

Language Politics and Language Retention in a Canadian Chinese Disapora
Community:Challenges for Parents

by

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Abstract

Many immigrant (minority language) parents send their children to heritage language programs in hopes of helping their children maintain connections to their mother cultures and languages. This case study aims to explore the challenges minority language parents may encounter with decisions related to heritage language retention through community-based heritage language programs in a Canadian Chinese diaspora community. Five parent participants were recruited based on their diverse geographical and linguistic backgrounds. From interviews with these parents five themes emerged. These are 1) the nature of parental expectations regarding the function of heritage education, 2) the differences between heritage education and mainstream education, 3) varying perceptions of being part of a cultural minority, 4) manners of negotiating ethnic identity, and 5) the issue of diaspora values. The findings may shed light on how heritage education may be further developed, and also provide educators and policy makers with a better understanding of the importance of heritage education from the parents' perspective.

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My participants from this diaspora Chinese community generously shared their family stories so that we could recreate those stories together, and share them with a broader audience. Three community-based Chinese schools and local Chinese restaurants also kindly assisted me in recruiting research participants.

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Dedication

*This thesis is dedicated to parents,
Who live outside of their original countries;
Who ever persist in their loyalty to their mother(father) tongues;
Who try every possible way to maintain their child's mother (father) tongue ability.
Your efforts mean so much to me, to other parents, and to the field of heritage
language maintenance.
Thank you for being steadfast in your commitment .*

Chapter One: Introduction

Many immigrant (minority language) parents send their children to heritage language programs in order to help them maintain connections to their mother cultures and languages. Immigrants seem to be aware that if they do not help their children to learn their heritage languages when their children are young, they may lose not only their mother languages, but their ethnic identities as well (Kouritzin, 2000; Wong Fillmore, 1991). Language loss is a situation in which an individual loses his/her ability to use a language he/she used to have the ability to speak (Fase, Jaspaert & Kroon, 1992; Kouritzin, 2000; Wong Fillmore, 1991). According to Wong Fillmore (1991), language loss in children is correlated to the age when they begin schooling in a non-mother tongue medium. This implies that when minority language children start their social practice (school or daycare) at a younger age in an English dominant environment, they tend to surrender their minority language not only due to external factors (English dominant environment) but also due to complicated internal factors (sense of belonging and acceptance by the dominant groups).

Some literature has examined parental roles and attitudes in helping children maintain their heritage languages (Li, 2005; Lao, 2004). However, there is very little literature exploring the challenges that parents face when they decide to enroll their children in a heritage language program as one means of maintaining heritage language. What are parents' understandings of heritage language maintenance and how do they envision their role in maintaining their children's ability in the heritage language? What are the overt and covert factors that affect parents' decisions regarding heritage language retention? How do parents define their own heritage

identity and to what extent do they influence their children's development of ethnic identity? Also, what are parent's expectations of heritage language schools? These are important questions, because many studies indicate that language loss will produce a variety of negative effects in terms of individuals, families, society, and nations (Kouritzin, 2000; 2006; Norton, 2000). Conversely, studies related to heritage language maintenance (Yang, 2007; Siegel, 2004; Noels, 2005) show positive correlations between language maintenance and the construction of ethnic identities, personal psychological development, higher self-esteem and confidence (Cho, 2000; Tse, 1998, 2001). It is also recognized that, overall, being bilingual is beneficial at the individual, societal, and national levels (Tse, 1998, 2001). With regard to the correlation between language loss and heritage language retention, my role as a researcher and Master's student in the field of second language education inspired me to investigate what challenges parents may face when they attempt to help their children with heritage language retention.

Rationale

This study explores parents' perspectives on heritage language retention and the challenges they face when sending their children to a heritage language program. My inspiration came from the first Chinese New Year I spent in Canada during which I had the opportunity to celebrate the New Year with a huge number of ethnic Chinese people and my non-Chinese partner. When I attended this banquet five years ago, I felt so overwhelmed that there were so many ethnically Chinese people gathered in a Chinese restaurant in Winnipeg. It was the first time that I had not celebrated Chinese New Year in my home country. The banquet was held by a local Chinese language

school in a large Chinese restaurant. There were almost five hundred people at this banquet, and the majority, I believed, were of Chinese heritage. The most touching part was that the school principal gave a speech in which she mentioned this Chinese school's long history, the school objectives, and their contributions to the society. The school was established in 1974. The original intention in founding the school was to promote Chinese culture and language within the context of Canadian multiculturalism. The original founders were from the local Chinese community and had intended to promote heritage language and culture among younger and future generations. I admired their volunteer work and efforts to preserve their mother culture and language in a host country over so many years. As a result of this experience, I started to take note of any information related to Chinese education in this city, and I even thought about being a volunteer teacher in this kind of Chinese school so that I could contribute my linguistic and cultural knowledge to children of Chinese heritage.

Two years after this event, I entered the Masters' program in second language education in the University of Manitoba to pursue my research interests. I found many interesting topics in my first year of the program, such as the language learning experiences of immigrants, ESL teachers' professional development, policy and minority language rights, and the maintenance of mother tongue. In one of the courses I took, I completed a project relating to the maintenance of mother tongue. It was something that I felt proud of because the topic was very connected to my personal experience. In brief, that project was to describe the mother tongue revitalization program in my home country- Taiwan. The official language in Taiwan is

Mandarin and the writing system is Traditional Chinese characters. Many people may not know that actually approximately 85% of the population in Taiwan speaks a language other than Mandarin as their mother tongue. Many people have noted that the language shift from mother tongues (Tai-gi, Hakka, and Aboriginal languages) to the dominant language (Mandarin) has recently become very marked (Sandal *et al*, 2006). The tendency is that our younger generation is starting to lose their mother tongue ability because people in my (middle) generation prefer to speak the dominant language (Mandarin) to the younger generation and peers. At the same time, we continue to communicate with the older generation in our mother tongues (Tai-gi, Hakka, or aboriginal languages). A similar language shift situation is described in Tigchelaar's (2003) "Language loss and language maintenance: Life history accounts of selected members of the Sikh community." Since second generation immigrants were educated in an English educational system, it is easier for them to speak in English, especially when they need to educate their children. This is reflected in the language situation in my home cultural context. My project on mother tongue programs made me feel that I had focused my research on something that I was really interested in. I was also encouraged by my advisor, Dr. Sandra Kouritzin, to develop my research interests in this direction. With the consideration that I might eventually relocate in Winnipeg, I decided to focus my research on Mandarin learning and maintenance in this city.

Another person who inspired me to proceed in this research direction is Lana (pseudonym), one of my close friends here, who is a second generation Chinese Canadian. She identifies herself as a Canadian with Chinese ethnic background. She

can speak a certain level of Mandarin, Cantonese, and Tai-shan dialect, partially because of living with her Tai-shan speaking grandmother and partially due to her childhood fascination with Chinese soap operas. One thing she regrets is that she never had a chance to learn Chinese characters when she was young. So the only Chinese characters she can write and recognize are those in her Chinese name. The same is the case with all of her family members in Canada. She has a fairly big family and most of her family members are settled here. She told me that none of the family members in her generation could write Chinese characters. One of the unfortunate results of this situation was that it had become very difficult, if not impossible to continue maintaining the traditional family tree-*Zu Pu*¹ records for her family. Even though they could ask someone who knows Chinese to keep it for them, nobody in her generation could read it any more.

Lana has four siblings with different levels of recognition of their ethnic identities. Some of them consider themselves to be Canadian born Canadians², instead of Canadian born Chinese. My friend told me that part of the reason was because her parents did not force them to be Chinese when they were young. The situation for her family was that they were the only Chinese family in a small town outside of Winnipeg. The pressure to integrate into mainstream society was inevitable. So Lana's parents gave her and her siblings the freedom to choose the

¹ The Chinese family tree-*Zu Pu* is a very traditional and important thing in Chinese culture. It is mainly used for keeping track of a family's history.

² "Canadian born Canadian" is a broad concept for me and is slightly similar to Tigchelaar's (2003) "Canadianized." However, in Tigchelaar's study, "Canadianized" has negative connotation, which means adopting bad habits from mainstream society, such as smoking, drug using, relax sexual norms, losing heritage language and cultural spirits. In my opinion, "Canadian born Canadian" tends to be a neutral term and simply represents personal decision with the recognition of his/ her heritage culture.

language they felt most comfortable to communicate with each other in. Due to this, some of Lana's siblings gradually lost their ability to speak their heritage language. And little by little, some of them even lost their emotional connections with their heritage culture. This seems to indicate that parental decisions are a crucial element for children in determining whether or not they will maintain their heritage language and recognize their ethnic background.

With this in mind, beginning in October 2008, I did a small-scale pilot study on heritage language retention (Chen, 2009a; 2009b). During this pilot study, a few participants were recruited from one Chinese heritage language school in Winnipeg. Two of the participants were Cantonese speakers who were originally from Hong Kong and who had immigrated to Canada in their early adulthood, while the other was non-heritage parent of an adopted daughter from China. All three participants were non-Mandarin speakers themselves, but they wanted their children to learn Mandarin as their heritage language, instead of Cantonese. Both Cantonese participants mentioned that the motivation for them to enroll their children in a Mandarin school was due to the promising economic situation in China, as well as their Chinese roots. This phenomenon piqued my interest in taking a closer look at the reasons behind their language choices.

In addition, several situations developed in my daily life which related to what I was thinking about my second language---Mandarin. For example, whenever I met people who, I thought, should speak understandable Mandarin because of their heritage background, I quite often thought, "This person looks Chinese, but his/her Mandarin has a very heavy accent;" or "I cannot understand his/her Mandarin".

Interestingly, my own uncritical idea was that; “every Chinese should speak standard Mandarin regardless of what their mother tongues are.” This was pointed out by my non-Chinese partner. Thus, I started to wonder whether I was colonized by the idea of an “official language” for people who have Chinese heritage background.

Another situation is that my non-Chinese heritage friends sometimes ask me meanings of Chinese words written in simplified characters. Often I cannot answer them because I did not learn simplified characters in my country³. Sometimes I feel embarrassed because they assume that since I am a Mandarin speaker I should understand Chinese characters. Do I need to feel embarrassed about not knowing simplified Chinese characters? These are very significant issues that seem to relate to people’s national and cultural identities (Cho, 2000, You, 2005). Should people who have Chinese heritage give up their original mother tongue and embrace Mandarin, the more “useful and promising” standard language? Are most ethnic Chinese being colonized by the broad concept that “Chinese speak Mandarin?”

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research is, therefore, to explore challenges for parents when they send their children to a heritage language program. To this end, I have interviewed parents of participants in Chinese heritage language programs in order to gain a better understanding of their motivations and their expectations of such

³ There are two standard sets of Chinese characters used in contemporary Chinese written language. Simplified Chinese Characters are based on graphic or phonetic simplifications of the traditional form, and officially used in People's Republic of China (PRC) or Mainland China, Singapore, Malaysia and the United Nations. Traditional Chinese is currently used in the Taiwan (Republic of China), Hong Kong and Macau. Overseas Chinese communities generally use traditional characters, but simplified characters are used among Mainland Chinese immigrants.

programs. I have also attempted to analyze how national ideology (official language) impacts parents' language ideology, and further how parents help in developing or negotiating their children's ethnic identity in a bi-cultural and bilingual environment.

The first task for this research was to address the limitations of my prior pilot study (Chen, 2009). In the pilot study I found that several language or cultural groups gathered in a Saturday language school to study Mandarin as their "heritage language." The major limitation of this pilot study was related to the limited numbers of participants (three participants in total). As well, the collected data was related to only two aspects of cultural experience (Hong Kong and Canada). Therefore, this study includes more language or cultural groups for the purpose of better exemplifying the possibilities of a typical Chinese heritage language program. It also examines parents' perspectives on heritage language retention. Other than sending children to a heritage language program, what other means of achieving the goal of heritage language retention are used by parents? The second task is to explore the meaning of choosing Mandarin as a heritage language despite the fact that the parents are often not Mandarin speakers themselves. I further investigate parents' challenges in helping children to develop their ethnic identity as Chinese when two or more cultural identities are also available to them.

The basic research questions posed by this study are thus as follows:

- (1) What are the motivations and expectations for parents in sending their children to Chinese heritage language programs?
- (2) How and to what extent does language ideology (Fairclough, 2001, 2003) influence parents' language choices for their children?

(3) How do parents understand their children's (bilingual and bicultural) identity development as negotiated through heritage language education?

In addition to these questions it is my hope (1) to determine how different ethnic or cultural backgrounds may affect parents' motivations and expectations of Chinese heritage language programs; (2) to identify challenges parents might face with the decision to help their children's heritage language retention; (3) to record and analyze parents' choice of a heritage language (including speaking and writing system) by using Fairclough's (2001) theories of language and power as a theoretical framework; (4) to record and demonstrate how these parents help in developing their children's identity in a bi-cultural and bilingual environment.

In the following chapters I discuss several issues related to heritage language maintenance on multiple levels, and reflect upon these issues in consideration of the current literature. My review of this literature will, I hope, provide readers with a better understanding of the background of this research. Furthermore, it should lay a framework for understanding how I came to choose my methodology and designed the manner in which I would carry out the research. I intend to describe what kind of considerations were included in the design of this research, as well as what kind of criteria I used to evaluate and analyze the data collected. This will be followed by a description of the participants' background stories in chapter four. The findings and discussion of the findings will be placed in chapter five and six respectively. The final conclusion is intended to give an overview of the research and discusses broader implications for such issues as language policy, educational curriculum development, classroom praxis, the administration of community-based heritage language schools, and how parents with diverse ethnic backgrounds may approach heritage language

maintenance.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In the Introduction I mentioned the relationship between the dominant socio-cultural environment and parents' language choices. I also alluded to correlations between language maintenance and construction of ethnic identity. In this chapter, I review in more detail how issues in heritage language education relate to existing theories and current literature. I examine how these theories and literature apply to heritage language education from the parental perspective. Based on my research questions, the literature review is intended to highlight three issues: (1) issues related to heritage language programs and maintenance; (2) theoretical perspectives-- language ideology; and (3) the construction of ethnic identity.

Issues Related to Heritage Language Programs and Maintenance

Community-based heritage language school. Most community-based heritage language programs intend to promote heritage languages and to assist in maintaining heritage cultures in situations where the dominant language and culture are not the heritage language and culture. In some cases there may be a shift to some other language and culture motivating people to ensure the survival of the original language and culture. This particular study specifically looks at groups of people broadly self-identified as ethnic Chinese who have settled in an environment where the dominant language is English, and the dominant cultural environment European derived. When we consider the heritage language programs established by these people, we must first discuss the manner in which such programs are developed and administered.

Researchers (Curdt-Christiansen, 2006; Li, 2005; You 2005) point out that

many heritage language programs are organized by local community members, and that a majority of instructors and administrators are immigrant parents themselves. Parents who enroll their children in a heritage language program are expected to become active members in most community-based heritage language schools. The drawbacks of this kind of arrangement have been discussed (Curdt-Christiansen, 2006), and include inconsistency of parental participation, and lack of professionally trained teachers and administrators. Also, limited textbook selection and old-fashioned pedagogies provide unfavorable conditions for most community-based heritage language programs. The problem of old-fashioned pedagogies brings to mind the debate in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), which is related to cognitive and socio-cultural perspectives of language instruction (Zuengler & Miller, 2006). In the field of SLA research, there has been a dramatic change from the cognitive conception to socio-cultural understanding in the past 15 years. According to Curdt-Christiansen (2006), much Chinese heritage language instruction still focuses on cognitive and internal mental processes, such as memorizing, drilling and a lot of grammar rules. The neglect of socio-cultural perspectives may result in students' lack of interest in learning Chinese because most young heritage language learners in the Canadian context have been exposed to Western education. Western pedagogies are known for active learning, being student-centered, and encouraging interaction between teachers and students. From the socio-cultural perspective, language learning should involve students' participation in the learning process, and this involves interacting with the target resources and people around. If such an approach were applied in the heritage language-learning context, teachers could adopt student-centered pedagogies, add more interactive activities, and use authentic and

meaningful materials to make language learning more engaging. Parents would also be encouraged to speak the heritage language to students and use some other culturally relevant materials to connect their heritage culture to everyday life. However, learning Chinese is far different from learning Romance languages (Wang & Higgins, 2008). Even for children in their mother countries who learn Chinese as their mother language or official language, learning Chinese is a slow process involving hours of practice and memorizing, especially in writing Chinese characters (Wang & Higgins, 2008). Unlike learners of alphabetical language systems, it is very difficult for Chinese learners to tackle a new word if they never learn the word before. Citing from *The Economist* magazine (2007), Wang & Higgins (2008) mention that “Even the Foreign Office [in Great Britain] recognises the difficulty of learning Mandarin [Chinese], giving ‘its officers four times as long to get from beginner to operational level . . . as it does in Italian, French or Spanish” (p.41). Due to differences in language systems between Mandarin (Eastern) and English (Western), the pedagogical concerns and the efforts that learners must make reveal opposite language learning perspectives.

HL learning in the higher educational institutions. Some research focuses on heritage language learning in public education systems and higher educational institutions. The enrollment in heritage/ foreign languages at college and middle/high school levels has substantially increased in recent years (Xiao, 2006). Deussen-scholl (2003) even points out that “foreign language enrollments at U.S. institutions of higher education have undergone a dramatic shift from the traditional (i.e., European) languages toward the languages formerly designated as “critical languages” during the Cold War era or –more recently as the “less commonly taught languages” (for

instance, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Chinese, Korean)” (p. 211). This phenomenon correlates with the large number of immigrants to North America from Asian regions during the past decades. These immigrants and their children have a natural desire to study their ancestors’ languages. Therefore, in recent years the importance of heritage language education has risen.

Many scholars (Anderson, 2008; Deusen-scholl , 2003; Tse, 2001) describe regular school or higher education settings which offer foreign languages to students who want to learn the target languages as a heritage language. The problem is that foreign language instruction should be different from heritage language instruction (Anderson, 2008; Deusen-scholl, 2003; Li, & Duff, 2008;). For heritage learners, the specific socio-linguistic situation of particular ethnic groups may play an important role in the identification of their needs and goals (Deusen-scholl, 2003). Also, motivation to learn a heritage language is different from that in learning a foreign language. Heritage language learners may be hoping to explore their cultural identity, reconnect to family members or to the older generation in their cultural background.

Responsibility among parents, school and teachers, and policy makers. In the following few paragraphs, I will discuss the following contributors to heritage language maintenance: school and teacher roles, teacher attitudes, language policy, and parental roles. To begin with, we must recognize that parents play an important role in terms of the heritage language retention of their children (Li, 1999; Li, 2005; Lao, 2004; Park & Sarkar, 2007). Studies show how parents’ positive attitudes toward maintaining heritage language benefits children’s linguistic and ethnic identity development. Studies indicate that parents’ attitudes towards heritage language

retention also depend on their educational background, socio-economical condition, recognition of cultural identity, and the length of stay in a host (migrated) country. Park and Sarkar (2007) point out that Korean immigrant parents believe that maintaining Korean language will ensure their children better future economic opportunities, and closer emotional connections with grandparents as well as their ethnic culture in general. Lao (2004) mentions that the major reasons for Chinese parents to enroll their children in Chinese-English bilingual programs are the practical advantages of being bilingual, the positive development on self-image, and better communication with the Chinese-speaking community.

Secondly, the school's role, teacher's responsibilities, and teachers' attitudes have been discussed in relation to heritage language maintenance. Lao (2004) suggests that effective partnership between school and home is necessary in order to meet the different language needs and expectations of parents and students. The school's positive support of heritage language maintenance is useful for cultivating minority language students' positive attitudes towards maintaining their heritage language and culture. Lee and Oxelson (2006) indicate, on the other hand, that teachers' lack of training as language educators gives rise to negative and indifferent attitudes toward heritage language retention. Therefore, there is a need to foster all educators' understanding of the importance on heritage language retention.

Thirdly, policy making has an influence on minority language rights (Blackledge, 2003; D'Souza, 2006; Hornberger, 1998; Kouritzin, 2006) since complex political, economic and social situations impact minority language rights. For example, government and educational assimilation policies have had negative affects on

people's perspectives on the value of language learning. When large numbers of immigrants migrated to Canada in the mid-nineteenth century, which was the beginning of industrialization in this country, schools played an important role in an assimilative policy, which expected immigrant students to follow Anglo-Canadian values and become part of Canada's British heritage (James, 2004). Not until the 1970s did Canada begin to promote a federal policy of multiculturalism, and provincial governments promoted multicultural education in order to respect ethno-cultural differences and facilitate the integration of immigrant/ minority students. One of my research sites (Chinese heritage language school) was founded in that moment in the development of Canadian multiculturalism policy in response to the desire to embrace and respect multi-cultural differences. Most literature related to heritage language maintenance demonstrates that positive attitudes toward maintaining heritage language have promising benefits for heritage language learners, as well as for families with diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Socio-economic factors. Other factors that influence minority language groups to give up their languages are complex, such as the family's economic conditions, and the general social environment. Take my friend, Lana for example. She grew up in a small town outside of Winnipeg where they were the only Chinese family in town. The social environment and family economic situation forced them to become competent English speakers. My personal experience is opposite to her experience of being minority language group and living in a small town in Canada. My mother tongue—Tai-gi is still the majority's mother tongue in Taiwan, but since Mandarin became our official language, people in Taiwan have started to perceive

that being a competent Mandarin speaker reflects higher social status with the possibility of achieving better career development. According to Sandal, Chao, and Liang (2006), people who speak a language other than Mandarin as a mother tongue make up approximately 85% of the population of Taiwan. But the current tendency is that people replace their mother tongues with Mandarin, and younger generations start losing their mother tongue ability due to the socio-economic situation. Therefore, even in different language contexts, similar political, economic and social considerations seem to impact people's language decisions.

The terms "official language" and "standard language" are relatively similar in that they reflect efforts to impose language ideology and language hierarchy on people's daily lives (Fairclough, 2001). Both terms are given legal status through political, cultural, historical and geographical considerations. The result is often that some languages in certain social contexts have higher value than other languages. The modern English-only movement in the United States is a typical example of a government policy that implicitly and explicitly promotes the higher value of English language. Since English is widely used in public media, school systems, and official institutions, it is usually considered that English is the "more correct" language to use in the United States. This pertains directly to the language ideology that I will discuss in the next section.

Language Ideology

In "*Language and power*," Fairclough (2001) notes that language and ideology are closely related to each other. He demonstrates how "common-sense" assumptions are implicit in people's daily lives when they interact linguistically. These

common-sense assumptions are embedded ideological assumptions, which are a means of legitimizing existing social relations and differences of power. The process of legitimizing existing social relations and differences of power operates through the repetition of familiar ways of behaving in ordinary life. In other words, we call things “common-sense” in order to naturalize social relations and hierarchical power in our daily life. Since language is the most commonly used social behavior, common-sense assumptions are easily reproduced through language ideology.

In the following sections, I first provide the historical background of the word “Chinese” where the meaning involves multiple connotations. I then explain the term “Chinese” from the point of view of a stabilized linguistic eco-system. This approach challenges people’s common sense understanding of a standardized linguistic system in the context of one nation. Thirdly, I discuss how the actual status of heritage learners of Chinese challenges how scholars interpret “heritage Chinese.” Fourthly, we need to consider the connotations of the debate over choosing simplified or traditional Chinese characters and explain why parents choose certain Chinese language programs over others. The debate over orthography also brings to the fore the political and social significance and meaning of the term “heritage Chinese.” Finally, I will deconstruct the meaning of being a member of an ethnic community. What kind of efforts do we need to make in order to behave like a member of ethnic community and to be recognized as a member? These issues are all included in the section of language ideology where I hope to challenge parents’ idea of being heritage Chinese, and the importance of learning heritage language.

The historical background of the word “Chinese.” According to Li and Duff (2008), Chinese languages are far from monolithic, which makes them different from many other languages associated historically with somewhat more homogeneous populations, geographical areas, or nation-states such as Korean. It is becoming more and more apparent that the so-called “Chinese race” itself is also far from monolithic. In any case, Chinese in its spoken and written forms varies considerably between The Peoples’ Republic of China (PRC), Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong and in Chinese diaspora communities around the world. It also differs considerably within each of those communities. These differences have historical, political, cultural, and social origins as well as consequences and impacts for both HL and non-HL education. Therefore, the diversity of languages used among Chinese heritage people is an important issue when we consider the development of heritage education.

Before jumping to language varieties, it is important to determine who ethnic Chinese people are. According to Defrancis (1984), the term “Chinese” needs to be clarified in multiple ways. Firstly, the term “Chinese” is used to refer both to a people and to their language in spoken and written form. “Han Chinese” is the majority population in China. The European term “China” comes from the Qin or Chin Dynasty (221-206 B.C.E.), however the term used in China to distinguish ethnic Chinese from other populations in the Peoples’ Republic of China and elsewhere is “Han.” This is the name of the 400 year long Han Dynasty (206 B.C. to A.D. 220) that followed the Qin and which first brought a sense of common cultural identity to the formerly diverse groups of people who lived in and around the areas of the Yellow River and Yangzi Rivers. Secondly, the term “Chinese” as a language spoken by the majority of

Han Chinese is an abstract concept including many mutually unintelligible languages. Like many other languages around the world, the concept of “Chinese” language owes as much to political expediency as to linguistic reality. The truth is that while roughly two-thirds to three-quarters of all Chinese speak some form of “Mandarin” Chinese (basically a northern Chinese language) there is almost a quarter to a third of the Chinese population that speak languages other than Mandarin, such as the Cantonese, Hakka, and Min (Defrancis, 1984.) These forms of speech are so distinctive that they are mutually intelligible. According to Defrancis, “these forms of speech are as far apart as Dutch and English, or French and Spanish or French and Italian.” (p.39) This doesn’t mean Dutch is a kind of English or a dialect derived from English, any more than French is a dialect of Spanish. However, in China and Taiwan, people normally consider languages such as Hakka or Cantonese as different variations of Chinese or dialects derived from standard Chinese. Once again, this is quite clearly related to political expediency.

The importance for mentioning Chinese ethnicity and language variety is first to remind us how “language ideology” functions in our “common- sense” understanding of how national language or official language relates to dialects, and how “standard” language relates to non-standard language (Crystal, 1995, 2002; Fishman, 1977; Hazen, 2001; Li, 2004; Siegel, 1999). According to Fishman (1977), language scientists imply that dialect is a part (a regional part) of a whole (an entire system of regional part). For example, we might consider Cantonese is a regional language relative to the Chinese national language--Mandarin. In fact, in this sense, dialect may not represent a standard speech form, but a language form because

“there is no way to distinguish between a dialect and a language on the basis of objective linguistic discriminanda [discrimination] alone, whether phonological, lexical, or morphosyntactic” (Fishman, 1977, p316.)

What is the ideology behind the term “dialect”? The term dialect normally implies a situation outside of the central (standard) language, which is socially and linguistically inferior to the standard speech form (Crystal, 1995, 2002; Fishman, 1977; Hazen, 2001; Li, 2004, Siegel, 1999). Citing from Weinreich (1980), Crystal expresses that “...a language has been famously defined as a dialect with an army and navy (2001, p38).” He also mentions that the boundary between dialect and language is arbitrary, and all depends on its sociopolitical conditions. Hence, the term “dialect” is not as simple as the common sense meaning of “regional language” implies; instead it reflects the sense that the standard language is the better or more appropriate language for public use and education. Within given power and political relations, the usage of standard language is predominantly associated with higher educational, social, cultural and economic status. Therefore, the inferiority associated with the meaning of dialect substantially affects people’s language choice, which is reflected in my question, “should every Chinese heritage person speak Chinese, and what kind of Chinese they should speak?” If a language wins official status and popularity, the power attached to this language can be a determining factor in educational priorities among people in a given nation or among people of that nation who emigrate to other countries.

Stabilized linguistic eco-system. Fattes’ (1997) proposes that the stabilizing linguistic eco-system transfers the “dynamic, ever-changing set of interrelationships”

(para. 3) to the “more homogenous and predictable” (para. 3) standard form. This standardized approach can easily apply to the use of dictionaries, textbooks, and educational curricula. Although establishing a standard form of a linguistic eco-system superficially seems like an easy way to enable people to communicate with each other and exchange information, the power of the standardized form is to oppress other formats of text, information, and languages. Therefore, the stabilized linguistic eco-system (standard form of a language) implies the devaluation of the enriched linguistic wisdom passed down from the ancestors and growing from the local environment.

This, in turn, means the elimination of the “dynamic, ever-changing” linguistic eco-system. For example, Geary and Pan (2003) surveyed China’s bilingual education in minority groups. Though the Chinese government has started offering bilingual programs in some rural areas where the majority population is a national minority group or indigenous people, which means they speak languages different from the official language, the policy and education practice seem to be contradictory. In order to improve their living standards, minority groups in China, such as the Kam in southwestern China, have no choice but to buy “a ticket to modernity (p.274).” “A ticket to modernity” was first mentioned by Kenan Malik (2000), to mean discarding traditional habits and language. People start to speak the dominant language, such as English or Spanish (in this case—Mandarin Chinese) and live according to the dominant way of life (modern life). Therefore, “modernity is typically mediated through education” (Geary & Pan, 2003, p.274). When education becomes the symbol of high-salary jobs and quality life, people want to gain as much benefit as

possible by participating in the education system. What else can we expect from a minority group once they begin to believe in the values carried by the standard educational system and modern life? Unfortunately, the price of a ticket to modernity is higher than what we might expect. Minority people may leave their homeland, lose their languages, forget their traditional habits, and even bury or discard their identities. Such cost is being extracted around the world everyday and it is something that both minority groups and dominant groups must pay for in one way or another.

Of course, my research is focused on heritage language retention among people who have a certain level of Chinese heritage and live outside of their heritage land. The recognition of being of Chinese heritage is closely connected to choices of heritage language that ethnic Chinese people make. Since the broad concept of Chinese nationalism is widely spread among people of Chinese ethnicity, learning a heritage language in a school setting limits the choice of languages. This is because many so-called “Chinese heritage language schools” offer standard Mandarin Chinese and, less often, Cantonese as their medium of instruction. What about other heritage languages that many Chinese and Taiwanese use as their mother tongues, such as Hakka, Min, Wu or Gan?

Should heritage Chinese parents devalue their mother tongue due to the fact that it is not considered to be of legitimate standard in the general Chinese population? Standard Mandarin is a language that carries superior social, economic, cultural and political prestige among the Chinese population. And now this prestige is expanding globally due to the rapid economic growth in China. Exported Chinese nationalism, including language ideology tends to make people believe that one

country and one language is the best choice. Therefore, heritage Chinese parents often feel that if they wish their children to learn “Chinese,” the politically, economically, and socially correct choice is to enroll them in a Mandarin school, rather than a school that instructs their true (non-standard/official) mother tongue.

Legitimate heritage learners of Chinese. Another issue by Li and Duff (2008) concerns legitimate heritage learners of Chinese heritage language at the post-secondary level. According to Li and Duff (2008), “Deciding who can be included under the “HL learner” label raises a number of issues related to the reification of identity and ethnicity, inclusion and exclusion, access and denial” (p. 16). By using Leung’s *et al.* (1997) conceptual framework of heritage and dominant-language learning, Li and Duff find that whether or not they are labeled legitimated heritage learners may influence how learners position themselves. Rampton, Harris, and Leung’s (1997) conceptual framework suggests that the notions of *language expertise*, *language affiliation*, and *language inheritance* are better than the terms *native speaker* and *mother tongue* in terms of the fluidity of social relationships in language education. *Language expertise* refers to people’s linguistic ability in each of the posited languages, including heritage language. *Language affiliation* applies that the attachment or connection that people feel to a language; whether or not they belong to the ethnic social group. *Language inheritance* refers to one’s apparently inherited language—the language they use at home or their ancestors’ language.

The definition of legitimate Chinese heritage learner seems not as easy it appears from superficial explanation, especially in the fast changing and fluid modern world. According to Li and Duff (2008), there are two general perspectives in defining

legitimate heritage language learners in current literatures. One perspective reflects one's ethnic, social, historical and political investment in the language. This tends to be ethnic-oriented or root-oriented, which means that an "ancestral language" (Fishman, 2001; Wiley, 2001) is significant and meaningful to the individual learner. Another perspective is based on learners' actual linguistic competence and familial affiliation, which describes the learner's home-language as different from the dominant language and considers the learner to have a certain level of bilingual competence in the home language and the dominant language. The issue of whether one is a legitimate heritage learner or not is very important in the context of post-secondary heritage language learning setting. It is also related to the development of a better heritage language-learning program for all learning levels and settings. Such a program aims to be aware of learners' background, learning motivation and other diverse needs. It also applies to curricula design, material selection, placement and the assessment of students, and teacher training (Li & Duff, 2008.)

The significance of choosing simplified or traditional Chinese characters. The focus on the context of a language program now shifts to how language ideology continues to operate in that "heritage" language program. First of all, one of the most contentious issues in a Chinese heritage language program is the preferred orthography (e.g., simplified vs. traditional characters.) Orthography varies from region to region, and even implies some geopolitical meanings, which may affect learners' desire to learn in multiple ways. Currently, the simplified character system is mainly used in Mainland China, and the traditional character system is used in Taiwan, Hong Kong and by the majority of overseas Chinese in North America (Li & Duff, 2008.)

