

**The Construction of Bicultural Identity:  
A Study of A Chinese School in Winnipeg**

by

**Haiying Su**

**A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of  
The University of Manitoba  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of**

**MASTER OF ARTS**

**Department of Anthropology**

**University of Manitoba**

**Winnipeg**

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**Master of Arts**

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to examine the cultural identity construction of Chinese immigrants and their children in Winnipeg, Manitoba. It explores how organizations such as Chinese schools, which originated as language schools and have emerged as cultural sites and community centers for Chinese immigrants, have played a role in the construction of bicultural identity.

The fieldwork was conducted at a Chinese school located in Winnipeg, and the field data for this research project was collected through one-on-one interviews, life histories and participant observation.

Based on the field research, this study contributes some new understandings of Chinese immigrants' acculturation patterns, and suggests a new form of Chinese community that combine Chinese and Canadian elements. By examining one facet of bicultural experience, this study is a valid starting point for an examination of acculturation and enculturation process.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks for the many members of the Chinese community in Winnipeg. Special thanks go to the Manitoba Academy of Chinese Studies where my fieldwork was carried out. I am grateful to all participants – parents, teachers and students of this school. There were simply too many of them for their names to be mentioned here, without their support and cooperation, this project would not have been possible.

I would like to express my gratitude to my advisor Ellen Judd for her endless patience, understanding and valuable guidance. Thank you Ellen – for everything. The other two members of my committee – David Stymeist and Jon Young gave me constructive suggestions and editorial comments for the thesis writing. Thank you both.

And to my parents – this could not have happened without you. This is for you, with love and thanks.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

*We as parents are providing something most valuable to our children through the heritage language schools. I am a firm believer that a sense of confidence regarding one's heritage can only be developed through the personal experience of the language itself. It is the language which provides the communication linkage to one's heritage and ethnic culture. It is the language which convenes the kinship feeling within an ethnic community. We are obligated to provide our children with some exposure to the language which is part of their legitimate heritage... The most important point, though, we must accept is the fact that to our children, the most suitable way for them to accept and enjoy the Chinese language classes is to teach the course in a way similar to all other classes they are undertaking during the weeklong school hours. Let the student have a good time, and let our children develop their own self-identity with comfort and confidence. (Pei 1988:18)*

In the 2001 Census, Canadians listed more than 200 ethnic groups in answering the question on ethnic ancestry, reflecting a varied, rich cultural mosaic as the nation started the new millennium (Statistics Canada, 2001). The People's Republic of China was the leading country of birth among individuals who immigrated to Canada in the 1990s. In 2001, the Chinese were the largest visible minority group, surpassing one million for the first time. A total of 1,029,400 individuals identified themselves as Chinese, up from

860,100 in 1996 (see Table 1-1). They accounted for 3.7% of the total national population and 26% of the visible minority population (see Table 1-2).

At present, Winnipeg, a multicultural city on the Canadian prairies, has attracted a sizable Chinese population estimated to number over 10,890 (Statistics Canada, 2001). Unlike the early Chinese immigrants who grouped themselves in Chinatowns, many post-1980 immigrants have settled by mixing with other ethnic groups. Many are professionals, competent in English and moving toward assimilation in the Canadian mainstream culture. These changes have affected the acculturation patterns, especially the identity development of the more recent Chinese immigrants and their children.

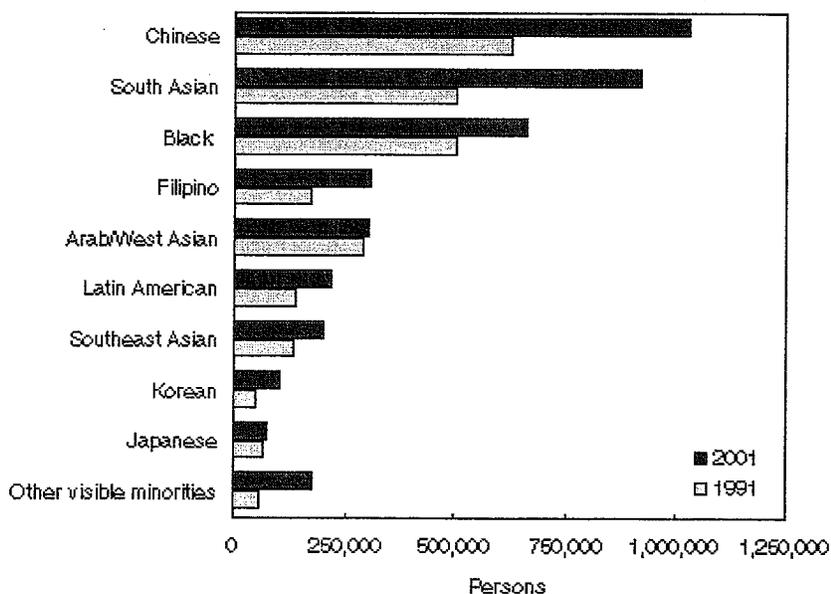
There are many ethnic institutions designed to assist immigrants in the transition from the old country to the new one. "If Chinatown was formed as an escape from a hostile society, but accidentally served to preserve traditional Chinese culture, the emergence of Chinese schools is a more conscious effort of preserving and carrying on Chinese cultural values" (Lu 2001:215). Leaving the native country behind makes these immigrants cherish more about their cultural traditions and practices. As Tanno and Gonzalez (1998) postulate, symbolic interaction and language play a key role in the development and maintenance of cultural identity. Language is a perceptible identity marker that maintains the boundary between "Us" and "Other."

The purpose of this research is to examine the cultural identity construction of Chinese immigrants and their children in Winnipeg, Manitoba. It explores how organizations such as Chinese schools, which originated as language schools and have emerged as cultural sites and community centers for Chinese immigrants, have played a role in the construction of bicultural identity. Through this research, I seek to address

issues such as representations of ethnicity and nationality in the context of multiculturalism in Canada, the role of language in the cultural identity crafting, and interactions between first-generation Chinese immigrants and their children who are Canadian-born in the process of cultural identity constructing.

In particular, this study tries to answer the following research questions: (1) what is the role and function of the Chinese school in the process of cultural identity construction for Chinese immigrants; how the first-generation parents and their second-generation Canadian-born children participate in the process? (2) What discursive practices, including curriculum, does the Chinese school engage in that facilitate the construction of a bicultural identity for Chinese-Canadian children? The answers to these questions were generated through ethnographic research involving participant observation, and interviews at a Chinese school located in Winnipeg.

Table 1-1: Visible minority groups, Canada, 1991 and 2001



Source: 2001 Census

Table 1-2: Top 10 ethnic origins<sup>(1)</sup>, based on total responses, Canada, 2001 and 1996

2001			1996		
	Number	%		Number	%
<b>Total population</b>	<b>29,639,030</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Total population</b>	<b>28,528,125</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Canadian	11,682,680	39.4	Canadian	8,806,275	30.9
English	5,978,875	20.2	English	6,832,095	23.9
French	4,668,410	15.8	French	5,597,845	19.6
Scottish	4,157,215	14.0	Scottish	4,260,840	14.9
Irish	3,822,660	12.9	Irish	3,767,610	13.2
German	2,742,765	9.3	German	2,757,140	9.7
Italian	1,270,369	4.3	Italian	1,207,475	4.2
<b>Chinese</b>	<b>1,094,700</b>	<b>3.7</b>	Ukrainian	1,026,475	3.6
Ukrainian	1,071,055	3.6	<b>Chinese</b>	<b>921,585</b>	<b>3.2</b>
North American Indian	1,000,890	3.4	Dutch (Netherlands)	916,215	3.2
(1) Table shows total responses. Because some respondents reported more than one ethnic origin, the sum is greater than the total population or 100%.					

Source: 2001 Census.

### *1.1 Organization of the thesis*

In the following chapters, the previous studies on cultural and bicultural identity will be addressed first, followed by an overview of related studies on issues about language as a key marker of cultural identity in Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 is a discussion of methodology. It explains the choices of qualitative research method, how these choices have been applied here and the procedure of the research conducted. As well I examine how I myself, as the researcher, contribute both an insider and an outsider view in conducting the fieldwork and in interpreting the interview data.

In Chapter 4, a brief social and historical background of the Chinese community in Winnipeg will be introduced, including changing policies in the early community, the Chinese community since the 1980s, and subdivisions within the community. This is followed by Chapter 5, in which I will first introduce the history of Chinese schools in Winnipeg within an overall picture with changing policies as the background. Then the history of the specific Chinese school studied will be introduced, as well as its present administrative system, its relationships with the local Winnipeg community, and its relationships with other Chinese communities in Canada.

After the above two background chapters, which were based on library research and archival and documentary material collections, in Chapter 6, a collective analysis about the results of the fieldwork will be presented. Because of their different roles and degrees of participation in this Chinese school, the first generation immigrants were divided into two groups: parents and teachers. The results of the interview data are gathered in three parts: parents, teachers and students. The second part of this chapter will present how the two immigrant generations define China and Canada together with their words.

Chapter 7 will outline analysis and discussion of the field data, and address a series of themes: how can language be presented as the medium of culture, and the mark of identity? How does the Chinese school exist as a form of social organization in the Chinese community, and functions as a Chinese cultural site, while providing the place and space for identity construction for the first generation Chinese immigrant to adopt local Canadian culture and society? At the same time, how does it permit the second generation Canadian-born children to keep their Chinese heritage? The thesis explores

how it articulates the process of bicultural identity formation, and the dynamics of the acculturation process.

## Chapter 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Critical theorists conceptualize the phenomenon of biculturalism and development of a bicultural identity within a context of continuous struggle against cultural oppression and imposed pressures to assimilate into the dominant culture. The formation of bicultural identity among members of subordinate groups is significantly affected by theoretical perspectives of bicultural reorganization, historical experiences of marginalization, and relationships of power within the society (Marino Weisman 2001).

#### *2.1 Defining bi/cultural identity and its re/construction*

Cultural identity has been defined as “identification with and perceived acceptance into a group that has shared systems of symbols and meanings as well as norms/rules for conduct” (Collier and Thomas 1998:113). Collier and Thomas (1998) suggested that cultural identity is dynamic and created through communication and symbolic interaction. In their view, a person can have multiple identities; however, a particular cultural identity may become salient in a given encounter. Ting-Toomey (1993) posits that the salience of one’s identity is enacted and negotiated through the process of communication. In her words, “effective identity negotiation refers to the smooth coordination between interactants concerning salient identity issues, and the process of engaging the responsive identity conformation and positive identity enhancement” (Ting-Toomey 1993:73).

The construction and negotiation of cultural/ethnic identity is closely linked to the acculturation process in the case of immigrants or ethnic groups. According to Berry (1997), for individuals in pluralist societies, there are two major issues relating to acculturation strategies, namely cultural maintenance and contact and participation. Four acculturation strategies result as a consequence of the resolution of these issues. When individuals seek contact and participation with the dominant group without maintenance of their own cultural identity, the assimilation strategy is adopted. In the case of individuals who maintain their own cultural identity, with little contact and participation with the dominant group, the separation strategy is adopted. For individuals who seek to maintain both their own cultural identity and contact and participation with the dominant group, the integration strategy is adopted. Finally, the marginalization strategy is adopted by individuals who have little opportunity or interest in cultural maintenance, nor any contact and participation with the dominant group.

Though integration has generally been found to be predictive of positive psychological adaptation (Berry & Sam 1997; Sue & Sue 1990), Berry and Sam argue that for children and adolescents, integration is a difficult option if there is little parental support for this acculturation strategy (Leung 2001). When an immigrant or ethnic group separates itself from the rest of the society, its cultural/ethnic identity may become the most salient. Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977) conceptualized this to refer to group members who maintain their cultural or ethnic identity by demonstrating loyalty to their language.

Immigrants who lack competence in the language of their new country and occupational skills may separate themselves from the larger society and seek support and

help from their own cultural and social group. This was exemplified before the 1980s by the many Chinese immigrants who choose to work and live in Chinatowns throughout their entire lives. Their cultural identity was strictly Chinese.

In response to the diverse ethnic groups and influx of immigrants from various cultures, scholars have proposed different models of acculturation. The melting pot model assumes that all immigrant groups will eventually sacrifice their communal identity and blend into the dominant culture, and this model has been considered an analysis of the American experience; whereas the cultural pluralism model postulates the preservation of the immigrant's ancestral culture within the context of mainstream society, a model which better fits the Canadian context (Hughes and Kallen 1974).

Critical scholars look at cultural identity formation in historical and socio-economic contexts as well as in power relations. The dominant groups define the identities of the subordinate groups through discursive practices and media representations. Campbell (2000) critiques what she sees as the "general agreement" that "construction of individual cultural identity is a process of acceptance of the cultural norms, beliefs, attitudes and values of one cultural group rather than another" (2000:31). From her point of view, however, this definition does not include the possibility that individuals may identify with more than one cultural group, may change their cultural identity in new cultural contexts, or may have developed the ability to move between different cultural contexts without losing their sense of individual identity. National identity can coexist with a separate and distinct cultural identity which means that: "It is possible to wear the baggage of civic symbols of cultural identity such as citizenship, while at the same time identifying with one or more specific cultural groups within the

nation” (Gunew 1998: 27). These cultural identities have no need to be “mutually exclusive,” but may be “cumulative layers,” where the immediate cultural context determines which layer is relevant at any particular time (Smith 1992).

For Hutnik (1986), cultural identity does not need to be a “singular, fixed, inflexible given” but can be constituted of multiple sub-identities. Based on this, his study concludes that “the individual’s sense of who he/she is or is not in terms of his/her group membership does not necessarily have implications for how he/she will behave” (Hutnik 1986:164). Cases in which one is dissociative in one’s cultural identity and highly acculturative in one’s behaviour suggest that ethnic identity in the second generation may in fact become functionally autonomous. This “partial autonomy of cultural identity” suggests an explanation for the failure of the United States’ melting-pot theory from the early part of this century. According to Hutnik (1986), it was a common observance that cultural identity was undergoing continual change, especially as the second and third generations took over responsibility for group functioning. Therefore, the ethnic boundary defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses.

Phinney and Devich-Navarro (1997) stated that members of ethnic minority groups within a society are exposed to two cultures, their ethnic culture and the culture of the larger society. They examined adolescents engaged in the process of identity formation while faced with differing demands and possible conflicts among alternative cultural frames of reference, and with the reality of minority status and discrimination.

They further explored the situation of immigrants insofar as it was assumed that, to deal with bicultural pressures, they either had to reject the mainstream and remain embedded within the ethnic culture, or else assimilate into the mainstream society and

reject the ethnic culture. Phinney and Devich-Navarro (1997) summarized two independent dimensions: “retention of one’s cultural traditions; and, establishment and maintenance of relationships with the larger society” (1997:3). Those who retain the traditions and values of their culture of origin and also develop and maintain identification with the larger society are said to be integrated. Integrated individuals who identify with and participate in both cultures can be called bicultural according to varied conceptualizations of that state.

Marino Weisman (2001) pointed out that “a strong bicultural identity encompasses a consciousness of social forces that perpetuate the marginalization of subordinate groups and a resistance to these forces of domination” (2001:224). Hall (1990) linked development of cultural identity with diaspora characterized by cultural diversity, fluidity, and transformation that many immigrant groups have experienced, and his ideas shed light on viewing identity as fluid, multiple, and ever changing.

Some case studies show that the person who does not belong to the cultural mainstream is obviously disadvantaged. Based on his study of non-mainstream children, Baker (1996) suggested that children from a bicultural background suffer from “home/school disarticulation,” where the norms, values, attitudes and beliefs of the family unit differ from those of the educational system, thereby alienating the child and the child’s family from the education system. In such a case, peer pressure to conform to cultural norms at school can be just as great as parental pressure to conform to cultural norms at home. For these children, there is no choice but moving from one cultural context to another, and cultural adaptability becomes one of the essential survival skills.

However, some authors have offered accounts of how they went through an identity crisis and then came to terms with their Asian-Canadian identity through additive acculturation experiences. Their bilingual competence and bicultural orientation helped them in academic performance as well as occupational success (Lu 2001; Schneider and Lee 1990).

As expressing both disadvantage and benefit, the concept of “bicultural” has been discussed and examined by these recent theorists who have suggested that people from bicultural backgrounds have the ability to cross cultural barriers or boundaries from one side to the other without losing their sense of cultural identity. Under the pressure of the dominant culture, such as the education system or peer groups, assimilation to the mainstream culture is an obvious way to understand “survival strategy.”

The majority of studies on cultural identity construction have focused on the influence of assimilation or acculturation by dominant mainstream culture. It is a one-sided approach though if we ignore the other side of struggle, which is how the home/native culture resists or reinforces the construction or reconstruction of ethnic identity. Whether the home cultural identity is natural or automatic, the process of identity construction can explain and understand the similarity and differences of bicultural identity as a result of negotiations. This is especially true in showing how the disadvantaged identity, in terms of power relationship, is struggling or has struggled to survive.

## *2.2 Ethnic language—the key marker*

Basing his study in a Canadian context, De Vries (1990) points out those studies of ethnicity tend to ignore issues of language, and studies of linguistic pluralism generally fail to consider issues relating to ethnicity. He tried to link the two by discussing various ‘markers’ of ethnicity, such as language, religion, national origin, and “race.” De Vries’ main point is that “the loss of an ethnic ‘marker’ inevitably leads to the loss of ethnicity.” His main argument focuses on language as a “marker” of ethnic groups: “the language shift is an indication of the weakening and eventual demise of ethnicity” (1990:231).

De Vries agrees with Weinreich (1953) who defined “loss of language” as “language shift,” meaning “the change in the habitual use of one language to that of another.” Language shift (in Canadian society) is a good indicator of a person’s assimilation into Canadian society. The corollary to this may be why ethnic language schools exist so widely throughout Canada: as a means of resistance to that assimilation. In fact, De Vries (1990) suggested that “language maintenance” is a necessary condition for the maintenance of ethnicity and survival of the ethnic group—though not a sufficient condition. Based on census statistics from 1941 to 1987, De Vries (1990) further suggested that ethnic identity and language maintenance is strongly linked to nativity (kinship). Identification with a specific ethnic group weakens with each generation and is associated with a declining knowledge of the ethnic language.

De Vries was not alone, Heller agreed that “shared language is basic to shared identity, but more than that, identity rests on shared ways of using language that reflect common patterns of thinking and behaving, or shared culture” (1987:181). Heller’s conclusion on the relationship between language and the construction of ethnicity was

that, "Language can be used not only to reaffirm background knowledge, but to create it, and on the basis of new background knowledge to define new conventions of behaviour" (1987:186). In her study, Heller emphasized the importance of language as a means of establishing the social ties and the participation in social activities that underlie entry to a social network.

As another contributor to the study of the relationship between language and identity, Peter Li defines minority language identity as "the adoption of a nonofficial language as the mother tongue or home language" (2001:137). He agrees that those who adopt a non-official language as the mother tongue or home language would necessarily have a strong sense of belonging to their ethnic group. Li emphasized that the retention of a minority language as mother tongue or home language constitutes an added component in the construction of ethnic minority identity, and that people who retain such a mother tongue or home language have a stronger linguistic capacity to link themselves with their ethnic community than others who do not retain such language (Li 2001).

Li rightly pointed out that the adoption of a minority language as mother tongue or home language represents an ethnic endowment or an ethnic language choice (respectively) and can be described as a phenomenon of minority language identity (Li 2001:137). However, in practice, the "adoption" and maintenance of a minority language seems to be an ongoing struggle for the Canadian-born. Min, Pyong Gap and Rose Kim describe the phenomena: "The 1.5- and second-generation...were raised in homes where their parents spoke their native language, ate their native food, and practiced their native customs. Yet, outside the home, their culture was marginal and largely invisible" (2000:746).

In fact, the main “officially” organized regular ethnic language teaching-learning site is the Chinese school. In her study “The Maintenance of Chinese Language in Winnipeg,” Xiao (1998) states, “While there are many Chinese organizations in Winnipeg, overt attempts at Chinese language maintenance occur mainly through the efforts of community-run Chinese schools” (1998:91). Even though operated independently of each other, these schools share the ideology of preserving and promoting Chinese language and culture among young Chinese in Canada.

