embedded do they feel in the school? To what extent to they feel they belong/fit in? What are the best and worst aspects of your school?)

17. Are there issues with racism at your school? (probe: if you have experienced any)

18. What are your friends like at school?
    (probe: ethnicity, background, interests, etc. Are they are similar to you in academic abilities, ethnicities, class?)

19. Do you have other people you regularly see or talk to, say friends or relatives, outside school?
    (prompt: age, ethnicities, family background, interest, what you do with them, etc.)

20. What do you like to do in your spare time? What are you interests/hobbies/out of school activities?

Language, culture & identity

21. Some British Chinese go to weekend classes to learn Chinese, have you ever attended this type of Chinese school?
    21a. If yes – how long?
    21b. Why did you stop attending?

22. What do you think of learning the Chinese language? (Possible prompts: Are you interested? Would it be useful to you to learn Chinese?)

23. What do your parents think about learning Chinese?

24. Do you feel Chinese?
    24a. If yes or some: In what ways do you feel Chinese? Prompts: Do you celebrate Chinese holidays? Do you know much about the popular culture in HK/Asia? What makes someone Chinese?
    24b. If no or not sure: Can you explain? Prompts: Do you celebrate any Chinese holidays? What would make someone Chinese then?

25. Have you visited Hong Kong/China/where parents or grandparents were from? If not, would you like to visit?

26. Do you feel British or English? In what ways?

27. Some people describe themselves as British; others would say English, British Chinese, British Born Chinese, etc. How would you describe yourself?

28. How do you feel about being someone growing up in Britain with Chinese heritage? (normal, special, easy, etc.?)

29. Have you ever encountered situations that people expect you to know Chinese (e.g. speaking Chinese to you)? If yes, what do you think of these situations?

30. Just one final question – could you tell me what jobs do your parents do?

Appendix 4: Participants demographics

*Pseudonyms have been assigned to participants. Names were chosen to reflect the origins of their real names (e.g. using appropriate spelling and transliteration of surnames).

Name	Gender	Age	Born	Raised	Father	Mother	Father's Occupations	Mother's Occupations	Father's languages	Mother's languages	Chinese knowledge
Josephine Leung	F	14	SW England	SW England	born in HK	born in HK	restaurant owner, also work there	restaurant owner, also work there	English, Cantonese, some Mandarin	English, Cantonese, some Mandarin	understand Cantonese, can speak a little bit like greetings
Christine Leung	F	12	SW England	SW England	born in HK	born in HK	restaurant owner, also work there	restaurant owner, also work there	English, Cantonese, some Mandarin	English, Cantonese, some Mandarin	can understand Cantonese, can only say a few things
Jackie Lam	F	17	E of England	E of England/Greater London	born in HK	born in Malaysia	head chef in Chinese takeaway	public sector officer	English not as good, Cantonese, Hakka	English, Cantonese, Hakka, Mandarin, some Malay and Indonesian	sometimes accent not that good, sometimes don't know hard words, can understand, but not very fluently in general
Patrick Fung	M	17	Greater London	lived in HK for 10 years, moved back 11, living Greater London	born in HK	born in HK	GP	was a nurse, now part-time interpreter	English, Cantonese	English, Cantonese, some Mandarin	mainly English background, can understand ok
Christina Pari	F	16	London	London	Greek Cypriot, from Cyprus	born in Malaysia	Export agent	used to be hairdresser, now a student	Cypriot Greek, English	English though not great, Cantonese, Mandarin, Malay, Hokkien	can have basic conversations; understand a tiny of Mandarin and Hokkien
Nicky Hartley	F	16	Kuala Lumpar	SE England	White English	Malaysia Chinese	retired now, was an engineer	works in public services	English	English, Hokkien, Mandarin, Cantonese	Very little Hokkien; don't understand any Cantonese or Mandarin
Jameela Mazari	F	11	Melbourne Australia	Australia and Malaysia, now in SE England	Pakistan	Brunei, parents also from Brunei	works for an international corporation	doesn't work	English, Malay, Urdu, learnt to speak Chinese	English, Cantonese, Malay	can understand some Mandarin
Matilda Watson-Cox	F	12	West Midlands	West Midlands	White English	Malaysia Chinese	unemployed	chartered accountant	English, French, German	English, Cantonese, Mandarin	can understand a few words in Cantonese, a few words in Mandarin
Ian Woodward	M	17	SE England	SE England	White British	born in HK, adopted by an White English parents & grew up in England	aeronautical engineer	was in arm forces, now works in the public sector	English, French	English	a few phrases pick up from friends
Callum Nicol	M	13	SE England	SE England	White English	born in HK, came when she was 8	unemployed	quality assurance engineer	English	English, a little bit of Cantonese, 'level of an 8 year old', can do basic mixed with English	very very little
Emma Wong	F	17	London	Greater London	born in HK	born in Malaysia	Senior Vice President of a bank	Part time pharmacists	English, Cantonese	English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Malay, Hokkien	can understand basic Cantonese, but speaking very little

