



# The Effort of Parent-Child Reading Activity in Chinese Traditional Family Education: A Practical Study in a Primary School of Shenzhen

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## ABSTRACT

*China is a country with traditional family education. Parents greatly influence their children, especially under the one-child policy and urbanization background. Chinese teaching requires context and training. Reading and communication are important ways to improve Chinese. Parent-child reading can better help students in grades 1-3 to read. This article aims to compare students' performance and interview results of parents in an elementary school in the immigrant city, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China, to explore the supporting role of parents in this family education. Previously, similar language research work has examined the students' language development in Shenzhen Pontus' families for further research. This study used mixed methods to analyze the parent-child reading situation in a school in Shenzhen. This article also compared the students' Chinese performance to judge the impact of parent-child reading on students. The results show that the influence of parent-child reading in family education has an obvious positive effect. The specific auxiliary role is reflected in children's reading ability, Mandarin level, and literary knowledge. Therefore, this study suggests that teachers and parents promote parent-child reading work. Parent-child reading is not only conducive to the psychological growth of students but also conducive to the cultivation of students' language ability, especially for the cultivation of students' Mandarin and literary ability.*

## INTRODUCTION

Chinese is the traditional language of the Chinese. (Ministry of Education, MoE, 2021) China is a country taught by traditional families. Chinese traditional family style and family education constitute an important part of Chinese traditional culture. Parents greatly influence their children, especially under the one-child policy and urbanization (An Yunfeng, 2005). The "Family Education Promotion Law" was launched in July 2021. The Chinese government pays more attention to family education. At present, family education in many big cities is lacking. Based on the author's personal experience and numerous public news reports, we can find that parents in big cities are often busy with work, and their children lack the company of their parents. Children accompanied by family members and who read together tend to show better language performance. However, few studies on the effect and significance of parent-child companion reading on students' language performance.

In the process of Chinese children's language learning, the role of parents is the most direct, more direct than the teacher. Chinese teaching requires context and training. Reading and communication are important ways to improve Chinese

The function of recitation is very direct, and it can have a great effect on children's language learning. Therefore, research on parent-child co-reading is of great significance: The first is to be able to clarify the relationship between children's language ability, family education, and parent-child co-reading; The second is to understand children's interest in language learning and family overreading's interest in children's language The characteristics of parent-child reading and the impact of parent-child reading on children's language interest; The third is to cultivate children's interest in language learning through parent-child reading, and The fourth is to find the factors might influence student's language skill in family education in China.

As a primary school Chinese teacher in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, the first author of this article has contacted many 1-3-year-old students and their parents at work and found that the degree of care they treat their children is closely related to their language performance. Therefore, to understand how parents play a supporting role in students' language learning, the author of this article decided to understand this reason through daily work, references, and interviews.

At present, the biggest gap between family education and parent-child reading is that parents do not have enough time to accompany their children. Therefore, we study the specific difference between parental company and unaccompanied, and we will also try to study possible ways to cross the gap.

### ***Literature review***

A language is a tool for human communication. It can express human emotions and convey human culture. Li Zhifeng (2013) believes that language learning is one of the five major areas of learning for pre-school children, and it is of great significance to children's lifelong development. Pre-school children's language learning will be affected by various environmental factors.

According to the analysis of the theory of human development ecology, the foundation of pre-school children's language learning in the environment of children themselves, homes, and schools; the relationship between family, school, and screen books is formed. The central system is the key to children's language learning. The parents' working environment, family social circle, community service, local social welfare policies, and other external systems protect children's language learning. Social culture, system, and other macro systems are the background of pre-school children's language learning; individual Diachronic systems such as the level of physical and mental maturity and the external environment have an important impact on the language learning of pre-school children (Qi Yawen, 2021).

This study focuses on Chinese primary school students in grades 1-3 who are 6-8 years old. Students who are mainly authors are mainly at this age. The basic characteristic of children's thinking development at this stage is that they can carry out basic thinking, perform complex calculations (Li Yu, 2006), communicate with others independently, and express their thoughts and wishes. Their language skills improved rapidly in this event. This period is an important stage of cultivating children to read. The author also realizes the importance of active reading in his daily work for children of this age. Children are highly motivated to read and allow adults to take them to literacy. At this stage, children's language expression develops very fast.

Shenzhen is located in Guangdong Province, China. This city is a city of immigrants, and the main language is Mandarin. Nuclear families dominate the family in Shenzhen. The influence of parents or family on the children is the main role, and the influence of family education on the children is the main time. There is less peer influence, so I choose Shenzhen as an auxiliary role for parents in exploring children's language learning. Shenzhen has many local dialect families, so Mandarin is not standardized. A study in Nanshan District, Shenzhen (Tang Yong, 2021) found that 726 children aged 1.5 to 2 years were selected for a survey of infant communication and symbolic behavior development scales.