Xiao argues that the function of the Chinese language schools is more than language maintenance; the students in the Chinese schools generally have a positive attitude towards their own ethnic group, are able to make friends within their own ethnic group, and are willing to participate in ethnic group activities (Xiao 1998). She further suggests that the very existence of these schools provides a meeting ground for young Chinese who otherwise would be totally immersed in the larger society outside their home. The school therefore reinforces group identity. In Chinese schools, the young students are able to meet others of their own ethnic background and gain exposure to the cultural values transmitted by the schools.

Therefore, Xiao (1998) suggests that language teaching in Chinese schools is only a limited aspect of maintaining Chinese language. Meanwhile, the community’s efforts toward language maintenance make an important contribution to cultural identity. Xiao believes, “When language teaching inside the Chinese schools is reinforced by language use outside and supported by both the community and the larger Canadian society, the efforts of the Chinese schools and of the Chinese community in language maintenance are most fruitful” (1998: 91).

Xiao (1998) well demonstrates the relationship between minority language and cultural identity. However, I would challenge Xiao's notion of "maintaining cultural identity" rather than of "re/constructing," because the content of cultural identity is not rigid and unchangeable. Instead, it is invented or re/constructed and undergoes constant transformation (Winland 1995).

It must be noted that one cannot study immigration and acculturation patterns in isolation from historical, social, political, economic, and racial contexts in Canada and the world, nor can one understand the topic without examining the individual and group background and experiences of migration as influenced by these contexts. As Wong (1998) summarizes well, "We must use this framework to examine identity as a process, and an effect of discourses about racial and ethnic formation that stretches across continents, history, generations, governments, and peoples. Using the metaphors of diasporas and imagined communities, we can examine the discourses that we use or are exposed to that both help us and hinder us in shaping notions of community"(Wong 1998:133). The early Chinese immigrants were restricted in their identity development and deprived of their voices, resulting in the limited notions and functions of Chinatowns. The new immigrants put emphasis on cultural integration, promote immigrants' participation in the host country as well as encourage preserving and honouring their own cultural roots. Moreover, they are more globally oriented, able to create their own discourses and articulate their own experiences, leading to the bicultural identity development of themselves and their children, and in so doing, expanding the notions and functions of communities.

The complicated process of negotiation and construction of bicultural identity is related to variable degrees of involvement of factors such as language, ethnicity, nationality, acculturation, social organization, and socialization. In the following pages I will discuss these factors with an ethnographical, as well as a theoretical focus.

## Chapter 3

### RESEARCH PROCEDURE AND METHODS

In agreement with Coffey (1999) that the ethnographic self is the outcome of complex negotiations, this chapter will first explore how I myself, as a researcher, am positioned both as an insider and an outsider in conducting the fieldwork and in interpreting the interview data. This is followed by a discussion of methodology, explaining the choices of qualitative research methods and how they have been applied in this research.

#### *3.1 Position in the Field*

I first came to know about this school because of a project for the applied anthropology class in the autumn of 2001. A former teacher at the school introduced me to the principal of this Chinese school. After a talk on the phone, the principal invited me to the school for a meeting. I introduced myself and my research, and I was allowed to conduct the course project there; meanwhile, the principal invited me to volunteer as a secretary of the school board at the same time. I accepted the invitation to express my appreciation. That project was finished successfully before the end of the Chinese school's term that year. After handing in a copy of the project report to this school, I decided to keep volunteering there, and later substituted in a couple of classes for the adult class till the summer vacation. There were some teachers' gatherings during that summer, and I was invited to become one of the teachers. In late August 2002, I received a letter from the principal, who invited me to sign on as a regular teacher of this school.

After two more years' constant attending this school, I got to know this school more and more through staff meetings, teachers' gatherings, literature materials and some pioneers sharing their school experience. Day by day, participating in this school came to be part of my daily. In my fourth year of volunteering there, I was preparing to conduct this fieldwork for my thesis. By then I was very familiar with the school itself, and also with the teachers, students and parents. I had already known the field for three years and established a good rapport with "the people" there. I found that it became increasingly hard to separate my life outside the school from my life within it.

By actively participating in the everyday (or weekend?) life of the setting, I found it was impossible to divorce my fieldwork self from my other selves. My identities as student, friend, researcher, and young Chinese were mediated by new identities as secretary, teacher of an adult class and tutor of summer camp for the Winnipeg Chinese community. My involvement in this school made me one of the "experienced" teachers who was sent to represent the school, as a speaker, to attend a conference on Chinese education in Ottawa. Meanwhile, my apartment became a place where some of the teenage students sometimes ran to, after they had a fight with their parents. These identities were all interwoven before and during the fieldwork, and continued to be so after the formal end of the fieldwork. In fact, prior to my fieldwork I had given very little thought to my field role(s), but once I started it, I found out who I am is different from who I was prior to my fieldwork in the school and before beginning the project for the applied anthropology course.

Concerning the researcher's identity and its reflection in her/his research, Dewalt, Dewalt and Wayland (1998) consider that the concept of self is related to the idea of

“person,” in the sense of a community’s ideas about which members are socially responsible (“persons”). This implies that they possess competent selves in one or another sense that must be locally investigated. I consider myself both an insider and outsider in conducting this research and in interpreting the interview data. I am an insider because I have been with this particular school so long. Over the years, I was able to establish good working relations with many parents, teachers, students and other members of the school. When I started to conduct this field work, I found it was different from three years ago while I was conducting the applied project. I had then developed and came to rely upon these established relationships; I also found myself drawn into the everyday life of the school. I cared passionately about doing my teaching and volunteer work. On one hand, the experiences which I have outlined may be judged as indicators of a successful ethnography. I was fully integrated into the school, able to come and go as I pleased. I had developed good relationships and levels of rapport with my key informants. I had access to the formal and informal contexts of the organizational culture, as well as the documentary reality. I was in a position to collect solid and detailed data, with the full consent of the members. As a result, my observations are more direct, and informants being interviewed were more comfortable in sharing their thoughts with me than during the coursework project. I perceive my informants as the co-producers of knowledge and treat my informants as the audience of my research results (Tanno & Jandt, 1998).

Even though I have felt like a member of the organization, especially part of the adult classes and teachers’ group, I still see myself as an outsider on the other hand. Firstly, I am an anthropology researcher and well informed about cultural identity theories and literatures. This made me more aware of the role played by the Chinese

school, the schooling process, the interactions between the two generations of Chinese immigrants and its impact on bicultural identity articulation, which influenced my design for this research and the interpretation of the interview data.

Secondly, I was in a sense doing fieldwork “at home”, where I had been living for four years; at the same time, I am an international student, traveling overseas for my anthropology training, and this fieldwork itself is, as a matter of fact, a very important part of the training. While the actual organizational settling was familiar to me, my field is a markedly different culture.

Thirdly, in addition to the language teaching, this school organizes cultural events and gatherings, which are all family related. As a single person, I do not fit in any of their groups, which are no longer organized as teachers or students, but parents and children.

Last but not least, I am after all NOT a Canadian or an immigrant and despite the fact that I may share much of overseas living experience as a Chinese with the first generation immigrants, I am still not one of them.

For the above reasons, as an insider, I want this study to be useful to the Chinese community in reflecting its past and visioning for the future. As an outsider, I would like to contribute to the development of identity theories by the findings in this study, which also apply to the larger intercultural studies community. To what extent I was successful in “objectively” and fruitfully representing a number of different experiences is a question that leads the discussion toward the issues of the positioning of the researcher and of objectivity.

After all, I only claim that the following ethnographic material represents an account of experiences of some particular Chinese immigrants or/and their children in Winnipeg,

and even those are being seen through my eyes. Following Baszanger and Dodier's (1997) argument for combinative ethnography, I tried to identify certain cases as examples of more general phenomena but with quite a high degree of freedom to circulate between different levels of generalization. Such an approach, however, does not make this study less relevant to understanding the immigrants, the ethnic organization, the weekend language school, the enculturation, and the experiences of Chinese people in this school.

### ***3.2 The Methods***

The data were obtained through participant observation, one-on-one interviews and the collection of life histories, involving seventy-two Chinese individuals in Winnipeg, who are or were teachers, parents or students of this school. These are considered to be the most appropriate means of incorporating all subjects involved in the study (research participants and the researcher) and achieving an inter-subjectivity that can lead to deeper understanding.

A total of five life histories were collected. The reason I separated life history from structured interviews is that the latter have specific themes or topics; life histories gives more room for open-ended questions, even though a life history can only be achieved through an "interview." In other words, the informant controls more of the interview content than in other structured interviews.

In order to conduct a life history, researchers have "to select informants carefully and probably to establish sufficient rapport with them" (Kluckhohn 1945), so the invitation to conduct a life history was given based on both the degree of the informant's interest to this research, and "sufficient rapport" between us. These five life history

informants were all people I had known at this school for at least a year. One of them worked in the school board for years, two of them have double roles as both teachers and parents, and the other two informants were adult students.

She/he was willing to share more about her or his version of bicultural identity experiences. I made sure that each of the informants understood what I wanted, then I just “let her or him go” while conducting the life history interviews (Angrosino 1989). A face to face invitation was given in the school, or where the structured interviews were conducted.

The use of one-on-one semi-structured interviews (See Appendix C, D, E, F, G, and H) applies the strength of qualitative interviewing, which lies in its capacity to access self-reflexivity among interview subjects, leading to the greater likelihood of the telling of collective stories. Such an interview built on interactive components (rather than trying to control and reduce them) can achieve “inter-subjective depth” (Miller and Glasner 1997). It can also avoid the interviewees’ responding to the interviewer through the use of familiar narrative constructs that are shaped by a general cultural understanding rather than providing meaningful insights into their subjective views.

The purpose of interviewing the teachers/parents was to discover both commonalities and personal differences in their understanding of the relationship between Chinese language teaching/learning and the construction of cultural identity. Meanwhile, interviews with students explore the difference of “how” they understand their language learning and being a Chinese-Canadian.

As Fluehr-Lobban (1998) pointed out that “when the anthropological researcher and persons studied respect and trust one another, there are positive feelings and outcomes on

both sides. Matters of ethics are an ordinary, not extraordinary, part of anthropological practice.” Consent in writing was obtained for the purpose of the interviews. The consent form includes a brief explanation of my study and addresses the participants’ right to privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality. Even though individual interviews went into detail, participants’ rights to privacy, anonymity, or confidentiality is maintained. Except for the consent forms, no names or other personal identifying information was recorded and there are none in my field notes or in the thesis. My role as a researcher and their role as participants were fully explained. I explained the consent forms before anyone signed up to participate in an interview. There were two separate consent forms (See Appendix A and B). One consent form was to be signed by the teacher and the other form was to be signed by the student and his/her parents/guardians, because the recruited students were mostly under eighteen.

Each individual was given a choice of interviewing in Chinese (Mandarin/Cantonese) or English, which not only made each informant feel more comfortable to express himself or herself, but was also designed to compare the language chosen between the two generations. As it turned out, thirty-six of all first generation parents and teachers chose Chinese to be the interview language; only one out of thirty-six second generation participants chose Chinese, and all the other thirty five chose English to do the interview.

In addition to life histories and one-on-one interviews, participant observation was also made of the actual behaviours and interactions of the informants who participated in the research. Meanwhile, demographic information was collected at the beginning of each interview with the informants. Participants were requested to supply

information on the countries of birth of themselves, date of birth, length of residence in Canada, language spoken at home, and occupation.

Since the data from the observation showed a high degree of consistency with the findings from the interviews, some data from the observation are used to complement the data from the interviews in the following discussion.

### ***3.3 The Procedure***

Fieldwork for this study was carried out from October 2002 to October 2003. As neither the size of the community nor time constraints allowed for community-wide observation, it was necessary to focus on the school and on accessible school-related group activities within the Chinese community in Winnipeg.

This institutional group by no means represents the totality of social networks of the community. There are merely some clusters (Milroy 1980:50) of community networks, each characterized by relationships of like cultural content. Milroy (1980) pointed out two proprieties of clusters of social networks: their relatively high density and like content. According to her observation, most network studies, including Labov's New York studies as well as her own study of three Belfast working class communities, deal with clusters or groups of clusters rather than entire networks. Just because the "relationships within the cluster are denser than those existing externally," "density of key sectors or clusters is in fact a more important norm enforcement mechanism than overall density" (Milroy 1980:50).

Because of the very fact that it is difficult to plan on establishing rapport, how to get a breakthrough in rapport is considered important. As introduced in the earlier part of

this chapter, I myself as a researcher from mainland China shared familiarity with the language, the unspoken cultural codes, and the shared China past with the first generation mainland immigrants. These shared bases made my breakthrough in establishing rapport with the fieldwork location, because the language (Mandarin) and characters (simplified Chinese) taught in this school represents immigrants from Mainland China<sup>1</sup> respectfully. This mirrors Dewalt, Dewalt, and Wayland's hypothesis that, "the breakthrough in rapport was achieved when the anthropologists showed that their relationship with the community was important and serious" (1998: 260). My full three years as a regular teacher in this school and participant in different cultural and school events every year, made my good rapport with this school and some of the other participants. This relationship was a good preparation for collecting valid and reliable data during the field work.

The ethnographic process, based on the slow building of long-term interpersonal relations with the immigrants and their children in the school, the key social setting, is critical to our understanding of the strategies and practices they employed in crafting their bicultural identities through ethnic language schooling. Ethnographic observations sensitize us to the power of social context in shaping the interaction behaviours of immigrants of different generations. Ethnography also allows us to discover critical phenomena that we could not detect otherwise.

In October 2002, I collected archival and documentary materials about the history and development of this Chinese school. I also continued to search for other literature relevant to the study of Chinese immigrant communities (in Winnipeg and Canada), immigrant adolescence and cultural identity, while the research was carried on.

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<sup>1</sup> For the history of this school and its curriculum design, please see chapter 5 – The Chinese School.

Participants in the research were selected using a snow ball sampling technique that explicitly took care to include people from varied backgrounds (men and women, different age groups). In November 2002, I started by relying on teachers, parents and students, whom I had already known through my teaching and volunteering at different school events. I made phone calls and face to face requests in school to introduce my research and recruited their participation with their own interest in this research. The snow ball turned out well so that most of their family members such as spouses, children and parents volunteered to participate together with them; some of their neighbours and friends participated as well. Most of them could be organized by family and volunteered their time to participate with both generations: parents and children. As well, there are some individual participants without any other family members together in this research.

Most of the interviewees had the opportunity to get to know me (if they did not know me already), before I asked them for an interview, and with many I had a chance to talk on more than one occasion. Only one person stonewalled my attempts altogether. To all subjects included in the study I explained the purpose and method of my research and informed them of the content of the consent form that would be signed before conducting the interviews.

A total of thirty-six students and thirty-six teachers/parents (some interviewees are parents who also are teachers) were involved in the study; sixty interviews were conducted as semi-structured interviews. Twelve unstructured interviews were also conducted in the Chinese school or at festival gatherings which introduced a random chance of inviting more participants for this research. This resulted in more participants being involved in this study; the exact number of participants came to seventy-two as a

result. Each participant had the option of being interviewed at the school or any other location where she/he felt comfortable, such as in their homes, or mine, or in a location they chose. The length of individual interviews was approximately half an hour to two hours. Many interviews lasted several hours and I spoke with some interviewees on more than one occasion.

In the interviews with informants, I encouraged them to express themselves by not limiting myself to standardized questions and a uniform approach. The interviews were informal and open-ended. My list of possible questions served only as an interview guide.

## Chapter 4

### THE CHINESE COMMUNITY IN WINNIPEG

The history and the context in which different groups have existed influence the survival patterns of different groups, thus their bicultural and multicultural processes. Therefore, in order to study the bicultural identity of Chinese immigrants and their children, it is necessary to understand how the historical background has influenced the existence of Chinese families in Canada.

#### *4.1 The Changing of Policies*

November 18, 2005, CBC news reported:

“Ottawa is set to pay millions of dollars in compensation to descendants of Chinese workers who were charged a head tax to enter the country. The government has agreed to acknowledge the tax was discriminatory and will pay \$12.5 million into a new foundation” (CBC News 18/11/2005).

This news about the Canadian government’s decision on “head tax compensation” was finally passed, reversing the decision of one hundred and twenty years ago when the first federal anti-Chinese bill was passed in 1885, the same year the transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) was completed. About 15,000 Chinese workers were hired to work for the CPR, with very low pay and under dangerous conditions. When the railway was completed, the Chinese labourers were laid off. This 1885 anti-Chinese bill took the form of a head tax of \$50 imposed, with few exceptions, upon every person of Chinese origin entering the country. No other group was targeted in this way.

In fact, the history of the Chinese community in Canada was constrained by Canadian immigration policies and anti-Chinese laws. "Legislative controls on immigration produced a definite effect on the size of the Chinese population and the structure of the Chinese community in Canada" (Li 1988:85).

The changing of policies may be grouped into three periods (Li 1988). The period between 1858 and 1923 is the first period. This period witnessed the emergence of institutional racism, which made the Chinese in Canada frequent targets of racial antagonism and attacks. One example is the 1885 anti-Chinese bill, which has been mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

In 1923, the federal government passed the Chinese Immigration Act, which excluded the Chinese from entering Canada. This year is the start of the exclusion era that runs from 1923 to 1947, during which time no Chinese were allowed to immigrate to Canada and those already here were denied many of their civil rights.

With the repeal of the Chinese Immigration Act in 1947 and subsequent changes in the Canadian immigration policy, they were allowed to immigrate on a limited basis. "The end of the Second World War marked a new epoch as the Chinese gained their civil rights and began to build a new post-war community" (Li 1988:2).

In the first two decades after the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act, both population growth and balancing the sex ratio among the Chinese were achieved slowly. In Winnipeg, for example, it took until 1971, for the sex ratio balancing to be first achieved, ninety years after Chinese arrived in Winnipeg (see Table 4-1). The racial bias of the immigration policy at the time continued to restrict Chinese and other Asian immigration to Canada. The only new Chinese immigrants to Canada during that time

were spouses, unmarried children under eighteen years of age, and elderly parents of Canadian citizens, all being family members of the Chinese who were already in Canada (Xiao 1992). In 1962, the Canadian government removed country of origin as a major criterion for the admission of immigrants to Canada. With the changes in immigration policy enacted in 1967 a larger volume of Chinese immigrants began to enter Canada. By 2001 over 75 per cent of the Chinese in Canada had immigrated after 1971 (see Table 4-1). Also shown by Table 4-1, Winnipeg boasted a sizable and vital Chinese community with a population of 9,295 in 1986.

According to the immigration information from the Government of Manitoba, throughout the second half of the 1980s, Hong Kong and Vietnam continued to rank among the five leading source countries of international immigration to Manitoba, reflecting a general trend of Chinese immigration to Canada in recent years. Just as the tendency for new immigrants to concentrate in large cities in Canada, nearly all new Chinese immigrants to the province of Manitoba have settled in Winnipeg (Xiao 1992).

The newcomers is socio – economically stratified with occupational diversity and differences in terms of education and income levels, and it is a population that speaks a number of different Chinese dialects as well as English.

Because of the different nature of the social treatment they have received from the larger Canadian society and its different consequences, the different cohort groups within the Chinese community also show different characteristics of network structures. In general, the networks are more open for the relatively recent independent immigrants than for either the old-timer immigrants who had come earlier during the days of

discrimination or for the Indo-Chinese immigrants who have come as a result of mass dislocation.

Table 4-1  
Chinese population in Winnipeg, 1881-2001

	Population		
	Total	Male	Female
1881*	4		
1891*	16		
1901*	119		
1911	574	563	11
1921	814	790	24
1931	1,033	991	42
1941	719	679	40
1951	738	636	102
1961	1,194	815	379
1971	2,535	1,425	1,110
1981*	6,195		
1986*	9,295		
1996*	9,595		
2001	10,890	5,585	5,305

\*No sex distribution available

Source: Baureiss and Kwang, 1979; Census of Canada, 1986 by ethnic origin; 2001 by visible minority groups

#### ***4.2 The Early Community***

Despite the fact that the Chinese community has become the fourth biggest visible minority group in Winnipeg with a population of 10,890 (Census 2001), this city has never been a major attraction to the Chinese immigrants to Canada.