Name	Sex	Age									
Arthur Chan	M	12	E of England	E of England	born in HK	born in China	driver	community/youth worker	English, Cantonese	English, Cantonese, Madnarin	basic stuff, can understand a conversation with people
Vivien Chan	F	13	E of England	E of England	born in HK	born in HK	driver	community/youth worker	English, Cantonese	English, Cantonese, some Madnarin	understand more than she can speak, can understand her mum on the phone; can't really speak it, but would be able to if she wanted to, but doesn't like speaking it
Tan Kit Mun	F	15	Kuala Lumpar	lived there for 5 years, been living in E of England	Malaysian Chinese	Malaysia Chinese	mechanic	nurse	English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Malay	English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Malay, some Hakka	50%, not everything, but enough to make a conversation; cannot read or write
Andrew Yip	M	15	E of England	moved to HK for 2 years, been living in E of England	born in HK, moved to when J was 2	born/raised in UK	manager in Chinese restaurant	waitress in a different Chinese restaurant	English, Cantonese	English, Cantonese	can speak it quite good, but can't really read or write it,
Matthew Wong	M	15	USA	Greater London	born in HK	born in Malaysia	Senior Vice President of a bank	Part time pharmacists	English, Cantonese	English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Malay, Hokkien	know a bit of Cantonese and Mandarin, can't hold a conversation
Sun Chow	M	16	Middlesex	SE England	born in HK	born in HK	was in IT, now works at the church	nurse	average English, Cantonese	average English, Cantonese	can understand decent amount, find it harder to speak it
Dac Kien Pham	M	17	London	SE London	Vietnamese Chinese	Vietnamese Chinese	NA	dinner lady, waitress at night	don't know	Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, a little bit English	below average, can understand ok, comfortable speaking Cantonese but not very fluent
Siuking Man	M	17	SE England	SE England	born in HK	born in HK	takeaway owner & worker	takeaway owner & worker	Cantonese, Hakka, semi-fluent English	Cantonese, Hakka, semi-fluent English	can understand Hakka basics, Cantonese ok; can speak quite a lot but not formal speech, Hakka not as good, can read Chinese
Daniel So	M	17	SE England	SE England	born in HK	born in HK	takeaway owner & worker	Housewife	OK English, Cantonese, some Madnarin, a bit of Hakka	OK English, Cantonese, some Madnarin, a bit of Hakka	no problem understanding, not confident in speaking, try to avoid it
Catherine Loh	F	16	SE England	SE England	born in Malaysia, came to the UK at 18	born in HK, came to the UKat 12	takeaway owner & worker	takeaway owner & worker	English, Cantonese, Malay, Mandarin	English, Cantonese, some Madnarin	can understand and speak Cantonese fluently, can read and write ok
Jessica Lau	F	16	SW England	SW England	born in HK, from NT villages	born in HK, from a different village in NT	takeaway owner & worker	takeaway owner & worker	Cantonese, Hakka, semi-fluent English	Cantonese, Hakka, semi-fluent English	can speak quite fluently, but has gone down since secondary school, now mostly speaking English in the house
Christy Dinh	F	16	SW England	SW England	Vietnamese Chinese	Vietnamese Chinese	takeaway owner & worker	takeaway owner & worker	Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, don't know much English	Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, don't know much English	quite fluent in Chinese
Amy Yau	F	15	Greater London	Greater London	born in UK, HK heritage	born in HK, moved to the UK at 10	manager in Chinese restaurant	housewife	English, Hakka, knows Cantonese but not that fluent	English, Cantonese, Hakka	can understand and speak some Cantonese
Alice Lam	F	14	London	London	Vietnamese Chinese	Vietnamese Chinese	chef at Chinese restaurant	housewife	Cantonese, not much English	Cantonese, not much English	doesn't speak very good Chinese but can speak some, can understand most of it
Sarah Chan	F	18	Hong Kong	moved to UK when 5, been living in SE England	born in HK	born in HK	retired, was in public service in HK	teacher in HK, but housewife after moved to UK	OK English, Cantonese, Mandarin	OK English, Cantonese, Mandarin	can understand and speak Cantonese fluently, cannot read or write