In conclusion, the dialect environment in the family has a relatively large impact on children's language development. Providing a Mandarin family language environment during the growth of younger children is more conducive to children's language development and growth and reduces the problems of children's language development. Chinese teaching in elementary schools in China is based on Putonghua (Ye Shuxian, 2005), using a partially edited version of elementary school Chinese

textbooks. Modern children's language learning is inseparable from Putonghua (Chai Xiaofang, 2021). Therefore, if you want children to learn Chinese well, it is very effective to have their parents lead their children to learn.

A family is an important place for parent-child interaction, and parent-child reading together is used by the parent's auxiliary role studied in this article. The main reason is that parent-child reading a book together can prolong children's language learning patience and endurance. Children aged 5-8 are at the stage where they learn the language quickly. Parent-child reading activity is an important means to increase children's interest in reading. It is the law that the author masters in daily work.

### ***Contrasts between parents' auxiliary and non- auxiliary Hypothesis***

This research is a mixed-method; the quantitative research measures students' performance, and the qualitative method finds the reason. However, based on the role of parent-child reading interaction in the literature, this article makes the following simple guesses:

1. Through reading together, children can better bring into the text scene described in the book, and the efficiency of word recognition and the ability to read empathy will be improved.
2. Since parent-child reading mostly occurs between parents and children, the environment between parents and children is mostly in Mandarin, which is conducive to children's separation from the dialect environment and learning Mandarin
3. Parents can explain some literary meanings for their children during the reading process, which is convenient for them to read further.

### **METHODS**

This article used a mixed method to find out the results, the quantitative survey is for the student's performance, and the interview to the parents and students is for the detail and results.

The first author, Miss. Kang Yaqiong works in a public elementary school in Bao'an District, Shenzhen. Through the comparison of student performance, this article uses interviews and focuses on the following issues:

1. The difference in literacy and reading between families with parental assistance and families without parental assistance
2. The difference in the standard of Mandarin pronunciation between families with parental assistance and families without parental assistance
3. The difference in academic level between families with parental assistance and families without parental assistance, mainly for literary reading questions in the third grade of primary Chinese.

The first two questions mainly rely on the author to compare the students' performance in the standardized Chinese test and the daily language use during Chinese teaching in the first and second grades.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The author faced 50 students, of which their parents brought up 18, 27 were brought up by their elders, and nanny brought up 5. The author found the differences in students' language performance in different groups by comparing the students' results. The author also learned about students reading in person at home through interviews with students' parents. The results showed that children led by their parents and able to read with their parents had an average language score of 2.5 points higher than other students (percentile scale), while children raised by elders performed worse in Mandarin pronunciation and language recognition. Children raised by nannies perform similarly to children raised by elders, but the average score in Chinese is 0.8 points lower than the latter.

After the first semester, I encouraged students to do family parent-child reading activities, and their grades have changed to a certain extent.

**Table 1. Test Result of Total students**  
(percentile scale)

<b>Type</b>	<b>Rise by Parents</b>	<b>Rise by Grandparents</b>	<b>Rise by Nanny</b>
Average score in Chinese Semester 1	85	82.5	79.5

Type	Rise by Parents	Rise by Grandparents	Rise by Nanny
Average score in Chinese Semester 2	86.8	84.5	82.8
The average score in Chinese Semester 3	90.1	86.7	84.9

Based from (optional on the text)

We can see that their performance has improved. In order to better understand the student's grades and performance and understand the reasons for their changes, I conducted interviews with many students, here are students A1, A2, and A3. In order to protect personal privacy, I use ABCD for their results. Grandparents brought up A1. Parents brought up A2. Grandparents mainly bring up A3, but its characteristics are more like being raised by a nanny. The following is a part of the interview with students A1, A2, A3:

**Q1: Do you usually read with your family?**

A1: *Not a lot, mainly with parents.*

A2: *Many, with parents and grandparents.*

A3: *My parents are too busy to read with me. Occasionally, my grandparents accompany me to read.*

**Q2: Do you think studying with your family will affect you much?**

A1: *I cannot tell, but it feels good to have family members. After all, they can help me recognize Chinese characters that I do not know.*

A2: *I still like it. Although I prefer outdoor sports, reading with my parents does make me feel very comfortable. I cannot pronounce some Chinese characters well, and my father will help me read them accurately. Sometimes my grandparents also read with me, but I do not think it is very good. They are all Cantonese, and Mandarin is not very good.*

A3: *Sometimes, I find it difficult to learn Chinese, and I do not know why. However, when my grandparents and I read together, I thought they were not very good because their Mandarin was not good.*

**Q3: What was your language score last time and last time? How do you feel about the relationship between your grades and parent-child reading?**

A1: *Last year, my Chinese was not good, only B-. However, my parents started to read with my parents and children. This semester, I have learned the phonetics of Chinese characters much better, and I got an A-. In addition, my Mandarin is also much better. However, sometimes, I feel that my grandparents speak Mandarin, which impacts my phonetic learning. For example, my parents were very good when they were there, and they could explain some literary knowledge to me, but my grandparents could not explain it.*

A2: *I got a B+ in Chinese last year because my grandparents took me to read that semester. My writing is much better because it can bring me many good stories. However, they cannot help me with reading and pronunciation. This semester, my parents came to read with me, and my pronunciation has improved significantly. However, it is still very effective; I got A+ this semester.*

A3: *Last year, I only had C+. This semester my grandparents started family reading with me. I feel much better. This semester is B-. I like them to accompany me. I think being with me is useful for improving my Mandarin.*

We also interviewed the parents of the students. It is part of the interview with A1, A2, and A3 parents.