Li and Duff express “the debate [over orthography] has stirred up heated responses from supporters on both sides as it is deeply associated with political ideology, social affiliation, and cultural identity in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan” (p. 23). Some people even link simplified characters to communism and traditional characters with anti-communism or “non-communism” since the simplified character system was developed as part of the cultural reforms in the Peoples’ Republic beginning in the 1950s.

Regardless of the connotations attached to simplified and traditional character systems, Li and Duff’s (2008) study points out that 76.6% of Mainland Chinese heritage language students indicated a preference for simplified characters, in contrast to just over 7% from Hong Kong, and 2% from Taiwan making the same choice. Conversely, approximately 70% students from Hong Kong and Taiwan favored the traditional characters. And a proportion of students across all groups (ranging from nearly 10% to 27%) thought both systems should be taught, and not just one or the other. This may indicate a sign of growing tolerance, acceptance, and accommodation among heritage language learners on each side with respect to learning both systems.

The meaning of being a member of community. In directing my focus to community-based heritage language programs, the community members themselves play a very crucial role. Community members’ personal backgrounds in terms of education, religion, and political belief substantially influence how they operate a heritage language program. Shibata (2000) mentions that, “ The community is the place to promote both instrumental and integral motivations to develop the language

through utilization in cultural activities, and to foster the family's ethnic identity and value" (p.340). Here, let us deconstruct the meaning of community for the purpose of instructing and maintaining heritage language. As I mentioned before, Chinese languages are far from monolithic. Chinese languages vary according to the ethnic make-up of the population, geographical area, or national affiliation. Therefore, overseas Chinese communities may be composed of people who have a certain Chinese heritage, but may not necessarily have the same language, be from a common geographical area, or share a national identity. That being so, if the Chinese community wants to maintain Chinese culture and language in a host country, what consequences can we imagine?

Community solidarity benefits from shared political, educational, religious and cultural beliefs. In the heterogeneous context of overseas Chinese communities what will most community members choose to believe? It might depend on the beliefs of the majority of population in the host community. Since people are trying to seek membership in their new social environment, power relations, ideologies, and new identities may deviate in the process of constructing new social relationships (Fairclough, 2001). Hence, the common-sense assumption here would be that members of a Chinese community need to find a set of beliefs around which to construct a mainstream, all-inclusive Chinese culture. This would seem strategically preferable to recognizing a large number of small sub-communities in the Chinese population. But where would common beliefs and values come from? Who or what would determine the beliefs to be adopted?

Community schools have a central role in the selection of teaching materials, recruitment of teachers, content of cultural activities, and of course, the choice of the preferred Chinese orthography. These things are all related to the process of defining what Chinese culture and language mean in a given community. Unfortunately, such selection is often fraught with socio-political implications. They can also be seen as the means to brainwash people to accept the privileging of a certain kind of Chinese heritage among those living outside of their homeland. Cummins (2006) points out that:

Behind language/cultural labels such as “Chinese” or “Spanish” there exists considerable diversity and complexity of historically-generated patterns of power relationships. These relationships and identity affiliations express themselves in ways of linguistic expression (e.g., speaking/accent, choice of writing system). This diversity needs to be recognized in the design of HL programs—these programs are helping students to become a particular kind of person rather than just attempting to transmit a language.(p. 23-24, cited in Li & Duff, 2008)

What this implies for Chinese communities in particular is that the forces and pressures of Chinese nationalism disseminated by the Peoples’ Republic of China and to a lesser extent, Taiwan, must be resisted in favour of a privileging of factors within the local community.

The core consideration when planning a heritage curriculum should ideally be to consider the diverse needs of every heritage learner through “flexibility” (Fairclough, 2000, p.170). In this way there is a better possibility of meeting the diverse needs of learners who come from different geographical areas, nationalities and with various linguistic backgrounds. However, practical limitations often discourage program planning and real learning contexts. Weger-Guntharp (2006)

indicates that some Chinese minority language groups may perceive their heritage languages as devalued and impractical due to the classroom privileging of certain other Chinese dialects or in the choice of writing systems. Also, by using Fairclough's (1999) critical discourse analysis, the discourse of flexibility means conditionally accepting the position of being "core" or "periphery." If people can accept a "flexible" curriculum, they can more easily understand the importance of supporting the core position, and further, accept the "standard" accent and choice of writing system. This means that people in the minority have a better understanding of what it means to occupy their marginal situation.

What this means in concrete terms is that we can observe how issues such as the choice of orthography in Chinese heritage language programs are emblematic of far more than a choice of simple or traditional writing styles. It directly reflects the power struggle between groups in the community who occupy varying positions in relation to the centralizing power of the Peoples' Republic, the main promoter of simplified orthography. At this moment in history, the political and economic rise of the Peoples' Republic, along with relaxed emigration policies which have seen increasing numbers of immigrants from the PRC to Canada and the United States in the past two decades (Biao, 2003; Kyle & Liang, 2001), have clearly tilted the playing field toward that unifying centre, and away from the traditionally diverse texture of North American Chinese communities. This has clear and important implications for parents of Chinese ethnicity who may be in the process of deciding which "heritage" language, including which orthography, to educate their children in.

The Construction of Ethnic Identity

Language and identity. A large body of literature has discussed the relationship between minority languages and cultural identities (DeKorne, Byram & Fleming, 2007; Feuer, 2009; Kubota, 2001; Lee, 2008; Pavlwnko, 2003; Norton, 1995, 2000; You, 2005) Regarding the construction of ethnic identity, prior research indicates the positive correlation between maintaining heritage language and forming cultural identity. How does language maintenance actually foster the formation of ethnic identity? Through what kind of process does that language influence one's understanding of a culture and further lead to identifying oneself as a part (unit) of the target culture? Also, how do parents' decision about maintaining heritage language for their children through heritage education affect the process of constructing children's ethnic identity? Finally, we must consider parents' perspectives on negotiating the balance (Kouritzin, 1999) between host (dominant) culture and mother (minority) culture.

A large volume of research as demonstrated the positive effect that maintaining heritage language will have on personal, family, community, and societal orientation (Cho, 2000; Tse, 2001; You, 2005). Studies like Cho's, (2000) and You's (2005) show that the development of heritage language plays a significant role in ethnic identity formation (Guardia & Evans, 2008; Tse, 1998), and heritage language also helps minority language groups maintain a strong sense of their own identity.

Ethnic identity formation. Just what are the processes of constructing ethnic identity for minority language children in a host country? Who is involved in this process of forming ethnic identity? In Tse's (1998) model of ethnic identity

development, there are four stages in forming ethnic identity. Stage 1 - "Unawareness", indicates that ethnic minorities are not conscious of their ethnic or minority situation. This is a relatively short period and usually happens before children's schooling starts. Stage 2 - "ethnic ambivalence / evasion", is when people develop ambivalent and negative feelings toward their ethnic culture and identity because of the desire to fit into the dominant society. This stage may sometimes last quite a long period (e.g., from childhood to adolescence, or even adulthood). Stage 3 - "ethnic emergence," describes when people realize a belonging to an ethnic group and start to explore their ethnic heritage. But at the same time, they may feel a conflict between belonging to their ethnic cultural group and belonging to the dominant group. Stage 4 - "ethnic identity incorporation," is the stage of strongly connecting with and participating in their ethnic cultural group. This stage may allow people to solve the conflict related to their ethnic identity and become proud of their ethnic identity. This model of ethnic identity formation provides a linear process of ethnic identity development in the immigrant, bilingual and multilingual contexts.

However, there is a lack of mention of potential factors, which may speed up or slow down the process. For example, the level of oral proficiency in one's heritage language (Imbens-Bailey, 1997) may play a determining role in whether one feels a part of his/her ethnic culture group (You, 2005; Cho, 2000; Chinen, 2005). Also, the attitudes⁴ of minority parents (Lao, 2004; Li, 2005; Park & Sarkar, 2007), and attitudes

⁴Take myself for example, even though my language ability in my education language-Mandarin, is superior to my mother tongue-Tai-gi, my parents' hostile attitude toward native Mandarin speakers* indeed affects my identity as a "Tai-gi speaking Taiwanese" or a "Mandarin speaking Taiwanese." Therefore, psychologically, my identity (Leary & Tangney 2003) relating to self-image indicates that I feel more comfortable being a "Tai-gi speaking Taiwanese", which represents as a local or semi-aboriginal person whose ancestors are

that community members possess towards the dominant culture seem to influence ethnic identity recognition to a certain degree. Conversely, attitudes from the dominant culture towards minority groups are probably another powerful factor for minority groups in terms of developing their ethnic identity. Therefore, in Phinney's study, she mentions, "Normative developmental trajectories have been described for particular identities at particular points in time, but there has been little generalization over different identities and time periods." (2008, p. 99) There are so many factors that we need to consider in order to explain the process of ethnic identity formation. Tse's model of ethnic identity formation is not an absolute trajectory for identity formation, instead it is a possible way to explain why people have certain reactions toward their ethnic identity at different times in their lives. Finally, Phinney (2008) believes that physical and psychological development will affect identity formation as well. When children become more mature, their thinking patterns also become more complex and thoughtful. This is why many members of ethnic minorities realize the importance of maintaining their ethnic identity and heritage language only in their adulthood (Kouritzin, 1999).

Language socialization. Another aspect we need to examine is why and how group or community-based activities foster language acquisition and ethnic identity

partially composed of aboriginal Austronesian peoples, and partially immigrants from southeast China who arrived in Taiwan in the 17th century. However, in cognitive psychology (Leary & Tangney 2003), the term "identity" refers to the ability for self-reflection and the awareness of self, which means that the fluent Mandarin skills and the education that I received from the dominant group actually controls how I view things around the world. Therefore, from the psychological perspective, what I think in my mind (my recognition of self) may not be equal to the way I behave (from an outsider's perspective). Applying Tse's identity formation model, it seems like that I will never reach stage four- ethnic identity incorporation. I wonder how many people can actually reach stage four.

* Native Mandarin speakers refer to people who came to the island of Taiwan from China in 1949 with Chiang Kai-shek, and their descendants. (Sandal, Chao, & Liang, 2006).

formation. The most commonly chosen theory to show how language is acquired through socially constructed contexts is “language socialization” (Park, 2003; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986), which proposes that children’s acquisition of language has a distinct correlation to their acquisition of culture. Language acquisition is not a parallel with cultural acquisition. Instead, these two acquisitions are interwoven and piled up together. Through interactions with caregivers or other more competent community members, children (novice learners) acquire the target language in a culturally meaningful way. In the process of participating in community or group activities and practicing the target language, children (novice learners) pick up a variety of aspects surround the learning context (cultural context), including the values and beliefs of the language, as well as the manners and social status of people who speak the language (Park, 2003; Schecter & Bayley, 2004; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986).

According to this view, minority parents’ choices for helping their children maintain their heritage language is the first step in connecting their children with their mother culture. In my study, parents’ decisions to enroll their children in community-based heritage language programs may simply be the product of their desire to maintain communication with their children in their heritage language, to find a social setting where both parents and children can feel less different, and to have more competent community members teach their children their mother culture and traditions. Therefore, caregivers (parents or teachers) and community members are especially important in assisting children (novice learners) not only in language learning, but also in cultural acquisition. Once children (novice learners) develop the ability to communicate effectively in the target language, the way of expressing

themselves in that language will contribute to their emerging identity (Park, 2003). That emerging identity then determines how children perceive themselves as members of that ethnic group, how they feel about the target (heritage) culture, and how they interpret knowledge around the target (heritage) culture and language.

The definition of identity. According to Norton (1997), the term identity “refers to how people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future.”(p.410) In this view, one’s identity depends on his/her relationship with others (in my study, children’s relationship with their family members and people in the heritage language program), with the environment (children’s relationship with the ethnic community and the dominant society), and with the world (the relationship among children in both the ethnic and dominant communities, and with the world at large). This means one’s identity is constructed from the resources around oneself, and one’s understanding of how to connect with those surrounding resources. It appears, from Norton’s point of view, that identity is a relatively passive development rather than an active involvement, or a conditional development from oneself. If we take this view and compare it with the theory of language socialization, we find they bring together some similar factors.

In order to be accepted and to feel a sense of belonging in the target community, people need to acquire the proper behavior patterns and behave like members in this community. For example, in Korean culture, the polite manner of speaking (Park, 2003) or patriotism toward the Korean national sport teams (You, 2005) are indications that one is Korean. In overseas Korean communities these traits

are also a prerequisite for fitting in. In such ethnic communities, there is a normative way for community members to behave (He, 2008). If children do not behave like the rest of the community members, they may not be accepted as “real ethnic members” in this community, or they themselves may not feel a sense of belonging in this context. This leads us to consider how challenging and unfair it is to ask children who are not born in their homeland, or who did not grow up in their motherland, to accept and behave as a member of two cultures (heritage culture and dominant culture). It is not the children’s choice to decide where to live and grow up. Instead, their parents choose for them.

Zhou (1997) informs us that, unlike their immigrant parents, immigrant children and children of immigrants do not have meaningful connections to their “old” world. They may hardly consider that their old world is a place to return to, or is a point of reference. However, people around these children have diverse expectations of them, and put many different pressures on them. For example, parents and ethnic community members may expect these children to maintain their ethnic identity and heritage language; however, people in the dominant society, such as peers, teachers, even people in the workplace, will expect them to be integrated members of the dominant society. In such complex and contradictory situations, I wonder how children can find a balanced space (Kouritzin, 1999) to believe in.

Hybrid nature of one’s identity. Many scholars try to use the term hybridity (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1990) to explain the phenomena of racial, linguistic, and cultural mixing in the postcolonial era. Hybridity defines something “in-between” (Bhabha, 1994) self (colonies, minority groups) and others (colonizers, dominant groups, or

powerful symbols). If we take the concept of “hybridity” to explain the mixed identities that people who own two or more cultural and linguistic backgrounds, many may think that this “in-between space” is a middle ground for these people. Will this “in-between space” represent an equal amount of shared ethnic and linguistic recognition? Is there a true balance between people who own two or more cultural and linguistic backgrounds? The answers regarding “in-between space” or balanced identity remain ambiguous and uncertain.

Many theories related to hybrid or in-between identity were the byproducts of Postcolonial theory (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1990) and were developed for the purpose of articulating postcolonial identities and subjectivities. These identity theories discuss migrants’ new identities arising from the global circulation of population and the further development of diasporic communities. Postcolonial theory provides a conceptualized framework for understanding how migrants negotiate identity between their homeland and diasporic communities (Jamal, 2008). The parent participants in this research may encounter similar experiences in questioning their own identity as well as their children’s identity with relation to living in a host land or a diasporic community. In addition, advanced communication technology, multimedia broadcasting, and extensive international trade these days appear to shorten the physical distances between the host land and homeland. This may impact on migrants in multiple ways.

Sliverstein (2003) argues that we can identify a change in the forces affecting the transformation of ethno-linguistic identities from “socioeconomic globalization” to “globalization of consciousness” (p. 534). The globalization of consciousness is not

only due to the socio-economic flows, but also to the accessibility of global communication and interaction. How will this accessibility to heritage land and culture reflect on migrants and their offspring in their linguistic and ethnic identity development? Will immigrants develop stronger ethnic and linguistic identity compared to a few decades ago?

Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (as cited in Akiba, 2004, p. 50) imply that immigrants these days migrate to a new society that allows them to retain their “original” cultural identities. In many nations, policies for assimilating migrants have become less oppressive, and in some countries, such as Canada, policies of multiculturalism, or policies that take the multifaceted process of cultural accommodation into consideration have been affected. This may add complexity to the process of developing the hybrid identities in the diasporic context. Norton (1995) describes identity as “multiple, a site of struggle, and changing over time” (p.14). This reflects how “identity is how people understand their relationship to the world” (Norton, 1997, p. 410). Hence, people’s identity will never be a fixed one and it all depends on the surrounding environment and relationships with people. This statement is similar to Silverstein’s (2003) ethno-linguistic identity and Akiba *et al’s* (2004) statement about viewing identity as “multidimensional”. Silverstein’s (2003) “ethno-linguistic identity” proposes that there is not necessary a “when”, a “where” and a “how” to explain people’s identity if we understand the dynamic of identity itself. Likewise, Akiba, Szalacha, and Coll (2004) states that identity is “multidimensional”(p.57), which “deserves to be studied within the context of other identity dimensions”(p. 57). Migrants, who possess their own cultural identity, may

develop a second cultural identity after they begin to live in a diasporic community. The potential factors, such as environment, society, and timing may affect the development of different ethno-identities. These factors will be considered in the proposed research study in order to better interpret parents' perspectives on heritage language retention for the next generation.

Furthermore, in Asher's (2008) study of hyphenated American identities (hybrid identities), she argues that the concepts of hybridity and interstices (or in-between spaces) become the contradictions and struggles for immigrant families, as well as involving hegemonic forces. An example of this is the model of minority stereotype applied to Asian Americans where the mainstream society perpetuated an image of Asian-Americans as problem-free individuals who do not complain or cause trouble. They are seen as hardworking and having high achievement both academically and financially (Asher, 2008; Chou, 2008; Empleo, 2006; Wing, 2007; Wong & Halgin, 2006). In this study, I focus on parent participants' understanding of ethnic identity, and their experiences in leading to the stage where they realize the hybrid nature of their children's ethnic identity.

As far in this chapter, I have reviewed current literature on issues about heritage language retention, the roles of parents, schools and society, in language retention, and also policies related to ethnic languages, language ideology, development of ethnic identity, and the hybrid nature of people's identity. The hope is that this will provide readers with a better understanding of the issues, as well as construct framework for this research.

Chapter Three: The Design of Research

The nature of this study is to understand the personal experiences and beliefs of a group of people who share a common behavior: enrolling their children in a Chinese heritage language program. However, among the participants in my study, there were many different expectations and motivations. Participants also indicated that they had encountered a wide variety of challenges in their efforts to help their children maintain their heritage languages. The participants are people from different geographical areas who may or may not speak the same language, but who want to learn or maintain Mandarin or Cantonese as their heritage language. As part of my Master's program, I investigated the question of ethnic identity in one of the Chinese schools in Winnipeg as a pilot study in a course, EDUA 7840: "Qualitative research methods in Education." I found to my surprise that the students in this Chinese school are from diverse language backgrounds and different geographical areas with various nationalities. Some of them are second-generation immigrants who were born in Canada, and some of them immigrated with their parents who were born in other countries. Parents may be immigrants from China who speak Mandarin or any of a variety of Mandarin dialects, and who use simplified Chinese characters. They may also be immigrants from Hong Kong who speak Cantonese and use traditional Chinese characters, or they may be immigrants from Taiwan who speak Mandarin or a variety of Mandarin dialects and use traditional Chinese characters. There are also people who have mixed heritages and speak a mix of languages, including immigrants from South East Asian countries who are of Chinese heritage and speak languages other than Mandarin. Finally, there are visually/racially Chinese students who were

adopted from China by Caucasian parents. Among students' family backgrounds, some of the parents speak Mandarin or Cantonese at home, but most of them may not speak either Mandarin or Cantonese at home. Such a complex population provides a very dynamic learning environment for language learners. From the limited findings of my pilot study, I gained a sense of who my participants would be in terms of ethno-cultural backgrounds. The next step was to review the study methodologies available to me from existing research literature.

I first reviewed research regarding heritage language retention, minority languages rights, community-based heritage language schools, and development of ethnic identity. I found that both quantitative and qualitative methods have been applied to different aspects of the basic issues. In Rumbaut, Massey, and Bean's quantitative study (2006), two surveys were utilized to examine the linguistic life expectancies of immigrant groups in Southern California. Another quantitative study was conducted by Adams, Tessler, and Gamache (2005) investigating whether linguistic and ethnic diversity at school encouraged Chinese adoptees to develop a sense of being ethnically Chinese. Using the results of a survey and questionnaires, the analysis suggested that children who attended schools with greater diversity were less likely to show a Chinese preference, and more likely to show a White preference. In California, K-12 teachers' attitudes towards heritage language maintenance have been examined by Lee and Oxelson (2006) using mixed methods, combining analytical survey data and interview data. Another mixed method study was conducted by Yang (2007) with regard to parents' perception of heritage language maintenance. In Yang's study, the quantitative data is comprised of self-reported

items regarding parental perception and activities, gender factors, parental background, parental education background, and parental occupational distributions. As well, Yang used qualitative data to provide a detailed explanation of those self-reported items, such as parent's perceptions of an ideal in-home learning environment for their children.

Most literature describing the experiences, attitudes or ethnic identity factors in heritage language and HL maintenance tends predominantly to employ qualitative methods since such methods inductively generate descriptive data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). In Xiao's (1998) research examining Chinese language maintenance in Winnipeg, she used a survey and participant-observation methodology to collect data from four organizations where Chinese language instruction was provided to both heritage learners and non-heritage learners. Also, You (2005) applied focus group interviews to interpret Korean American children's negotiations of their ethnic identities. Furthermore, Noro's (2009) preliminary research explored the correlations between Japanese as a heritage language and constructing ethnic identity among Hapa Japanese Canadian children. The findings imply that locality affects the degree of Japanese ethno-linguistic vitality and there is a debatable relationship between language and ethnicity. In any case, it is clear that both quantitative and qualitative methodologies can be effective depending on the nature of the data sought by the researcher.

In the present study, my intention is to explore parents' experiences in helping their children with heritage language retention. I also hope to understand the challenges that parents may encounter with their decisions in this regard. To this end,

an ideal research methodology, in my mind, must 1) provide sufficient space and time for participants to give detailed explanations of their experiences and beliefs, 2) view participants as individual cases with unique life backgrounds instead of generalizing their personal experiences and beliefs into fixed or reified categories, 3) reflect the current social phenomena in both ethnic groups and in mainstream society by which ethnic culture and language have arguably gained more recognition and value, and 4) demonstrate how these personal experiences and beliefs affect people at the personal, familial, communal, societal, and national level. I therefore feel that the characteristics of qualitative research, such as its effectiveness for focusing on process, context, and meanings, as well as on both descriptive and inductive data (Bogden, & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2008; Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S., 2008), make it the most appropriate as a tool for exploring my three research questions. My research questions are:

- (1) What are the motivations and expectations for parents in sending their children to Chinese heritage language programs?
- (2) How and to what extent does language ideology (Fairclough, 2001) influence parents' choices in terms of choosing Mandarin as a heritage language for their children?
- (3) How do parents understand their children's (bilingual and bicultural) identity development as negotiated through heritage language education?

Case Study Through Critical Lenses

According to Yin (2003), “ As a research strategy, the case study is used in many situations to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena”(p.1). The case study is widely used in the social sciences, such as psychology, nursing, sociology, social work, political science, and community planning due to its flexible, in-depth nature, as well as the ability to use it to appreciate multiple realities and differences (Bogden, & Biklen, 2007). The explicit literal meaning of case study is to concentrate on a specific case, to provide in-depth exploration of the target case, and a holistic and appropriate inquiry of the proposed case (Creswell, 2008; Gangeness & Yurkovich, 2006). Creswell (2008) categorized case studies under the category of ethnographic design because its longitudinal, in-depth, context-focused characteristics overlapped with certain features of ethnographic research. However, most scholars view case studies as an independent research methodology (Bogden, & Biklen, 2007; Yin, 2001). As Yin (2001) mentions, when “what” and “how” questions are being proposed in the research, and when the researcher has little control in terms of researched context, case, and process, the case study becomes the preferred strategy. In particular, Yin describes case study research as being effective in providing an appreciation of the differences among cases, events, and phenomena.

Based on what has been discussed above, I believe the case study strategy is best suited to describe the in-depth personal experiences, beliefs, values, and decision-making factors of concern in the present study. Bogden and Biklen (2007) have stated that “Qualitative researchers go to the particular setting under study

because they are concerned with context” (p. 4). As a researcher and a member of Chinese community in an overseas setting, my interests in my own community inspire me to investigate how community-based schools operate, what minority parents experience in terms of enrolling their children in these community-run heritage language schools and how minority parents think about heritage language retention. On the other hand, as a minority (Taiwanese) member of the broadly-conceived Chinese diasporic community, I am curious to discover whether the local Chinese community takes advantage of heritage language programs to spread a broad concept of Chinese nationalism.

Community-based heritage language schools are not new in conception or organization. They have existed in many parts of the world for centuries in one form or another. In contemporary Canadian society community-based heritage language schools offer an attractive and idealized vision for members of a diasporic community hoping to maintain heritage language, cultural knowledge and traditions, ethnic beliefs, and sometimes the religions or philosophies of their original land. My point is to see how parents interpret their beliefs about maintaining heritage language through heritage language schools, what experiences parents faced during the process of assisting their children’s heritage language and ethnic identity development, what they learned from such experience, and what the relationship between these ethnic parents and their own ethnic community is.

By focusing on critical aspects of above topics, I seek to ascertain if there are any ideological or political practices behind the behaviours of my participants, and how changing ideologies and political practices may affect their decisions when

confronting social power, oppression, inequality and marginalization. In consideration of such questions, I incorporate the critical approach (Canagarajah, 1993; Hawkin & Norton, 2008; Norton-Peirce, 1995; Segall, 2001) into my study. Habermas (as cited in Hawkin & Norton, 2008 p.1) explains that critical theory, “challenges constructs such as naturalism, rationality, and neutrality, referencing instead the subjective, the social, and partisan nature of reality, and the ways in which our understandings of the world are constructed by contextual factors that are ideologically informed.” It challenges our thoughts of ordinal way of living, such as social behavior, language, the common sense constructed by and within social relationship that results in imbalanced social power, oppression, inequality, hegemony, and marginalization.

Adapting the critical approach in a case study may unlock minority parents’ beliefs regarding heritage language education, language choices, and development of ethnic identity. Thus, for example, although it looks like a very reasonable and rational behavior to enroll the next generation in a heritage language school in order to preserve their heritage roots, in fact, the choice of heritage languages may contain various issues related to existing power relations, social hegemony and inequity. I am especially fascinated by the phenomenon of how Mandarin is increasingly being recognized as a heritage language in preference to other so-called “dialects” or “regional languages”, such as Cantonese. There is no doubt that Mandarin has a powerful and privileged status in countries like China and Taiwan because of its official status. However, even in diasporic communities, like some heritage Chinese groups in Winnipeg whose native languages are other than Mandarin, people appear to have accepted the ideology of Mandarin superiority, and hope to spread it to the next generation (Chen, 2009a; 2009b). In the present study, I discover and analyze

the common sense assumptions surrounding the concept of “being Chinese.” For example, I ask what cultural, linguistic, and political perspectives are involved in “being Chinese”? This is certainly relevant to the participants in this study who believe that they have a certain degree of Chinese heritage, for it is to a great extent on the basis of that belief that they decided to enroll their children in a Chinese heritage language program. These people may come from many different geographical areas of China or outside of China and speak a variety of languages, all of which they consider to be “Chinese” language. Their mother tongues may be fundamentally different from Mandarin Chinese in many ways; nonetheless, the participants all consider Mandarin to be their heritage language to a certain degree because of being ethnic Chinese. I wish to question how it is that the participants seem to perceive that Mandarin is their heritage language and what power relationships are implicit in that perception. Finally, it is clear that power relations are conveyed in the classroom via such factors as textbook selection, teachers’ backgrounds and sense of mission, as well as through the choice of school activities and linkages to organizations and agencies in the greater community. I will also be examining these various factors with an eye to deconstructing the “common sense” assumptions of the heritage language program and its participants.

Through the use of critical lenses, I have also tried to challenge “common-sense assumptions” (Fairclough, 2001) that I myself possess—such as that “every Chinese-looking person should speak Chinese.” I have unlocked my “taken for granted” worlds (Bogden & Knopp Biklen, 2007), and deconstructed the details of our ordinary living environment and the assumptions I make as I negotiate my daily

routine. I believe that there are reasons for every common-sense assumption we made. For example, it is easy to assume that ethnic Chinese should learn Chinese language, and that Chinese language means the official language of the nation of China. However, the fact is that there are many different languages spoken by “Chinese” people, and even within the nation of China (The Peoples’ Republic of China) many different languages are spoken. The official language of China is Mandarin, but the majority of ethnic Chinese immigrants to Canada do not speak Mandarin as a first language.

My assumptions about parents who register their children in a Chinese heritage language program must thus achieve a certain level of understanding about: 1) What it means to be “Chinese” 2) the languages spoken by ethnic Chinese people, 3) the consequences of maintaining Chinese heritage and language, 4) the implications of cultivating children’s ethnic identity, and 4) the balance between host culture and mother culture.

The present study also took the language socialization (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986) perspective into consideration, since the intention of these parents in enrolling their children in such heritage language programs was also to provide their children with opportunities to interact with members of the ethnic community, as well as to have their children learn the history, traditions, values, and proper behaviors of the target culture. That means that there was an expectation that children would simultaneously learn language and culture through interactions with competent community members in a culturally specific environment.

In order to better understand the connection between common sense

assumptions and language ideology, I try to apply Norton's (1995) "six tenets" (p.570) to conceptualize the design of the present research. Norton presents six tenets of critical research that she adopted for her research related to language learning of immigrant women in Canada and how these tenets affect the research process of framing, data collection and data analysis. The six tenets of critical research (p.570) include 1) rejection of claims to being totally objective or unbiased in any research, 2) examination of the complicated relationship between social structure and human agency without applying deterministic or reductionist analyses, 3) the assumptions of inequities among gender, race, class, ethnicity and sexual orientation are directly or indirectly developed from unequal power relations in society, 4) interest in how individuals make sense of their living experience, 5) interest in the connection between their research and historical context, and 6) the belief in the possibility of transforming society and the education system. Therefore, in developing my research project I asked if other language choices have ever been considered and whether Chinese cultural imperialism has influenced heritage language choice. Are any decisions that the participants made affected by their belief systems (personal or educational background) or by current community members (existing power relations) in this host country? How do they feel about the relationship between themselves and the Chinese community? How do they help their children to negotiate their ethnic identities in the host country? I hope to raise an awareness of the ethnic group concerning the questions; "what is the main point of heritage language retention and how should people make their heritage language choices?"

Many of the above questions seem to derive from a marginal point of view. As a researcher and a member of Chinese community, I cannot deny the fact of my minority positioning in this community. This is due to the country I came from and my political stance. Kouritzin (2002) argues that researchers cannot deny that personal and educational backgrounds cultivate their worldviews. In turn, worldviews deeply influence how we interpret and comprehend the things we see and experience in our lived environment. In other words, researchers in the field need to be aware of any assumptions they make, cultural artifacts they create, and realize the weaknesses of their assumptions.

Block (2000) believes that interview data are not only answers or reflections from participants, but also the participants' "voice" (p. 759) in responding to researchers' attitudes, intentions and questions. This "voice" may or may not be different depending on context, researcher, or occasion. Therefore, the interview data are co-constructed by researchers and participants. Through an understanding of the characteristics of interview data, a mutual trust relationship between participants and researcher becomes especially significant. Under the terms of a mutual trust relationship, participants and researcher should reach an agreement about the findings. Participants and the researcher will shape these findings together because these findings will be derived from participants, then analyzed and published by the researcher. So the researcher has a responsibility to clarify the credibility of these findings and also to make sure the findings will not harm participants in any situation. This involves ethical responsibility on the part of researchers. Therefore, as researchers, we have to remind ourselves of the two basic ethical principles (Bogden

& Biklen, 2007.) These are; 1) participants in any research with “human subjects” are voluntary, and they must understand the nature of the research, the dangers and the obligations that are involved, and 2) the risk that participants are exposed to cannot be greater than the gains they might obtain. The researcher needs to clarify how these findings are related to the participants, how participants are influenced by these findings, and how the researcher is going to implicate these findings in educational settings, or even in broader contexts.

Study Context

This research aimed to explore the challenges that parents encounter in making decisions regarding their children’s heritage language retention, parents’ motivations and the expectations related to participating in Chinese heritage language programs. I also analyzed how national ideology impacts parents’ language ideology, and further investigated how parents help in developing or negotiating their children’s ethnic identity in a bi-cultural and bilingual environment. According to Xiao (1998), the Chinese population in Winnipeg is divided into several groups speaking languages that are mutually unintelligible. Community members themselves understand these languages as regional languages or dialects. Even though there are a number of so-called regional languages or dialects spoken among the members of the Chinese population in this city, Chinese language learning in the school setting only focuses on Mandarin and Cantonese. The Chinese language learning organizations in this city include three community-based schools, the Chinese cultural centre, as well as some churches that offer Chinese language programs. The focus of this study is based on three community-based language schools. These community-

based language schools are the Manitoba Chinese School, Han Chinese School, and Elite Chinese School. The Manitoba Chinese School has the longest history among these Chinese schools. It offers only a Mandarin program and teaches simplified Chinese characters. The Han Chinese School, originally was founded by a group of Cantonese speakers, so it offered a Cantonese program with traditional Chinese characters. In order to involve other segments of the Chinese population, the Han Chinese school started offering few Mandarin classes a decade ago. The Elite Chinese School is composed of students from mixed heritages, mainly ethnic Chinese coming from South East Asia countries. The Elite Chinese school offers Mandarin programs with traditional Chinese characters.

Recruiting participants. The technique for recruiting participants was designed to follow the principles of purposeful sampling. Participants with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds would best exemplify the realities of a typical Chinese heritage language program. Therefore the basic requirement for parent participants was that they fit the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds comprising the local Chinese community. Participation in this research was voluntary. All of the recruiting procedures followed the rules of the Education and Nursing Ethics Review Board in the University of Manitoba. My responsibility as a researcher was to ensure every participant's privacy and voluntary status. To this end I adopted such devices as using coded names in the transcribed data and final report, password protected computer files, assurance of free withdrawal at any time, and mutual agreement about interview place and schedule.

