

**ENGAGING WITH LANGUAGES  
AND MULTIPLE IDENTITIES:  
PORTRAITS OF YOUNG FRENCH IMMERSION  
CHINESE CHILDREN IN CANADA**

by

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## **Abstract**

This ethnographic inquiry examines how five young (ages 6 – 8) Chinese children constructed their identities through multilingual, multiliteracy, and multicultural practices. The children attended French Immersion programs in the Richmond school district, British Columbia (B.C.), Canada. A variety of qualitative methodologies was used to document children's literacy practices and their emerging identities. Semi-structured interviews and field observations were conducted at home, in school and in the community from April 2008 to February 2009. The goal of using these methodologies was to document children's multi-linguistic biographies (e.g., choice of languages and communicative practices), multiliteracy practices (e.g., the kinds of academic and cultural activities that children engaged in both in and outside of the home), and social relations (e.g., family and peer relations and their emerging identities).

The findings from interviews, field observations, and artifacts produced by children were analyzed within the context of current sociolinguistic views of language and identities. The data highlighted that identities among young French Immersion Chinese children is dynamic, complex, and contextualized. The data also offered a perspective on children's multilingual, multiliteracy, and multicultural practices at home, in school, and in the local community. The results will be of interest to parents, teachers, school policy-makers, and scholars, as they shed light

on many aspects of multilingual and multicultural students' lives in French Immersion in the Greater Vancouver area.

## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this dissertation research to all young French Immersion children, especially the participating Chinese children and their families. I would not have been able to complete this research without their on-going support and encouragement. It is my goal to provide young Chinese children with a space where teachers, school policy-makers, scholars, and most importantly, parents can hear the children's voices in the ever-changing multicultural society.



## **献给**

我希望把這篇論文獻給所有閱讀法語課程的兒童，特別是參與這項研究的孩  
子和家庭。沒有他們的支持和鼓勵，我絕不可能完成這份畢業論文。我希望老師，  
學校政策制訂者，研究學者，和最重要的事，父母可以聽見兒童的聲音在這個不斷  
轉變的多元文化社會。

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I would also not have been able to complete this thesis without my two special mentors: Dr. Maureen Hoskyn and Dr. Danièle Moore. They played an instrumental role in nurturing me as a young scholar and ethnographer. Before I met my participants, I was worried that parents might not allow me to follow them around or children might not like to keep a daily diary. However, both Dr. Hoskyn and Dr. Moore helped me to realize that the observer-participant relationship is the key to collecting quality data. Indeed, my worries subsided once I began the initial home visits and subsequent field observations. I changed from being worried to feeling overwhelmed because of the mountain of information I collected over the year of 2008. Not only have both Dr. Hoskyn and Dr. Moore provided much-needed assistance and encouragement throughout my

doctoral studies, but their style of questioning, critical insights, and prompt feedback also stretched my mind at every stage of my research and writing process.

I would like to thank Dr. Cécile Sabatier (the internal/external member) and Dr. Rosamund Stooke (the external member), who made insightful comments which enabled me to better analyze my data for future publication and further consolidate my thinking regarding young Chinese children's multilingual practices and identity construction in the ever-changing Canadian multicultural society.

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I am immensely grateful to have received financial assistance from both the Faculty of Education (the Graduate Fellowship awards) at SFU and the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP PhD Thesis Award Funding) at UBC. I also want to thank Dr. Hoskyn for providing me with both the research assistantship and financial assistance in attending two important conferences (Transmission/Appropriation of Languages and



Construction of Plurilingual Identities at Sorbonne University in Paris, France in 2007 and the 9th International Conference of the Association for Language Awareness (ALA) at the University of Hong Kong in 2008).

Hearing international scholars and researchers talk about multilingual children's literacy practices and identity construction were invaluable experiences. I will never forget the wonderful times we (Dr. Hoskyn, Dr. Moore, Dr. Dagenais, Brooke Douglas, Vicky Cheung, Marian Pan, and Patsy Wai) spent together during the 2008 ALA conference in Hong Kong.

During my doctoral studies, I had been privileged to work with a number of professors (e.g., Dr. Bernice Wong, Dr. Sandra Vamos, and Dr. Steve Marshall) who gave me opportunities to work on their projects, which immensely broadened my academic knowledge regarding learning disabilities, school health education, and academic literacy in higher education, respectively. Furthermore, I met a supportive cohort and learned a great deal from each cohort member, especially Dr. Mingming Zhou, Ms. Irina Tzoneva, and Ms. Hisako Hayashi, I came to know through research projects, and who have been unique friends and colleagues.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Setting the Stage**

Globalization and recent immigration flows have dramatically changed the cultural, linguistic, and educational landscape of Greater Vancouver, a large metropolitan area located on the west coast of Canada. Since 1997, approximately 30,000 immigrants have made applications to live in Vancouver; the majority of whom arrived from Asia (72-74%), most frequently the People's Republic of China (17-27%; Citizen and Immigration Canada, 2010). With this influx of Chinese immigrants into the cultural landscape of the Greater Vancouver region, increasing numbers of Chinese children have entered English and French Immersion programs, the two placement options presented to Canadian parents when their children enter school (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007a). Despite these increases in enrollment, little is known about the sociohistorical, sociocultural, interpersonal, and individual spheres of influence from which language and literacy practices of Canadian born Chinese children arise. This is an oversight, for language and literacy activities are always embedded in the language of others from previous contexts (Bakhtin, 1990) and language is the vehicle that drives transmission of the intergenerational cultural beliefs and values that undergird the construction of children's identities. In this dissertation research, I highlight the language and literacy practices and emerging

identities of five multilingual Chinese children who attend French Immersion schools in Richmond, a city located in the Greater Vancouver region. I draw heavily from previous research on literacy practices of multilingual children and on theories of identity and identity construction to weave threads of meaning from my observations. My overall aim is to create a portrait of the literacy practices of young Chinese children in the study, and how these literacy practices provide a medium for the children's emerging identities.

The chapter begins with a description of children's multilingual worlds as settings for the construction of 'identities'. A constructivist account of identity formation is briefly presented to juxtapose the sociolinguistic views that guide the study. Research questions are stated. This is followed by a summative overview of the ethnographic methodology (Hymes, 1995; Wolcott, 1997) used in the study to explore how children's use of language with others during literacy practices shapes how they come to represent themselves across sociocultural and sociolinguistic contexts and time.

### **Multilingualism and Young Children**

A number of scholars (e.g., Blackledge, 2005; Dagenais, 2003; Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Tejeda, 1999; Kenner, 2004; Pahl & Kelly, 2005) note that multilingual persons traverse 'multilingual worlds'. When young children engage in language and literacy practices that together

constitute these worlds, they use signs – languages, gestures, images, and actions – as semiotic resources to support their activities. These signs are used purposefully by young children and represent what is central to them at that moment in time and space. For example, in a study where Chinese multilingual children created drawings that represented their choice of heritage, school, and home languages (English, French, Cantonese, Mandarin, and/or other Chinese languages) in literacy practices, Moore (2010) showed that children were active social agents in their language use. They conveyed “symbolic allegiance to local and transnational values, placing value on authenticity as legitimate speakers and writers of the language, while voicing a wider sense of independent agency” (p. 7). In this dissertation, I further explore Chinese multilingual children’s use of languages in their literacy practices. Consistent with the work of others before me, I will focus on children’s emerging knowledge, agency, identity, and cultural positionings in their social worlds (Maguire, 1999, 2005; Maguire & Graves, 2001).

### **Children’s Construction of Identities**

Children’s identities are constituted in social contexts, including literacy practices. However, there is little agreement among theorists or researchers with respect to how ‘identities’ should be conceived. For example, Pagliai (2003) points out that:

The word identity is ambiguous. On one side, it refers to the person's perception of him or her self. On the other side, it refers to a process of external labeling, such as in the connected process of identification, or attribution of an I.D., of a particular place in a group and in a society. (p. 49)

The lines that define this dichotomy are further blurred for young children whose identities emerge within the complexity of literacy practices as well as multilingual and multicultural contexts. Although there is general consensus among theorists that with increasing age and use of spoken and written languages, children come to identify with the symbols represented by these languages, there is little agreement about the nature of this process. Whether children's identity is constructed in layers over time and on a trajectory that parallels their development or whether identities are constituted solely from children's social worlds are theoretical distinctions that require further exploration. In the former constructivist view, identity is viewed as a singular construct.

Constructivist theories of child development that emphasize a lifespan perspective, the importance of others in children's social worlds and a psychosocial approach give recognition to the situated nature of identity in both history and social groups (Martin, 2007). From this view point, children are dynamic, relational participants in social activities. They are motivated by unconscious processes as well as conscious agency (Martin

& Sugarman, 1999; Martin, Sugarman, & Thompson 2003), and have a unique biography that is a consequence of emotional investments and defenses as well as from experiences within the shared sociohistorical context in which they live. Children's language is important in this process because it is the medium through which principles of thought are appropriated (Carpendale & Lewis, 2006) and experiences are rendered meaningful.

Dahlberg and Lenz Taguchi's (1994) conceptions of "the child as nature" and "the child as reproducer of culture and knowledge" (as cited in Borgnon, 2007, p. 266) is illustrative. In this view, children learn through action (meaning mental actions) and construct knowledge schemes about who they are in their social worlds. The "child as nature" is "helped by adults to let free *natural*, inherent capacities. This is facilitated by activities such as free play...and free creating..." (original italics, Dahlberg & Lenz Taguchi, as cited in Borgnon, p. 266). The "child as a reproducer of culture and knowledge" occurs as the child receives "the fixed content of knowledge presented by adults and to adapt itself to it, to internalize it, to *develop* in a certain manner, in order to later be able to reproduce it as exactly as possible" (original italics, Dahlberg & Lenz Taguchi, as cited in Borgnon, p. 266).

While constructivist theories espouse the internal workings of the child's mind in the construction of identity, others challenge these



assumptions. In the words of George Ganat (2003):

By surfacing implicit power relations traditionally accepted as common sense (Bourdieu, Foucault), locating fissures and intertextualities within discourses previously considered stable and coherent (Bakhtin, Derrida), and elucidating *third spaces* between dichotomous identity labels (Butler, Bhabha), critical thinkers in this vein have undermined the notion of an essentially stable self and encouraged exploration of social identity as a complex and shifting phenomenon. (original italics, p. 1)

Accordingly, children's use of language is essentially a dialogical phenomenon (Bahtkin, 1990). As Bakhtin (1984) describes, one carries on "an inner dialogue, responding to someone's words (including [one's] own). In each case someone else's speech makes it possible to generate [one's] own and thus becomes an indispensable factor in the creative power of language" (p. ix). Bakhtin (1981) further explains that:

The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language (it is not, after all, out of a dictionary that the speaker gets his words!), but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other

people's contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own. (pp. 293-294)

Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) underscore how children's identity narratives are a dialogical phenomenon, which constantly open to construction and reevaluation within and through communicative interaction. Rather than seeking fixed identities underlying discourse strategies, identity exists as a narrative emerging through language – or, more specifically, as a “fragmented, decentered, and shifting” narrative (p.18). In this view, children's narratives are viewed as discursive constructions, not factual statements. In the words of Maguire (2005), discursivity is used here to:

mean particular ways of being, talking and writing about or performing one's practices that are coupled with particular social settings in which those ways of being, talking, writing and being are recognized as more or less valuable.... Third space then is an open text offering differing and multiple possibilities for selfhood and dialogue with others in particular places. (1427)

In this dissertation, I focus on children's narratives as representations of their emerging identities within their literacy practices. Although constructivist notions of identity, agency, and selfhood have theoretical import, they fall short of providing the necessary foundation upon which

to observe children's multiple uses of language and how they transmit cultural values that underpin construction of identities.

### **Significance of This Research**

While research has explored the relationship between the use of heritage languages and identity construction among older first generation immigrant children who retain and use minority languages (e.g., He 2004; Ishizawa, 2004; Lee, 2008), few studies have examined these relations for younger children, or for second or third generation children of immigrants. Many young Chinese children living in western Canada are Canadian born and have been immersed in a majority English-speaking community in addition to their heritage, Chinese culture. However, little is known about the lives of such children, their knowledge, agency, identity, and cultural positionings in their literacy practices.

As educators increasingly face multilingual children in their classes, they are challenged to “resist the hegemony of dominant national languages” in their own teaching practices (Garcia, Bartlett, & Kleifgen, 2006, p. 217). For example, Parke, Drury, Kenner, and Robertson (2002) point out that “learning to read [and write], in any language requires an understanding of how to make meaning of a system that uses abstract symbols and conventions” (p. 218). There is some research evidence to suggest that current practices of educators in schools fall short of

permitting access to children's multiple languages as bridges to further learning (Castellotti & Moore, 2010). Smythe and Toohey (2009) further note:

Many observers have argued that schools and teachers have such minimal knowledge of the outside school lives of their multilingual and multicultural students that they are unable to build upon the 'funds of knowledge' that students and other members of their communities have. (p. 37)

Funds of knowledge includes the multiple resources that children bring with them to school each day that support their participation in literacy practices. In order to create a rich portrait of the resources of each child, ethnography was adopted to get as close to the children's action as possible in this dissertation research. Ethnography provides a pathway to explore multilingual children's use of languages in their social networks and literacy practices which in turn helps reveal the existing etic, within theories and frameworks pertaining to children's multilingualism, their engagement in literacy practices, and their emerging identities.

Ethnography is designed to observe a specific group of people's behaviours and understand social issues of that particular group over a long period of time (Wolcott, 1997). Sanday (1979) provides a good overview of philosophical underpinnings of ethnography, which can be divided into holistic, semiotic, and behaviouristic schools of thought, each

of which has their own approach to ethnography. Critical ethnography is yet another ethnographic school of thought. It is a synthesis of critical theory and interpretive ethnography, because “each [offers] a solution to a perceived weakness in the other” (Noblit, 2004, p. 182). Ethnography can be a powerful tool to give voice to participants. As Smythe and Toohey (2009) and Stooke (2010) note, the voice of multilingual and multicultural children are not always recognized by their teachers or school policy-makers.

Hymes (1974) explains that ““ethnography of communication” is intended to indicate the necessary scope, and to encourage the doing, of studies ethnographic in basis, and communicative in the range and kind of patterned complexity with which they deal” (p. 3). Hymes describes scope as “the use of language in contexts of situation” and basis as the “communicative activities as a whole” (p. 4). Documenting the multilingual practices of young Chinese children in and outside of school has potential to give voice to children with linguistic capacities that are not always recognized by their teachers. Documenting these capacities for educators allows them to gain authentic access to multilingual children’s lived experiences outside of their school lives. Furthering these understandings may help educators to design learning environments where multilingual children feel safe to communicate in multiple languages (Dagenais, Day, & Toohey, 2006).

Studies such as Dagenais and Moore (2008) and Moore (2010) are illustrative of how children's multiple representations have the potential to shed light on their engagement in the cultural and linguistic practices of their social networks. Cheng and Kuo (2000) argue that "the dynamics within a family which influence identity formation [are] seldom examined" (p. 413). Hence, conducting a "more focused analysis of the dynamics of family socialization in identity formation" holds promise to shed light on young Chinese children's use of multiple languages, cultural understanding, and self (p. 413). In this dissertation research, I will explore patterns of multiple language use, literacy practices, and identity construction across young Chinese children's social and cultural contexts.

### ***Research Questions***

The essential aim of this dissertation research is to document how young children with Chinese heritage who are enrolled in French Immersion educational programs use their languages, and how engaging in activities and multiple language and literacy practices is linked to their emerging identities. Two research questions guide the study:

- 1) What are the language and literacy practices of young multilingual Chinese children in the study?
- 2) How does the use of English, French, and Cantonese/Mandarin languages in these literacy practices contribute to multilingual children's representation of self and construction of identities?

It is of interest to document Chinese children's representations of self through multiple languages and scripts. This documentation provides a much-needed clarification of how multilingual children's emerging identities are situated in language and literacy practices.

### ***Research Methodologies***

I adopt ethnography methodologies to explore how young French Immersion Chinese children make sense of their lived experiences (Wolcott, 1997). Specifically, I document how five young Chinese children's engagement in multiple language and literacy practices shapes their emerging identities. To achieve this, I will utilize Hymes' (1974) ethnography of communication approach to garner an awareness of the contextual factors that might influence children's language use and literacy practices. Observation of the multiple language and literacy practices of multilingual children with Chinese heritage attending French Immersion educational programs offers the possibility of coming to know how multiple languages and cultures are represented in the narratives of young children of immigrant families. These ways of knowing also have implications for educators who have an interest in creating settings that facilitate appropriation of diverse cultural and societal values and traditions. Ho (1998) states that:

Culture enters into the generation of knowledge, because the conceptualization of the phenomenon, as well as the methodology

employed to study the phenomenon or its conceptualization, are both informed by cultural values and presuppositions. Psychological knowledge is, in itself, a product of culture. (p. 3)

In conducting this ethnographic inquiry, the “objective is not to dictate interpretation, but to provide an environment conducive to the production of the range and complexity of meanings that address relevant issues, and not be confined by predetermined agendas” (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997, p. 125). To raise my own awareness of predetermined agendas, I reflect upon Goodson’s (1995) notion of life history, which is defined as “stories of action within theories of contexts” (p. 98).

In order to give voice to children’s stories, it is my task as an ethnographer to highlight their lived experiences. For example, I analyze children’s verbal interactions with family members during home visits and their representations of their languages and culture via drawing and written journal entries. Using both participative observations and children’s representations of their engagement in their daily activities helps capture their values within multiple identities that emerge and evolve across contexts and time (Kendrick & McKay, 2004a, 2004b, 2009).

### **Structure of the Dissertation**

The dissertation is divided into ten chapters: Chapter 1 introduces the research; Chapter 2 presents a brief historical overview of Chinese



immigration in Canada and, more specifically, in the province of British Columbia; Chapter 3 discusses links between language and identity in the literature; Chapter 4 addresses the theoretical approaches that guide interpretation in this dissertation research; Chapter 5 presents a brief overview of the ethnographic approach used in this research; Chapter 6 presents a portrait of the five families; Chapters 7, 8, and 9 analyze the emerging themes highlighted by the children and their families; and Chapter 10 addresses limitations, future research, and directions.

## Chapter 2

### Sociohistorical Context:

#### The Changing Canadian Cultural and Linguistic Landscapes



**Figure 1. Vancouver Chinatown: Millennium Gate<sup>1</sup>**

The Millennium Gate (千禧門) not only represents the entrance to Vancouver's Chinatown, which is the second largest in North America (after San Francisco's Chinatown), but behind the Gate there lies Shanghai Alley and Canton Alley where the story of early Chinese immigration in B.C. begins. Vancouver's Chinatown was established in 1885. It was an enclave for the first wave of immigrants who suffered from

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<sup>1</sup> The photo of the Millennium Gate was taken by John Poon:  
[http://johnpoon.org/images/photos/landscape/bcwest/IMG\\_1524aThumb.jpg](http://johnpoon.org/images/photos/landscape/bcwest/IMG_1524aThumb.jpg)

anti-Chinese sentiments provoked by white settlers. The establishment of Chinatown was an attempt to create a sense of community and unite the Chinese against anti-Chinese sentiments that were present in the greater community.

Originally, Vancouver's Chinatown consisted of a number of small service industries (e.g., restaurants and laundry shops) and kin organizations. Each of these industries and organizations were created in different periods and for different reasons. Two well-respected organizations are the Chinese Cultural Centre (2011a) and the United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society (S.E.C.C.E.S.S., 2011). The former was founded in 1972, and the latter was established in 1973. Both are non-profit charitable organizations, with some support from the B.C. government, and the central goal is to promote Chinese culture and provide assistance to new immigrants who encounter cultural and language barriers in the process of integrating into and contributing to Canadian society. Vancouver's Chinatown represents the history, the memories, and the struggles of the lives of Chinese immigrants in B.C. since the 18th century.

### **Immigration Patterns**

Waves of immigration from Asian countries to the west coast of Canada have significantly changed the cultural and linguistic landscapes where this dissertation research is set. The story of Chinese-Canadians

begins with a group of sojourners. Siu (1952) coined the term “sojourners” to describe migrants who temporarily left their home country (usually for work) and intended to go back to live in their country of origin. Chinese historians “have shown quite conclusively that most early Chinese who came to Canada were actually “sojourners,” though some changed their plans” because many did not intend to permanently reside in their host country (Mar, 2007/08, p. 16). Typically, these sojourners were males. They were poor, unskilled, and lived in rural areas in China.

### ***First Wave of Immigration: 1850s – 1930s***

Approximately 70 Chinese craftsmen were hired by British Captain James Meares in 1788, marking the first Chinese presence in Canada (CBC News, 2004). However, migration of Chinese sojourners in large numbers did not begin until 1858 (Holland, 2007). After their arrival, many Chinese living in Canada sponsored kin and friends from their villages to come to Canada, sparking a chain migration (Chen, 2004). Many Chinese labourers left China during the 1800s, because China faced difficulties in maintaining peace due to mounting economic instability and political turmoil (e.g., the Taiping Rebellion from 1850 to 1864, the First Opium War from 1839 to 1842, and the Second Opium War from 1856 to 1860; Anderson, 1991; Holland, 2007).

Some Chinese initially migrated to the United States to avoid these ordeals and to reap the economic benefits from the discovery of gold in

1848 (Holland, 2007). In 1858, when news of the discovery of gold in B.C. spread to the United States, many Chinese moved from California to Vancouver Island in an attempt to make their fortune. Since many of the Chinese did not find gold, they began to look for other job opportunities (e.g., agriculture and domestic service; Chui, Tran, & Flanders, 2005).

The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), a transcontinental railway connecting western and eastern Canada, employed Chinese labourers in large numbers because of their willingness to work for low wages. For example, Chinese workers received “one-fifth of what [employers] paid white workers for the same work” (Holland, 2007, p. 151). In 1861, a Victoria newspaper reporter wrote: “We have plenty of room for many thousands of Chinamen.... There can be no shadow of a doubt but their industry enables them to add very largely to our own revenues” (CBC News, 2004).

During the construction of the CPR in the 1880s, the CPR company had agreements with Chinese labour contractors who helped recruit over 5,000 Chinese from Guangdong Province, 7,000 Chinese railway workers from California, and several thousand other Chinese for the duration of the railway construction. Holland (2007) describes the railway construction in Canada and in the United States as “an even larger attraction than the California Gold Rush” (p. 150).

Upon the completion of the CPR, the demand for Chinese labourers significantly decreased. As Chui et al. (2005) described, “[s]ome returned to...China, while those who remained worked in industries such as forestry, fishing canneries, sawmills and coal mines” (p. 25). Some moved east to the rest of Canada in search of other job opportunities. White workers increasingly saw the Chinese workforce as a threat to their employment. In order to address white workers’ concerns in B.C., labour unions formed the Asiatic Exclusion League in 1907. By 1908, there were approximately 200 members who belonged to the league. In order to further ease this tension and to appeal to voters who sympathized with the concerns of the white workers, the Canadian government used political means to explicitly deter Chinese people from coming to Canada (Holland, 2007).

In 1885, the Canadian government introduced the head tax as part of the Chinese Exclusion Act. In order to purposely limit the number of Chinese people immigrating to Canada, each Chinese person had to pay \$50, which was a large sum of money at the time. However, the introduction of the head tax did not effectively deter the wave of Chinese immigration. In 1900, the government revised the Act and raised the head tax from \$50 to \$100; in 1905, the head tax was officially increased for a second time to \$500 (Chui et al., 2005; Holland, 2007).

Despite this deterrent, there was a steady increase in the Chinese population in Canada, from 17,000 in 1901 to 28,000 in 1911, and 40,000 in 1921 (Chui et al., 2005). In 1923, the Canadian government responded by dramatically changing the Chinese Exclusion Act in ways that denied Chinese people the right to obtain citizenship, vote in federal elections, and work in professions of citizens in Canada (Holland, 2007).

The number of Chinese people immigrating to Canada decreased from 47,000 in 1931 to 35,000 in 1941 (Chui et al., 2005; Li, 2005). In part, this slowing of immigration has been attributed to the harsh measures installed in the Chinese Exclusion Act. However, Chinese immigration to Canada was also interrupted as a result of the two World Wars, which made it a difficult time for Chinese to travel through the Pacific regions.

### ***Second Wave of Immigration: 1940s – 1980s***

After the two World Wars, the United Nations (UN) played an increasingly influential role in peace-keeping and maintaining social order worldwide. The expectation of the UN was that countries would create constitutional orders to ensure the protection of individual rights and equality. With mounting international and public pressure on human rights issues, the Canadian government finally abrogated the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1947. As a result, “wives and children of Chinese residents were permitted to enter Canada” once again (Chui et al., 2005,

p. 26). In 1948, Canada joined the other 47 countries (e.g., the United Kingdom and France) in adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Holland, 2007; Johnson & Symonides, 1998).

The late 1940s marked the beginning of immigration liberalization in Canada. The Canadian government granted amnesty to 12,000 Chinese who came to Canada illegally from Hong Kong in 1962. In 1967, the Canadian government removed “race” and “place of origin” in its immigration policy (Holland, 2007). During the same year, the Canadian government introduced the “point system” which evaluated applicants to Canada on their level of education, knowledge of official languages (i.e., English and/or French), work experience, age, arranged employment in Canada, and adaptability (i.e., previous work or study in Canada, arranged employment, relatives in Canada, and partner’s education).

In 1973, Pierre Trudeau, the Canadian Prime Minister, paid an official visit to China in an attempt to forge closer diplomatic relationships (Holland, 2007). At the end of the visit, government officials reached an agreement that relaxed immigration policies to further allow “close relatives of Chinese Canadians to emigrate from China to Canada” (Li, 2005, p. 14). Trudeau was also largely responsible for the introduction of the Multiculturalism Act into the constitution of Canada in 1988. This Act recognizes the plurality of the Canadian cultural context and enshrines



the rights of Chinese and other immigrants to maintain their cultures and heritage language practices.

As a result of these influences, the proportion of Asian immigrants, which includes people of Chinese heritage, has slowly increased in the Canadian population. Prior to 1961, 3% of immigrants were Asian (Statistics Canada, 2003)<sup>2</sup>; this rate increased to 33% in the 1970s, and to 47% in the 1980s. Chui et al. (2005) noted that based on Statistics Canada Census data, the Chinese population increased from 58,000 in 1961 to 119,000 in 1971. The Chinese population then doubled, rising from 300,000 in 1981 to 626,000 in 1991 (Chui et al., 2005).

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, Chinese immigrants were primarily from Hong Kong in anticipation of the handover of Hong Kong from Britain to China on July 1, 1997. Many Chinese people living in Hong Kong at the time feared political and economical instability (Ley & Kobayashi, 2005). To highlight this, Verma et al. (1999) explored a range of topics from the academic activities to identity construction of a group of Chinese adolescents who resided in Britain and Hong Kong. For example, when respondents were asked their views toward the then-impending handover, one respondent noted:

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<sup>2</sup> Prior to 1996, Chinese immigrants were grouped in the Statistics Canada database and other government reports with other ethnic groups living in Asia (e.g., Filipino, Japanese, Korean, etc.) under the broad umbrella term “Asian”. As Chui, Tran, and Flanders (2005) noted, “[r]eaders should exercise caution in comparing visible minority data” because “data on visible minorities were derived from responses to the ethnic origin question” (p. 24).

The issue of 1997 influencing Hong Kong is a definite matter. As a matter of fact, I don't know what will happen after 1997. I think that there will be a lot of instability. I've always heard from people how bad communism is.... (p. 98)

Ley and Kobayashi (2005) also conducted focus groups with middle-class returnees from Canada in Hong Kong. One respondent, Yune Wai, noted:

I moved to Canada in 1989, when the Beijing massacre happened. But actually my parents already had the intention of moving to Canada to secure a better future for us. They were really concerned about Communist China and what that implied for Hong Kong in the future. Especially on my father's side, his family had experienced brutal treatment from the communist government because they were land owners. (p. 114)

Wang and Lo (2004) also noted that there was an increase in Taiwanese immigrants who emigrated from Taiwan to Canada from less than a thousand to over 13,000 between 1985 and 1997. Both Wachman (1994) and Blundell (2005) explained that in addition to the lax emigration and immigration policies of Taiwan and Canada, many Taiwanese feared the political instability associated with a total separation of Taiwan from Mainland China at that time.

Unlike the first wave of Chinese immigrants who were sojourners, changes to Canadian immigration policy with respect to the point system

insured that the second wave was comprised of well-educated professionals who represented substantive economic capital to Canada because of their education, financial resources, and commitment to reside in Canada (Holland, 2007). Peterson (1966) coined the term “model minority” to describe Asian immigrants who generally cope well with the acculturation process and “achieve a higher degree of success than the population average” in the host country (as cited in Holland, 2007, p. 157).

### ***Third Wave of Immigration: 1990s – Present***

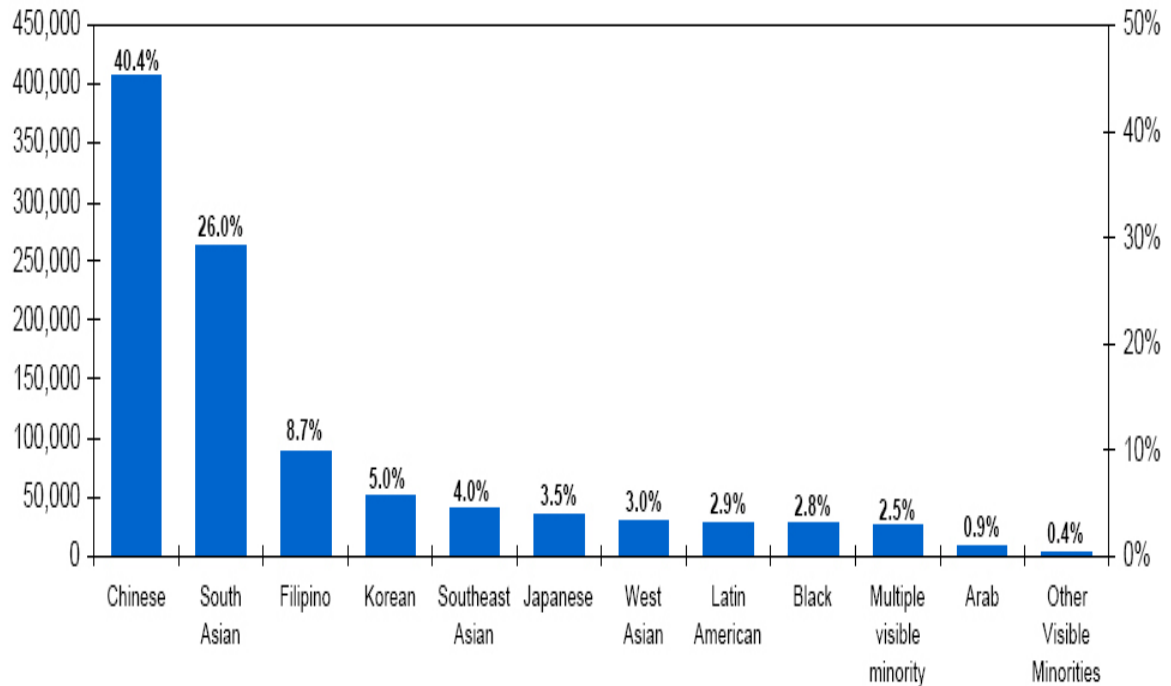
The third wave of Chinese immigrants continues to be comprised of professionals who have obtained at least a post-secondary level of education with a wealth of employable skills and capital. Between 1981 and 2001, an average of 35,400 immigrants came to Canada annually, from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China (Chui et al., 2005). Of the 1.8 million immigrants who arrived in Canada between 1991 and 2001, 58% came from Asia, the chief country of emigration being China.