**Q1: Do you usually have time to read with your child?**

A1P: *My time is average; I do not have much time, mainly my parents accompany my children to read.*

A2P: *I do not have much time, but I can spare time to read with my children. If I do not have time, I will let my parents come.*

A3P: *I usually do not have much time, mainly because my mother-in-law and father-in-law occasionally read with their children.*

**Q1: Do you think you can bring something to children's reading?**

A1P: *I think it can, and it can bring some help. At least it can help him to read. Besides, his Mandarin pronunciation is average to helps him a little bit.*

A2P: *It can help a lot; I am busy at work. Reading is our important parent-child activity. I can take him to read, take him to read, and speak Mandarin well. I think this work is part of learning things and, more importantly, letting him realize my existence.*

A3P: *This must be useful, but I would rather allow schools to do reading. Mainly I do not know how to do it, and I do not have time. If I have time to read with my child and learn things, I will accompany him. However, I do not think I can do it.*

**Table 2 Test result of Student A1, A2, A3**

Type	A1	A 2	A 3
Average score in Chinese Semester 1	B-	A-	C-
Average score in Chinese Semester 2	B-	B+	C+
Average score in Chinese Semester 3	A-	A+	B-

**CONCLUSION**

According to the author's research on the situation of students in the class, the author found that parents play a certain auxiliary role in the language learning of students aged 1-3. The specific method can be to use parent-child reading together. The author researches the language situation of the students in his class and finds that at present, the parents of students who leads kids to read can improve students' reading, speaking, and article comprehension skill. However, we also need to realize that although this kind of interaction can have better auxiliary functions, its effect mostly occurs during non-class hours, and the requirements for parents are relatively high because the parents must have time and knowledge to join this activity.

The necessary companionship can improve students' happiness and improve students' grades. In the reading process, it should be noted that it is very important to strengthen parents' company to their children. The specific auxiliary method can be a parent-child reading a book together. The effect is reflected in improving students' reading ability, improving oral pronunciation, and improving literary accumulation. For schools and teachers to better play the supporting role of parents, they should provide parents with necessary online lessons, provide parents with necessary academic knowledge support, and facilitate parents to carry out due to family education to their children. However, in

Shenzhen, the biggest and youngest city in South China, parents often earn money, and grandparents conduct these activities. It had brought our concerns.

Meanwhile, overview this study, I had to say that this survey result may be suspicious. Because the parents maybe lie to avoid their responsibility to conduct their family education. The real result may be more obvious. Besides, there is still a problem that parents need further training. Parents need the knowledge to enable them to drive parent-child reading together.

### ***Recommendations for parents and teachers***

First of all, reading is an important measure to improve students' language level. It is recommended that future parents accompany their children as much as possible. Students' time in school is limited. If you want to improve your reading level, students must do many reading works. If parents can accompany their children in reading, it will play a good role and greatly promote students' reading level.

Secondly, reading will improve students' pronunciation. Parents should shape the Putonghua environment for students. Mandarin is the standard pronunciation of Chinese. If parents give their children a Mandarin environment in reading and companionship, their pronunciation will be more standard. It will also help children learn Pinyin.

Finally, schools and teachers should spend more time training students after class. Especially training parents. Many parents know the importance of companionship but do not know how to accompany their children. Parent-child reading activities are unique, but there are also many skills. Schools and teachers can properly train parents in this regard. Follow-up family language education will be better when parents acquire basic educational knowledge.

Different reading types help children read deeply and promote parent-child thinking, speaking, and writing together. One is appreciative reading. When the reading material is lively and interesting, the parents will read it eloquently, letting the children be intoxicated in work. Parents do not take the initiative to ask questions or force their children to express their feelings to experience them slowly. The second is analytical reading. The children may not understand the words and sentences of some reading materials. Parents should use plain and easy-to-understand language to analyze the words that the children do not understand in work to help the children better understand the true expression of the work's meaning. The third is performance reading; parents and children play the characters and plots together, making the story deeper into the child's heart. Through different types of reading, children's thinking can be exercised, prompting them to think and driving them to participate in the re-creation of the work activities and realize co-writing.

Parent-child reading is a simple and happy thing. Maintaining an optimistic and open-minded attitude can make reading more "casual," and this "casual" reading often accumulates binding energy inadvertently. Sowed the seeds of doubt and creation. Parents can use games when reading with their children. While telling stories, they can add real objects to allow children to participate by hand. They can integrate various methods such as painting and singing into reading activities. Reading is not regarded as a task but as a task. Let parent-child reading become a novel game, and let reading become a happy thing that children look to forward.

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