Since the study intended to explore the personal experiences and beliefs of a group of people who shared a common behaviour: that being enrolling their child in a Chinese heritage language program, the ideal place to recruit parent participants was at the heritage language schools themselves. I started by sending out information to three community based heritage language schools, and then followed up with visits to these schools in person. Among the three Chinese schools, I had several contacts with the Manitoba Chinese School so I had built rapport with this specific school. Eventually I received full access to potential participants in this school, such as being allowed to give the information package⁵ (bilingual--English and Mandarin) to parents during the recess period or at the end of class time. At the other two schools, the Han Chinese school and the Elite Chinese School, I could only give my information package to school administrators, instead of parents. Aside from the placing posters in the school locations, I also put up posters in several Chinese restaurants and Chinese grocery stores, hoping to spread the information to people who would be interested in participating the study. These posters were bilingual (English and Mandarin) and outlined the nature of the study, including its purpose, the requirement for voluntarily participating, the research schedule, and a brief summary of interview content (see appendix D).

Participants. The recruiting process from three school locations was not a big success, and forced me to become more active in searching for ideal parent participants via different means, such as distributing information packages to parents in person, and visiting the schools every week. Eventually, I recruited five parents

⁵ The information package included an introduction letter to parents(Appendix C), consent form (Appendix A), and sample interview questions (Appendix E).

with different geographical, cultural and linguistic backgrounds with experiences in enrolling their children in the three target Chinese schools. These five parent participants are Mimi (Elite Chinese school), Ellen (Manitoba Chinese school and Han Chinese school), Cherry (Manitoba Chinese school), Vuong (Han Chinese school), and Emma (Han Chinese school). In chapter four, I have a detailed explanation of how I met these parents, these parents' background stories, and their perspectives of heritage language maintenance.

The participants in this research study were from different geographical and linguistic backgrounds. In addition, the research topic was related to parental perspectives on language choice and maintenance. Therefore, the language I used to conduct the interviews became very crucial and needed to be considered carefully. I decided to leave the language choice to my participants so that they could choose the language they felt most comfortable communicating with me in. Leaving the language choice to my participants not only reinforced participants' autonomy in terms of how they were to be researched, but it also built rapport between researched and researcher.

Participant observer. During the recruiting process, I regularly visited the three community-based Chinese schools. Also, I promised one Chinese school (Manitoba Chinese school) that I would contribute my own knowledge as native speaker of Mandarin to school. This was partly because I hoped to gain volunteering experience in a school setting, and because it might potentially construct my knowledge of how the community-based school operates. Aside from the fact that I did a pilot study in one of the Chinese schools (The Manitoba Chinese school) in 2008,

I did not have any connection or work relationship with any Chinese school in this city. My only knowledge of these Chinese schools comes from the school websites and some advertisements in a local Chinese newspaper. This may limit my understanding of how such heritage language programs operate, who registers in such programs, and what people's attitudes are when they register in such programs. I believed the volunteering opportunity would help me to get insights into the living and learning experiences of community-based heritage language programs. This information assisted me in gaining a better understanding of parents' decisions about heritage language retention in relation to networks in the ethnic community, social structures, and national ideological assumptions.

In 2009, two weeks before the Christmas holiday, after I had completed all of my participant interviews, the principal of the Manitoba Chinese School phoned me and asked me if I was still willing to volunteer in her school. Since approximately half of her teacher resources were Chinese international students, many of them would go back their home countries during the long holiday breaks, such as the Christmas holidays, mid-term break (during February), and summer holidays. Therefore, I accepted this opportunity to volunteer in the Manitoba Chinese School. I felt it was a perfect moment to become a participant observer (Cresswell, 2008) in this particular research site since I would no longer have any power relations with any of my participants whom I had interviewed.

Because there were two teachers in the classroom already, my responsibility as a volunteer in the Manitoba Chinese School was to help with class management, rather than with actual language instruction. The role as a teacher assistant was

beneficial for my field note taking. Therefore, I regularly kept the field notes and a reflective journal after classes.

The class I worked with was at the kindergarten level, with children aged from 5 to 7 years. The complexity of these students' backgrounds was beyond what I expected. According to my previous experience from the pilot study, I expected that all students in these so-called "heritage Chinese language schools" would have Chinese heritage to certain degree. However, it turned out that there are many people who wish their children to study Chinese language at very young age, yet have no heritage connection to Chinese culture at all. The majority of these non-heritage students were from Korean-speaking families. It is an interesting phenomenon and may become a potential research issue for the future.

Creswell (2008) maintains that field notes should include descriptive field notes and reflective field notes. Descriptive field notes focus on the detailed information of events, activities, and people, which tend to be objective; while reflective field notes emphasize the researcher's personal thoughts related to events, people and activities, which seem to be subjective. I chose to keep a combination of descriptive and reflective field notes because I hoped to keep records of what I have seen and experienced in every class, as well as how I felt about different events that happened in the school. Besides this, I included experiences that I had with school administrators and some parents. The subjective and objective data became an important part of my data collection. I also kept records of how I established rapport with research sites and these parents; how I sensed the power differences between parents and research sites; my attitudes and biases toward the target community;

and how my perspectives changed during the process of research; how these changes shaped my interpretation of the data I collected; and what I needed to improve or be more aware of in future fieldwork. The reflective research journal reminded me of the focus of my research and assisted me in becoming a better researcher.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Interview techniques, volunteer experience, and the descriptive and reflective filed notes generated a large amount of data that needed to be organized and summarized. The most common approach to organize these data is to read through the narratives and researcher's comments, find common words, phrases, or events; and then code these as patterns or themes. These coded data are then listed under certain categories. Data analysis in the present study put more emphasis on emic data (Cresswell, 2008) – participants' attitudes, beliefs, behaviors and their social practices (Chapelle & Duff, 2003) because it attempted to represent participants' social behavior and experiences, which constitute elements in the social relations of the Chinese community. It aimed to gain a deeper understanding of experience and social practice among these culture-sharing people. The process of data analysis was inductive and iterative (Creswell, 2008; McMillan, 2008). This meant that I produced broad themes or categories from diverse data sources, and then generated a large and consolidating picture. Because so much of the analysis relied on my interpretation, I had to clarify my initial motivation, perspective, background, and theoretical framework in order to provide readers with a clear picture of this research.

Besides, it was important to consider the evaluation criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba— "trustworthiness", which is constructed by introducing the criteria

of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) regarding scientific adequacy in educational research methodology. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), *credibility* is to demonstrate whether or not the data, data analysis, and conclusion are believable and trustworthy. This *credibility* is enhanced by activities like prolonged engagement in the field, member checking and triangulation. *Dependability* is defined as being when phenomena and methods cannot assume stability. It enhances the consistency of data collection and analysis, data auditing and traceability. *Confirmability* is used in controlling for the effects of observations and interventions when neutrality in the research cannot be guaranteed. Making reflexive journals, using rich data, and establishing a rapport assist the *confirmability* of a study. Finally, the criterion of *transferability* is used in relation to a field where the study findings cannot be directly applied, and where extrapolation is employed. It is normally enhanced by thick description of research context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miyata & Kai, 2009).

Furthermore, deWitt and Ploeg (2006) propose evaluation criteria for judging the rigour of interpretive phenomenological research that provides an in-depth understanding of the legitimacy in qualitative methodologies. These expressions of rigour are balanced integration, openness, concreteness, resonance, and actualization (deWitt & Ploeg, 2006, p. 224). *Balanced integration* refers to the interrelation between philosophical concepts within the study methods and findings, which aims to create a balance between the voices of study participants and the philosophical explanation. *Openness* is related to multiple decisions made throughout the research process. This decision-making process is systematic and explicit.

Concreteness relates to the connection between usefulness of research findings and lived experiences. *Resonance* bridges the feelings of reading study findings upon the reader. Finally, *actualization* addresses the future interpretation from readers related to the resonance of study findings (deWatt and Ploeg, 2006).

In consideration of trustworthiness and rigour, I developed rapport with research sites and participants, used triangulation of sources (interview data, volunteering in the fields, and reflective research journal), and inductive and iterative analysis techniques. I attempted to balance the voices of the researcher, researched, research context and current literature. I provided a rich descriptive research process and analyzed data so that readers of my research study would find connections with their lived experience and living environment. Thus, due to multiple considerations, I made the decision to choose case study as the methodology for this research study. The next step was then to put the plan into action, for this it was necessary to recruit parent participants. *Table 1* outlines the summaries of parent participants' backgrounds. I describe the parent's country of origins, heritage languages, the length of staying in Canada, spouse's country of origins, educational backgrounds, occupations, numbers of family members, and child's Chinese HL learning history. The next chapter provides a summary of the stories of these parent participants, including their perspectives on attending HL school, the importance of maintaining HL for the next generation, negotiation between two cultures.

Table 1: Summaries of parent's background

| | Mimi | Cherry (non-Chinese heritage) | Ellen | Vuong | Emma |
|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| Country of origin | China (Spouse: Taiwan) | Canada (Spouse: Canada) | Hong Kong (Spouse: Canada) | Vietnam (born in Malaysia) (Spouse: Philippines) | Taiwan (Spouse: Vietnam) |
| 1 st language/ other language | Mandarin/English | English/ French | Cantonese/ English | Cantonese/English | Taiwanese/ Mandarin, English |
| Education/ occupation | College degree/ Restaurant owner | B.A / Business | Medical degree/ Physician | B.Ed./Elementary school teacher | B.A/IT technician |
| Length of stay in Canada | 12 years | From birth | 30 years | 29 years (Arrived in Canada when he was 8 months old) | 13 years |
| Home language | Mandarin | English | Cantonese/English | Cantonese (parents)/ English (Siblings & wife, daughter) | Mandarin |
| Children's HL learning situation | (Elite Chinese school) Older son (15): 4 years of HL learning Younger son (9): 2 years of HL learning (Both of them stopped Mandarin learning in 2007) | (Manitoba Chinese school) Daughter (6): 2nd year of HL learning (continuing..) | (Han Chinese school & Manitoba Chinese school) Older daughter (15): 1 year of Cantonese learning, 1 year of Mandarin learning (Quit many years ago) Younger daughter (11): 6 years of Mandarin learning (Quit last December) * A year and half of private tutoring *Computer self- learning program (present) | (Han Chinese school) 11 years of Cantonese learning/ 1 year of Mandarin learning (quit at grade 12) | (Han Chinese school) Older daughter: 3 years of HL learning Younger son: 2 years of HL learning (Both of them stopped Mandarin learning at the end of 2008) |

Chapter Four: Summary of Parent's stories

Mimi- A Happily Bicultural Mother

Mimi and Mr. He are a couple who own a restaurant in the area in this city where the largest concentration of the Chinese population resides. I met Mimi through a friend of mine because we went to their restaurant quite often. Also, I heard from my friend that Mr. He was a principal of one Chinese school in Winnipeg a few years ago. After talking to Mimi about my research project, she showed willingness when she knew that I was going to interview her. Mimi was my first participant in this study. She told me that we could have an interview at her restaurant in the afternoon. The first interview was conducted with Mr. He because Mimi was preparing to go out when I visited her restaurant. Mimi asked her husband to perform her job at the restaurant as well as to do the interview with me. With only one chef (Mr. He) at the restaurant, I had several interruptions during the first interview with Mr. He. Therefore, we called off the interview that day. One week after the first interview, Mimi and I had a second interview at her restaurant. The second interview was better than the first one in terms of quality, there being fewer interruptions and the restaurant being quieter.

Mimi's background story. Mimi is originally from China and Mr. He is from Taiwan. After they got married, Mimi moved from China to Taiwan and lived in Taiwan for two years. Then they immigrated to Canada in 1997. They had their first child in Taiwan and the second child was born in Canada. The two boys are now 15 and 9 years old. Mimi and Mr. He are Mandarin speakers, and they both have good communication skills in English after 12-years living in Canada.

The reason that they enrolled their two boys in the Elite Chinese school was because Mr. He was an active member in the Chinese community several years ago. Mr. He used to be on the committee at a Chinese school board and then he became a principal at that Chinese school. Starting several years ago in this city he also has published a Chinese magazine. Since Mr. He was serving in the Chinese school, he and Mimi decided to bring their children to the school on Saturdays. Originally, Mr. He and Mimi hoped that their children could learn Chinese characters and culture in the school. However, they both knew that their children might not learn too much due to the limited time. Mimi's children both liked to go to Chinese school because they could play with friends of similar age on Saturdays. After they opened their restaurant, Mr. He resigned from his principal position at the Chinese school and their children stopped their Mandarin learning.

Mimi's attitude towards heritage language maintenance. Mimi mentioned that she and her husband were very open-minded people. They do not want to force their children to do things they do not like. At home, they tried to communicate with their children in Mandarin. However, her younger son did not really follow this rule. Mimi told me that part of the reason was that she and her husband had been very busy in their jobs since the second son was born, so they did not have time to stay with him or teach him everything in Mandarin. After their younger son started going to a daycare, his dominant language became English. He did not speak Mandarin to his parents, although Mimi thought he could understand basic Mandarin conversation. So basically, Mimi and Mr. He tried to accommodate their second son's language preference at home, which was speaking English to him.

In 2006, Mimi took her two sons to China to visit her parents and relatives. After coming back from that trip, her second son started trying to speak Mandarin to them. Both she and Mr. He felt happy to see the changing attitude from their younger son. Before that, they both thought the second son was purely Canadianized. Now both of Mimi's sons try to speak Mandarin to them, unless they want to argue or have something urgent to say. For Mimi's children, English is still their dominant language.

Mimi and Mr. He did not expect too much in terms of their sons' Chinese education. They hoped they could understand and communicate Mandarin with them, and that was enough for them. They tried to teach their two sons Chinese characters at home. But the result was always a struggle. They are now giving up this idea and are just hoping their children have a happy childhood. Mimi and Mr. He both mentioned to me that the learning results from the Chinese school were very limited due to the very short school time. But one thing for sure was that their sons made some friends from that Chinese school, and so did this couple.

Negotiation between two cultures. Both Mimi and Mr. He are very satisfied with their life in Canada. Mimi told me that their personalities were similar and they did not desire to make a lot of money to buy many material things. They are very happy that they have family here and have their own restaurant. They also like the lifestyle here, which is less stressful compared to lifestyles in either Mainland China or Taiwan. Though they both like the host culture, it is clear that they are still Chinese and they hope their children learn Chinese values, such as politeness and humility. Because of this couple's personalities, it seems like they are trying to find a balance

between host and heritage cultures. Mimi and her husband's attitude toward their children's heritage education is to know who you are first, and then you can decide whether or not you want to embrace the host culture. Mimi told me lots of Chinese immigrants would work very hard in order to get bigger houses and expensive cars, or they expected their children to have great achievements academically. But for her and her husband, they just hope their children can grow up happily.

However, Mimi told me that it was very challenging to educate her second son. Mimi's second son was more prone to desiring Canadian lifestyle and values since he spent lots of time in daycare and regular school in Canada. Now he studies in a French immersion school where Chinese students are very few. Most of his friends do not have similar minority immigrant backgrounds. Therefore, he sometimes does not understand why his peers can do something, but his parents do not allow him to do it, such as sleepovers or eating Western food. Mimi thinks that sometimes it is hard to persuade her second son to behave like a Chinese or think in the Chinese way. Therefore, Mimi and her husband tried to compromise with him to a certain degree so that both of them can find a middle ground. Mimi believes that when their second son gets older and more mature, he will appreciate Chinese language and culture better.

Interestingly, Mimi's first son is opposite to his younger brother. He is a well-behaved and mild tempered kid. He always has good communication with his parents, and "most importantly" (from Mimi's perspective) he recognizes himself as half Chinese and half Taiwanese because of his parents' original nationalities. He and his parents moved to Canada when he was three. As a child of immigrants, Mimi's elder

son had some difficulties when he started schooling in Canada. He used to have some identity problems when they lived in the north part of the city. Mimi explained that was because only a small number of Chinese resided in their neighborhood. When Mimi's family moved to the south of the city and the elder son met many people who have similar backgrounds to him, he became more stable in his school performance and started appreciating his Chinese heritage. Whenever Mimi mentioned anything to me about her older son, she showed satisfaction on her face and kept saying—"he is a nice kid." This does not mean that Mimi's second son is not a good kid. Mimi, instead, described her second son as a smart kid because his school performance is better than his older brother.

After interviewing Mimi. My personal relationship with the participant created a situation where the first interview was not successful, therefore I felt very frustrated. Mimi treated me as her friend, and thought she could offer some "help". However, this help brought some problems, such as the power relationship, and a lack of understanding of the study. First, she asked me to go to her restaurant for the interview. Even though I knew that this was not an ideal place for the interview, I did not suggest that we should find a quieter place. I knew that Mimi has a very busy schedule because of running a restaurant with her husband.

Secondly, when I invited her to my study, she agreed to my invitation quickly and said I could go whenever I wanted to have an interview. There was no appointment needed because she thought, "it was just answering some questions." For me, I knew that I had found someone "who could participate in my study";

instead of “who wanted to participate in my study.” This was, obviously, different to what I hoped for and expected.

Due to the problems I faced in my first interview, I started wondering if I should change my positivist mind (Motha, 2009) in order to meet this ethnic group. Kouritzin (2009) describes less rigid methods for conducting research or interviews. Researchers also need to consider diverse variables, such as a participant’s ethnicity, education, social background, as well as the historical and current political situation(s), and adjust their methods accordingly. In this case, I wondered, if most of my participants thought that participating in the study is a kind of help, should I explain to them, “No, it is different from help” or “Yes, you are not only helping me, but also helping our Chinese community”? Obviously, the latter answer would be closer to my original intention. In my mind, I felt most familiar with this ethnic group, but at the same time, after my few years of experience with Western education I felt it difficult to approach them. The understanding of the interview process in this ethnic group seems different from what was assumed in Western academia. After several days of struggling, I decided to change my attitude and collected data whenever I visited Mimi’s restaurant.

Cherry-A Culturally Sensitive Adoptive Mother

I knew Cherry because of the pilot study I did in 2008. She was one of my parent participants. She and her husband are non-Chinese heritage parents who adopted a Chinese girl six years ago. She, her daughter, and her husband all registered in the Manitoba Chinese School two years ago. When I contacted her via email, she gave me a prompt reply and agreed to participate. Cherry’s supportive

attitude in participating in this study encouraged me a lot. It made me feel that somebody really cared about the issue that I also concerned about. This is a very important part of doing research. The researcher needs to feel that it is not only they who are concerned with the results of this research, but that the participants are as well. During our discussions or interviews, I also came upon some interesting new issues, such as how do children acquire the concept of culture? Is it through their parents, through the dominant environment, or does it depend on a variety of factors?

Cherry's background. Cherry and her husband are both Canadians without Chinese heritage. They adopted a girl from China 6 years ago. Cherry read many articles related to experiences of being adoptive parents and being adopted. These suggested that adoptive parents should assist adoptees to access their birth culture. Cherry and her husband decided to follow what these articles and books suggested. Cherry is a well-educated businesswoman and she also has a bachelor's degree in education. She is quite familiar with how an interview and research is conducted. She and her husband both registered in the adult Chinese language program at the same school with their daughter in order to encourage her daughter to learn her heritage language.

Cherry's attitude toward heritage language maintenance. From interviewing Cherry, I perceived that from her readings she had acquired a very solid sense of what she believed about international adoption. Cherry believed that it was important to offer her daughter access to people of similar heritage language and culture. Cherry believed that for her daughter, attending Saturday Chinese School was just the beginning of her learning journey or root-searching journey. Once Cherry's daughter

becomes older and more mature, she would have her own thoughts about whether she would like to continue her heritage language learning and how she is going to define herself. Cherry knew that the decision for her daughter to learn Mandarin on Saturdays was made by Cherry and her husband, so in order to encourage her daughter to accept this decision, they also registered in the Chinese school to learn the language as well. By doing so, Cherry's daughter not only had some company in the Chinese school, but also knew that her parents cared about learning Mandarin. Besides heritage language learning, Cherry's daughter is also enrolled in the Chinese folk dancing class on Sundays, which is a class that she really enjoys.

Though Cherry is not sure how much her daughter will learn from this language program because of the limited school time, she still feels the environment where the majority of students have Asian-looking faces is good for her daughter. In Cherry's mind, her daughter may feel less different from the others, and she may feel that she belongs to this ethnic community to a certain degree because they all have similar Asian-looking faces.

Cherry also pointed out that, in this Chinese school, parents did not interact very regularly unless they spoke the same language. For example, Cherry basically had interactions with English-speaking parents who had similar adoption experiences only. Cherry mentioned that she had very little communication with parents who speak languages other than English. Even though Cherry quite actively participated in most activities in this Chinese school, she hardly ever had real conversations with parents of other language groups, such as Mandarin speaking parents or Cantonese speaking parents. From this experience, Cherry concluded that the networking in this

Chinese school community was limited to those belonging to the different language groups.

Negotiation between two cultures. Cherry told me that “I am not Chinese, and I have no Chinese background, and I will never have any Chinese culture.” Therefore, it is not a struggle for Cherry herself to choose between Chinese culture and Canadian culture. However, Cherry mentioned that her daughter would be the one who suffers such a struggle. Because of her appearance, people will expect to hear her speaking her heritage language; people will wonder where she or her parents come from, people will wonder why she has a Western last name etc. When Cherry mentioned this to me, she showed a bit of emotion and she told me about a book written by a Korean adoptee, called *“Once they hear my name: Korean adoptees and their journeys toward identity.”* Even though Cherry offers heritage language access to her daughter, she believes that culture is not only participating in language classes, folk dancing, and going to Chinese restaurants. It, instead, includes how you are raised, how your parents teach you about this world, how you interpret things around you, and much more. Culture is from growing up, from family, and from generation to generation so Cherry does not think that her daughter will perceive herself as a culturally Chinese. Because of living with a Canadian family, Cherry’s daughter will learn Canadian values and worldview from her parents.

After interviewing Cherry. Cherry’s interview was very different to Mimi’s. First of all, Cherry viewed this interview as a formal interview, and she understood the procedure of being interviewed. I felt that Cherry knew the “rule” or the “format” of an interview so she fit the category of an ideal participant. Secondly, because I had

email contact with Cherry before the interview, she seemed well prepared for the interview questions and provided nuanced answers. Thirdly, since Cherry was very serious about this interview, she expected that she would receive some kind of feedback or report when the study was done. It seemed like Cherry was really interested in this topic. To some extent, Cherry's serious attitude toward this interview made me feel that this research was appreciated and understood. On the other hand, I understood that Cherry's educational (bachelor degree in Education) and ethnic background (locally born Canadian) were key elements contributing to why I felt positively about Cherry. Because both of us had received higher education in Canada specialized in education, we had similar educational backgrounds. Both of us understood the "standardized procedure of conducting the research". Even though I hoped I would have more participants like Cherry with knowledge about how research was done, I realized that the research I designed was intended to collect different perspectives from parents with diverse backgrounds. Therefore, the experience of interviewing Cherry informed me that I might expect to encounter many different interview experiences.

Ellen-A Persevering Mother

Ellen is a parent who has sent her daughter to the Manitoba Chinese School for several years. The Manitoba Chinese School is the school that my partner has some involvement with. Ellen has been a long term volunteer at this Chinese school. I met her through participating in some school activities with my partner. I knew that she had a non-Chinese looking daughter studying in this school so I thought she may have a Canadian husband. Both she and her daughter are quite active in this school.

When I started regularly visiting this Chinese school because of my research project, I met her at school sometimes. Therefore, I invited her to participate in my study. Before we set up the interview time and place, we sent some emails back and forth. She was very encouraging when she knew the nature of my thesis. She told me there were lots of challenges maintaining a heritage language in her children's case.

Ellen's background story. Ellen moved from Hong Kong to Winnipeg with her family when she was 15. At the time, it was very hard for her to adjust to the new environment mainly because of the language barrier. Although she learned some English in Hong Kong, it was still very challenging for her to speak English and adjust to cultural differences. Her first language is Cantonese, which is the language she communicates with her family and relatives in. She also learned Mandarin as a second or extra language at school in Hong Kong, but she did not try to speak Mandarin until she started volunteering in this Mandarin school. She has been living in Canada for 30 years. She married a Caucasian Canadian and has two mixed-parentage daughters who are aged 15 and 11. She is a physician in a hospital.

Ellen's attitude towards heritage language maintenance. Ellen tried very hard to teach her children Cantonese at home. Since her husband can speak only English and they also live in an English-language dominant environment, she decided to speak as much Cantonese as she could to her children. The reason why she hoped her children could learn Cantonese was because she wanted her children to maintain communication with her family and know where she came from. So she sent her daughters to the so-called "Chinese schools", including a Cantonese school (Han Chinese School) and a Mandarin school (Manitoba Chinese School). Her first daughter

had one year of Cantonese school and one year of Mandarin school learning experiences. The second daughter had 6 to 7 years of Mandarin learning experiences. Though Ellen is a Cantonese speaker, her rationale for putting her two daughters in Mandarin school was that the first Cantonese school experience was not very good. At that time, her first daughter was in the kindergarten level, and that school gave a very formal lecture-style instruction⁶ to these young kids. Her daughter did not enjoy the learning experience in the Cantonese school so Ellen tried to let her go to a Mandarin school. It seemed like her older daughter liked the Mandarin school better although she did not continue learning after one year. The reason why the first daughter stopped Mandarin learning was because Ellen's second daughter was born at that time. It was a very busy time for Ellen to take care of two children. So Ellen decided to stop her first daughter's Mandarin learning.

Interestingly, Ellen's second daughter has a different story with regard to learning Mandarin. When Ellen's younger daughter started learning Mandarin, Ellen decided that she wanted to pick up on the Mandarin learning that she had in Hong Kong. Therefore, she also enrolled in an adult class in this school. The more time she spent in this school, the closer she felt to this school community. Then, she became a volunteer in this Mandarin school and became very involved in the school administration.

Ellen told me that she felt that having this school community was like having an extended family in Winnipeg because most of her own family is now settled in Vancouver. Due to Ellen's husband's job situation, they have to stay in Winnipeg.

⁶ This formal lecture-style is very teacher centered with lots of repetition and dictation.

Therefore, this school community is especially important and meaningful to her. Because of Ellen's encouragement, her second daughter kept going to this school until last Christmas, a period of almost 7 years. During the Mandarin learning process, Ellen's second daughter made some good friends in the school, which became the most important reason for her to go to Saturday Chinese school. However, last Christmas some of her friends decided to stop going to Chinese school and this also affected Ellen's second daughter.

In the past few years, Ellen tried many methods to teach her daughters Cantonese and Mandarin. For example, she taught her daughters Cantonese at home by using the materials from the Mandarin school; she hired a Mandarin tutor for her daughters; and right now she uses a computer self-learning program to help her children maintain their language ability.

Though Ellen's first daughter does not have as much formal Chinese language education as her younger sister, she actually has better verbal skills in Cantonese. That is because Ellen's parents were the main caregivers when the first daughter was young, she learned her Cantonese from her grandparents. Ellen told me that last year her older daughter wanted Ellen to speak Cantonese only to her because she wanted to improve her Cantonese skills. The reason was that her daughter has some friends in school whose home language is Cantonese. They sometimes speak Cantonese at school and they feel proud to be a "special" group that can communicate in their own language. One of Ellen's friends also mentioned that there was a similar situation for her son. Ellen told me it seems like there is a moment that these teenage kids become proud of having a "special language and identity."

The younger daughter has learned Mandarin for almost 7 years, but according to Ellen, the learning result was not very obvious. She can carry on very basic conversations in Mandarin, but she did not feel comfortable speaking Mandarin when they visited China last summer.

One interesting phenomenon that happened with Ellen's father was that he started speaking English to his grandchildren because he was afraid that if he did not speak English to them, they would not want to communicate with him. Since he has quite good English conversation skills, he decided to accommodate his grandchildren's language preference.

With regard to language choice, Ellen mentioned that Mandarin is good to "learn" and Cantonese is good to "understand". She admitted that learning Mandarin has many economic benefits, so she encouraged her daughters to learn this useful language.

Negotiation between two cultures. Ellen has a very strong desire to embrace Chinese culture in this English speaking society. Though she married a Canadian man, she still hopes to preserve her ethnic identity. At the same time, her husband shows great support for her and their daughters in this respect. They sometimes talk about the latest news from China at their dinner table. Ellen's husband also has become involved in an exchange program with some Chinese universities so that he has many opportunities to visit China each year. Ellen is proud to be Chinese and she hopes her daughters will understand this and feel proud to be half Chinese. Also, Ellen's active participation in the Chinese school community shows that she needs a space where she feels she belongs in this city. Ellen brought her daughters to this community and

hoped her daughters would get a sense of Chinese community. She has become a very strong role model for her daughters. She hopes her daughters will maintain their ethnic identity as half Chinese and half Canadian.

After interviewing Ellen. The experience of interviewing Ellen provided me with lots of opportunities to reflect upon my own experiences since we both had the “Canadian” partners and lived in a host city. Ellen’s story also reminded me of what I will need to consider when educating my own children in the future. It seems like Ellen had tried every possible method to educate her children about their “half” ethnicity because it was really important and meaningful to Ellen. However, at the same time, Ellen understands that her children will have their own interpretation of their ethnicity when they become mature mentally and physically. More importantly, Ellen has her husband’s support even though Ellen’s husband does not speak Cantonese. Certainly, in Ellen’s family, Ellen is not a lonely fighter maintaining her children’s mother tongue. However, another question occurred to me after interviewing Ellen. That was; “Did Ellen choose the right language for her children to learn?” “Can Mandarin, a more useful language, replace Ellen’s heritage language, Cantonese?”

Vuong-A Struggling Model Minority

I met Vuong at the 2009 TEAL Manitoba conference where I gave a presentation about Chinese heritage language retention. The presentation was a project I had done for my qualitative research course. Vuong was the first audience member to arrive at my presentation so I started chatting with him before my presentation. I was curious about his reason for participating in my presentation.

What attracted Vuong, who seemed not to fit in at this conference,⁷ to this presentation? Also, since he had an Asian-looking face, I wondered if he possessed a Chinese heritage. Perhaps that was what connected him to this topic? After I greeted him, my first question to him seemed to clarify everything. “So, do you have Chinese heritage?” I asked. “Yes, I do.” Vuong replied politely. Obviously, it was the keyword “Chinese” that connected Vuong to my presentation related to Chinese heritage maintenance.

Then, I kept digging for more background information from Vuong, because I hoped to build a relationship between myself as the presenter, and the audience. I believed it was beneficial for the presenter to know the connection between audience and the given topic. After a brief chat with Vuong, I found that he had several years experience of learning Chinese languages when he was young. He hoped to understand other parents’ reasons for sending their children to Chinese language school (Han Chinese School). Additionally, Vuong has a 15 months-old daughter and he hopes that his daughter will learn Cantonese in order to communicate with his parents and relatives whose primary language is Cantonese.

Vuong’s personal background was of having multiple identities: as a child of Chinese immigrant parents, as a minority student in the regular school system, as a former Chinese language learner, as a heritage Chinese parent, and as a teacher in a regular school in Winnipeg. This now aroused my interest. I started thinking that probably he would be a very good subject in my research project. Considering his

⁷ It was my first time attending the TEAL Manitoba conference. I found the dominant population was female Caucasian whose age was normally above 35 years old. And Vuong is one of the very few young looking Asian men at the conference.

multiple identities, I felt very sure that he was going to be a perfect participant in my study since he had the experience of learning Cantonese and he had a new role as a father who hoped to put his daughter in a Cantonese heritage school. Vuong's challenges and perspectives would be very valuable to my study. After my presentation, I invited him to participate in my study and he seemed to be interested in what he learned from my presentation. Therefore, we both exchanged contact information and two weeks later, we had our first interview.

Vuong's background story. After exchanging a few emails, Vuong had received from me the basic information about the basic interview procedures, such as filling out the consent form, the interview questions, and the digital recording process. One thing that Vuong hoped to clarify with me before the interview was if he was the right subject I was looking for. Since my presentation in the TEAL Manitoba conference was focused on parents who send their children to Mandarin (one kind of Chinese language) program, Vuong worried that his Chinese language learning experience was primarily focusing on Cantonese, instead of Mandarin. Therefore, I explained to him that my focus was on Chinese heritage people who have experiences learning Chinese languages, or who have children with Chinese language learning experiences. After I explained this to him, and as he answered questions from the interview, his understanding of my research project became clearer.

Vuong was born in Malaysia and immigrated to Winnipeg when he was eight months old. Both his father and mother are Chinese who were born and grew up in Vietnam. Vuong was not very sure when his ancestors moved from China to Vietnam. He thought it might be the generation of his great grandparents. Most of his relatives

immigrated to countries like Canada, United States and Switzerland. Very few of Vuong's relatives still live in Vietnam, and those who still live there are kind of distant relatives that hardly have contact with Vuong's family. Therefore, unlike many immigrant families who frequently visit the home country, Vuong's parents did not go to their second home country-Vietnam (The first home country in their case should be China) to visit their relatives.

Even though they lived in Vietnam for at least two generations, Vuong's parents and grandparents still maintained their Chinese language ability—mainly Cantonese. To a certain degree they also maintained a Chinese lifestyle, culture, and traditions while living in Vietnam. For their language ability, Vuong's parents can speak Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, and English, but the primary communicative language in Vuong's family is Cantonese. Therefore, Cantonese became Vuong's mother tongue. After starting schooling, Vuong learned his second language, which was the dominant language in this society—English. After starting schooling, Vuong's home language with his parents continued to be Cantonese, but the language with his siblings became English.