The early Chinese community in Winnipeg was a special demographic, ecological and organizational ethnic sub-community designed primarily for survival. The initial group consisted mostly of males, a fact which resulted in the first period frequently being referred to as the married bachelor phase (Baureiss and Kwong 1979; Baureiss and Driedger 1982). It is recorded that the first Chinese arrived in Winnipeg by stage coach from the United States on November 18, 1877. The Canada Census of 1881 listed only

four Chinese people in Manitoba (Baureiss and Driedger, 1982:12). The increase of the Chinese population in Manitoba and Winnipeg was very small during the period 1877-1900. The first newspaper reference to "China town" appeared in the Winnipeg Free Press in 1911 (Winnipeg Free Press 5/20/1911:5). During the first quarter of the twentieth century, growth was relatively large considering the existence of discriminatory government policies. The number of Chinese continued to rise in every census year until 1931, when it began to decline. "Undoubtedly this drop was brought about by the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923, which totally excluded the Chinese from entering Canada. The restricted opportunities in Canada for Chinese also prompted some of them to return to China." (Li 1988:85) As a result, among the Chinese in Winnipeg population decreased from 1,033 in 1931 to 738 in 1951 (See Table 4.1).

It was not until the post-war years, when the restrictive immigration policy towards the Chinese was replaced by a more favourable one that the Chinese population again began to show signs of increase. By 1961 it had risen to 58,197. As a result, the Chinese population in all of Canada as well as Winnipeg has increased substantially since then. "Further changes in the immigration act in 1967 permitted Chinese to be admitted, for the first time in history, under the same criteria as other immigrants. Consequently the Chinese population increased to 118,815 in 1971, and between 1971 and 1981 it doubled again to 289,245" (Li 1988:85). In this decade, Chinese population in Winnipeg almost tripled (see Table 4-1).

Until the 1980s, while there was a high concentration of Chinese in Chinatown, it contained only about one-third of the community, an amount similar to that found in other Canadian cities. The nature of the Chinese businesses such as laundries and

restaurants catering to the general Winnipeg population required many of the Chinese to establish themselves in other parts of the city. Chinatown was, however, a shopping centre and meeting place for all Chinese during their leisure time. Even now, it is still the symbolic and activity centre for the Chinese in Winnipeg.

However, changes have occurred in both the segregated, traditional "bachelor" Chinatown community of the first fifty years, and over the past forty years in the more modern "family" type community dispersed throughout metropolitan Winnipeg. Originally, the Chinese came to Canada to make their fortune with the ultimate aim of returning home. Chinese tradition, reinforced by discriminatory immigration policies, encouraged the Chinese to leave the women and children behind. Some went back to China to marry and produce offspring and then returned to this country. Based on their common ethnic background and the denial of full participation by the host society, close social bonds developed among the Chinese of Winnipeg in the downtown Chinatown area. They transferred the loyalties and institutions of their Chinese villages to Winnipeg, setting up what has come to be known as Chinatown.

Those early immigrants thought of themselves as Chinese since the non-Chinese, both friendly and unfriendly, would have reinforced that message daily. Chineseness would be their identity and their psychological escape from hardship and racism in the rest of their world. Their village back home was still clearly part of their lives. In this sense, Chineseness is a definer, something which allows them membership with a sense of belonging, something they can claim, something that makes them different from others, something exotic. Conversely, there are individuals who see Chineseness as being

outdated, old fashioned, something they may even be embarrassed about, something which is incomprehensible, or something others are making a big deal about.

During this period, discrimination towards the Chinese by the Canadian government and the Winnipeg community, as well as Chinese traditional values, were factors that contributed to the formation of the Chinese community. The Chinese were integrated into Canadian society through the process of accommodation, making necessary adjustments to conflicting situations between them and the larger community by maintaining social distance. A new stage began in 1947 when the immigration laws stressed unity in diversity: a "mosaic." Integration rather than assimilation became the focal point. In 1971, the Multicultural Policy was announced. Ethnic groups were encouraged to keep their traditions and customs as long as they did not interfere with or directly violate those of the Canadian society. This approach has legitimized the existence of the Chinese community in recent years and played a vital role in the integration of the Chinese into the larger community. In the past, Chinatown and the Chinese community were inseparable; at present, there still exists a high concentration of Chinese businesses and organizations in Chinatown but it is not growing.

Not only in the city of Winnipeg, but also in Canada as a whole, substantial changes have occurred in the Chinese community since the second half of the last century. Based on a recent census (2001), Chinese immigrants have grown to comprise the largest immigrant group with a population of 1.3 million, 3.7% of the total Canadian population. Meanwhile, the composition of the recent wave of Chinese immigrants differs from that in the past, because recent immigrants have come from Hong Kong, Taiwan and every part of Mainland China. Most are better educated than the former immigrants and are

financially better off. Moreover, unlike the early Chinese immigrants who grouped themselves in Chinatowns, many post-1980 immigrants have settled by mixing with other ethnic groups. Many are professionals, competent in English and moving toward assimilation in the Canadian mainstream culture. These changes have affected the acculturation patterns, especially the identity development of the more recent Chinese immigrants and their children.

#### ***4.3 The Shifting of Chinese Community and Organizations in Winnipeg***

In his book, *Chinese in Canada*, Peter Li (1988) categorized four kinds of organizations in the early Chinese community, and stated that “the basic purpose of these associations was to resolve the community's internal problems and to deal with the external pressures of discrimination and segregation” (1988:71).

The first kind of organization is a quasi-judiciary system for adjudicating internal disputes. The reason why the early Chinese population preferred to settle disputes internally through community associations was the language barrier, and the worry that they were excluded from the Canadian courts and would not receive a just hearing.

The second kind of organization is the voluntary organizations providing mutual aid and social services to the sojourners, especially in times of need. Li (1988) specified that “many associations set up hostels for Chinese who needed a temporary place to stay” (1988:72). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the early Chinese community was a “married-bachelor’s phase.” Without their families, the members depended on community associations for emotional and material support. As Li (1988) pointed out, “in such conditions it is easy to understand why the various Chinese associations were so

popular in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth. Their decline in recent decades has largely reflected the different needs of the post-war immigrants” (1988:72).

The third kind was organized by districts. Li (1988) stated that “common locality provided a basis for social organization. Districts of origin often meant not only differences of allegiance or identity, but also substantial variations in dialects” (1988:72). Meanwhile, some other organizations which were by common surnames, or clans, enabled them to use both real and pseudo-kinship for social organization.

With the changing of Canadian immigration policies, the Chinese community grew quickly after 1967, and “new ethnic associations emerged as the old ones failed to represent the interests of the more heterogeneous Chinese population” (Li 1988:73).

Organizationally, there are perhaps fewer divisions between the old-timer group and the independent immigrant group than among the independent immigrants themselves. That is, while separate social organizations have been set up by different groups of independent immigrants since they arrived in Winnipeg, their participation in the traditional organizations in the Chinese community, such as the Chinese Benevolent Association of Manitoba and the Mah Society, a clan association of the Mah family, is also present.

Since their arrival, the independent immigrants, especially those with a professional background, have taken an active part in the development of the Chinese community in Winnipeg. With their high socio-economic status in the larger Canadian society, their organizational skills and, above all, their commitment and devotion to the community, they soon assumed the leadership role in local community affairs. One

example is the success in the revitalization of Winnipeg's Chinatown in the 1980s, which was largely due to the efforts and leadership role of a physician, Joseph Du, president of the Chinese Culture and Community Center in Winnipeg, as well as to the efforts and contribution of the Winnipeg Chinatown Non-profit Housing Association led by Ken Wang of Taishan background, an entrepreneur and a former City Councillor. The situation in the Chinese community of Winnipeg today resembles what has been described by Chan (1983) for the Chinese communities elsewhere in Canada, in that the new professionals have taken on the function of the old merchant class as pillars of the community, while the roles and functions of the old community leaders have become supportive and secondary.

It is not surprising that in a community of the size of today's Chinese community in Winnipeg there should be many subdivisions, social, political, and linguistic. The social and political subdivisions within the Chinese community are reflected in the separate sets of institutions that the different sectors of the community set up. The social and political subdivisions within the Chinese community are reflected in the separate sets of institutions that the different sectors of the community set up. For example, there are three supplementary Chinese schools which all have the same aim of promoting Chinese culture through the teaching of Chinese. The three schools have different origins and are run by personnel from different sectors of the community (Xiao 1992). The chosen school of this study is the Manitoba Academy of Chinese Studies, which was established in 1974 by a group of professionals who came to Winnipeg relatively recently. This school teaches the simplified Chinese characters, and uses Pinyin as the pronunciation system. This Chinese language is called *Putonghua* (the standard language). The verbal

and writing system is the same as that of the Chinese education in Mainland China.

*Putonghua* is the only Chinese language taught in this school. Therefore, this school attracts families mostly from Mainland China.

The Manitoba Institute of Chinese Language, Culture and Arts was established in 1977, also by a group of professionals. This institute is consisted mostly of those of south China origin, including the early immigrants and their families, who may have come to Canada relatively more recently, together with independent immigrant group, consisting of the independent immigrants having arrived since the 1960s. This school has both Mandarin and Cantonese classes. Mandarin at this school is called *Guoyu* (the national language), which is how Taiwan and some southeast countries name standard northern Chinese. The writing characters taught in this school are the traditional characters. Cantonese teaching is more emphasized here compared to the other two schools.

The third school is the Pei-ing Chinese school, established in 1983, and run by the Indo-China Chinese Association, which consisting of Chinese from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, who came after 1979. This school teaches both Mandarin and Cantonese as well, but Mandarin is the main focus. The Mandarin textbook they use is the same as the Manitoba Institute of Chinese Language, with the same verbal (*Zhuyin*) and writing system (traditional characters).

Each of these three schools attracts different immigrant families, depending on where their origins are. Running an ethnic school is by no means a simple task and nearly all the work involved is performed on a voluntary basis. To keep any of them going involves considerable devotion and support from the community. These three Chinese schools in the local Chinese community are not an accidental fact. No single organization

seems to represent the interests of the community as a whole, and the different sectors of the community operate independently within their own networks.

Only on matters or events concerning the local Chinese community as a whole, such as official visits of representative of the People's Republic of China (PRC) government, do all the three organizations gather together for information and require cultural resources from the whole community. There is also a summer camp sponsored by Taiwan to promote Chinese culture every year, and each of the three schools will in turn serve as the host of the summer camp to represent the whole community, since students of all the three schools could participate. Meanwhile, the Chinese community can show its unity in times of crisis and when mutual support is needed to overcome certain difficulties. For example, when the funds supporting the heritage-language programs were cut by the federal government in 1991, all three Chinese schools in Winnipeg together appealed against the government decision.

In the following chapter, the field setting of this research will be introduced. For the reason that it teaches simplified characters *Putonghua*, the Manitoba Academy of Chinese Studies, gathered the most Chinese immigrants from the People's Republic of China, which now is the top origin of Chinese immigrants in Winnipeg during the past five years (2001 Census). This school is the site of the field research for this thesis.

## Chapter 5

### THE CHINESE SCHOOL

Pannu and Young (1976) pointed out that the role of supplementary language schools in Canada from “other ethnic” groups revealed some interesting findings about these institutions. Supplementary language schools are those institutions set up outside the public-school system by the ethnic groups themselves. Classes are usually held in the late afternoon or evenings, or on the weekends. These schools have been firmly established in Canada. They operate completely without public funding and have to recruit students who are also carrying a full load of work in the public-school system. Although the staffing and library resources, as well as the physical plant and educational technology, available to these schools are generally meagre, their teaching and administrative personnel express high satisfaction with their own work, and report a high level of enthusiasm and co-operation on the part of parents (Pannu and Young 1976).

Chinese schools first appeared in Winnipeg in the 1930s, in order to preserve the Chinese language among immigrants (Baureiss and Driedger 1982). Studies show that “the objectives of the Chinese schools have remained unchanged over that time: to impart the knowledge of the Chinese Language and cultural heritage to Canadian-born Chinese” (Baureiss and Driedger 1982:13).

As introduced at the end of last chapter, different groups of ethnic Chinese classify themselves by their original identities. The participants in the Chinese school under study are primarily Chinese from Mainland China.

### ***5.1 Structure of the Setting***

Having just celebrated its thirtieth birthday last summer (2004), the chosen Chinese school is a federally registered charitable organization, which was established in the summer of 1974 with sixteen students and three teachers. Since then it has expanded into thirteen classes (from kindergarten to grade ten, and two adult classes) with about two hundred students and twenty five teachers. Like eighty five percent of the other Chinese schools throughout Canada (Choi 1994), the chosen Chinese school borrows a public school every weekend for teaching.

The Chinese School is run and managed by a School Board consisting of five members. These five members include: the Principal, Secretary, Treasurer, Public Relations and General duties. The Executive Board appoints the Principal who will then form his/her own committee members. This School Board is responsible for all the administrative duties pertaining to the teaching and managing of all the school related matters. The teachers are trained and well qualified in general; most of them hold a university or even postgraduate degree. Monthly staff meeting plus teachers' in-service are conducted on a regular basis with the aim to improve communication and teaching techniques.

Due to the fact that students only study Chinese once a week (and for only two and one half hours), parents are considered vitally important to assist their child/children at home in completing their weekly assignments. Parents are told to maintain contact with the homeroom teacher or the school, because "a healthy home environment is a critical factor in the success of students who hope to learn the Chinese language" (see website of this school). The School hosts a parent-teacher meeting once a year.

A monthly Newsletter is published in order to keep the parents well informed about the current activities at the School. Parents can express their opinions or feelings in the newsletter, and volunteer their time to help in school-related activities of all kinds.

## ***5.2 Curriculum Design***

The school's twentieth anniversary edition of the Newsletter stated that the reasons for the establishment of the school were threefold: to develop and promote Chinese culture; to teach and learn the Chinese language, and to reinforce the solidarity of the Manitoba Chinese community. It is the school's belief that preserving the Chinese language, promoting Chinese culture and reinforcing the solidarity of the Chinese community are essential factors in enriching the lives and raising the status of Chinese-Canadians, that it is "our belief that our local level efforts to promote heritage languages and culture are not only worthwhile, but play a critical role in building a strong and vibrant Canada" (see website of this school: <http://www.manitobachineseacademy.com> ).

Because of the different cultural and political environment, textbooks from China were found not to be suitable in either content or level for students in Winnipeg, so the school wrote and published its own textbooks between 1975 and 1977. The school believes that the textbooks should combine Chinese heritage with local (Canadian) culture. This should make the Chinese-Canadian students feel proud of the Chinese traditional culture and, at the same time, feel a sense of responsibility to local Canadian society. Students learn to read, write, and speak Chinese at levels corresponding to grades from kindergarten to grade ten. Meanwhile, this school also provides adult classes in beginner and intermediate conversational Chinese. Beginning in 2001, students passing

the final exam of the Senior I Class graduate from the Chinese school with a certificate which makes them eligible to write a challenge exam for Introductory Mandarin Language from the Asian Studies Center of the University of Manitoba.

Besides the focused language instruction, other areas of instruction include Calligraphy, Chinese History and Literature, Chinese Yo-Yo and Chinese Folk Dance. In the cultural arena, this school has over forty adults taking Tai-chi classes. It also has over forty choir members, who promote the singing of Chinese songs in the community such as at an annual Christmas party, Chinese New Year and other school-related gatherings.

### ***5.3 Raising questions***

As introduced at the beginning of this chapter, supplementary schools from ethnic groups all over Canada have limited resources to support their day-to-day operation and purchase of necessary materials, and have difficulty in obtaining texts and related classroom materials. However, even these obviously serious constraints were evidently not so severely discouraging as to dampen the commitment of the teaching personnel or the support of the parents. Both staff and parents apparently make more than a modest financial sacrifice and invest their time willingly in support of these schools (Baureiss and Driedger 1982).

This Chinese language school is no exception. As shown by the structure of the organization and its curriculum design, the establishing and running of this school resulted from the constant efforts and co-operation of immigrant parents/teachers. As a matter of fact, the first generation's purpose of promoting heritage language education as

a means of re/constructing ethnic cultural identity was widely discussed by previous studies, and reveal that ethnic identity and language maintenance are strongly linked to nativity. Identification with a specific ethnic group weakens with each generation and is associated with a declining knowledge of the ethnic language (De Vries 1990, Hall 1990, Li 2001, Lu 2001, Marino Weisman 2001, Massey 1995, Xiao 1998, Chan & Leong 1994). However, although they form the important half of the school and the subjects to be educated, the voice of Canadian-born children were hardly heard. Moreover, was the function and organization of this Chinese school the same during the past thirty years, while there were huge changes happening in the Winnipeg Chinese community, or did the school change as the community changed?

In order to have a better understanding of the process of cultural identity negotiation, and the interactions between the two generations of Chinese-Canadians, the following pages will present the research results from studying the bicultural identity construction based on the voices of the first generation parents/teachers, as well as their Canadian born children in this Chinese school.

## Chapter 6

### RESULTS

The results are based on field data, which were generated through semi-structured interviews, in order to answer the following questions: (1) What is the role and function of the Chinese school in the process of cultural identity construction for Chinese immigrants, and how do first-generation parents and their second-generation Canadian-born children participate in the process? (2) What discursive practices, including curriculum, does the Chinese school engage in that facilitate the construction of a bicultural identity for Chinese-Canadian children?

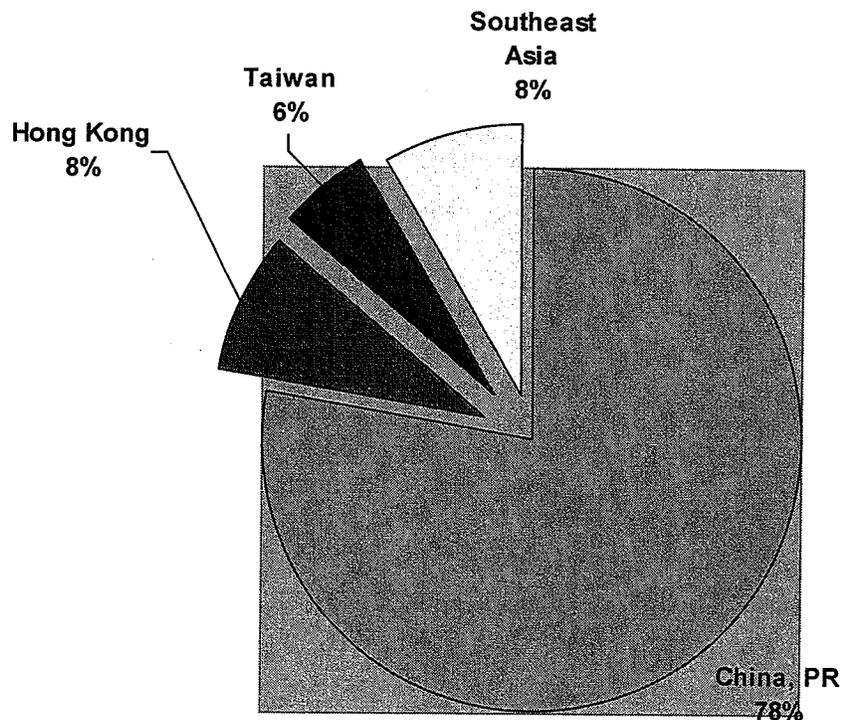
Interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis. Because of their different roles and degrees of participation in this Chinese school, the first generation immigrants were divided into two groups: parents and teachers. The results of the interview data are gathered as three parts: parents, teachers and students. Before presenting the results by dividing them into these groups, the following is the demography of the informants.

#### *6.1 Demography – The Informants*

Of the seventy-two informants who participated in the research, thirty-one were males and forty-one females. Their ages ranged between seven and seventy-four. The birth-date range of first generation were from 1930 to 1970, sixteen males and twenty females; the Canadian born generation ranged from 1972 to 1997, fifteen males and twenty-one females.