The first group to become the largest visible minority in Canada was Chinese: 860,100 in 1996 increasing to 1,216,600 in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2008). The Chinese presence accounts for 24.0% of the visible minority population and 3.9% of the total Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2008). In B.C., Chinese people accounted for a large share of the population in the Greater Vancouver areas, followed by South Asians and

Filipinos (as shown in Figure 2; Multiculturalism and Immigration Branch, 2008).

**Figure 2. Visible Minority Population in British Columbia - 2006**

**Census**



South Asian visible minorities as noted in Canada Census include East Indian origin, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Punjabi, Tamil, and Bangladeshi. In the 2001 Canada Census, 917,700 respondents identified themselves as South Asian; by 2006, the number of people residing in Canada who identified themselves as South Asian increased to 1.3 million, which was slightly more than the Chinese visible minority population (Statistics Canada, 2008).

Changes in immigration patterns are also reflected in the increasing numbers of individuals (41-46%) who report that they speak neither English nor French at home (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2010). At the national level, English and French are reported as the languages spoken most often at home by respondents to the 1996 and 2001 Census in Canada. However, a noticeable increase in respondents who indicated Chinese was spoken most often at home increased from 736,000 in 1996 to 872,400 in 2001, an 18.5% increase (Chui et al., 2005). In B.C., 2.87 million respondents (71%) reported that English was spoken most often at home; only 39,000 respondents (1.4%) reported that French was spoken at home in 2006. Regarding non-official languages, 342,920 respondents (8.5%) reported that a Chinese language was spoken most often at home (BCStats, 2008). This data indicate that while English and French are the official languages of Canada, both Cantonese and Mandarin are becoming more and more important in provinces like B.C., due to an increased Chinese immigrant presence.

In summary, the three waves of Chinese immigration have unique characteristics. The first wave of immigrants is characterized as working class; however, the second and third waves are described as middle-class Chinese who are educated and bring wealth to Canada. With the increasing numbers of Chinese immigrants came increased use of Chinese culture and heritage language practices in the changing Canadian cultural and linguistic landscapes.

## **The Changing Canadian Cultural and Linguistic Landscapes**

As noted in the immigration literature, the issues of immigration continue to provoke much debate in Canada (e.g., immigration policies, immigrants' adaptability, etc.; Beach, Green, & Reitz, 2003). Canada's pluralistic society is often described as a cultural mosaic, in which ideological forces, such as democracy and human justice are valued. People believe that all individuals are of equal worth, and all may live as they choose, provided that they respect the rights of others. It is an arrangement whereby distinct immigrant groups live side-by-side in relative harmony (Peach, 2005).

Canada's cultural pluralism is further buttressed by the Canadian government entrenching the Multiculturalism Act into the constitution. The Act held that:

The Government of Canada recognizes the diversity of Canadians as regards race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and is committed to a policy of multiculturalism designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada. (Department of Justice Canada, 2011, para. 8)

This suggests that different ethno-cultural groups can retain their unique ethnic and cultural identity and practices. This freedom is entrenched in Canadian laws and policies. The content of the Act further set the stage for later acknowledgment that Chinese immigrants have rights as a group of people who have benefited the economic and cultural fabric of Canada.

In 2006, Prime Minister Harper apologized to the Chinese in Cantonese (“加拿大道歉” or Gar Nar Dai Doe Heem) regarding the head tax. In his parliamentary speech, he acknowledged that “[t]he Canada we know today would not exist were it not for the efforts of the Chinese labourers ....” He further said, “This apology is not about liability today: it is about reconciliation with those who endured such hardship, and the broader Chinese-Canadian community” (Harper, 2006, para. 22).

Over time, Canada has become associated with cultural pluralism, and is described as a mosaic (Hiebert & Ley, 2001). The Canadian government encourages and assists immigrants who desire to continue to develop their cultural heritage, while seeking to acquire one of the two official languages and thus increase their integration into a pluralistic Canadian society with a shared national identity (Dib, Donaldson, & Turcotte, 2008). In the literature, however, political scientists, theorists, and scholars are to this date still examining what defines “Canadian” and what being Canadian means (Dyck, 2001; Lee & Hébert, 2006). Churchill (2003) points out that “[t]o speak of Canadian identity in the singular is to

deny a key aspect of Canadian identity as it is popularly understood by most Canadians of all origins and linguistic groups” (p. 8). Hence, what being Canadian means to native-born and non-native-born immigrant children and adults, and how they come to construct their own identities, are worthy of scholarly attention.

### **Chapter Summary**

Although some 70 Chinese craftsmen were hired by British Captain James Meares to come to Canada in 1788, the first wave of Chinese immigrants did not arrive until 1858. In actuality, the year 2011 represents 153 years of Chinese-Canadian history. Chinese immigration patterns show that increasingly, Canada is recognized as a place where Chinese people have the freedom to engage in their cultural heritage and linguistic practices. In B.C., recent immigration flow has changed not only the population landscape, but has also introduced changes in the patterns of language use. In this chapter, I have set the sociohistorical context upon which understanding about the immigration flows, as well as cultural and language practices upon which Chinese children and their families built. The next chapter will review the literature on children’s language practices and identities.



## **Chapter 3**

### **Language and Literacy Practices**

My ethnographic study is situated in an educational context where the language of instruction is in French, one of the official languages of Canada. However, children in the study also attend schools where they are immersed in their heritage language and culture. At the same time, the language used in the greater community for commerce is English. The chapter begins with a brief overview of French Immersion programs and Chinese schools, which provides a context for describing the language and literacy practices of young, multilingual Chinese children in this study.

#### **Overview of French Immersion Programs**

French Immersion education was borne out of the first French Immersion program established in St Lambert, outside of Montreal, Quebec in 1965 by a group of parents who wanted to promote bilingualism (English-French) for Anglophone children in local schools (Genesee, 1983). In order to promote and protect the bilingualism, the parents initiated a campaign to galvanize other concerned parents to overhaul existing French language instruction (Safty, 1991).

At that time, French language instruction in public schools was mostly taught by teachers who were native English-speakers whose French language competence varied, and students spoke French with

their teachers and classmates for 20 to 30 minutes a day. The parents argued vehemently that this was inadequate and were afraid that their children would become economically and socially isolated from the majority French culture in Quebec when they graduated from high school (Safty, 1991). The St. Lambert parents were successful in advocating for a new French Immersion initiative in 1965 (Wesche, 2002). As de Courcy (2002) noted, “[t]he success of this experiment led to [French] immersion [programming] spreading throughout the Montreal area, and across Canada” (p. 5).

### ***Enrollment in French Immersion Programs***

In British Columbia, French was first recorded as an optional school subject at Victoria High School in 1876 (Raptis, 2001). However, it was not until the early 1970s when federal funding for promoting French language use in schools became available. In 1977, former Education Minister Pat McGeer recommended that British Columbia should prescribe French language instruction as a required school subject (Carr, 2007). While core French programs were mandatory in high schools, it remained an optional subject for the elementary grades. In 1994, the B.C. Language Policy was enacted whereby all Grade 5 to 8 students would study a second language. This policy was followed by the development of a communication-focused curriculum, the Core French Integrated Resource Package (BC Ministry of Education, 1995/2001). Both the policy and

curriculum were fully implemented in 1997 (Chan, Fisher, & Rubenson, 2007).

In French Immersion programs, students engage in both English and French languages as part of their schooling. French Immersion programs are taught by educators who have proficiency in spoken and written French, and who have earned professional teaching certificates in the province or territory where they reside.

### ***French Immersion Programs in Richmond***

The study took place in a school district in Richmond that has a large Chinese population residing in the area. Increasing enrollment of Chinese children in French Immersion programs has created a need for studies of multilingual and multiliteracy practices and their influence on young children's identity construction. My ethnographic work for this dissertation aims to focus on the daily lives of children, and to better understand children's language use and their engagement in activities within their social networks. This will help create a rich portrait of the language and literacy activities of Chinese children and their cultural positioning during the construction of knowledge and identities.

In the school district where this dissertation research was conducted, there are currently seven schools offering French Immersion programs. While all seven schools are dual-track programs (i.e., offering

English and French language programs), all French Immersion programs are housed in schools where French is the language of instruction except for English class and Language Arts. There are also some single-track programs (i.e., French only schools) available in the Greater Vancouver area.

In general, the early French Immersion program begins from kindergarten and continues to Grade 3. From Grades 3 to 7, all courses are taught in French, except for English and Language Arts, in which students receive an hour-long lesson in English each day. As students progress, courses are increasingly taught in English: 50% between Grades 8 and 10, 75% in Grade 11, and all courses being taught in English (except for the French course) in Grade 12 (School District No. 38, 2011a).

Allen (2004) reports that students who attend French Immersion generally live in families where the parents are well-educated and work in high status positions. The Canadian Council on Learning (2007) conducted a survey of Canadian parents' attitudes toward learning additional languages and showed that language immersion programs are offered in many Canadian schools, French being the most common.

While there are no data on the number of Chinese children who are enrolled in French Immersion programs in the Greater Vancouver region where the study is conducted, there is general information available regarding enrollments of children in French Immersion programs. For

example, 300,000 students are currently taking French Immersion in Canada (Carr, 2007). In B.C., the number rose from 30,414 in 2001 to nearly 43,964 in 2010 (Steffenhagen, 2010). About 55% of students are enrolled in French Immersion programs before Grade 4 in B.C. (Allen, 2004). More girls are enrolled in French Immersion than boys in B.C.: 61% versus 49%, respectively (Allen, 2004).

Regarding students' performance in French Immersion programs, on average they perform better than non-immersion students in English tests of reading (Allen, 2004). Anglophone children enrolled in French Immersion programs learn French with no appreciable effect on their English language literacy (Genesee, 2007; Wesche, 2002). There may be a tendency for less-skilled Anglophone children not to enter French Immersion programs or transfer out of immersion programs when educators have concerns about the child's ability to understand or speak in French. There is some evidence to suggest that schools may be reluctant to recommend French Immersion programs for young children who have limited English language proficiency. As Canadian Council on Learning (2007b) noted, "[o]n the surface, it may seem likely that learning English as a second language presents enough of a challenge to immigrant students whose first language is not English" (p. 7). Despite any counsel from schools to the contrary, a growing number of Chinese/Asian parents have elected to enroll their children in French Immersion programs in B.C (Dagenais & Moore, 2008).

### ***French Immersion Education Research***

Lapkin, Swain, and Shapson (1990) pointed out that “during the 1970s, research on immersion education focused on program outcomes” (p. 683). One important concern at that time was to what extent an immersion education affected children’s first language development (e.g., Genesee, 1983; Genesee, 1989; Genesee, Holobow, Lambert, Cleghorn, & Walling, 1985). Overall, research (e.g., Allen, 2004, Comeau, Cormier, Grandmaison & Lacroix, 1999; Genesee 1987, Swain & Lapkin, 2005) has shown that English-speaking children who enrolled in French Immersion programs tend to have positive long-term cognitive and social development. Research is needed to examine whether French Immersion programs provide optimal conditions to children who speak languages other than the dominant language (English) and the language of instruction (Genesee, 2007; Genesee & Jared, 2008).

During the 1980s and 1990s, researchers expanded the research focus by examining how a myriad of factors (e.g., socioeconomic status, students’ and parents’ attitudes towards learning and French Immersion education, etc.) affected program outcomes (Olson & Burns, 1983). For example, Olson (1983) pointed out that parents who enrolled their children in French Immersion programs were generally professionals and who earned incomes at the upper end of the socio-economic bracket. To understand parents’ attitudes toward immersion education, Olson cited

survey to explore parents who enrolled their children in French Immersion programs in Ontario and highlighted that “78% of the nearly six hundred parents we surveyed listed increased job opportunities as the number one reason for entering their child in the program” (p. 85).

Recent research has shifted from a focus on long term outcomes of French Immersion programs to consideration of the changing cultural fabric within French Immersion classes. One issue that has garnered attention is whether teachers in French Immersion programs use children’s heritage language as a resource for French language learning (Dagenais & Beron, 2001; Dagenais & Day, 1998; Swain, Lapkin, Rowen, & Hart, 1990). For example, Dagenais, Day, and Toohey (2006) explored the 'figured worlds of literacy' through the eyes of 12 multilingual children who attended French Immersion schools. The authors observed children's home and school language and literacy practices over a five year period. Sarah, one of the children in the study could speak, read, and write in Chinese, English, and French. The authors used numerous interview and field observation data to illustrate how Sarah, who was 12 years old at the time, came to construct her identity "within the figured world of 'French Immersion elementary classroom'" (p. 213).

At the beginning, teachers reported that Sarah did not participate much during the classroom activities. According to her English teacher, “Sarah [w]as a ‘very quiet’ girl who participated orally in class only when

called on, yet listened to others ‘very intensely’” (p. 210). As she grew over the two-year period of field observations, the authors noted that “Sarah expressed herself easily when she collaborated with trusted peers in small groups” (p. 211). For example, Sarah worked with a group of peers to create a newspaper for their Grade 5 French class. One of Sarah’s contributions was to prepare instructions in French for making a Chinese New Year’s red envelope. During this literacy activity, Sarah demonstrated her expertise in her Chinese heritage culture. The authors wrote:

As Sarah attended to this task, one of her peers looked approvingly at the instruction sheet Sarah created and tried to copy the Chinese characters. As well, another girl in this group took the instruction sheet in her hands, inspected it admiringly and complimented Sarah: *Ça c’est très bonne, Sarah, c’est bonne*. Sarah seemed pleased at her recognition and smiled as the girl handed back her work. (p. 211)

Even though Sarah was reluctant to participate in large group activities, she actively engaged in literacy practices where “she was able to construct herself as a competent and literate community member” (p. 211). As Sarah progressed through grades, Sarah began to construct her identity as a multilingual and multiliterate learner. Dagenais, Moore, Sabatier, Lamarre, and Armand (2009) posit that “individuals make sense of their print [and/or learning] environment depending on where they are



situated socially and they strategically affiliate with particular representations according to their own experiences and interests” (p. 255).

In summary, investing in French Immersion programs is viewed by many parents as a means to access Canada’s official language communities, thereby paving the way for their children to secure a place in a highly valued Canadian English-French bilingual society (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007a; Dagenais & Lamarre, 2005). Recent research also hints that access to literacy practices in French Immersion programs may be important to construction of positive identities for Chinese, multilingual children.

### **Overview of Chinese Heritage Schools**

A group of Chinese-Canadians formed the Chinese Language Association of British Columbia in December 1989. Their goal was to preserve both the Chinese culture and language in Canada. Over the years, more than thirty Chinese schools have been affiliated with the association, including the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Vancouver, which has offered more than 300 Chinese classes to over 4000 students since 1972 (Chinese Cultural Centre, 2011b). The Richmond school district also offers Chinese language programs as part of its continuing education to its students (School District No 38, Richmond, 2011b).

Programs offered at Chinese heritage language schools vary from one Chinese school to another as they may reflect recent changes in the Chinese population residing in B.C. For example, one local Chinese school principal discussed her modification of her usual recruitment practice by changing the language instruction offered in her school. She said that “Our school can no longer just focus on offering Cantonese lessons. We also need to teach Mandarin in order to meet the increasing Mandarin-speaking students’ needs in Vancouver” (A. E., personal communication, February 23, 2007).

In general, there are three kinds of Chinese programs offered in B.C., which share the educational goal of facilitating children’ cultural understanding as well as reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in a Chinese language.

The first is a Cantonese program, which primarily attracts children of immigrants from Hong Kong. Children are taught to write traditional Chinese characters as well as how to pronounce meanings for the characters in Cantonese. Since there is no one agreed-upon Cantonese curriculum in Canada, the curriculum material is usually imported from Hong Kong (Wang, Wang, & Wang, 2007).

The second option for heritage language schooling is a program where Mandarin is the spoken language of instruction; however, there is a slight variation in pedagogy depending on the prospective students. One

Mandarin program is geared towards the needs of immigrant children from Mainland China in which students are taught to read simplified Chinese characters along with PinYin – a Chinese phonetic alphabet that is used early on to support the reading of Chinese characters. Here, also, the curriculum material is created in China. The other Mandarin language program is geared towards Taiwanese immigrant children. Students learn to read and write traditional Chinese characters, but instead of PinYin, they learn to read Zhuyin Fuhao – a system of symbols for annotating Mandarin sounds, with the curriculum material designed in Taiwan (Wang et al., 2007).

The third approach to pedagogy is varies with the needs of the local community. For example, Chinese schools may tailor programs in order to meet parents' needs (e.g., offering a Chinese class on speaking Cantonese only; Wang et al., 2007).

Many Chinese schools rent classrooms either after school or on weekends from school districts in the Greater Vancouver area. Chinese teachers' qualifications and teaching experiences vary in Chinese heritage language schools. Many Chinese schools are non-profit institutions and are privately run by instructors who are former teachers in their home countries or by a dedicated group of parents. While many teachers were professional teachers in their countries of origin, parents may serve as teachers without any prior teacher training. In order to help nurture the

expertise of teachers, the Chinese Language Association of B.C. and the Chinese Lingual-Cultural Centre of Canada (2011) offer workshops and seminars.

### ***Heritage Language School Research***

Similar to French Immersion education research, there has been growing research in documenting what students are experiencing in heritage language classrooms. Lu (2001) explored the experience of students in a Chinese school through the lens of the immigrant parents in the northern suburb of Chicago. One parent described that “[t]he function of the Chinese school is not simply kids learning about Chinese characters. In a multicultural America, we must be bilingual and bicultural. The Chinese school helps us reach this goal” (p. 213). Lu’s findings highlight that in order to meet the students’ learning needs, it is critical to analyze the range of complexities in multiple language acquisition faced by students and language teaching faced by teachers.

Multilingualism can be defined as “the process of acquiring several non-native languages (i.e., multilingual acquisition) and the final result of this process (multilingualism)” (Cenoz & Genesee, 1998, p. 16). However, Blommaert, Collins, and Slembrouck (2005) note that “[m]ultilingualism should not be understood as ‘full competence in different languages’, despite dominant ideologies which emphasise complete facility” (p. 199). This view is similar to that of Moore and Gajo (2009) who define

multilingualism as “the study of individual’s repertoires and agency in several languages” (p. 138). Multilingual people are able to fluidly use languages for different purposes with different people at different times in their language (Fishman, 2000) and social networks (Moore and Gajo).

Additionally, Grosjean (1982) points out that “language attitude is always one of the major factors in accounting for which languages are learned, which are used, and which are preferred by bilinguals” (p. 127). Research has shown that maintaining a heritage language at home has psychological and social impact for immigrant children (Curdt-Christiansen, 2003; de Courcy, 2002), and that parental attitudes towards the use of a family language enhances children’s proficiency in the languages they speak, their literacy activities, and their identity construction as effective learners (Dagenais et al., 2006).

### ***Languages Usage in Richmond***

Children in the study attended schools in Richmond, British Columbia. Consistent with the high number of recent immigrants since 1991, 65.2% of Richmond’s population aged 15 and over is a first-generation immigrant, while 16.5% are second generation and 18.2% are third generation or more. The country of origin of approximately one-half (49.8%) of these immigrants is China (People’s Republic of China, 26.8%) and Hong Kong, Special Administrative Region (23.0%; City of Richmond, 2011).

One of the most frequently travelled streets used by the families in this dissertation research was Minoru Boulevard, which is located in the heart of Richmond. On Minoru Boulevard, one can see signs written in an English alphabet script, as well as billboards and signs where simplified and traditional Chinese characters are also used.

**Figure 3. Examples of Language Scripts**



The urban signage in Richmond has incorporated both Chinese and English scripts, and the Chinese spoken language is functional and has high status in Richmond. A Chinese person who only speaks Cantonese and/or Mandarin may live successfully in the language communities of Richmond.

### **Spoken Chinese**

There are two forms of spoken Chinese: Mandarin and Cantonese. The former is the official language of China and is spoken by people from

surrounding areas in Northern China. Mandarin is also spoken by people from Taiwan, and most Taiwanese have proficiency in Hakka, a regional language used in Taiwan. Cantonese is spoken by people from Guangdong province in southern China, including Hong Kong. Many recent immigrants from Hong Kong to Canada also speak Mandarin, for once children enter the Hong Kong school system, they learn Mandarin which is a part of the overall curriculum. It was practiced during the British colonial period and has become increasingly important after the 1997 handover (Evans, 2010).

In Vancouver, Chinese immigrants may come from a number of Asian countries and children will have exposure to a number of spoken languages. For example, Mandarin is spoken by educators in most Chinese schools, however, the language spoken by parents at home might be Cantonese. Although Mandarin and Cantonese are phonologically, orthographically and grammatically similar, they differ in substantive ways which make either language largely unintelligible to a monolingual speaker of each language.

There are approximately 400 syllables excluding tones in Mandarin Chinese (or 1300 syllables including tones), which is far less than the number of syllables (approximately 10,000, excluding homophones) available to speakers of English or French (Deng & Dang, 2007). Mandarin and Cantonese have similar, but distinct phonology. Mandarin is

composed of 21 initial consonants and Cantonese has 19. Twelve initial consonants overlap between Mandarin and Cantonese.

### ***Chinese Characters and Writing Systems***

There are over 80,000 Chinese characters which are morphosyllabic (Chueh, Wu, & Chien, 2007). There are two forms of Chinese characters: the simplified and the traditional Chinese characters. The former is borne out of the People's Republic of China government's initiative to decrease the number of strokes in an attempt to standardize different regional printing systems in the 1950s. The latter traditional script is mainly adopted and practiced among people from Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and overseas Cantonese-speaking communities.

Most educational programs in China and North America teach Chinese children to scribe Chinese characters through repetitive writing practices. In these literacy practices, Chinese children first learn strict rules to guide them as they create Chinese characters with precise strokes. Most Chinese characters are comprised of a semantic and a phonetic radical that are configured in either a left-right or top-bottom structure. For example, the word “一” in simplified Chinese characters has one basic stroke that is used to form radicals; “一” is represented in PinYin as yī; meaning one. In this case, the word “一” is also written in the same way in traditional Chinese characters.



Chinese characters are created from cumulative strokes, and with each stroke, their lexical meaning changes. For example, the word “一”, when a stroke is added to the centre of the original character “十”, the meaning changes to ten, or when another stroke is added to the top part of the new character “千”, the meaning changes to one thousand, or when strokes are added to both sides of the new character “禾”, the meaning changes to grain. These examples illustrate how Chinese characters can be constructed in many ways.

In the Chinese writing system, 4,500 regularly used characters map onto approximately 1,700 tonal-syllables in Cantonese and 1300 tonal-syllables in Mandarin (Chow, McBride-Chang, Cheung, & Chow, 2008). Chen (1999) described that “Chinese has adopted a logographic writing system in which the sound values of characters are not indicated in a way that is as direct, explicit, and decomposable as in [an alphabetic-based] phonographic system” (p. 12). Thus, the pictographic script that represents Chinese languages is a non-alphabetic system in which each Chinese character maps onto tonal syllabic. When learning to use written forms of Chinese, children reportedly use phonetic radical cues spontaneously to read novel words (Kuo, 2007). This process differs somewhat from that of learning to read or engage in literacy practices that utilize alphabetic scripts such as English and French. In this dissertation research, children living in Richmond have experience with Chinese

scripts but also the alphabetic scripts associated with English and French.

In the context of Chinese families, reading, writing, and speaking activities are important Chinese literacy practices at an early age (Curdt-Christiansen, 2003; Moore, 2010). The structure of the Chinese languages that children read, write, and hear about them is important for them to use their languages effectively in social networks. Dagenais and Moore (2006) noted that Chinese parents reported that they read story books when their children were in pre-school and kindergarten. For example, one Chinese parent said, “When the older one was studying at the community pre-school, she began to learn to read when she was one year old, and could read encyclopedia herself when she was three...” (p. 20). Chinese parents in this study valued literacy, and they recognize that engaging their children with Chinese characters in isolation and in printed text helps foster Chinese literacy and cultural understanding. Parents play a pivotal role in shaping their children’s use of language in social networks and through their language use, they transmit historical, social, and cultural values. Consistent with the work of others (e.g., Curdt-Christiansen, 2003; Maguire & Curdt-Christiansen, 2007), parents’ attitudes towards languages are transmitted through literacy practices and children’s views about their heritage language emerge from that.

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented an overview of both French Immersion programs and Chinese schools in B.C as they play significant roles in the daily lives of the children in this study. Chinese languages and writing systems differ markedly in structure and form, but for the purposes of this study, I am interested in children's use of languages. Children's choice of language and their use of languages highlight how they identify with the languages they speak.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Construction of Self and Multiple Identities**

The aim of this chapter is to explore theoretical views on how identities emerge for young French Immersion Chinese children. To undertake such an inquiry, I will begin this chapter by discussing historical views on being “Chinese”. This is followed by an overview of constructivist notions of “identities” noted in the academic literature. I will end the chapter by discussing sociolinguistic approaches to gathering understanding about young children’s identity construction.

#### **Being “Chinese”**

During the course of Chinese history and its development, what it means to be “Chinese is indeed a “layered and contested discourse” (Tu, 1994, p. viii). Given the different geographical locations and socio-historical contexts, the way Chinese from Mainland China, Hong Kong people, and Taiwanese think, feel, and behave is bound to reflect their “deep-seated philosophical and institutional doctrines” as well as sociocultural and linguistic practices (Rothbaum, Morelli, Pott, & Liu-Constant, 2000, p. 337). For example, Tsui (2007) wrote that “when [people] self-identify as Hong Kong Chinese, the Chineseness does not refer to national identity, but rather ethnic and cultural affiliation” (p. 133). Ang (2001) explains that terms such as “Chineseness”:

...operates as an open and indeterminate signifier whose meanings are constantly renegotiated and rearticulated in different sections of the Chinese diaspora. Being Chinese outside China cannot possibly mean the same thing as inside. It varies from place to place, moulded by the local circumstances in different parts of the world where people of Chinese ancestry have settled and constructed new ways of living” (p. 38).

In the context of Chinese people residing in Canada, how they define themselves depends upon the contexts they are in and how others define them. For example, Anderson (1991) conducted an in-depth historical analysis of Vancouver’s Chinatown and noted that:

Regardless of how Chinatown residents defined themselves and each other – whether by class, gender, ethnicity, region of origin in China, surname, generation, dialect, place of birth, and so on – the settlements were perceived by Europeans through lenses of their own tinting. (p. 30)

### **How Do We Conceptualize Identities?**

Over the past few decades, researchers and theorists have attempted to conceptualize identities in many ways (Barth, 1969; Erikson, 1963, 1968; Marcia, 1966, 1976, 1980; Phinney, 1989, 1990; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986). The following discussion presents an

overview of how different researchers and scholars come to conceptualize identities in the academic literature. However, in this dissertation research, identities will be discussed through the lens of multilingualism as described by Fishman (2000), Grosjean (1982, 2008, 2010), and Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004).

### ***Personal Identity***

Erikson's (1963, 1968) conceptualization of identity came to light when he was treating Second World War veteran patients who suffered from after-war disturbances. He used the term 'ego identity' to explain these veterans' feelings of a loss of sameness and continuity in their lives. Erikson (1963) explained that:

What impressed me most was the loss in these men of a sense of identity. They knew who they were; they had a personal identity. But it was as if subjectively, their lives no longer hung together – and never would again. There was a central disturbance in what I then started to call ego identity. (p. 42)

The consequences of these sociopolitical events have affected how the Second World War veterans incorporated these lived experiences into their identities, which influenced their interpretations of the meaning of life.

As Erikson conducted further research, he put forward a conceptual framework of adolescents' identity, which expanded on Hall's (1904)

notion of adolescents as undergoing a period of ‘storm and stress’. Erikson (1963) viewed the turmoil faced by adolescents as a normative process of development. In one of his books, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, Erikson (1968) explained that adolescents’ identity is an interplay among biological, personal, environmental, and societal contexts. Erikson (1977) further explained that “[t]he process of identity formation depends on the interplay of what young persons at the end of childhood have come to mean to themselves, and what they now appear to mean to those who become significant to them” (p. 106). Erikson (1968) stated that:

The final identity, then, as fixed at the end of adolescence, is superordinated to any single identification with individuals of the past: it includes all significant identifications, but it also alters them in order to make a unique and reasonably coherent whole of them.  
(p. 161)

As adolescents mature, they are often able to resolve developmental crises and develop an achieved identity. Erikson’s conceptual framework laid the foundation for views on identity construction that consider past and present experiences, including those that occur in early childhood.

### ***Ethnic Identity***

Ethnic identity is another often-researched concept in the literature. First and foremost, Barth’s (1969) seminal view of ethnic identity is that

people define their ethnic identity based on how they perceive their ethnicity in relation to the social group. Barth wrote:

...ethnic identity is superordinate to most other statuses, and defines the permissible constellations of statuses, or social personalities, which an individual with that identity may assume. In this respect ethnic identity is similar to sex and rank, in that it constrains the incumbent in all his activities, not only in some defined social situations? (p. 17)

Heller (1984) further explained that ethnic identity is socially negotiable, which cannot be understood without understanding the relevant social contexts and interactions. In order to highlight the social interaction aspect of ethnic identity, Isajiw (1990) explained that ethnic identity provides information to people as to how to “locate themselves in one or another community internally by states of mind and feelings...and externally by behavior appropriate to these states of mind and feelings” (pp. 35-36). Isajiw (1990) wrote:

The internal, subjective aspects of ethnic identity refer to images, ideas, attitudes, and feelings.... These may be stereotypes of self or of the group and perceived stereotypes by others of oneself and one's group.

External aspects refer to observable behaviour...such as (1) speaking an ethnic language, practicing ethnic traditions, and so



on; (2) participation in ethnic personal networks, such as family and friendships; (3) participation in ethnic institutional organizations, such as churches, schools, enterprises, and the media; (4) participation in ethnic voluntary associations, such as clubs, 'societies', and youth organizations; and (5) participation in functions sponsored by ethnic organizations such as picnics, concerts, public lectures, rallies, dances. (pp. 37-38)

To illustrate children's emerging sense of ethnic affiliation, Kowalski and Lo (2001) examined 225 Taiwanese children (109 boys and 116 girls) who were between 3 and 11 years old regarding ethnic/racial group membership and bias. They used the following age group categories: 3 to 5, 6 to 7, 8 to 9, and 10 to 11 years old, and reported that there was a detectable significant difference among age, gender, and group membership in choosing photos to which they most related. Specifically, Taiwanese children who were in the 3- to 5-year-old and 6- to 7-year-old groups tended to select photos that had specific Asian physical features, compared to older children. Kowalski and Lo explained:

...even the 3- to 5-year-olds selected Asian photos significantly more often than expected by chance indicates that...children in Taiwan begin to display an awareness of the physical features that mark racial group membership at a fairly young age. (p. 447)

Kowalski and Lo's findings affirm those reported by Morland and Kwang (1981), who studied a group of 4- to 6-year-old Asian children in Taiwan and 4- to 6-year-old White children in the United States. Morland and Kwang found that when asked to select photos that had specific physical features similar to their own, 50% of the Taiwanese children tended to choose photos that had Asian physical features, and 82% of the children of European descent in the United States chose photos that highlighted European physical features.

The similarity noted in both Kowalski and Lo's and Morland and Kwang's findings suggests that young children select photos that show people with ethnic or racial features that are familiar to the children, rather than those that are unfamiliar. As Costigan, Koryzma, Hua, and Chance (2010) describe, "[a]t young ages, a central focus of ethnic identity development is on learning about characteristics of one's ethnic group; as children make the transition into early adolescence, this focus shifts to understanding the personal meaning of one's cultural group membership" (pp. 264-265).