Vuong is the first child of four in his family. He has two younger sisters and one younger brother. Four of them went to Saturday Cantonese school when they were in grade one. Vuong had 11 years experience of learning Cantonese (from grade 1 to grade 11) in the Han Chinese School. He also had one year Mandarin learning experience when he was in grade 12. The reason he switched from Cantonese to Mandarin was because he found that the grade 11 Cantonese-class was too difficult to him. He was told that Mandarin was a similar language to Cantonese. So he started

learning at the beginning level of Mandarin in grade 12. However, after one year of learning, he found that these two languages shared almost the same written characters (Traditional Chinese characters), some similar grammar rules, but had totally different pronunciation. This made it very hard for him to master the pronunciation of Mandarin. Besides, he was busy preparing to go to University. He felt that he did not have time to practice the language he learned on Saturdays. So he quit his Chinese language learning before he entered university.

Vuong mentioned to me that his second sister's Cantonese proficiency is better than his. I asked him the reason and he replied that it seemed easier for her to learn a language and also his second sister finished all of the Cantonese classes in that heritage language school, which was up till grade 12. However, he did not talk about the other two younger siblings' Cantonese proficiency. But they all learned Cantonese from grade one until high school. The communication situation between Vuong's siblings did not differ from most immigrant cases. After the children started schooling here, they switched their mother tongue to English when speaking among themselves.

I found the language rule in Vuong's family quite interesting when I first heard of it. At home, Vuong's father hopes they can communicate in Cantonese and they do communicate in Cantonese between generations (parents and children). However, Vuong's father wants them to communicate in English when they are in public places, such as schools, work places and on other public occasions. This makes Vuong feel uncomfortable because he is already used to speaking Cantonese to his parents. Vuong mentioned that sometimes when his father calls him at his work place, his father asks him to reply in English because he worries that Vuong's coworkers may be

around. But Vuong does not like this idea and he felt unnatural speaking English to his father even though they are in public places. Vuong didn't explain too much about this, but he indicated that his father did not want people to think that they were immigrants or that they were different from other people in this society.

Vuong's major in university was education. After he graduated from university, he was a substitute teacher for a year. He became a full-time teacher after that and continues in that position now. He has had a teaching position for about 8 years.

Vuong's attitudes toward heritage language maintenance. Vuong admitted that learning Cantonese at a Saturday Chinese-school was not always a happy story. When he was young, he felt that he was forced to go to that Chinese school. It was not very "cool" to go to school on Saturdays when most his classmates were watching lots of cartoons at home. He even hid the truth about going to a Chinese school on Saturdays. He did not want his mainstream classmates to know that he could not do the same things as them, i.e. watching cartoons on Saturday morning.

Vuong told me that he did not learn a lot of history or culture from that heritage Chinese school; instead he learned most about Chinese history and culture from his parents, especially from his father. He explained that this was because he did not care what he learned in Chinese school when he was young. He just hoped to pass the vocabulary quiz every week. However, at home, Vuong's father helped him and his sibling a lot with the Chinese assignments and Cantonese pronunciation. Vuong's father sometimes told them Chinese stories or fairy tales. Vuong did not make a lot of friends in the Chinese school because of his shy personality. There was only one friend that he was really close to. This friend also went to the same regular

school with him. When Vuong was at the higher-grade level, he felt more comfortable attending the Chinese school because there were fewer students in the classes. At that time, the Chinese school became a very familiar place for him. That was also why he started to enjoy going to Chinese school when he got older.

He mentioned that he felt that his parents forced the four of them to go to Chinese school on Saturdays when they were young. However, when he got older and more mature, he understood why parents made them go. Besides, his father encouraged him to be a role model for his younger siblings. If he quit Cantonese learning, the rest of them would probably want to quit. Therefore, he accepted the idea of being role model for his siblings and kept learning Cantonese in the Chinese school until high school.

It was not until Vuong got into high school that he started valuing the learning opportunity available in the Chinese school. He realized it was important to learn his heritage language---the language that connected him to his family, his life, and his identity. I asked Vuong if there was any turning point when his attitude changed. He replied, "It is just maturity, I think." However, this maturity did not keep Vuong learning Cantonese over the longer term. Because of his busy schedule in high school and preparation for the entrance to university, he finally quit learning Cantonese.

After 11 years of Cantonese learning, Vuong appreciated the importance of learning Cantonese, and appreciated the efforts that his parents made. Although these experiences made him feel a little bit different from his mainstream classmates in childhood, he is now happy that he can communicate with his parents and relatives in their own language. And he hopes his 15-month-old daughter will learn Cantonese

when she gets older. The main reason for his daughter to learn Cantonese is because Vuong's mother does not speak English. In order to communicate with Vuong's mother, he thinks that it is necessary for his daughter to learn Cantonese when she starts learning to talk.

Vuong's wife is a second generation Filipina. Her mother tongue is Tagalog. The communicative language between Vuong and his wife is English. Vuong does not try to speak Cantonese to his daughter, because then his wife would not understand what he was talking about. It is very likely that Vuong's daughter will grow up in an English dominant household. Fortunately, right now Vuong's parents babysit Vuong's daughter regularly, so that little girl has some chances to be exposed to a Cantonese-speaking environment. When she reaches school age, Vuong would like to enroll her in a Chinese school to learn Cantonese. For Vuong, learning Cantonese will assist his daughter to understand his family, his heritage, and his culture. Vuong admits that he will not be the main cultural and language transmitter for his daughter because he has very limited knowledge in terms of Chinese culture and history. He assumes that his father will be the one who passes the heritage knowledge and traditions to his daughter.

Vuong thinks the home environment for heritage language learning is important, and it is good that he can communicate with his family in the language they all feel comfortable in. However, as a mainstream teacher now, he suggests to his students whose home languages are other than English should try to speak English. He thinks it would be a lot easier for them if they adapt to an English-dominant classroom sooner. I asked Vuong if he had some unpleasant experiences as a minority

student. He told me that there was only once when they moved from downtown to the north part of Winnipeg and he changed from one school to another school. At the new school, he thought his English was as good as the other classmates, but probably because of his Asian appearance, his teacher asked him to go to the ESL classroom. At first, he could not understand why he had to go to ESL class. But after he found his cousin was there, too, he felt it was kind of fun, because they could play together. Vuong did not stay in the ESL class for long because the school soon found out that Vuong was not in need of ESL help.

Vuong always thinks his English is not good enough even though now he is an elementary school teacher. He said it was probably because he did not get good marks in English in high school. He also mentioned that it might be because he speaks another language. Therefore, he is very cautious when he talks to his coworkers or students' parents (especially Caucasian parents). He worries that if he does not speak in grammatically correct sentences, the Caucasian parents will think that he was not a qualified teacher.

Vuong's ethnic identity. When I asked Vuong, "What is your nationality?" He gave me a very quick answer, "Chinese". His reason for this was because he speaks Cantonese and he has an Asian appearance. He also mentioned that if people asked you this question in Canada they meant they wanted to know where you came from, or where your parents came from. Even though he immigrated to Canada when he was 8 months old, he does not think he is Canadian. He told me that in his parents' case, even though they were both born in Vietnam, they never thought they were Vietnamese. Being who you are does not necessarily correlate to where you were

born or where you live. It is obvious that Vuong and his parents believe their Chinese heritage is the best representation of who they are. Interestingly, when I asked Vuong the same question about his daughter, he said, “I would say—she is Canadian.” From Vuong’s perspective, his daughter is a Canadian because she was born in Canada even though her father is second generation Chinese, and her mother is second generation Filipina.

I got another interesting answer from Vuong when I asked him about being a minority in Canadian society. He mentioned that he did not see any advantage of being minority in this society though he did not give me any reason. But he revealed that being a minority means that you are always different to most people in the community, society, and country. From his description of his past and present experiences, the uncertainty of being a bi-cultural minority explains why he said his daughter is Canadian. It is probably the best way for him to protect his daughter from being a minority.

After interviewing Vuong. Vuong is the only father among my participants and he is also the one who speaks Cantonese himself and hopes his daughter will learn Cantonese in a school setting. Aside from the desire for better communication among generations, Vuong did not mention any particular value that he associated with learning Cantonese. Additionally, Vuong’s lack of confidence on his own language ability (both heritage language and English) and being minority made me wonder if he had become the victim of the educational system and family biases. Vuong’s feeling of inferior racial status reflects Zhou and Xiong’s (2010) study where they found that second-generation Asian Americans are likely to internalize the

disadvantages associated with their racial identity even though they seem to assimilate into mainstream society without much trouble compared to their parents. The interview experience with Vuong provided me with different thoughts about “heritage Chinese”, too. Even though both Vuong and his father were not born in place broadly considered to be a “Chinese land”, such as China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, they have a very firm identity as Chinese, which also reinforced my knowledge of diaspora communities.

Emma- A Mother Encountering Both Fulfillment and Frustration

Emma is the last interviewee in my research, and she has a similar ethnic and geographical background to me. I met Emma at a charity dinner hosted by the Taiwanese Association last summer. Emma has been living in Winnipeg for almost 14 years. She came from Taiwan in 1996 because she married to a heritage Chinese husband who came from Vietnam in his teens. Emma’s husband, Jichung, was born in Vietnam and raised in Vietnam until his teens. Jichung’s parents were both immigrants from China to Vietnam, and then to Canada. Jichung was raised as a Chinese in Vietnam, which means he never learned how to speak Vietnamese. In Vietnam, Jichung went to Chinese schools, made friends with similar Chinese heritage, and mostly interacted with people who also lived in his neighborhood. Because heritage Chinese people in Vietnam have a very self-sufficient Chinese community, Jichung had only rare contact with local Vietnamese. In Vietnam, Chinese people have their own schools where they learn Chinese history, language, and philosophy. I was amazed by how Chinese people could maintain their culture in a host country for such a long period.

Emma's background story. Emma is originally from Taiwan and her mother tongue is Tai-gi, which is the language she uses to communicate with her parents and relatives. Like most Taiwanese under the age of 60, Emma's primary and secondary education was entirely in Mandarin, so Mandarin has become her dominant language cognitively (Leary & Tangney 2003.) Emma has been in Canada for 14 years. She took her second bachelor's degree in computer science in Canada in order to find for a better job. She is now working as an information technician in a big company. She is a mother of nine-year-old daughter and eight-year-old son.

Emma used to be a volunteer teacher in the Han Chinese School. She taught Chinese for one full year before her children went to this Chinese school. Then, she taught another half year when her children were studying there. Due to her busy schedule at work, she quit the volunteer teaching. Emma's children learned Mandarin in the Han Chinese school for three years. They both stopped learning Mandarin two years ago. Emma mentioned the main reason for them to stop was because she did not see any progress on their learning. Also, her children are interested in many sports activities so they have a very busy schedule after regular school. Because Emma was familiar with how this particular Chinese school operated, she pointed out several details that needed to be improved in order to develop a better Chinese language program, including teachers' training and administrative procedures.

Emma's two children had quite good verbal skills in Mandarin before they started regular school. Emma felt proud of her hard work in keeping her children's mother tongue skills. However, after Emma's children started regular school (starting with grade one), they switched to English as their dominant language very quickly.

Emma still tries very hard to maintain the home language as Mandarin, but very often, her two children, and even Emma's husband, forget this home language rule and use English as their communicative language.

Emma's attitudes towards heritage language maintenance. Emma expressed her disappointment towards her children's Mandarin learning because of the dysfunctional Mandarin program and the busy activity schedules of her two children. Emma found that this particular Chinese school did not focus on the Mandarin program, but on the Cantonese program. This was probably the reason why they hired (recruited) anyone who could speak Mandarin to teach in their Mandarin program. Emma also believed that the lack of professionally trained teachers was the biggest failure of the Mandarin program. Emma used to help her children review what they learned from Chinese school. However, in the last year of her children's experience, Emma could not find any indication of what her children learned, so that she could not help review the lessons at home. Emma tried to teach her children Mandarin at home after they quit the Chinese school. But inefficient instruction and an inconsistent learning schedule resulted in the failure of this effort. "It is a tough job," Emma told me.

Another reason why she took her children out of the Chinese school setting was that Mandarin learning was only a small piece of all the activities that she chose for her children. Emma pointed out that growing up in Canada you could not focus only on Mandarin learning. Instead there is a lot more for her children to do and to learn. Emma knew the importance of learning heritage language, but the lack of resources and environment, and an inefficient language program created a less than

ideal learning situation for her children. For now she is just hoping that her children can at least maintain their mother tongue skill at home. She hopes someday that she can take her children to Taiwan and stay there for a longer time so that her children can pick up the language easily.

Negotiation between two cultures. When discussing the maintenance of her mother tongue with Emma, the expression on her face was often that of being upset and angry because of her children's reaction and the big environment. However, at the same time, she was happy about her children's successful integration into mainstream society. Emma mentioned to me that her daughter had very good academic performance in school. Also, both her children were really enjoying school life and those extracurricular activities that Emma chose for them.

Emma told me that her children recognized themselves as Canadian instead of Chinese. Emma tried to teach her children about their ethnicity. She taught them what the differences between being Canadian and being Chinese were. However, the only two things her children could understand were the difference in physical appearance and language. Emma's children could not understand why Canadians are "others", and we are "us" or "Chinese". Emma thought probably when her children became older, they would understand the concept of being Chinese in Canada. Another possibility Emma mentioned to me was that if she could take her children to Taiwan and show them what so-called "Chinese" were, her children could easily tell the differences. Therefore, the nature of the big environment is the key factor causing ethnic confusion in Emma's children at their present age.

Emma hoped to find a balance between maintaining heritage culture and integrating into the host culture. If it is not possible to find a balance, she would rather her children integrate into the host culture because that is the culture they live in now. Even though Emma felt upset that her children had not preserved their Chinese language skills, she still expressed satisfaction in terms of her children's ability to adapt to the local environment.

After interviewing Emma. From Emma's perspective, her children acquire culture from the "big environment" (dominant environment), which is different from Cherry's (adoptive mother) opinion that cultural is acquired basically from the main caregiver, and how you are raised. Emma perceives the dominant environment as a more powerful factor that affects how children define themselves. Also, in Emma's case, she subconsciously helps her children to choose who they should be because she hopes her children will achieve some success in Canadian society. Knowing who your ancestors are becomes less important than knowing how to live in the dominant society.

Chapter Five: Findings

As I collected data from these six parents' experiences relating to their efforts to maintain heritage language ability for their children in this city, I found many overlapping or interwoven experiences and perceptions. This may or may not reflect the literature review I have done. Interestingly, when I was writing my proposal, I had some images of how this study would develop. I hoped I could find evidence to prove the story line I had developed. However, as interviews proceeded and as I reviewed different aspects of the literature, my line of thinking became more realistic, and grounded by the experiences of the five participants. This is the most fascinating part of qualitative research: One discovers that the central phenomenon (enrolling children in a heritage language program) is affected by so many unknown variables (Creswell, 2008). These variables could be related to the parents' country of origin, educational backgrounds, socio-economic status, lived experiences in the mother country and host country, length of staying in a host country or their mother country, worldviews, social networks, ethnic population in the location they chose to live and religious beliefs. Therefore, the task for ethnographic researchers is not to generalize these live experiences, instead to interpret these lived experiences individually. These lived experiences may not transfer from one to the other because of individual differences; however, they may provide traceable clues to reflect the challenges that the majority of Chinese heritage parents may encounter. The interpretation here is not intended to give the reader any conclusive results, but to offer some observations based on inductive reasoning (Creswell, 2008; Bogden, & Biklen, 2007).

Partly due to different geographical backgrounds and life experiences in the host country, the subjects reveal a complex set of language retention issues. According to the lived experiences and perceptions of heritage language maintenance held by the subjects, the emerging themes are 1) expectations regarding the function of heritage education, 2) differences between heritage education and mainstream education, 3) the perception of being part of a cultural minority, 4) negotiation of ethnic identity, and 5) diasporic values.

Expectations regarding the function of heritage education

Reasons for attending HL school. For parent participants in this study the most direct motive for enrolling their children in a heritage language school was connected broadly to their concept of ethnic background. We could also refer to this as their Chinese roots. For example, Emma and Ellen indicated that their intention in sending their children to Chinese language was related their cultural background:

*“Ellen: Learning Mandarin--- I think there are a few factors. One is I think it’s always good to have a second language. And me being from a Chinese background. That would be a natural thing for them to learn Chinese because I want them also to know where I came from, because I have the culture.”
(Transcript C. P3, Lines 17-20)*

“Researcher : 那為什麼你會想讓他們上中文學校 ?

Emma : 學中文啊 ! (笑) 因為我講中文啊!” (Transcript E. P5, Lines 29-31)

Translation:

Researcher: Why did you enroll your children in the Chinese school?

Emma: To learn Chinese! (Laugh~) Because I speak Chinese!”

Apart from heritage, parents also considered the practical factors, such as the benefits of learning Mandarin or being bilingual or multilingual. Ellen, Cherry and Mimi also explained that the advantage of learning Chinese was due to the rapid economic growth in China recently, which is an additive value for learning Chinese languages:

“Mimi: 因為不是說別的考量, 就是以世界語言, 或工作機會來講, 還有以世界的發展去衡量的話, 他如果會中文的話, 他今後對他的就業, 對他各個方面都是有很大的幫助!” (Transcript A. P9, Lines 26-28)

Translation:

Mimi: ...leaving aside other factors, in terms of global language, work opportunities, and international career opportunity, Mandarin is a very important language for my children’s career development and in so many other ways.”

The learning results from attending a HL program. The common experience these parent participants shared was enrolling their children in Chinese heritage language programs. When mentioning the function of attending the Saturday Chinese language schools, many parents expressed uncertain attitudes toward the learning outcomes from community-based heritage programs. However, the group also can be divided into two groups; a group whose children are still learning and a group whose children stopped learning in the community-based school. Parents such as Mimi, Emma and Ellen whose children dropped out of Saturday Chinese school expressed

frustration and disappointment towards these Chinese schools. Mimi and Emma vocalized the most negative opinions of Chinese schooling:

“Researcher : 那你覺得他們在中文學校學到什麼?”

Mimi: 在中文學校啊? 很少耶... 如果說中文學校, 是家長去, 如果單是中文學校上那兩小時的課, 真的沒學到什麼東西, 如果是家長回家後每天這樣盯... 可能有效, 可是很多事情呢? 還是因為去中文學校, 很多小孩子父母不講中文, 如果光靠兩個小時的時間根本不夠!” (Transcript A. P5, Lines 26-29)

Translation:

Researcher: What do you think your children have learned in the Chinese school?

Mimi: In Chinese school? Very little....If you mean Chinese school, parents go with them, if you mean that two hours in Chinese school, they cannot learn anything. If parents help their children’s Chinese study at home...(long pause), it might work. But it’s the same as with many things, like many parents they do not speak Mandarin themselves and just send their children to a Chinese school. Only two hours a week is not enough.”

Mimi strongly rejected the idea that children could gain positive learning outcomes from a HL program. She also mentioned that for kids whose parents speak language other than Mandarin at home, it would be impossible for them to master Mandarin learning. She didn’t explain why, but the limited exposure time to a Mandarin-speaking environment seemed to be a key element. This also indicates that Mimi believes that parents are the main learning models for their children and home environment is very important for heritage language learning. Ironically, Mimi knew that a Chinese language program could not be effective without parental supervision at home. And Mimi constantly emphasized that the efforts she put into her children’s Mandarin learning was very little because she did not want to give her children too

much pressure. Here is Mimi's statement in regard to the failure of Chinese education in the school setting:

“Researcher: 所以就是在上中文學校的時候, 你們對小孩的期望有跟著時間改變嗎?”

Mimi: 其實我都是一樣的, 因為我自己知道上中文學校不可能有太大的影響... 所以我對他們沒有很大的期望, 但還是會盯他一下功課, 問一下啊... 但實際上我也不是很用心在做。” (Transcript A. P7, Lines 1-4)

Translation:

Researcher: So during Children's attending to Chinese school, did you change your expectations over time?

Mimi: In fact, I always felt the same way. I knew there would not be too many effects (from the Chinese language program). So I do not expect too much. But still I would keep an eye on my children's homework and ask how they were doing. But actually I did not put a lot of effort into this part.

Emma, another Mandarin speaking mother, always helped reviewing what her children learned after each class in the Chinese HL program. Emma understood it would be the best method to reinforce children's Mandarin learning. Therefore, Emma just tried her best to review what her children learned in the HL school even though the result was not very ideal:

“Emma: 沒想那麼多, 我想他們能學多少就學多少, 就盡我的力量啦! 但也希望能教他們拼音或ㄅㄆㄇㄏ啊! 那種拼音我也會想教, 其實我就還是在教ㄅㄆㄇㄏ的階段啦! 那教他們背啦, 那你說久了不跟他們複習或使用, 他們就會忘記啦! 就變成說每一次我隔一陣子, 我又要拉回原來的點, 就很難再 continue 這樣。” (Transcript E. P6, Lines 14-17)

Translation:

Emma: I didn't think that much (in terms of her initial expectation of Chinese HL program). I hope they can learn as much as possible, and just try their best. But I also want to teach them ㄅㄆㄇㄏ(the phonetic system used in Taiwan). I would also want to teach them the Pinyin system (the phonetic system used in China). Anyway, I am still at the stage of teaching ㄅㄆㄇㄏ. I teach them to memorize it. If they do not review or use ㄅㄆㄇㄏ, they will forget it easily. So every once a while, I have to teach them ㄅㄆㄇㄏ. It is very hard to continue (in terms of teaching new things)."

Emma hoped that putting her children in that Chinese environment would benefit her children's language learning. However, even though Emma made sure to review every lesson with her children after Saturday Chinese school, she found the lack of professionally trained teachers and unstable teacher resources to be the biggest failure of such non-profit heritage language programs. Emma found out that teachers in the HL school used English as instructional language so her children did not really expose in a Mandarin-speaking environment:

"Emma : 那玩之間就是希望她能夠 pick up 一些中文嘛！但是我發現後來他們都用英文在教，那我說那我何必帶來給你教呢？我就是希望有人跟她講中文，就算聽不懂，你也跟她講中文，但是那些老師就說，那些小孩他們聽不懂，他們就不跟他們講中文，就用英文去解釋，去教課，那根本沒有用，所以我發覺沒有用！" (Transcript E. P6, Lines 24-28)

Translation:

Emma:... I just hope they can pick some Mandarin through their play (playing and learning in the class). But I found out that they used English for instruction in class. Then, I thought, why am I sending my children here? I just hope someone else can speak Mandarin to them. Even though my children might not understand, you should still use Mandarin as a medium to teach Mandarin. But those teachers would not use Mandarin for instruction just because students might not understand. It is really useless. So I felt that it was pointless."

Emma pointed out that most of the teachers in this Chinese school were using English language for instruction, which seemed to minimize the students' opportunities to be exposed to a Mandarin environment. That is to say, most parents who send their children to such Chinese heritage language programs would presume that it is a Mandarin speaking environment for their children. However, the truth is that not every teacher follows a "Chinese (Mandarin/ Cantonese) only" policy in such programs because it may not be suitable for many students whose home languages are other than Chinese (Mandarin/ Cantonese). Additionally, Emma understood that such HL program was community-based, non-profit organization so that the teacher recruiting was all voluntary and very hard to manage:

“Emma：對，但這也不能怪那些老師，因為這些都是 non-profit organization，都是義工嘛！那大家也都是奉一些心力，就是因為這樣的情況之下，她的師資很難掌控，後來中華學院，我發覺就是師資出了問題嘛！那老師一個個都走，然後校長不 support 老師，後來找的一些老師，只要有人教就好，他不管那老師的背景是如何？後來我發現我的小孩一開始學的不錯，也都教的不錯。譬如說我回去寫這些字啦！起碼會有一個 note 說我們今天是教哪一部份。回來家長就可以幫忙複習，至少回家來我有東西教小孩嘛！但後來那一年又，我都不知道那些老師在搞什麼？就是問小孩老師教什麼？“不知道！”有沒有課本？“沒有”就是什麼都沒有啦！就是不知道他們教什麼啦？什麼也沒有！通訊簿也不寫，那變成我也沒辦法 follow 老師的進度，去教小孩子了。(Transcript E. P7, Lines 13-21)

Translation:

Emma: Yeah, but you can't blame those teachers because these schools are all non-profit organizations. They are all volunteers. They just want to devote their time and efforts. Under such circumstances, it is very difficult for her (the principal) to control teacher resources. I found that it was really problematic recruiting teachers. Lots of teachers left this school and the principal did not support the teachers. Then they recruited teachers without asking their professional background. They (the Chinese school) just needed people to

teach. I found my children learned quite well at the beginning and the teaching was very efficient. For example, they had some homework to practice their character writing. At least, there would be a note to remind you what your children learned today. Then, parents could help reviewing what children learned at school. At least, I could teach something to my children at home. But the last year of Chinese school, I did not know what those teachers taught at school. I asked my children about the progress. They replied, "I don't know." "Do you have a textbook?" "No!" There was no clue of what they learned at school. There was nothing. They wrote nothing in the notebooks. So I cannot follow (review) my children's progress and I cannot teach my children. "

With is in mind, another parent---Ellen, whose daughters also dropped out of the Chinese program, has an indomitable spirit in terms of her daughters' heritage education. So far, she has tried several methods to assist her children's Chinese languages learning, such as sending them to formal schools, giving them private tutoring, using computer-based self-learning programs, and home teaching by Ellen herself. However, when I asked her about her younger daughter's learning outcomes from Chinese school over the past 7 years, she honestly expressed the slow progression in attending such Chinese language program. And the biggest challenge that Ellen faced may be hard to define. Originally, the language choices between Mandarin and Cantonese seemed less important to Ellen, since she sees them both as Chinese languages. However, Ellen is a Cantonese speaker, but she enrolled her younger daughter in a Mandarin school due to bad experiences in a Cantonese school in the past. Also, considering the accessibility of Simplified Chinese characters and the Pinyin phonetic system for her daughter, Ellen chose the Mandarin school for her daughter. She felt optimism about her daughter's language development, which she hoped would mean she masters the four-language skills in Mandarin. However, as time went by, Ellen became more realistic and even questioned whether or not Mandarin was the right choice for her daughter:

“Ellen: Yeah. It (expectations regarding Mandarin learning) has changed over time. I think at the beginning, I was expecting a lot. The challenge is very huge because we are not surrounded by people speaking Chinese (Mandarin). Even in my family, they aren’t really speaking Chinese. They speak Cantonese a little bit, and the common language will be English.... Initially, I would like them to read and write. But over time, I think my expectation now... I speak Cantonese to them. My expectation is if they understand right now what I am talking about, that is ok. Maybe what I would like them to appreciate is the culture. Maybe if they really want to, they can learn on their own. So over time, I think the expectation come down to maybe being a bit more realistic (Transcript C, P4, Lines 4-15).

Ellen: Yeah...I don’t know what’s the best (choosing Cantonese or Mandarin)? I mean going back if they can learn better because I can speak Cantonese to them. But you never know what would happen (Laugh~) (Transcript C, P5, Lines 1-3).”

Though Ellen questioned the decision to enroll her daughter in Mandarin school, she did not show any regret about her decision because she also recognized other advantages that the Mandarin program could provide, such as a sense of belonging, being part of the Chinese community, cultural activities, and holiday celebrations.

A sense of community. Another group of parents whose children are still studying in Chinese language programs highlight different kinds of expectations of the Chinese language program. The adoptive mother-- Cherry --was originally unfamiliar with the Chinese community because of her ethnicity and life background. However, in order to offer her daughter access to that community, she initiated contact with the Chinese community and began their (Cherry, her husband and daughter) Chinese learning journey two years ago. Unlike Mandarin speaking parents, whether or not they master Mandarin does not affect the communicative situation in her family. Therefore, the learning outcome will not necessarily be of concern. Instead, Cherry

expected the social function and psychological compensation that Mandarin program could bring were the most important benefits for her daughter:

“Cherry: ...I think the most important thing is to put her in with about two hundred children that attend school on Saturday morning, just one of the crowd. Chinese people and Chinese kids have just become very normal for her. There is a whole bunch of Chinese people, some of them are adopted, some of them are not, some of them speak Mandarin home, and some of them don’t. So it just depends on the situation is. It just makes everything a little bit normal for her.

Researcher: Do you expect that she will speak fluent Mandarin after this school?

Cherry: I don’t think so. I mean three hours a week. I don’t think she can learn any language in three hours a week. I guess it’s two and half hours a week. If you study full-time, I think you can certainly learn a language, especially at a young age. It’s easy to pick up language when you study full time. I don’t think that two and half hours a week is enough for her. I think she will get some basic conversation, she will recognize some characters.... Like right now, she really enjoys it, she likes going to school, but there might be some point that she might feel she doesn’t want to go anymore. For now, when she is young, she enjoys it, we are hanging out with whole bunch of Chinese people, that’s all good.” (Transcript B, P5, Lines 7-25)

What Cherry wants for her daughter is similar to Ellen’s personal desire, which is to find a place where they can feel they belong. Cherry knows that her Chinese-looking daughter may always feel different to the majority population she meets in this society. Therefore, finding a place where Cherry’s daughter can feel less different is the most important reason for Cherry to enroll her in this Chinese program. For the language learning part, Cherry was not very optimistic due to the limited learning time and the lack of resources in the big environment. However, attending Chinese school is an action that opens a door for Cherry’s daughter. This door provides a bridge for her daughter between her birth culture and her lived culture. When she

grows up and feels the necessary to search for her birth culture and roots, she may need the language to access it.

School learning as systematic education. Another subject, Vuong, reflects the expectations of two generations. As a Cantonese learner, he understood his father's expectations of the Cantonese program, which was considered to be a string to connect the family to its heritage. Also, to learn the language "in a productive and organized way" was what Vuong's father hoped to achieve through the Cantonese school:

"Researcher: Do you know the motivation for your parents to send you to Cantonese school?"

Vuong: They wanted us to learn Cantonese and they knew it's going to happen, but they wanted us to learn it in a productive and organized way. (Transcript D, P5, Lines 31-34)

Vuong: They think it is better to go there to learn because it is a classroom setting. And they didn't want us to drop out because even if we learned one word, it was still an extra word for us. And yes, I think my parents' expectation changed a bit. (Transcript D, P7, Lines 12-15)"

Heritage language as a family tie. Another statement that Vuong made as a father of a 15-month-old daughter, reflects a similar idea that language is a string connecting her to the family's heritage. The most important intention is to maintain communication between generations (i.e. Between Vuong's mother and daughter):

"Vuong: Yeah...I don't want to say it's not important to speak Tagalog (Vuong wife's first language). It is just because her (Vuong's wife) family can speak English very well. That means my daughter can speak English to them and they all understand. But my mom's English is not very good. So if my daughter wants to communicate with my mom, she needs to learn to speak Cantonese. I hope it makes sense. But we do have a channel of Tagalog (television) though. If my daughter wants to learn, she can learn Tagalog at home (Transcript D, P11, Lines 17-22)"

Similar to most parents, Vuong's parents changed their expectations and attitudes toward Cantonese learning over time, although Vuong's father still tried very hard to keep up the children's Cantonese learning at home when they were young:

"Vuong: Yeah...I asked my parents many times to drop out from Chinese school. And they told me just go for few more years, and then see if I would like to drop. (Transcript D, P5, Lines8-9)

Researcher: Did your parents help you learn the language?

Vuong: Yeah...my parents, my dad was always guiding me. I always mispronounced the vocabulary. Even though we speak Cantonese at home, I still needed a lot of help from my dad after Saturday's classes. At home we always needed to practice our own for the next class. So he helped me a lot. (Transcript D, P3, Lines15-19)"

The social function of the HL school. Many parents point out the social function within the Chinese school context, which is also part of the reason why many minority language parents enrolled their children in such HL program. Some parents hope their children can meet students who have similar ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, while other parents indicate the HL school would be an ideal place for their children to learn Chinese culture and behaviors. According to Mimi and Ellen, interacting with peers becomes the biggest motivation for these young learners:

"Mimi: 嗯..其實我小孩喜歡去中文學校的原因是他可以跟同學玩, 上課的時候當然還是 ok, 那下課時喜歡玩啊! 可以跟很多人一起玩啊! (Transcript A. P11, Lines 5-6).

Translation:

Mimi: Um...Actually the reason that my children liked to go to Chinese school was because they could play with classmates. They were ok (behaved) during class time, but they liked to play at recess time. And they could play with many people.

“Researcher: So do you help your children network with her classmates from this Chinese school?”

Ellen: Now she uses Internet or emails. One of her classmates’ family has a Chinese restaurant. So we go there for supper sometimes. And the kid is always there. But they now use emails to connect each other.

Researcher: If your daughter has a birthday celebration, will you invite them(classmates from the Chinese school) to the party?

Ellen: Not so much, because a birthday party is just within the regular school in this neighborhood. Like when she was quite young, we invited her friends to come here and play. But they get older so it gets hard. (Transcript C. P17, Lines 6-14).”

Social interactions did not beyond the school environment for most of my participants. It was instead limited to the space and time of the school, which means it only happened on Saturdays within the confines of the school. Due to the fact that there are only three community-based Chinese language schools in this city, students who registered in these schools may come from different geographical areas within or outside of city. Restricted by the geographical space, the interactions among students outside of the HL school were very limited.