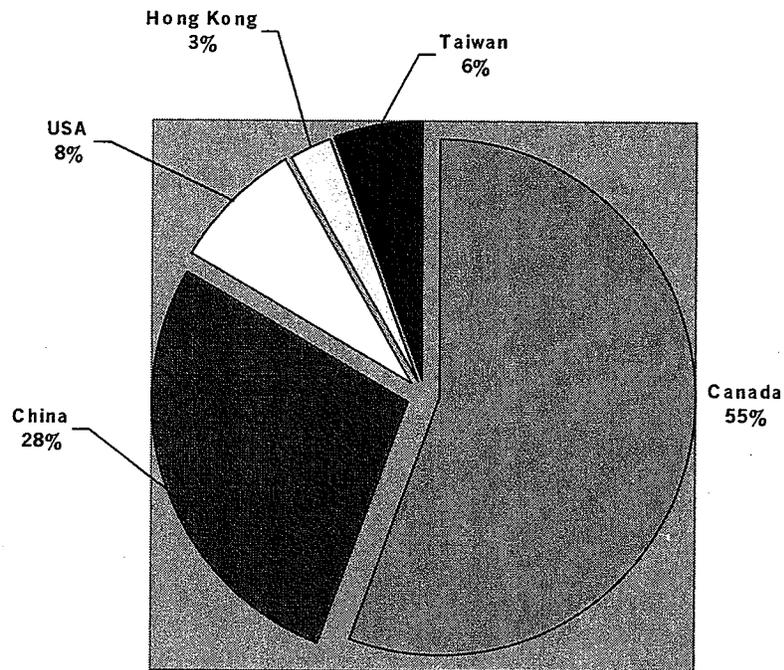
As shown in Figure 6-2, for the first generation, a total of twenty-eight informants came from Mainland China, of whom six have lived in other countries (including the United States, Japan, and UK) before they came to Canada. Three came from Hong Kong, two from Taiwan, and three from countries or regions in South East Asia. Twenty of the second generation are Canadian born (See Figure 6-3). Ten of them were born in Mainland China, and immigrated to Canada with their parents in their early childhood age (three to eight), and the other six were born in other regions or countries, including Hong Kong (1), Taiwan (2), and the United States (3).

Figure 6-2 Place of Birth of the First Generation Participants



Total number =36  
Source: Field data.

Figure 6-3 Place of Birth of the 1.5 and Second Generation Participants



Total Number=36.  
Source: Field data

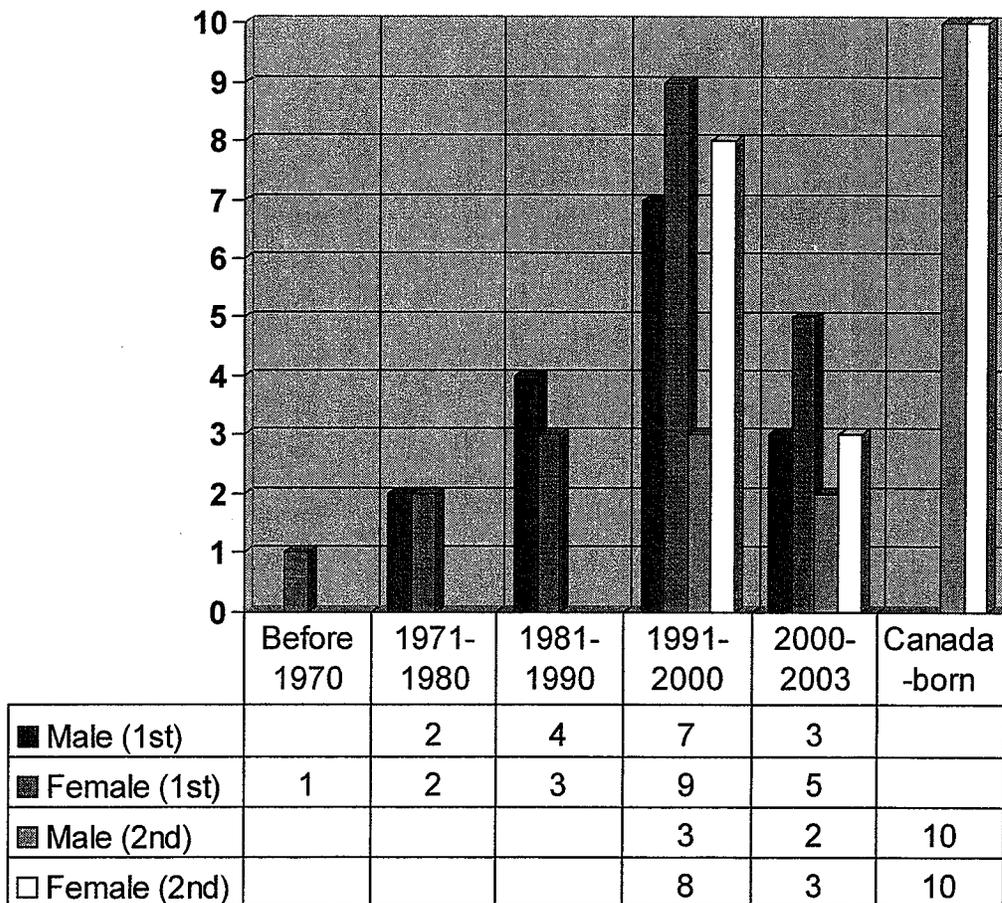
For the first generation, twenty-four out of thirty-six came to Canada around ten years ago (1991-2003); seven came between 1981 to 1990; and five came before 1980. Twenty of the thirty-six interviewed in the second generation were Canadian born; eleven of them came in the 1990s; and the rest, two boys and three girls, came with their parents during the past five years. (See Figure 6-4)

As to the educational backgrounds of the first generation informants (see Figure 6-5), thirty-two, or nearly 89%, have educational attainments at or above the university level, 22% of whom have educational attainments at or beyond the post-graduate level.

Ten informants have not received any education in North America, either in Canada or the United States.

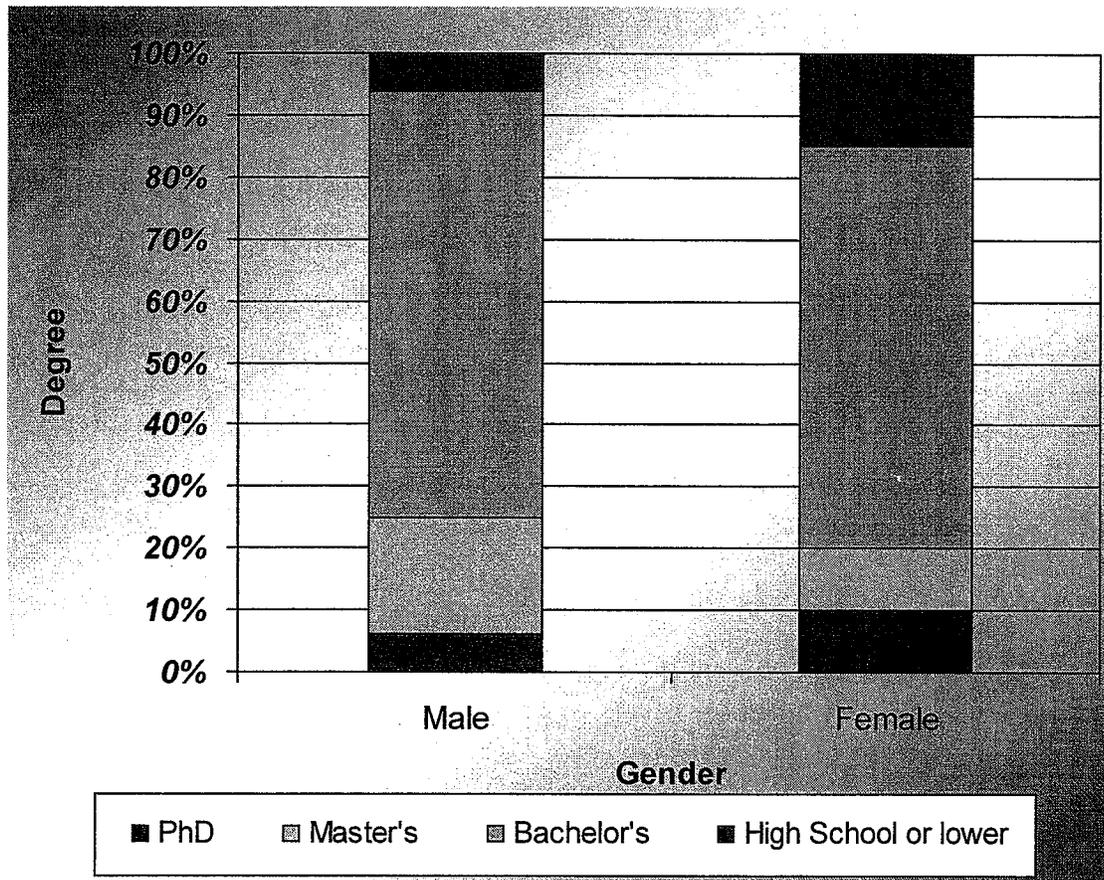
Based on the demographic data of the total of seventy-two interviewed informants as background, the following pages will present the interview results group by group, first parents, then teachers, and finally students.

Figure 6-4 Year of Arrival of Both Generations



Male: 31  
 Female: 41  
 Total number=72  
 Source: Field data.

Figure 6-5 Gender and Education of the First Generation Participants



Male: 16  
 Female: 20  
 Total Number=36  
 Source: Field data.

**6.2 Parents**

**6.2.1 Channels to reaching the Chinese school**

In general, there are two main channels parents get to know about this Chinese school (See Table 6-1). Some of the parents get to know about this school in Chinese newspapers which are free to pick up in every Chinese grocery store. Other interviewed parents were introduced by their neighbours or friends who knew about this school. Most

of them have neighbours or friends teaching or have their own children studying in this school.

Table 6-1: Channels to Reaching the Chinese School

Channels	Chinese Newspapers	Friends	Others*
Total	11	23	2
36			

\*The Winnipeg Multicultural Department is one; and the other is the Chinese Cultural Center

### 6.2.2 Reasons for sending one's own child to this school

“Why do you send your child to Chinese School?” In response to this question, parents identified six (main) reasons, some central to their notions of identity and some pragmatically related to the curriculum of the school. The most often answer was, “because we are Chinese” with thirty-four (94%), of the interviewed parents so responding (see Table 6-2). Parents showed concern for their children’s Chinese language ability, because they believed language ability is a medium for children to understand Chinese culture and become involved in the Chinese community.

Table 6-2 Reasons for Sending Children to the Chinese School

Reasons	Frequency (times)	Percentage (total 36 interviewed)
To learn the language and culture (to be capable of communicating with relatives)	30	83.3%
To better understand who you are, and why you are different	8	22.2%
Prepare for future career	10	27.8%
We are Chinese	34	94.4%
Curriculum of this school	36	100%

Source: Field data.

One parent, who had a twelve year old son, told me that she sees herself as Chinese, moved to another country. Once they have chosen to immigrate, people should adapt where they are living. But she asks her son to remember he is Chinese. In order to do so, her son has to know how to speak and communicate in Chinese, at least verbally; or he will be isolated from the Chinese community, whether or not he chooses to be. As a matter of fact, the big environment is Canadian culture; those born in Canada can hardly access any Chinese culture outside their own homes. In order to prepare their own children not to “get lost out there”, 22.2% of interviewed parents shared the same opinion with parents of a seven year old and a nine year old (both started to attend this school when they were five years old), “because you have to know your language and culture, or you will not understand why you are different, what makes you different.” He told his children this is the most important thing. He thinks they should get to know about Chinese language first, and will understand culture when they are older. 83.3% of the parents mentioned Chinese language study is a necessity, because then children could talk to their relatives back in China, especially if they have grandparents who speak no English at all. Meanwhile, they could communicate with people in China on visits. Middle aged parents who have a teenage daughter and a seven year old son told me that “You sure know that family is so important to our Chinese. I cannot let my children not communicate with my parents – their grandparents. I know some of them still cannot speak well after years of study in the Chinese school, but I will give them a try at least. I have to give them the opportunity, no matter how it turns out. This is my part of my responsibility.”

At the same time, 27.8% of the total interviewed parents believe Chinese study is a foundation for their children's future careers, as one of them mentioned that "China's economy is growing so dramatically, not only over there in China, but more and more business is going on between China and Canada, so to speak Chinese is definitely an asset, no matter what they do in the future."

As I have mentioned in the Introduction, there are three Chinese schools in Winnipeg (2004); each of these three Chinese schools represents a different Chinese subculture (See Chapter 4). Besides understanding why parents choose Chinese school, what is the reason these parents send their children to this chosen Chinese school?

Twenty-eight out of the total thirty-six interviewed first generation participants mentioned that they sent their child to this school because this school teaches *Putonghua* and simplified Chinese script, which is the same as in Mainland China (where they came from, see Figure 6-2). The other six parents (from Hong Kong and Southeast Asian counties) speak different Chinese dialects at home (e.g. Cantonese); they chose this Chinese school for their children because *Putonghua* is the most popular Chinese language. To learn *Putonghua* will bring their children a broader picture of being Chinese.

Parents also like the textbooks in use at this school, as they were written and edited here by local Chinese teachers. These textbooks are localized with both Canadian and Chinese culture, but with no political issues involved. Meanwhile, the teaching style here is more relaxed and does not put too much pressure on students; teachers teach based on the student's own level and ability.

According to the interviewed parents, their expectation of their children's Chinese learning is purely at the verbal level. Parents hope that their child will be able to carry on

general conversations. A parent said “[the student’s] father and I only set them the goal to be verbally capable of Chinese. This is a practical decision. How could we expect them to read and write Chinese, while they barely have any chance to speak Chinese outside this house? Besides, without the cultural background, most of the readings are too hard to understand, and they lose their interest after a couple of pages.” The interviews showed that, to have the ability for daily conversation is the main goal of most parents.

Meanwhile, to have more sense about the (Chinese) culture is another main reason for parents sending their children. A parent mentioned to me that she told her daughter the reason for attending Chinese school is, “I want you to know who you are, and why we are different.” Meanwhile, because this school hold lots of cultural activities, and celebrates important Chinese festivals, some parents think this is a good way for children to understand own heritage. “At least, he will not hate to be Chinese, to be different,” one parent added.

### ***6.2.3 Attending Chinese school -- Parents’ Efforts***

Attending Chinese school is not a one day or one week event, even though it is only once a week. Parents found their children were very excited about going to Chinese school in the early years, because their Chinese friends attend this school as well. But after two or three years’ study there, they will feel bored. This is not only because they do not have much chance to practice what they have learnt in the Chinese school on a daily basis, but schooling itself is a long process, and in general it needs encouragement from parents.

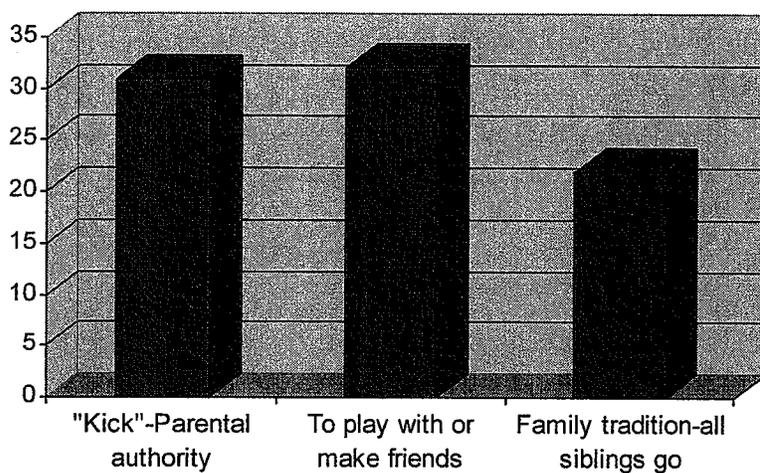
Based on the interviews with parents, factors that affect their children's attendance at Chinese school can be summarized as the following four: peer group fun, parental forces, a role or a family tradition, and, self (heritage) exploration.

For younger children, their parents explain to their child that their (Chinese) friends will go to this school as well, so, he/she could go there and play with them. Interviewed parents, who have arrived Canada recently, said they wanted their children to go to Chinese school, because they could make some friends who are the same (ethnic) as themselves, and gain a sense of belonging to Canada:

I did not plan to send her to the Chinese school, because I feel her Chinese is pretty good already. She came to Winnipeg with her mother and me, when she was nine already. But she had no friends since the first year of our arrival. She seemed not to be very happy and was always on her own. Around her first birthday in Canada, her mother and I wanted to throw her a birthday party. I told her that she could bring all her friends home for the party. She was not excited about the party, and told me that she has no friends at all. She said she cannot communicate with her new classmates very well with her limited English. I was worried and by chance I talked about this with a friend, who had immigrated to Winnipeg eight years ago. He told me that his children had the same situation while they just came. They sent their children to this Chinese school, though their English was still not good enough to communicate with other kids, but that is CHINESE school. They felt they belonged because of the familiar look; they gained self-confidence because of their fluent Chinese; they adapted faster with the help of other Chinese classmates. I felt this is a great suggestion, and sent my daughter to the school; it turns out a proof of all my friend's words.

In fact, to play with or make friends is a factor, which was used both by the “newcomer families” who send their China-born children to Chinese school, and for Canada-born children as well. As shown by Figure 6-6, thirty one out of thirty-six interviewed parents said this is an effective motivation.

Figure 6-6 Motivation Factors for Attending the Chinese School



Total interviewed=36  
Source: Field Data

Even though, to make and play with friends is a good motivation, according to the interviews, thirty-two parents agreed that the challenge is not to get their child there, but to keep him or her there. Especially, it is getting harder as the child grows up. “They have lots of other interests which they grow from weekday school; Chinese study is hard and they don’t have much chance to practice in Canada. As time goes by, they lose interest.”

said one of the interviewed parents who has two sons (twelve and fourteen). Parents have to use their parental authority “to kick them there.” This seems the most popular “motivation” of most parents to keep children in school, especially for the older children.

Twenty-two out of thirty-six interviewed parents observed that their child saw going to Chinese school on Saturdays as a “tradition” of their generation (Canada-born) to follow their elder siblings; meanwhile, neighbours and friends have to go as well. Groups of parents also noticed that their child had gotten used to coming to Chinese school every Saturday, because they sent them there since kindergarten: “no complaints, but not very excited either.” A parent felt, “my son treats this (attending Chinese school) as a role which he has to do.”

Four parents seemed not to have the motivation problem, as they told me about their teenage (or older) child who wants to come to the Chinese school him/her self. One parent said that her daughter wants to get to study about her Chinese background (her father is non-Chinese), to know more about herself; in fact, she is proud of her Chinese heritage.

#### ***6.2.4 Parents' involvement in the Chinese school***

All interviewed parents are or were involved in some program of the Chinese school (See Table 6-3). Ten parents used to or still teach in this school; thirty-one of them have volunteered in festival or graduation preparation, or came every Saturday to supervise school hallways; and seven of them come to join Tai-chi class, the school Choir, or dancing class. Most of them have participated or are participating in more than two programs, no matter what activity they are doing, and all of them said they enjoyed

coming and chat with other parents, teachers and community members. This is the most relaxing and information gathering time of the whole week.

Despite the schooling-related events, a parent from a nearby farm offers farm access with the support of the school. For example, there are offers to buy “frozen chicken” from a Winnipeg farm. There was a list you simply sign your name on, and the next week you could come to school and pick the chicken up.

There are banquets and gatherings running through the whole year, especially during important Chinese traditional festivals, such as Chinese New Year. The Chinese school also sells tickets for other Chinese community events. Some parents told me that they had their very first Chinese banquet have with their family and friends, introduced by the Chinese school. Parents said they enjoyed this kind of gatherings, because dining with family and friends in a Chinese restaurant to celebrate the traditional festivals made them feel the Chinese atmosphere and a sense of belonging. “For a second or two, I felt I am still in China,” said one of my interviewed parents. In fact, all thirty-six interviewed parents have been to at least one of these banquets and gatherings (see Table 6-3).

Table 6-3 Parents’ Involvement in the Chinese School

Programs	Teaching	Events or Graduation Preparation	Festival Banquets or Gatherings	Supervise Hallway	Join a class	School Choir	Dancing Class
No. of Participants	10	28	36	3	3	2	2
Percentage of Total	27.8%	77.8%	100%	8.3%	8.3%	5.6%	5.6%

*Note: Most parents have been involved or are involving in more than two above programs.*

Source: Field Data

## **6.3 Teachers**

### **6.3.1 Reasons for Teaching in the Chinese School**

A total of ten teachers have been interviewed. All of them are also parents of students of the school. In contrast to parents' diversity of original countries or regions, interviewed teachers all came from P. R. China. Eight of the interviewed teachers got to know about this school through their own friends or relatives; the other two saw the advertisement in Chinese newspapers (which are produced monthly and free to pick up in Chinese grocery stores, restaurants, and some major banks).