### ***Social Identity***

As Tajfel (1981) describes, social identity is "part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his[/her] knowledge of his [/her] membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (p. 255). To illustrate

this, Goldstein (2002, 2003) situated her observations at “Northside Secondary School” (an alias for a Toronto high school). Goldstein observed that many Hong Kong immigrant students faced a dilemma when speaking English at school. If they spoke English with their peers from Hong Kong, they might seem to be showing off their English proficiency since their peers can speak and understand Cantonese perfectly and thus might be excluded by their peers (meaning group membership). Victor Yu, an informant, explained:

For the Hong Kong people, right? We will, we will rarely use English to speak to each other except for people who are born here or have been here for a long time. If that is not the case, right? [w]e will speak Cantonese because if we[,] like[,] talk English with them, right? [t]hey do think you are really, like, showing off your skill in English. (p. 16)

This perception is shaped by the historical context of their place of origin. Hong Kong was a British colony, and in order to climb the professional ladder (whether academic or corporate), it was/is essential to master English: “It is the association of English with membership in this elite bilingual class in Hong Kong that helps explain why Cantonese-speaking students at Northside associated speaking English with showing off” (Goldstein, 2003, p. 255).

Through social interaction and observation, language is “one of many social practices that students learn as they participate in the social activities of their communities” (Dagenais & Toohey, 2002, p. 1). The main point illustrated by Goldstein’s research is that many Hong Kong immigrant students chose to speak Cantonese in school as a reflection of their social identification with their peers. Even though they might be punished for speaking Cantonese at school, they agreed that it is important to be included by their Chinese peers (meaning social groups; Goldstein, 2003).

### ***Cultural Identity***

Baumeister (1986) describes how people’s identities can be shaped and reinforced by events and experiences in their cultural realms. Cultural identity is viewed as a shared understanding of cultural values (Hofstede, 2001; Triandis, 1995). Cultural identity can be a verbal expression or a symbolic representation of children’s and adults’ feelings towards a culture and their interaction with others as they come to develop a sense of belonging to a culture which provides them with rules and norms to guide their thoughts, emotions, and behaviours.

To illustrate children’s emerging sense of cultural affiliation, Tsui (1997) used an ethnographic approach to study the transition of a six-year-old Chinese boy who emigrated from Hong Kong to Canada. Tsui noted that “[w]hen Lincoln first arrived in Canada, he strongly resisted

speaking English. He also rejected his English name” and insisted on using his Chinese name (p. 87). As Lincoln was exposed to and acquired new cultural experiences, Tsui reported by the end of the study that “after a process of adjustment..., he adjusted well. Although he still thinks that he is Chinese, he also thinks of himself as a member of Canada...” (p. 87). This is another piece of empirical evidence to support the idea that young children may be aware of their place in their culture of origin as well as their new culture at a fairly young age.

Verma et al. (1999) explored the cultural identity of a group of 363 Chinese children (ranging in age from 11 to 20) who resided in Britain and Hong Kong. The authors reported that respondents who described themselves as ‘British’, ‘Hong Kong Chinese’, or ‘British-Chinese’ had difficulty in saying with confidence what ‘British’ or ‘Chinese’ meant to them. Of the three groups, children in the British-Chinese group had the most difficulty, because they knew they were Chinese, but were growing up in Britain. For example, a 14-year-old girl defined herself as “British-Chinese” and said:

Sometimes I feel I live in two worlds. When I am in school, I think I am an [sic] English, when I am at home I feel [like] I am Chinese.... I feel more comfortable at home with my parents and family, but in school it is easier to use the English language. (Verma et al., 1999, p. 63)

This quotation is illustrative of Hall's (1990) explanation of cultural identity, which is a "matter of "becoming" as well as "being." It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history, and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories" (p. 225).

Wang posits that "the framework of culture is embodied in the construction of memory and self from the very beginning" (as cited in Ulrich, 2004, p. 3). Wang reasons that:

The development of memory and self is not merely a cognitive achievement nor is it solely constrained by an individual's immediate social setting. Differing cultural values and beliefs that are embedded in everyday activities shared between parents and children play a crucial role in shaping the mode in which memory and self-identity are established and maintained. (as cited in Ulrich, p. 3)

Pavlenko (2006) investigates the issues of bilingualism and emotion by recruiting bi- or multilingual participants. Based on the participants' web questionnaire responses, Pavlenko discovered that participants "frame the perception of distinct selves through the discourse of language socialization" (p. 13). In other words, participants' knowledge in two or more languages supplied them with "different repertoires, cultural scripts,

frame[s] of expectations, autobiographic memories, and levels of proficiency and emotionality” (p. 27).

At the same time, Tang and Dion (1990) note that many children have a difficult time finding a balance between their parents’ cultural heritage (e.g., language and practices) and their acculturation to a host country. Not only do these add to the tension between children’s heritage culture and the culture of the host country, but their experiences can also lead them to feel polarized between two cultures. Grosjean (1982) points out that while “integration of traits from two [or more] cultures may lead some people to feel that they do not belong to either culture” (p. 161), it is during the integration process that people come to create their own identities.

In summary, this section gave an overview of how identities have been theorized by various researchers in the academic field. Exploring how young children come to assign an identity to themselves is a varied and complex process (Verma et al., 1999). Young children are situated in a social context where they are exposed to cultural assumptions, beliefs, customs, and values through social interaction and language use with others (e.g., parents) early in their lives. While such insights shed light on the social and cultural experiences that are important to young children’s identity construction, a more dynamic approach to this subject is to explore how young children come to describe themselves as similar to or

different from others through language use during social interactions. Whether such interactions transmit knowledge of individualism and/or collectivism in young children, it sets the foundation for how young children will come to describe who they are and their place in the world. Hence, individualism and collectivism are two aspects of culture that have relevance to this discussion. In the next section, I will discuss self and identities through the lens of western and eastern philosophies.

## **Self and Identities**

### ***Constructivist Views on Development***

During the 18th and 19th centuries, English philosophers used the terms individualism and collectivism in relation to political ideologies (Rychlak, 2003). Individualism was linked to liberalism, which is a political ideology focused on maximizing individual freedom, equal members' participation in group activities, and in which group membership is voluntary. It was during the 18th century when both the American Revolution (in which people fought for the belief that all men are created equal and entitled to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness") and the French Revolution (in which people fought for liberty and equality) occurred that the notion of individualism was propagated (Triandis, 1995).

In contrast, collectivism is a political ideology which emphasizes the values of group ownership and sharing of resources among group members (Rychlak, 2003). Plato stressed that the self is bounded by



relationships with others in a society: “the individual is both a ‘concrete individual’ and a ‘constituent member’ of society rather than a mere part of the organic world” (as cited in Hall, 1963, p. 16).

Likewise, George Herbert Mead in *Mind, Self and Society* (1967) emphasized the role of societal context on emergence of identity:

The self is something which has a development; it is not initially there, at birth, but arises in the process of social experience and activity, that is, develops in the given individual as a result of his relations[hip] to that process as a whole and to other individuals within that process. (p. 135)

Mead explained that “[i]t is the characteristic of the self as an object to itself that I want to bring out. This characteristic is represented in the word “self,” which is a reflexive, and indicates that which can be both subject and object” (pp. 136-137). That is, “self-consciousness involves the individual’s becoming an object to himself by taking the attitudes of other individuals toward himself within an organized setting of social relationships” (p. 225). The key point here is that the self acts not only according to its perceptions but also according to the perceptions of others.

In today’s ever-changing social world, children have more opportunities to interact with others from different social groups than in

the past. In this view, it is the diversity in these interactions that adds to the complexity of identity construction. Hall (1996) concurs:

We can no longer conceive of 'the individual' in terms of a whole, centred, stable and completed Ego or autonomous rational 'self'. The 'self' is conceptualised as more fragmented and incomplete, composed of multiple 'selves' or identities in relation to the different social worlds we inhabit, something with history, 'produced' in process. The 'subject' is differently placed or positioned by different discourses and practices. (p.225)

Martin, Sugarman, and Hickinbottom (2003) also note that the self is more than a physical entity whose thoughts, feelings, and behaviours can be objectively explained by and reduced to biological and/or cultural determinants. Trueba (1999) explains that reflection on the self involves a process whereby people "discover multiple layers of [their] personality and multiple identities developed in response to [their] engagement in making meaning with [others] from diverse cultures, language and social strata" (p. xxvii). In essence, when children interact with others, they come to recognize that they exist independently of others, and that they come to know themselves through discursive practices in multiple contexts with others. Part of the complexity in this process is dealing with conflicts among multiple identities. In the words of Brehm and Kassin (1993):

Being able to recognize [ourselves] as a distinct entity is a necessary first step in the evolution and development of a self-concept [or identities], the sum total of beliefs [we] have about [ourselves]. The second step involves social factors [where] other people serve as a mirror in which we see ourselves. We often come to know ourselves by imagining what significant others think of us and incorporating these perceptions into our self-concept [or identities]. (p. 48)

Fay (1996) echoes the idea, stating that “by being an object to another [person, we] not only become aware of [ourselves] as a conscious being; [we] also thereby become aware that there is a potential difference between what others see and what [we] feel or experience” (p. 43).

The social system in which young children’s awareness of who they are develops is constantly in flux. As Bandura (1997) points out:

[P]eople are both producers and products of social systems. Social structures...do not arise by immaculate conception; they are created by human activity. Social structures, in turn, impose constraints and provide resources for personal development and everyday functioning. But neither structural constraints nor enabling resources foreordain what individuals become and do in given situations. (p. 6)

In other words, young children’s sense of self is likely constrained by as well as developed through engagement with others in social structures,

and it is through human activity that young children come to incorporate cultural beliefs and values into their evolving conceptions of identity.

Children learn early on in life that they exist independently of their surroundings. Lewis and Brooks-Gunn (1979) conducted an experiment on young infants who were 9 to 24 months old in which mothers were asked to put a red dot on their child's nose. Each child's behaviour was observed and recorded after placing him or her in front of a mirror. Findings showed that younger infants touched the mirror rather than their nose. However, by 15 months, older infants touched their nose and some even tried to get rid of the red dot. While infants have the notion of "me" and "not-me" quite early in their lives, Piaget pointed out that young children are by and large "unconsciously centered on" themselves (as cited in Light, 1973, p. 39).

How children come to know different points of view will depend upon social interactions with parents, peers, and significant others with whom they have interacted in their childhood (Carpendale & Lewis, 2006). As young children use language to interact intentionally with others, they become more aware of themselves as independent from others. Young children are active agents in this process. Throughout the child development literature, studies repeatedly affirm that children's identities are constructed through interactions with parents and significant others. That is, children slowly come to know themselves as distinct from their

significant others (e.g., friends, siblings, and parents) through social interactions in which they begin to be aware of having a perspective that may or may not align with the perspectives of others.

In summary, in a developmental view, young children's identity construction is based on their social interactions as they move from young childhood to adolescence and from adolescence to adulthood (Erikson, 1963, 1968, 1977). As young children interact with others (e.g., friends, siblings, and parents), they become more aware of the cultural and social expectations that guide their everyday life. Even though culture affects the way social life is constituted and maintained, "rule-followers...do not simply "conform" to rules, but instead elaborate and transform them in the process of following them" (Fay, 1996, p. 56). Through exposure to cultural practices and values, children will come to acknowledge who they are and their place in the world as they continue to engage in the negotiation process and language use during their social interactions.

### ***Eastern Philosophies***

Eastern philosophies also describe the construction of self and multiple identities as manifested through learning and social relationships (Waley, 1992; Yutang, 1994). In the eastern literature, Confucius (孔子 or K'ung Fu Tzu) was a prominent philosopher and teacher who was born in 551–478 BC. His work promoted self-development through learning and social relationships (de Bary, 1996). He believed that self-development is

manifested in someone who puts the interests of the group and society before his or her own interests. This is the ultimate goal of self-development, which is to sacrifice oneself in order to attain moral perfection as opposed to striving for liberty and personal uniqueness. Lu (1998) explains the difference between the western notion of self vis-à-vis the eastern notion in that “the former involves personal autonomy and recognizes distinct characteristics of a particular person, whereas the latter is perceived as a physical entity separate from the collective or a spiritual entity capable of achieving transformation and enlightenment through self-control and cultivation” (p. 96).

To be attuned to one’s self, Confucius advocated self-development in striking a harmonious balance between people and nature (Weiming, Hejtmanek, & Wachman, 1992). It is something that is seldom mentioned in western discussions on self and identities. According to Confucius, “[m]an is the product of the forces of heaven and earth, of the unions of the yin and the yang principles, the incarnation of spirits and the essence of the five elements (metal, wood, water, fire, and earth)” (as cited in Yutang, 1994, p. 236).

For example, in order to be attuned to one’s self, one must maintain a balance between yin and yang, which are viewed as two opposing forces. The former refers to the “feminine power”, which is characterized by dark, cool, soft, wet, earth, and moon, whereas the latter is the “masculine

power”, characterized by light, hard, hot, dry, sky, and sun (Lee, 1997, pp. 60-61). Together, they produce chi (energy). Our human energy is interrelated with the energy of the universe. Resolving that imbalance of energy will contribute to our own self-development. As Friedman (1992) explains, Chinese people’s self-development is “an elaborate and deadly serious game of mirrors. It is a complex temporal interaction of multiple practices of identification external and internal to a subject or population” (p. 853).

In addition, Confucius emphasized relations between people and the state built upon the Five Relations: sovereign and subject, father and son, elder brother and younger brother, husband and wife, and friend and friend. This provides a hierarchical structure and rules for maintaining domestic order and preserving traditions which include respect for superiors and the aged, benevolence, traditional rituals, loyalty, and filial piety (Chen, 2004).

Collectivistic cultures emphasize filial piety and family cohesion. According to Confucius, the superior man is sincere, loyal to his lord, and filial toward his parents. For example, Chinese are expected to show piety towards their parents and kindness towards their children, and to be loyal to them (Yum, 1988). “Filial piety” refers to children’s obligations to their parents (Yeh & Bedford, 2003); together they build family solidarity and fulfill their familial responsibilities (Feldman & Rosenthal, 1990).

Specifically, the superior man knows his culture, adheres to both social and religious forms (禮 or Li) and practices reciprocity. These qualities are further conveyed by Confucius' notion of humanity (仁 or Jen) with respect to his relations, friends, and associates. Therefore, it is through social and cultural activity that young people become actualized as humans.

Chinese people undergo these processes in their self-development. Historically, one's worth was primarily determined by one's placement in public examinations in China. The traditional view of academic achievement is that it is the only 'sure' path to advancement. As Confucius noted, the "officer, having discharged all his duties, should devote his leisure to learning. The student, having completed his learning, should apply himself to [becoming an] officer" (Analects, XIX; as cited in Piironen, 2010, p. 191). Even today, many Chinese parents still place a strong emphasis on education because it is the primary means to enable the family's upward social mobility, which in turn upholds and honours the family's name. Weiming, Hejtmanek, and Wachman (1992) noted that in order to cultivate Chinese people's self-development, their identity as Chinese emerges through the practice of correct ritual behaviors, which are embedded in social relationships.

Confucius also emphasized the importance of education, which is an important means to cultivate people's self and moral development. To cultivate people's self-development, there are prominent texts written



before 300 BC known as the Four Books (四書 or Si Shū) and Five Scriptures (五經 or Wǔ Jīng). The Four Books are the Analects of Confucius (論語 or Lún Yǔ), Mencius (孟子 or Mèng Zǐ), The Great Learning (大學 or Dà Xué), and The Doctrine of the Mean (中庸 or Zhōng Yōng). The Five Scriptures are: The Book of Changes (易經 or Yi Jīng), The Book of History (書經 or Shū Jīng), The Book of Rites (禮記 or Lǐ Jì), The Book of Poetry (詩經 or Shī Jīng), and Spring and Autumn Annals (春秋 or Chūn Qiū). The purpose of learning these Four Books and Five Scriptures went beyond the notion of being educated and the ability to write the civil service examinations during the Ming and Qing dynasties. As Lee (1996) concurs, the “purpose of learning is therefore to cultivate oneself as an intelligent, creative, independent, autonomous, and...authentic being” (p. 34). In essence, to become an authentic being one must actively engage in learning activities whereby one comes to know and define oneself in relation to these desired qualities.

Confucius stated that “[y]oung people are not human; they are merely in the process of becoming human” (as cited in Chen, 2006, p. 13). To enable young people to become human, on-going learning is the key to a Chinese person’s self-development (Li, 2001). Cheng (2000) points out that the Chinese term ‘knowledge’ consists of two characters: “One is ‘xue’ (to learn) and the other is ‘wen’ (to ask)” (p. 441). This reciprocal process allows learners to inquire and question their social and textual

information, and how the newfound knowledge contributes to their ongoing self-development.

There is also a Chinese phrase — Hao Xue Xin (好學心) — that translates literally as “one’s heart and mind for wanting to learn.” Researchers (e.g., D’Andrade, 1992) acknowledge that such culturally-specific concepts not only guide people’s behaviours, but also inform people’s goals and purposes in life. Li (2001) explains that:

There is a large repertoire of culturally-accumulated conceptions, expressions, wisdom, and values regarding learning. The multiplicity of these terms captures nuances of epistemological conceptions, behaviour, emotions and social norms of learning, and provides effective tools for members of the culture to use for their specific learning needs, as well as for parents and teachers to help the young. (p. 118)

In a study among Hong Kong Chinese, Salili (1995) found that being a good son or daughter is an important achievement goal. Achieving excellence would not only make their parents proud, but is also an indication that the family’s financial help has not been wasted. It has also been shown that Asian parents who have sacrificed for their children tend to demonstrate that their self-worth is dependent on their children’s academic success (Yao, 1985). Confucius asserted that through learning, young people would come to develop their self, and ultimately understand

the concept of conduct, which is one way of becoming the gentleman or the superior man.

In his teachings, Confucius discusses the intricate connections among morality, politics, philosophy, social structure, and quasi-religious beliefs. Liu (1982) notes that:

In reality, Confucian thought on mental development, together with other ideas in his system, has had a significant influence on the way people have thought about human growth and development and considered their own responsibilities in caring for and educating the younger generation. It has become a component of the cultural background of the society in which the Chinese have lived from generation to generation. (pp. 392-3)

To illustrate the significance of Confucius' ethical tenets, Ma and Smith (1992) conducted a national survey of 9000 households in Taiwan regarding Confucianism, and reported that Confucianism still dominates how Taiwanese people think, feel, and behave in the 21st century. Galt (1929) noted that Confucianism is "almost the history of China, for perhaps in no other country has the educational process had such influence in shaping the national life" (as cited in Hu, 1984, p. 1).

In summary, over the centuries, Confucius' teaching has influenced the development of East Asian countries' epistemologies. His teachings have become known as Confucianism, which forms the foundation of

Chinese culture. Many of Confucius' ethical tenets have been woven into the cultural beliefs and values as well as identities of Asia. Some of the core differences between an individualistic culture (such as self-reliance and emotional distance from in-groups) versus a collectivistic one (e.g., interdependence and a close relationship to in-group members) are dependent largely upon how individuals come to make sense of these aspects of culture and their place in the world, which shapes their emerging sense of self and multiple identities.

### ***Sociolinguistic Approaches***

I now turn the readers' attention to an overview of the sociolinguistic approaches (Fishman, 2000; Grosjean, 1982, 2008, 2010; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004) that are important to this study of young French Immersion Chinese children's emerging sense of self and identity construction. As mentioned earlier, parents of young children play an important role in facilitating children's sense of self. The degree to which parents facilitate the transmission of values of the children's culture of origin versus the new culture in which they live will likely be related to the magnitude of acculturation of the parents, themselves, to the society in which they now live and learn.

Based on the sociopsychological research, the ability to decipher the hidden dimensions of a new culture is dependent upon immigrants' experiences during the acculturation processes in the country where they

now reside. Berry's (1980, 1987) acculturation framework assumes that all aspects of acculturation influence how immigrants view themselves in their new communities. In order to determine their positions and roles in this new culture, immigrants may examine what benefits or consequences they face if they accept or reject the cultural and linguistic norms and values of their country of origin.

Based on the dialogical processes undergone by people in Berry's work, there are four categories of acculturation (Krishnan & Berry, 1992):

- 1) Assimilation is defined as people who distance themselves from their own cultural heritage by adopting the dominant culture and customs as well as participating in the dominant cultural activities.
- 2) Separation refers to people who embrace their own cultural heritage and segregate themselves from the dominant culture and customs as well as not participating in the dominant cultural activities.
- 3) Marginalization is defined as people who neither practice their cultural heritage nor adopt the dominant culture and customs.
- 4) Integration refers to people who practice their cultural heritage as well as adopting the dominant culture and customs.

According to Sam and Berry (1995), adjusting to a new environment is a challenging process, especially for immigrants who have no or minimal knowledge of the country to which they have immigrated. In the

context of identity construction, Pavlenko (2001) talks about repositioning (i.e., searching for a position) undergone by new immigrants in order to make sense of and forge relationships with others in their new communities. Pavlenko notes that “the person can only be a meaningful entity, both to himself or herself and to others, by being “read” in terms of the discourse available in that society” (p. 133).

While Berry’s (1980, 1987) acculturation framework sheds light on people’s self-interpretation and evaluation process regarding their place in a new culture, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) argue that “the categories adopted in sociopsychological research, such as ‘acculturation’ ...,’ are oversimplified, ambiguous in their specifications, and detached from real-life contexts”; especially, they do not address power relationships between people (p. 6). Pavlenko (2001) explains that:

[Our] subjectivities are not entirely a product of [our] own free choice and agency: they are co-constructed with others who can accept or reject them and impose alternative identities instead. Often, depending on the power balance, it is others who define who we are, putting us in a position where we have to either accept or resist and negotiate these definitions. (p. 135)

Children have multiple identities and constantly negotiate and renegotiate as they cross boundaries and social communities and interact with others on a daily basis (Dagenais et al., 2006). As a result, children’s

identities are shaped by their language practices and how they position themselves in social situations (Dagenais, 2003; Norton, 2000; Toohey, 2000). Sociolinguists' work focuses on "what the bilingual's languages are used for, when they are used, with whom, etc." (Grosjean, 2008, p. 12). We use languages for different purposes and to interact with different people who may or may not share the same language networks (Fishman, 2000).

From both sociolinguistic (scholars such as Fishman and Grosjean) and ethnographic (scholars such as Hymes and Wolcott) perspectives, "one think[s] of a community (or any group, or person) in terms, not of a single language, but of a *repertoire*", which highlights various ways of speaking in that community (original italics, Hymes, 1995, p. 33). Hymes (1974) states that speech communities go beyond understanding "the concurrence of rules of grammar and rules of use" (p. 120). The emphasis of speech communities is not so much on the mechanics of language use, but rather the social interaction between speakers in that shared network through the use of language.

A speech community is one way for people to gain access to "available resources for speaking" and understand "patterns and mechanisms of their allocation and distribution" (Philipsen & Coudu, 2005, p. 364). Languages allow speakers to use "linguistic resources to index their identities" (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. 14). Romaine

(2001) explains that “[t]hrough the selection of one language over another or one variety of the same language over another speakers display what may be called “acts of identity,” choosing the groups with whom they wish to identify” (pp. 517-18).

Another way to describe language use is through the lens of marked and unmarked language choices between speakers. Myers-Scotton (1995) explains that the marked choice refers to speakers who make unexpected or unusual language choices (which are outside of normative communicative practices) when communicating with interlocutors in specific social contexts. In contrast, the unmarked language choice refers to speakers who align their normative communicative practices when communicating with interlocutors in any context. Myers-Scotton argues that how speakers make their language choices not only reflects their communicative intentions, but also goes beyond the actual verbal messages sent by the speakers. In essence, both marked and unmarked language choices illustrate speakers’ discourse strategies in highlighting their identities to interlocutors.

Hymes (1995) also describes ways of speaking which “comprise *speech styles*, on the one hand, and *contexts of discourse*, on the other, together with relations of appropriateness obtaining between styles and contexts (original italics, p. 33). The process of constructing identities can be explored through the children’s engagement in activities with others.



Specifically, the activities in which children engage reveal how children come to use languages to construct their identities.

The use of discourse strategies to convey identities to interlocutors occurs in the home, and also in educational contexts such as schools. In the context of Chinese (immigrant) families, when children and/or parents communicate in their chosen language or mix languages in a specific social context, that particular language or languages reflect(s) their identities in that interaction. In a similar vein, Heller (2006) observed how teachers and students interacted with one another in a French school in Toronto, Canada. She reported that while both teachers and students generally used the authorized dominant language (which would be equivalent to Myers-Scotton's (1995) notion of unmarked language choice) for official school-related tasks, many reported using unauthorized languages (which would be equivalent to Myers-Scotton's notion of marked language choice) in schools generally. The choice of using an unauthorized language represents individuals' preferred identities, which illustrates their negation of the authorized dominant language (Canagarajah, 2006; Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 2005).

The relevance of the above discussion in this dissertation is that language is an important source of power, and that it is also a critical aspect of people's identities. In the context of being a minority, whether at home, in schools or in communities, the use of language represents an act

of identity. Page and Tabouret-Keller (1988) explain that:

The density and multiplexity of social networks have been found to correlate with the degree of focusing around a set of linguistic norms, since joining and maintaining membership of such networks is itself an act of identity. The networks are the groups which the individual has actually joined; their isomorphism [is] with the group or groups with which from time to time he [/she] wishes to be identified. (pp. 116-117)

Through language exchanges, children come to engage in the construction and negotiation process regarding their positions across socio-cultural contexts. The following section will discuss aspects of identity construction that involves the contexts, activities, and relationships between speakers (Fishman, 2000; Grosjean, 1982, 2008, 2010; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004).

### **Contexts**

Contexts provide the references necessary for people to make sense of their behaviours. Noels and Clement (1998) explain that “identity is constructed through language negotiations in different situations, such that the degree of identification with each group depends upon with whom one interacts and the normative expectations of that situation [or context]” (p. 114). In the context of learning, children acquire knowledge via social

interactions, which in turn they come to experience different cultural norms, values, and ideologies.

Children access assumptions, beliefs, customs, values, and words through communication and interaction with others (e.g., parents, teachers, and peers) early in their lives. As children internalize shared language(s) through communication and interaction with others, their identity construction is shaped. Bakhtin (1981) echoes the idea that:

At any given time, in any given place, there will be a set of conditions – social, historical...physiological – that will insure that a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different than it would have under any other conditions. (p. 428)

Bakhtin illustrates that the process of learning language as well as language use and changes are socially constructed. In order for children to make sense of their communication and interaction, they have to understand the utterance (i.e., the activity), the context (i.e., when and where the communication takes place), and the relationship they have established with the other speakers.

### ***Language and Literacy Practices***

From a sociolinguistic viewpoint, language and literacy practices are situated in particular historical, social, political, and cultural contexts (Hymes, 1974; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). ‘Multiliteracies’ is a

multifaceted concept, encompassing historical, cultural, and social literacy. In particular, the New London Group (1996) looked at multiliteracies as “the understanding and competent control of representational forms that are becoming increasingly significant in the overall communications environment, such as visual images and their relationship to the written word” (para. 3). Multiliteracy studies also showed that there are differences in language use and literacy practices across cultures (Jones & Martin-Jones, 2000). Multiliteracy theorists (e.g., Cole & Pullen, 2010; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Gee 2008) put forward the assumption that learners use language and literacy to present their understanding of their places in the world.

For example, when children are engaged in reading, they come to learn new ways of interpreting textual and social information. As children acquire further knowledge, their understanding of themselves and the world is shifted and modified, and thus impacts their views on identities. Similarly, Ivanič (1998) argues that “writing is an act of identity in which [writers] align themselves with socioculturally shaped possibilities of selfhood, playing their part in reproducing or challenging dominant practices and discourses, and the values, beliefs and interests which they embody” (p. 31). In other words, Ivanič’s notion of “possibilities for selfhood” emerges through writing, which reflects the writers’ ability to imagine and create ways of being.

As Street (2003) points out, “the ways in which people address reading and writing are themselves rooted in conceptions of knowledge, identity, and being” (p. 7). When children engage in multiple literacies, their “literate actions reflect multiple interacting spheres of influence – the socio-historical, interpersonal and individual” (Maguire, 2005, p. 1423). This line of thinking reinforces the premises of multiliteracy, which are embedded in “nested contexts of collective and personal meanings and social relationships” (p. 1423). In other words, multiliteracy practices provoke learners to negotiate their identities and positioning across contexts.

Dabène and Moore (1995) explain that when we associate with a community language, that language can be “invested and recognized as the guide to kinship-interpreted group membership” (p. 23). In essence, language is “a badge of cultural and personal identity” which reinforces language and ethnic ties to the group membership (Parke et al., 2002, p. 197). How and when languages are used is an important marker of young children’s identity construction, and their emerging identities are a result of negotiation and renegotiation when interacting with others (Norton, 2000). When children interact with others (such as parents, peers, and teachers), they absorb cultural norms and values as well as language use and practices, which shape their identities. Hall (1992) stated that:

Everywhere, cultural identities are emerging which are not fixed, but poised, in transition between different positions; which draw on different cultural traditions at the same time; and which are the product of those complicated cross-overs and cultural mixes which are increasingly common in a globalised world. (p. 310)

Such interactions, coupled with the powerful role of culture, will influence how children “come to view themselves and remember their personal experiences” (Ulrich, 2004, p. 4). Block (2008) explains that identities are:

neither the sum of the new and the old, nor half of what they were and half of what they are; rather their stories seem more the result of the negotiation of differences cited, as their past and present interact [with] and transform each other. (p. 10)

One of the goals of this ethnographic inquiry is to discover how young French Immersion Chinese children construct identities through engagement in activities and multiple languages. Language use highlights how children position and reposition themselves depending upon the social, cultural, and linguistic contexts they are in (Grosjean, 2010). The contexts in which young children come to use language as well construct meanings from a variety of activities will undoubtedly shape their views of themselves as literate individuals in their social networks.

## **Chapter Summary**

This section began by describing how the concept of identities has been discussed in the literature. Instead of dichotomous categorizations where people have a specific identity (i.e., personal identity, ethnic identity, social identity, and cultural identity), children who use multiple languages come to represent themselves through their language use in a social network. This chapter also highlights how transmission of historical, social, and cultural values occurs through the interaction between parents and children in activities. Observing how such interactions unfold in children's social networks will allow me to develop a rich portrait of their multi-linguistic repertoires, social relations, and their identities in diverse linguistic and cultural contexts.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Methodology**

In order to create a rich portrait of each child's language and literacy activities and how these shape each child's emerging identities, French, Seidman, Allen, and Aber (2006) urge researchers to study the relationship between language and identity through different methods. As Martin (2005) points out:

All perspectives reflect relationships between individuals and the world. Because the human world is a social world, all perspectives arise and are employed within interpersonal interactivity. This is not to say that there is no biophysical world that constrains and also enables human interactivity, but to recognize that biophysical conditions, although necessary, are in no way sufficient for perspectivity of the kind that enables the development and functioning of social-psychological phenomena like mind and self.  
(p. 234)

Thus, I decided to examine my research aim (exploring young French Immersion Chinese children's language use and identity construction) through the lens of ethnography. In this chapter, I will provide an overview of ethnography of communication for it is this specific approach that guides the procedures of the present study.



### ***The Emergence of Hymes' Views on Ethnography***

Malinowski, who published *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* in 1922, first adopted ethnographic methods when conducting fieldwork concerning the TroDaweid Islanders' everyday life in 1914. Malinowski noted that previous research took cultural practices out of context, which made the comparison of various cultural practices difficult (as cited in Harvey & Myers, 1995). In his book, Malinowski explained that one of his goals as an ethnographer is "to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realise *his* vision of *his* world" (original italics, p. 25). After Malinowski's work, ethnography became the dominant form of inquiry among anthropologists (Jaworski & Coupland, 2006). However, the history and origin of ethnography can be traced back to the ancient Mediterranean world (Hymes, 1995).

It was in the early 1970s when Hymes (1974) introduced an alternative research method, which he called 'an ethnography of communication'. Ethnography of communication is a research method designed to explore people's mediative practices that go on between and within speech communities. In other words, Hymes' ethnography of communication emphasizes an emic perspective, which examines phenomena through the eyes and points of view of the observed participants in their speech communities.