The social function for parents themselves does not seem promising in such a community school context either. Even though most of them possess so called, “Chinese heritage” as a common characteristic, the actual interactions and connections among parents are very limited within the school context. Ellen seemed to indicate the cultural connection is what she gained from the Chinese program. This cultural connection may refer to Chinese roots, bloodlines, and ancestors:

“Researcher: So does this school connect you and other families who have similar situations to you?”

Ellen: In XXXX (the Chinese school name), it’s a little different. During the class time, we don’t connect, but maybe we connect culturally (Transcript C. P16, Lines 4-7).”

Cherry was firm in her conviction that attending Chinese school did not connect her family with other families who also attended the program, although she hoped to have some Chinese friends so that she could offer her daughter a better Chinese-speaking environment outside of Chinese school:

“Researcher: Does this school connect you and other parents who have or don’t have the same situation as your family?”

Cherry: “No!” And I don’t know how they could connect with us. You know I say no, but I don’t say that in a bad way. I think everybody drops their kids off, and I dash down to the hall to my class. And the other parents go off whatever they go to do on Saturday morning. And everybody picks up their kids at the end of class. It isn’t an opportunity for connection. When I have to participate occasionally, like Moon Festival event, which is on Friday night. They have like potluck dinner—everyone brings something. And there’s a lantern parade outside that we go to. But unfortunately no one ends up talking to each other. And I don’t blame anyone. I probably blame myself more than anything. But the Caucasian families all sit together in one corner. The families who are Asian but speak English at home seem to sit together. And the Mandarin speakers, which are the majority, they sit together. Like I said, I don’t blame anybody. It’s human nature to find similarities and to look for other people like you, right? (Transcript B, P21, Lines 1-15)”

According to Cherry, the interactions among different language groups are very limited. It seems like that networking function with this ethnic community is restricted to those within different language groups, such as Cantonese, English, Mandarin and probably other Chinese languages. Furthermore, most parent participants mentioned that the majority of parents only showed up when they dropped their children off and came back to pick them up. That implies that the

actual time parents stay in the schools is very little unless they are volunteers or staff in the school.

Emma explained that the source of her connections with parents was not only from the Chinese school. Instead there were other connections within the bigger community, such as the Taiwanese association:

“Researcher : 那你在那邊有沒有認識一些朋友 ?

Emma : 有啊 , 就是認識一兩個台灣人。

Researcher : 是在那時候送中文學校認識的嗎 ?

Emma : 對對 ! 因為有一個是我兒子的老師 , 另一個我是她女兒的老師 , 那現在我們就常常來往 !

Researcher : 所以算那個中文學校還是有一點點功能在 ? !

Emma : 是有一點點功能 , 聯繫社交的功能 , 但是這些社交的功能也都有關係到外面其他的關係 , 像台灣同鄉會 , 上次聚餐時那個台灣同鄉會! ”(Transcript E, P14, Lines 15-22)

Translation:

Researcher: Did you get to know any friends at that Chinese school?

Emma: Yes, I know one or two Taiwanese.

Researcher: Is that because you sent your children to the school that you got to know these Taiwanese friends?

Emma: Yes, one friend is my son’s teacher and the other one is because I taught her daughter in the Chinese school. Now we often get in touch with each other.

Researcher: So there is still some social function in this Chinese school!

Emma: Yes, there is a little bit of social function in the school. But this social function is also related to other associations, like the Taiwanese association, the one that we met at last time.

In terms of the functions of heritage education, findings from the five parents interweave various concerns depending on the family’s needs. Those needs reflect

the linguistic and social functions that community-based Chinese schools can bring. Most parent participants expect that such community-based language programs will offer an authentic environment where their children can have social practice with the target language. However, the dominant language of instruction in such programs is still English due to the students' diverse geographical and linguistic backgrounds. Generally speaking, parents' expectations from the heritage language program became realistic over time due to the limited language training time and inconsistency of teacher resources. Social interaction among parents is very limited if parents do not participate in any school activities, or get involved in school affairs. One interesting aspect pointed out by Cherry is that the social interactions among parents are divided into language groups. Cherry and Ellen are the only two parents who mentioned the social function such Chinese language program could bring to their children. Mimi, Emma and Vuong focused on the linguistic function of attending such Chinese language programs. As most parents expressed the importance of learning Mandarin because of the rapid economic growth in China, this seemed to be of benefit to people who possess Chinese heritage and know how to speak Mandarin. Therefore, parents like Mimi, Ellen, Emma and Cherry demonstrated the advantages of being bilingual (English and Mandarin) in the international job market. Even though Cantonese is considered to be a Chinese language, people who learned Cantonese do not think of it in terms of economic advantage. For example, the Cantonese-speaking participant, Vuong only emphasized the communicative function of learning Cantonese.

The differences between heritage education and mainstream education

While most parents pointed out that heritage education and mainstream education can easily be distinguished by the length of time students actually attend classes, the question of how parents thought about the functional differences between the two systems hinged on their evaluation of how the two educational programs delivered results in areas such as academic performance, school networking, teachers' and peers attitudes, and power dynamics.

Chinese HL school vs. mainstream school. Parents, like Cherry, Emma, and Ellen, mentioned that these two school systems were very different in terms of teaching pedagogies, functions, and environment. Cherry seemed unsure of her feelings about the differences between Canada and China in terms of teaching pedagogies. Cherry understood the Canadian learning environment, which is known to be student-centered, game based, and with less homework for younger learners, but she did not directly express how she felt about the Chinese style of teaching. However, because Cherry was also an adult student of the Chinese school, she knew the focus at the Chinese school on a formal lecture style, which was teacher-centered style of learning. Thus, the gap between the two different education systems could be very challenging for children who grew up here and were used to the activity-based instruction in their regular schools. However, Cherry also mentioned that she had not heard any complain from her daughter yet.

“Researcher: So are there any differences between these two school systems?”

Cherry: You know that’s a hard question to answer. I don’t know exactly what goes on in either of the classrooms. I can get a sense of what goes on, by talking to the teachers, looking at the work that comes home, and talking to

my daughter about what happens...but I don't really know...you know how the classes are organized in terms of teaching style. You know there are teachers in the Chinese school teaching in a similar way to how they were taught, which is very different than the way children are taught in Canada. And I know that. But I know that there're efforts by the administration of Chinese school to work with teachers and talk to them about how learning happens in Canada. It may be different to how they may have learned in China, and how they may have been taught in China. Yes, I know they focus on that. You know Canadian kids are accustomed to games, more fun and learning through doing and having fun as opposed to sitting at your desk doing what you are told to do. But I haven't noticed that being a problem, so I don't want to suggest that. That's what's happening there. You know I am not really sure how things are different..".(Transcript B, P15-16, Lines 27-40, 1-2)

Ellen explained that the teaching strategies used in Chinese language schools were very different depending on who the teacher was. She agreed that different teaching strategies strongly affected children's learning interest and motivation. Ellen's daughter experienced some teachers who really made her feel engaged in the learning content. Interestingly, when Ellen mentioned the differences between the Chinese traditional schooling atmosphere and the Canadian schooling situation, she referred to "the Chinese traditional teaching style" as the "Old style", which was primarily focused on copying and repeating:

"Ellen: Yeah...it's all depends on the teachers we found. And they have a set of books that needed to follow. Some years, if the book teaches about Festivals, some teachers are very good...they would do singing and things like that. But it depends on the teachers. Some teachers, depending on where they come from, the teaching style is different. Some teaching is very old style. It's like you recite, and you copy. Sometimes it's very hard for them. That's one of the challenges. It depends on how you teach. Some teachers are from the background that they are not used the Canadian system of teaching. And my kids are born in Canada. It's very hard for them to follow their teaching style because what they are used to is very different (Transcript C, P10, Lines 21-30)."

Additionally, Ellen brought out the idea that “old style—Chinese traditional teaching style” could be very challenging for children who were used to the Canadian teaching and learning environment. This is because Ellen had educational experiences studying in both school systems as a teenage immigrant thirty years ago. This seems to reveal Ellen’s preference of Canadian learning environment.

Mimi pointed out the length of time in the learning environment was the biggest difference between these two school systems:

“Researcher : 那所以你覺得這兩種學校的系統有什麼不一樣? 正規學校跟中文學校?”

Mimi: 最重要的就是時間的長短, 因為像中文學校一個星期就兩個小時, 太短了一點! 中文學校如果能像法文學校, 或我們上的法文學校 90%要講法文... 然後中文學校一個星期就兩個小時真的太少了!”

Translation:

Researcher: What are the differences between these two school systems? Regular school and Chinese school.

Mimi: The most important thing is the length of time. For example, the learning time in Chinese school is only two hours every week. It is too short for Chinese learning. If the Chinese school involved the same amount of time as French immersion school, or like the French school my child goes to, which uses 90% French as an instruction medium.... But the learning time in Chinese school, which is two hours a week, is too short.

Mimi’s opinion about the length of learning time in these two different educational systems was shared by Emma and Ellen. More importantly, Emma and Ellen expressed that the learning priority for their children was the mainstream school studies and activities related to living in Canada. Emma and Ellen both agreed that their children had very busy schedules of extracurricular activities, which was part of the reason that they had to give up HL learning in the school setting. As well,

Emma selected activities based on her children's interest in great variety of activities, such as sports, music and dance. Emma emphasized that her children were at the stage of exploring their interests. They were interested in many kinds of activities, but they, most importantly, only had limited time to participate in some activities.

“Researcher : 那你說的課外活動，你目前有給他們上什麼樣的課外活動？是讓他們選的？還是你幫他們選的？”

Emma : 都有，因為我要看小孩的興趣在哪，所以小時候他們想學什麼就學什麼，就是他們說想學跳舞，就幫他們選，但我不是選那種很 professional 的，就是先給他們試試看，然後我也給他們試很多音樂啦！每一種活動都學了，所以我們很忙，現在就比較固定幾樣，鋼琴.....所以就觀察他們的興趣，而我那兩個小孩是什麼都有興趣，變成我們要幫他們過濾，你只能選這麼多，因為時間只有這麼多，所以一定會有個音樂方面，像鋼琴就是會一直學下去的，然後星期六去教會學一些樂器，這些也是額外的。(Transcript E, P8-9, Lines 32-37, 1-7)

Translation:

Researcher: And you mentioned extracurricular activities. What are their (Emma's children) extracurricular activities these days? Do they choose these for themselves or do you choose for them?

Emma: Both. Because I have to see what their interests are. When they were young, whatever things they wanted to learn, I signed them up. They said they wanted to learn dancing, and I just helped them to choose the right class. But I did not choose those professional dancing classes because I just wanted them to try first and see if they really liked dancing. Then, I also tried many music activities. They have tried everything. They like to explore many activities and you will get to know what their interests are. Now they are taking swimming. They have taken almost every single activity and that is why we are so busy. Now they only take a few things, like piano... So we just observe what their interests are. My two children are interested in everything so we have to select for them. You can only choose some activities because the time is limited. I always choose at least one activity related to music. For example, they will continue learning piano. And Saturdays, they go to church and learn some musical instruments. And this is an extra activity for them.”

After attending regular school, the time left for children to explore their interests was limited. What Emma did was to offer as many opportunities as possible to her children and to explore her children's talent when they were young. Apparently, parent participants in this study sometimes felt challenged about how they weighted the importance of heritage education because they understood that the priority for their children's education was mainstream education. Emma went further in her statement related to the big environment. Because of living in Canada, learning a mother language can become a struggle due to the fact that heritage education is not considered as a priority in mainstream society. For social and economic considerations, if minority language *students want to be* competitive in this society, to master English is more important than mastering a heritage language. As a result, minority language parents may need to compromise on certain practical issues, such how to manage both parents' and children's busy schedules. Slowly, many minority language parents gave up the opportunity to learn HL in the community-based school setting:

“Emma：對，但是你在這個環境裡面，你不是只要讓他們學中文而已，你還要讓他們學很多東西，那 priority 來講的話，那你要選哪一個？中文到底有多重要，還有正規學校，還有其他的才藝方面，那也很重要！那你要考慮到中文以後他們到底能用到多少？你也不能 *guarantee* 他以後一定回台灣或回中國去發展，所以中文對他們到底有什麼用處，所以就變成在拿捏上面...（笑）算了！”(Transcript E, P8, Lines 3-7)

Translation:

Emma: Right. But in this environment, they need to learn not only Chinese, there are lots more things. So, which is a priority for you? How important is learning Chinese? There is still regular school, and other extracurricular activities. They are also important. And you have to consider what they can do if they know Chinese. You cannot guarantee that they will go to Taiwan or

China for their career development. What are the advantages if they learn Chinese? So you have to think about this...(Laugh) Forget it!

In Emma's mind, learning Mandarin became a small part of living and growing up in Canada. If her children decided not to have career in Taiwan or China, learning Mandarin would become less meaningful to them. Therefore, it is obvious that Emma have already made language choice for her children due to the attached benefits of mastering the dominant language.

Attitudes from mainstream educators. Vuong, Ellen and Emma talked about the attitude of regular school towards students whose home languages were other than English and French. These three parents had very different experiences when mentioning the attitudes from their childrens' schools. Because of the diversity of the student population in Ellen's daughter's schools, her children did not have different experiences from English speaking families:

"Ellen: The children's school seems very neutral regarding kids whose home language is not English. I feel that the school neither supports it nor discourages it, and leaves it up to the parents. There were a lot of different cultural groups at my kids' school, so it is not unusual to have kids who do not speak English at home. I remember when the kids were young, I would bring certain things to school to celebrate different Chinese festivals.. e.g.: one year I gave some lucky envelopes to the kids at Chinese New Year, and the teachers seemed to think it was interesting and liked it. (Transcript C, P18, Lines 16-23)"

Therefore, Ellen's experience indicates that if a school has a greater variety of ethnic students and bigger numbers of ethnic students, the attitudes from the school and teachers may be more positive or neutral. However, this was not the case with another participant--Vuong. As a visible minority student two decades ago, Vuong had very unpleasant experiences as he noticed the negative attitudes from teachers:

“Researcher: So do you still remember when you were in the school, what were your teachers’ attitudes toward you (minority students)?”

Vuong: It was only from the time we moved from downtown to the northeast area. At that time, my English proficiency was similar to everyone else in the class. But because I looked Chinese, the teacher thought I might need ESL class. So I went to few ESL classes. After a few ESL classes, they realized that I didn’t need ESL at all. But I don’t think I was treated fairly.” (Transcript D, P10, Lines 8-14)

Vuong’s first thought was that he was placed in the ESL class because of his Chinese appearance, which was different to majority students. Vuong seemed to be very aware of his minority identity so that he thought that the teacher’s decision to send him to the ESL class was not fair:

“Researcher: At that time how did you feel about being pulled out of regular class to go to the ESL class?”

Vuong: I thought it was kind of strange how I was pulled out from my class and placed with a whole group people who didn’t speak a lot of English. But I also thought it was kind of fun because my cousin was there, too. They also felt my cousin’s English was horrible so they pull him out. I felt strange that I have to leave my classroom. But when I saw that my cousin was in the same classroom, I felt ok. (Transcript D, P10, Lines 15-22)”

As a minority student, Vuong felt strange when his teacher asked him to go to ESL class. Vuong knew that his Chinese-looking face made teacher suspect his English ability and that was the reason why he was pulling out from his class. It is worth noting that Vuong was talking about an earlier time, before teachers were taught to value heritage languages. Conversely, another parent, Emma, expressed her appreciation of how regular schoolteachers make efforts to help minority language students, like Emma’s children:

“Researcher : 那你有沒有注意到這裡正規學校對母語不講英文的學生的態度？老師會不會鼓勵你講英文？”

Emma : 沒有，這個老師跟學校很好，而且還鼓勵我在家要講中文。她說英文就交給我們，就我們有 parent interview 的時候，就有問我們在家裡講什麼？我說我們在家都講中文。她說 that's good, continue ! 他們說英文我們會幫他們補強所以英文就交給他們了，所以我們的小孩從幼稚園開始就上 ESL，因為他們知道他們是不同語言的家庭，所以他們每一天都會抽半個小時出來讀字輔導英文....所以我覺得很好這個學校的老師非常 encourage multiple languages，就是說你最好 keep your mother language at home.” (Transcript E, P18, Lines 1-12)

Translation:

Researcher: Have you noticed the attitudes that regular schoolteachers have toward students whose home languages are not English? Do they encourage parents to speak English to their children?

Emma: No, the school and teachers in this school are nice, and they encourage us to speak Mandarin at home. In parent-teacher meetings, she (the teacher) said, “it is our responsibility to teach your kids English.” She asked us, “What is our home language?” I told her that we speak Mandarin at home. And she said, “That’s good! Continue!” She said that they would teach and reinforce English to our children. So teaching English is their responsibility. That is why my children went to ESL classes when they were in kindergarten because they knew we were a family that spoke a language other than English. So they have one-on-one reading classes for my children everyday....So I feel teachers in this school really encourage multiple languages. That means that they encourage you to keep your mother tongue at home.

Emma’s experience was far different from Vuong’s, partly because they were in different positions. Emma was a mother who hoped that teachers would pay more attention to her kids because they were from a minority language family. And when the school teacher showed great support for Emma’s home language policy, which was to maintain HL at home, Emma felt she was being appreciated and valued. However, years ago, Vuong was a minority student who enrolled in a new school because of moving to another area. Vuong was pulled out from the regular classroom and placed in an ESL classroom without any explanation, which resulted in his negative thoughts and feelings about having a Chinese appearance and being

minority. As a mainstream schoolteacher now, Vuong's response regarding home language choices for minority language students is to encourage their parents to speak English to them at home in order to catch up to students from English speaking families:

Researcher: So what would you suggest to minority families about their home language?

Vuong: I think I would suggest that they speak English if they hope their kids will improve their English skills. (Transcript D, P13-14, Lines 32, 1-2)

And another statement confirmed that Vuong believed that speaking English at home would bring the most benefit to minority language students even though he acknowledged the shame of losing heritage language ability. Besides, Vuong expressed that the intimate feeling he had when speaking his mother tongue (HL) to parents was very important:

“Vuong: Yeah...as a teacher, I do tell those minority parents to speak English at home to help their children's English development. At the same time, I kind of worry that they will lose their mother language. But I still think it is the best way to help their children in the regular school, because I had the experience of worrying that my English is not good enough.” (Transcript D, P14, Lines 29-33)

Another aspect worth mentioning is that when regular schoolteachers show appreciation towards diverse cultures, most minority students seem to have positive attitudes toward their heritage culture and different cultures. It seems to directly encourage minority students to appreciate their heritage culture.

Emma :他們就是教一些其他的文化，像去年學日本的文化，他們就會挑一兩種不同的文化來學習，但是不是學語言啦，而是學習文化啦！像他們有學習埃及啦，日本啦！然後日本跟中文有些一樣，然後我女兒

的老師就有問她毛筆怎麼寫啊！那她就回來問我啊！然後我就教她啊！大概也是讓她覺得別的文化也是滿重要的。” (Transcript E, P18, Lines 16-19)

Translation:

Emma: They also teach other cultures. For example, last year they learned Japanese culture. They chose one or two different cultures to learn, but they don't learn the languages. They learned culture only. For example, they learned Japanese and Egyptian. And Japanese and Chinese have some similarities, so my daughter's teacher asked her how to write calligraphy. Then she came back and asked me how to write calligraphy. So I taught her. This was probably intended to teach her to appreciate other cultures.

Most parents mentioned that the main differences between Chinese heritage education and mainstream education are the teaching pedagogies, the length of learning time and different educational functions. In terms of teaching pedagogies, parents like Cherry and Ellen pointed out the challenges that children growing up in Canada and being used to Canadian classroom activities may have with traditional Chinese teaching pedagogies, which are focused on drilling, repeating, copying and teacher-centered instructions. For the length of learning time, Mimi and Cherry hoped that heritage education could offer more time on a regular basis and that the learning results would be more efficient. Emma also indicated another issue related to the importance of heritage education in Canada. The focus for minority language families seems to be on mainstream education in order for their children to be competitive with the majority group. Finally, the attitude of mainstream society toward heritage education affects minority students' thoughts about their own mother language and culture. Emma and Vuong encountered very opposite experiences so that they expressed different opinions about language choices at home.

The perception of being part of a cultural minority

Parents in this research have their own interpretations of the significance and effects of being part of a minority group. They may hold either positive or negative feelings. Mimi, Ellen and Emma possess positive feelings about being part of a minority; however, Vuong presents the negative side of why it is disadvantageous to be a minority in Canada. In addition, Cherry, the adoptive mother, imagines negative things that might happen to her Asian-looking daughter.

Positive feeling of being minority. Mimi enjoyed the freedom of living in Canada. Neither Mimi nor her husband seem much concerned about how much they earn everyday; instead they care about the quality of life in Canada, which involves many things that they could never find in their home country. They are satisfied with living with the ones they love and living in the way they want. After immigrating to Canada, Mimi started to realize the importance of life quality. A better quality of life is what many immigrants are looking for when they decide to move to Canada. Mimi explained this feeling of freedom while living in Canada was opposite to the feeling while living in China or Taiwan where life is lived under a lot of pressure:

“Researcher :所以你覺得移民再加拿大有什麼樣的優點或缺點?”

Mimi: 優點嘛...我覺得非常的自由, 我覺得生活上, 生活上相對來說也比較..我不應該用“富裕”這個形容詞, 但是會比較怎麼講“隨心所欲”! (Transcript A, P7, Lines 30-33)

Translation:

Researcher: So describe any disadvantages or advantages you perceive in being an immigrant in Canada.

Mimi: For advantages...I feel I have a lot of freedom. I feel my life is, relative speaking, I shouldn't use the term "rich", but how can I describe it..." I can do whatever I want to do without caring about others' feelings."

Emma also agreed that the quality of life was better in Canada. However, in her mind, the disadvantage was that Canada was not as competitive a place as Taiwan, the country where she came from. For Emma, the noncompetitive atmosphere made her put lots of focus on her children, instead of her career. But Emma agreed it is a better place for children to grow up happily without too many pressures.

“Researcher : 那你覺得移民在加拿大有什麼樣的優缺點嗎？

Emma : 我覺得優點是生活品質 quality 比較好啦！那缺點就是太沒有競爭性了，然後來到這邊好像就不一樣啦！就變成說你的時間好像花比較多在小孩子身上啦！那你說個人要衝次什麼就很難啦！(Transcript E, P8, Lines 14-17)

Translation:

Researcher: Can you describe any advantages or disadvantages of living in Canada?

Emma: I think the advantage is that the quality of life is better here. The disadvantage is lack of competitive environment. And this is so different to Taiwan. It is like you spend most of your time on your children. Therefore, it is very hard to think about your own career development.”

Ellen showed a positive attitude about being a teenage immigrant in Canada even though she spoke about the difficulties she encountered at the beginning of adjusting to a new environment. Additionally, since Ellen is married to a Canadian man, there were literally two cultures going on in her household. Ellen mentioned that she could see the differences between two cultures, including both good things and bad things. However, Ellen indicated that her experience as an immigrant to Canada in her teens was not easy. She felt quite a lot of suffering at the beginning as

she adjusted to the new environment. But eventually, she developed a positive attitude about being a bi-cultural mother:

“Researcher: Describe any advantages or disadvantages of being immigrant parents in this society.

Ellen: I think the advantage is you see the differences between two cultures. It was very hard at the beginning when I moved here. It was very different so it was very difficult at the beginning. Once I got through that, I saw the differences in the cultures. I saw the good things and bad things,... So you open your eyes a little bit. Disadvantage...it was very difficult at beginning, especially when I came here in as a teenager. Your life changes so much already, and suddenly they throw you into a totally different environment. I needed time for adjustment.” (Transcript C, P5, Lines 8-15)

Negative feeling of being minority. Such a positive attitude did not develop in Vuong’s mind even though he came to Canada when he was eight months old. The identity of being minority seemed to remind Vuong constantly and restricted him seeing any advantage of being minority in the Canadian city.

Researcher: So describe any advantages or disadvantages of being a minority in this city or in Canadian society.

Vuong: I don’t see any advantage. I feel that disadvantages are more. Even when I talk to my coworkers, I know because of my Chinese heritage, I still worry about whether my spoken English is correct in grammar or pronunciation...I worry that I am going to say something that will come out wrong grammar because of being a Chinese person.” (Transcript D, P7, Lines 20-26)

Accordingly, Vuong felt that his Chinese heritage was his weakness and that it might lead his coworkers to criticize his English grammar or pronunciation, even though they never did. It was worth noting that Vuong had all his education in Canada, and became an elementary school teacher five years ago. Vuong’s

educational background and professional job did not eliminate his insecure feeling of being minority:

“Researcher: It’s strange because all of your education was in English and you were educated here. You can also consider yourself as native speaker.

Vuong: Yeah...I still do worry about my English speaking because their (Vuong’s coworkers) grammar is quite good. In high school, I was always getting bad marks in English. So I don’t feel comfortable when I speak English to them (Vuong’s coworkers).” (Transcript D, P7, Lines 27-31)

Researcher: Is that because of their (Vuong’s coworkers) attitude?

Vuong: “No...No... they are very nice people. I love my coworkers. I think it just more me. I don’t want them to think that I am a immigrant or I sound like an immigrant.” (Transcript D, P8, Lines 2-4)

Vuong also explained that his insecure feelings might come from the other language he spoke at home, which was his mother tongue--Cantonese. Vuong felt that he sometimes needed to translate or process things between these two languages so that he could get a better sense of what people were talking about:

Fang: Do you think that’s because you speak another language? Like Cantonese?

Vuong: I think so. I think if I spoke English from the beginning and did not speak Cantonese to my parents, I would feel my English is better than now. But because of speaking Cantonese at home, I kind like translate something in my mind first.” (Transcript D, P7, Lines 32-36)

The process of translating between two languages confused Vuong and further, affected his confidence as a professional elementary school teacher:

“Vuong: Oh...I think part of the reason is because I am a teacher. I don’t want to make mistakes in front of my students. If I don’t speak properly, parents

may say, "how did you become a teacher?" That bothers me, too." (Transcript D, P8, Lines 8-10) "

Another parent, Cherry, also worried about her daughter's position as a minority in Canada even though Cherry herself was a member of the so-called majority Caucasian people. This is the reason why Cherry wanted her daughter to go to the Chinese school where she could see that the majority students in the Chinese school are Asian looking faces:

"Cherry: The second reason is not related to language. It's related to her being able to spend Saturday morning, once a week, with kids that exactly look like her, where she is the majority as opposed to being in the minority in the school. Even though she is going to the school that is reasonable ethnically diverse, she will still be the minority there. Because statistically, in Winnipeg to be Asian is to be a minority. (Transcript B, P14, Lines 4-9) "

Because Cherry studied Mandarin at the same Chinese school with her daughter, she also pointed out her feeling of being a minority in this school, which is very different from the environment she grew up with. Cherry's sense of identifying with the majority living in this city has totally changed whenever she attended any Chinese related event with her daughter. Because of having a Chinese-looking daughter, Cherry started rethinking the easy life she used to take for granted:

Cherry:I guess, it's as we try to participate in these activities, I have to overcome a feeling of being the minority, and going to places where people normally do not speaking English, which is very unusual for me. I guess I have lead a very sheltered life living in Winnipeg. We participate in dance classes where all parents were standing around and talking. I have to be brave and go up to a group and stand with them and wait until they switch to English so that I can participate. And I am very often the only Caucasian person in the room. (Transcript B, P4, Lines 1-7)

Being a visible minority in a Chinese environment (Chinese dance school or Chinese language school), Cherry felt that she needed courage to overcome the insecure feelings and to deal with most people in that environment speaking other languages. That was how she sympathized with her daughter's feeling of growing up in this city.

Parents' feelings of being in the minority in this city are different due to past experiences. Mimi and Emma agreed that the quality life they found living in Canada was better. It also gave them positive feelings about being part of a minority in this city. Ellen greatly appreciated being a bi-cultural mother after she went through the adjustment of being a newcomer to this country in her teens. The adoptive mother, Cherry, showed empathy for her daughter because she worried that her Chinese looking daughter might have a hard time finding a place she felt she belonged. Cherry tried to imagine the difficulties of being a minority in this society. So the function of attending Chinese language school was not only to learn the target language, but also to look for a place where Cherry's daughter could feel she belonged. Vuong's past experiences resulted in his negative feelings about being a minority in Canadian society. These negative feelings were produced in his early school experiences, as well as in his current position as an elementary school teacher. Vuong believed these negative feelings were correlated to his Chinese looking face, Chinese heritage and home language. Therefore, Vuong, as a mainstream schoolteacher, suggested minority language parents speak English at home in order to minimize the discrimination their children might encounter in their regular school journey.

Negotiation of ethnic identity

Most of the parent participants in this study expressed their desire to help their children develop their ethnic identities. These parents also understood that to cultivate ethnic identity the more input (language learning, connection with home country, mother tongue readings, TV programs, friends from same background, food, and cultural activities), the better. The common experience of these participants was that they enrolled their children or themselves in a Chinese language school. This common experience indicates the potential connection between heritage language and ethnic identity.

Mainstream culture and family influences. Cherry explained her thoughts of helping her daughter feel connected with her heritage culture through Chinese language school and Chinese folk dancing. Cherry offered these opportunities to her daughter where she could learn the language and get to know people who had similar birth culture and Asian looking faces:

“Researcher: How do you help your child to develop her ethnic identity and why do you think it is important?”

Cherry: well...this would be a similar answer to what I said before regarding the importance of helping an adopted child...have a strong sense or link, and to feel proud of her birth culture. So these are the kinds of things we’re participating in...the language school. She also takes traditional folk dance classes one hour a week on Sundays... there’s just another place where she can hang out with a pure group of all “Asian kids”. The staff are all Asian. That’s just an opportunity for her to hang out with people just look like her.”
(Transcript B, P16-17, Lines 37-40, 1-6)

“Cherry: You know I can’t teach Chinese culture. I am not Chinese. I can read lots of books. We have lots of storybooks. We have books about how to

celebrate Chinese New Year. And I read them and we can do our best and we probably get half wrong. We did have a Chinese family that we invited over to our house during the Chinese New Year. I had lanterns up. I had some couplets hanging on the front of door. And I am sure they just laughed at what I was doing...(laugh)... We just...you know we just do our best.” (Transcript B, P19, Lines 11-17)”

Cherry tries to create an authentic environment for her daughter to be immersed in a Chinese cultural environment. She does things such as celebrate Chinese New Year and Moon festival. All of the knowledge she has gained is from the Internet or books. Cherry realizes her limitations in providing an authentic Chinese cultural environment for her daughter because Cherry is not from that culture and never had close contact with Chinese culture until they adopted her Chinese daughter. Cherry also believes that culture is not merely language, dancing, food or holiday celebrations. Culture is also the way you have been raised, the beliefs your parents (main caregivers) hold, the environment you grew up in, and much more. In Cherry’s mind, it is not very realistic to expect that she can really help her daughter develop a Chinese ethnic identity:

Cherry: But you know the values and beliefs that my child is going to learn...that’s tough, that’s tough...I don’t know how you can teach values and beliefs unless your family teaches you those things. And there’s subtle things...about what do you value in terms of generosity. I struggle with it. I don’t pretend for a minute to understand Chinese culture. I really don’t because I know it’s so much more than dancing and eating. (Transcript B, P19, Lines 18-23)

Cherry: But you know, culture is a lot more than language and dancing. Culture is the way you were raised, your parents teach you how you feel about things, how you look at the world, how you interpret things that are going on around you. That’s what culture really is. From growing up, from generation to generation, and families. So will my daughter like Chinese culture? You know we really want to do as much we can to try to make that happen for her, to

help her make a connection with Chinese people, we can help her access Chinese activities. You know, we sort of embracing everything we can that's available in Winnipeg. Will she feel she is culturally Chinese? I don't think so. She is going to learn because she lives in my family and she is going to learn what we value and what we think is important, and that's what she is going to learn. Of course, those are Canadian values. (Transcript B, P17, Lines 6-17)

Cherry's statement is very different from Mimi's sense of her situation. Mimi's second son had a hard time accepting the concept that he is heritage Chinese because his birthplace is Canada and the culture he knows is Canadian. Mimi stated that because her second son went to daycare at a very young age (one year old), he accepted the mainstream culture and values that he learned from dominant group, instead of family values and beliefs. In Mimi's mind, the environment is a more powerful factor in deciding her second son's identity, rather than family values and beliefs.

"Mimi: ... 小的不會, 因為他沒有認為 he 自己是中國人, 他完全就覺得他是加拿大人, 完全想都沒有想過 "OH~ I am Canadian!" 他想都沒想, 哥哥有時候會是因為三歲才來這邊, 他會想阿.. 我住過哪裡在哪裡? 那小的我看過人家問他, 他很 confused, 他說"我就是加拿大人" 他很直接的反應!" (Transcript A, P13, Lines 11-14)

Translation:

Mimi: ...No, my second son doesn't because he never thought his was Chinese. He feels that he is totally Canadian. His direct response is, "OH~ I am Canadian." He won't have a second thought. But his older brother will think about this question seriously because he came to Canada when he was three years old. He will think about where he lived or was born. But I saw people ask my second son this question. He felt very confused and answered, " I am Canadian." This is his direct response without thinking."

Mimi further explained that her second son went to French immersion school where the school population was not very diverse, so he doesn't have any Chinese friends or friends who have a similar background. Besides, because Mimi's second son is still young and immature, what he embraces is basically the everyday routine he has learned from the dominant group, such as the teachers at the school and his peers.