Based on the interview data, the reasons why teachers teach in this school can be summarized under the following four aspects (see Figure 6-7):

The first is that their children are or were studying in this school, which means all teachers are parents of students in this school. All ten teachers agreed that they come to teach every Saturday to motivate and keep their own child in Chinese school. But only two of them think this is the most important reason for why they teach here. One of them told me that her son would drop out of Chinese school if she were no longer teaching there. She said "there is no way I will let him stop Chinese study; therefore, no matter what, I will make time to come back."

Even though most teachers are teaching while their children attend the school at the same time, some teachers still teach after their children have finished grade twelve and go to the university, only because he/she loves teaching itself. One of the teachers reported that she loves to teach, but was too busy to teach while her son was younger and attending the school. Recently she retired and her son is already a university student. Now she has time to volunteer and come back to teach in this school again.

The interviews showed that what six teachers liked the most about teaching in this school was simply the teaching itself. Some of them were teachers in China; they love this profession and have good memories about teaching. They could no longer try teaching as a career after immigration to Canada, because of language ability and professional background. Chinese school offers them a stage to teach again. Meanwhile, the purpose of teaching here is to spread Chinese culture, to avoid our next generation becoming “totally Canadian.” Most minority groups are doing this, so we Chinese must do this too!

Personal interest in teaching leads to the result of the teachers’ sense of self achievement. Most teachers shared the comment that “I felt I accomplished something” because of their teaching in this Chinese school. They teach the Chinese language and culture, which they’ve valued for years, in this school to the next generation/s. This is what they could hardly accomplish in the mainstream society. For these six teachers, teaching used to be their career in China, which they really love passionately for.

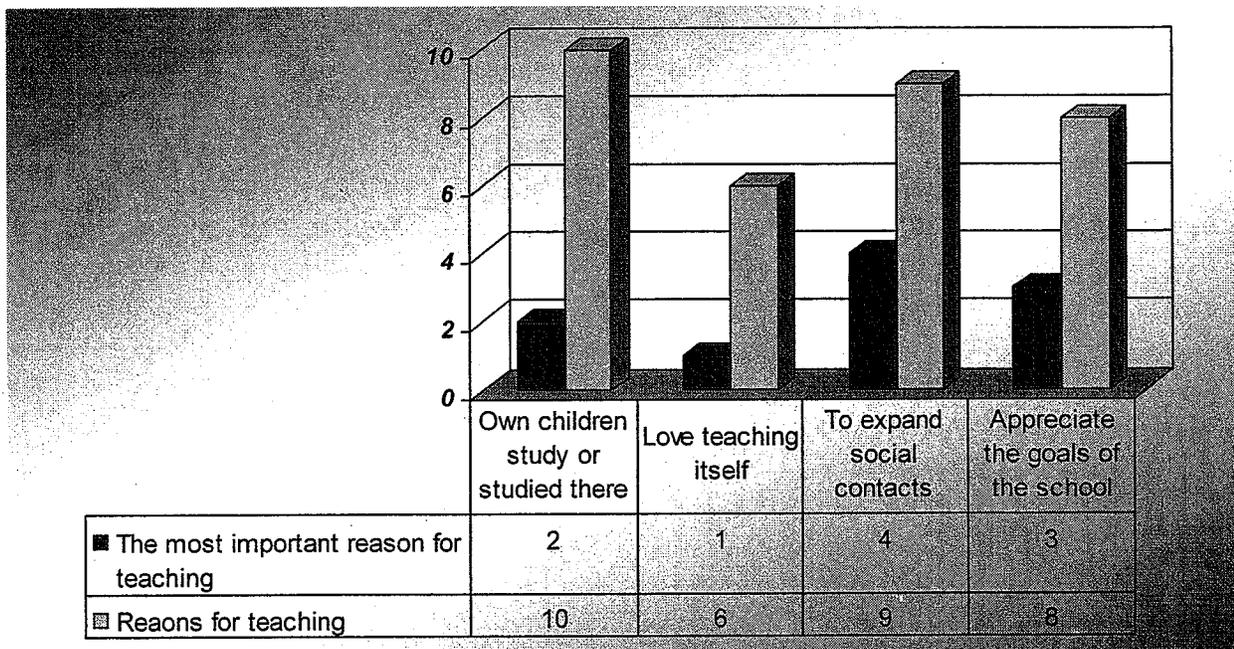
To expand social contacts is another aspect that teachers liked most about teaching in this school. Forty percent of the total ten teachers felt this is the most important reason for why they were or are teaching in this school. Another five teachers viewed this as one of their teaching reasons (see Figure 6-7). One of the teachers (female, third year in Canada) shared with me that she could not find a long-term job after immigrating to Canada; she felt her social contacts had been limited without a job. She is not a church person either, where there could be social resources. Volunteering in Chinese school offers her a good site to get to know more people and the local society, which makes her life “colourful.”

Like this teacher, another teacher (female, seventh year in Canada) told me that what she likes most is that she gets to know lots of Chinese people and made friends. Before she was teaching in this school, she felt lonely. Now she feels she has entered the Chinese community; she could borrow Chinese movies and music easily from friends there. She works weekdays in the mainstream society, and teaches in Chinese school every Saturday, where she can not only speak freely in her mother-tongue, but also teach the younger generation to keep their heritage.

Besides motivating their own children, finding self-satisfaction by teaching, and expanding social contacts, three teachers mentioned that they were or are teaching in this school because they appreciate the goal of this school (see Chapter 5, the goal of the Chinese school): the teachers and school board are working hard for “our next generation” who could still speak Chinese. Meanwhile, this school follows the tradition of celebrating Chinese festivals, such as Chinese New Year, mid-autumn festival, and so on, so students have the chance of learning both Chinese language and the culture.

The working atmosphere of this school is also a reason why teachers liked to teach in this school. They described it as “democratic in decision making.” The school board always asks teachers’ opinions before any regulations or decisions are made. As one of the teachers said, he feels this represents Canadian society.

Figure 6-7 Reasons for Teaching in the Chinese School



*Note: There were multiple reasons why teachers teach or taught in this school (showed by "Reasons teaching"; "The most important reason for teaching", give responses when teachers were asked to choose only one reason as the most important cause of teaching.*

Total interviewed=10

Source: Field Data

### 6.3.2 Results of teaching in this school: rewards and challenges

Eight of the ten interviewed teachers liked it that they could better understand their own children's learning experiences through other students' study. Their own child may not tell them the study difficulties or challenges; however their own students would let them know because they are the teacher.

Teachers shared the point that the results of better understanding their own child improved parent-child relationships. Some teachers said that they got a better understanding of how to educate their own son through teaching in the class. They felt they had pushed their own child too hard to study Chinese; now, they tend to communicate with their own child, to explain the reasons and listen to what he or she thinks and feels. "I tend to listen to him and give him suggestions now. My son said I am no longer a Chinese father with only regulations anymore," as one interviewed parent shared his experience on how teaching in this Chinese school changed his parenting behaviours.

Meanwhile, teachers said that the experience of teaching older students could better lead their own child on to further (Chinese) studies. Now they understand more about what their own child is thinking and doing, and why they are not interested in Chinese school.

Despite these benefits of teaching in this Chinese school, teachers do face challenges during their teaching, because of the different cultural background in youth of the first and second generations.

As parents themselves, all ten interviewed teachers shared the challenge of "how to motivate students to learn." Canada-born Chinese lack a Chinese language and cultural environment, especially for those students who came from English, Cantonese or inter-ethnic families who have no *Putonghua* environment at home at all (according to this school's survey, 2001). Chinese school is the only place, and Saturday morning provides the only two and one half hours they speak Chinese. Even in those *Putonghua* speaking

families, usually parents speak to their children in *Putonghua*, but the children reply in English.

For the older students, teachers felt that they have already grown up here, lack a Chinese cultural background and are harder to motivate; it is difficult for them to accept lots of Chinese context even though they do want to understand more. For the younger children, on the other hand, many of them are coming because their parents want them to instead of wanting to come on their own. As teachers told me, since most students are “kicked” to the school (see Figure 6-8), it is even harder to motivate them to study.

Eight teachers shared the other challenge that the Chinese levels and ages of students are very different even in one single class, depending on what language is spoken in their family. It is normal that teachers have to divide classes into two groups based on their Chinese knowledge, and design two teaching plans to fit the different levels of the students.

### ***6.3.3 Teaching Chinese in a Chinese way, learning parenting in a Canadian style – the double role played by teachers***

As introduced at the beginning of this chapter, all teachers have/had their children study in this school. For teachers who came from mainland China (95% of teachers of this school came from Mainland China while this research was going on<sup>2</sup>) the main reason why they chose this school is simply because this Chinese school is the only one in Winnipeg which teaches simplified Chinese and *Putonghua*. One of the interviewed teachers told me that she sent her son to another Chinese school which also teaches Mandarin (*Guoyu*), but uses traditional Chinese characters. After one year’s study in that

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<sup>2</sup> Based on personal observation.

school, she decided to transfer her son to this one, because “I felt traditional Chinese characters are too hard for a beginner. My son’s progress was so slow that it discouraged his interest in study.”

Seven teachers reported the agreement that it is more challenging to teach one’s own children than other students. Peer pressure is one of the important reasons that children learn better in the class instead of at home. Some teachers told me that they could not force their child to study at home, but when they put the child in a class the children could study together and encourage their learning interests. One of the teachers said, “I could not force my son to study Chinese at home, but he studied hard at school because he didn’t want to loose face in the class.”

The school system offers students a group learning environment, where they can learn better. Teachers all reported that a student studying by him/herself at home may feel bored and there was no one at his/her level to practice with. Teachers in the class have to consider the curriculum and balance the difficulty of teaching. In contrast, there is no such concern while teaching their own child at home, so they can focus on individual needs more.

All teachers also agreed that they slowed down or set the requirements for their own children lower after teaching in Chinese school. Teachers of this school are first generation immigrants, or international students who study in Winnipeg universities (based on personal observation). Ninety percent of them are newcomers (who came to Canada less than ten years ago), and most of them got their post-secondary education in Mainland China. Therefore, they have a very high expectation when they start to teach their own children Chinese. If their own child does not make satisfactory progress, they

used to feel their own child did not work hard enough. One of the teacher's cases represented teachers' views. She was very strict with her son because she felt her loss of many things which tied her to China, and wanted him to keep all his Chinese culture. After teaching in this school and getting to know more Canada-born Chinese, this teacher could better understand her own child's learning difficulties. At the same time, through communicating with students' parents and other co-workers, teachers became more patient with students.

#### ***6.3.4 Socialization, to establish or/and expand social ties in Canada***

The teachers, who started to volunteer in this school when it was just established, were mostly introduced by teachers or active volunteers of this school. They have known each other outside of the school already, and most of them are friends. One of my interviewed senior teachers recalled to me that students of her very first few classes were friends' children. They called her "Ayi (aunt)" instead of "Laoshi (teacher)". She said that "There was no teacher hired to teach here, but all were parents volunteering." She remembers there were only one or two teachers hired to teach here in 1979.

There is a huge change in the most recent ten years in this school. Most of the newcomer teachers shared the experience that Chinese school is a medium for them to get to know more people of the Chinese community. All teachers felt it is easier to make friends with teachers in this school because most of them come from Mainland China and share many experiences of settling down in Winnipeg and memories of China. Meanwhile, their own children are a medium for building parents' social connections. Parents get to know each other through their children because they are friends (because of

study in the Chinese school). After class, they go out together with the children for picnics, or go to the parks, gathering together at least once a year. They visit each others' homes to see their pictures of trips to China as well. After getting to know more and more teachers who then became friends, they get together often during weekends and traditional festivals, exchange Chinese films brought back from visiting China, call each other often, have potluck gatherings and dancing parties together.

### ***6.3.5 Contributions of this school made to the Chinese community in teachers' eyes***

Based on interview data, teachers think this Chinese school has made the following three contributions to the Chinese community.

First, the big contribution of this school is, obviously, in language education. This school has been established for thirty years. Students can gain a foundation of Chinese (*Putonghua*) language which they can pick up later at a higher level to meet their own interests or needs. This school offers a Chinese study environment for the younger generations. Instead of studying by themselves at home, students now could learn Chinese with their peers' cooperation and competition.

Second, teachers emphasized that one of the other main contributions made by this school is that it teaches not only Chinese language, but Chinese culture at the same time. It advertises overseas and educates the younger generations to inherit Chinese culture.

Third, it serves as a good social place for newcomers to get to know each other. One teacher emphasized that based on its formation as a school, it connects Chinese together despite the variety of the Chinese sub-cultures. This Chinese school plays the

role of getting everybody together. The attraction for immigrants from mainland China is that it teaches simplified Chinese, *Putonghua* and Pinyin. Other Chinese schools in Winnipeg represent other Chinese backgrounds, which mainland Chinese parents could hardly identify with; therefore, they choose this school and are gathered together with it. This is, in a teacher's words, "a natural and volunteered gathering." The Chinese school gives new immigrants a space where they can relax, away from working pressure in the mainstream society, a place the Chinese own. Teachers have the sense of belonging and of being related to this school. One teacher mentioned that she hopes to speak more Chinese in the class, which is the only chance in a whole week when she can possibly speak it.

## **6.4 Students**

### **6.4.1 The language used at home**

All the second generation speak English (totally or partly) to communicate with their own parents, depending on their Chinese ability (See Table 6-4-2). Their Chinese vocabulary is limited compared to their English one. It is mostly about daily life and they are better at listening than speaking. The common situation which happens in an immigrant family is that parents speak in Chinese to their children, and the children reply in English. This kind of language use in the conversation between immigrant parents and Canada-born children was generally observed during my interviews, at the Chinese school, and at all other Chinese gathering occasions.

At the beginning of this chapter, parents interviewed showed that they have "given up" on their children's reading and writing abilities, but set being verbally capable

of speaking in Chinese as a realistic goal for their own children's Chinese study in the Chinese school. While I was doing my interviews in their families, most of the children interviewed spoke to their parents in English, but their Chinese was good enough to understand their parents who replied in Chinese. As shown in Table 6-4-2, seven of the thirty-six interviewed students speak half Chinese or Chinese only with their parents; and twenty nine of them talk to their parents in mostly English or only English. On the other hand, 75% of interviewed parents (see Table 6-4-1) speak at least half Chinese to their children. Parents tend to speak to their first child in Chinese more than to other younger children. All the ten interviewed students, who were China born (see Figure 6-3), reported that their parents speak only Chinese with them.

Table 6-4-1 Language use of the First Generation Participants

	Own Children			Own Siblings	Frequently Contacted Friends
	1 <sup>st</sup> Child	Younger Children	Average (%)		
C	6	2	11	30	24
m-C & s-E	13	9	31	5	6
h-C & h-E	10	13	33	1	None
s-C & m-E	4	8	17	None	2
E	3	4	8	None	4

Total numbers=36  
Source: Research Data

Table 6-4-2 Language use of Canada-Born Participants

	Own Parents	Own Siblings	Frequently Contacted Friends
C	None	none	None
m-C & s-E	4	1	None
h-C & h-E	3	1	None
s-C & m-E	6	3	2
E	23	31	34

Note: C=Chinese only, m-C & s-E= mostly Chinese and some English, h-C & h-E= half Chinese and half English, s-C & m-E= some Chinese and most English, E= English only

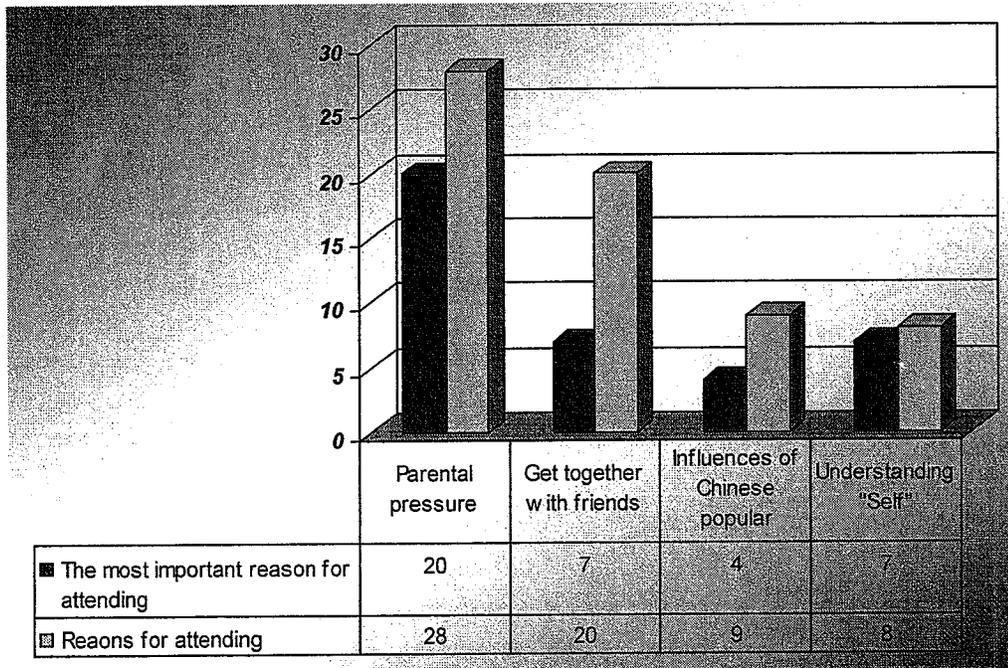
Total numbers=36  
Source: Field Data

The interview data shows (see Table 6-4-2) the decrease in students' Chinese use, from the highest with their parents at 31.1%, to 13.9% with siblings, and 5.6% to frequently contacted friends.

#### 6.4.2 What does the second generation think about attending Chinese school?

The reasons why students attend the Chinese school can be summarized as four main forces: parents' pressure, the influence of pop culture, the wish get together with friends, and an opportunity to understand their identity (See Figure 6-8).

Figure 6-8 Forces for the Second Generation to Attend the Chinese School



Total interviewed=36

Source: Field data

Most children (55.6%) responded to this question that they attend Chinese school simply because their parents want them to. They understand their parents send them mainly for two reasons. The first reason is to learn or retain the language ability to communicate with their relatives back in China (especially grandparents). Children's contact with their Chinese relatives back in China is in mainly two ways, one is on the phone and in personal visits. Students who had visited or spent their early childhood in China showed they have a better understanding of why they should go to Chinese school to learn or keep their Chinese. "When I go to China, I will not feel lost, or really get lost, without my parents by my side," one of the grade four students told me.

Parental pressure, however, as shown by figure 6-8, is one of the most forceful reasons why students attended Chinese school. Besides telling them to learn this language to communicate and visit relatives, older children reported to me that their parents told them this is a preparation for their future careers. With the economic influence of China increasing in the world, most Chinese parents see fluent English-Chinese bilingualism as an advantage for their child. Older students in this school (grade seven and up) agreed with their parents on this point.

The influence of popular culture, especially films and music, shows in the second generation of Chinese-Canadians. It is most reported by older students (grade seven, eight, nine and adult classes). Instead of purely the language itself, they seem interested in Chinese popular culture products, such as Chinese popular songs, movies, video games. Three of the interviewed students who were in higher grades, told me that they loved Chinese movies and songs. Their idols are not only Canadian but some Chinese stars as well. They told me that they really want to go to China and buy CDs, movies, and fashion

products. "My relatives sent me some movies two years ago, but I could not understand too much, and it is troublesome to look at the subtitles. But I loved that star and his movies, so, I decided to concentrate on Chinese school. At least I could pick up more words bit by bit," one of the students shared with me about why he used to be "bored" by Chinese school, but now loved to come. "My friend loved those movies and songs as well. He is in my class now," he added. Asian popular culture seems to serve as one of the influences among Canada-born Chinese.