While there is not a unifying definition of ethnography, there are some agreed-upon characteristics that used to describe aspects of ethnography: 1) "it is a dialectical, or feed-back (or interactive-adaptive) method"; 2) "methods that initial questions may change during the course of inquiry"; and 3) "it is open-ended, subject to self-correction during the process of inquiry itself" (Hymes, 1995, p. 7). The idea of 'stories' or 'narratives' are also important in ethnography. Hymes (1995) notes that "[i]t is continuous with ordinary life. Much of what we seek to find out in ethnography is knowledge that others already have. Our ability to learn ethnographically is an extension of what every human being must do, that is, learn the meanings, norms, [and] patterns of a way of life" (p. 13).

To connect this point to my sociolinguistic framework, Pavlenko and Blackledge's (2004) concept of identity narrative is illustrative of Hymes' ethnography of communication in that people's negotiation of identities "offer a unique means of...(re)constructing the links between past, present, and future, and imposing coherence where there was none" (p. 18). This view is consistent with Hymes' who notes that narrative "provides...a textual 'architecture' where we can observe...emergent cultural traditions brought into 'confluence' with each other" (as cited in Hymes, 1995, p. viii). Ho (1998) explains that:

Culture enters into the generation of knowledge, because the conceptualization of the phenomenon, as well as the methodology

employed to study the phenomenon on its conceptualization, are both informed by cultural values and presupposition. Psychological knowledge is, in itself, a product of culture. (p. 2)

To understand how young French Immersion Chinese children view themselves in this ethnographic inquiry, I explored their language use during activities through field observations. For example, when children interacted with others in a specific sociolinguistic context, field observations allowed me to document how they were appropriating as well as internalizing a particular language(s) as well as social norms and values (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). Hymes (1995) notes that “speakers of a language, participants in a network of kinship, are not merely objects, but as sources of information, partners in inquiry as well” (p. 20).

Hymes (1995) also discusses how knowledge can be learned through participation and observation. Hence, ethnography in the present study was used to examine social phenomena from the emic (insiders’) perspectives (Pike 1954; Ratner, 2006). As an ethnographer who conducts socio-cultural dissertation research, my goal is to get “as close to the [participants’] action as possible” (Goodson, 1995, p. 334). It is important to first understand the children’s specific socio-cultural linguistic contexts and reflect upon how I can effectively utilize existing theories and frameworks to understand their multilingual development and identity construction.

### ***Rationale for Choice of Ethnography***

In this dissertation, I will adopt an ethnographical approach, which emphasizes “how to ensure that...researchers intent on attributing “culture” to others have themselves experienced culture in some conscious, comparative way” (Wolcott, 1997, p. 331). To achieve this, I will create a portrait of multilingual children and their language use in the activities. This connects to Wolcott’s (1997) description of ethnography in which he notes that “the word “ethnography” means a picture of the “way of life” of some identifiable group of people” (p. 329).

In order to add insights into what I observed at the children’s home vis-à-vis what I observed in school and in local communities, I utilized narrative to undertake this ethnography within the context of young French Immersion Chinese children’s identity construction in multilingual and multicultural settings. Based on this, I defined narrative as a series of events or daily experiences, with the meanings children attribute to them, which are connected to their past, present, and future. Holstein and Gubrium (1997) explains that “[t]he objective is not to dictate interpretation, but to provide an environment conducive to the production of the range and complexity of meanings that address relevant issues, and not be confined by predetermined agendas” (p. 125).

In order to get to the heart of the research aim (exploring young French Immersion Chinese children’s language use and identity

construction), utilizing both ethnography and narrative may be more advantageous approaches for research than simply relying on children's responses to psychometric measurements. Children's narratives are an important means to help explore from the surface level of research to where they actually want to be in sharing their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours with me as the ethnographer (Bochner, 2001; White, 2001; Zimmerman, 2001). Through the children's narratives and field observations, the information that the children offer can help illuminate who they are within a given time and context.

The adoption of narrative is not without criticisms. For example, Plummer (2001) notes that:

The telling of a story of a life is a deeply problematic and ethical process in which researchers are fully implicated. In the hands of a novice researcher – and especially say a student rushing in to gather a life story for a dissertation – such awareness may be very thin and the damage that could be done, enormous. (p. 224)

This may be an underestimation of novice ethnographers who adopt narratives, because when participants are telling their 'stories', it actually engages the ethnographer in the process of understanding the participants' ontological views of life. The ethnographer is reflective in listening to participants' stories, and ask clarifying questions. This can engage participants in a meaningful conversation that can allow more

issues/themes to be discovered and addressed by both the participants and the ethnographer (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997). As Wolcott (1997) notes:

Genuine ethnographic inquiry proceeds best under conditions where there will be time to find out what is going on, and where there is reason to believe that knowing what things mean to those involved could conceivably make a difference. It also requires some understanding of how—or whether—one particular instance, or event, or case, or individual described in careful detail...shares characteristics in common with other instances or events or cases or individuals. (p. 347)

In the context of this dissertation research, adopting ethnography prompted me to explore both the micro-structure of how young children perceive themselves and coordinate different identities, and the macro-structure of how they value their identity in relation to others, and decide which identity should take precedence over other identities in specific contexts and time.

In summary, reviewing the literature on young children's language socialization and identity construction brought to my attention that there is still much to be learned about young children's multilingual and multiliteracy development. As Smythe and Toohey (2009) note, both schools and teachers have "minimal knowledge of the outside school lives

of their multilingual and multicultural students” in the Greater Vancouver area (p. 37). To address this, the adoption of ethnography was used to identify what criteria/standards/guidelines young children use to describe themselves, how they come to interact with diverse peers, and so on. This will help capture the nuances of young French Immersion Chinese children’s language use and identity construction across contexts and time in this dissertation research.

## **Ethnographic Design**

### ***Research Contexts***

As mentioned in Chapter 2, over time, the City of Richmond has become the contemporary ‘Chinatown’ where new Chinese immigrants tend to reside. The following information highlights the immigrants’ resident trends. Prior to 1960, only 3,650 immigrants resided in Richmond. The number of immigrants has increased since 1961: 5,105 immigrants were recorded between 1961 and 1970, rising to 11,525 between 1971 and 1980, and 15,885 between 1981 and 1990. There was a sudden increase recorded between 1991 and 2000: 44,720 immigrants. This was slightly more than double that of the previous decade. There were 18,780 immigrants in Richmond between 2001 and 2006. Altogether there were 99,660 immigrants residing in Richmond, approximately 7% below the age of 15 (BC Stats, 2006).

While Statistics Canada (2003) did not give the breakdown of school-aged immigrant children residing in Richmond, the overall distribution in the Greater Vancouver area between 1991 and 2000 was as follows: 32% resided in Richmond, 29% in Burnaby, 24% in Vancouver, 22% in Coquitlam, and 11% in Surrey. Approximately 2,000 school-aged immigrant children have been arriving annually in B.C. since 2003. The number of immigrant children between 5 and 9 years old residing in B.C. is as follows: 2,134 in 2003; 2,400 in 2004; 3,175 in 2005; 2,513 in 2006; and 2,384 in 2007 (Statistics Canada, 2008). As of 2010, the Richmond school district recorded that there were 22,971 students (The Ministry of Education, 2010). Of 22,971 students, 13,089 (57%) reported that English is not their primary spoken language at home.

### ***Participants***

As briefly described in Chapter 1, my access to the children was developed through the ties that I developed with French Immersion schools and parents during my involvement as a project coordinator in the larger part of the SSRCH study entitled *Literacy of Multilingual Children in French Immersion Programs*, led by Hoskyn, Dagenais, and Moore from 2005 to 2008. The study utilized an ethnographic approach to examine Chinese (immigrant) children's literacy activities at home and in school. To achieve this, questionnaires and semi-structured audiotaped interviews with the participating children, parents, and siblings were done in order to



gain a representative range of literacy activities across home, school, and community contexts.

In particular, the larger part of the study was situated at French Immersion schools in Richmond. Upon approval from SFU's ethics review board, the Richmond School District, and school principals, both research assistants and I distributed the forms to all French Immersion classes. Initially, 40 families expressed interest in participating in the ethnographic study. In the end, of the forty families, 12 families were randomly selected to participate in a semi-structured interview.

All 12 families had resided in the Greater Vancouver area ranging from one to twenty-eight years. They lived in single-family dwellings located on quiet streets in Richmond. Of the 12 families, one family came from Japan, two from Hong Kong, three from China, and six from Taiwan; most had become Canadian citizens. All parents had completed a secondary level education, and most had obtained a post-secondary degree in their country of origin, except three parents: one had completed a post-secondary degree in the United States and two had completed a post-secondary degree in Canada. Regarding which language was spoken most often at home, one family spoke English, one spoke Taiwanese, one spoke Cantonese and English, one spoke Mandarin and English, two spoke Cantonese, and six spoke Mandarin.

In this dissertation, part of the sample was built upon the larger SSRCH study led by Hoskyn, Dagenais, and Moore (2008). In the larger study, the participants were to be either Canadian-born Chinese or Chinese immigrant children, between 6 and 8 years old, and in French Immersion programs. This is a much-needed clarification of how multilingual, multiliteracy, and multicultural practices shape young French Immersion Chinese children's language use and identity construction. This dissertation research was designed to closely observe the linguistic resources children and their family members utilized in their interactions with one another across contexts. This would give me first-hand experience of young Chinese children's actual language practices and interaction processes, including communicative resources, strategies, and challenges, which in turn would provide insights into their language use and identity construction and negotiation at home and in local spaces.

### ***Procedures***

Before I could invite participants, I underwent three ethics reviews. The first step was to submit all research materials to the Research Ethics Board at Simon Fraser University. Upon receiving approval there, the second step was to seek approval from the Richmond school district. Since there are seven French Immersion elementary schools, the third step was to seek approval from the seven school principals. The purposes of this ethnographic inquiry were explained to the seven principals through

phone and/or in-person meetings. Of the seven principals, five helped distribute introductory letters to Chinese parents (see Appendix A/B/C/D) and two declined to participate in the research project.

Initially, forty-five parents expressed an interest by returning the reply slip to their schools, writing me an e-mail, or leaving a voice message for me. Upon explaining the purposes of this ethnographic inquiry to the parents, only 15 parents were willing to participate in the research. Because the committee members noted that it would be too time-consuming and overwhelming for me to observe all 15 families, I used the “drawing from a hat” method to randomly select five families to participate in the research and to have their daily routine observed in-depth for one week each. The method was adopted from Purcell-Gates (1996, 2000, 2004). I will go into this in more detail later in the chapter.

***Informed consent.*** Since the participants were under 19 years of age, both the children and their parents were asked to read and sign the “Informed Consent for Minors” form (see Appendix H/I/J). The parents were also asked to read and sign the “Informed Consent by Participants” form themselves (see Appendix E/F/G).

All informed consents were obtained before the initial home interview. Participants were informed that:

- 1) All participation is voluntary. They can refuse to answer any questions and/or terminate the research project at any time (which will not affect

the children's school grades). There will be no physical or psychological risks involved.

- 2) All materials will be held in a secure location. The information will be kept confidential to the full extent permitted by law.
- 3) All audio interview tapes will be destroyed within one year of completion of the study.
- 4) They will be informed how to obtain a summary of the result. Upon completion of this study, a summary of the results will be sent to those participants who make a request and to all participating schools.

### **Data Collection Methods**

As mentioned in Chapter 1, this ethnographic inquiry took place in Richmond for two major reasons. Firstly, there have been an increasing number of children enrolled in French Immersion programs in Richmond. Secondly, from a documentation standpoint, children's daily routines and interactions could be put in context since they lived in a similar geographic and communal context. The following data collection methods (collection of participants' artifacts and field observations) will be employed in this ethnographic study.

#### ***Participants' Artifacts***

Constructing identities reflects a composite of lived experiences which are constructed by cultural and social transmission from parents, peers, and significant others with whom children have interacted over

time. Being attuned to the way young children engage in multiple languages and multiliteracy practices enables me to better document their emerging identities. To achieve this, I documented the children's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours through the use of drawing (e.g., language maps) and daily diaries to record activities from their own perspectives. I also asked the children to save some school work and free writing and drawings that they produced on their own.

***The use of drawings.*** Children were asked to draw a language map to record which language(s) they used to communicate and with whom. This helped me to discern if there were any differences in the way parents and children used language when I was not observing. The children were also asked to draw a picture of a country symbol(s) that is/are most representative of them, which allowed me to see how they wanted to be described visually.

Drawing is a way to gain access to young children's phenomenological world. By providing children with the freedom to draw, children can construct their language socialization and sense of self in ways that might have been free from their parents' or significant others' expectations of them. Kendrick and McKay (2002) adopted the use of drawings to investigate children's literacy practices. In the article, the authors made reference to Vygotsky who "viewed drawing as a way of knowing, as a particular kind of speech, and emphasized the critical role

of drawing in young children's concept development, particularly because the drawing event engages children in language use and provides an opportunity for children to create stories" (p. 46). Hence, the use of drawings is one of the key ethnographic methods of gaining access to young children's thoughts, feelings, and non-verbal behaviours which may not be readily available through field observations. Through discussion, I can invite children to describe their language use and perceptions of self and identities. This allows children to more fully describe their use of languages and sense of self and identities. At the same time, it allows me to discover how much cultural and parental values they have come to internalize in their narratives.

***Daily diary.*** Besides observing the real-time interactions between children and parents, a daily diary is an important means to gain access to the kinds of activities that children and their parents did when I was not present. Both parents and children were asked independently to record daily activities and feelings regarding those activities over a 12-month period. They were asked to record their daily dairies in their own style. It could be in the form of a simple report, running count, story-telling, and/or drawings of what they did in a day, events that they found special, and/or events that contributed to their understanding of language use and/or identity construction.

**Other artifacts.** During the field observations, I also collected other artifacts which illustrated how multilingual, multiliteracy, and multicultural practices shape young French Immersion Chinese children's language use and identity construction.

- 1) Photos of participants' home decorations
- 2) Photos of bookshelves
- 3) Photos of literacy toys
- 4) Photos taken by participants
- 5) Copies of homework (from French Immersion class, Chinese class, English class, arts class, math class, piano class, etc.)
- 6) Spontaneous written work
- 7) Journals (from French Immersion class, Chinese class, and English class)
- 8) Artworks (e.g., drawings, crafts, etc.)
- 9) Weekly flyers

The kinds of activities facilitated and promoted at home, in schools and local communities can shed light on how the children might come to construct their identities. By documenting what they do with languages and multiple literacy practices, I can explore the views of the children (what they say about them in their narratives, in writing, and in drawing).

### ***Field Observations***

From both sociolinguistic (scholars such as Grosjean and Fishman) and ethnographic (scholars such as Hymes and Wolcott) perspectives, “one think[s] of a community (or any group, or person) in terms, not of a single language, but of a repertoire”, which highlights various ways of speaking in that community (Hymes, 1995, p. 33, original italics). Hymes (1995) described ways of speaking which “comprise speech styles, on the one hand, and contexts of discourse, on the other, together with relations of appropriateness obtaining between styles and contexts (original italics, p. 33). To explore the speech styles and contexts, I conducted field observations in the following areas.

***Home observations.*** Since young children spend a significant amount of time at home, it is important to identify culturally-induced behaviours during social interactions at home. One of the most influential Chinese scholars, Confucius, talked extensively about family structures and values (e.g., how one should preserve the family structure, maintaining boundaries between husbands and wives, parent-child relations, etc.). I used this cultural understanding as a starting point to explore how young French Immersion children who lived in a Chinese (immigrant) family behaved and interacted with parents and others in their social networks.



There were two main steps involved in conducting the home observations. The first step was to conduct an initial home interview. There were two reasons for this step. Firstly, it allowed me to build a rapport with the families and answer their questions about the research (which could be addressed and clarified immediately). Secondly, it allowed me to obtain background information on both the family and children. By conducting initial home interviews, I gained a first-hand experience of how familial and social interactions shape Chinese children's language use and identity construction (e.g., to what extent Chinese decorations were emphasized in participants' homes, to what extent Chinese cultural influences permeated the participants' lives, and what the socio-cultural linguistic dynamics were like between the parents and child).

Each initial home interview took approximately one to two hours to complete. All interviews were audio-taped and conducted in the participants' preferred language (i.e., Cantonese, Mandarin, and/or English), because speaking in their own language would enable them to more freely express their thoughts and feelings. When I explained my research aim to the parents, I also sought their verbal consents to allow me to take photos of their homes and throughout my field observations. All parents agreed to my request. Participants' anonymity and confidentiality was assured. All subsequent home observations were scheduled after the initial home interview.

The next step was to conduct home observations over a ten-month period. All home interactions between the children and others (i.e., family members, relatives, and friends) were audio-taped and transcribed. My observations of participants' interactions were also recorded as field notes. Home observations included cultural knowledge dissemination (e.g., the extent to which parents and children discussed their heritage culture), home literacy practices (e.g., with what frequency parents read to their children in Chinese, English, and/or French), social interaction (e.g., the extent to which parents and children code-switch), etc.

The home observation method was guided by Purcell-Gates' (1996, 2000, 2004) research, which spent a seven-day period with parents in order to document how parents used languages and facilitated literacy practices with their children at home. In my dissertation, I spread out my observations of all five families' and children's daily routines (i.e., waking up, breakfast, school, lunch, after school, homework, extracurricular activities, dinner, and bedtime activities) over a ten-month period. I adopted Purcell-Gates' home observation method, but extended the observation timeframe in an attempt to record social-cultural linguistic factors that shaped children's language use and identity construction in and outside of the home.

**School observations.** Besides spending time at home, many young Chinese children spend a fair amount of time in their regular schooling

and attending a heritage language school. In this study, the five children spent approximately six hours per day in elementary school from Monday to Friday and two to three hours in a heritage language school on weekends (usually Saturday or Sunday). The goal was to conduct school observations in both French Immersion classrooms and Chinese heritage language schools, and I was thankful that both school principals and teachers allowed me to observe the children in and outside of classroom interactions (e.g., before class, recess, lunch, and after school), so that I could document how they used languages when positioning themselves culturally, socially, and linguistically in and outside of the classroom.

***Community observations.*** Besides home and school, I was also able to observe the children's extracurricular activities that took place in their community. Some of the popular extracurricular activities among these children were: arts class, English and math classes, dancing, figure skating, martial arts, and piano. The goal of community observations was to document the children's language use across socio-cultural linguistic contexts.

### ***Semi-structured Interviews***

Upon completion of the field observations, I conducted semi-structured interviews with participants. Interview questions were developed based on field observations and children's and parents' written texts (e.g., daily diaries and language maps). All interviews were audio-

taped and lasted about an hour each. Not only was it a time of closure, but it was also a vehicle to induce a deeper discussion of the children's and parents' perception of family organization and dynamics, the impact of their living contexts, learning in a multiple educational system, and cultural differences that may have positively or negatively contributed to their identity construction.

In summary, in order to explore the nuances of children's social interactions in the activities with parents and significant others in the home, school, and community, ethnography methodologies were employed to create a rich portrait of the multilingual children in this study. Moore (2010) points out that since the reliance of qualitative interviewing is limited in scope (i.e., require the "participants' abilities (and willingness) to verbalise and conceptualise meaning and knowledge" in relation the question asked, p. 5), hence the use of drawings, maps, and diagrams will serve as a "powerful tool to change the dynamics of interacting with children" (p. 5). Moore further states that by using drawings in addition to interviews, it allows the ethnographer to create "a more equitable relationship between children and researchers, while giving maximum opportunity for the construction of meaningful contextual knowledge, in a manner and style more accessible, more creative and more relevant to [the children]" (p. 5).

## **Data Analysis**

All audio-taped interviews were fully transcribed by a fluent native Chinese-speaking research assistant and then checked by me for accuracy. The following procedures were adopted to analyze the interview data:

- 1) Transcription of interviews verbatim in the original languages
- 2) Coding for emergent themes
- 3) Translating key excerpts into English

Field notes, daily diaries, language maps, and interview transcripts were coded by me and then examined by my doctoral committee supervisors for themes related to the research questions.

### ***Triangulation***

Triangulation methods allowed me to go beneath the surface by observing how young Chinese children's identity is constructed as they interact with others across social contexts, which in turn provided thick, rich descriptions of the processes involved. As Wolcott (1997) noted, "through efforts at "triangulation", information is obtained "from multiple sources rather than relying solely on one method" (pp. 333-334). The daily diary, language map and other artifacts served as additional evidence to triangulate my observations in the home, school, and community, because their writing and drawings provided valuable information about both

stable and variable components of their use of language and identity construction.

The use of a daily diary was a creative means to record how children and parents actually expressed themselves regarding what they did in a day, events that happened to them, etc. Their daily dairies provided evidence of how they developed as literacy writers (e.g., their perceptions of the school, parents' expectations, etc.). This provided information pertaining to assumptions that children and parents might have about language use, literacy developments, etc.

The use of a daily diary also enabled me to understand how children come to represent themselves through language use during the activities. For example, based on their description of activities I could explore children's daily dairies pertaining to how they use scripts to represent the nuance of their cultural experience. Their daily dairies provided me with an objective means to make sense of their multilingual worlds.

In addition to what children and parents recorded in their daily dairies, observations also helped triangulate how they actually behaved in and outside of the home. Home observations were analyzed based on the families' interactions (e.g., parents assisted children in literacy practices, language use, code switching, and identity construction) across contexts and time. I also used field observations at school to explore the development of the children's language use and identity construction.

These shed light on local norms of communication and how children socialize communicative practices into their identities.

Trustworthiness was achieved through triangulation of methods (e.g., field observations, interviews, and participants' written texts) and through member checking (i.e., shared emerging results with participants and doctoral committee supervisors). To minimize biased or misleading interpretations, I compared my observations and field notes to the participants' written texts and interview data. A collaborative approach was taken between a research assistant and me (both served as transcribers in this project), and between the participants and me to ensure accuracy and increase confidence in my interpretation of the qualitative data. The doctoral committee supervisors served as a check and balance throughout the research process, because we had periodic consultations in order to address emerging themes and the writing process. These were valuable sources of information for analysis with respect to identifying common themes pertaining to the children's use of language and identity construction in their social networks.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I presented an overview of ethnography (Hymes, 1974, 1995) and then explained how I conducted my ethnographic inquiry through the adoption of ethnography and narrative. Specifically, I described how I used the ethnographic methods to ground this

dissertation research by documenting children's social interactions and language use in the activities. Since both home and school are a major keystone in the efforts to strengthen children's development and help them become productive citizens, the inclusion of home and school visits (i.e., field observations) along with participants' artifacts (e.g., drawing, language maps, etc.) and semi-structured interviews contributed towards a deeper understanding of the processes involved in young French Immersion Chinese children's emerging sense of self and multiple identities. The next chapter will present a portrait of the five families.



## **Chapter 6**

### **Family Portraits**

In order to explore young French Immersion Chinese children's multilingual and multiliteracy practices in depth, I will utilize multiple sources of data (e.g., field observations, interviews, and artifacts). I first sketch a general overview of the activities that together formulated routines in the lives of the five children. The chapter begins with a description of the family home context in which each child resides.

As shown in Table 1, four boys and one girl, each from a different family, participated in the study. In order to preserve anonymity, each child was asked to come up with an alias. The children ranged in age from 7 years 5 months to 8 years 9 months and were in grades 2 or 3. With the exception of Chinglan's mother, who is Canadian born, all parents immigrated to Canada. Each child has one sibling, all of whom are older than them. Shing, Minghoa, Chinglan and Dawei have older brothers (10, 12, 12 and 16 years of age, respectively), Enlai has an older sister (15 years of age).

**Table 1. Family Characteristics**

<b>Child</b>	<b>Birth Place</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Father's country of origin</b>	<b>Mother's country of origin</b>
Minghoa	Canada	M	7 years 5 months	2	Shanghai, China	Shanghai, China
Chinglan	Canada	F	8 years 6 months	3	Hong Kong, China	Canada
Enlai	Canada	M	8 years 5 months	3	Hong Kong, China	Hong Kong, China
Dawei	Taiwan	M	8 years 9 months	3	Taiwan	Taiwan
Shing	Taiwan	M	8 years and 7 months	3	Taiwan	Taiwan

As previously discussed in “*Eastern Philosophies*” on self and identities in Chapter 4, Confucian traditions are viewed as a common domestic architecture ingrained in many Chinese families (Schaaf, 2001). While many Chinese as a whole may appear to share the same Confucian heritage culture, given the different geographical locations and historical contexts, “being Chinese outside China cannot possibly mean the same thing as inside. It varies from place to place, molded by the local circumstances in different parts of the world where people of Chinese ancestry have settled and constructed new ways of living” (Ang, 2001, p. 38). Therefore, Chinese-Canadian families are like all other families, like some other families, and like no other families (Gestwicki, 2010, p. 32). It has been reported that the way Chinese (from Mainland China), Hong Kong people, and Taiwanese think, feel, and behave is bound to reflect in

part, their “deep-seated philosophical and institutional doctrines” (Rothbaum, Morelli, Pott, & Liu-Constant, 2000, p. 337).

### **Immigrating to Canada: Parental Beliefs and Expectations**

During the initial interview and field observation, the parents not only talked about their unique culture, customs, languages, and identities, but they also reported different reasons for immigrating to Canada. Three themes emerged from the parents’ interview data in response to questions about why they chose Canada as a place to live. They are as follows.

#### ***Theme #1: An Escape from Political Tensions***

Enlai’s parents were born in Hong Kong and immigrated to Canada 12 years ago to avoid political tensions. As Enlai’s mother described:

我們離開香港也是因為怕共產黨，好多事也不公開，透明度又不夠嘛。就是因為政治原因，我們希望他們能夠去到一個能夠自由表達言論看法的地方。

*We left Hong Kong because we were afraid of Communism. Many things were not disclosed to the public, and transparency was lacking. Because of the political reasons, we hope our children can go to a place where they can freely express themselves. (Translation from Cantonese)*

As previously discussed in Chapter two, the majority of immigrants to western Canada prior to 1997 were from Hong Kong, for the reasons given by Enlai's parents.

### ***Theme #2: Educational Opportunities***

Minghoa's father explained that his reason for coming to Canada was to give his children a better living and learning environment than was currently available to them in Shanghai, China:

因為我希望讓我的兒子有一個好的學習環境。

*Because my consideration for their future, I hope to give my sons a better learning environment. (Translation from Mandarin)*

Similarly, after Shing's parents completed their post-graduate education in the United States, they applied for immigration to both the United States and Canada. At the end, they chose Canada, because they received acceptance from Canada first. Shing's parents adjusted well to life in North America and also wanted their children to have equitable access to the educational system in Canada, as they had done in their own lives.

### ***Theme #3: Family Connections***

Dawei's parents lived in Canada for eight years. They were born in Taiwan. Their reason for immigrating to Canada was because they had

other relatives living in Canada. According to Dawei's mother:

我們移民是因為我有親人在這裏。我在Richmond住了8年了，一直都住在這裏。覺得不錯，我們有滿多機會講中文。

*We immigrated to Canada because we have relatives living here. We have lived in Richmond for eight years, living here for all these years. Feeling not bad, we have many opportunities to speak Chinese.*

(Translation from Mandarin)

### **Living in Canada: Physical Spaces**

Based on my field observations, I will provide a brief physical description of the homes in which the children live and learn to situate further discussion of the language and literacy practices highlighted throughout this dissertation. In the following descriptions, I will focus on the areas where the children do their homework and eat their meals, for this is where multiple languages are used with others and identities are constructed.

Enlai's family lives in a 3 bedroom, 2 story townhouse in a complex with young families, the majority of whom are of Chinese descent. The children often play with their bikes in the street as the complex is situated on a quiet cul-de-sac. As one walks through the front door to the living room, a leather sofa, a television and playstation, and a piano, all of which are arranged around a traditional Chinese rosewood table come into view.

Chinese ornamental flowers and artwork are found on the walls, and a Chinese orchid sits on the table. The table is covered with a cloth to protect it since the children do their homework at this table. Meals are eaten in the kitchen, which is modern and western in design (i.e., stainless steel appliances; a small table for eating meals).

Minghoa's family lives in a modest house on a quiet street. Immediately after entering the house, one encounters a small open space, the main feature of which is a fireplace and a piano. The fireplace to the left of the piano is adorned with numerous trophies and certificates awarded to the children for their accomplishments in piano, school, and sports. A large glass display case with trophies awarded to Minghoa's parents is also found in this area, along with a single chair and small coffee table. The children practice piano in this area; however, homework is completed either in the kitchen, in the bedroom, or in a small office room. Family meals are eaten at a large table in the modern kitchen. The table is covered with a plastic tablecloth in order to protect the traditional Chinese rosewood table. A television, playstation, CD player, and radio are also located in the kitchen.

Dawei's family lives in the upper level of a large home. A piano is situated on a large open landing at the head of the stairs; to the right of the piano is a television set. A Chinese ornament with a Chinese verses sits along with family photos on the piano and on the walls. The kitchen is

modest, and has a dining area where Dawei often sits to read. Homework is completed most often in Dawei's bedroom, where there is a small desk with desklight, computer, and bookcase filled with English, French, and Chinese books.

Shing's family lives in a townhouse complex. As one enters the doorway the first thing one notices is a large poster of T-Bum! Ebee transformers hanging on the left side of the wall. On the door, one can see a certificate which acknowledges Shing's participation in a French spelling competition. A large sectional sofa is located in the living room, along with the television, a computer table and bookshelf (with books, artwork, and toy cars), and a small coffee table (upon which rest a Chinese flute, along with several car magazines). Shing does his homework with his older brother at a small wooden table in the small kitchen.

### **Living in Canada: Educational Choice and Opportunity**

During the initial interview, parents were asked: "Why did you choose French Immersion for your child?" The parents shared with me the following insights: 1) their children can benefit from learning different languages and 2) French Immersion provides an enrichment opportunity for their children. The parents' responses were consistent with previous research findings (e.g., Dagenias, 2003). The Canadian Council on Learning (2007a) conducted a survey of Canadian parents' attitudes toward language learning and reported that many parents of diverse

backgrounds, including Anglophone parents, reasoned that by enrolling their child in French Immersion, their child will be more competitive in the Canadian workforce, and that more job opportunities will be open to their child, particularly at the federal level.

### ***Theme #1: Opening Doors***

The first theme that emerged from the interviews centred on the idea that by learning multiple languages, Chinese children would have a increased access to a global society.

Shing's mother said: 大體上，我們希望給他一個機會去學習不同的事和語言。我覺得在世界語言來說，中文和英文是比較重要的。而對法文來說，法語很難，所以我們對他沒有那麼高要求。

*Overall, we hope to give him a chance to learn different things and languages. We know that among world languages, Chinese and English are very important. In terms of French, French is difficult, so we do not have high expectations of him in French. (Translation from Mandarin)*

The second theme was regarding enrichment opportunities in education and future career exploration.

Enlai's mother said: 既然有一個這樣的機會，我覺得他們可以從其他語言看文化。我覺得不是單純學習語言，他們學法文也會加深他們對法國人的想法和做法。而且我移民前也有讀過一點法文，他們也會學都英文。



*It is an enrichment opportunity for them. I feel they can learn different cultures through learning the languages. I feel that it is not just about learning the language; learning French will deepen their understanding of the way French people think and do things. I also learned some French before coming to Canada; my children will also be taught English. (Translation from Cantonese)*

Shing's mother said: 學法文也是為了他們以後，就算是以後不學，現在學法語是一個好機會。

*Learning French will be of use in their future. Even if they do not want to study, having the chance to learn French is still a good enrichment opportunity. (Translation from Mandarin)*

During the field observations, parents acknowledged from time to time that because they live in Western Canada, where English is the dominant language used in the general community, the opportunity for their child to learn French is something that would only exist through a French Immersion program. Parents also suggested that French Immersion programs represented a learning enrichment opportunity, because children are being asked to view things through different cultural and linguistic lenses which will help broaden their cultural understanding and sensitivity when they interact with others. The children could also develop broader social skills in preparation for working in the workforce.