*“Mimi: 老大他覺得他知道 he 自己是中國人, 但他就對一些中國的傳統文化比較接受, 包括我們對他的一些教育不同於外國人的家庭, 那小的就比較不行, 因為也許他還小才九歲, 所以小的完全沒有中國朋友, 因為他上的小學也很少中國小孩, 那大的因為上的學校身邊很多小朋友是中國人或是 CBC, 但是他們父母管教的方式, 他們都能接受, 那我的小孩也就接受!”
(Transcript A, P6, Lines 15-18)*

Translation:

Mimi: My older one knows he is Chinese. So he feels more open to traditional Chinese culture, including the idea that our education at home is different to Western families. But my younger one can't understand this maybe because he is still young, nine years old. My younger son doesn't have any Chinese friends because the school he goes to has very few Chinese kids. My older son goes to a school where he meets lots of Chinese kids or CBC (Canada born Chinese). Because the way their parents teach (discipline) them is similar to the way we teach (discipline) at home my older son can accept this.

Mimi's elder son understood and accepted his Chinese roots probably because he was more mature (teenage) and he knew his birthplace was Taiwan. More importantly, he has some friends who have similar heritage backgrounds so he seemed to accept his family values and Chinese traditions in many ways.

Emma also agreed that environmental factors are more powerful than family influences. Emma's husband has a similar birth background to his children, which was

growing up in a host country-Vietnam. But Emma's husband never doubted his Chinese heritage because in Vietnam, they had a relatively big Chinese community where they could have a self-sufficient Chinese life style. But for Emma, since the Chinese population and resources are very limited in this city, it is very frustrating trying to teach her children "the meaning of having heritage Chinese."

“Researcher：那你想想看你先生的例子，那為什麼他覺得他是中國人，而且他是在越南出生長大，到十六七歲才出來的。

Emma：因為他從小講中文，而且他是十六七歲才出來的，他其碼知道他根是在哪裡！

Researcher：對，但我的意思是他住在越南，出生在越南。

Emma：對他們住在越南，但是因為他們有很強的學校系統，及華人社區，讓他們覺得說他其實還是在中國人的世界裡面，但是在這裡不一樣，小孩子出去接觸的都是洋人，出去學的也是英文，接觸到的 culture 也是英文，那中文方面的東西只是父母告訴他們，沒有很強烈的 image 跟他們說“這是我的根”，他們都跟我說我是 Canadian。他們覺得他們是 Canadian 不是 Chinese，我都跟他們說你是 Chinese 只是 born in Canada，“又”（表示了解）就這樣而已！因為他們沒東西讓他們去想像，除非就是我們帶他們回中國回台灣，讓他們親眼見到什麼叫做中國人的世界，不過現在他們很難去想像，就算是用電視，只能逼他們看啊！可是那只是很小部份的時間，在他成長學習的時間都是洋人的文化，所以連吃東西都很難，連吃東西他都說“I hate Chinese food！”(Transcript E, P15, Lines 5-17)

Translation:

Researcher: But if you think about your husband's case. Why does he feel he is Chinese? He was born in Vietnam and grew up in Vietnam until he was sixteen or seventeen.

Emma: That is because he spoke Mandarin when he was little, and he lived there for sixteen or seventeen years. So at least he knows where his roots are.

Researcher: Yeah. But I mean he lived in Vietnam and was born in Vietnam (but he doesn't feel he is Vietnamese).

Emma: Right, they lived in Vietnam. But since they had a very strong (Chinese) school system and Chinese community, they almost felt that they were living in a Chinese world. But living here (Winnipeg) is different. Our children have regular contacts with Westerners outside of the home. Our children also learn English in school. The culture they are immersed in is Western culture. Their parents are the only ones who have told them about Chinese things (culture, language, etc.). They don't have a strong sense that "Chinese is my root (heritage)." They told me that they are "Canadian". They think they are Canadian, instead of Chinese. But I told them that they are Chinese, but just born in Canada. They may reply "oh" (which means "ok", or "I understand"), and that's it. Because of the environmental factor, they have a hard time to imagine that they are Chinese. If I take them to Taiwan or China, they can see what the Chinese world is with their own eyes. Living here it is very hard to make them believe that they are Chinese. Even if you ask them watch Chinese TV programs, you have to force them to do so. But that is still only a small amount of time. When they grow up here most of their learning time and their other contact is with Western culture. They don't even like Chinese food. They told me, "I hate Chinese food."

Though Emma understands the importance of teaching her children about their Chinese roots, she found that the greater environment here restricted the possibility of developing her children's recognition of their ethnic roots. Her children know that they are different from most of their classmates because they have different hair colours and speak different languages at home.

“Emma：對，你要給他那個環境，讓他知道真的有那個世界在那邊，不然你很難解釋為什麼我們是中國人，我們只能跟他們說我們長得不一樣啊！我們是黑頭髮，黑眼睛，然後他們也能辨識什麼較英文人，什麼叫中文人，中文人大概是黑頭髮黑眼睛而已，其他的很難啦！就像之前台灣有來一個星期的那種夏令營，我不管怎樣一定空出來讓他們去參加，因為我發覺差很多，他們學很多像畫畫扯鈴啊！都是一些中文的東西，就很直接告訴他了，而且是人家教他的，而不是我告訴他的！（Transcript E, P15, Lines 23-28）

Translation:

Emma: Yes, you have to give them an authentic environment and they will know it is true that there is a Chinese world. Otherwise, it is very hard for us to explain the concept of "We are Chinese." What we can only say is because we

look different. We have black hair and black eyes. And they can also tell the difference between English-speaking people and Mandarin-speaking people. Mandarin-speaking people probably have black hair and black eyes, and no other distinguishable character. There is a summer camp sponsored by the Taiwanese government. I always sign them up for this activity because they learn a lot of Chinese stuff, such as traditional Chinese painting and diabolo. These are all Chinese things and taught to them by others, not me."

Emma's children understood the concrete concept of being different to mainstream group, such as having different hair color, eye color and spoken language. Through participating in some authentic Chinese activities, they also learned the concept of "Chinese culture". Emma demonstrated the importance of having an authentic Chinese environment and activities in order for her children to understand "Chinese world." This is more effective than only having her remind her children of the concept that "they are Chinese." However, according Emma, the concept of "being heritage Chinese" is still obscure for her children.

Vuong's parents were also born and grew up in Vietnam like Emma's husband, and Vuong's parents never refer themselves as Chinese-Vietnamese. Therefore, for Vuong's parents, Vietnam was only a host land in which they lived.

"Researcher: Do they feel (Vuong's parents) like Chinese or do they feel that they are Chinese-Vietnamese? Like they might say, "We Chinese...always do this or do that", or they said, "We Vietnamese always eat this or do this...?"

Vuong: You know I think they feel more like Chinese although they lived and were born in Vietnam. I don't really hear them refer themselves as Vietnamese.

Researcher: So for them, Vietnam is just a location they lived. They never consider themselves as Vietnamese?

Vuong: Right...Vietnam is just a place, but they still think they are Chinese. (Transcript D, P6, Lines 12-20) "

Interestingly, Vuong also firmly maintained his ethnic identity as a heritage Chinese although he immigrated to Canada when he was eight month old. Unlike

Emma's children, Vuong's concept of being heritage Chinese involves more complex aspects:

“Researcher: If people ask you about your nationality, what would you answer?”

Vuong: I would say Chinese...

Researcher: Not Canadian?

Vuong: Well... if I travelled somewhere, I would answer I am Canadian. But if I'm here, they might ask what language do you speak...“Oh...you are Chinese”. But my first response would be Canadian. But when I got older, I think I would more often answer Chinese.

Researcher: Is that because of your Asian appearance?

Vuong: No...I guess I feel more Chinese than Canadian. (Transcript D, P12-13, Lines 28-32, 1-4) “

In Vuong's case, the process of developing his ethnic identity involved his home language, education, and isolation from mainstream society through growing up in Winnipeg. He did not have regular contact with school classmates (in the mainstream group) until high school. Interacting with relatives was the main social activity for Vuong in his childhood, which seemed to strengthen his ethnic identity and to isolate him from mainstream society.

Researcher: Did you connect with friends from regular school more?

Vuong: No, not really. I guess that's because of my parents. We didn't have friends come over to my house or hang out with friends until high school.

Researcher: But I guess part of the reason is that you have quite a big family in Winnipeg, right?

Vuong: Oh...yeah...that's right. (Transcript D, P13, Lines 18-31)”

“Researcher” Do you have any language policy at home?

Vuong: Yeah. They (parents) always told us that when we are at home, we could only speak Cantonese. While we are in public place, we try to speak

English. But we feel more comfortable to talk in Cantonese with each other. So like when we are in the school, they try to speak English to me.

Researcher: Do they speak English to you?

Vuong: Yes, they tried to. But I felt weird because I can only speak Cantonese to them.

(Transcript D, P9, Lines 2-11)

The language policy at home and in public places was very different in Vuong's family. He also expressed his feelings of discomfort at having to switch languages in different locations, especially when he needed to communicate with his father in public places.

Another situation provided by Ellen explains why some older generation people might switch their language in order to communicate with the younger generation.

Ellen: Yeah...the thing is that I speak Cantonese to my dad. But because my dad has been away from my kids so many years, he is worried that if he speaks Cantonese to them, they wouldn't want to communicate with him. So my dad knows English, too. His English is not great, but he can communicate. So my dad would end up when he see my kids, would end speaking English to them. But I ask my dad to speak Cantonese to them, and my dad worries that Cantonese may not work with the kids. So that's why he says, I just want to make sure I have communication with my grandchildren rather than focusing on the language. He thinks if he just speaks his language rather than English, then the kids will not talk to him. (Transcript C, P8, Lines 11-19)

Ellen's father worried that if he kept speaking Cantonese to his grandchildren, they might not want to talk to him because of language barrier. Therefore, Ellen's father used his understandable English to communicate with his grandchildren. In Emma's case, her children also communicated with their grandparents in Taiwan through the telephone, but Emma doubted it was really communication because her children only responded "yeah" and "ok". The problem was that Emma's parents only

spoke Mandarin, and Emma's children had become used to speaking English from the time they started schooling. The phone calls back to Taiwan did not seem to be very functional communication.

“Researcher : 那你會不會常常打電話回家跟台灣的家人連絡？

Emma : 以前剛來的時候很常啦！現在就很少了，一個月一兩次。

Researcher : 小孩子會順便也和外公外婆講一下嘛？

Emma : 很少。比較少。有過啦！就說跟阿媽講幾句話他們就會“ok”

“yeah”也不知道在講什麼就“yeah, yeah”我說你不會講中文又！沒有用啦，他們聽的懂，但是阿媽一直講，他就 yeah, yeah...(Transcript E, P18, Lines 2-8)

Translation:

Researcher: How often do you phone your family in Taiwan?

Emma: I used to phone them quite often when I first came here. Now I do not phone as much as I used to, about once or twice a month.

Researcher: So do your children also talk to your parents whenever you phone them?

Emma: Very little, very little. Maybe once in a while. They would talk to grandma and said something like “ok” and “yeah”. I would ask them to speak Mandarin. But they would not listen. So grandma keeps saying what she wants to say and my children just say “yeah”...“yeah”.

Both Ellen and Vuong mentioned that there is a specific age at which children become aware of their ethnic identity—high school age.

“Ellen: My older daughter is showing more interest in learning Cantonese, and asking me to speak to her in as much Cantonese as possible. I think it is because some of her friends speak Cantonese at home, and they are proud to be a “special” group that they can use “their own language” to communicate among themselves. My friend's son who is in the same age group seems to be the same way, too. He went to Chinese school when he was young but did not care for it. But this year when he goes to the restaurant, he asks his Mom to

teach him some Chinese words on the menu. I think as kids get older, they start to develop their own identity. And knowing and wanting to learn their own heritage language is part of their searching for their identity.” (Transcript C, P18, Lines 1-10)

Ellen stated that it was a very natural process for children to explore their identities when they become mature. She also referred to a similar case involving her friend’s son, which explains the process of children searching for their ethnic identity. It seems like something is missing here.

Vuong also pointed out that his attitude toward heritage language learning changed due to the fact that he became more mature:

“Vuong: But maybe from Kindergarten to grade nine, whenever they (Cantonese school) taught us any story I didn’t really focus on the content of stories. I just hoped to learn vocabulary to pass the exams. Not until grade 10 and 11, I started to realized “wow...this is important and I should take time to study this seriously.”

Researcher: What happened to you? Why did you change your attitude?

Vuong: Just like I was older I think.” (Transcript D, P4, Lines 23-29)

When discussing their children’s ethnic identity, parents in this study had different approaches and opinions on how that ethnic identity develops. Mimi and Emma feel frustrated because their children seemed to accept the concept that “they are Canadian” instead of “they are Chinese”. Part of the reason according to Ellen’s identity searching theory is that these children are still immature. Ellen believes that when children reach a certain age, they will start to explore their identity, and that this is a very natural process.

Besides, according to Emma, the big environment (dominant society) is the key to determining whether children can develop an affinity for their heritage culture or not.

The big environment may include the accessibility to heritage culture, ethnic population, authentic cultural classes or situations, and the attitudes of mainstream society.

Finally, both Ellen and Vuong found that there is a moment at which children start to be aware of their heritage and appreciate who they are and where they come from. However, both of these cases showed that appreciation of their heritage culture began after they stopped their heritage language learning. Even though they had a strong desire to reacquire their heritage language, such strong desire does not necessarily translate into real action. However, it does seem to stimulate the development of ethnic identity, as evidenced by the changing attitude toward using the heritage language more often, feeling curious about their heritage land, and making friends who had similar ethnic or linguistic backgrounds.

Diaspora Values

Except for the adoptive mother- Cherry, most parent participants in this study possess a certain degree of Chinese heritage and recognize their Chinese ethnicity. The common experience for these parent participants is that of living in a host country where they are bringing up the next generation. These immigrant parents not only migrated to Canada, but also brought their cultural assets with them. In Chinese diasporic communities, it seems that these Chinese heritage parents try every possible way to maintain traditional values and beliefs for the next generation. Mimi pointed out the different manner between Chinese and “foreigners⁸”:

⁸ The term of “foreigner” is a vernacular widely used in Taiwan and China. It usually refers to people from Western countries, and specifically refers to Caucasians.

“Researcher : 那有沒有什麼樣的傳統美德, 觀念, 你覺得希望你的一定要了解, 就是我們中國的傳統中國的一些事情?”

Mimi: 應該會這樣子... 因為我們中國人跟外國人不同就是做事情謙虛, 外國人有外國人的好處, 因為他們很自信, 我做的很好, 我就是要告訴別人“我做的很好”, 那我們中國人就是說自己只有 90 分的話, 絕對不說我做的很好, 但我不知道這對他們是不是可以接受, 畢竟他們從小在這邊長大, 但是我們中國人的道德觀念是一定要有的。” (Transcript A, P13, Lines 23-28)

Translation:

Researcher: Describe any values or beliefs that you hope your child can learn from your culture or tradition.

Mimi: Yes, of course. Because the difference between (we) Chinese and foreigners (Westerners) is that we always have humble manners. Foreigners (Westerners) are very confident, which is also good in some situations. If they do things well, they tell people that they did a great job. But for us (Chinese), if we received 90 marks, we would never say that we did a great job. But I don't know if they (Mimi's children) would accept this concept because they have grown up here (in Western culture). But it is necessary for them to understand Chinese traditional values.

And Ellen demonstrated her own thoughts about Chinese values, which included being subtle and not direct in terms of attitude and language:

“Researcher: So describe any values or traditions that you want your children to understand and follow?”

Ellen: I think that calling people's names, like uncle so and so, or aunty so and so, instead of calling their name directly. By doing so, they can call people in a respectful way. They sometimes, I found that the Canadian way of speaking is very open and Chinese way is subtle. Does that make sense? At least in my family, when I talk to my dad about certain things, instead of saying it straight out, I try to say it indirectly. But I think it can be a good thing and bad thing. Sometimes it's very hard to know what you really want to say if you don't say it directly. But sometimes if you say it directly, it might hurt people's feelings. Get it in the middle ground, I guess.”(Transcript C, P14, Lines 14-24)

Another example about the concept of respecting older people is, in Chinese culture that calling a person's name directly is inappropriate if this person is older than you. Emma pointed out this difference and demonstrated the confusion that it caused:

“Emma : 或是說你見到阿姨要叫阿姨，但這邊洋人是直教叫名字，那這個中國人就不一樣了！

Researcher : 那我覺得如果你是叫他們叫華人，可以這樣叫，但如果是西方人就接叫！

Emma : 所以這就 confuse 啊！但是我還是會啊，如果是一大群中國人見面，我就會要他們叫阿姨叔叔伯伯，他們也會啦，但是就變成你去到英文的世界，你說這是 aunty,no...this is Anna... 因為這是洋人的方法，那變成你有兩套方法，這是一個例子啦，就是很多衝突啦！”(Transcript E, P16-17, Lines 29-31, 1-4)

Translation:

Emma : Or something like when you see your aunt, you have to call her “aunt”. But here Western people call people's names directly without being concerning if they are older or if any relationship is involved. But in the Chinese way, this is very different.

Researcher: So I think if tell them when they meet Chinese, they should call the person's name with title (in respectful way), and when they meet Westerners, they can call their name directly.

Emma: So it is very confusing for them! But I still perform this way. If they meet a group of Chinese, I will ask them to call them aunt someone, or uncle someone. They are also willing to do this. But when we go to into the Western world (meet Western people), you say, “This is aunty..hummm, no this is Anna.” And this is how Western people call people's names. So it becomes that you have double standards. This is just one example. There are so many conflicts (between two cultures) !

Emma also expressed that the concept of respecting elders and people with special accomplishments was very different between Chinese and Western people. And she interpreted it as one of the conflicts that arise while living within two cultures.

“Emma : 傳統美德跟觀念 ?

Researcher : 就是有些你看不過去的西方習慣 ?

Emma : 例如敬老尊賢 , 在這洋人的教育都是 equal, 就是你可以很勇敢的表達你的意見 , 那中國人就不是啊 !

Researcher : 就是比較謙虛 ?

Emma : 對 , 還有大人講什麼 , 你小孩就聽話就好了 , (笑)還問那麼多 !”
(Transcript E, P16, Lines 22-27)

Translation:

Emma : Traditional values and beliefs?

Researcher: Is there any Western behavior that you don't like?

Emma: Such as respecting elders and people with special accomplishments is an example. In Western education, everyone is equal. That means that you can express your opinion without thinking too much. But Chinese people are different.

Researcher: More humble?

Emma: Yes, and when we (parents) say something, you (children) just listen and follow. (Laugh) Don't ask too much!

What Emma wanted to express was the authoritarian style of home education in Chinese culture, which is opposed to most Western families' democratic style of home education. Of course, Emma's children who grew up in Canada and learned

Canadian family values from school may have different opinions about the Chinese discipline. Emma understood these differences, so she was joking about this conflict.

Significantly, for parents like Mimi, Ellen, and Emma, they all grew up in a Chinese-only environment so the challenge they faced was how to teach the next generation about Chinese traditions and values in a host country. These Chinese traditions and values might be opposite to the Western values and beliefs, which is also different to what their children learn from schools or dominant society.

In Vuong's case, having grown up in a relatively isolated environment (except for his mainstream education), Vuong possesses much traditional Chinese behavior and many values. However, such behavior and values were just part of ordinary life and Vuong never had the opportunity to explore the meanings behind these values and behavior. At the same time, because of being educated in Canada, Vuong acquired Western values to a certain degree. Being a father now, Vuong hoped his daughter would understand some traditional Chinese values that Vuong continues to believe in. Vuong's responsibility was not only to follow these traditions and values, but also to teach his daughter the meanings of these traditions and values. However, since he never had interest in these cultural values when he was young, Vuong felt frustrated and powerless because now he might not be able to teach his daughter these traditions:

“Researcher: So describe any traditions or values that you hope your daughter can learn?”

Vuong: Yeah...like my parents, they still do things in traditional ways. I wouldn't know why and what to do, but I will teach her what I remember from my parents. I don't think she understands why we do that now.

Fang: So your parents will be the main culture transmitters?

Vuong: Yeah...I want her to know these traditions but it's tough though because we don't live with my parents now. If we lived with my parents, that would be ideal because they can teach her some culture and traditions. I feel kind of bad because I don't remember a lot of things about Chinese heritage." (Transcript D, P12, Lines 11-18)

The adoptive mother, Cherry, honestly expressed her limitations in teaching her daughter any Chinese traditions and values because of her own ethnicity and limited knowledge of Chinese culture. Cherry also believed that her daughter would more likely learn Western values and beliefs from her family. It indicated some of the limitations of international adoption, although many adoptive parents provide access to birth cultures for their adopted children.

"Researcher: Describe any values or traditions that you will teach your child?

Cherry: Yeah...I guess we are kind of discussing that already. I think the best thing that could happen to my daughter is that we spend more time in addition to language school and dancing class, if we were very close with an immigrant Chinese family, and we spent lots time with them, I think we would be able to see how their family is, what is the same and what are the differences....I don't know how you can teach values and beliefs unless your families have those things. And there's subtle things...about what do you value about in terms of generosity (indicating Chinese value). I struggle with it. I don't pretend for a minute to understand Chinese culture. I really don't because I know it's so much more than dancing and eating." (Transcript C, P19, Lines 19-25)

Parents in this study expressed their desire to maintain traditional Chinese values and beliefs for their children, such as the manner of respecting older people, calling people's names in a respectful way, and so on. One interesting thing that appears in this section is that the two parents (Emma and Mimi) who most strongly expressed their appreciation of living in Canada, also used the most powerful negative phrases to describe the difference between Chinese and Western values. Inter-cultural marriage mother Ellen expressed that finding a balance between two

cultures would be best solution for so that her children could grow up bi-culturally. Vuong's case demonstrated the situation of being a second-generation immigrant who possessed ethnic characteristics to a certain degree, but felt inadequate as a cultural transmitter to the third generation. Adoptive mother Cherry pointed out the important question of how children learn ethnic values and culture if parents themselves do not possess such ethnic background. In other words, Cherry thought that parents (caregivers) are the ones who passed on cultural values and beliefs to next generation instead of the living environment. Although Cherry's statement seemed to contradict the other parents' statements, it directly pertains to the complexity of diaspora values.

In the next chapter, I will give a brief review of what I have presented in the previous chapters, such as the purpose of the study, methodological concerns, and themes emerging from the findings. Then, I will compare the findings to current literature, and hope to provide a better explanation, rather than a generalization, of parents' perspectives on heritage language retention in the diasporic context.

Chapter Six: Discussion

Thus far, I have presented five parent participants' experiences in helping their children with heritage language retention through Saturday Chinese heritage language programs. The findings from the five participants reveal the complexity of issues surrounding heritage language retention in a Chinese diasporic community. The five emerging themes from the findings that I presented in the previous chapter are; a) the function of heritage language programs—what a HL program provides to minority language groups and what minority parents expect to gain through such program, b) differences between heritage education and mainstream education—the differences between mainstream education and heritage education in minority parents' mind, and whether or not this difference involves power issues, c) the meaning of being a minority—how minority parents see themselves and their children in this host country; what are the advantages and disadvantages of being minority in this society, d) negotiation of ethnic identity—how parents interpret their children's identity and how they understand the meaning of being heritage Chinese, and e) diasporic values—what traditional values and beliefs minority parents hope to maintain and how they are hope to transmit these cultural values and beliefs to the next generation.

Due to the different geographical, linguistic and life experiences of parent participants', each theme takes on different shadings with each individual case. In this chapter, I hope to use cross-analysis technique, combining the emic information collected from participants and etic information interpreted by the researcher, to

reflect upon the relationship between these five themes and the three research questions proposed in Chapter one.

Just to review, the three research questions that I proposed in chapter one are:

- (1) What are the motivations and expectations for parents in sending their children to Chinese heritage language programs?
- (2) How and to what extent does language ideology (Fairclough, 2001, 2003) influence parents' language choices for their children?
- (3) How do parents understand their children's (bilingual and bicultural) identity development as negotiated through heritage language education?

Using cross-analysis technique allows the reader to clearly compare the relationship between presented findings and existing literatures. Therefore, the following content divides into three parts based on the main focus of three research questions.

Parents' Motivations and Expectations for Enrolling their Children in a Heritage Language Program

Excepting the adoptive mother, Cherry, motivations for the parent participants stem from their ethnic roots. Among the participants considered here, at least one parent's country of origin, or their ethnic heritage is "Chinese," and this represented a major component in their motivation to enroll their children in a heritage Chinese language program. The adoptive mother enrolled her daughter in a heritage language program as a way of acknowledging the importance of her adopted

daughter's ethnic roots. This connection between ethnic identity and heritage language maintenance has been widely discussed in literature, and most literature presents evidence of a positive correlation between maintaining heritage language and ethnic identity (Cho, 2000; Tse, 2001, 1998; You, 2005). This positive correlation indicates that people who have better heritage language skills may develop more positive feelings towards their ethnic group and vice versa (Tse, 1998). There is no doubt that language ability is an important factor in accessing the target culture. In this study, parents believe that learning in a HL program helps their children understand the mother culture, provides their children with the ability to connect with the heritage land, allows them to socialize with peers from a similar ethnic background, and further develops their ethnic identity in the diaspora community.

Two parents (Cherry and Ellen) make reference to the importance of this latter social function of HL programs. Cherry hopes that her adopted daughter can feel less different among these Chinese looking children and find a place where she can feel a sense of belonging. Ellen's explanation of the social function of HL programs is that it feeds her own psychological need to find a community that she can get close to. After Ellen and her daughter began learning Mandarin in the HL school, Ellen became very involved in school administration. Ellen explains that having this Chinese school community is like having an extended family in this city. This is very important to Ellen since her family is all located in other cities in Canada. Naturally, by going with Ellen to the HL program, Ellen's younger daughter also adds the Chinese community to her social landscape. Emma also mentioned that they made some friends from being involved in the HL school regularly. The adoptive mother, Cherry, felt that there was very little social function for herself in the HL

school, however, she said she knew that parents from other language groups (Mandarin group and Cantonese group) seemed to have some social interactions during the school events. In any case, what is most significant here is that this study indicates that HL programs may serve a social function not only for ethnic children, but also for ethnic parents.

Interestingly, three of five parents in the study (Cherry, Ellen, and Mimi) emphasize the basic importance of being bilingual (Guardado, 2002; Lao, 2004; Parkes, 2008) in modern society. Even though in Canada their children may learn two languages (English and French) in the regular school system, in these parents' minds a more meaningful definition of being bilingual is being good at English and Mandarin. This reflects something similar to the findings of Liao and Larke's (2008) research related to Chinese heritage programs in the United States. These parents favour Mandarin-English bilingualism over French-English bilingualism because of their ethnicity and the recent economic growth in China. They all agree that the rapid economic growth in China makes them feel that more opportunities will open up for their children if they also learn Mandarin, the official national language of the People's Republic of China, and also of Taiwan. This socio-economic factor is mentioned by Lao (2004). It is an added motivation when parents enroll their children in a Chinese HL program, because it raises parents' estimate of the "practical" (economic), value of heritage education.

Although this study demonstrates that socio-economic considerations are relevant to parents' evaluation of their children's heritage education, one parent, Emma, indicates she feels that so long as they live in Canada, it is unlikely that mastering a heritage language will tangibly benefit her children's career development

or academic performance. Only if her children decide to engage in business dealing with the Chinese market when they grow up will it be a useful skill. Since this did not seem to be a major likelihood as far as Emma was concerned, economic factors were not influential in her decision to register her children in the Mandarin program.

One participant (Vuong) mentioned that the systematic language learning in a Chinese HL program was the reason why his father enrolled him and his other siblings in a Chinese HL school. Even though Vuong's father knew that his children would pick up the language from their parents, he still thought that more formal education would provide a consistent and systematic curriculum to his children. Interestingly, both Ellen and Emma demonstrated the difficulties of teaching their children at home. Since both of them have their own careers, the time they can actually devote to their children's language teaching is limited. Ellen and Emma thought that kind of teaching fell short of their idea of formal teaching, which they imagined would involve sitting down by the table, reading a textbook or book in the target language, and practicing writing characters. Emma and Ellen's situation is slightly different to Okita's (2002) idea of heritage language transmission through the family. Okita (2002) thinks that parents perform "invisible work" in heritage language transmission and yet they do not realize that transmitting a heritage language requires much effort. In this study, both Ellen and Emma realize it is not an easy job to teach their own children the target language by themselves so they enrolled their children in a HL program even though, due to some practical limitations, such as limited learning time and inconsistent teacher resources they did not feel that the school could provide a systematic education for their children.

Only one participant in this study, Vuong, strongly emphasized that using HL to communicate among different generations was important. This was because Vuong's mother does not have English skills. In order to help Vuong's daughter communicate with her grandmother, she must be taught heritage language-Cantonese. However, Vuong understands his limitations with that language so that he hopes his father and the Chinese school will provide the resources for his daughter to learn the target language. This is the biggest reason why Vuong wants to register his daughter in a HL program when she reaches school age. It indicates that in some cases, parents' or grandparents' HL language ability is a determining factor in fostering a desire for minority language children to acquire their heritage language. This communicative function is also emphasized in most literature (Kopeliovich, 2010; Li, & Duff, 2008; Liao & Larke, 2008; Park, 2008) in terms of creating positive correlations between heritage language, generational relationships, parents-child intimacy, and effective communication.

It is worth noting that parents' expectations of HL programs generally show a declination over time partially as a result of observing lower than desired results, and also due to the fact that HL learning in a Saturday school setting is just one activity among many extracurricular activities for most children. The effectiveness of the training is limited by class time (2.5 hours per week), inconsistency in teacher resources, and the teachers' general lack of qualification. Xiao (1998) indicates that the difficulty of achieving functional proficiency in these Chinese programs in Winnipeg is related to the limited classroom hours and insufficient language practice outside of the schools. If the main caregivers (parents) cannot provide a constant

input of the target language, children's intake and output opportunities will be really limited. Lao (2004) mentions that parents' limited heritage language proficiency will limit their children's heritage language development. In other words, parents like Ellen (Cantonese speaker who enrolled her child in a Mandarin program) and Cherry (Caucasian adoptive mother) may provide very limited opportunities for communicating in the target language to their children at home.

One participant, Emma, also pointed out that she expected the HL school would provide her children with learning in an authentic language environment. However, she found out that many teachers in the HL programs used English for instruction, which fell short of her idea of an "authentic Chinese environment". This situation is born out by my own experience of volunteering in one school. The reason why teachers in HL schools use English to teach students the target language is related to the students' varying ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. For example, in the classroom I taught in, only three out of fifteen students spoke Mandarin at home. The rest of the students all spoke different languages such as English, Cantonese, and Korean etc. Since these students were all early school age (Kindergarten or grade one), the common language for them was English. This is why teachers in HL programs often start by using English as the instructional language. This situation reveals the complexity of issues faced by Chinese HL schools in achieving their goal of serving the language learning needs of the target ethnic group. The fact is that the target group is far from homogenous.

Language Ideology and Language Choices

The intention here is to explore the relationship between language ideology and language choices. The focus will be on how parents view the language choices they make for their children in terms of home language, heritage language learning in a school setting, and the language they use in public. This first section mainly deals with how internal and external factors affect parents' language choice in different contexts.

This study reveals a genuine and natural desire among most parents to bring their children up to speak their heritage language (the language they feel most connected to). This instinctive choice is mentioned by most research (Kopeliovich, 2010; Kouritzin, 1999; Liao & Larke, 2008; Lao, 2004; Li, 1999; Li, 2005) related to heritage language studies. Emma's attitude is similar to the findings of Liao and Larke's study (2008). She told me, "Because I speak Chinese, my children need to learn Chinese." (*Transcript E. P5, Lines 29-31*). Choosing a language that the parent feels comfortable may seem straightforward and natural, however, for Ellen who is from Hong Kong but who is married to a Canadian, and for Vuong, who is Chinese-Vietnamese but married to a Filipina, the choice of home language may require reaching some mutual agreement between the parents as to whether they wish their home to be bilingual or monolingual. In Ellen's family, Ellen speaks Cantonese to children and her husband speaks English to them. The language Ellen speaks to her husband is English because her husband has limited Cantonese ability. In Vuong's case, both he and his wife are second-generation immigrants to Canada, so the

language they feel most comfortable to bring up their daughter in is English, even though they both maintain fluency in their heritage languages.

Choosing the home language to communicate with the next generation is one thing, however, if the home language is different to the dominant language, the actual performance of home language policy is quite a different matter. It has been described as “invisible work” by Okita (2002). Emma, Mimi and Ellen described the effort required in order to transmit their heritage language to their children at home. Significantly, the responses of the children are quite different in all three cases. With regard to her children’s HL development, Emma shows the most controlling and organizational tendencies. However, she also expressed the most frustration at her children’s use of English to communicate with her. We find a similar case with Kopeliovich’s (2010) Russian mother participant, Natasha. Kopeliovich’s (2010) Russian mother frankly describes how her strict home language policy “evoke[s] her children’s open or silent resistance” (p.172). Emma described how her children often responded to her with negative feelings toward the heritage cultural, such as “ I hate Chinese food” even though they eat mostly Chinese food at home. (*Transcript E. P5, Lines 29-31*)

Mimi and Ellen both agree that they try to speak mostly HL to their children; however, unlike Emma, they do not force their children to speak the HL back, and sometimes they even accommodate their children’s language preferences. They use a more flexible attitude toward their children’s language choices as long as they produce a functional conversation. This relaxed attitude is similar to Kopeliovich’s (2010) Russian father participant. This approach creates better opportunities for

children to develop a positive attitude toward their parent's language and culture.