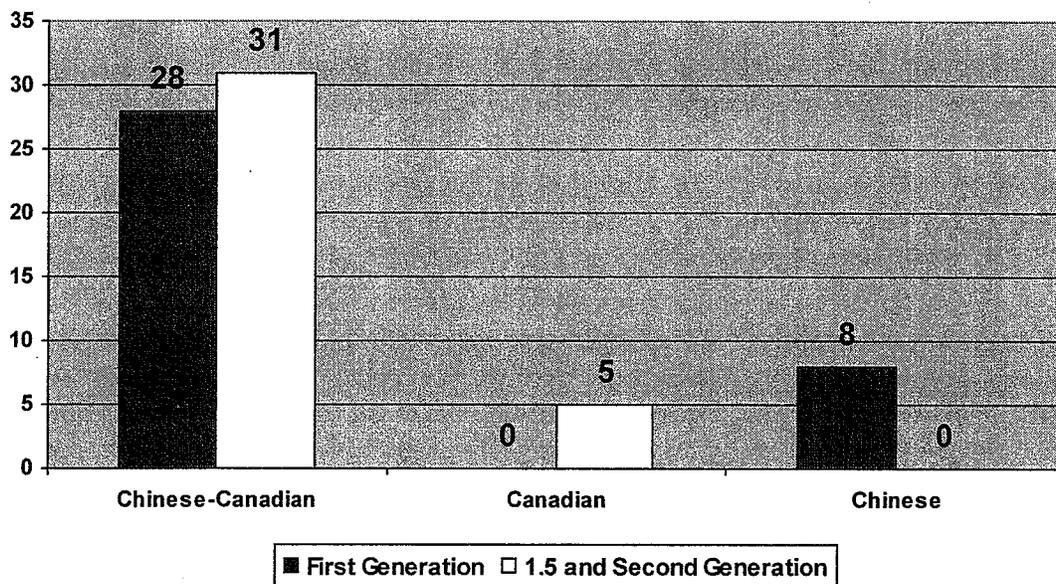
Some younger students, especially those from new immigrant families, come to Chinese because both of their parents have to go to work during Saturdays and they do not have any other place to go. One of the seven year old girls in grade two told me that, "if I was not coming to Chinese school, I don't know where to go on Saturdays then. My parents and I came to Canada last winter; I do not have any friends yet. I feel happy and comfortable staying here and making some friends." As a matter of fact, most students from lower grades shared, "my friends are there too," as one of the main reasons to keep attending the Chinese school.

In addition to the above, there is another group of students (19.4% of total interviewed, see Figure 6-8) who are not being "kicked" to the Chinese school by their parents; instead, they come with their own willingness to get know more about their own heritage. These students are mainly adults (except one eleven year old girl) who missed their chance to study Chinese when they were younger. Now after they have grown up they decided to spend some time to get knows more about their Chinese cultural "self".

### 6.4.3 Defining China and Canada, the difference between two generations

When three choices were given to all three groups of informants, the majority of interviewed participants identified themselves as Chinese-Canadian (twenty-eight parents and teachers; thirty-one students). No first generation Chinese called himself or herself Canadian, and no second generation Chinese identified him or herself as just Chinese. Among the total of thirty-six each, only five students think of himself or herself as Canadian, and eight parents ticked Chinese (see Figure 6-9).

Figure 6-9 Self Identification of the Two Generations



Number of First Generation=36

Number of 1.5 and 2<sup>nd</sup> Generation=36

Total Number=72

Source: Field Data

The following is a comparison of the two generations describing each of the two identities separately by using their own words (see Table 6-5).

Table 6-5: How the Two Generations Described “Chinese” and “Canadian”

Generations	Interviewed groups	Chinese	No.	%	Canadian	No.	%	
First generation (Immigrants)	Parents	Mother's home, born home ( <i>niang jia</i> )	2	7.7%	Husband's home, married home ( <i>po jia</i> )	2	7.7%	
		Roots ( <i>Gen</i> )	20	76.8%	Future ( <i>jianglai</i> )	24	92.3%	
		Old fatherland ( <i>jiu zuguo</i> )	4	15.4%				
	Total interviewed			26	100%		26	100%
	Teachers	Born mother ( <i>sheng mu</i> )	1	10%	Adopted mother ( <i>yang mu</i> )	1	10%	
		Hometown ( <i>jia xiang</i> )	2	20%	New home ( <i>xin jia</i> )	3	30%	
		Old home ( <i>laojia</i> )	2	20%	Try to grow roots ( <i>sheng gen</i> )	4	40%	
		Roots ( <i>gen</i> )	3	30%	Second hometown ( <i>di er jia xiang</i> )	2	20%	
		Fatherland ( <i>zu guo</i> )	2	20%				
		Total interviewed			10	100%		10
1.5 and second generation (Canada-born)	Students	Good candy	3	8.3%	Friends	8	22.2%	
		Big and hot	4	11.1%	Speaks English well	4	11.1%	
		Yummy food	2	5.6%	The place to go school	7	19.4%	
		Relatives	18	50%	Most familiar with	6	16.7%	
		Business	3	8.3%	Opposite to China	3	8.3%	
		Culture	6	16.7%	Safe place	8	22.2%	
	Total interviewed			36	100%		36	100%

First generation=36

Second generation=36

Total number=72

Source: Field Data

As shown in Table 6-5, Chinese parents are differently identified depending on their own background. They all have a sense of belonging to both China and Canada, which are “home “fatherland” for them. Each interviewed first generation person could define Chinese and Canadian identities separately; however, all considered their Chinese identity and Canadian identity as related, instead of opposite. To summarize the terms they used, China in general is treated as their past, but Canada is their future, which is tied to them by different time periods of their life.

Two female immigrants defined China as *niangjia*, “mother’s home,” where it is blood related, and Canada as *pojia*, “husband’s mother’s home.” Their definition itself could only be better understood with in a Chinese cultural context. In a traditional Chinese community, a woman has to leave her *niangjia* and move to her husband’s mother’s home (*pojia*) to live. She might only visit her mother’s home (*niangjia*) once a year during Chinese New Year for a short stay. One of the people said that her situation as a new immigrant, indeed, is very similar to marriage as the transition of a female’s life in the traditional Chinese society, who married far away, “though my head is here, my heart is there.” They keep frequent contacts by phone, but the distance makes it hard for them to visit often.

However, there are no gender differences when the first generation participants tried to describe how they are related to China as their fatherland. It is deeply emotional for each of the interviewed. “I still feel kind and closely tied to China. I get excited whenever I think about China, because I grew up there,” said one of them. Even though the first generation participants are no longer living there, they all showed their care about what is happening there and China’s future developments, because they still have

strong emotional ties. It is not only because most of their relatives and friends are still there, but because of their own past and memories which will be with them life-long.

All parents and teachers agreed that they still think of themselves as “Chinese” ethnically, because China is a place they spent many years, even though they became Canadian now. They all wish China will be stronger and stronger, which makes them (overseas Chinese) respected.

Canada is also defined as “home” to most of the interviewed first generation participants. But they only listed it as “the second.” Canada is their future, though. As one of the interviewed parents said, an immigrant who lives in Canada, is like a tree to be moved to another beautiful garden – it should grow roots here as a matter of time and adopt the environment of the new home.

Two of the first generation participants tend not to think about China too much, because Canada is the “future,” not only for the first generation, but for their younger generation/s. They showed an effort to build emotion to Canada and adapt to the local culture. Four of them said they are “trying to grow roots (*sheng gen*)” on this new land.

The first generation showed their appreciation for Canada, for she has a multi-cultural environment, respects cultural difference, and does not integrate but tolerates the differences. Because of Canada’s toleration and “big heart,” they feel they are very peaceful and this is the very reason that they want to stay here and develop their career. As a matter of fact, some have already felt the gap of living in China when they go back to visit. Some feel they could not adapt and get on well with China’s environment anymore, because China is changing too fast, and the living speed is too fast.

Three of the first generation participants showed their sense of belonging to both of the identities by supporting both Team China and Team Canada in the Olympics.

There are no language conflicts either, as one of the teachers said that she uses English for daily life and work, but Chinese in social life, and watch to Chinese TV and movies.

All twenty six parents and ten teachers agreed that both China and Canada are part of their life and they could no longer live in either of them alone. After years of being immigrants to Canada, they have emotions of love for both of them; they could not choose between them and be a Chinese or Canadian only; instead they accept both of them without comparison, as Chinese-Canadians.

It was not a surprise that students as the second generation see Chinese and Canadian societies differently compare to their parents. These terms were used to describe China: “has good candy,” “a big and hot place,” “yummy food,” “grandparents are living there,” “has relatives,” “business opportunities,” and “different culture.” This means they see China as relatives, as travel – based and as a potential career. Because of their lack of living experiences in China, the Canada-born Chinese participants’ sense of China was built from their parents’ influence and articulation of their Chinese identity.

For the twelve adult second generation participants, they see China more as opportunities for the following two aspects: 1) business - some of them study business in the university, and they noticed a 70% increase in city construction happening in China, and the high GDP; 2) culture - almost all of the interviewed second generation participants have spent holidays in China, in their parents’ hometowns. They observed the different festivals there, and the speed of life style. In their words, “the atmosphere (in China) is so different from Canada.”

In contrast to their parents, almost all interviewed second generation participants have deep emotions for Canada. For the second generation participants, their family and friends are all here. As a child, “friends,” “school,” “feel safe” and familiar means “hometown,” where they are growing their roots and sense of belonging, which has been mentioned by twenty-seven of the first generation participants to describe China. Most of them prefer to use English than Chinese, because they are much better at it and more people in their real life communicate with it. Canada for them is the hometown where they go to school, and they are more familiar with it. As one student said, Canada is something she has to know, because she is living here. However, because of their access to China, and growing up in bicultural families, the second generation participants do have a sense of the second identity. 50% of them mentioned they have relatives in China (see Table 6-14), although they may have never been there; ten of them felt Canada is opposite to China, because there it is “hot” and people speak Chinese. In contrast to their parents, for whom Chinese and Canadian could be described as the past and future of their whole life, for the younger generation these two cultures are more complicated as they exist at the same time and place.

No matter how these two identities relate to the two generations, or to what degree, both of the generations agreed that Chinese and Canadian identities are indeed combined and work together as bicultural identities, to which they have the sense of being related or belonging.

## Chapter 7

### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will outline an analysis and discussion of the field data, and address a series of themes. How can language be presented as the medium of culture, and the mark of identity? How does the Chinese school exist as a form of social organization in the Chinese community, and function as a Chinese cultural site, providing the place and space for identity construction for the first generation of Chinese immigrants to adopt local Canadian culture and society? At the same time, how does it permit the second generation of Canada-born children to keep their Chinese heritage? The thesis explores how it articulates the process of bicultural identity formation, and the dynamics of the acculturation process.

#### *7.1 Language as the medium of culture, and mark of identity*

*As you are aware, promotion of heritage language has been traditionally advocated in terms of its role in the preservation of ethnocultural identity. It has been emphasized that without the vehicle of language, no other cultural factor is powerful enough to maintain by itself the genuine and lasting distinctiveness of an ethnic group. (Tsai 1988)*

Some Chinese diasporic theorists, such as Ien Ang (a Peranakan Chinese), complain that the Chinese diasporic identity excludes intellectuals of Chinese descent who like her do not speak, read or write Chinese. Despite the fact that Ang's argument was shared with

many third- (or more) generation overseas Chinese, who had common frustration in the negative response to the question, "Do you speak Chinese?", the very assumption that a person of Chinese descent should be able to speak Chinese is a presumption born of a conflation of race and ethnicity . She argues that the meanings of "Chineseness" should be "constantly renegotiated and rearticulated in different sections of the Chinese diasporas...what it means to be Chinese varies from place to place, moulded by the local circumstances in which people of local Chinese ancestry have settled and constructed new ways of living" (Ang 1993:7) .

In contrast to Ang (1993)'s position which was based on third- or more generation overseas Chinese, the subjects of this research are first and second generation Chinese-Canadians. In line with Ang's (1993) criticized "stereotype," the interview data shows Chinese identity of Canadian born is questioned by first generation immigrants of the Chinese community because of their preference to speak English. In order to be a "real" Chinese, almost 89% of the interviewed parents "kick" their children to Chinese school.

On the other hand, thirty-five of the total thirty-six second generation chose English to be the interview language, and 11.1% of interviewed students report their belonging to Canada because they "speak English well," which makes them feeling "safe" and "familiar."

Interview data with both the generations revealed that language is one of the key marks of one's ethnic identity, and showed as key to in-group identification when they answered the question "who we are." However, language is not the only mark be used in self-identification to answer "who I am." Language shows as a flexible mark of out-group identification as well, in the sense of "who they are" (Xiao 1992).

Language maintenance seems a prime factor in cultural maintenance. The language maintenance efforts of “other ethnic groups” in Canada have taken several forms – the two most obvious being the ethnic school and the ethnic media and press. These groups have experienced varying degrees of success in maintaining their language in a country which is officially bilingual in English and French.

The interview results support Heller’s theory that language use is involved in the formation of ethnic identity in two ways, based on her study with bilingual (French-English) children. First, it constrains access to participation in activities and to formation of social relationships. Thus, at a basic level language use is central to the formation of group boundaries. Second, language is a central means of making sense out of that shared experience. Patterns of language use reflect the shared background knowledge and shared ways of establishing that background knowledge that underlie group membership and ethnic identity (Heller 1987). The interview data showed the importance of language as a means of establishing the social ties and the participation in social activities that underlie entry to a social network.

As children spend more and more time together they share experience, and language is a central means of making sense out of that shared experience. This is one of the important reasons for attending Chinese school for both the generations, it is central to the maintenance or change of the boundaries on which cultural identity is based.

The identity formation process, especially for the Canada – born, is facilitated through learning Chinese language and by communicative acts and activities in Chinese. Chinese cultural values and core symbols are taught through textbooks, reinforced through newsletters and participation in community events, and learned through

interaction and socialization in the Chinese school. As Tanno and Gonzalez (1998) postulate, symbolic interaction and language play a key role in the development and maintenance of cultural identity. The ability to communicate with grandparents and relatives enables a child to identify her or himself with Chinese heritage, maintain family ties, and learn about cultural values firsthand. In the Chinese school, the child learns to be proud of his or her heritage rather than to be ashamed of it. Avoiding or reducing identity crisis, they learn to come to terms with their Chinese identity at an early age. Parents see the intellectual and career benefits of being bilingual and bicultural. They see their children as future bridge builders between China and Canada.

### ***7.2 The Chinese school as a form of Chinese community- The fluidity of community formation***

*"I have found being involved in the academy a great experience. The experience not only offers me a chance to be involved in my child's education, it also gives me a great sense of community." (Parent who has two children studying in this school for two years)*

*"The community of the Chinese school guided me to a realization of what my culture is, and that being Chinese is not something to hide but something to be proud of. I realized that I am more than just a Canadian, I am a Chinese Canadian, and no one can take that away from me." (Student who has been studying in this school for eight years)*

The fact that there is no single organization for Chinese in Winnipeg seems to represent the interest of the community as a whole. The different sectors of the community operate independently within their own networks. Earlier studies suggested that Chinatowns, established by the early immigrants at the turn of the twentieth century, have been the center of study for Chinese immigrants' acculturation patterns. However, with the change of numbers of immigrant waves during the past four decades, from Cantonese speakers to Mandarin speakers, in profession, in English language ability, and in living patterns, acculturation patterns have also changed. This is especially true in the identity development of Chinese immigrants and their children. Over the years, the new Chinese immigrants have developed their own community organizations, shifting away from Chinatown.

To label them "language schools," indeed, is somewhat misleading. A more adequate label would be "ethnic schools" and community centers. It appears that their overarching function may be ethnic socialization of their young charges. In this view of these schools, then, the teaching of ethnic language forms only a basic component of this process of socialization, which is essentially the process of realization of a self-conscious ethnic identity and an active identification with one's ethnic group. Assuming that socialization is the major goal or function of these schools, it would be far more important for the teaching personnel to have a strong commitment to ethnicity and an active involvement in the ethnic community than pedagogical training (Pannu and Young 1976).

The main function as a language school is still valid, as more and more new Chinese immigrants from mainland China have arrived Winnipeg in the past decade. Not

only is English a key barrier for these new immigrants from the mainstream society in the first few years of their arrival, but also they tend to have fewer ties with the local Chinese community compared to those early newcomers of this century who were from the south-eastern part of China. As shown by the interview data, the Chinese school is the place where they can communicate well, and it offers something (language and cultural teaching) that provides self-satisfaction, especially if some of them cannot find a job immediately after their arrival.

Based on interview results, these new immigrant families communicate mostly in Chinese (especially with their eldest children who were born in China, see Tables 6-4-1 and 6-4-2). These immigrant families mostly gave birth to their eldest child under China's one child policy, though some of them have had a second child here after they came to Canada. These children's Chinese is comparatively fluent, and all of them could understand my questions in Chinese, although, all of them chose to do the interview in English except one. As a matter of fact, these children come to Chinese school mainly to maintain their *Putonghua* ability and to gain some writing skills. At the same time, many teenage children as the eldest or only child of their families come to the Chinese school to be teaching assistants. This kind of assistant is another way of language maintenance. Based on my observation in this school for three years, these teenage teaching assistances do help a teacher well in the class, as they speak English fluently and have a similar age range to the students in their classes. These "big brothers' and sisters'" participation in this school set the model and create a "tradition" for younger Canada – born siblings.

Teacher turnover in the Chinese school happens every year. Teachers teaching in this school show a short-term commitment, except earlier immigrants. Immigrants in the

recent decade teach in this Chinese school on a short-term basis; every year they come and go. Based on this study, teachers see Chinese school as a channel to access local Winnipeg society. After they become more involved in the mainstream society, and adapt better to Canada, their social ties are not limited only to the Chinese community. Some teachers can hardly arrange their time to teach in the school.

Not only for the immigrant parents, but also among Canada – born participants, the Chinese school functions as a community site in building social ties. Parents said their children only hold one birthday party before they go to Chinese school. However, since they went to the Chinese school they hold an extra birthday party with friends from the Chinese school. The interesting finding is that they are not combining two groups of friends together, but have two separate gatherings. When asked the reason why they held the two parties separately, students said it was because these two groups of friends do not know each other. As a matter of fact, these two groups of friends belong to two separate social groups, and each of them is connected with him or her differently.

The interview data show that the Chinese school has become a community center for new immigrants from Mainland China that reside in Winnipeg suburbs. The interactions and communicative activities among parents have helped them overcome culture shock and adjust to Canadian life. For instance, teachers' data shows their process of constructing their Canadian culture by changing teaching styles in the school, which has the consequence of changing their parenting skills. The case I mentioned in chapter 6 indicated some teachers said that they gained a better understanding of how to educate their own children through teaching in the class. Once they felt they pushed their own children too hard to study Chinese; now they tend to communicate with them, to explain

the reasons and listen to what they think and feel. “I used to simply tell him what to do; now, I tend to listen to him and give him suggestions. My son said I am no longer a Chinese father with only regulations,” one interviewed parent said in sharing his experiences on how teaching in this Chinese school changed his parenting behaviours. Meanwhile, they have created their own discursive space through the communicative acts and communal events that serve to confirm their Chinese cultural identity, help them with psychological well being, and provide collective support.

Although overt discrimination is rare, they can still encounter stereotypes and face glass ceilings at work. Because many of them speak English as their second language, they still face barriers in communicating with their colleagues at a cultural level in Canadian companies. The Chinese school has provided them with a cultural zone where they can feel comfortable and can communicate with one another at ease. Some culturally based and language-related jokes can be shared and appreciated, and some topics relevant to their Canadian life and concern can be discussed.

Based on interviews with parents, they agreed the Chinese school is a place for them to share experiences about child education in the “Chinese way.” No matter which countries or regions these first generation participants were originally from, all parents shared the same cultural background as ethnic Chinese. No matter if their children were born in Winnipeg or came to Winnipeg in their early childhood, sharing their experience makes parents feel no longer alone or helpless with their own child’s education. One parent told me that her daughter benefited from her communication with other parents in the Chinese school, the first year of coming to Canada. Her daughter was already in grade eight in China, so most of her language, of course, is Chinese. She faced a big challenge

in her English to catch up with her class (also grade eight) in weekday school, and she was very discouraged in her study, with no friends and limited ability to communicate with teachers and classmates. Her mother was afraid she would lose her self-esteem and confidence, but did not know how to help her daughter. She volunteered in this Chinese school at that time, and once she mentioned her daughter's situation to other parents, other parents comforted her and shared experiences of how their child went through the language block, which helped her daughter. One of them even offered her daughter who was also in grade eight, to be this girl's tutor. As the parent said, "I really appreciated their help; my daughter and I am still friends with some of the families. I really didn't know what to do at that time; my daughter was not the only one who got lost back then."

It is in the Chinese school that they can exchange information, provide emotional support, and seek strategies for coping with problems in their new cultural environment. It is in the Chinese school they can disagree with dominant ideologies of both China and Canada and give voice to the legitimacy of their own experience.