## ***Theme #2: A Need for Challenge***

The third theme expressed by many parents was that the mainstream educational system in B.C. does not quite meet the parents' expectations (compared to their country of origin's educational system).

Minghoa's father said: 在幼稚園的時候，他的英文已經達到了二年級的水平，數學也到了三年級的水平，所以讓他去學同年齡水平的英文，他會感覺的很無聊。而且他在加拿大出生，法語實際上也是在幼稚園開始學的。

*When he was in kindergarten, his English proficiency had already reached a Grade 2 level, and he could do Grade 3 mathematics. So if we let him study at the same age level in English, he would feel bored. Since he was born in Canada, it is important to learn French starting at kindergarten. (Translation from Mandarin)*

The third theme has not been cited by previous studies (e.g., Canadian Council on Learning, 2007a; Dagenias, 2003). In this study, some parents viewed that the regular English program did not quite meet their expectations, which was a source of motivation for the parents to enroll their children in a French Immersion program. The above quotations reinforced some of the earlier findings on immigrant parents' concerns about kindergarten. For example, there is evidence in the educational literature suggesting that immigrant parents do not want their children to be seen as "ESL" (Yeung, 2005). Perhaps by enrolling children

in French Immersion programs, they could bypass an ESL placement (which is generally perceived as a roadblock for academic achievement and advancement; August & Calderón, 2006; Li, 2003).

Some parents also described in this study that French Immersion class added challenges to their child's learning, which in turn taught them how to overcome challenges on their own. Research (e.g., Dagenais, 2003; Dagenais & Moore, 2008) has noted that by sending children to French Immersion programs, parents believe that their children can be more challenged, which in turn will enrich their academic literacy and language practices. There is also some evidence to suggest that parents felt that kindergarten strongly emphasizes social development but lacks academic challenges in students' literacy development (Beardsley, 1991).

While Enlai's and Chinglan's parents reported that they have some rudimentary proficiency in French, the remaining families (Minghoa's, Dawei's, and Shing's) reported that they do not have any functional proficiency in French. For example, some parents discussed methods in helping their children to access literacy-related resources and support.

Shing's mother said: 因為我不懂法語,有時候我會找一些法語的小朋友書給他看。

*Because I do not know any French, sometimes I will buy some French children's books for my children to read. (Translation from Mandarin)*

Even though the majority of the parents did not know any French, they were actively involved in their children's multiliteracy development in French Immersion programs.

Dawei's mother said: 我沒有怎可以麼幫助他，我教他自立自強。我告訴他，他聽得懂就讀下去，聽不懂可以轉英文班，他不願意轉。他有時不懂，我就幫他翻查字典。譯成英文後，我再幫助他想。有時候我會帶他到圖書館。也沒有什麼法文的VIDEO，看電視和書，就是這樣。

*I cannot help my son much. I teach him how to be independent and strong. I told him that if he is not able to follow, he can switch back to the English program. He does not want to switch. Sometimes he does not understand French, I help him check the dictionary. After translating ideas into English, I will try to help him think. Sometimes I will bring him to the library. There are not many French videos; just watching television and reading books. That's about it. (Translation from Mandarin)*

Similar to Dawei's mother, Shing's mother said: 剛開始的時後,我就幫他們查字典，找資料。我自己也學了一些法文，所以我可以讀一些單詞，我也會看他們的法文復習。

*At the very beginning, I helped them to check the dictionary and find information. I have learned some French in the process of helping my children, so I can read some French words, so I can read some French*

*words. I am also able to check their French homework.* (Translation from Mandarin)

In this study, all parents agreed that the onus for learning French is on their child. Parents noted that in order to master French, their children are encouraged to put effort into their French studies. Parents' explanations of their child's French learning exemplified some forms of the Confucian attitude towards learning (such as putting effort into one's learning or working hard to overcome one's inability).

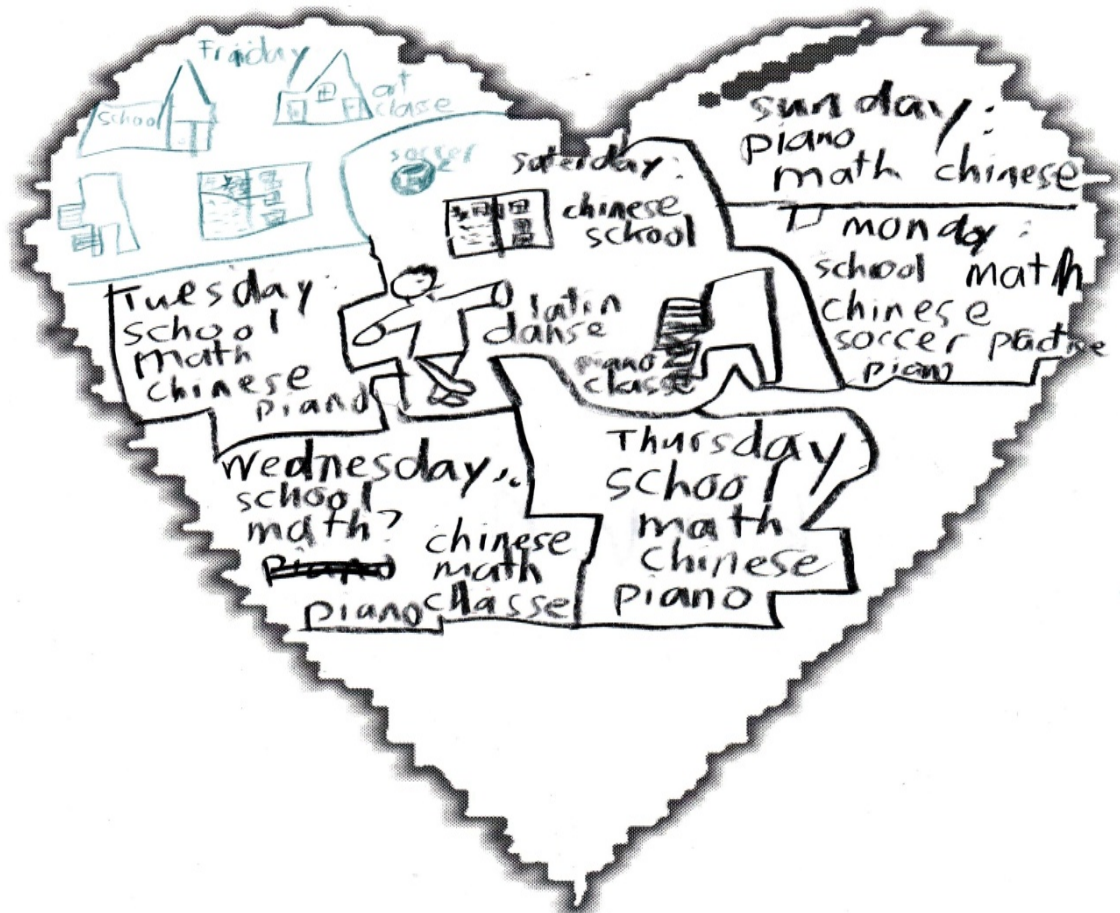
### **Living in Canada: Languages and Practices**

Even though all the children were enrolled in French Immersion programs, their parents also ascribed importance to learning and maintaining both their heritage language and English. From the parents' perspectives, they all put Chinese and English ahead of French. The parents also reported preferences for speaking, writing, and reading in Chinese. Therefore, it was important to me to have an idea of how the children viewed the activities that formed their daily routine. I asked each child to "show me the activities that you do during a week that are important to you". I gave each child a piece of paper with a heart shape to symbolize that they were to highlight activities that were close to their hearts. Two of the children chose to indicate their activities through drawings; two children segmented the heart into "days" and used printed

text to label their activities; and one child used a mixture of drawing and printed text.

In this section, I will present a portrait of the children's lived experiences, focusing on all the activities in which they participated during the field observations. As shown in Figures 4-8, with the exception of Dawei (Figure 7), who views his daily life as restricted to competitive swimming and language learning, all children expressed a large range of activities that take place in their lives. In particular, the following drawings represented what the seven days looked like for five children.

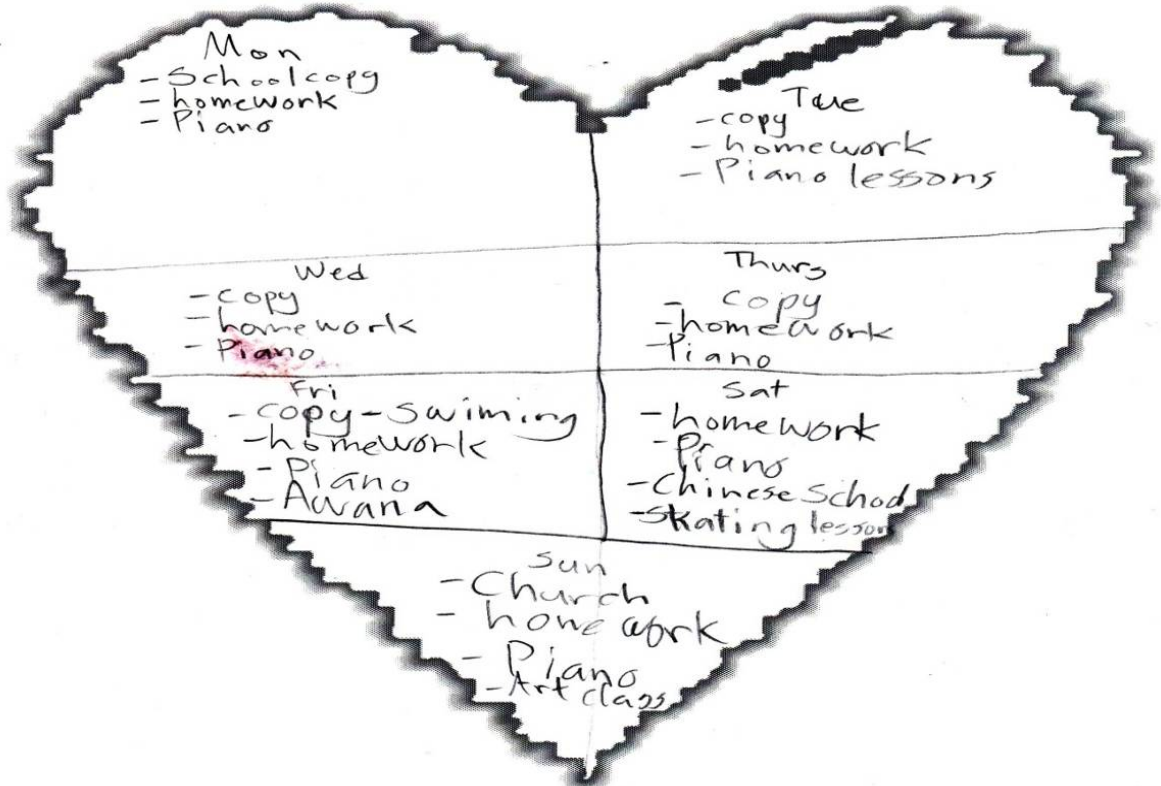
**Figure 4. Minghoa's Drawing of the Weekly Routine**



**Figure 5. Chinglan's Drawing of the Weekly Routine**



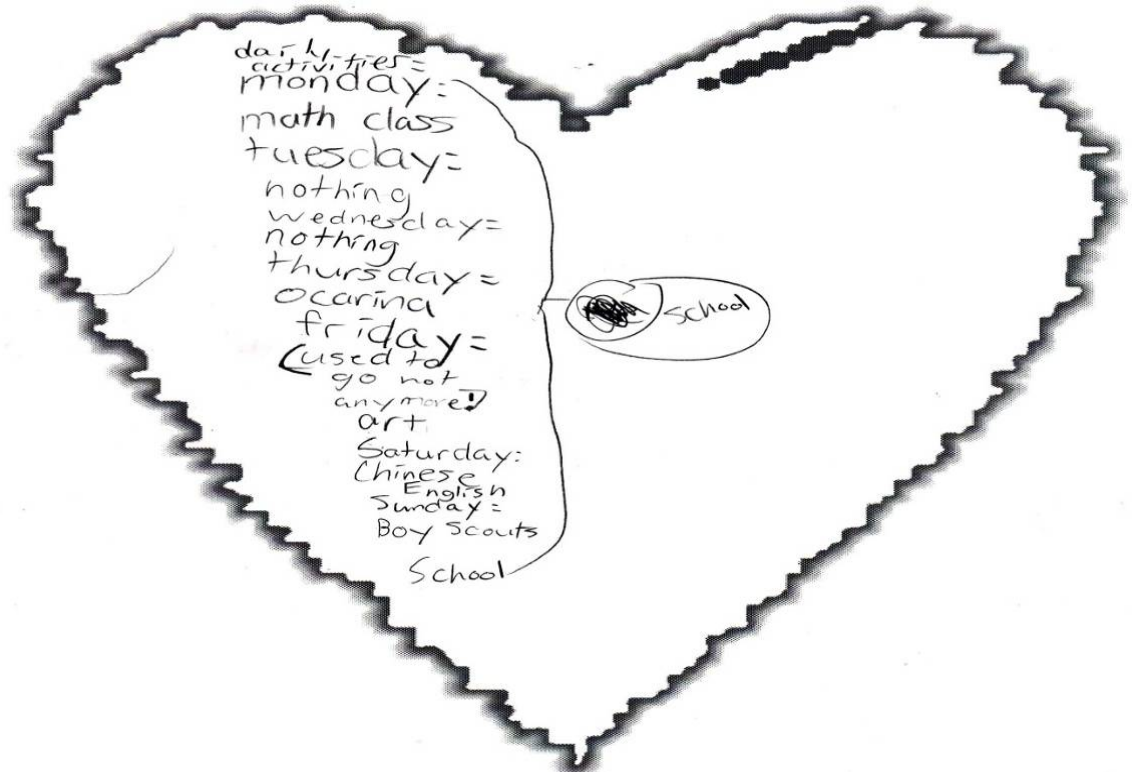
**Figure 6. Enlai's Drawing of the Weekly Routine**



**Figure 7. Dawei's Drawing of the Weekly Routine**



**Figure 8. Shing's Drawing of the Weekly Routine**





To summarize the above drawings, Table 2 showed all the activities in which the children participated and the associated language(s) of instruction.

**Table 2. Activities and Associated Language(s) of Instruction**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Chinese</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Japanese</b>	<b>Math</b>
Minghoa	Mandarin	--	--	Club (Mandarin/ English)
Chinglan	Cantonese/ Mandarin	--	--	Kumon (English)
Enlai	Cantonese	Taughy by Mother	--	--
Dawei	Mandarin	Tutor	Japanese/ some English	--
Shing	Mandarin	Tutor	--	--

	<b>Skating</b>	<b>Soccer</b>	<b>Swimming</b>	<b>Tae kwon do</b>
Minghoa	English	English	English	--
Chinglan	English	--	English	--
Enlai	English	--	--	--
Dawei	--	--	English	Mandarin/ English
Shing	English	--	--	--

	<b>Arts</b>	<b>Music</b>	<b>Dance</b>
Minghoa	Mandarin/ English	Piano (Mandarin/ English)	Ballroom (Mandarin/ English)
Chinglan	English	Piano (Cantonese/ English)	Ballet (English)
Enlai	Cantonese	Piano (Cantonese/ English)	--
Dawei	--	--	--
Shing	Mandarin/ English	Ocarina (Mandarin/ English)	--

	<b>Church</b>	<b>Boy Scouts</b>
Minghoa	--	--
Chinglan	--	--
Enlai	--	Cantonese/ English
Dawei	Mandarin/ English	Mandarin/ English
Shing	--	--

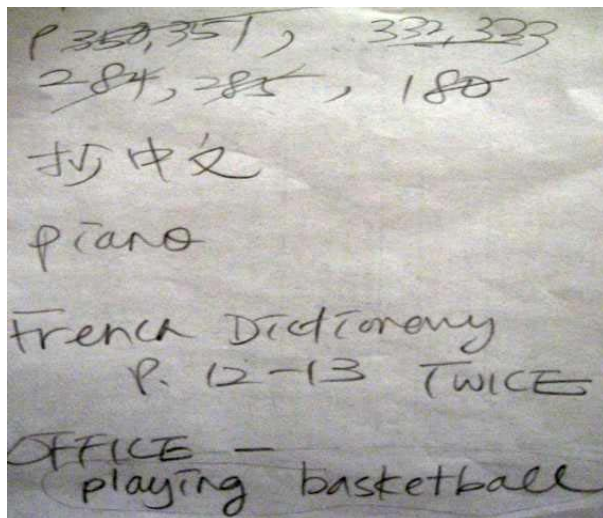
The following categories summarized the activities most frequently participated in by the children noted in Table 2: academics (all attended Chinese school, three received English lessons from parents or tutors, and two attended a math centre), visual arts (four took drawing lessons), performing arts (three played piano and one played ocarina; two dancers), and sports (four took skating and three swimming lessons). Regarding the language(s) of instruction, with the exception of Chinese school (which was taught in Chinese) and figure skating and swimming (which were in English), all the other activities were instructed in both the children's heritage language and English.

While all of the children's activity maps excluded library visits, they all visited their local libraries and borrowed books to read at least once a week. Parents explained that accessing language-related books and materials is one way for them to foster and support their children's multiliteracy practices. For example, even though accessing French materials (such as videos or DVDs) that are age-appropriate is a challenging task, all parents have borrowed them from their local libraries

whenever possible or purchased some of them online in order to help their children learn French. Some parents also commented that there are many more literary materials in French as well as Chinese now than there were a decade ago.

In summary, the parents enrolled their children in a variety of activities (as shown in Table 2) which were designed to stimulate their children's language and literacy development. All the children lived according pretty much to their drawings. For one family, Enlai's mother had specific learning tasks for her child to complete. This drawing was a sample of Enlai's daily task reminder.

**Figure 9. Enlai's Daily Task Reminder**



The first-four tasks (practiced math questions, copied Chinese, practiced piano, and learned French vocabulary from a French dictionary) were routine for Enlai. Regarding the last task, he participated in a variety of

sports activities throughout the week. During my field observations, he played basketball and table tennis, took figure-skating lessons, and roller-bladed and rode bicycle with his sister outside of his parents' townhouse complex.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I provided a portrait of the children's family background and the children's daily activities, which briefly highlighted their discourses and multilingual, multiliteracy, and multicultural practices. These serve as a starting point to understand the children and their family's socialization, where multilingual and multiliteracy practices are embedded in their culture and upbringing. The next chapter will address the two research questions pertaining to multilingual, multiliteracy, and multicultural development and practices by analyzing the emerging themes noted in field observations, interviews, and artifacts produced by the children and their families.

## Chapter 7

### Multiliteracy and Identity Construction

Cultural norms and expectations are embedded in multiliteracy practices during which children relate to family members and others. Observation of the children's engagement in multiliteracy activities will shed light on their use of language which is relevant to their emerging sense of self. The chapter begins with observations of children's literacy environments in their homes. This is followed by a summary of comments made by parents concerning their children's engagement in multiliteracy practices. Important themes that emerged from field observations and child/parental discussion of multiliteracy practices will be discussed throughout the remainder of the chapter.

Before I present my data, here are a few pointers that might help the reader to comprehend my transcriptions:

- 1) I used italic to indicate my translations of the participants' speech from Cantonese/Mandarin to English.
- 2) I used square brackets “[ ]” to describe actions or non verbal cues that I observed preceding or during the participants' verbal communication.
- 3) I used an ellipsis “...” to indicate that I was not able to transcribe because of background noise interfering with the participants' speech.

## Overview of the Children's Literacy Environments

Multiliteracies is a multifaceted concept which encompasses how literacy is transmitted through historical, social, and cultural contexts (New London Group, 1996). One way to highlight the children's engagement in multiliteracy activities is to begin with an observation of the literacy environments in their homes. One thing that drew my attention during my home observations was the scope of literacy resources available to the children. One commonality among families was that all children had spaces that were well suited for them to engage in a number of literacy practices. All children in the study had access to books, toys, computers and other digital media in their bedrooms or in common living spaces.

Let's begin with Minghoa. Figure 10 shows all the books that he has collected in the past few years.

**Figure 10. Minghoa's Bookshelf**



When I walked into Minghoa's bedroom, my attention was immediately drawn to a two-level bookshelf. The books on the shelves were organized into categories according to the language scripts used. On the top shelf, he put all the English and French books together, along with his favourite toys (e.g., Winnie the Pooh). Keven told me that he finished reading all the English and French story books. On the bottom shelf, he put all the Chinese books, tapes, DVD disks (e.g., songs) and other cultural artifacts together. He reviewed the Chinese texts from time to time. He told me that if he forgot some Chinese words, he would use his Chinese dictionary (新世纪小学字词通典) to re-learn the Chinese words. His father also brought him the *Rich Father* (富爸爸) reading series which was in the purple box.

In Chinglan's case, access to books and other objects to support literacy activities were stored mainly in her parents' office space. As one can see, there is a book shelf beside the computer desk. Everything was organized and neatly displayed. All of Chinglan's school-related materials were stored inside binders (see Figure 11) or inside a book case (see Figure 12). Chinglan also showcased some of her favourite English language books (e.g., Rainbow Fairies series) which were displayed on a smaller bookshelf. I did not observe any French or Chinese books displayed in this area.

**Figure 11. Chinglan's Bookshelf on the Right-hand Side**



**Figure 12. Chinglan's Bookshelf Shared with Her Parents and Brother**



Another common area where Chinglan displayed her books was the kitchen, where she spent most of her time doing homework and other academic-related tasks. For example, one can see both English and French dictionaries, along with an English local community newspaper, called *Review*, and arts-related books displayed on a rolling granite kitchen table (see Figure 13). Most of the books were written in English and kept over time. French books were borrowed from the library. There were no Chinese books observed in this space.



**Figure 13. Chinglan's Work Space**



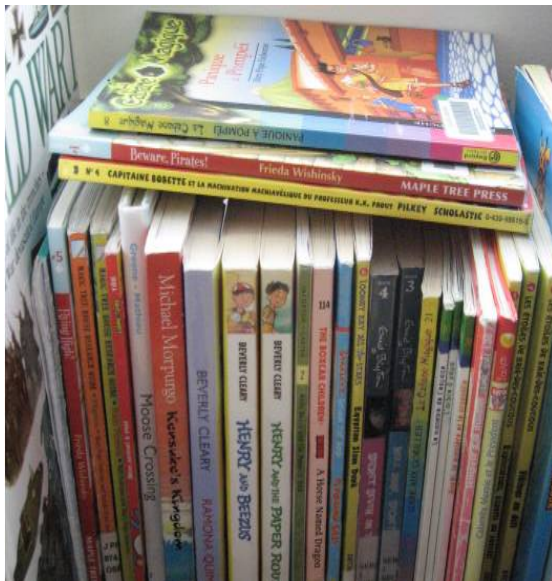
Enlai's books were stored together with those of his family in a common bookshelf on the second floor in an open space. Enlai had his books stored on the bottom two shelves on the left-hand side of the bookcase (see Figure 14). He did not organize his books into discrete categories, but had English, Chinese, and French books together on these shelves. He also stored his favourite Transformer toy on this shelf.

**Figure 14. Enlai's Family Bookshelf**



Compared to the other four families, Dawei had the smallest collection of books and other text materials. On the left (Figure 15), he had a small space for storing books at his homework desk which was located in his bedroom. On the right (Figure 16), he neatly organized all of his toys. All of Dawei's toys, games, and books used English language texts.

**Figure 15. Dawei's Book Collection**    **Figure 16. Dawei's Toys and Games**



Lastly, Shing and his brother showcased all of their literacy tools in the living room. When I first met Shing and his brother, they introduced me to all of these objects, arranged in a hierarchy of importance from bottom (least important) to top (most important) shelf. All of their Webkinz animals were displayed on the top shelf. On the second shelf, the left side was allocated to mostly Chinese and English texts, and the right side was

used for storage of art supplies. Toys and books that were used less often were loosely kept in small storage containers on the bottom shelf.

**Figure 17. Shing's Bookshelf**



In summary, all children in the study had access to resources in multiple languages and scripts to support literacy activities. For example, Minghoa's and Dawei's books and texts were stored primarily in their rooms. In the case of Chinglan, Enlai, and Shing, these resources were located in common areas and accessed by the entire family. The above photos highlight the scope and nature of the children's literacy tools that they collected through engagement in multiliteracy practices in their early years. Many of these texts had been stored over years in the family home and other texts had been borrowed from school and community libraries. Even though the children had access to English, French, and Chinese

scripts, the relative proportion of each language and script varied among children and families. How the children construct knowledge through interactions with these and other literacy resources will be explained in the next section.

### ***Parents as Participants in Literacy Environments***

As noted in the literature, during children's early years, children rapidly develop the foundational capabilities on which future academic and social learning depends (Hill & Taylor, 2004). One meta-analysis supports that the quality of parents' engagement predicts their children's success in these practices (Jeynes, 2005). In the present study, all parents encouraged their children to read Chinese books at least once a week in addition to their assigned reading and homework from Chinese school teachers. They also reminded their children to read English and French books daily. Even though the parents could not help their children with French, they helped them with Chinese and English. Tayler (2010) noted in his recent synthesis of educational practices in kindergarten, pre-primary and Year 1 in Western Australia that "[p]arents are the first and primary educators of children.... By educating families using evidence from the science of early learning and development, the course of children's learning and development can be enhanced" (p. 5).

***Providing the resources.*** All parents in this study provided a rich, stimulating literacy environment for their children. They did this by

providing their children with adequate space and opportunities to access and engage with a number of texts written in different languages and scripts. They also conveyed the importance and value of languages and texts by interacting with the children using these texts. Three families illustrated this theme:

Minghoa's father said: 現在學校會發一些法文的故事書，我會讓他讀。他每天會讀中文故事，基本上中文的故事都有拼音。英文的話，我就買 English Smart 那些書，根據他的進度來買。

*Right now his school gives him some French books that I like him to read. Everyday he also reads Chinese stories. Basically Chinese books have incorporated Pinyin. In terms of English, I will buy the English Smart series or something similar to English Smart for him to read depending upon his learning progress. (Translation from Mandarin)*

Chinglan's mother explained that: 我哋只能借多D書，例如中英文圖書，雜誌和CDs也會給他看，還有法語的卡通片。中國的玩具他都很喜歡。

*We try to borrow books. For example, we borrow Chinese and English books, magazines, and CDs for them in addition to French cartoons. They also like Chinese toys. (Translation from Cantonese)*

Shing's mother also said: 我有買一些activity的法文書，還有借CDs，有跟他們一起看法文的卡通片。如果我不跟著他們看，他們就跑掉了因為小朋

友比較懶。但是我看一些中文連續劇得時候，他們會在旁邊看。英文的話就是玩了一些拼組單詞的遊戲。

*I purchased some French activity books and borrowed CDs, and joined them to watch French cartoons. If I don't watch it with them, they will not watch it, because they are fairly lazy. But, when I watch a Mandarin series, they sometimes watch it with me. In terms of English, we play some vocabulary games. (Translation from Mandarin)*

**Facilitating transmission of cultural values through literacy resources.** All parents provided their children with opportunities to maintain a sense of cultural belonging. Culture matters, because it is the wisdom of generations from which meanings and children's identities are constituted. Two families illustrated this theme:

Enlai's mother said: 我哋有中文報紙，雜誌，電台，電視台。我哋希望可以能夠幫助佢哋培養中文文化。佢哋有時睇英文台而法文就好少，大部分都係去圖書館借英文同埋法文書來看。

*We have Chinese newspapers, magazines, radio, and television channels. We hope to help them nurture Chinese culture. They sometimes watch English television channels, but rarely French. Often they will borrow English and French books to read from the local library. (Translation from Cantonese)*

Dawei's mother talked about the importance of attending Chinese school and reading Chinese texts: 我們就很少看中文電視。他有上中文學校，我有陪伴他讀中文的故事書。

*We seldom watch Chinese television programs. He goes to Chinese school. I also accompany him to read Chinese story books.*

(Translation from Mandarin)

Figure 18 shows Dawei's mother reading Chinese texts with him, which will be explained on pages 143 and 145.

**Figure 18. Example of Reading Chinese Texts**



In summary, all the parents took an active role in their children's appropriation of language and culture. The parents' responses highlighted both the symbolic value and the importance of language that Bourdieu (1977) theorized. Bourdieu described language as cultural capital, similar to currency and social and symbolic capital within particular fields.

## **Multiliteracy and Identity Construction**

In this study, not only did the parents take the time to review Chinese school lessons with their children, but they also reported that they spent time reading Chinese to their children early in their lives. Some parents used printed materials to facilitate their children's access to language and cultural understanding. For example, children were taught nursery rhymes, popular Chinese riddles, etc. This also lent some support to Curdt-Christiansen (2003) who reported that similar literacy practices were engaged by Chinese parents with their children in her study in Montreal.

Based on my field observations and discussions with the parents, I inferred that they all used many ways of nurturing their children's engagement in literacy practices. Research has shown that children's literacy practices are strongly influenced by their parents' involvement in their children's education and language (Curdt-Christiansen, 2003; Moore, 2010). The following three sections will analyze the emerging themes: 1) appropriating cultural values through literacy practices; 2) children's differentiation of culture and cultural values through their use of script; and 3) repeated practice. These themes were supported by my analysis of the children's home environments, language maps, diaries, and artifacts, coupled with interviews and field observations at home, in school, and in the community.



## **Theme #1: Appropriating Cultural Values through Literacy Practices**

Many Chinese traditions and values (e.g., filial piety, persistence, hard work, etc.) are reflected in Chinese texts (Bin & Freebody, 2010). All Chinese textbooks that the children read in this study included many illustrations of Chinese history, places, and moral stories. For example, during one of my home observations, Minghoa was going over one of his Chinese reading assignments in preparation for Chinese school the next week (see Figure 19).

**Figure 19. Learning in Chinese School**



*Learning in Chinese School* (Translated Title)

I learn in Chinese school. Teachers teach me to speak Chinese, writing words, singing, and drawing. I like learning Chinese.

This short passage reflects how authors of Chinese books try to cultivate and promote the value of learning Chinese. Bin and Freebody (2010) explain that many Chinese educational materials incorporate “image, syntax, and genre structure” in order to convey the importance of “authorial practices for young people” (p. 43). In social cognition literature, how the relationship between direct and indirect exposure to stimuli (such as teaching and learning) will affect the way people think, feel, and behave is well established (Kunda, 1999).