Therefore, it is apparent that enforcing home language policy involves multiple considerations, such as the effectiveness of the communication (Kouritzin, 1999), the ability to express ideas fully in either the HL or the dominant language (Oh & Fuligni, 2010), the relationship between parents and child, and the children's reaction to home language policy.

When it comes to learning the heritage language in a school setting, the decision may be more complicated than choosing a home language in terms of social, economic, and political ideologies. This is particularly so with "Chinese" languages which are presently in the midst of quite major ethno-political controversies. First of all, Li and Duff (2008) point out that Chinese languages are different from many other languages such as Korean, which are associated historically with somewhat more homogeneous populations, geographical areas, or nation-states. The concept of "Chinese" in its spoken and written forms varies considerably between Mainland China, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, in Chinese diaspora communities around the world, and even within The Peoples' Republic of China itself. These various spoken and written forms influence how and why parents prefer certain HL schools to others. For example, in Liao and Larke's (2008) study, most Taiwanese parents (people from Taiwan) choose to enroll their children in Chinese programs run by the Taiwanese community. Chinese parents (people from the PRC) choose Chinese programs run by the Chinese community. To some extent, this is because there are differences in the written characters, phonetic system, and some spoken usages between these two

“Chinese” nations. Due to historical factors, there are also significant political, ethnic and social divergences at play.

In this study, there are Mandarin-speaking families from Taiwan (Emma), and China (Mimi), an English-speaking family (Cherry-adoptive mother) and a Cantonese-speaking family (Ellen and Vuong’s parents). Most parents in this study recalled great initial interest in enrolling their children in a HL program, which was based on the community or geographic area they came from, and which taught the language they themselves spoke. One exception was Ellen. Ellen explained that she chose the Mandarin program because of past bad experiences in a Cantonese program, as well as her desire to reacquire a language that she had previously studied—Mandarin. Even Ellen’s relatives questioned why she wanted to enroll her younger daughter in a Mandarin program, instead of Cantonese program. Ellen’s response to this was, “Mandarin is good to learn, and Cantonese is good to understand.” (*Transcript C. P9, Lines 2-4*). Ellen confirms the importance of understanding Cantonese because Cantonese is the HL language she uses to communicate with her family and relatives. This is based on communicative considerations. However, when she states that, “Mandarin is good to learn”, the underlying meaning is related to the perceived socio-political and socio-economic superiority of Mandarin. Since Mandarin is the official language in both Taiwan and China, and because of the recent rapid economic growth in both of these nations, especially in China, many ethnic Chinese parents who speak a HL other than Mandarin seem to take political and economic factors into consideration when choosing a Mandarin program for their children. The pilot study I did in 2008 showed this tendency, with more and more Cantonese-speaking parents

registering their children in Mandarin programs because of socio-economic and socio-political factors.

As Wei and Wu (2008) point out, the internal hierarchies of Chinese language vary in the UK, and lead to social prestige for speakers of certain languages in the Chinese communities. Socio-economic and political factors have now apparently become the primary concern of many parents who enroll their children in Mandarin programs rather than choosing genuine heritage programs such as Cantonese, Hakka or Hokkien. Gradually, the influence of linguistic centrism on the part of the government of the PRC, which gives priority to Mandarin, seems to be changing the linguistic ecology in many Chinese diasporic communities. Approximately a decade ago, Xiao (1998) pointed out the language shift from Tai-shun to Cantonese in the Chinese community in Winnipeg because Cantonese carried cultural and economic superiority. There was also at that time a major migration of Cantonese speaking people to Manitoba from Hong Kong. Ten years later, the majority of ethnic Chinese immigrants now originate from Mainland China. Many of these people speak various forms of Mandarin as a mother tongue, and are educated in Mandarin. This, combined with the social, political and economic factors mentioned above, is creating another shift in the linguistic ecology of the larger Chinese community in Winnipeg. Registration in the Saturday Chinese schools provides evidence of this shift. For example, the HL program where I volunteered has now overtaken the Chinatown-based Cantonese school to become the biggest of three Chinese schools in this city. It provides only Mandarin classes using the Pinyin phonetic system and simplified characters, which are standard in the PRC.

Currently the only Chinese language programs available in this city are Mandarin and Cantonese. This is probably related to recent immigration patterns and the fact that these two languages carry the greatest socio-economic and socio-political prestige. For people of Chinese heritage but who speak mother tongues other than Mandarin and Cantonese, there are no other language choices. It is not possible to choose to educate their children in languages such as Hakka, Tai-shun, Shanghainese or Hokkien (Tai-gi). Emma, for instance, speaks Tai-gi as her mother tongue, and she uses Tai-gi to communicate with her family in Taiwan. Yet she decided to speak and teach her children Mandarin. This is largely because she thinks she is herself more fluent in Mandarin due to the fact that Mandarin is her educational language. Therefore, Emma's children will most likely not learn Tai-gi from their mother, and will thus never share the emotional and cultural feelings conveyed uniquely by that language. From the interview with Emma, I got the sense that Emma's children cannot have a functional conversation with their grandma in Taiwan because of their inability to speak Tai-gi. Without Tai-gi, intergenerational communication seems incomplete and dysfunctional.

Vuong and Emma both mentioned that the language they chose to speak in public caused confused feelings for their children. Emma felt that if the home language is different to the language they use in public, the children may not know when and what kind of language they should use. This rings true with Vuong's personal experience. Growing up in Winnipeg, Vuong's father had a very specific language rule for his children to follow. Vuong's home language is Cantonese, which is the language they have used for at least three generations (as far as he knows).

However, in public places, Vuong's father insisted that they speak only English. This caused confusion and uncomfortable feelings for Vuong. He said that when he had to speak English to his father in public he felt like he was acting out a play for others to watch. Vuong's family background (immigration history) seems to be the reason why his father wanted his children to avoid appearing to be members of a "minority" while in public. As part of the contingent of post-Vietnam war refugees, Vuong's family were not as economically or educationally privileged as some more recent migrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan, or the PRC. They thus faced a much different reception in the host culture, and had to work harder to achieve socio-economic advancement.

Last but not least, expanding our view of language ideology to include relations with mainstream society and mainstream language, I found that parents, like Emma and Ellen, tended to indicate reservations about importance of heritage education in comparison to mainstream education. For example, even though Emma agreed that there was a benefit to being bilingual, she still expressed doubt that learning a HL would be useful to her children unless they decided to engage in international business in China, Hong Kong or Taiwan. This seems to indicate that maintaining the HL is less important than mastering the dominant language. If Emma needed to choose one language in this society, she said she would choose English, because it is the most useful language for living in this society. This reveals the obvious pragmatics of linguistic power struggles for recent immigrants.

Negotiation of Children's Bi-lingual and Bi-cultural Identity through a Heritage Language Program

This study also explores parents' understanding of child's bi-lingual and bi-cultural identity as negotiated through heritage language education. All of the parent participants in this study enrolled their children in a heritage language program at the lowest level, which is equal to kindergarten level in mainstream education. The intention was to expose their children to "formal heritage language education" as early as possible in order to ensure the development of bi-lingual and bi-cultural education. This seems a natural assumption, however it is worth asking if in fact HL schools significantly assist in children's heritage language learning and developing ethnic identity.

As mentioned above, my study also indicates that HL schools provide a social function for both parents and children. This is noteworthy because we know from other studies that since parents are usually the first role models for their children, parents' attitudes toward their own ethnic group are definitely a key factor in fostering children's cognitive and psychological development as members of the ethnic group (Guardado, 2006, 2009; Lao, 2004; Li, 1999; Li, 2005; Park & Sarkar, 2007). Among the parents that I interviewed, Cherry (and her husband) as well as Ellen seemed most intent on taking the initiative in this regard. They hoped to become strong role models by going to Mandarin classes together with their children, by volunteering their time in the Chinese school community, and by engaging in other Chinese cultural events passionately.

The theory of “language socialization” (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986) can apply to parents’ involvement in school affairs as well as to children’s classroom learning in the HL school. Children can observe how their parents interact with other ethnic community members. In the classroom, children meet and interact with classmates who have a similar heritage background. The Chinese school community affords children a great many opportunities to interact with the target ethnic group. The school community and classroom experiences also scaffold these children’s understandings of target cultures and languages.

On the other hand, parents who regularly make the trip (i.e. sending and picking up their child) to the heritage language school get a sense of how the heritage language program operates, and what their child is learning from such a program. They also have chance to meet other parents with similar ethnic backgrounds who enroll their children in the program. As Xiao’s (1998) ethnographical study in Winnipeg mentions, parents who regularly make the trip to the heritage language schools may develop an “attached” group identity. This attached group identity implies that the parent’s responsibility is to assist their children’s heritage language learning in a school setting.

In addition to enrolling their children in a HL school, parents in this study provided many other resources to facilitate their children’s positive attitude toward their own heritage culture. These resources included such things as storybooks, songs, Chinese cable TV, movies, and home country visits. For example, visiting the home country in particular had an amazing and positive effect on Mimi’s younger son’s attitude toward Chinese culture and language. After his first visit to China in 2006, he

started speaking Mandarin to his parents. And this was a dramatic change because he had never tried to speak Mandarin before. So visiting the heritage land (Guardado, 2006) seems to assist the connection between second generation of immigrants and heritage culture.

There are many factors that act negatively in the process of fostering children's ethnic identity. Parents pointed out that the small size of the ethnic group, negative attitudes in mainstream society, and overly aggressive efforts to impose an ethnic identity on children may discourage children from trying to understand their heritage and learn the language. For example, Mimi used to live in the north part of the city where the Chinese population is small. At that time Mimi's elder son often challenged his parents because he did not want to be different to most of his peers. Since Mimi's family has moved to the south part of the city, Mimi's elder son has made a lot of friends who have similar ethnic backgrounds to him. As a result he has started to understand and appreciate the Chinese approach to discipline in his family. According to Mimi, her elder son behaves "more like a Chinese kid" now. This is a reference to his polite manner toward people older than him, his being more humble, and being more willing to listen to his parents' suggestions.

In terms of forcefully imposing an ethnic identity, Emma always reminds her children of their Chinese heritage and the importance of speaking Mandarin. The reaction from Emma's children is obvious not compliant, and sometimes causes tension (Cho & Krashen, 1998) in the family. As with Mimi's elder son, Emma's children do not want to be different to their peers. Most importantly, they feel they are Canadian, not Chinese born in Canada. The negotiation of being heritage Chinese,

being different to the dominant group, being children of immigrants, and being part of a minority are only some of the many challenges that minority parents face while living in diasporic community.

The process of developing an ethnic identity among minority children has been discussed by many scholars (Guardia & Evans, 2008; Norton, 1995; Silverstein, 2003; Tse, 1998). The trajectory of such development involves multiple factors and layers of challenges. Parents often accept that they have a responsibility to help their children understand their heritage, their ethnic culture and their heritage language. This enables children to access their heritage culture and motherland more easily when they grow up.

Bhabha's (1994, p. 4) "in between" concept of identity or "hybrid identity" provides insight into how parents perceive their children's identity in this study. Even though the hybrid identity does not give a clear definition of who one should be (i.e. Canadian, Chinese Canadian, second generation of Chinese immigrant, and etc.), it is still the best interpretation for these ethnic children. For example, Emma's children think they are Canadian, and so does Mimi's younger son. However, they cannot deny that they have Chinese parents and they all speak another language (different to the dominant language) at home. How can they define themselves? He (2008) proposes that "temporality and spatiality" (p.115)--time and space are the crucial elements, which seems to help minority language parents interpret their children's identity. For example, when I asked my parent participants, "if people ask you- what is the nationality of your children, how would you answer?" Three parents (Mimi, Emma and Vuong) agreed that if people in Canada asked this question, they must want to

know where your parents, grandparents or great grandparents come from; and if people outside of Canada asked you this question, they probably want to know where (which country) you come from. Therefore, space, time, and relationship with people and environment are very important in terms of how you determine your identity.

However, I found that minority language parents do not easily understand the hybrid nature of their children's identity in the first place because the majority of these parents come from a totally different cultural and linguistic background. Through the process of childrearing in a host country, these minority parents learn about the host culture gradually and compare it to their ethnic culture. They then become more able to see both worlds, and to further describe and analyze the two worlds to their children. In a very real sense these parents are experiencing intercultural (hybridity) negotiations extended over two or more generations, different languages, cultures, school systems and communities.

Finally, this study reveals that the attitude of mainstream society toward the minority group is a determining factor in fostering the ethnic identity. My participants encountered both positive and negative experiences. Two decades ago, when he moved to a new school, Vuong was pulled out to an ESL class because the new teacher did not know his English ability and assumed that because of his Asian appearance, his English might require remedial study. This resulted in Vuong feeling a certain discrimination in his school life. Now an adult, Vuong feels that there is no advantage in being part of a minority. He is always concerned that people will judge him because of his Asian appearance. As a mainstream schoolteacher now, Vuong also worries that his English is not perfect enough for his colleagues and for some

students from Caucasian families. Although speaking Cantonese as his mother tongue, Vuong does not feel confident enough to speak Cantonese to people other than his family. Vuong hopes that his daughter can learn Cantonese in order to communicate with her grandmother, but he knows that he will not be the one who teach his daughter the language. This situation reflects so-called semilingualism (Cummins, 1981,1994; Guardado, 2006; Martin-Jones & Romaine; 1986). Semilingualism refers to the lack of ability in both first language and second language. In Vuong's situation, he is concerned about his inadequate language ability in both his first language (Cantonese) and second language (English). His insecure feelings about being a minority may derive from his family background, home education, and attitudes from mainstream society.

Emma represents an opposite case. Emma knew that her children were the minorities in the school, but she received a lot of support from the school and teachers. For example, the teachers encouraged Emma to keep speaking her heritage language to her children. They assured that they, as teachers would take care of the children's English. Also, the school that Emma's children go to has many cultural activities so Emma's children have learned that other cultures (including their own heritage culture) are as important as the dominant culture. This has led them to show more interest in their own heritage culture. We can thus observe that attitudes of mainstream society are a significant factor in fostering or discouraging ethnic children's identity development.

To sum up, the findings from this study demonstrate how minority parents deal with challenges they face in terms of maintaining HL, choosing a HL, choosing

whether or not to attend a HL school on Saturdays, negotiation between the dominant culture and heritage culture, and further creating the moderating values and beliefs for next generations in a diasporic context. To some extent, language ideology affects parents' language choices within the home, at school, and in public. It further affects how minority parents view the importance of HL education compared to mainstream education. Even though these participants, with the exception of Vuong, did not strongly emphasize the disadvantages of being minority, the findings indeed reveal some of the struggles that minority parents experience in the process of maintaining HL and assisting in their children's ethnic identity development in a diasporic context.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and Implications

Due to the international flow of migrants, issues related to heritage language maintenance and heritage education have recently been widely discussed. This study draws attention to how and why minority parents seek to educate their children in their mother culture and language through community-based heritage language programs. The study was derived from (a) my personal experiences (e.g., the experience of attending Chinese New Year banquets hosted by a local Chinese school), (b) observation (e.g., observing my Chinese born Canadian friend, Lana interact with her siblings and negotiate her ethnic identity), and (c) curiosity about the function of the Chinese heritage language schools in a diaspora. I chose to focus on parent's perspectives in choosing which heritage language to teach their children, which heritage language school to enroll them in, and how they help children negotiate in a bi-cultural and bi-lingual environment. I also examined the parent's feelings about the importance of heritage language retention, their feelings about being part of a minority, how they help their children develop their ethnic identity in the diaspora, and issues related to living in a bi-cultural and bi-lingual context. The five parent participants share the common experience of enrolling their child or children in a Saturday Chinese heritage language program. It is my hope that the study will provide readers with a basic understanding of what minority parents hope to gain from heritage language programs, what challenges they may encounter when registering their child in a HL program, and how they can help their children to negotiate a bi-culture and bi-lingual context. These specific five participants were chosen through three Chinese community schools in this city because they, originally, came from

diverse geographical areas, had lived different lengths of time in Canada, and had different life stories. They are in many ways representative of the diversity of the small Chinese community in one mid-sized Canadian city.

The motivation for parent participants to enroll their children in a heritage language program stems from their ethnic roots. Except for the adoptive mother, all the parent participants consider themselves to be of Chinese heritage because of their country of origin, parent's country of origin, or ethnic roots. This is a large element in what motivated them to enroll their children in a Chinese language program. This holds true even for the adoptive mother who hopes to offer Chinese heritage education to her adopted daughter so that she has the ability to access her birth culture when she grows up. It is a very natural and basic desire for these minority parents to develop and maintain their children's heritage language ability. In so doing their children can establish a feeling of cultural intimacy with their heritage land, culture and language. From the parent's perspectives, enrolling their children in a HL school is related to their hope that the school will provide a systematical learning framework, a social environment, and an authentically Chinese learning space for their children.

I have also noted the workings of language ideology, which in this study manifests itself in the parent's language choices, even though the parents themselves seem not to be much aware of the ideological underpinnings of those choices. For example, most parent participants mentioned a desire for their children to be bilingual. This desire combined with social, economic and political considerations, such as possible future international career related to the promising economic

situation in China recently. Being bilingual (in this case, in English and Mandarin) may lead to increasing opportunities for these heritage Chinese children. A concern for their children's future career success is thus an important factor when minority parents choose a HL program for their children. Among Chinese languages, Mandarin is the language that possesses most prestige since it is the official language in China (including Hong Kong) and Taiwan where the largest number of ethnic Chinese immigrants to Canada come from. Thus, despite the fact that many ethnic Chinese speak a language other than Mandarin as their mother tongue, there is an increasing tendency to equate being Chinese with the ability to speak the official language of China and Taiwan: Mandarin. One parent in this study who chose a Mandarin program for her daughter indicated that this was partially based on socio-economic and socio-political considerations even though Mandarin was neither her heritage language, nor a language she was fluent in. Another mother participant, whose mother tongue is Tai-gi, did not mention any consideration of educating her children in Tai-gi because there was no Tai-gi language school available in her area. What this seems to indicate is that among Chinese languages, Mandarin is growing in prominence, while the regional languages (such as Cantonese, Hakka, Hokkien (Tai-gi), Shanghainese, etc) are becoming less and less important in diasporic contexts. A combination of limited or non-existent formal schooling options, and pragmatic considerations of social, economic, and political factors, has thus lead many heritage Chinese parents to forsake their genuine heritage language in favour of teaching the dominant, officially recognized Chinese language (Mandarin) to their children.

Only one participant in this study strongly emphasized that communication between different generations was the most important factor for him in seeking to

cultivate and maintain his child's heritage language ability. This was mainly because the participant's mother did not have English skills and his parents live in the same city as him. If the participant's child did not learn the heritage language, communication between generations would be a problem. This indicates that parents' or grandparents ability in the heritage language and the dominant (English) language, as well as the physical distance between generations can be determining factors in fostering parents' desire for children to acquire the heritage language.

This study also highlighted differences between heritage education and mainstream education. For most of the parents interviewed, mainstream education for their children is no doubt the priority. Heritage education is like an additional subject for them. Because of their immigrant backgrounds, three of the parent participants felt that for the benefit of their children's academic performance and career development in this society, mainstream education should be the main focus. Besides, because they now live in Canada, they did not believe that mastering the heritage language would significantly affect their children's career prospects. One mother participant indicated that she felt that learning a HL would be useful if her children only if they decided to engage in international business in China, Hong Kong or Taiwan. However, this is not to say that they have totally surrendered to the dominant culture and education. Even though these minority parents acknowledge the priority of mainstream education, they still use every possible method to facilitate their children's heritage education.

Parents' expectations of the Saturday HL schools generally show a declination over time in this study. This is due partially to the fact that heritage language learning

in a community school setting is an added activity for most of children who may have several other extracurricular commitments. The effectiveness of the training provided in the schools was another negative factor. The limited learning time (2.5 hours per week), and teachers' lack of qualification makes it difficult for children to gain great proficiency in such schools. One parent also pointed out that most teachers in heritage language programs used English as the medium of instruction, which fell short of her idea of an "authentic Chinese environment".

Most parents did not seem to believe that there was a direct connection between the HL program and their children's ethnic identity development. Instead, most parents acknowledged that Chinese schools provide these ethnic children a social environment where they can scaffold their HL ability, observe people's interaction in culturally specific ways, and make friends from a similar heritage background. This reflects Schieffelin and Ochs' (1986) theory of "language socialization" which holds that language learning and culture absorption occurs simultaneously through such a school setting.

In a general sense, parents understand their children's ethnic identity as the manner in which their children interpret themselves to their parents, peers, school and society. Time, space and their relationship with the social environment are the determining factors for these ethnic children in terms of who they are, where their parents and ancestors come from, and why they need to learn Chinese language and culture. A large number of studies demonstrate that in the process of a child's ethnic identity development parents are the most important figures (Guardado, 2006; 2009; Lao, 2004; Li, 1999; Li, 2005; Park & Sarkar, 2007). This is because parents are not

only the decision makers, but also the home policy performers. However, neither parents' home policies, nor the children's ethnic identity formation follow a fixed trajectory or generalized path. In the process of childrearing, these minority parents engaged in tremendous intercultural negotiations. Issues ranged from their situation as immigrant parents and minority parents, problems of learning the dominant language and culture, serving as the only connection between mother land and host land for their children, being the gatekeepers between heritage culture and dominant culture, and being the facilitators for both their children's heritage education and mainstream education. Eventually, the experience of all these cultural negotiations seems to lead parents to a realization that living in an adopted culture necessarily implies that their children will develop hybrid and multiple identities (Bhabha, 1994). In the diaspora context, much of the work of scaffolding and facilitating their children's ethno-cultural hybridity falls to the parents who themselves must examine and redefine their understanding of their own cultural heritage.

Limitations

This case study raised several questions about heritage language maintenance through Saturday community schools. I have asked what the schools mean to minority parents in terms of their children's heritage education and HL ability. I have also examined the nature and extent to which mainstream society supports heritage education. The essential meaning "heritage language" for people of "Chinese" ethnicity and changing linguistic ecology also drew my attention. Even though this study represents an effort to explore why minority parents hope to maintain heritage language and culture for next generation, the extent to which parents will ultimately

feel satisfied with their efforts and child's heritage language ability remains as a significant issue that was not thoroughly addressed. In terms of heritage language ability, we need to ask if minority parents expect that their children can achieve the same level of language abilities as they do? Or are minority parents satisfied with the communicative skills that their children may achieve?

Support from mainstream society is one of the biggest factors that affect whether or not ethnic communities have opportunities to maintain their culture, language, and traditions in public. This study touches this issue briefly; however, it would be useful to explore this in greater depth from the mainstream school perspective, heritage school perspective, and in relation to government policies related to heritage education. It is clear that support from mainstream society directly affects minority groups' attitudes toward maintaining their culture and language, and finding ways in which to provide greater support may bring better cross-cultural understanding within the community.

The meaning of heritage language has been discussed in most heritage education related research. However, this study reveals that the language choices in school settings are limited, especially when we note the great variety of Chinese languages spoken by members of the ethnic "Chinese" community. Should "heritage" language be understood as the first language (mother/father tongue) that members of a given group speak, or should it mean the official (dominant) language in minority parents' home countries? This is definitely related the next question-- what is the meaning of the changing linguistic ecology of the Chinese community. The changing linguistic ecology refers to the changing demography, and the hierarchy of languages

established through cultural, social, economic, and political factors. It unfortunately also implies the death of the “inferior” or non-dominant minority languages. Future study may need to explore how people perceive the changing linguistic ecology.

Finally, this research was originally designed as an ethnographical research project because I planned not only to collect interview data, but also observational data from three research sites. However, because I only had access to one of three Chinese schools (The Manitoba Chinese School), I could not collect ethnographic field notes from the other two schools. This meant my research did not fulfill the standard procedures ethnography that contains interviews as well as observation. As a result, I decided to engage in detailed analysis of the interview data, and interpret the individual differences thoroughly. This then fitted the model of case study research. The lesson learned seems to be that many times qualitative researchers have less than full control of their project in terms of research context, recruiting participants, and how a study eventually develops.

Implications

This research project explored the experiences of a number of Chinese immigrant parents, and one mother of an adopted Chinese girl, in helping their children to develop and maintain their heritage languages through heritage language programs. The findings provide a better understanding of how minority language groups cope with unexpected challenges in terms of language choices and maintenance, and how they negotiate their ethnic identities through HL programs. This study provides readers an overview of the complexity of heritage language maintenance issues, not only in community HL schools, but also at home, in public K-

12 schools, and in social settings. My intention to explore HL maintenance issues was not only fed by my own interest and community, but also by a hope to contribute to the deeper understanding of minority language rights in this multi-lingual and multi-cultural society.

Based on the findings of this research as well as on suggestions from participants, the following list outlines how this study may be of benefit to target readers—minority language parents, members from community HL schools, educators from mainstream schools, and policy makers.

For minority parents:

- 1) It is important to understand and acknowledge the challenges and difficulties that they may encounter in terms of children's heritage language development and maintenance. Recognizing the invisible workload of maintaining an HL may decrease parents' frustration and anxiety in terms of transmitting HL to future generations.
- 2) The performance of language policy, whether at home, in schools or in public settings, needs to be clear and consistent in order not to confuse children.
- 3) It is beneficial to adopt a relaxed attitude toward children's heritage language and ethnic identity development. Imposing language and identity strictures on children may create overt and covert rebellion on the part of the children.
- 4) There is also a need to consider the importance of maintaining an HL at an early stage of the children's development. Such things as language choices, the importance of communication with the older generation, and other socio-economic factors should be decided upon well before children start formal

schooling.

For members from community HL schools:

- 1) It would be advisable to spend time and effort in professional teacher development in order to ensure the teachers' qualifications.
- 2) In order not to fall short of creating an authentic Chinese environment, the HL school board needs to consider who the target students are and what the purpose of establishing such school is. If there is a large number of non-Mandarin or Cantonese speaking students and parents, school and teachers need to consider using bilingual instruction, instead of using English as the dominant instructional language.

For mainstream educator

- 1) It is very important for educators to possess a positive attitude toward minority language students and support their heritage language ability. For example, it can be a very meaningful activity to ask the minority language students to teach some basic vocabulary to other student as the classroom activities.
- 2) Encouraging minority parents and students to maintain their heritage language at home will also assist parents in understanding of the importance of heritage language maintenance.
- 3) Incorporating a variety cultures into the curriculum will provide students with the opportunity to appreciate diverse cultures from around the world, including the cultures of minority students in the school itself.

For policy makers

- 1) To ensure basic language rights (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2001) for minority groups, policy makers need to re-examine the multiculturalism policy to see if the current policy is effective in protecting minority groups' language rights, and to what extent the government can provide appropriate support to minority groups, community, and community-based schools.
- 2) Financial resources were identified as an issue by one parent participant because she used to work as staff in one of the Saturday Chinese schools. In order to support the vitality of ethnic community schools, the various levels of government should consider providing funds for maintaining and supporting these schools' operation.

Applying these suggestions would generate a better support for minority language parents for heritage language maintenance issues. Minority groups are a major asset for Canadian society and we should provide every possible support to help them feel included and to assist them in maintaining their cultural identities and languages. This study intends to provide readers with a better understanding of the experiences and challenges of immigrant families respect to maintaining their own language and identity.

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Appendix A: Consent Form
(To be copied on University of Manitoba letterhead)

THE CONSENT FORM

Research Project Title: Language Politics and Language Retention in a Canadian Chinese Diaspora Community: Challenges for Parents. 研究的題目：加拿大中文社團對語言政策及母語保存的看法：對父母的挑戰

Researcher(s): Yi-fang Chen, Master of Education candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba

研究人員：陳宜芳，曼尼託巴大學教育系的研究生

Project supervisors: Dr. Sandra Kouritzin, Associated professor of Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba 指導教授：Dr. Sandra Kouritzin 曼尼託巴大學教育系副教授

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you a basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

在簽同意書的同時，您將會保存一份同意書的副本以供參考。這份同意書將提供您對這個研究的參與及過程有基本的了解，如果您想了解更多有關這個研究的內容，請自在的提出您的問題。請將這份同意的內容仔細詳讀。

My name is Yi-fang Chen and I am a Master of Education Degree student at the University of Manitoba. I am writing to inform you of a research study I am conducting called Language Politics and Language Retention in a Canadian Chinese Diaspora Community: Challenges for Parents. I am requesting your voluntary participation in this study, which I hope will lead to better understanding of the challenges that immigrant (minority language) parents face when they decide to enroll their children in a heritage language program. Its focus is on exploring parents' perspectives about heritage language retention.

我的名字叫陳宜芳。我是曼尼託巴大學教育系研究生。這封信是要通知您我準備進行的研究，題目叫做加拿大中文社團對語言政策及母語保存的看法：對父母的挑戰。由於這個研究計畫，我請求您的自願性的參與這項研究計畫。我希望這個研究能提供給移民父母或弱勢族群父母一些詳細的資訊—關於當父母幫孩子註冊母語學校時所可能面對的挑戰。這個研究的重心是要探討中國移民父母對母語保存的看法。

Please consider this letter to be a request for you to participate in a project that will study parents' perspectives about heritage language retention.

請考慮將這份同意書當作是一種請求您參與這個研究--移民父母或弱勢族群家長對母語保存的看法。

Purpose of the study. I understand that the purpose of this study is to explore the challenges that immigrant parents face when they decide to send their children to a heritage language program in order to help their children maintain certain connects with their mother language and culture; The three main directions of this study are 1) to collect information

about the motivations and expectations of parents of participants in Chinese heritage language programs, 2) to analyze how language ideology impacts parents' language choice, and 3) to investigate how parents help in developing or negotiating their children's ethnic identity in a bi-cultural and bilingual environment.

研究的目的。我了解研究的目的是探討父母為讓孩子保存祖國文化觀念及母語，而送孩子到母語學校的挑戰。三大研究方向為(1) 收集父母送孩子到母語學校的動機及對母語學校期望，(2) 分析語言的意識形態如何引響父母對母語選擇(3) 探討父母如何在異鄉幫助孩子建立他們的祖國文化認同。

The procedure of the study. I've read and understood the information about the study on the above mentioned topic. I understand the research procedures involving two tape-recorded interview sessions, and member checking (read the text transcription after interviewing). I know that I will be participating two interview sessions and each session will be lasting at least an hour long. This project will be conducted during September to October 2009. In these two sessions, I will need to provide or discuss my experience of enrolling my child in a heritage language school and how I help them in this learning journey. I understand that these interviews will be tape-recorded and notes will be taken by the researcher. I understand that if I agree to participate, I will sign the consent letter before the first interview. This consent letter outlines the nature of the study and the rights I have in this research project, such as; I can always ask questions to clarify interview questions; I can refuse to answer any questions that I don't feel comfortable with; I can choose the language (English or Mandarin) that I feel most comfortable with to answer the questions; I can also withdraw from this study at anytime without any penalty; I understand that my decision of participating in this study will not affect my children's education. The researcher and I will arrange the time and place of the interviews together by telephone or e-mail message.

參與研究的過程。我已經讀過並且了解這個研究的目的。我了解這個研究的過程包含了兩次錄音面談以及確認抄寫後文字的面談內容。我了解我將和研究人員進行兩次持續一小時的錄音面談。面談的時間將安排在今年的九月和十月。在這兩次的面談當中，我將和研究人員討論我送孩子到母語學校的經驗，及我和幫助小孩與祖國學習母語的過程。我了解我將和研究人員進行錄音面談，在面談的過程中研究人員也會作筆記。我了解如果我同意參加，我將會簽一份同意書。這份同意書明確說明了這項研究的目的及過程，以及我參與研究的權利，例如；我隨時可以發問來澄清某些問題，我有權利不回答一些令我感到不舒服的問題，我也隨時可以選擇退出研究而不受到任何遲罰。是否參與這個研究計畫，將不會影響我孩子的學習。我可選擇用英文或中文回答問題，我和研究人員會經由電話或電子郵件討論面談的時間和地點。

The interview data will be transcribed into text data, and I will read a copy of the transcript (either English or Mandarin) to verify the answers I provided. I understand I have the right to add or delete any comments from the transcribed text data of the interview and send it back to the researcher within two weeks via mail or E-mail.

面談的內容將會抄寫為文字內容，我將會收到一份抄寫後的副本（中文或英文版）以確定面談內容的可靠性。我有權力決定哪些內容是我想增加或不想要留在面談的文字內容裡，並且在兩個星期內寄回給研究人員。

I understand that the rules of the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board respect the confidentiality of participants in any research. So, the researcher will give me a pseudonym after transcribing the interview into the text data in order to guarantee my anonymity. Any information used in the text or in the reporting of the final results will be masked by pseudonym. There will be some direct quotations with a pseudonym used in this study. However, I understand that my name will not appear anywhere in the transcribed data or final paper and all identifiers will be stripped to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of

my participation. The transcribed information (with pseudonyms) will only be shared with the researcher's advisor, Dr. Sandra Kouritzin, and her two other thesis committee members, Dr. Yi Li and Dr. Dawn Wallin. Each of these people also understands and follows the regulations of the Research Ethics Board regarding the need to respect the confidentiality and privacy of research participants. After transcribing the interview information into text data, the audiotape will be destroyed immediately. The researcher will store all transcribed data securely in a password-protect computer, and the data will be destroyed after the completion of this project.