The Canada-born Chinese were given a strong sense of identity by attending the Chinese school. As an adult student of the Chinese school wrote, "Our cultural background makes us distinct in Canadian society, and by holding on to it, we add to the increasingly multicultural landscape of Canada. In return, the growing diversity of our country and particularly of our generation allows us to remain distinct, and we are respected and treated as equals by our peers." He believes this is the gift of the Chinese school to its alumni: "the dual cultural identity crisis gives way to benefits such as an increased understanding of other cultures, a place in Canada's multi-ethnic map, and an

even greater role in defining the identity, ideals and goals of our age group, the Canadian born generation” (Lim 1994:99).

Using the term “communities of practice,” Kanno adopts the theory, developed by Leve and Wenger, which postulates “that what we usually call learning is part of learning to take part in shared practices of a community. We learn not for the abstract goal of attaining knowledge, but in order to participate in communities where we wish to become a member. . . learning is intertwined with community participation and belonging, it has direct implications for identity” (Kanno 2003:12). Participating in the Chinese school can be seen as a “community of practice” in this sense, even though second generation informants showed a much lower percentage of Chinese use in and outside their own homes. The differences between the two generations support the point that identity is not simply a zero sum choice between one culture and language and another, but rather that it is possible for bilingual people to reach a balance between two languages and cultures (Kanno 2003; Smith 1992; Campbell 2001). “The trajectories of their identity development show a gradual shift from a rigid and simplistic approach to bilingualism and biculturalism to a more sophisticated skill at negotiating belonging and control. One does not have to accept all of a culture — no one does — in order to belong to it” (Kanno 2003:135).

### ***7.3 The formatting of bicultural identity***

*“In Taiwan I was different because I couldn’t speak Chinese; in the West I was different because I looked Chinese” (Ang 2001)*

*"Chinese is my heritage, Canada is my country" (Lim 1994)*

Doing interviews with families together produced interesting observation. Five interviews with younger students (ten years and younger) were conducted in their parents' house while their parents were present. When they had been asked the question of "which one do you think you are" by choosing among "Chinese," "Canadian," and "Chinese-Canadian," twenty-seven parents and teachers said "Chinese-Canadian," but nine referred to themselves as "Chinese;" and most older students answered "Chinese-Canadian." However, younger students said "Canadian" right after I asked the question, and then changed their answers because parents corrected them when they overheard the interviews. Young students feel the opposite of their parents. The parents' feeling of belonging requires "Chinese" as "the first identity," but the second generation have the sense of being "Canadian" as the priority in all kind of ways. Despite these differences, 77.8% of the first generation and 86.1% of the second generation felt they belong to the category "Chinese-Canadian" (see Figure 6-9). In other words, 82% of the two generations showed their sense of belonging to both the identities.

The interview data shows that none of the second generation identified him or herself as "Chinese" only. However, the age differences of the second generation participants influenced their attitude towards Chinese learning, and the sense of "being Chinese." As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, all five of the ten year old and younger children identified themselves as "Canadian" right after the question was asked; a total of four twenty year or older Canada-born adults mentioned that their purpose in studying the Chinese language is to understand more about their Chinese cultural "self".

Meanwhile, the reason given for “why do you send your own children to Chinese school” showed parents’ agreement that “a sense of confidence regarding one’s heritage can only be developed through the personal experience of the language itself” (Pei 1988:15). It shows that language is a medium chosen by the informants of both generations to construct Chinese identity, as they believed that, “It is the language which provides the communication linkage to one’s heritage and ethnic culture” (Pei 1988).

Despite the above point shared by both the generations, the research results also showed a difference within the second generation. Their sense of belonging to their heritage roots is growing with their age. As one of the adult students said to me, “I sense my difference to my classmates (he was the only Asian student in his school) since I was ten. In my twenties, I figured out that I can never be anything but Chinese; Chineseness is and always has been my sense of self, but I never noticed it when I was younger.” The Canadian born Chinese presented their sense of belonging to multiple identities. They may, indeed have, adopted a political identity, a civic citizenship, as Canadian. They cannot escape their ethnic identity as Chinese, since it is an imposed identity inscribed on their bodies (Chan 2002). When the second generation grows older, there are some ways to show their belonging to their Chinese identity. A grade eight student told me that he wanted to go to math school because most of his Chinese friends will go; he said “I am a Chinese, I want to be good in math, too.”

The research results showed that the Chinese school is the place to grow their Chineseness for the second generation. Based on the interviews, no matter whether they were “kicked” to the school by their parents, or want from a sense of difference and wanting to get to know more about their cultural “self”, the students of the Chinese

school generally had a positive attitude towards their own ethnic group, were able to make friends within their own ethnic group, and were willing to participate in ethnic group activities. The very existence of these schools provided a meeting ground for young Chinese who otherwise would have been totally immersed in the larger society outside their homes. The school therefore reinforced group identity. In the Chinese school, the young were able to meet others of their own ethnic background and gain exposure to the cultural values transmitted by schools.

As Chinese are the biggest ethnicity widespread all over the world, Chineseness means different things to different people, depending on which home country or area they came from. For example, 78% of the total interviewed first generation participants came from Mainland China. There a child begins to learn the general history of China at primary school, and keeps studying it all his or her study life. By years study in the general history of China in school, children learn that no matter how much the cultural difference between Mandarin and Cantonese, Shanghainese and Sichuanese, the notion of the Chinese (*zhongguo ren*) was one fiction encouraged to hold them together. However, once they immigrated to Canada, the national identity became the dominant one. The boundaries into groups and between groups are becoming thin and transparent, so there is a sort of social ethnic osmosis happening. Since immigrating to live in Canada, “in a world in which the modern nation-state still forms the dominant framework for cultural identification and construction of imagined community” (Ang 1993:3), Chineseness became “the identity” for all Chinese immigrants, no matter whether they were from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Southeast Asia, or any other country or area. While Chinese is no longer their only identity for the first generation, inside the Chinese

community they could still keep their sub-group identities as they have back in their home country or area.

However, we should notice that there is a difference between immigrants from Mainland China and those from other countries, such as Southeast Asians. These overseas Chinese did not have many reasons to sustain their cultural and personal ties with their father country (except for the fact that they might still have family living there); instead, "when they realized that they could not become thoroughly Western either, they, like the Chinese-Americans described by Pan, reached back to their more primordial notion of origins: Chinese culture" (Ang 1993:4).

Diasporas, then, are commonly understood as transnational, spatially and temporally sprawling, sociocultural formations of people, creating imagined communities whose blurred and fluctuating boundaries are sustained by real and/or symbolic ties to some original "homeland." As Ang (1993) pointed out, it is clear that many members of ethnic minorities derive a sense of joy and dignity, as well as a sense of (vicarious) belonging, from their identification with a "homeland" that is elsewhere.

Constructing cultural identity is influenced by internal and external forces. Either cultural identity or its construction shows flexibility in the forms of negotiation with its social context. The possibility of biculturalism or multicultural depends on at least two major factors: "the desire of minority ethnic groups to retain their linguistic and cultural identities and the commitment of the majority groups to provide structural support" (Young 1979:102). The Chinese school demonstrates both of the factors in Winnipeg.

The interview data from the Chinese school indicate that there is a strong drive among new immigrants and hopes for their children to preserve Chinese culture through

learning the Chinese language and participating in communal activities and communication practices. Anderson (1983) demonstrates that preservation of ethnic language and culture has been a common practice among all the immigrant groups in the North America. If Chinatown was formed as an escape from a hostile society, but accidentally served to preserve traditional Chinese culture, the emergence of Chinese schools is a more conscious effort of preserving and carrying on Chinese cultural values. By 1994, there were more than 3,000 Chinese schools all over Canada (Choi 1994).

Meanwhile, for adult Canada-born Chinese, who missed their chance to study Chinese language and culture systematically while they were younger, the Chinese school is a resource of their Chinese heritage, where they can reinforce their Chinese identity. As one of my interviewed adult students shared in his life story, "I felt lost when I was younger, for example, when I went to my friends' houses, and their parents introduced themselves with their own names. They are my friend's parents; I respect them, and I just felt it was not right to call them by their first names, because I never use the first names of my parent's friends (who are mostly Chinese). That is disrespectful in my home." He was the only Chinese in his elementary school in the early 1980s. He always felt different at home and in school, and this made him feel lost, but he did not know why. When he figured out it is being Chinese that makes him different, "suddenly, everything gets explained," he said, "My world is not a single world. I have relatives in Asia; they call us, and we visit them once a year. There are two worlds in my life. I never take one thing for granted." He further mentioned that recognizing himself as Chinese makes him rooted. He said, "I love Winnipeg; I grew up here. But at the same time, I know I have a strong connection with another culture on the other side of the earth." Meanwhile, he said that

he has had a strong feeling of difference from his classmates, since at the age of ten.

“Even those TV dramas only have one minority person in a whole program.” When he was in his twenties, he got to know why he is different (because he is Chinese). To take action, he started to improve his Chinese language and try to know more Chinese culture.

“The only Chinese resource for me is my parents; I am wondering, if they pass away, how should I explain to my child why they are different as Chinese.”

Moreover, international mobility and technology also allows more frequent travel between China and Canada, thus providing more opportunities to communicate with “people back home.” This not only encourages the preservation of Chinese culture and attachment to the native land as an “imagined community” (Anderson 1983), but also gives Chinese immigrants a more realistic sense of the home country and a view of culture as dynamic and ever changing. From the interview data, it is clear that preservation of Chinese culture, keeping family ties, and maintaining Chinese identity are the primary reasons why parents send their children to the Chinese school.

In the ethnic separation of the early immigrants to pressure for assimilation for the post-1965 immigrants, the cultural identity of the Chinese immigrants was first restricted to their Chineseness and then abandoned in order to be accepted as Canadian. The immigrants of the 1980s and 1990s seem to have the choice of maintaining their culture as well as integrating into the larger Canadian society. With the support of local high schools providing free classrooms, Chinese schools are able to have their own cultural space and engage in their own symbolic interactions and discursive practices.

There is a change happening recently, though. Early immigrants showed that contacts personal and business ties in Cantonese-speaking South China also provided

opportunities for using Cantonese and a motivation for learning Cantonese for those who were not native speakers of Cantonese. These contacts further reinforced the use of Cantonese among the Chinese in Winnipeg. However, functioning similarly, Mandarin or *Putonghua*, is taking the place of Cantonese use in Winnipeg, which fits the rising economic status of Mainland China and the increase in Chinese immigration from the Mainland during the past decade. Based on the school registration records, the Chinese school only had 75 students in 2001, and in 2002, the students doubled, and have kept rising 25% a year, at least till this year (2005).

The interview data also reveal that those new Chinese immigrants with professional backgrounds who live in Canadian suburbs cannot relate to people who reside and work in Chinatown. Their decision in choosing the Chinese school over Chinatown as their community center has little to do with the geographical location, but rather the perceptual difference in the definition of goals and functions of each community. It has been a myth for many Canadians to lump all the Chinese together without recognizing that they can come from different regions, speak different dialects, and have different socioeconomic backgrounds. In his study of the Chinatowns in New York, Casey Lum (2000) identifies these differences among the Chinese immigrants in New York and reminds us of the diversity of Chinese immigrants within the Chinese community. The emergence of Chinese schools across the nation suggests a trend of creating new communities that meet the goals and fit the background of the new immigrants. While the identity of Chinese and of Chinese-Canadians is dynamic and fluid, so is the formation and function of Chinese communities.

The Chinese school's efforts to install in its students a strong attachment to their heritage language have perhaps exacerbated the cultural clash and generation gap which existed and exists between Chinese immigrant parents and their Canada-born children. With one foot planted in the soil of each country, the second generation has often been forced to choose between familial roots and the country of their birth and childhood, or seek some compromise which addresses both the concerns of their parents and the pressures of their Canadian friends. Consequently, the dichotomized sense of self which comes with being a Canada-born Chinese undoubtedly contributes significantly to the identity crisis experienced by all adolescents seeking to define themselves in terms of beliefs, lifestyle, desires and needs. Chinese parents, the Chinese school and Chinese customs all serve to distance the second generation from their Canadian peer groups, which they try so hard to fit in with while attending grade school. Each of them makes decisions regarding their life and Canadian conventions. In this way, members of the second generations spend their entire lives negotiating the cultural identity crisis into which they were born. Their parents, too, realize over time that the reasons for their immigration to Canada, and the benefits which they wanted for their children, will come at a cost, but that his cost is not necessarily the complete loss or rejection of the Chinese heritage by their children.

In fact, due to institutions such as the Chinese school, many second generation Chinese grow up strengthened by their dual cultural identities. With family and other Chinese friends, they are able to use their heritage language and, to take part in the traditions of their ethnic background – celebrations such as Chinese New Year and the Autumn Moon festival, the familiar sights and smells in Chinese grocery stores, the

variety and nutrition offered by Chinese meals, and the noisy, satisfying dim sums. However, when faced with decisions regarding work, marital status or leisure time, members of the second generation are also free to live their Canadian identities with other Canada-born friends. As one of the students put in words, "I think my involvement with this Chinese school allowed me to become more involved with my culture, which had created an inner awareness within me. I realized that as a child growing up in North America, my parents didn't make me go to Chinese school as a form of torture; they wanted me to go to learn what being Chinese really is" (Chang 1994:101).

The findings indicated that all participants were bicultural because they experienced the cultures in some blended form for the most part while using more of one culture base over another when situations called for it. The way they blended and switched their cultural bases in varying degrees provided typology categories of being bicultural with multiple dimensions. Examining both the behaviour and value dimensions of bicultural identity helped this study in refining the meaning of being bicultural beyond the notion of having equal parts of both cultures. The bicultural identity – Chinese-Canadian, is not simply Chinese and Canadian cultures combined, but a whole different culture that has evolved as a function of growing up in Canada as descendants with Chinese immigrant parents experiencing everything that they were exposed to in Canada (and elsewhere). Thus, the framework from which bicultural identity has been studied (that is, addressing two separate cultures) may not be adequate when examining contemporary culture such as the Chinese-Canadian culture (Ree 2003). As Wong told about her son's story, after she confirmed for her son that he is half-Chinese, he asked "which half". For children, half is equated to an apple, which could be cut and chosen;

however, opposite to this mentality, she suggested that people do not have to do that with their sense of culture. She believes that no matter how much personal experience or blood connection they have to Chineseness, each one of them also has a mix of Canadian in them as well. Therefore, it is unrealistic to divide them, just as it is also unrealistic to say that Canada-born Chinese spend 50% of their time thinking with their Chinese perspective, seeing the world with Chinese contact lenses and eating Chinese food and then magically at 12:00 midnight they change and become Canadian, whatever that means to them (Wang 2002).

#### ***7.4 Conclusion***

As the above discussion shows, both generations are trying to articulate their bi-cultural identity through the bridge of a community center – the Chinese school. The content of being bicultural is different not only between, but also within a generation. There is no ideal-typical migrant or Chinese-Canadian, and it would therefore be unwarranted to collapse this diversity of experiences into a master-narrative of the migrant experience. However, what all migrants do share in a general sense is precisely the need to establish, in one way or other, in more or less culturally effective ways, what Rushdie calls “strange fusions” (Ang 1993).

This study suggested cultural identity is a social construct, grounded in social interaction in the activities and situations that arise as a product of the relationship of a social group to its social and physical environment. The Chinese school functions as a “bridge” of transition between new immigrants and local society. Chinese school comes to be a bicultural site itself servicing the Chinese community in Winnipeg. It shows that

biculturalism (the combination of host and native cultural values and practices), as opposed to Canadianization, is a predictor of the positive adjustment and psychological well-being of immigrants. Immersed in Canadian society at work and school during the week, these new Chinese immigrants and their children come to Chinese language schools on weekends. Their exposure to both Chinese and Canadian languages and cultures provides them with opportunities to develop bilingual and bicultural competency. Community centers such as Chinese schools provide new immigrants with an environment for cultural adjustment, identity confirmation, and social acceptance, which is essential to their psychological well-being and quality of life.

Even so, the interpretation of the relationship and interaction between language and cultural identity only shows part of the whole construction story. The picture of immigrant groups and, the process of bicultural identity construction will be better shown in comparison, with studies of other ethnic groups in Winnipeg or Canada. Further studies are certainly needed.

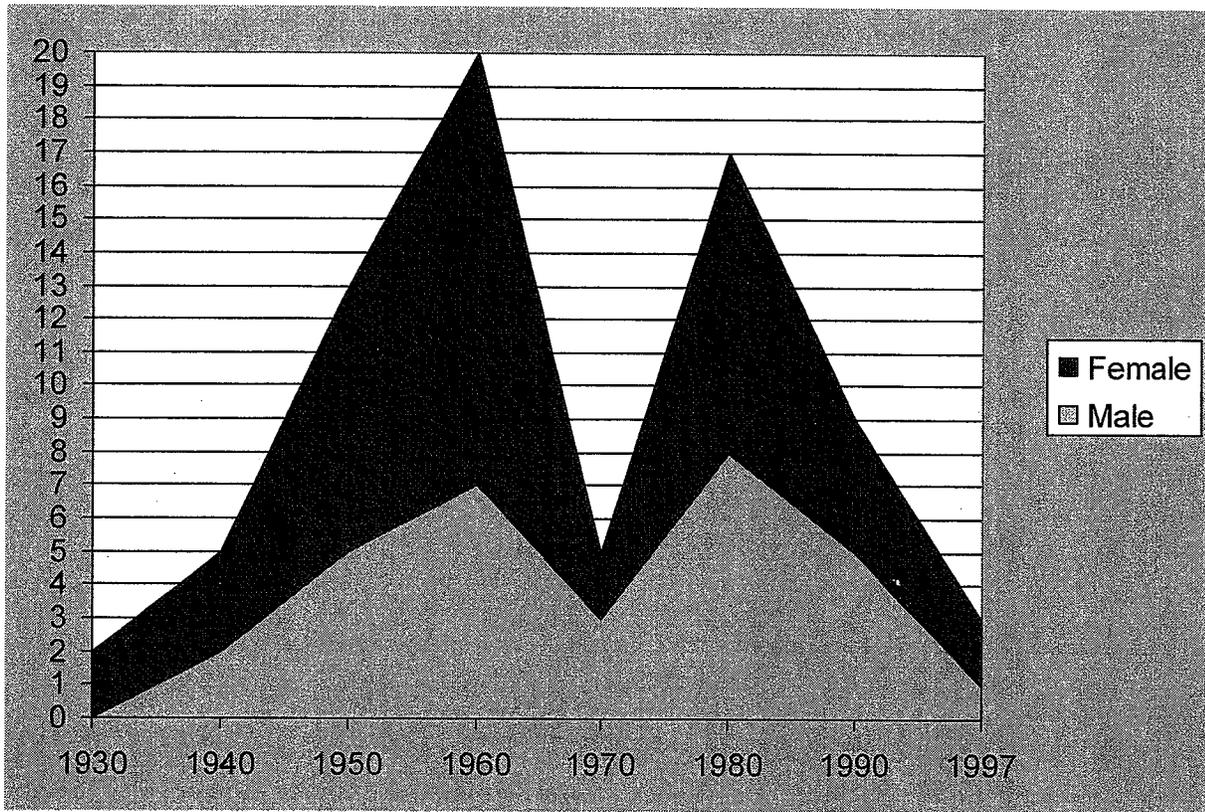
This study has contributed some new understanding of Chinese immigrants' acculturation patterns and the function of their communities. As Wang (1995) points out, "The suburbanization of the Chinese should not be viewed as total acceptance of the assimilation model. More often than not, the professional-status Chinese who have moved to the suburbs have not 'melted' into main stream, middle-class suburbanites; instead, they have attempted to form a suburban Chinese community" (Wang 1995: 86). The emergence of Chinese schools in Canada has challenged these assumptions and is the new form of Chinese community. This study indicates that the Chinese school has

functioned as a community center for new Chinese immigrants by creating a cultural and discursive space, as well as promoting the development of biculturalism.

Meanwhile, ultimately and ideally, the Chinese school has created a bridge for the second generation, between their ethnic origins and Canadian lives, enabling them to establish themselves in Winnipeg. They can relate to both Canada-born and non-Canada born friends, and they may be able to bridge the gaps between these two populations as well.

This study has explored the relationship between bilingualism and biculturalism, the types of discourse and activities taking place in the Chinese school, and how these activities influence the adjustment and bicultural identity construction process for Chinese children and their parents. They provide one pole of the bicultural experience, but a valid starting point for an examination of the acculturation and enculturation process.