All parents in this study read with their children; they were active interlocutors in communication around texts. This is illustrated in the following interaction between Dawei and his mother as they discussed a Chinese text, entitled *Greeting Cards*:

01 Mother: 贺年卡, 你知道什麼是年卡? (*Greeting card, do you know what is a greeting card?*)

02 Dawei: [Shook his head to indicate “no”] Mmm...no.

03 Mother: Greeting...Greeting card, 就是贺年卡。就是到新年或者 (*Greeting card are for Chinese New Year and...*) Christmas 到的時後, 要做一張卡片給老師或者給媽媽, 這就是叫... (*You will make a Christmas card for teachers or your mother. This is called...*)

04 Dawei: 贺年卡。 (*Greeting card.*)

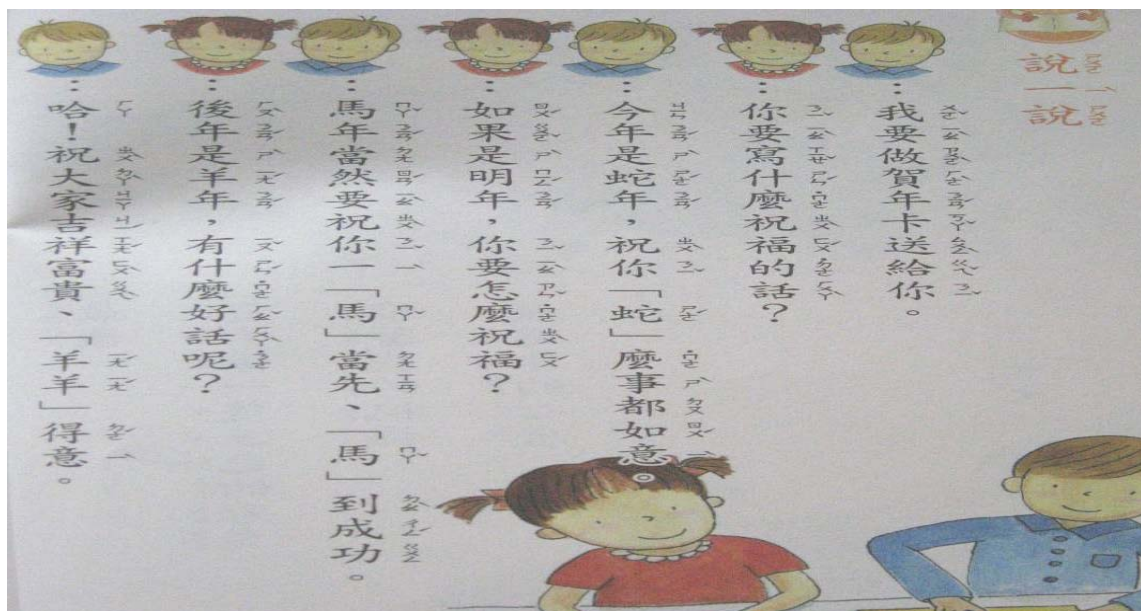
Throughout the conversation, Dawei and his mother switched between English and Mandarin languages. Specifically, Dawei’s mother

used a combination of English and Mandarin words to insure that Dawei understood the meaning of the Chinese word (贺年卡) greeting card. For example, when she spoke about the Christian tradition of Christmas, she used English, and when she spoke about Chinese New Year, she used Mandarin. On one hand, this illustrates that Dawei's mother is aware of her language use when helping Dawei to understand the meaning of greeting card. On the other hand, Dawei's mother's use of different languages when describing greeting cards signals to Dawei that he shares group membership with both Christian and Chinese cultures.

After Dawei showed that he understood the meaning of greeting card, he began to read the passage.

05 Mother: 對, 來。 [Right, ready.] (Let's read this chapter about greeting cards.)

**Figure 20. Greeting Cards**



The translated passage is as follows:

Line One: I want to make a greeting card for you.

Line Two: What greeting statements do you write?

Line Three: This is the year of the snake, wishing that everything goes well in the year of the snake.

Line Four: If it is next year, how would you greet someone?

Line Five: The year of the horse must wish you Yi “Ma” Dang Xian, Ma Dao Gung Sing.

Line Six: After that is the year of sheep, how would you greet someone?

Line Seven: Ha! Wishing everybody good fortune according to his/her wishes in the year of the sheep.

The passage that Dawei read with his mother illustrates the cultural transmission of Chinese values through greeting cards. Through this interaction, Dawei comes to learn that not only greeting card represents his heritage Chinese culture during Chinese New Year, but it is also a cultural tool of the global Christian community in which he lives. In other words, the literacy practice of sending a greeting card is one way to transmit cultural values among members of a cultural or social group. As children grow, they come to appropriate these cultural nuance and practices into their identity construction.

Moore (2010) observed in her study of 14 Chinese children who also participated in the SSRCH study that parents were the most influential

figure in transmitting culture and language through their social relations and social exchanges. This transmission of cultural values can also occur through the interactions of parents and children during homework activities. In the following example, Minghoa first read an assigned passage and then drew his father's attention to the meaning of specific words assigned by the teacher for homework. As Minghoa tried to recall the assigned Chinese words and associated strokes, his father discussed the meanings of the Chinese words and then asked Keven to write the characters that represented the words in the air.

01 Father: 老師個師怎麼寫? (*How do you write the word "Shi"?*)

02 Minghoa: [He wrote the symbol for "師" "Shi" in the air. He self-corrected a mistake.] Ah.

03 Father: Not bad. 學校的校? (*How do you write the word "Xiao"?*)

04 Minghoa: [He wrote the symbol for "學" "Xue" in the air, but did not write the adjoining radical, "Jiao"]

05 Father: 這個是學字。 (*The word that you produced was "Xue".*)

06 Minghoa: [He then wrote the radical for "校" "Xiao" in the air.]

07 Father: 你的筆畫錯, 在寫一次。 (*Your sequence of strokes was incorrect. Write it again.*)

08 Minghoa: 木 (*The left side of the radical is "Mu".*)

09 Father: 木字旁, 右邊哪? (*The left side is "Mu". What about the right side?*)

10 Minghoa: [He tried to write the "交" "Jiao" in the air.] Ok?

This interaction exemplifies the cultural transmission of values through dialogue when engaging in literacy activities related to homework. Minghoa's father first uses spoken language to discuss meanings of Chinese symbols and then uses the writing script to represent the words. In this exchange, Minghoa's father is directive and points out errors to Minghoa. He provides general cues for Minghoa to self-correct his errors. This literacy practice signals to Keven that it is important to be completely accurate in his writing of a Chinese script, that errors are not tolerated, and Minghoa has the responsibility to self-correct to meet the high standard set by his father. Minghoa's father also shared with me that:

學中文是會影響他對中國文化的想法。好像在讀故事書的時候，我會告訴他一些中國人對於這個故事會怎麼想。我會用這些方法去維持他對中國文化的認識。

*Learning Chinese will influence his thinking about Chinese culture. Like when I read Chinese story books with him, I will tell him how Chinese people generally think about the story. I use this kind of method to maintain his understanding about Chinese culture.*

(Translation from Mandarin)

This pattern of interaction around reading and homework is also illustrated in the following exchange between Enlai and his mother, when Enlai's mother pointed out his repeated use of connectives such as "after and then" at the beginning of his sentences:

**Figure 21. Discussion on “After and Then” Sentences**



01 Mother: 記住, 當我地寫文的時後, 我地唔需要寫 (*Remember when we write, we do not need to write*) after, then, then, after, after, then, then, after, after, then, then, then, then ◦

02 Enlai: [Laughs as his mother pointed out to him the necessity of writing about events in sequential order for the writing to be cohesive and intelligible to the reader.]

03 Mother: 全部的意思是一句一句跟住, 已經人地知道你的思路。你唔會寫寫下, 寫寫下 — 我現在吃飯, 然後就話, 早上時我吃了一個早餐。然後昨晚我和家姐玩, 下一個星期我就會去邊。沒人這樣寫文的, 係唔係先? (*Group all the ideas together, one idea after another, people know your train of thought. You will not write – I am now eating rice, and then say, I have eaten breakfast in the morning. And then my sister and I played together last night. Next week I will go somewhere. Nobody writes like that, yes or no?*)

04 Enlai: I was going to tell what I did.

05 Mother: 所有的意思唔須要寫 (*When expressing ideas, you do not need to write*) then, then, then, after, then, after, then, then, after, then. 知道嗎?  
知道嗎? (*Do you understand? Do you understand?*)

06 Enlai: (Knocks his own head.)

Throughout this exchange, Enlai quietly listened to his mother's explanation. At one point, Enlai was laughing at his own writing when his mother read the passage aloud and emphasized all the "after-then" sentences. When asked for a response, he would respond in English. As Moore (2010) explained, "children used their writing skills in their three [Chinese, English and French] scripts as material for story construction of selves, as strategic ways to develop multiple and dynamic discourses of identity, to exercise agency and participation in their social groups and to position themselves in these groups" (p. 18). The above exchange shows that Enlai is aware of travelling in between two linguistic communities: Cantonese and English. Overall, engagement in this literacy practice is similar to that of Dawei and his father in that parents critique and expect children to modify their actions on the basis of this critique. There is little room for error.

### ***Theme 2: Children's Use of Scripts to Identify with Culture***

Minghoa's parents try to visit his grandparents and relatives every summer in Shanghai. In one of Minghoa's journal entries, he described his



feelings about leaving Shanghai. Two days before his return to Vancouver, he had a piano recital, and his grandparents, uncle and aunt came to watch him. Later, they took a subway to visit the Science World and a Shanghai museum. He also described his favourite Chinese snacks.

**Figure 22. Minghoa's Journal**

No. \_\_\_\_\_ Date July 25/08  
Dear Paddy:  
It's my second last day at Shanghai. Yesterday I had a piano concert. I did not do that well. My Granma, Granpa, Uncle and auntie came to watch me and Kenny playing piano. In the past two and a half weeks, we went to Science World, subway (not the Subway eat fresh), Shanghai Museum, The Tropical Storm (热带风暴). We ate little steamed bun (小笼包) and fried Chinese doughnut (油条). Shanghai is hot, exciting, happy and fun.

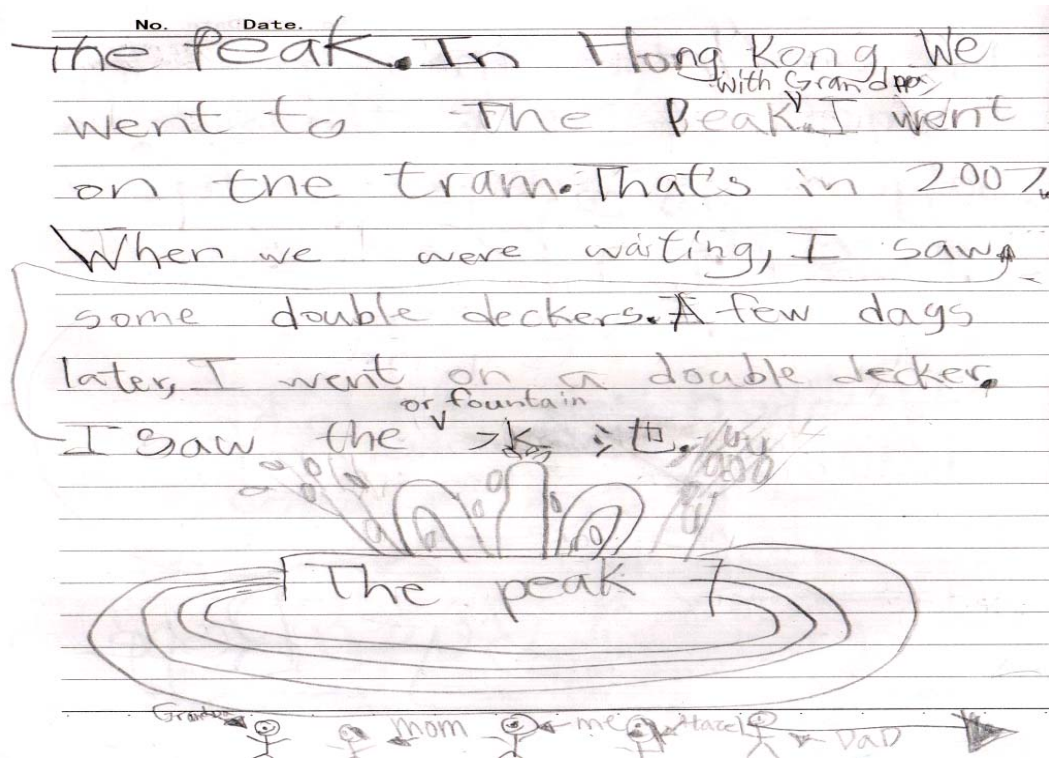
Throughout Minghoa's journal entries, he wrote about his daily experiences in English. In this particular entry, he offered specific descriptions through the use of English and Chinese scripts. For example, he signified the specific steamed bun (小笼包) or fried Chinese doughnut (油条) both in English and Chinese. Although he used the English words to refer broadly to the steamed bun or doughnut, he used Chinese scripts to specifically represent the unique cultural experience that he had with his

grandparents, uncle and aunt in Shanghai. Minghoa demonstrated the specific cultural awareness of the significance of describing nuances within his culture. They had importance to him because he used different scripts to show that he interacted with foods that have different names. This shows that to be Chinese, he eats specific foods.

Furthermore, through Minghoa's journal entries, he is learning the power of scripts that is not available to him in English. In other words, he came to realize that specific meaning can only be shown through the use of specific Chinese scripts (e.g., “小笼包” “steamed bun”), and that these scripts represent cultural experiences that he has constructed with his parents, grandparents and relatives during their sightseeing in Shanghai.

In a similar vein, Enlai recounted an experience unique to himself when he and his parents visited the Peak in Hong Kong. The Peak is a signature sight-seeing place where one can enjoy a panoramic view of Victoria Harbour. Enlai's journal entry reflected his cultural experience at the Peak, and his entry reflected his memorable experience (“I saw the fountain or 水池”).

**Figure 23. "I saw the fountain or 水池"**



Both Minghoa's and Enlai's journal entries reflected the scripts that they came to use to illuminate their specific cultural experiences with me as a reader. They understood when and how to use English scripts vis-à-vis Chinese scripts to convey different meanings. When they wanted to communicate a deep cultural nuance of their experience with me, they recognized that there are no sufficient nuances in English words to do so. Both Minghoa and Enlai came to differentiate the functionality of using English and Chinese.

In summary, engaging with scripts is relevant in the context of self-construction (Li, 2006; Moore, 2010). Through the use of scripts, the

children demonstrate how they have come to explore and internalize values relating to both the dominant and their heritage culture. How they come to enact those values when relating to others depends upon the situation. Wertsch (1998) explained that regardless of how young children learn, they do not simply ‘take words’ from others. Children use (and sometimes even create) words to communicate intentions and meanings, however rudimentary their language and literacy development might appear to adults. Children are still “the agent involved in the mediated action of producing utterances” (p. 56).

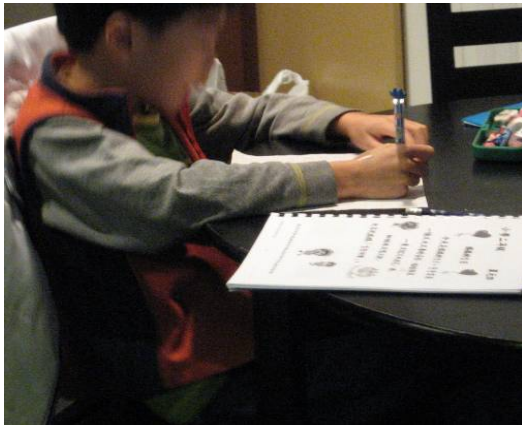
### ***Theme #3: Cultural Traditions of Repeated Practice***

In the spring of 1987, Howard Gardner spent a month with his wife and son in the eastern Chinese city of Nanjing. During Gardner’s stay, he came to notice the difference between eastern and western approaches to education. In his reflections, he wrote: “Chinese teachers are fearful that if skills are not acquired early, they may never be acquired; there is, on the other hand, no comparable hurry to inculcate creativity” (p. 55). In order to harness skills, children are expected to learn through repeated practice. By using the same material (e.g., same texts and symbols), children will learn how to develop proper knowledge and skills in the process.

One’s sense of mastery before moving forward in one’s learning is precisely what the young children have written about in their journal entries – the temporal sequence and the importance of practice over time.

When Chinese children learn to use a Chinese orthography, they must first learn how to produce the characters by remembering the associated strokes through the structured teaching practice known as calligraphy. Through repeated practice, the children will learn how to reproduce the characters. All the children practiced their Chinese writing diligently. The following photos captured their writing practice.

**Figure 24. Enlai's Writing Practice**



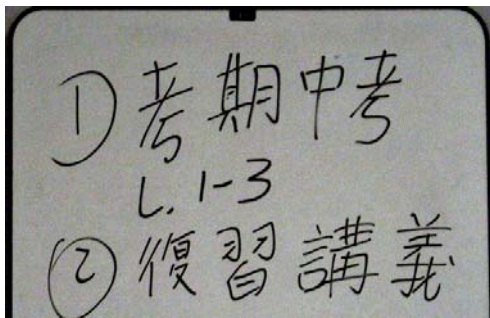
**Figure 25. Dawei's Writing Practice**



All the parents encouraged their children to engage in writing practice, where they copied characters. When the children were told by their parents that they had to practice writing Chinese scripts, the children often complained. The parents' response was typically to demand that their children continue without complaining. As Confucius described, the process of learning involves “studying extensively, enquiring carefully, pondering thoroughly, sifting clearly and practicing earnestly” (as cited in Lee, 1996, p. 35). By engaging the children in repeated multiliteracy practices, the parents plant cultural seeds for learning, so that those

seeds would set into motion new activities and practices that, when grown up, their children will be able to know and tell others what their roots are and their cultural values.

**Figure 26. Shing's Daily Reminder of Repeated Practices**



Cultural influences are embedded in literacy practices, where children appropriate heritage cultural norms and values. For example, Shing's mother used the white board to remind Shing to practice Chinese every day and review assigned readings by his Chinese school teacher. Cheng (1996) documented that when a Chinese mother sends her child to school, she is less concerned about literacy acquisition than in providing her child the "way" to develop as a person and to be morally cultivated (as cited in Li, 2001, p. 132). Confucius believed that one's ability to interpret what has been read and learned will eventually create new meaning and understanding. The notion of rote memorization in Chinese literacy development goes beyond simply memorizing textual information through a string of words put together on printed pages. Rather, Chinese literacy requires learners to repeatedly 'think and ask' how meanings of words change when the tone of the words change, which will give different

interpretations of written passages. As Confucius noted in one of his Four Books, *The Great Learning*, one aspect of learning is about personal cultivation. The Master (Confucius) said:

I do not open up the truth to one who is not eager to get knowledge, nor help out anyone who is not anxious to explain himself. When I have presented one corner of a subject to anyone, and he cannot from it learn the other three, I do not repeat my lesson.' (7:8; as cited in Hughes, 2011).

As learners engage in the reading and writing activities, they are learning how to construct and negotiate their identities as well as position themselves across written texts which shape their “perspective, conceptual horizon, intention, and worldview” (Wertsch, 1991, p. 51).

Parke et al. (2002) stated that “learning to read [and write], in any language, requires an understanding of how to make meaning of a system that uses abstract symbols and conventions” (p. 218). In order to assist western educators in recognizing how to “resist the hegemony of dominant national languages” in teaching literacy and literacy practices among multilingual and multicultural learners (Garcia, Skutnabb-Kangas, & Torres-Guzmán, 2006, p. 217), the above data captured the learning processes and language use by the children and their parents.

Literacy practices are not an independent activity. For example, when children engage in a reading activity, they interact with authors’

written texts which provoke questions and new ways of thinking and understanding. When children engage in a read-aloud task, they undergo a process of verbalizing their thoughts and conversing with others (e.g., authors). At the same time, they also learn how certain ideas are cultivated and embedded in texts. Both the samples and excerpts shown in this section exemplify how they come to know and portray themselves through reading and writing. As Street (2005) explains, how people experience reading and writing are themselves rooted in “conceptions of knowledge, identity, and being” (p. 28). This suggests that when children are engaged in reading and writing, they come to learn new ways of interpreting information. As they acquire further knowledge, their understanding of themselves and the world is shifted and modified, and thus it impacts their views on identity through learning.

In summary, throughout my field observations, the children’s artifacts and journals, coupled with interviews and field observations at home, in school, and in the community helped illuminate how they come to develop multiliteracy and how their parents foster it by engaging them in multiliteracy activities. While it has been reported in the multilingual and multicultural literature that children’s literacy practices are strongly influenced by their parents’ attitudes toward involvement in their children’s education (Curdt-Christiansen, 2003), the above data illustrated how the parents used multiliteracy practices to foster Chinese



culture and values. Speaking Chinese languages and reading and writing Chinese scripts are examples of literacy activities that provoke and propel learners to reflect upon their association with different cultural groups. Chinese cultural values are being maintained in a Canadian setting, and the multiplicity of values that children of Chinese heritage come to adopt will continue to shape their children's identities.

## Chapter 8

### Language Use and Identity Construction

Scholars such as Dagenais (2003), Moore (2010), Norton and Toohy (2002), and Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) illustrate how languages are connected to people's identity construction. In this study, becoming multilingual is indeed the central theme exemplified by all children. As Chinglan's mother succinctly summarized:

每天都用不同的語言，中文和英文混合來和他溝通。

*Every day we use different languages, we mix Chinese and English when communicating with them.* (Translation from Cantonese, Chinglan's mother, 2008)

To explore this central theme, I first invited parents to talk about "What language(s) do you like to speak most often with your child and other family members?" during the initial home interview in early 2008. The following two sections will analyze the emerging themes: 1) inter-generational transmission of cultural values and 2) children as agents of language use. These themes were supported by my analysis of children's language maps and example of their language use in and outside of their home.

### ***Theme #1: Inter-generational Transmission of Cultural Values***

Parents believed that languages are important for inter-generational transmission of cultural values. Based on the home observations over a 10-month period, all five parents transmitted some form of Chinese cultural expectations. To illustrate this, Minghoa's father explained:

回去上海，我們一定要說中文。所以，我希望讓我的兒子有一個中文環境，家的感覺。

*When we visit Shanghai, we must speak Mandarin. So, I hope to give my sons a Chinese environment, a home feel. (Translation from Mandarin)*

In order to make it happen, Minghoa's father highlighted how Chinese as the heritage language is an effective communication tool to help maintain connections with the extended family and communities. Such an awareness was developed through the children's use of language and emerging reference points, which are influenced by the way their parents pass on cultural knowledge to them.

During the initial home interviews, the parents presented the following views:

Minghoa's father said: 最重要我希望他會懂中文，因為對他以後長大就業有好處。

*The most important thing is that I hope he knows Chinese, because it will be good for his future career development. (Translation from Mandarin)*

Chinglan's mother said, "We don't have a family rule expecting them to speak Cantonese. 我們在家會盡量讓他們說中文。" (*We try to let them speak Cantonese more at home.*)

Enlai's mother said, "When they were young, they knew that we wanted them to speak more Cantonese at home. It is not so much about the family rule. We just want them to be able to speak the language."

Dawei's mother said, "We speak Mandarin at home. They know how to behave themselves at home."

Shing's mother said, "I speak Mandarin to them. They like to speak English more. From time to time I remind them to speak Mandarin."

To further illustrate how parents shaped their children's use of language, three parents reported the importance of speaking Cantonese or Mandarin.

Enlai's mother indicated that she usually speaks Cantonese to her husband and children: 我地發現佢哋兩個去了小學後，大部分時間就用英文。如是我們在家會盡量說中文，讓他們說多D中文。

*We discovered that starting elementary school, they often spoke in English. So we speak Chinese at home whenever possible, we let them speak more Chinese. (Translation from Cantonese)*

Dawei's mother also indicated that she mainly speaks Mandarin to her husband, Dawei, and his brother. She said: 我們在家會講中文，因為如果他們聽不到，他們在這環境生活就越難瞭。

*We speak Mandarin at home, because if they do not listen to the language, they will find it difficult to understand. (Translation from Mandarin)*

Shing's mother further accentuated the importance of speaking Chinese to her husband, Shing and his brother at home: 其實我覺得讓他們聽和講中文是重要的。他們的祖父母都是在臺灣，爺爺奶奶是會注意中國的文化。如果說，今天回去臺灣，他們就肯定會了解。我覺得只要他們認識到自己是一個中國人就好了。

*In fact, I feel that it is important to let them listen and speak Chinese. Their grandparents live in Taiwan. They pay much more attention to the Chinese culture. Let's say, today we go back to Taiwan, they will for sure understand Chinese. I feel that as long as they know they are Chinese, that is okay. (Translation from Mandarin)*

In contrast, two parents chose to speak both Chinese and English to their children. Chinglan's mother talked about family traditions and

explained in English: “We mainly speak English to them at home. That’s how our parents speak to us, too.” Minghoa’s father reported that he usually speaks Mandarin to his wife and Mandarin and English to both Minghoa and his brother. Minghoa’s father explained:

我們中文和英文混合在一起教。如果要比較的話，從小都大，還是講中文比較多一點。

*We teach them both Chinese and English. Comparatively speaking, from when they were young to when they are older now, we speak Chinese a bit more. (Translation from Mandarin)*

Enlai’s mother also noted:

其實我想大部分華人家長都同我哋一樣，佢哋係屋企時間都很短。大部分都係去學校，去中文班，一下課他們就開始講英文，所以我哋會盡量去幫佢哋保存中文。

*In fact I think many Chinese parents’ situations are similar to ours, their children spend relatively short periods of time at home, the majority of time is in school, and attending Chinese class. After class they speak English right away, so we try our best to help maintain the Chinese language. (Translation from Cantonese)*

This quotation conveys the central idea that as the children try to make sense of their family contexts (both in Canada and their parents’ home country), the children will come to learn and be aware of when and how to

speak specific languages with whom. Dagenais (2003) also concurs that multilingual children are generally encouraged by their parents to develop and maintain proficiency in their heritage language as a way to promote strong ties to their heritage language communities in Canada and abroad. In essence, the Chinese parents try to establish a “durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” that will help their children acquire cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 187).

During my field observations, it was clear that parents played a pivotal role in trying to shape their children’s use of language in social networks. For example, in order to maintain the use of heritage language at home, Minghoa’s father liked to watch Taiwanese television programs if time permitted. Minghoa’s father and his children would especially watch 綜藝大哥大 (Variety Big Brother; China Television/MediaCorp, 2010) together, which was a Taiwanese comedy-variety show featuring celebrity guests and performers from Taiwan and/or abroad. Similarly, Chinglan’s parents liked to watch 無綫電視 (known as TVB or Television Broadcasts Limited), a series from Hong Kong. For example, at the time of the field observation, they were watching 滄心風暴 (Heart of Greed; Television Broadcasts Limited, 2007) which was about a family war over inheritance. Both Chinglan and her brother would sometimes join their parents to watch the series. In Dawei’s family, his father enjoyed watching English

sport channels (especially golfing), and Dawei would sometimes watch sports channels with his father, as he did during the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Unlike the aforementioned three families, Shing's mother intentionally did not install cable television cable, because she preferred that Shing and his brother read books or play education-related computer games (such as Webkinz) rather than watch television. From time to time, they would watch their favourite DVDs (such as SpongeBob SquarePants). Like Shing, Enlai and his sister did not watch much television during my field observation. The parents always had the radio on; their preferred radio station was AM 1470 which broadcasts predominately Cantonese programs and some Mandarin, coupled with 30 other languages, which makes it "Canada's only national multicultural radio network" (Fairchild Radio, 2011, para 1). By having the AM 1470 station on every day, they were exposed to local, HK and international news and politics, as well as entertainment news and Pop music.

During field observations, all parents used mixed languages (Cantonese/Mandarin and English) to a certain extent when communicating with their children. However, all parents emphasized that their children's ability to communicate with grandparents and relatives in Chinese was important. Dabène and Moore (1995) note that language can be "invested and recognized as the guide to kinship-interpreted group



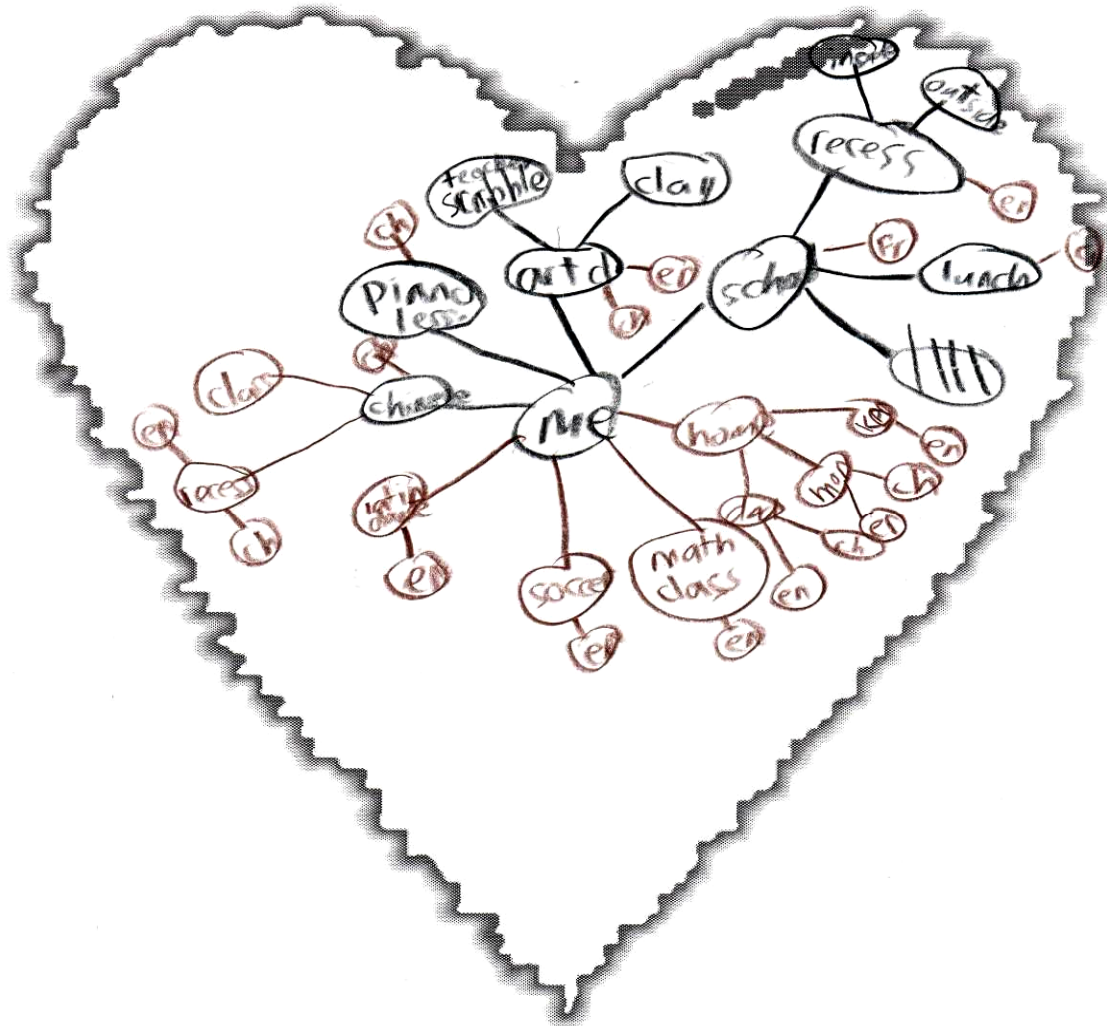
membership” (p. 23). Indeed, the maintenance of family language allows people to maintain their group membership (Dagenais, 2003) as well as to access information and help when they are in need (Danesi, McLeod, & Morris, 1993). The above examples illustrated that all parents did whatever they could (such as speaking their heritage language at home or watching TV series produced by their home country) in order to ensure their children retained their heritage language beyond the mere ability to communicate.