我了解研究教育及護理道德委員會的規則是確保任何參與研究的人都應該保持機密及隱私，所以研究人員將會在抄寫後的內容中給我一個假名。任何有關我的資料，不管文字敘述，或在最後的研究報告都將以假名出現。在研究報告中可能會出現一些引述參與人員所說得話，但我的名字絕對不會出現在抄寫後的內容或者最後的研究報告，以確保參與研究的人的機密。所有抄寫面談的內容以（假名呈現）將會和只有研究的指導老師 Dr. Sandra Kouritzin 即兩位委員教授 Dr. Yi Li and Dr. Dawn Wallin 分享。所有參與討論的教授們，也會遵守研究道德委員會的規則，以確保任何參與研究的人的機密及隱私權。當面談的內容抄寫為文字內容後，錄音帶將會馬上摧毀，所有抄寫的文字面談內容將安全的用密碼鎖定後，儲存在研究者的私人電腦，所有文字面談內容也將在最後的研究報告完成後摧毀。

The research results will be collected and analyzed into a thesis project and may be presented at local, national, or international conferences; or published in professional and scholarly journals. If I am interested in the final research results, the researcher will send me a copy of the final results once the study is completed.

所有研究的結果將會被收集及分析為碩士論文，而且最後的論文研究也可能會在地區性，全國性，或國際性的會議中發表。如果您對最後的研究報告有興趣，研究者也會寄我一份。

I understand that there are no known risks or discomforts associated with this study. Participation in this project is voluntary, and I am free to decide not to participate or to withdraw without penalty at any time. I understand that my decision of participating in this study will not affect my children's education. I can ask questions about the research, or present any concerns about interview questions that I do not understand at any time during the project. There is no compensation for participating in this project. However, I will receive the final research report if I request it. This final research results may provide me a better understand of how immigrant (minority language) parents cope with the challenges of helping their children with heritage language retention.

我了解參與這個研究並不會對我有任何危害。這個研究是採取自願性參與。我可以選擇是否要參加，或在任何時間想退出都不會受到任何懲罰。是否參與這個研究計畫，將不會影響我孩子的學習。在參與研究的過程中，我可以自在的提出的問題。參與這項研究並不會得到任何補償。然而如果我對最後的研究報告有興趣，我可以向研究者提出申請。最後的研究報告能讓我更了解 父母如何面對讓孩子保存母語挑戰

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

您在這份同意書上簽名代表您已經充分了解參與這項研究的細節。參與這項研究以及簽這份同意書對您和研究人員並不會造成任何法律上的顧慮。您在任何時間還是可以決定退出研究或者拒絕回答任何您不想要

回答的問題，或者在研究報告中更改您的意見或想法。這些舉動並不會對您造成任何傷害。您持續性的參與研究面談就如同您一開始的同意參與這項研究。在參與研究面談的過程中請自在的提出您的問題。

Researcher: Yi-fang Chen Tel: 275-0669, E-mail: ivonnechen@hotmail.com

研究人員

Project supervisors: Dr. Sandra Kouritzin Tel: 474-9079, E-mail: kouritzi@cc.umanitoba.ca

指導教授

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board in the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact Dr. Sandra Kouritzin at kouritzin@shaw.ca and 204-474-9079 or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

這個研究已經通過曼尼託巴大學道德研究委員會的審核，如果您對這項研究仍有其他的問題或抱怨，請與 Dr. Sandra Kouritzin, kouritzin@shaw.ca, 204-474-9079 連絡或者與人類道德秘書連絡 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca 您將會保存一份同意書的副本以供參考。

-----Provide for Signatures as Required-----

請務必簽名

| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| Participant's Signature | Date |
| 參加者簽名 | 日期 |

| | |
|------------------------|------|
| Researcher's Signature | Date |
| 研究人員簽名 | 日期 |

I would like to receive a copy of final research result, please choose: **Yes / No**

您是否願意收到最後的研究報告，請選擇：是 / 否

If you choose "Yes", please include your postal or electronic address where the researcher can send you a summary of the results.

假如你選擇願意收到最後的研究報告，請告知您想要的收件方式：

Via e-mail 經由電子郵件: _____

Via mail:經由普通郵寄信件: _____

**Appendix B: Permission letter for the principal
(To be copied on University of Manitoba letterhead)**

Yi-fang Chen

651 Viscount Place,

R3T 1J1

Date: May 25, 2009

Dear principal,

My name is Yi-fang Chen and I am a Master of Education student at the University of Manitoba. I am writing to inform you of research regarding immigrant parents' perspectives about heritage language retention that I am conducting. The focus of this research is on parents' perspectives of heritage language retention and their heritage language choice in a Chinese diaspora community in Canada. The study is part of my thesis project, which aims to gain insight into the challenges that parents may face when they decide to help their children with heritage language retention. My thesis advisor is Dr. Sandra Kourtzin from the Faculty of Education at University of Manitoba.

The study is entitled "**Language Politics and Language Retention in a Canadian Chinese Diaspora Community: Challenges for Parents.**" The purpose of this study is 1) to collect parents' views about their motivations for and expectations of enrolling their child in a Chinese heritage language program, 2) to analyze how language ideology impacts parents' language choice, and 3) to investigate how parents help in developing or negotiating their children's ethnic identity in a bi-cultural and bilingual environment. This study is trying to collect information related to immigrant parents' experiences and personal beliefs through two audio-taped interviews during September to October, 2009.

I would like to request your permission and assistance to recruit participants for my study. If you grant me permission, I have attached a letter that I am asking you to distribute to students in your school so that they can bring this recruitment letter to their parents. Also, please help by placing some advertising posters at your school. A copy of the recruitment letter and advertisement has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. Basically, the letter to parents requests those who are interested in participating in the study to contact me directly. After they contact me, I will contact them through telephone or E-mail to initiate the study, which entails two interview sessions. Parent participants will sign a consent form before the interview. This will make them aware of the nature of this study, their rights while participating, and the right to withdraw at anytime. All responses will be kept strictly anonymous and confidential. Participants' names and that of the school will not appear anywhere in the results and final report. So that you have greater understanding of the parameters of the study, and the ethical issues under consideration, I have attached a copy of the consent form that will be signed by all participants. (*Documents, including principal permission letter, participant consent letter, recruitment letter for parents, and advertising poster, will be provided to principals.)

If you would be willing to help me advertise this study, or if you know any parents who might be interested in participating in a research study, please forward the attached advertisement to them. Besides, I wish to build reciprocal relationship with the your school by being a volunteer during my data collection in order to thank you for helping my research. If you would like more information regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact me at the following address or phone number:

Yi-fang Chen

651 Viscount Place, R3T 1J1

Tel: 275-0669

E-mail: ivonnechen@hotmail.com

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board in the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact Dr. Sandra Kouritzin at kouritzin@shaw.ca and 204-474-9079 or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

這個研究已經通過曼尼託巴大學道德研究委員會的審核，如果您對這項研究仍有其他的問題或抱怨，請與 Dr. Sandra Kouritzin, kouritzi@cc.umanitoba.ca, 204-474-9079 連絡或者與人類道德秘書連絡 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca 您將會保存一份同意書的副本以供參考。

Sincerely,

Yi-fang Chen

Appendix C: Introduction letter for parents
(To be copied on University of Manitoba letterhead)

Yi-fang Chen

651 Viscount Place,

R3T 1J1

Date: May 25, 2009

Dear parents,

親愛的家長您好：

My name is Yi-fang Chen and I am a Master of Education student in the University of Manitoba. I am writing to inform you of a research study focusing on immigrant parents' perspectives on heritage language retention that I am conducting. The study is part of my thesis project, and my instructor is Dr. Sandra Kouritzin from the Faculty of Education.

我的名字叫陳宜芳。我是曼尼託巴大學教育系的研究生。目前我正在進行一項研究是有關於父母對母語保存的看法。這個研究是我的論文研究的一部份, 我的教授是教育系的 Dr. Sandra Kouritzin.

The study is entitled, "**Language Politics and Language Retention in a Canadian Chinese Diaspora Community: Challenges for Parents.**" The purpose of this study is 1) to collect information about parents' motivations and expectations when enrolling their child in a Chinese heritage language program, 2) to analyze how language ideology impacts parents' language choice, and 3) to investigate how parents help in developing or negotiating their children's ethnic identity in a bi-cultural and bilingual environment. This study is trying to collect information related to immigrant parents' experiences and personal beliefs through two audio-taped interviews during September to October, 2009.

這個研究的題目是題目叫做加拿大中文社團對語言政策及母語保存的看法：對父母的挑戰。

這個研究的目的是(1) 收集父母送孩子到母語學校的動機及對母語學校期望，(2) 分析語言的意識形態如何影響父母對母語選擇(3) 探討父母如何在異鄉幫助孩子建立他們的祖國文化認同。在九月及十月份，藉由兩次一個小時的錄音面談，這個研究主要收集移民父母對母語保存的經驗，以及個人的想法。

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in two interview sessions that will last about one hour each time. Before the first interview session you will be asked to sign a consent letter to ensure you have fully understood the nature of this study and your rights while being involved in this study. You will also be asked to review a written transcript of the interviews. You may send me back any revisions that you wish to make to this transcript within two week. Reading and responding to this transcript should take no more than one hour each time. You can be assured that your anonymity will be protected throughout all processes of the study, and your name will not appear anywhere in the results.

如果您同意參與這項研究，您將會和研究者有兩次一小時的錄音面談。在進行第一次面談之前，您將會簽一份同意書，以確定您對這項研究的目的，內容及參與研究的權利完全了解。您也將會收到文字版的面談內容，如果您想要更改任何的回答，你可以在兩星期內回覆研究者。在整個研究過程，研究者會確保您姓名的機密及您的隱私權，您的姓名將不會出現在研究結果及報告。

If you would be willing to participate in this study, or wish to receive more information regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact me at the following address or phone number.

如果您願意參加這項研究，或想了解更多研究內容，請趕快跟我連絡。

Yi-fang Chen

651 Viscount Place,

R3T 1J1

Tel: 275-0669

E-mail: ivonnechen@hotmail.com

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board in the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact Dr. Sandra Kouritzin at kouritzin@shaw.ca and 204-474-9079 or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

這個研究已經通過曼尼託巴大學道德研究委員會的審核，如果您對這項研究仍有其他的問題或抱怨，請與 Dr. Sandra Kouritzin, kouritzin@cc.umanitoba.ca, 204-474-9079 連絡或者與人類道德秘書連絡 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca 您將會保存一份同意書的副本以供參考。

Sincerely,

感謝您的考慮，

Yi-fang Chen

陳宜芳

Appendix D: Advertisement Poster
(To be copied on University of Manitoba letterhead)

Research Project Title: Language Politics and Language Retention in a Canadian Chinese Diaspora Community: Challenges for Parents.

研究題目: 加拿大中文社團對語言政策及母語保存的看法: 對父母的挑戰。

Researcher: Yi-fang Chen, Master's degree candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba.

我的名字叫陳宜芳。我是曼尼託巴大學教育系的研究生

Supervisors: Dr. Sandra Kouritzin, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba.

我的指導老師是 Dr. Sandra Kouritzin

The purpose: 1) to collect information about the motivations and expectations of parents enrolling their children in Chinese heritage language programs, 2) to analyze how language ideology impacts parents' language choice, and 3) to investigate how parents help in developing or negotiating their children's ethnic identity in a bi-cultural and bilingual environment. The results of my interviews will be collected and analyzed for a thesis research project.

這個研究的目的是(1) 收集父母送孩子到母語學校的動機及對母語學校期望, (2) 分析語言的意識形態如何引響父母對母語選擇(3)探討父母如何在異鄉幫助孩子建立他們的祖國文化認同。研究之結果將會被收錄為碩士論文報告。

Who can participate in this project? (Six to eight participants only)

Parents who have a child who has had the experience of learning Mandarin or Cantonese in a Saturday Chinese school in Winnipeg. 這項研究只需要六到八名家長。如果您有小孩正在星期六中文學校學習中文!

What is required?

You will participate in two audio-taped, hour-long interview sessions. The date of the interviews will be between September 2009 and October 2009. You can choose the language (English or Mandarin) you feel most comfortable with to answer the questions during the interview. 這項研究將需要與您有兩次一小時有錄音面談, 面談的時間將安排在九月和十月。您可選擇用英文或中文進行面談。

Content of interview:

You will be asked questions related to your personal experiences in helping your children connect with your mother language and culture. 面談的內容是關於您個人有關幫助您小孩與祖國文化或母語聯繫的經驗

Participation is voluntary, and you should be aware that you are free to decide not to participate or withdraw at any time. 這個研究是採取自願性參與。你可以選擇是否要參加, 或在任何時間想退出。

If you might be interested in participating, and want more information regarding the study, **please contact the researcher by telephone or E-mail:** 如果您願意參加這項研究, 或想了解更多研究內容, 請用電話或伊媚兒跟我連絡,

Yi-fang Chen

Tel: 275-0669

E-mail: ivonnechen@hotmail.com

I am looking forward to hearing from you!! 我很期待趕快聽到您的消息!

**Appendix E: Interview Questions
(To be copied on University of Manitoba letterhead)**

First section of Interview questions for parent participants

1. Please provide the following information: 請提供以下資訊

- Country of origin 祖國 (原本國籍)
- First language/ mother tongue/ language ability 母語及任何會講的語言及程度
- Education background 教育背景
- Employment situation 工作情況
- The length of time in Canada and Winnipeg 到溫尼伯多久的時間
- The brief history of your life in Canada 簡述在加拿大生活
- The length of time your children have spent studying in this Chinese school 在中文學校學習多久的時間

2. Motivation and expectation 動機及期望

- Describe why you chose to enroll your child in a heritage language program. 請描述您為何想讓孩子上中文課程
- Describe what you expect that a heritage language program can provide to your child and what you believe your child has learned from his/her heritage language program so far.
請述說您期待中文課程能提供什麼給您的孩子或者您的孩子在中文課程中學到什麼
- Did your expectations change over time? 您的期望是否隨著時間而改變?
- Describe any advantages or disadvantages of being an immigrant (minority language) parent in Canadian society. 請描述您覺得身為移民在加拿大有什麼優點及缺點

3. Resources for heritage language learning in this city 在這個城市中母語保存的資源

- Besides enrolling your child in a heritage language program, how do you help your child connect with your mother culture? 除了讓孩子上中文課程, 您還做了哪些來讓您的孩子與祖國文化保持聯繫
- Describe any language policy or communicative situations in your family.
(E.g., What language do you use to communicate with your child, or what language do your children use to communicate with siblings?) 請述說您家中的語言政策或互相溝通的情形
- Describe any other resources you have accessed in this city for heritage language retention. 請描述在這個城市您所知道或得到過的母語保存的資源

Second section of Interview questions for parent participants

1. If your mother tongue is or isn't Mandarin, why do you think learning Mandarin is important for your child?
如果您的母語不是普通話或國語，為什麼您覺得學習普通話或國語對您的孩子很重要？
2. What factors affect your language choice in terms of enrolling your child in a heritage language program?
任何原因影響你選擇讓您的孩子學習普通話或國語？
3. In what kind of situation do you interact with your child in your mother tongue or Mandarin?
在什麼情況下您和您的孩子講普通話或國語，或者您的母語？
4. Describe the schooling situation (in the regular school system and Saturday Chinese school) of your child.
請描述您的孩子在學校上課的情形
5. Any differences or preferences between these two school systems for you and your child?
您覺得這兩種學校系統有什麼不一樣，您或您的孩子對兩種學校系統有沒有偏好？
6. How do you help your child to develop their ethnic identity (to know they are ethnic Chinese) and why do you think that this is important?
您如何幫助您的孩子對祖國文化的認同或讓他們了解他們是中國人的祖先？□為什麼您覺得這對您的孩子很重要？
7. If people ask you "what is your nationality and what is your child's nationality", how would you answer this question?
如果有人問您 您及您孩子的國籍是什麼？您會如何回答？
8. Have there been any struggles that you have gone through in order to help your child to maintain connection with your mother culture? 您覺得讓您的孩子學習母語會不會很難？
9. Describe any values or beliefs that you hope your child can learn from your culture or tradition.
請描述任何您想要您的孩子學習到的重要的傳統美德或觀念。
10. Describe any progress you and your child made in this school so far.
請描述目前您孩子學習的進展
11. Dose this school connect you and other parents who have or don't have similar situation as your family?
請問這個學校是否讓您認識其他同樣類似背景的家庭
12. What do you learn from this program or from networking with this ethnic group?
從參加這個課程開始你對個個課程及這個社團有什麼樣的了解
13. Do you help your children network with other kids from this school?
您是否有幫您小孩和這裡的同學做聯繫？例如邀請他們到我家玩
14. Do you have any preference of Chinese characters (simplified or traditional Chinese characters)?
你對於中文字體有沒有特別的偏好 簡體中文或是繁體中文
15. Do you notice any specific attitude from regular school? (Teachers attitudes toward students' home language)

你有無注意到正規學校老師們的態度？老師們是否鼓勵學生在家也講英文？

16. Describe the ideal situation for heritage program. 請描述您理想中的中文學校.

Appendix F: Ethic Proposal



Fort Garry Campus Research Ethics Boards
 CTC Building, 208 - 194 Dafoe Road
 Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2

Protocol # _____

(Assigned by HES Admin.)

FORT GARRY CAMPUS RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD PROTOCOL SUBMISSION FORM

Psychology/Sociology REB **Education/Nursing REB** **Joint-Faculty REB**

Check the appropriate REB for the Faculty or Department of the Principal Researcher. This form, attached research protocol, and all supporting documents, must be submitted **in quadruplicate** (original plus 3 copies), to the Office of Research Services, Human Ethics Coordinator, CTC Building, 208 - 194 Dafoe Road, 474-7122.

Principal Researcher(s): Yi-fang Chen

Status of Principal Researcher(s): (please check): Faculty Post-Doc Student:
 Graduate Undergraduate WRHA Affiliate Other
 Specify: _____

Address (to receive Approval Certificate): 651 Viscount Place, Winnipeg, MB, R3T 1J1

Phone: (204) 275-0669 Fax: _____ Email: ivonnechen@hotmail.com

Project Title: Language Politics and Language Retention in a Canadian Chinese
 Diaspora Community: Challenges for Parents

Start date August, 2009 Planned period of research (if less than one year): 5
 months _____

Type of research (Please check):

Faculty Research

Self-funded Sponsored

Administrative Research

Central

Student Research

Thesis Class
 Project

(Agency) _____

Unit-based

Course Number: _____

Signature(s) of Principal Researcher(s): Yi-fang Chen

For student research: This project is approved by department/thesis committee. The advisor has reviewed and approved the protocol.

Name of Thesis Advisor: _Dr. Sandra G. Kouritzin**Signature** _____

-

(Required if thesis research)

Name of Course Instructor: _____**Signature** _____

(Required if class project)

Persons signing assure responsibility that all procedures performed under the protocol will be conducted by individuals responsibly entitled to do so, and that any deviation from the protocol will be submitted to the REB for its approval prior to implementation. Signature of the thesis advisor/course instructor indicates that student researchers have been instructed on the principles of ethics policy, on the importance of adherence to the ethical conduct of the research according to the submitted protocol (and of the necessity to report any deviations from the protocol to their advisor/instructor).

Ethics Protocol Submission Form
(Basic Questions about the Project)

The questions on this form are of a general nature, designed to collect pertinent information about potential problems of an ethical nature that could arise with the proposed research project. In addition to answering the questions below, the researcher is expected to append pages (and any other necessary documents) to a submission detailing the required information about the research protocol (see page 4).

1. Will the subjects in your study be
UNAWARE that they are subjects? Yes No

2. Will information about the subjects be
obtained from sources other than the
subjects themselves? Yes No

3. Are you and/or members of your research team in a
position of power vis-a-vis the subjects? If yes,
clarify the position of power and how it will be
addressed. Yes No

4. Is any inducement or coercion used to obtain
the subject's participation? Yes No

5. Do subjects identify themselves by name
directly, or by other means that allows you or
anyone else to identify data with specific subjects?

- If yes, indicate how confidentiality will be maintained. What precautions are to be undertaken in storing data and in its eventual destruction/disposition. Yes No
6. If subjects are identifiable by name, do you intend to recruit them for future studies? If yes, indicate why this is necessary and how you plan to recruit these subjects for future studies. Yes No
7. Could dissemination of findings compromise confidentiality? Yes No
8. Does the study involve physical or emotional stress, or the subject's expectation thereof, such as might result from conditions in the study design? Yes No
9. Is there any threat to the personal safety of subjects? Yes No
10. Does the study involve subjects who are not legally or practically able to give their valid consent to participate (e.g., children, or persons with mental health problems and/or cognitive impairment)?
If yes, indicate how informed consent will be obtained from subjects and those authorized to speak for subjects. Yes No

11. Is deception involved (i.e., will subjects be intentionally misled about the purpose of the study, their own performance, or other features of the study)? Yes No
12. Is there a possibility that abuse of children or persons in care might be discovered in the course of the study? If yes, current laws require that certain offenses against children and persons in care be reported to legal authorities. Indicate the provisions that have been made for complying with the law. Yes No
13. Does the study include the use of personal health information? The Manitoba Personal Health Information Act (PHIA) outlines responsibilities of researchers to ensure safeguards that will protect personal health information. If yes, indicate provisions that will be made to comply with this Act (see document for guidance - <http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/phia/index.html>). Yes No

Provide additional details pertaining to any of the questions above for which you responded "yes." Attach additional pages, if necessary.

In my judgment this project involves: X minimal risk
 more than minimal risk

(Policy #1406 defines “minimal risk” as follows: “. . . that the risks of harm anticipated in the proposed research are not greater nor more likely, considering probability and magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in life, including those encountered during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.”)

#7: Since this project will select six to eight subjects from three different Saturday Chinese language schools in Winnipeg, and their names will be masked with pseudonyms after transcribing the interview into text data, the possibility of being identified as individuals is extremely limited. There will be some direct quotations (with pseudonym) used in the final report. However, subject’s names will not appear anywhere in the transcribed data or final paper and all identifiers will be stripped to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of participants. Strict measures to maintain anonymity and confidentiality will be employed. The interview audio-taped will be destroyed immediately after transcribing into text data with pseudonyms and a copy of the transcript (either English or Mandarin) will be provided to subjects for their verification. Subjects have the right to delete any comments from the transcribed data of the interview. The transcribed text data will be stored securely in a password-protect computer only accessible by the researcher and her supervisor, Dr. Sandra Kouritzin. The transcribed text data will be destroyed after the completion of this project.

| **25/ 05/ 2009**

dd mm yr

Signature of Principal Researcher

Ethics Protocol Submission Form

Review your submission according to this:

Checklist

Principal Researcher: Yi-fang Chen

| ✓ | Item from the Ethics Protocol Submission Form |
|---|--|
| X | All information requested on the first page completed in legible format (typed or printed). |
| X | Signatures of the principal researcher (and faculty advisor, or course instructor if student research). |
| X | Answers to all 13 questions on pages 2-3 of Ethics Protocol Submission form. |
| X | Detailed information requested on page 4 of the Ethics Protocol Submission Form in the numbered order and with the headings indicated. |
| X | Ethics Protocol Submission Form in quadruplicate (Original plus 3 copies). |
| X | Research instruments: 4 copies of all instruments and other supplementary material to be given to subjects. |
| X | Copy of this checklist. |

NOTE: For ease of reviewing it would be much appreciated if you could number the pages of your submission (handwriting the numbers is quite acceptable).

Summary of the Project

Many immigrant (minority language) parents send their children to community-based heritage language programs in order to help their children keep certain connections with their mother culture and language. There are many factors affecting parents' decision about heritage language retention. Studies (Kouritzin, 2000, 2006; Norton, 2000) indicate that language loss will produce negative effects in terms of individuals, families, society, and nations. Conversely, studies related to heritage language maintenance show positive correlations between language maintenance and the construction of ethnic identities, personal psychological development, higher self-esteem and confidence. (Cho, 2000; Tse, 1998, 2001) However, it is still challenging for immigrant (minority language) parents to promote the importance of maintaining their heritage culture with their children when they are faced with a totally different cultural environment daily. Specifically, in a polite study I did in 2008 as part of the course, EDUA 7840: Qualitative Research Methods in Education, I found that there is a tendency for these so-called "Chinese heritage parents" to choose Mandarin as their heritage language in overseas settings. This indicates that the "heritage" language that parents choose for their children may be affected by official language ideology in the Peoples' Republic of China, Taiwan and Singapore. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative research is to explore the challenges that parents encounter when they consider sending their children to a heritage language program. I hope to collect information about parents' motivations regarding their children's heritage language education and their expectations of Chinese heritage language programs. I will also analyze how language ideology impacts parents' language choice, and I will further investigate how parents help in developing or negotiating their children's ethnic identity in a bi-cultural and bilingual environment.

This study is guided by the following research questions:

- a. What are the motivations and expectations for parents in enrolling their children in Chinese heritage language programs?
- b. How and to what extent does language ideology (Fairclough, 2001, 2003) influence parents' choice in terms of choosing Mandarin as a heritage language for their children?
- c. How do parents understand their children's (bilingual and bicultural) identity development as negotiated through heritage language education?

Methodology

Because the research questions of this study are subjective and seek to bring to light the experiences of the individuals decision making, as well as their personal beliefs, the research will employ the qualitative research method (Creswell, 2007) by collecting interview data from 6 to 8 parents who have enrolled their children in a community-based Saturday Chinese school.

These parent participants will be interviewed to gather information related to: (1) their motivations regarding their children's heritage language education and expectations in enrolling their children in a heritage language program (2) the factors that might affect their choice of a heritage language; and, (3) their understanding of helping children negotiate and develop ethnic identity

through heritage education in a bi-cultural and bilingual context. All interview questions are related to personal belief, experience, and decision-making.

These parent participants will be interviewed individually between August to October 2009. Each interview will last approximately one hour. Two interviews will be needed. The first interview will focus on building rapport and sharing feelings about sending children to a heritage language school. The second interview will emphasize language choice as well as the issue of negotiating ethnic identity in a host country. Parent participants will be recruited through a purposeful sampling to ensure that the ranges of demographic and linguistic characteristics are represented in the interview pool. These parent participants will be contacted via telephone or email to set up interview appointments at an agreeable time and place. Since the researcher is a fluent Mandarin speaker, and English may be the second/additional language for the participants in this study, the interviews will be conducted in either English or Mandarin, as participants wish. All interview processes will be audio-taped, with some note-taking, and transcribed afterward into text data. Participants will be asked to check the transcribed text to ensure the accuracy of the content. These transcriptions will be written in either English or Mandarin depending on the language used in the interview process. Participants will be given pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality. The text data will be analyzed and categorized into several themes with discussions, and collected into a Master's thesis project. This thesis project may be presented at local, national, and international conferences, as well as published in academic journals. The advisor, Dr. Sandra Kourtzin, and the researcher will be the only ones to have access to all the data. However, all data will be carefully masked with pseudonyms and all identifiers will be stripped to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of participants. If participants are interested in the final research results, the researcher will send them a copy of the final results once the study is completed.

Research Instrument

First section of Interview questions for parent participants:

1. Please provide the following information:

- Country of origin
- First language/ mother tongue/ language ability
- Educational background
- Employment situation
- The length of stay in Canada and Winnipeg
- Brief history of life in Canada
- The length of children's studying in this Chinese school

2. Motivation and expectation

- Describe why you chose to enroll your child in a heritage language program.

- Describe what you expect that a heritage language program can provide to your

child, and what you believe your child has learned from his/her heritage language program so far.

- Have your expectations changed over time?

- Describe any advantages or disadvantages of being an immigrant (minority language) parent in Canadian society.

3. Resources for heritage language learning in this city

- Besides enrolling your child in a heritage language program, how do you help your

child connect with your mother culture?

- Describe any language policy or communicative situations in your family.

(E.g., What language do you use to communicate with your child, or what language

do your children use to communicate with siblings?)

- Describe any other resources you have accessed in this city for heritage language

retention.

Second section of Interview questions for parent participants:

1. If your mother tongue is or isn't Mandarin, why do you think learning Mandarin is important for your child?

2. What factors affect your language choice in terms of enrolling your child in a heritage language program?

3. In what kind of situations do you interact with your child in your mother tongue or in Mandarin?

4. Describe the schooling situation (regular school system and Saturday Chinese school) of your child.

5. Are there any differences or preferences between these two school systems for you and your child?

6. How do you help your child to develop their ethnic identity (to know they are ethnic Chinese) and why do you think that this is important?

7. If people ask you "what is your nationality or what is your child's nationality", how would you answer these questions?

8. Have you encountered any struggles in helping your child to maintain connection with your mother culture?
9. Describe any values or beliefs that you hope your child can learn from your culture or tradition.

Study subjects

The recruitment of the subjects will be through a purposeful sampling in three Saturday Chinese heritage language schools in Winnipeg. The three Chinese schools are the only three Chinese schools, which offer Mandarin and Cantonese language instruction on Saturdays in this city. I will request permission from these three schools to recruit parent participants. I wish to build reciprocal relationships with the Chinese schools by being a volunteer for a limited of time during my data collection period. However, in order to avoid the appearance of interference, and to prevent any confusion that may be caused by my volunteer work at the research sites while simultaneously collecting research data, all of my volunteer work will be performed after all of my data have been collected. The recruitment techniques include advertisements and posters in the schools, in Chinese grocery stores and restaurants, as well as by having students in these Chinese schools bring home an introduction letter.

Parents who are willing to participate in this project will contact the researcher through email or phone directly. The six to eight parents will be selected due to their country of origin as well as first language. To ensure that the ranges of demographic and linguistic characteristics are represented in the interview pool the study aims to include participants from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, such as immigrant parents from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South East Asian countries, heritage Chinese and non-Chinese heritage parents, as well as people who have mixed marriages or mixed heritages. Since immigrants may in some cases be considered a vulnerable segment of the population, a number of measures will be taken to ensure their protection and full and informed consent during participation. First, participants will be invited to choose the language (Mandarin or English) to be used in the interview, to ensure that the language is one they are proficient in and comfortable with. Secondly, the recruitment will be done directly between participants and the researcher, instead of through any referral from principals or teachers, which may involve power relations that may unbalance the results of the interviews. For the purpose of building rapport at the research sites, the researcher will also participate in some volunteer work after the process of collecting interview data has been completed. Third, as a follow up to the bilingual letter of consent, which clearly describes the nature of this study, at the outset of the interviews participants will be reminded of the voluntary nature of their participation, and the right to change their answers and withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty. Fourth, all interview data will be transcribed into text data immediately. This text data, written in the language used by participants in the process of the interview, will also be returned to participants to enable member checking, and also to remind participants of their right to reframe the answers they provided. Finally, There will be some quotes that emerge from the data that will be used as

examples of themes appearing in the final report. The quotes will be marked by pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality of all participants.

Informed consent (Please see attachment A)

Once participants have contacted the researcher and indicated their interest in participating in the study, the researcher will set up an interview time and place by telephone or E-mail. A bilingual (English and Mandarin) letter of consent will also be sent to the participants to be signed and returned to the researcher at the time of the interview. The printed letter of informed consent will outline the purpose and procedure of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the guarantee of confidentiality. On the consent form, and before the interview, the researcher will also explain orally the purpose and procedure of the study, and explain that the participants have the right to withdraw without penalty at anytime. In this way, the nature of the study, the voluntary nature of the participation, and the subjects' confidentiality will be explained to them prior to the interview process. Participants will be asked to keep one signed copy of the consent form for their own records, and the researcher will keep one signed copy as well. Since there are no vulnerable populations involved in this study, consent does not have to be obtained from guardians. No additional confidential records or additional information of any kind will be obtained at any time. In order to ensure understanding of the agreement with the various components of the research, an information letter will be also distributed to principals of the three schools, including permission letters, letters of consent, and interview questions.

Deception

No information will be deliberately withheld, nor will there be any deliberately misleading information about the research or its purpose.

Feedback/ Debriefing

All participants in the interviews will be provided with a transcription of the interview for verification purposes. Also, a summary of the findings of the study will be mailed to each of the participants if they request it. No deceptive feedback will be provided.

Risk/Benefits

There are no risks involved in this study to any of the participants since participation is entirely voluntary, and the results will be reported only by masked pseudonym. The potential benefit of participation is that a better understanding of how these immigrant parents cope with challenges helping their children heritage language retention may be obtained.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Since this project will select six to eight subjects from three different Saturday Chinese language schools in Winnipeg, and their names will be masked

with pseudonyms after transcribing the interview into text data, the possibility of being identified as individuals is extremely limited. There will be some direct quotations (with pseudonym) used in the final report. However, subject's names will not appear anywhere in the transcribed data or final paper and all identifiers will be stripped to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of participants. Strict measures to maintain anonymity and confidentiality will be employed. The interview audio-taped will be destroyed immediately after transcribing into text data with pseudonyms and a copy of the transcript (either English or Mandarin) will be provided to subjects for their verification. Subjects have the right to delete any comments from the transcribed data of the interview. The transcribed data will be stored securely in a password-protect computer only accessible by the researcher and her supervisor, Dr. Sandra Kouritzin. The transcribed data will be destroyed after the completion of this project.

Compensation

Subjects will not be compensated for their participation in this study.

Reference

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