Figure 6-1 Birth-date and Gender of the Participants



Male: 31  
Female: 41  
Total number=72  
Source: Field data.

## Appendix A Consent Form for teachers and parents

### CONSENT FORM FOR THE STUDY OF LANGUAGE SCHOOLING AND CULTURAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

Consent of the Interviewed teachers and parents:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in the *Language Schooling and Cultural Identity Construction* research study. The purpose of this project is to explore how organization as the Chinese school, which originated as language school and now has emerged as cultural sites and community centers for the Chinese immigrants, has played a role in the construction of biculturalism. The study is being conducted by Haiying Su, a Masters student in Anthropology at the University of Manitoba. This project is to fulfill the requirements of her Master's degree for writing a thesis. The study has been approved by the Joint-Faculty Research Ethic Board.

I understand that my role as a participant involves partaking in an interview with the researcher, Haiying Su. The length (around forty-five minutes), time and place of the interviews will be convenient to me. My participation is voluntary. A series of open-ended questions about my experience in Chinese school will be asked. If I agree, the interviews may be audiotaped. I understand that my name or other identifying characteristics will only be attached to my answers and any other field notes of the researcher's for her access data and ONLY by her, none will show to other person and appear on her final paper. By informing the researcher, I may withdraw from the study at any time. I may refuse to answer any questions with which I feel uncomfortable. If I have any questions about the study, I can contact Ms. Su at \_\_\_\_\_ (office), or Dr. Ellen

Judd, the thesis advisor, at \_\_\_\_\_ (office). I will sign this consent form prior to participating in an interview. Any complaints about the study may be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) or Department Head (Dr. Judd, \_\_\_\_\_ ).

I agree to participate in this project.

Your Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

(One copy to Participant) (One copy to Interviewer)

## **Appendix B-- Consent Form for students and their parents**

### **PARENTAL AND STUDENT CONSENT FORM OF LANGUAGE SCHOOLING AND CULTURAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION**

This research is to explore how organization as the Chinese school, which originated as language school and now has emerged as cultural sites and community centers for the Chinese immigrants, has played a role in the construction of biculturalism. The study is being conducted by Haiying Su, a Masters student in Anthropology at the University of Manitoba. This project has been assessed by the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board as being of no risk to your son/daughter.

Your son/daughter has a choice of two types of interviews. One is an individual interview with the researcher on a one-to-one basis; it will take about 45 minutes and it will provide him/her with a personal setting for discussion. The other is a focus group interview in which 5-9 people will gather for the purpose of discussing issues collectively; it will provide a more social setting for open discussion with peers, and it will last around an hour. In whichever type of interview your son/daughter chooses, Ms. Su will ask him/her a series of open-ended questions about his/her understanding of the relationship of language and cultural learning. (E.g. Do you feeling any differences between study in weekday school and the Chinese school? For example?).

The individual interviews will occur at a time and place convenient to your son/daughter. The focus group interview will be organized by Ms. Su in the school. Your son/daughter can ask Ms. Su in person, by email or by phone when the focus group interview will be

held. Your son's/daughter's participation is voluntary. His/her name or other identifying characteristics will only be attached to his/her answers and any other field notes of the researcher's for her access data, none will show to other person and appear on her final paper.; he/she has the right to refuse to answer any questions with which he/she feels uncomfortable; and he/she may withdraw from participation in the interview at any time. If he/she agrees, the interviews may be audiotaped.

If you have any questions about the project, you may contact Ms. Su at \_\_\_\_\_ (office), or Dr. Ellen Judd, the thesis advisor, at \_\_\_\_\_ (office). If you have any complaints about the study, you may contact the Human Ethics Secretariat ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) or Department Head (Dr. Judd, \_\_\_\_\_ ).

I (parent/ guardian), \_\_\_\_\_, agree to allow my son/ daughter, to participate in *the study of Language Schooling and Cultural Identity*

*Construction:*

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I (student), \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in *the Study of Language Schooling and Cultural Identity Construction*

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Check preference/s) An individual interview \_\_\_\_\_

A focus group interview \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

(One copy to Participant's Parents) (One copy to Researcher)

## Appendix C Interview Schedule with Teachers

### Open Statements:

A. Personal introduction.

B. Objective of the research:

The purpose of this research is to examine the cultural identity construction of Chinese immigrants and their children in Winnipeg, Manitoba. It tries to explore how organizations such as Chinese schools, which originated as language schools and have emerged as cultural sites and community centers for Chinese immigrants, have played a role in the construction of bicultural identity.

C. Consent (see Appendix A & B)

### Part one: Personal Information

Demographic information is collected at the beginning of each interview with the informants. Participants are requested to supply information on the countries of birth of themselves, date of birth, length of residence in Canada, language spoken at home, education and occupation. Answers are collected as the following formation:

1. Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date of birth (Year) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Place of birth (Country or region) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Date of arrival in Canada \_\_\_\_\_ (year) \_\_\_\_\_ (month)
5. Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_

6. Mother language:
- A) Mandarin/ *Putonghua* \_\_\_\_\_
  - B) Chinese dialects \_\_\_\_\_
  - C) English \_\_\_\_\_
  - D) Other \_\_\_\_\_
7. Occupation \_\_\_\_\_
8. Education:
- A) High School (or lower) \_\_\_\_\_
  - B) Collage \_\_\_\_\_
  - C) Undergraduate \_\_\_\_\_
  - D) Master's \_\_\_\_\_
  - E) Ph.D. and above \_\_\_\_\_

### **Part two: Questions for Teachers**

The purpose of interviewing the teachers is to discover both commonalities and personal differences in their understanding the relationship between Chinese language teaching and the construction of cultural identity.

The use of one-on-one semi-structured interviews applies the strength of qualitative interviewing, which lies in its capacity to access self-reflexivity among interview subjects, leading to the greater likelihood of the telling of collective stories.

In the interviews with informants, I encourage them to express themselves by not limiting myself to standardized questions and a uniform approach. The interviews are

informal and open-ended. My list of possible questions is intended only as an interview guide.

Questions are:

1. How long have you been teaching in this school? What do you teach?
2. What makes you to be a Chinese teacher?
3. What keeps you teaching in this school?
4. Based on your experience, what do you like about teaching in this school?
5. What are the challenges of teaching in this school?
6. Do you have your own children study in this school?
7. Why do you choose this school for your children?
8. Do you feel any difference between teach your own children at home and teach a class in the school?
9. Do you know any other teachers or students' parents before you teach in this school?
10. Do you meet some teachers or students' parents outside school?
11. What does Chinese and Canadian means to you?

## Appendix D The Chinese Equivalent of The Interview Schedule with Teachers

开场白：

- A. 自我介绍。
- B. 研究目的：本研究的目的是对曼尼托巴省温尼伯市中国移民和他们孩子的文化身份建构的探讨。试图探研如中文学校这样的组织，是如何在语言学校的架构下，逐渐显现成为中国移民的文化场所和社区中心，并在建构他们的双重文化身份中扮演着一个角色。
- C. 访问中的答案没有对与错之分。意在以回答问题的方式，分享您的个人经历和观点。

### 第一部分：个人信息

在每个访问的开始会对每一位被访者做一个个人信息的收集。请被访者提供包括一下方面的信息：出生地、出生年份、到加拿大的时间、在家所用语言、以及教育和工作情况。答案是以一下方式收集的：

1. 男\_\_\_\_\_ 女\_\_\_\_\_
2. 生日(年)\_\_\_\_\_
3. 出生地(国家或地区)
4. 到达加拿大地日期\_\_\_\_\_ (年)\_\_\_\_\_ (月)
5. 国籍\_\_\_\_\_

6. 母语

- A) 国语/普通话 \_\_\_\_\_
- B) 方言 \_\_\_\_\_
- C) 英语 \_\_\_\_\_
- D) 其他 \_\_\_\_\_

7. 职业 \_\_\_\_\_

8. 教育

- A) 高中（或以下） \_\_\_\_\_
- B) 大专 \_\_\_\_\_
- C) 本科 \_\_\_\_\_
- D) 硕士 \_\_\_\_\_
- E) 博士（或以上） \_\_\_\_\_

**第二部分: 教师的问题**

对教师访问的意图，在于发现和了解他们对于中文语言教学与文化身份建构之关系的个人理解的相同与相异。

之所以采用一对一的半结构式访问是为了充分应用质量型访问的优点。它对所有的被访对象都提供了个体反应的足够空间，因而更有可能收集到被访者各方位的故事。

在访问的过程中，我鼓励他们最大可能的表达自己，使我不局限与自己的标准答案或是单一的探讨。访问是非正式的，并且是开放式的。我的可能性的问题提纲只是访问的一个指导。

可能的问题包括：

1. 你是从哪一年开始在中文学校教书的？
2. 你为什么会来这个中文学校教书？
3. 对你个人来说，你最喜欢中文学校的是什么？
4. 你觉得在这个学校工作最大的快乐和挑战分别是什么？
5. 你自己有孩子在这个学校上课吗？如果有，你为什么给她/他选这所学校呢？
6. 你觉得在家教自己的孩子和在学校教学生有什么不同的地方呢？
7. 在来这个学校教书之前，你认识一些这个学校的家长或老师吗？
8. 来了教书以后，有没有和学校的一些老师或家长成为朋友或来往比较多？如果有，主要是一些怎样的来往呢？
9. 你来中文学校教书以来最大的感受或心得是什么？
10. 你觉得中文学校对华人社区有什么样的贡献？
11. 中国和加拿大分别对你意味着什么？能谈一下吗？

## Appendix E Interview Schedule with Parents

### Open Statements:

- A. Personal introduction
- B. Objective of the research:

The purpose of this research is to examine the cultural identity construction of Chinese immigrants and their children in Winnipeg, Manitoba. It tries to explore how organizations such as Chinese schools, which originated as language schools and have emerged as cultural sites and community centers for Chinese immigrants, have played a role in the construction of bicultural identity.

- C. Consent (see Appendix A & B)

### Part one: Personal Information

Demographic information is collected at the beginning of each interview with the informants. Participants are requested to supply information on the countries of birth of themselves, date of birth, length of residence in Canada, language spoken at home, education and occupation. Answers are collected as the following formation:

1. Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date of birth (Year) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Place of birth (Country or region) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Date of arrival in Canada \_\_\_\_\_ (year) \_\_\_\_\_ (month)
5. Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_

6. Mother language:
- A) Mandarin \_\_\_\_\_
  - B) Chinese dialects \_\_\_\_\_
  - C) English \_\_\_\_\_
  - D) Other \_\_\_\_\_
7. Occupation \_\_\_\_\_
8. Education:
- A) High School (or lower) \_\_\_\_\_
  - B) Collage \_\_\_\_\_
  - C) Undergraduate \_\_\_\_\_
  - D) Master's \_\_\_\_\_
  - E) Ph.D. and above \_\_\_\_\_

### **Part two: Questions for Parents**

The purpose of interviewing the parents is to discover both commonalities and personal differences the first-generation Chinese immigrants understand the role of language in the cultural identity crafting, and their interactions with their children who are Canadian-born in the process of cultural identity constructing.

The use of one-on-one semi-structured interviews applies the strength of qualitative interviewing, which lies in its capacity to access self-reflexivity among interview subjects, leading to the greater likelihood of the telling of collective stories.

In the interviews with informants, I encourage them to express themselves by not limiting myself to standardized questions and a uniform approach. The interviews are informal and open-ended. My list of possible questions is intended only as an interview guide.

Questions are:

1. How you get to know about this Chinese school?
2. Do you have children in this school?
3. Why do you want your children to go to this school?
4. What are you expecting from this school?
5. What do you like about this school?
6. How do you get your children go to Chinese school? Do you explain why you want them to go?
7. What do your children say to you about going to this school?
8. Do you have any other involvement with this school?
9. Do you take part in any program of this school? If yes, what program?
10. Do you join annual events or gathering hold by this school? Such as spring festival celebration, graduation ceremony, est.?
11. Are you a member of this school? If yes, for how long? The reason you decided to join?
12. What does Chinese and Canadian means to you?

## Appendix F The Chinese equivalent of the interview Schedule with Parents

开场白：

- A. 自我介绍。
- B. 研究目的：本研究的目的是对曼尼托巴省温尼伯市中国移民和他们孩子的文化身份建构的探讨。试图探研如中文学校这样的组织，是如何在语言学校的架构下，逐渐显现成为中国移民的文化场所和社区中心，并在建构他们的双重文化身份中扮演着一个角色。
- C. 访问中的答案没有对与错之分。意在以回答问题的方式，分享您的个人经历和观点。

### 第一部分：个人信息

在每个访问的开始会对每一位被访者做一个个人信息的收集。请被访者提供包括一下方面的信息：出生地、出生年份、到加拿大的时间、在家所用语言、以及教育和工作情况。答案是以以下方式收集的：

1. 男 \_\_\_\_\_ 女 \_\_\_\_\_
2. 生日(年) \_\_\_\_\_
3. 出生地(国家或地区)
4. 到达加拿大地日期 \_\_\_\_\_ (年) \_\_\_\_\_ (月)
5. 国籍 \_\_\_\_\_

6. 母语

- A) 国语/普通话 \_\_\_\_\_
- B) 方言 \_\_\_\_\_
- C) 英语 \_\_\_\_\_
- D) 其他 \_\_\_\_\_

7. 职业 \_\_\_\_\_

8. 教育

- A) 高中（或以下） \_\_\_\_\_
- B) 大专 \_\_\_\_\_
- C) 本科 \_\_\_\_\_
- D) 硕士 \_\_\_\_\_
- E) 博士（或以上） \_\_\_\_\_

**第二部分: 家长的问题**

对家长访问的意图，在于发现和了解第一代中国移民对于语言与文化身份建构之关系的个人理解的异同。以及在文化身份架构中，以中文学校为空间，他们与自己在加拿大出生或/和长大的孩子们的相互作用。

之所以采用一对一的半结构式访问是为了充分应用质量型访问的优点。它对所有的被访对象都提供了个体反应的足够空间，因而更有可能收集到被访者各方位的故事。

在访问的过程中，我鼓励他们最大可能的表达自己，使我不局限与自己的标准答案或是单一的探讨。访问是非正式的，并且是开放式的。我的可能性的问题提纲只是访问的一个指导。

可能的问题包括：

1. 能否谈一下你是怎么知道这间中文学校的？
2. 可以说一下是什么原因，你想让孩子上中文学校呢？
3. 请问基于什么样的原因，你选这间中文学校呢？
4. 可以具体谈一下你对孩子学中文有怎样的期望值吗？
5. 到现在为止，你最喜欢的是这间学校的哪些方面呢？
6. 你是怎样告诉你的孩子来上中文学校这件事的？你需要给他们解释原因吗？

可否说一下你是怎样解释的呢？

7. 对上中文学校这件事，你的孩子一听到是怎样反应的，能给我讲一下吗？
8. 可以谈一下，你知道中文学校的活动吗？有参加其中的一些吗？
9. 请问每年的春节、毕业典礼等活动你都参加吗？
10. 你跟孩子用什么语言对话？
11. 可否具体谈一下中国和加拿大各对你意味着些什么呢？

## Appendix G Interview Schedule with Students

### Open Statements:

- A. Personal introduction
- B. Objective of the research:

The purpose of this research is to examine the cultural identity construction of Chinese immigrants and their children in Winnipeg, Manitoba. It tries to explore how organizations such as Chinese schools, which originated as language schools and have emerged as cultural sites and community centers for Chinese immigrants, have played a role in the construction of bicultural identity.

- C. Consent (see Appendix A & B)

### Part one: Personal Information

Demographic information is collected at the beginning of each interview with the informants. Participants are requested to supply information on the countries of birth of themselves, date of birth, length of residence in Canada, language spoken at home, education and occupation. Answers are collected as the following formation:

1. Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date of birth (Year) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Place of birth (Country or region) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Date of arrival in Canada \_\_\_\_\_ (year) \_\_\_\_\_ (month)

5. Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_
6. Mother language:
  - A) Mandarin \_\_\_\_\_
  - B) Chinese dialects \_\_\_\_\_
  - C) English \_\_\_\_\_
  - D) Other \_\_\_\_\_
7. Occupation \_\_\_\_\_
8. Education:
  - A) Grade \_\_\_\_\_
  - B) High School \_\_\_\_\_
  - C) Collage \_\_\_\_\_
  - D) Undergraduate \_\_\_\_\_
  - E) Master's \_\_\_\_\_
  - F) Ph.D. and above \_\_\_\_\_

### **Part Two: Questions for students**

The purpose of interviews with students is to explore the commonalities and differences of “how” they understand their language learning and be a Chinese-Canadian.

The use of one-on-one semi-structured interviews applies the strength of qualitative interviewing, which lies in its capacity to access self-reflexivity among interview subjects, leading to the greater likelihood of the telling of collective stories.

In the interviews with informants, I encourage them to express themselves by not limiting myself to standardized questions and a uniform approach. The interviews are

informal and open-ended. My list of possible questions is intended only as an interview guide.

Questions are:

1. What language you speak at home?
2. Which grade you are in this school? Grades?
3. Why you come to the Chinese school? You think the reason is?
4. Who choose this school for you? Did he/she tell you the reason?
5. Do you feeling any differences between study in weekday school and the Chinese school? For example?
6. What do you like about this school? And what do you dislike about this school?
7. What keeps you studying in this school?
8. What language do you speak at home?
9. Do you have any other resources of learning Chinese besides Chinese school?
10. Do you use Chinese on a daily basis? If yes, what for?
11. What does Chinese and Canadian means to you?

## Appendix H The Chinese equivalent of the interview Schedule with Students

开场白：

- A. 自我介绍。
- B. 研究目的：本研究的目的是对曼尼托巴省温尼伯市中国移民和他们孩子的文化身份建构的探讨。试图探研如中文学校这样的组织，是如何在语言学校的架构下，逐渐显现成为中国移民的文化场所和社区中心，并在建构他们的双重文化身份中扮演着一个角色。
- C. 访问中的答案没有对与错之分。意在以回答问题的方式，分享您的个人经历和观点。

### 第一部分：个人信息

在每个访问的开始会对每一位被访者做一个个人信息的收集。请被访者提供包括一下方面的信息：出生地、出生年份、到加拿大的时间、在家所用语言、以及教育和工作情况。答案是以以下方式收集的：

1. 男 \_\_\_\_\_ 女 \_\_\_\_\_
2. 生日(年) \_\_\_\_\_
3. 出生地(国家或地区)
4. 到达加拿大地日期 \_\_\_\_\_ (年) \_\_\_\_\_ (月)
5. 国籍 \_\_\_\_\_

6. 母语

A) 国语/普通话 \_\_\_\_\_

B) 方言 \_\_\_\_\_

C) 英语 \_\_\_\_\_

D) 其他 \_\_\_\_\_

7. 职业 \_\_\_\_\_

8. 教育

A) 年级 \_\_\_\_\_

B) 高中 \_\_\_\_\_

C) 大专 \_\_\_\_\_

D) 本科 \_\_\_\_\_

E) 硕士 \_\_\_\_\_

F) 博士 (或以上) \_\_\_\_\_

**第二部分: 学生问题**

对学生访问的意图, 在于探讨和了解在加拿大出生和/或长大的第二代移民是“怎样”理解他们的中文学习和作为加籍华人之间的关系的。

之所以采用一对一的半结构式访问是为了充分应用质量型访问的优点。它对所有的被访对象都提供了个体反应的足够空间, 因而更有可能收集到被访者各方位的故事。

在访问的过程中，我鼓励他们最大可能的表达自己，使我不局限与自己的标准答案或是单一的探讨。访问是非正式的，并且是开放式的。我的可能性的问题提纲只是访问的一个指导。

可能的问题包括：

1. 请谈一下你和父母、祖父母、兄弟姐妹、朋友之间用什么语言？
2. 能说一下你为什么要上中文学校吗？
3. 请问是谁为你选的这间学校呢？
4. 能谈一下你最不喜欢上中文学校的原因是什么吗？
5. 那在中文学校里最让你感兴趣的是什么呢？
6. 除了上中文学校，你还有其他时间或机会学中文、说中文吗？
7. 你喜欢说中文吗？可以谈一下是什么原因吗？
8. 你还学其他语言吗？是什么语言呢？能谈谈学这些语言的原因吗？
9. 除了中文以外，你有没有什么特别有兴趣或喜欢的有关华人的东西，能谈谈是哪些吗？
10. 可否谈谈中国和加拿大各对你意味着什么呢？

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