### ***Theme #2 Children as Agents of Language Use***

Language preference is a marker of people’s internalization of the norms and values of their own culture (such as Dagenais, 2003, Dabène & Moore, 1995). Depending upon the contexts, speakers’ chosen languages represent their shift in identities. One way to examine this is to hear the children’s voice regarding their language preference in and outside of the home. I invited them to talk about “What language(s) do you speak most often with your parents and other family members?” during the initial home interview in early 2008. All children reported that they preferred to speak English more quite frequently at home, in school, and in the community. To further understand the children’s language affiliations, I asked them to draw a language map which represented the language(s) that they most often spoke when engaged in their daily activities. The

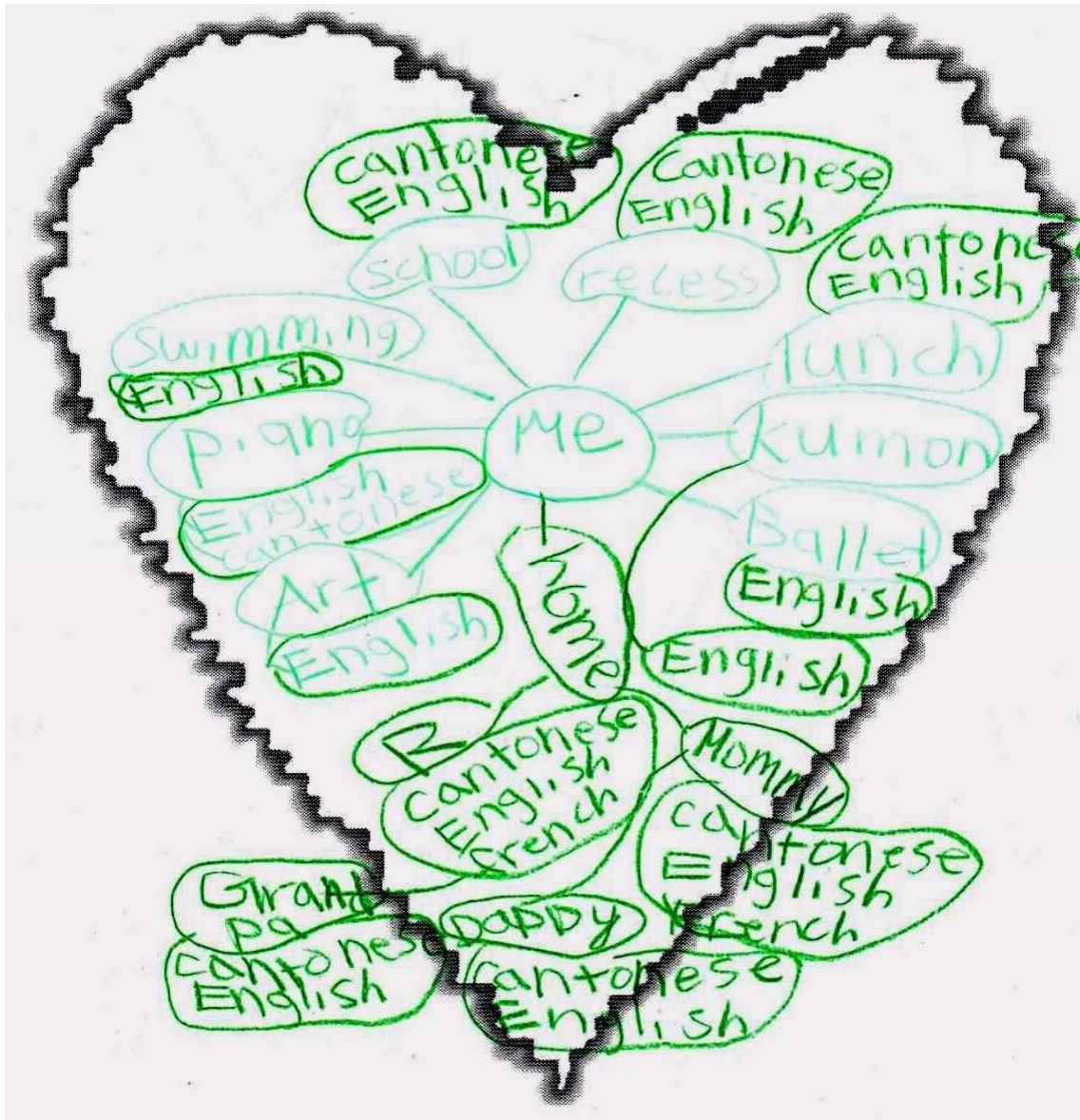
following maps represent both the activities and associated languages spoken most often by the children.

**Figure 27. Minghoa's Language Map**



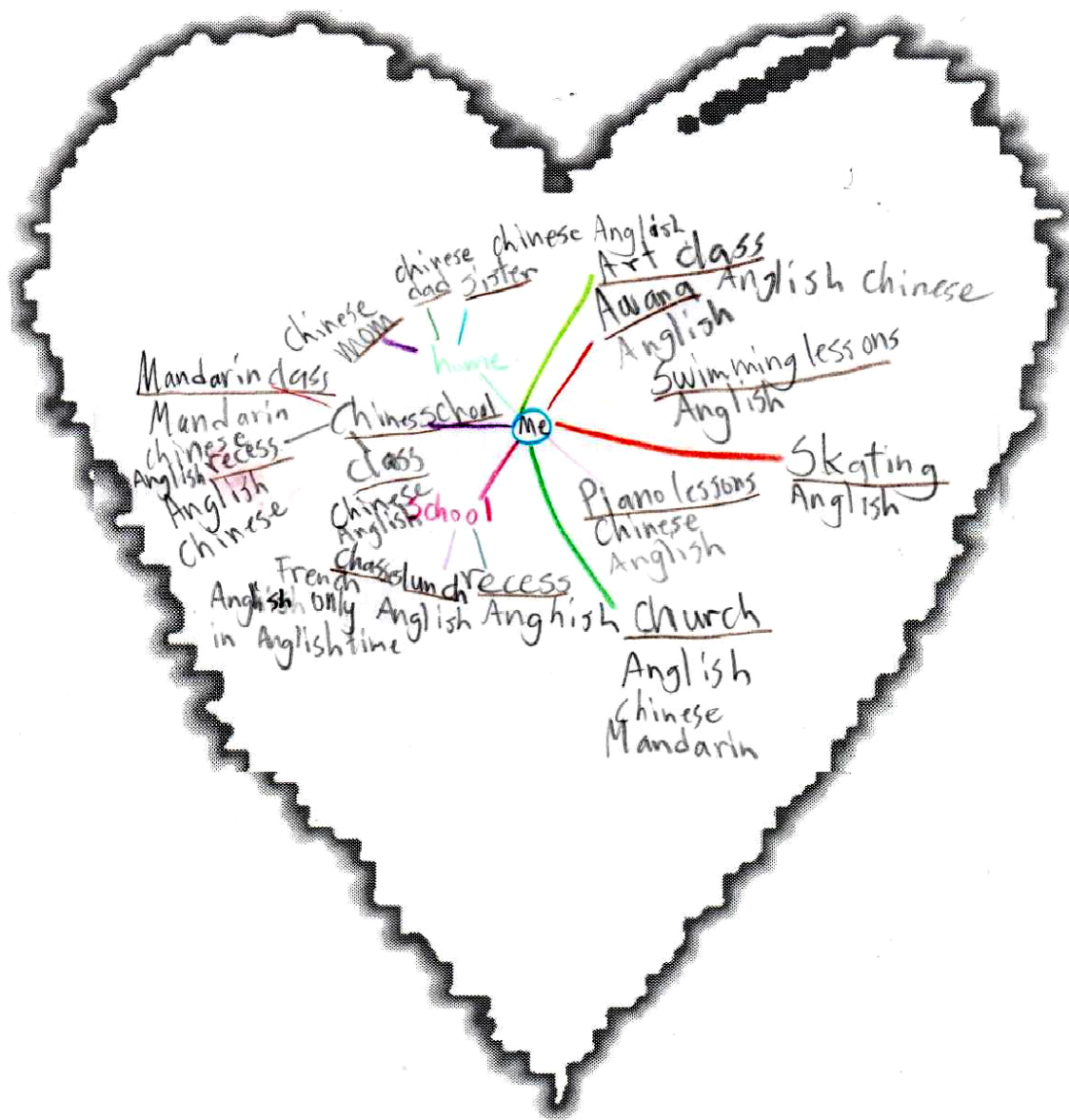
When I analyzed Minghoa's map, I immediately noticed that he speaks predominately English, except where Chinese is the mode of communication (which is mainly connected to home and piano lessons). Minghoa indicated that he only speaks French in class, because during recess or at lunch, he speaks English.

**Figure 28. Chinglan's Language Map**



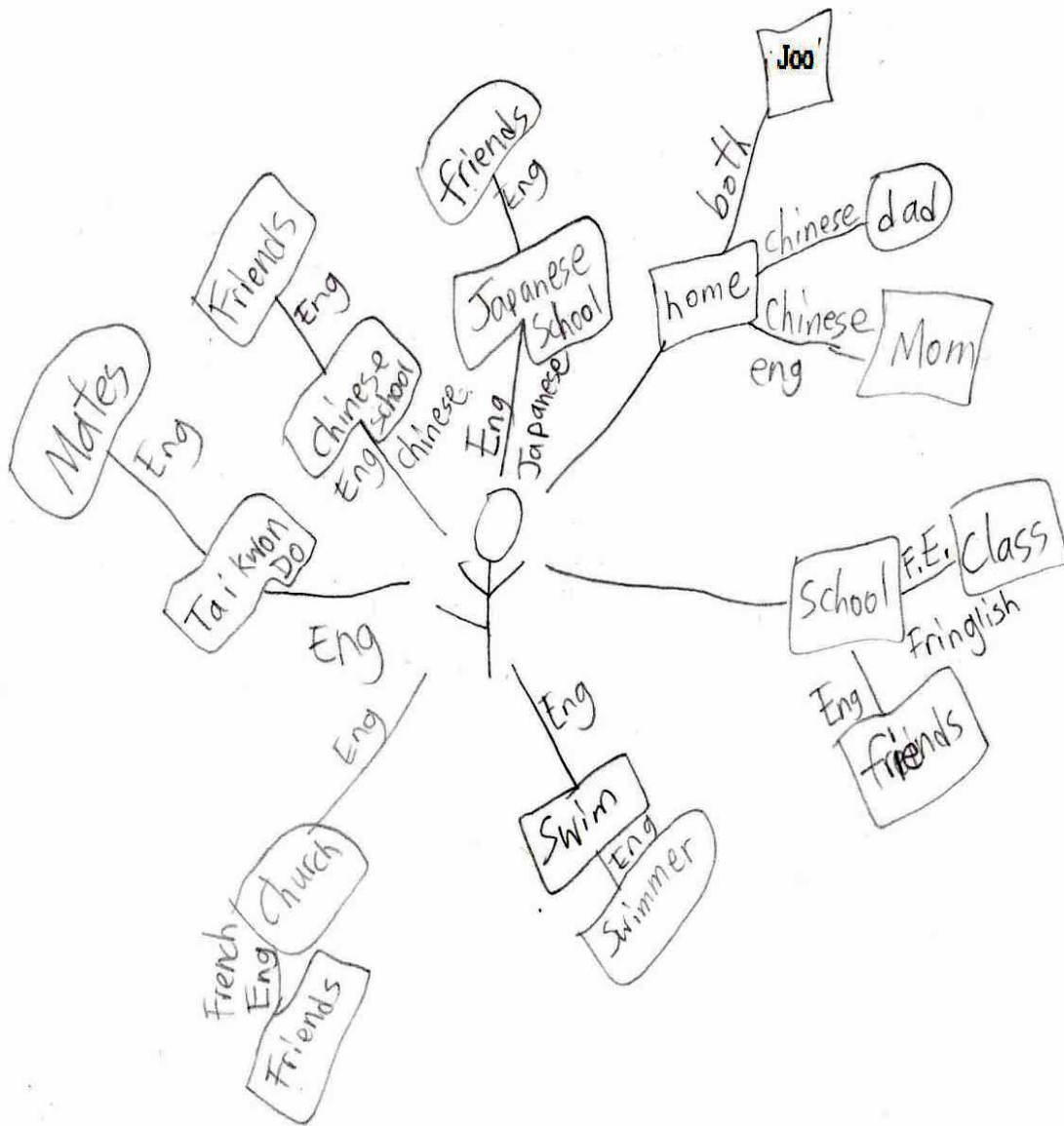
Chinglan's map reflects that her use of English is connected to arts, swimming, ballet, and Kumon. Otherwise, she shows that she uses a combination of English and Cantonese (such as at home). She also indicates that she speaks a combination of Cantonese, English and French to her mother and older brother.

**Figure 29. Enlai's Language Map**



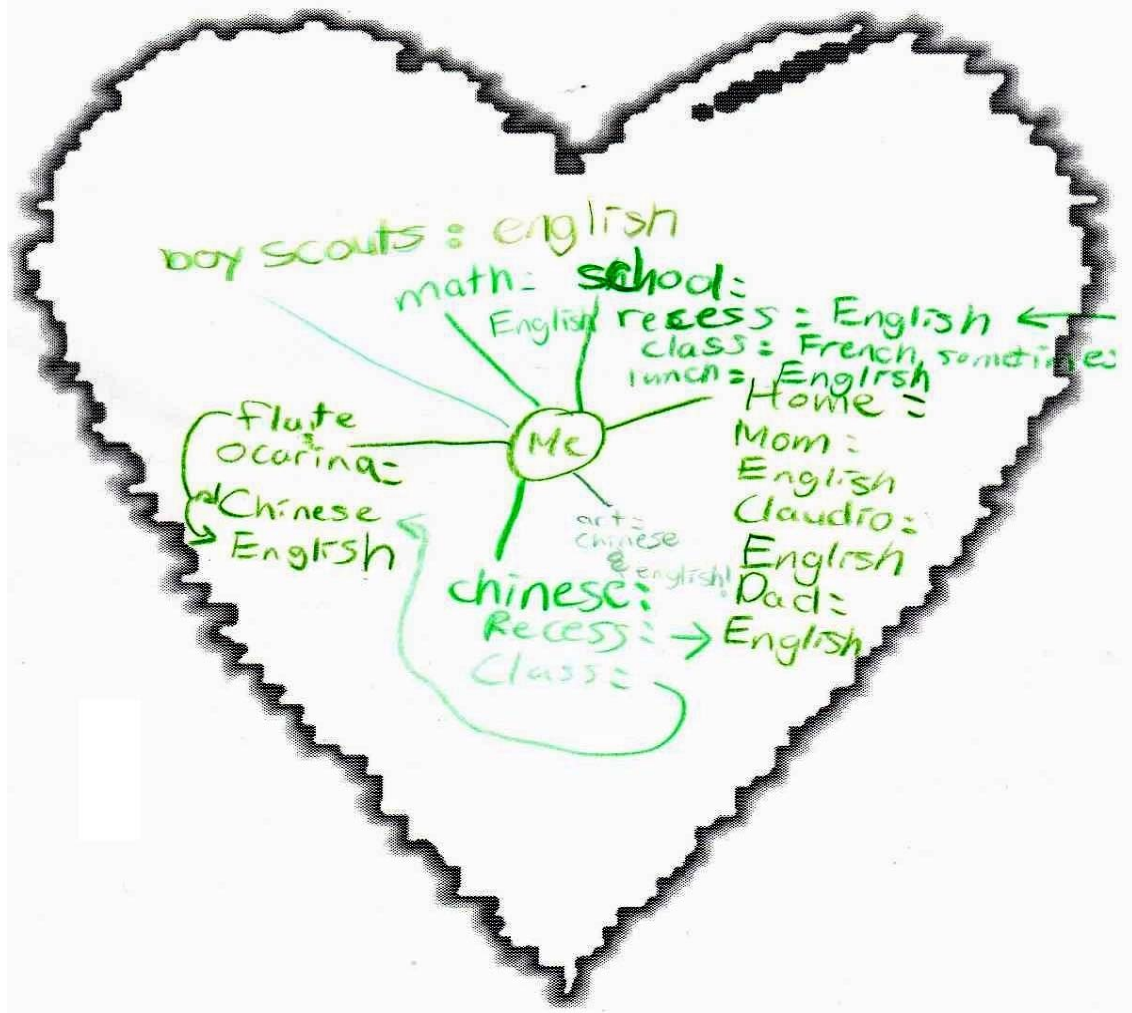
Enlai's map shows a diverse use of languages. For example, he indicates that he speaks 'Chinese' to his parents and sister. He speaks English when engaging in the following activities: swimming, skating, recess and lunch. Otherwise, he shows that he speaks a combination of languages (such as English, Cantonese and Mandarin in church).

**Figure 30. Dawei's Language Map**



Dawei's map shows that he speaks mainly English during swimming and Tai Kwon Do. He speaks both English and Chinese during Chinese school, Japanese school, and at home. He also noticed that he speaks 'Fringlish' in French class (noted by his description of school). He also reported speaking English and French with friends at church.

**Figure 31. Shing's Language Map**



Of all the children, Shing clearly prefers to speak English, except when he has to speak Chinese (such as in Chinese school) and Chinese/English during his Ocarina lesson and art class.

The children's drawings above indicate their language affiliations in their social networks. They show that English is used most often with friends, whereas Chinese is used with family members. French is limited to use in the school environment. As reported by the children, they chose

to mostly speak English when engaging in their daily activities. At the same time they would try to speak the specific languages which were expected of them in the appropriate contexts. For example, the children would mainly speak French in French class or Chinese in Chinese class. The children's drawings illustrated that they spoke specific languages to different people in various contexts.

Not only did the children show the complexity of language use, but their chosen language(s) per activity represented the multiple ways that language is a resource used by the children as agents to engage with others in social networks. Their language maps lent support to Moore (2010) who demonstrated that language is a marker of children's identity, and such identity can only be fostered through language use in their social networks. This was supported by the children's self-reports on the use of language in this study. During the final field observation in early 2009, all five children were invited again to talk about "What language(s) do you like to speak most often?" The children reported that they still liked to speak English more often than Cantonese/Mandarin or French in a variety of linguistic contexts.

Through field observations and their drawings, all children reported that they chose to speak English more often than Cantonese, Mandarin, and French. The fact that the children reported that they liked to speak English could be explained by the fact that although the Chinese language

is very functional and has high status in Richmond (as explained in Chapter 5), nonetheless B.C. is still predominately an Anglophone province. Hence, English was chosen to be the language most spoken by the children, which may reflect their awareness of English as a language of power in the social networks that exist in the mainstream Canadian culture. The children's drawings clearly reflected children have agency to use multiple languages across speakers and contexts.

### ***Children's Use of Language: Parents***

Children's construction of identity as active agents is influenced by language use in parenting practices. In North America, the core values transmitted intergenerationally emphasize individualism, egalitarianism, independence and self-actualization (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002). In contrast, Chinese culture emphasizes collectivity and interdependence. In Chinese culture, the family is the most influential in-group which dictates the formation of social relations and social exchange processes. In this section, I explored how young children constructed and negotiated identities by way of understanding their language preference in and outside of the home. Not only is language a mediator through which speakers and interlocutors exchange ideas, but the use of languages also represents the identities that speakers convey to interlocutors. As Dagenais and Day (1998) noted, language is a salient dimension of identity.



Here is an example which captures the language use between Minghoa and his parents at home. Minghoa's family had dinner together. While Minghoa's mother was still cooking in the kitchen, Minghoa's father, Minghoa and his brother were eating supper at the dining table. The conversation in the following excerpt captured the use of Shanghainese and Mandarin between the father and mother (which was about their children's golfing schedule for the next day) and the use of Mandarin with the children (which was the focus of this excerpt).

01 Mother: [She directed her speech to Minghoa and his brother]

七點五十分就要去。 (*Leave here at 7:50 am.*)

02 Father: 八點到這邊。 (*Arrive there at 8 am.*) 明天比賽要量力打。 (*Do your best at tomorrow's golfing competition.*)

03 Minghoa: [He did not understand the comment...] 什麼啦? (*What?*)

04 Father: 打Golf呀。 (*Play golf.*) 你們兩個明天到七點起來。 (*You two have to get up at 7 am tomorrow.*)

05 Minghoa: [He listened while he kept eating.]

06 Mother: [She microwaved food and boiled something on stove at the back of the kitchen.]

06 Father: [He looked to Minghoa.] 你明天可以十點起來。 (*You can wake up at 10 am tomorrow.*)

07 Minghoa: 是嗎? (*Really?*)

08 Parents: [They briefly exchanged words in Shanghainese.]

The dominant topic of the narrative among the family members in this excerpt was when to wake up. As they discussed the time, both children were quietly listening to their father and asked for clarification when they were not sure. I also observed that Minghoa's father used the supper opportunity to provide emotional support to Minghoa's brother regarding his golfing competition (see Line 2). Supper is a time during which all family members eat together. Supper can also be a time to talk to (as seen in the above excerpt) or in some cases discipline children, because children are expected to eat with the rest of the family members. It is part of Chinese tradition passing from one generation to the next which has been deeply entrenched in many Chinese families and become part of their lives. From a Chinese ethnic standpoint, eating supper together represents wholeness and harmony.

Throughout my field observations, I observed that the language use between Minghoa's parents was predominately in Shanghainese and occasionally in Mandarin. When the family spent time together, Minghoa and his brother would speak with their parents or respond to their parents primarily in Mandarin. Minghoa and his brother would speak English to each other some of the time at home.

When I further interpreted their language maps and analyzed field observations, the children knew when it was most effective to speak specific languages, to whom, and in what contexts. As illustrated in this

study, they used languages for multiple purposes in dialogue and interaction with others. In particular, the next two excerpts illustrated the taking of Chinese medicine by two children.

**Example 1.** The use of language between Enlai and his parents was in Cantonese.

**Figure 32. Taking of Chinese medicine by Enlai - 1**



Enlai: 媽, 好苦呀! (*Mom, it tastes very bitter!*)

Mother: 好苦咩? 快D啦! (*Tastes very bitter, really? Drink quickly la!*)

Father: 快D飲左佢, 快D啦! (*Drink quickly, hurry up la!*) 成日都係這樣飲啦!  
(*You drink it all the time la!*)

Mother: 日日都是這樣做啦! (*You drink it every day la!*)

Father: 快D飲就唔苦囉! (*Drink it quick, you do not notice the bitter taste!*)

扭計都要飲啦, 唔好扭計啦. (*Don't fuss. You still have to drink it. Don't fuss.*)

Enlai: [As shown in the photo below he finished the drink without saying another word.]

**Figure 33. Taking of Chinese medicine by Enlai - 2**



**Example 2.** The use of language between Cars (Shing's brother) and his mother was in Mandarin and English.

Mother: 哥哥來，快喝這杯中藥。 (*Cars, come quickly to drink the Chinese medicine.*)

Cars: I don't want 中藥。 (*Zhong Yao, Chinese medicine.*)

Mother: 快點喝。 (*Drink it quick.*)

In the first example, Enlai used Cantonese to voice the bitter taste of the Chinese medicine to his mother. His father overheard and instructed him to finish it. His parents reminded him that he has been drinking it all the time. In the second example, Cars responded to his mother's request in English, except the part where he emphasized that he did not like the Chinese medicine in Mandarin. These two excerpts showed how the children used the heritage language to engage with their parents in the hope that they did not need to drink the Chinese medicine.

When I observed Enlai and Cars in both situations, it was clear to me that they were accessing both Chinese and Canadian cultural resources. Firstly, by accessing Chinese resources Enlai used Cantonese to express the bitter taste of the Chinese medicine, while Cars used all English except using Mandarin to accentuate he did not like “中藥” (Zhong Yao/Chinese medicine). Secondly, by accessing Canadian cultural resources, they both voiced their dislike of drinking the Chinese medicine,

because in Chinese culture, children were not supposed to voice concerns or talk back to parents. In the end, both children were anchored more in Chinese epistemologies. That is, following their parents' request to finish the medicine without uttering another sentence. This shows that they were anchored in Chinese epistemologies, namely, filial piety, which refers to one's obligations of reverence, obedience, and love toward one's parents.

### ***Children's Use of Language: Siblings***

The following examples captured language use between the children and their siblings. This example took place at Chinglan's birthday party. While waiting for guests (i.e., her uncles, aunts, and cousins) to arrive, Chinglan and her brother asked a cousin to play Mahjong. To help the readers understand what Mahjong is, the closest western game that I can think of is Bridge. Like Bridge, Mahjong requires critical thinking which involves good calculation, skill, strategy, and a bit of luck. Another point which may be of use to readers is that while many Chinese historians still debate when and by whom the game was created, one of the hypotheses is that during the Taiping Rebellion, Chinese army officers created the game to pass the time (Mahjong, 2011). I thought that the notion of pastimes certainly captured Chinglan's situation (i.e., waiting for her guests to arrive).

It is an ancient Chinese game involving four players. Since they did not have a fourth player, they invited me to play along with them.

Chinglan, Tom (Chinglan's brother), Mandy (cousin), and I began to build 四方城 (known as the Mahjong wall). After they finished building the Mahjong wall, they began to play the first game of the "East Wind". They explained to me that there are usually four games within a Wind. Each Wind has a different name, beginning with the East Wind, then South, West, and North. If someone wins a game within a Wind, the person will be awarded an additional game within that Wind. When asked "How did you learn Mahjong?" Chinglan's brother said, "Mommy taught us." The interaction among the children was in English.

01 Tom: [He said to Chinglan.] You need to add one more. [He referred to the base of Chinglan's Mahjong wall.]

02 Chinglan: We played a lot last night. [She explained to me that she and Tom were playing Mahjong with their parents the previous night.]

03 Tom: [Looked at his tiles.] That's horrible.

04 Mandy: [After Chinglan, it was Mandy's turn. When she got a tile, she made an inquisitive look and covered her mouth with her left hand.]

05 Chinglan: Oh, did you get one, what did you get?

06 Mandy: [She kept thinking.]

07 Tom: Something good.

08 Mandy: [After thinking for 30 seconds, she put a tile out to the centre of the wall.]

09 Chinglan: [She extended her left arm to signal that she might need the tile.] Wait, wait, wait, wait.

10 Tom: 嘖 [Ji – it is a Cantonese expression of well or why. He thought that Chinglan was winning the game.]

11 Chinglan: Go ahead. [She laughed at herself.]

12 Tom: 嘖 [Ji – He used “Ji” to signal that he did not get the tile that he wanted.]

In this interaction, Chinglan and Tom demonstrated what they knew about Mahjong. During the game, both of them were perceptive regarding Mandy’s non-verbal cues. Mandy was paying attention to her tiles and not saying anything. In one instance, Chinglan demonstrated her calculation strategy by asking Mandy, “Oh...what did you get?” (see Line 5). Chinglan identified whether or not she was getting a useful tile to make a winning hand. Although the dominant narrative among Chinglan, Tom, and Mandy was in English, Tom did use a Chinese expression (i.e., Ji) to express disappointment when Chinglan signalled that she might have won the game by saying “Wait, wait, wait, wait” (see Line 10) or frustration when he did not get a good tile (see Line 12). In this instance, Tom used Chinese expressions to emphasize his emotions.

### ***Children's Use of Language: Relatives***

This section illustrates language use between the children and other family members. Specifically, the following excerpt captured the family dynamics and communicative practices performed by different members in Chinglan's family gathering. After the family potluck party, the children began to break away from the adults. The children decided to have a make-over and dressed up in Chinglan's bedroom. Maria and Chinglan showed their beautiful dresses to the adults. Then they invited their younger cousin, Haley (4 years old), to join them. Some family members clapped hands to encourage Haley to go with Abby and Chinglan. Despite the family members' encouragement, Haley actually moved near to Auntie Hui.

01 Auntie Hui: 唔使怕醜. (*Don't be shy.*)

02 Uncle Tom: Chinglan will help you.

03 Chinglan's mother: Yea, Chinglan will help you.

04 Abby: [She imitated Haley's expression] I am sha.

05 Auntie Hui: [She corrected Abby.] I am shy, right?

06 Abby: [She knocked her head.]

07 Uncle Bill: 呀, 表姐同你影? (*a, have you taken photos with your cousin?*)

08 Chinglan's mother: 有呀. (*Yes.*)

09 Uncle Tom: Chinglan comes to take Haley.



I captured the multiple use of languages among multiple-conversations in this interaction. The dominant narrative among the family members involved the use of both Cantonese and English to encourage Haley to join Abby and Chinglan for a make-over and to play dress-up. At the same time, there were three other subordinate narratives.

The first one was between Abby and Auntie Hui. Abby imitated Haley's shyness by saying "Sha" which is a portmanteau word comprised of Chinese and English pronunciation. Even though Abby said "Sha" as an effect to highlight her young cousin's shyness, Auntie Hui immediately corrected her by saying, "I am shy, right?" (see Line 5). Abby knocked her head to acknowledge that she knew how to properly pronounce "Shy" in English. The correction performed by Auntie Hui reinforced that errors are not tolerated even in spoken language, and that every spoken word must be properly enunciated in order to demonstrate one's understanding of linguistic forms. In other words, Auntie Hui seemed to convey to Abby that she is linguistically competent and expected to properly perform basic communicative tasks at home.

The second one was between Chinglan's mother and Uncle Bill regarding taking photos with their cousins (see Lines 7-8). They used Cantonese in their brief exchange which indicated that they were highly linguistically competent in the way they traversed between multiple linguistic communities at the family potluck party. Most importantly, their

use of Cantonese may be one way for Chinglan's mother and Uncle Bill to ascribe specific identities in their linguistic and social interactions. This is illustrative of spatial analysis (Blommaert et al., 2005). As Blommaert et al. note, "spaces are meaningful in relation to other spaces... [and they] are ordered and organised..., stratified and layered, with processes belonging to one scale entering processes at another scale" (p. 23).

Blommaert et al. discuss scale as a movement from one space to another, from one time to another, from general to specific, etc. In other words, Chinglan's mother and Uncle Bill illustrated that they were able to move from a dominant narrative to having their own separate brief conversation.

What the above excerpt shows is, on one level, the complex communicative demands placed on both the children and adults to keep track of the conversation. At a deeper level, even though they were mixing languages, both the children and adults demonstrated linguistic competency in the way they used languages to converse and understand with other family members in the social networks. The excerpt further illustrated that both the children and adults were fluidly crossing cultural and social boundaries through language at the family potluck party.

### ***Children's Use of Language: Friends***

The following examples captured language use between the children and their friends. For example, Dawei invited one of his friends to play at his house. The following excerpt captured the interaction between Dawei

and his friend while playing on the computer, while Dawei's brother watched them play from the side.

01 Dawei's brother: How come?

02 Dawei: Oh, I don't like Candyland. What about the Excellent?

03 Dawei's brother: [Laughs.] Ops. Go back first.

04 Dawei: You need to...Candyland.

05 The Boy: [He was typing the URL address.] C-A-N-D-Y...

06 Dawei: Dot C-A

07 The Boy: [He finished typing the URL.] Oh, yeah. [He showed his excitement.]

08: Dawei: Just, just press this [pointed at the monitor], just press, Ok, I'll, I'll do it. I'll do it.

One may say that there is nothing unique about the above excerpt. It simply shows how Dawei and his friend negotiated their gaming preference (see Line 2) and how Dawei came to accept his friend's suggestion to press "ok" in the end (see Line 8). The uniqueness of this excerpt lies in the children's use of English language. The excerpt shows that the use of English language is an effective communication tool to access social resources (such as playing on-line computer games). In order to access such resources, the children need to know which English websites contain games that they would like to play. The children's use of

English language also reflects their understanding that it is an effective communication tool to maintain connections with friends.

### ***Children's Use of Language at Schools***

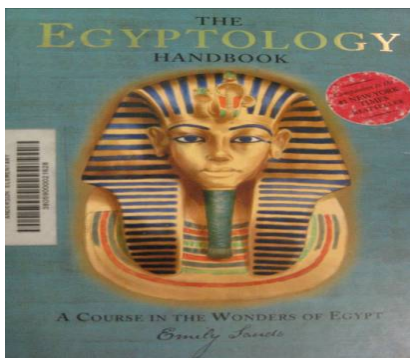
***In class.*** For example, Dawei drew on his language map that he speaks “Finglish” in French class (see Figure 30, p. 170). In Dawei’s case, while he used English as a way to signal an Anglo-Canadian identity, he acknowledged the rule of speaking French in class. Despite the classroom rule of speaking French, those children excluded/ignored the teacher by forming their own linguistic community. The following excerpts illustrate my field observations in class.

#### ***Example 1. Chinglan’s Silent Book Reading Time***

Activity: It was the silent book reading period. I observed that some children whispered in English.

Chinglan: [After she finished reading an English book, she came over to my table. I was flipping through the “Egyptology Handbook”.] 我要睇. (*I want read this book.*)

#### ***Figure 34. Chinglan’s Silent Reading***



01 Classmate 1: [Another classmate joined her.] Are you recording her?

[She referred to my audio recorder.]

02 Classmate 2: [Another classmate came by.]

03 Chinglan: Is this the beer?

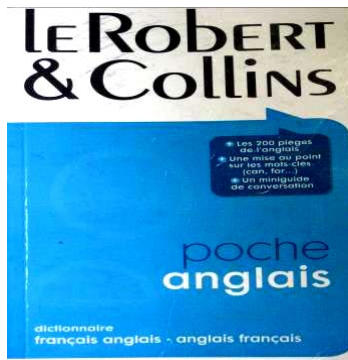
04 Classmates 1 and 2: [Giggles.]