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Name	Sex	Age	Birthplace	Settled	Father origin	Mother origin	Father occupation	Mother occupation	Parents' languages	Pupil's languages	Chinese ability
Michelle Chou	F	15	SW England	moved to HK as a baby, moved back to the UK at 9, settled in SE England	from eastern China	born/raised in UK	works in HK in granddad's company	housewife	Cantonese, Mandarin, doesn't speak English	English, Cantonese	can understand (dad) well enough to communicate, can speak ok Cantonese, but was told her has an English accent and get laughed at
Winnie Kwong	F	13	London	London	born in Vietnam	born in China	chef at Chinese restaurant	was working at hair salon	English not as good, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese	English not good, Cantonese, Mandarin	not understand Cantonese very much, alright speaking,
Neve Barlow	F	15	Greater London	Greater London	English, born in London	born in London, of HK and Chinese Mauritian heritage	Public services	works for international organisation	English	can speak almost fluent French, speaks to her parents in English, maybe can understand Cantonese a bit, grandparents speak Cantonese	understand very little, cannot speak at all
Louise Chiang	F	17	SE England	SE England	from Malaysia, came here as a student	from Singapore, moved here when 2, grew up in London		pharmacist	English, Foochew (Fuzhou dialect), Malay, a bit of Cantonese	English, a bit of Hokkien	understand and say a few bits, know food names in Chinese
Daniel Woodward	M	15	UK	SE England	Kent, UK	born in HK, adopted by an White English parents & grew up in England	aeronautical engineer	was in arm force, now works in public sector	English	English	None
Federico De Luca	M	15	SE England	SE England	Italy	Malaysia	supervisor in public sector	accountant	Italian and English	Hokkien, Mandarin, Cantonese, English, some Italian	only know very few words
Livia De Luca	F	13	SE England	SE England	Italy	Malaysia	supervisor in public sector	accountant	Italian and English, some Chinese and some other languages	Cantonese, Mandarin, village dialect (can't remember name), English	can comprehend some Chinese words, can only say a few words
Grace Tang	F	14	SE England	SE England	East China	East China	university lecturer	software engineer	Mandarin, English and Anhui dialect	Mandarin, English and Anhui dialect	can understand most and can speak ok
Charlotte Han	F	14	England	SE England	Chinese Vietnamese	China	Chef at Chinese takeaway (not owner)	housewife	Cantonese, a bit of English, maybe a bit of Vietnamese	Cantonese, not much English	can understand and speak quite a lot, quite fluent
Shirley Ng	F	13	SE England	SE England	born in England	southern China	works at granddad's takeaway	housewife	English, Cantonese and Hakka	Taishanese, Cantonese, Mandarin, doesn't speak English	can understand & speak 90% Cantonese, can understand & speak Hakka, sometimes can understand Taishan, can speak & understand some Mandarin
Kinming Fan	M	15	SE England	SE England	Southern China	born in Northern Ireland, lived in HK, moved back in her teens	work at family shop/takeaway	work at family shop/takeaway	English, Cantonese, Mandarin	English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Hakka	can understand & speak a lot; can understand Hakka a bit
Fiona Yeung	F	14	SW England	SW England	Hong Kong, moved to the UK in early teens	Hong Kong, came to the UK as young adult	doctor	beautician	English, Cantonese, Mandarin, knows a bit of French	English, Cantonese, Mandarin, knows a bit of this village dialect but don't know what that is	spoken Chinese not very good, have accent