05 Chinglan: Is that what they eat?

### ***Example 2. Shing's In-class Assignment***

Activity: Shing's French teacher distributed a vocabulary worksheet to the class. His work station consisted of Dailin (a Chinese girl) and Paloma (a Caucasian girl). As they engaged in the class activity, they spoke quietly in English (November, 2008).

### ***Figure 35. French/English Dictionary***



01 Dailin: (She and Paloma were checking the French-English dictionary as shown above.) If you look back, we've got that one.

02 Paloma: Ok.

03 Dailin: Look, look – A-R...

04 Shing: (He kept looking at his dictionary and then looked over to the two girls. He spelled a word to Paloma.) E-r-a-n.

The above excerpts reinforce the concept that language is a mediator through which young children converse and exchange ideas (Grosjean, 1982, 2008, 2010). At the same time, language is also a source of power, which affects how both senders and receivers interpret the world around them. For example, Chinglan and Shing whispered English to their classmates in a French classroom. Despite the classroom rule of speaking French, they excluded/ignored the teacher and other classmates by forming their own speech community. One way to explain this unique speech community is that the children might want to use their familiar communicative technique (i.e., communicating with others in English) to share information (as in Chinglan's case) or to find out meaning (as in Shing's). This is another example to illustrate that identities are fluid. Both Chinglan's and Shing's use of English signal an identity that they wanted to communicate with other at that moment in time.

***Outside the classroom.*** All the children conversed with classmates or school friends primarily in English outside of the classroom. During recess, these children were surrounded by predominately English-speaking peers. Wei (2000) pointed out that "the availability of various languages in the community repertoire serves as a useful interactional resource" (p. 11). The following excerpts illustrate my field observations.

**Example 1: Dawei and His Friends**

Activity 1: During recess, lunch and after school, Dawei and his friend (Elven) liked to hang out together. Dawei also liked to be the first one to find a swing spot. The following excerpt captured Dawei playing with his two friends on the school playground.

01 Susan: I don't know what that means. I really don't.

02 Elven: [Shout.] What you are doing?

03 Dawei: [He threw small rocks at Elven.]

04 Susan: [She came down from the Monkey bars.]

05 Elven: [He looked at his watch.]

06 Dawei: We are going at 11 am. It's only 10:38.

07 Susan: Is that at 11 o'clock?

08 Dawei: Yeah.

09 Susan: [She glanced over Elven.] It is, eh.

10 Dawei: [He swung on the Monkey bars.]

11 Susan: Dawei, Dawei, do you want to go back?

12 Dawei: Elven, look at this? (He swung upwards on the Monkey bars.)

13 Susan: Dawei.

14 Elven: Hurry up, they are going now.

15 Susan: Yeah, they probably go.

16 Dawei: Wait (He ran with Elven and Susan back to the classroom.)

In this exchange, it is clear that Dawei, Elven, and Susan communicated with each other in English. However, when Dawei was attending Sunday school, the following interaction was observed: The class had a snack break. The use of language was in Mandarin and English.

01 Mai: Mmm. 這個很有味. (*This one is tasty.*)

02 Dawei: [He held one small piece up in the air.] How about this cheese?

03 Dallin: 你不吃. (*You don't eat it.*) Oh, that one, that's French.

04 Tingting: That one is marble. That's good. I like...

05 Tommy: (A student was running in the room.) Hahaha.

06 Teacher: Nobody runs in this room.

08 Leo: (Another student asked Dawei about me.) Is he your...?

09 Dawei: I am not telling you.

The above excerpts illustrated that during recess, Dawei was surrounded by predominately English-speaking peers. The children showed how they engaged in code-switching between Mandarin and English with other peers (see Lines 1-3). This reflected how they signalled taking on identities which may align to the appropriateness of the interaction and context (Blommaert et al., 2005). All children rarely spoke French, except in one instance where Dawei spoke French to his peers at



Sunday school during recess. All the above excerpts thus far illustrated how the five children positioned themselves in a French Immersion program housed in an English school, in a heritage language school, or in their local communities.

### ***Children's Use of Language in Communities***

Since the children spent a significant amount of time outside school, it was critical to investigate how they came to use language through activities that they engaged in in their community (Smythe & Toohey, 2009). The following examples captured language use between the children and others in the community.

Let's begin with Enlai. One of the activities for Enlai and his family was attending the Celebration of Light event, which was an international pyro-musical fireworks competition. In order to find a good spot to enjoy the Grand Finale of the fireworks competition, Enlai's parents decided to have a family day at Kitsilano Beach. Enlai's sister also invited one of her friends to join the family gathering, which began at around 10 am.

Since it was early in the morning, the family was able to find a nice resting spot with an ocean view under a big tree to shade the sunlight. The family and I set up the place for resting and had a snack. Enlai tried to distribute a snack to everyone. In doing so, he tried to find his favourite snacks. The interaction among Enlai, his parents, sister, and sister's friend was in both English and Cantonese.

01 Enlai: Yeah. [He found one and expressed his excitement. His sister saw the snack and tried to grab it from him playfully.] Woo-no. [He swiftly moved his hand and then held it in front of his sister.] Fine, trade [in an excited voice].

02 Sister: 好呀 (OK.)

03 Enlai: [He continued to search the snack bag.] Oh yeah. Yeah. [He then threw a snack in a playful way at his sister's friend.]

04 Sister's Friend: What?

05 Sister: Give it back. [She gave the snack to her mother.]

06 Enlai: Yeah, yeah. [He was smiling and jumping up and down for a few seconds. He stood still and showed me his favourite snack.]

After the snack, I went with the children to observe how they played on the playground (e.g., on the Monkey bars) and searched for objects on the nearby beach (e.g., sea shelf, mini crabs, etc.). The children were looking at a small puddle of water. The interaction among Enlai, his sister, and sister's friend was in both English and Cantonese.

01 Sister: 捉唔倒. (*I didn't catch it.*)

02 Enlai: Come on. [He broke off from the group and went to a nearby spot.]

03 Sister's Friend: That one [She pointed at another medium size rock.]

04 Enlai: 嚟呀 (*Come over*), 嚟呀 (*Come over*), hi guys, crabs. [Enlai sister and her friend were engaging in small talk and laughing while Enlai was diligently digging in the water for crabs.] 咦, 捉唔倒. (*Ji, I didn't catch it again.*)

05 Sister's Friend: Yeah, grab one.

06 Sister: I got a big one. [Enlai sister continued her small talk with her friend.] 你覺得好唔好? (*What do you think?*)

07 Sister's Friend: [She screamed.] Ahhh...Scary bud. There, the 'giantgantal' [sic] bug.

The above excerpt shows the children's unique use of languages in various activities. For example, Enlai spoke Cantonese while catching crabs (see Line 1) and trying to gain his sister's and sister's friend's attention (see Line 4). However, Enlai's sister and her friend continued catching crabs and had a small competition on their own (see Lines 5 and 6). It is also interesting to note that while Enlai's sister code-switched to Cantonese from time to time (see Line 6), her friend responded in English throughout the event (see Lines 5 and 7). One way to explain Enlai's sister's code-switching may be due to the topic of their conversation. Even though I was not invited to participate in their conversation, it appeared to me that Enlai's sister might want to express her view by aligning herself with Chinese at that moment in time.

As Enlai's family waited for the fireworks to begin, all were lying down on a big blanket. While waiting, the children had more snacks. The interaction among the children was in English.

01 Enlai: [He weaved an empty small plastic bag.]

02 Sister's Friend: [She ate Goldfish crackers and did a bit of imaginative play. She held the cracker up.] We are on the plane right now.

03 Sister: [She reached out to grab the cracker.]

04 Enlai: [Laughed.]

05 Sister's Friend: [She grabbed a second cracker and used the Gatorade bottle as the control tower. She started again.] We're on the plane right now. Everyone jumps now. [She made the crackers crash into each other.] Ahh, my god. Waaah.

06 Enlai: [Laughed.]

07 Sister: [Laughed.]

08 Sister's Friend: Oh, no, waahaa, when are we ever going to touch the ground. [She then ate the two crackers.]

09 Enlai: [Laughed.]

10 Sister: [Laughed.] Hahaha, that was a good one.

In the above excerpt, it is interesting to note that the children communicated entirely with one another in English. This showed how they signalled taking on an identity which may align to the appropriateness of

the context where they were surrounded by predominately English-speaking spectators, which in turn had a high status in the immediate context.

The second example was captured during one of Dawei's activities. He was attending the woodwork-related workshop at the Home Depot during the July 2008 field observation. The Home Depot (2008) offers "Kids Workshops" to children between the ages of 5 and 12 during the first Saturday in every month in Richmond. The theme is to "build, learn, and create". Dawei's mother said that she usually brings Dawei and his older brother to attend the workshop if time permits.

The activity for the July workshop was building a mini model house. As Dawei hammered the nails into the base of the model house, his mother was giving him instructions from across the workstation table while helping his older brother to build one at the same time. The following excerpt illustrated the use of languages between Dawei and his mother.

01 Mother: 輕輕的 (*Lighter*).

02 Dawei: [He turned the model house upside down in order to hammer the nails into the base.]

**Figure 36. The model house**



03 Mother: No, not this way.

04 Dawei: [He then returned the model house to the upright position.]

05 Mother: 對, 輕輕的。 慢慢釘, 用點力。 (*Right, lighter. Hammer it slowly, use a bit of force.*)

06 Dawei: [He continued to hammer the base.]

**Figure 37. With Mother's Help**



07 Mother: [She saw the base was crooked from across the table. She went over to assist him.] 壞了, Dawei, 壞了, 壞了。 (*Crooked, Dawei, crooked, crooked.*)

08 Dawei: [He looked at the model and tried to think how to put the last wooden piece in.]

09 Mother: [Dawei seemed to figure it out.] 對。 (*Right.*)

The above excerpt shows an interesting juxtaposition between Enlai's and Dawei's language socialization. Despite Dawei's family was surrounded by predominately English-speaking woodwork attendees, Dawei's mother communicated with him mainly in Mandarin, except in Line 3, "No, not this way." Dawei only listened to his mother's instructions and did not verbally respond to his mother throughout the activity. I only observed Dawei's non-verbal behaviours when responding to his mother (see Lines 4 and 6). This is illustrative of Dawei internalizing Chinese values (i.e., listening to his mother and accepting his mother's help even though he might have his own idea of building the model).

The third example was captured during Minghoa's soccer practice. The following excerpt highlighted the interaction between Minghoa and his father, and Minghoa and his teammates during soccer practice. This is one of a few instances where Minghoa and his father communicated entirely in English.

01 Coach: [Noted that it was time for Minghoa to rest, so he took Minghoa out of the game.]

02 Father: [He gave Minghoa a water bottle.]

03 Minghoa: [He quietly watched the game by the sidelines.]

04 Other Parents: Yes, go. Keep going.

05 One Resting Player: Go. Run

06 Coach: Move it!

07 One Resting Player: Yeah, kick it!

08: Coach: Go after him!

09 Father: Aww, almost, almost.

10 One Resting Player: Yeah, kick it. Kick it. Come on guys.

11 Minghoa: [Walked over to his father.] They [referring to the other team] almost got it (a score).

12 Father: That's good. That's good. You have a good, great speed. You need to run faster and stop them, right.

13 Minghoa: [He leaned over to his father while he continued watching the game by the sidelines.]

14 Father: Kick the ball. Just kick the ball.

15 Minghoa: But when I'm right beside it, I can't kick the ball.

16 Father: That's OK. You can. It's your first game, right?

17: Minghoa: [Knock his own head.]

The dominant topic throughout the narrative in this interaction was pertaining to playing soccer. Minghoa talked about how he was not able to kick the ball (see Line 15). His father encouraged him by highlighting that



it was his first practice game, meaning that he still had many chances to practice (see Line 16). The communicative practice between Minghoa and his father in this example reinforced how Fishman (2000) talked about how speakers choose what languages to speak and with whom and when. All the conversations near Minghoa and his father were in English, which had a high status in the soccer field. Based on the context they were in, it seemed that they both mutually chose to communicate in English at that time. The language that they chose to speak also reflected their affiliation with the Anglophone community. I thought it might be a coincidence that Minghoa's father wore a "Canada" logo on that day (see Figure 38).

**Figure 38. "Canada" Logo**



In summary, the contexts in which children grow up will play a role in their identity construction. In addition to the children's family contexts, their use of language in after-school activities (e.g., arts, math school, etc.) also contribute to their development of self and identities. For example, when the children were attending schools or visiting local communities in this study, they all interacted with diverse ethno-linguistic peers. During

such interactions, the children came to appropriate not only the dominant Canadian but also their heritage culture, customs, and beliefs. Their identities are created by those about them that may align to the appropriateness of the interaction and context. In other words, the children are presented with various ways of seeing and experiencing how others see them in their social worlds. Bourdieu (2001) described children's multilingual learning as 'linguistic capital' and these children's ability to learn different cultures through multilingual learning as cultural capital.

The above excerpts reflected various language practices and use. In addition the use of English and French languages noted in the children's language maps, the use of the Chinese language observed over a 12-month period also reflected how the families tried to preserve their children's use of the Chinese language as well as inculcate its culture, traditions, and values (e.g., cultural norms of respect, obedience to authority, and family harmony). As multilingual children's linguistic repertoires increase, so does their knowledge of respective linguistic cultures (i.e., the dynamic of the interplay of Chinese and Canadian cultures in their social networks).

## **Chapter 9**

### **Children's Construction of Self**

Young children undergo a multitude of changes as a result of their social engagements within their living spaces. These unique lived experiences come to light through analysis of field observations, interviews, written texts, and drawings made by children as they interact with their parents, siblings, relatives, teachers, peers and local people. My analysis will be guided by the sociolinguistic framework – how one comes to identify oneself will be dependent upon the context one is in and with whom one carries out the conversation (Fishman, 2000; Grosjean, 1982, 2008, 2010; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). To shed light on this important line of research, I will draw upon the children's drawings and diaries, coupled with interviews and field observations, in order to address the second research question: "How does the use of English, French, and Cantonese/Mandarin languages in these literacy practices contribute to multilingual children's representation of self and construction of identities?"

In order to document young children's representations of self, I invited them to draw a picture of a flag(s) that is/are most representative of them during the final field observations in early 2009. The following five drawings illustrate the children's symbolic representations of self. This was followed by inviting them to describe their drawings. The children's

descriptions of their flags were used as a prompt to further explore how they identified with different languages, scripts, and cultures.

### ***A Singular View***

***Figure 39. Enlai's Identity drawing***



As Enlai drew the Canadian flag, he told me that “I am Canadian. 因為我喺呢度出世 (Because I was born in Canada.) I also like to play with my friends, because they were also born in Canada.” In this exchange, I noticed that Enlai code switched when he emphasized his cultural affiliation with Canada (which was said in English). At the same time, his explanation was said in Cantonese. This code-switching was also observed in Enlai’s journals. He wrote his entries mainly in English except when he intentionally described significant events, at which time he would write some Chinese characters. Perhaps this is indicative of Enlai recognizing both the Canadian culture as well as the cultural roots from which his parents came. In Enlai’s family, I also observed that the Chinese radio was always left on in the kitchen (where most family activities took place) and

that the parents spoke Cantonese to the children on most occasions. It is important to point out that unlike the other four families, a parent-imposed rule exists in Enlai's family that Cantonese must be used at all times in the home. However, the children used English or code-switched between English and Chinese to communicate with each other sometimes in the presence of their parents.

**Figure 40. Chinglan's Identity Drawing**



Chinglan explained why she drew the Canadian flag: "I am Canadian, because I was born here and I speak more English than Chinese." Her use of English is illustrative in her language map and writing her journals. Chinglan's explanation is affirmed by my field observation that her use of Chinese is limited to the Chinese classroom, where she is learning Cantonese and some Mandarin as part of the Chinese school curriculum, and that she intentionally wanted to use Cantonese to communicate with her parents, brother, and me. Otherwise, Chinglan speaks primarily English with her parents, brother, and friends.

According to Chinglan's mother, Cantonese is spoken at home mainly between adults, when they do not want to their children to listen to their conversation. During my field observations, I noticed that Chinglan's parents usually spoke in English to their children. However, Chinglan's mother frequently used Cantonese at mealtimes when she asked them about what foods they would like to eat or when she directed them to do their homework. This indicates that Cantonese is a more effective language to communicate precisely the specific Chinese cultural dishes that the children want to eat, and that Cantonese also draws the children's attention and signals them to the importance of homework and achievement, a Chinese cultural value.

**Figure 41. Shing's Identity Drawing**

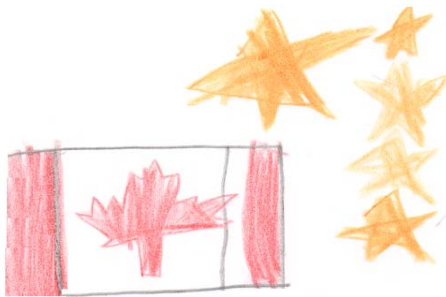


Shing explained why he drew the Canadian flag: "I am Chinese-Canadian, because I go to Chinese school. And I like speaking English a lot, because I speak English very well. And I like Canada a lot, because most of my friends are Canadians. They were born here, pretty much." In this exchange, it is interesting to note that although Shing verbally described himself as Chinese-Canadian, his drawing indicated that he

culturally affiliates himself with Canada. During my field observations and analysis of his language map, he speaks English with his mother, brother, and friends most of the time. Even though his mother speaks Mandarin to Shing in and outside of the home, he will only respond to his mother in English, even when he is requested to speak Mandarin. The only occasion where I observed him speaking Mandarin was when he was specifically asked to by his Chinese school teachers. Shing told me that “English is my favourite language, French is second, and Chinese is third.”

### ***Fluid Identities and Affiliations***

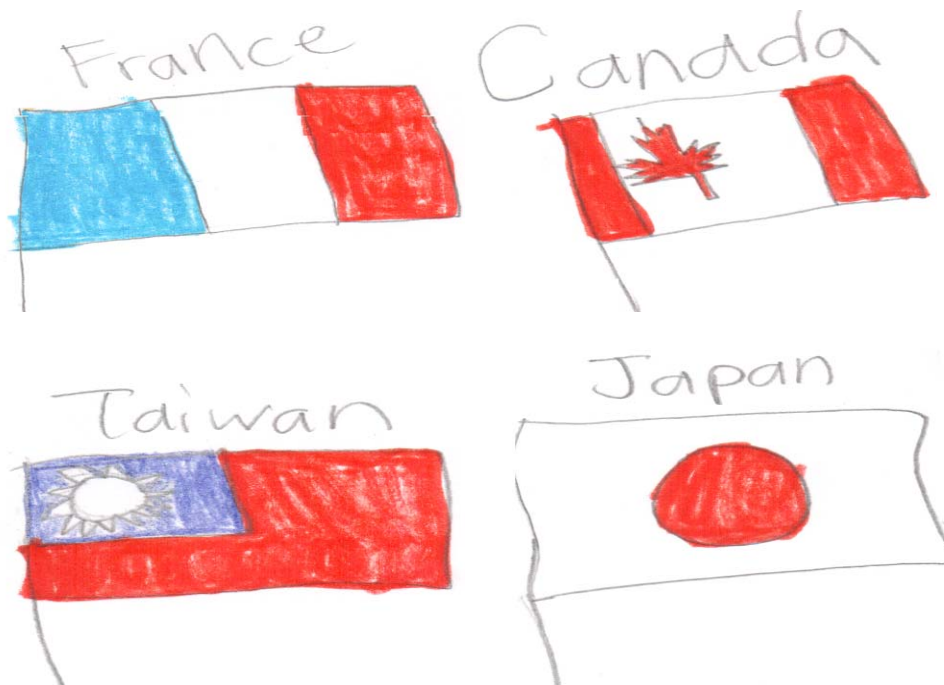
***Figure 42. Minghoa’s Identity Drawing***



As Minghoa drew, I noticed that he drew the Canadian flag first and then drew the stars on the side. I asked, “Why would you want to add the Chinese stars on the...?” Minghoa responded: “Because I went to China. My brother, my mother, and my dad lived there before I was born. But I’ll say I am mostly Canadian. I speak English better than Chinese. I mostly play with Canadians, because I feel connected when I play with them. Um, Chinese people, I also feel connected. But sometimes, I just feel, don’t feel that connected. I make a connection, but I don’t do it like the connection

with the Canadians.” In this exchange, Minghoa demonstrates that he is aware of both cultural heritages: the one he was born with and the one with which his parents are affiliated. Like the aforementioned children, Minghoa also used his language preference as a way to culturally affiliate himself. However, he adds to his explanation by emphasizing the connection he has come to make with Canadians vs. Chinese. In his mind, he does not feel the deep emotional bonds he has come to develop with Canadians apply to the same extent to his Chinese friends.

**Figure 43. Dawei’s Drawing of His Identity**



Dawei explained: “I drew this one (the national flag of France), because I go to French school. But we also live in Canada.” He further elaborated upon his drawing: “I speak Chinese at home and I go to Chinese school. My parents were born there. And I can speak some Japanese, too.” Dawei



has been going to Chinese school since Grade 1 and has been learning Japanese for three years. His drawings indicate that he culturally affiliates himself with the languages he speaks. During my field observations, I learned that communication would not be effective if English was used in this family. Dawei's mother stated that:

我和他們交談的時候大部分都是中文，因為我覺得中文也是滿重要的。

*We communicate with each other in Chinese most of the time, because I feel that Chinese is very important.* (Translation from Mandarin)

Furthermore, in order to accommodate the needs of the older brother with learning disabilities into their daily lives, conversing with each other in Mandarin is a functional means to create connections and maintain emotional bounds between family members. In this family, speaking Mandarin confers the power to include all family members.

In one of the field observations, I observed that during one family gathering, Dawei was watching the 2008 Summer Olympic Games with his relatives. They were cheering for the athletes. Dawei commented to his aunt that they came from different countries, and I recorded the following conversation.

01 Aunt: No, we are [from the] same country.

02 Dawei: 台灣跟加拿大不是一樣吶! (*Taiwan and Canada is not the same.*)

03 Aunt: [Laughed.] 他已經是加拿大人。 (*He is already a Canadian.*)

04 Dawei: 是不一樣吶。台灣, 台灣, 台灣的地是很小, 然后加拿大的地是很大。 (*It is not the same. Taiwan, Taiwan, Taiwan is small, whereas Canada is large.*)

05 Aunt: 對對對, 真是很小。 (*Right, right, right, it is very small.*)

06 Dawei: 然后加拿大辦事都是English然后在台灣很多人講台语跟中文。 (*And then, Canada carries out business in English, and then many people speak Taiwanese and Chinese in Taiwan.*)

In this exchange, Dawei tries to make the distinction between Taiwan and Canada. In doing so, he tries to convey to his aunt that he is not 'Taiwanese', rather he sees himself as a Canadian. His aunt affirms this by saying "He is already a Canadian" (see Line 3). At the same time, he uses Mandarin to communicate his ideas with his aunt in this exchange (see Lines 2, 4, and 6). One can hypothesize that on one hand, Dawei thinks of himself as a Canadian; on the other hand, he may also indirectly acknowledge that he is Taiwanese because he chooses to represent himself through the use of Mandarin in this particular instance.

As discussed in my theoretical framework in Chapter 4, it is through the socio-cultural contexts and language practices that children come to construct a sense of self and multiple identities. Since 'Chinese' is not a simple ethnic marker, and different children define their identities in

different ways, it is important to understand how the young Chinese children describe their cultural affiliations which will shed light on their identity construction.

In this study, children were invited to describe their drawings. One commonality shared by all the children was that they used physical location (i.e., the place where they were born or the place where they lived the longest) as a way to define their cultural affiliation. The physical spaces that the children are travelling in their everyday life are of significant influence in their language use and identity construction. Even though young children have the capacity to define “me” and “not-me” in light of physical and visual cues (Gunns), they are highly influenced by their socio-cultural contexts. Martin (2007) explained that children’s self-identification is primarily tied to particular situations and others, at least for the most part. Children do not quite have the developmental capacity to allow for more philosophically reflective considerations of their identities. In other words, the younger the child, the more isomorphic their socio-cultural contexts are in their interactions with parents/caregivers.

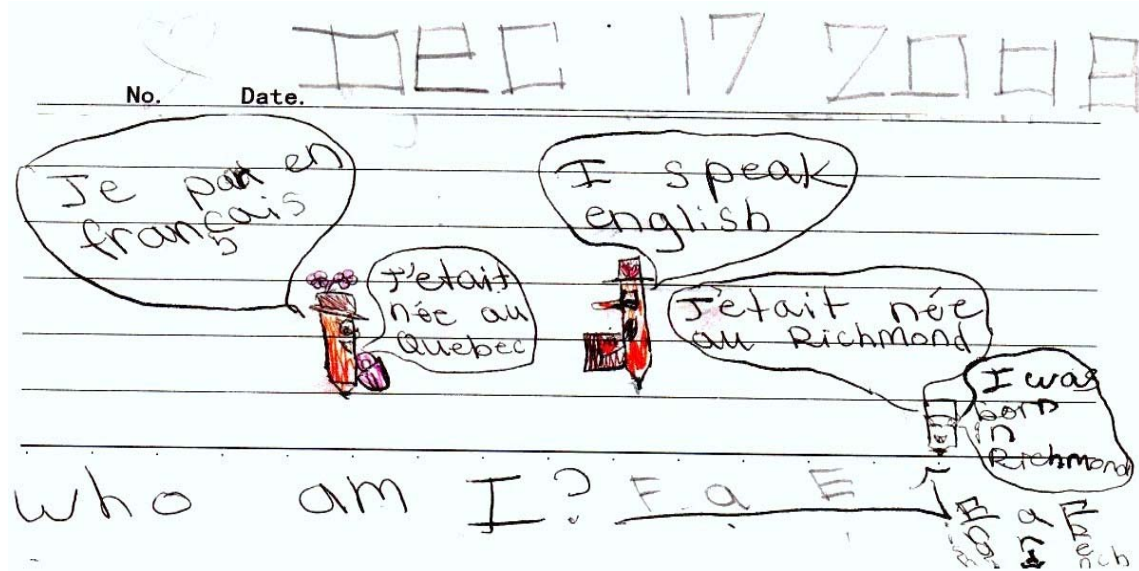
Bourdieu’s (1977) notion of habitus is also useful in understanding the children’s physical spaces and identity construction. Habitus is defined as a system of dispositions, practices, and representations primarily learned at home. It emerges within a dynamic interplay of social

interaction, where children learn to communicate with and take the perspectives of others. For example, as children learn that their parents speak Chinese or English most of the time to them in and outside of the home, they may come to appropriate these specific communicative practices as to how they should interact with their parents and others in the social network. Over time, children come to learn how to follow linguistic rules and norms in order to make their intentions clear, and as they become proficient in this process they become more aware of how linguistic and cultural rules shape their own identity.

Another commonality shared by all children is the fluidity of the language boundaries existing in their multilingual world. All the children reported feeling comfortable speaking English relative to Chinese or French. Through their narratives, the children view their world as culturally pluralistic, where they become connected with others in different contexts through the use of different languages. Connecting this to the theoretical link between language use and identity construction, the children demonstrate how they have come to define and redefine their understanding of their self and multiple identities in their language and social networks.

The following journal entry was particularly insightful which captured the essence of the dissertation research. Chinglan drew the following 'conversation bubble' in her dairy on December 17, 2008.

**Figure 44. “Who am I?”**



In Chinglan’s conversation bubble, she pointed out that “I speak French. I am not in Quebec. I speak English. I live in Richmond.” She then raised the question “Who am I?”, and her answer was “F a E” (i.e., French and English). Chinglan’s drawing can show parents and educators how young children can begin to think about their identities. This can create a meaningful dialogue between parents/educators and the children themselves about various contextual factors that may help or hinder children’s identity construction in today’s multilingual and multicultural Canadian society. By creating this type of dialogue, parents and educators can learn about different ways to effectively assist their children and students in developing multiple identities.

The above drawings not only reflected the complexity of language use in the children’s social networks, but their use of languages also

reflected salient cultural values that they came to adopt, which highlighted the dynamic of the interplay of Chinese and Canadian cultures. This generation of children living in Canada begins to recognize the power of English in the community. Both the children and their parents recognize language as including the power to include or exclude. For example, Kaitlin's parents would speak Cantonese to each other when they intentionally do not want their children to listen to their conversation. Likewise, all children would speak English as a way to exclude their parents from their conversation with siblings. When playing with their friends, they would speak mainly in English. In other words, parents use the heritage language to exclude their children, whereas the children use English to exclude their parents. Both the children and their parents intentionally use different languages to meet their communicative goals.

At the same time, all parents want to keep their heritage language alive. For example, Enlai's parents impose a house rule of speaking Cantonese at home, and Shing's mother speaks Mandarin to her children in and outside of the home. Moskowitz (2005) noted that contexts/situations are major determinants in shaping individuals' behaviours, which will dictate how they may behave in accordance with their family's rules and norms. In the case of Dawei's family, since the older brother has learning disabilities and does not have much functional

proficiency in English, Mandarin is used to draw the family together. In this instance, speaking Mandarin at home has the power to include.

It has been reported in the multilingual and multicultural literature that children may find themselves in conflict with their parents (Lee & Chen, 2000). In the present study, parents acknowledged that in this generation, children just speak English. Dawei's mother reasoned that:

可能他們目前的學校，就是洋人比較多，他在外面一定會講英文。我們比較喜歡用中文，方便到我們交談。

*Perhaps his current school has many Caucasian students, so he speaks English in the community. I like speaking Chinese which makes it easy for communication. (Translation from Mandarin)*

Enlai's mother also makes a similar point:

他們大部分時間都是在學校，一下課他們就開始說英文，所以我覺得去幫助他們保存中文，不是很容易的事情。

*They spend most of their time in school. They speak English after school. So I think that it is not that easy to help them maintain their Chinese. (Translation from Cantonese)*

One thing which was clearly noted in this study was that all the parents value their heritage language.

Based on the children's language maps as shown in this section, boundaries in language use are emerging. While language preference is a

unique marker of the children's current internalization of the norms and values of the Canadian culture as well as their own heritage culture, it is clear that the children fluidly demonstrated their agency to use different languages in their social networks. The children's drawings highlight their ability to seamlessly travel between identities, which lent some support to Hall's (1996) work on the self. Hall noted that "[t]he 'self' is conceptualized as...fragmented and incomplete, composed of multiple 'selves' or identities in relation to the different social worlds we inhabit, something with history, 'produced' in process" (p.226). The word "process" is key to understanding how the 'self' emerges and evolves over time. During different stages of children's development, young children come to explore and internalize cultural values relating to both the dominant and their heritage culture. As children interact more with others in diverse settings, the children will further develop their own cultural affiliations.

In this section, I presented the data on young French Immersion children's representations of self and multiple identities. The children were asked to draw a country symbol(s) that represented them the most. Their drawings allowed me to gain access to how they came to construct their identities in dynamic and multiple ways. All of these observable behaviours (e.g., drawing, the use of languages in their social networks, etc.) indicated the children's intention to publicly acknowledge their cultural and linguistic affiliations. This research lent support to the



sociolinguistic view that multilingual children have demonstrated ease and seamlessness in the way they traverse between multiple cultures and languages in their social networks.

***Theme #1: Children's Identity Construction is Tied To Cultural Activities***

As children grow, they come to learn more about their own cultural values as well as the new values of the dominant culture. In essence, they weaved in between Canadian and Chinese cultures in a manner that was very free and at the same time skillful. All parents reported celebrating some of the major Chinese festivals (e.g., Chinese New Year, Spring Festivals, Dragon Boat Festival, Moon Festival, and Winter Festival) at home. During field observations, all parents tried to transmit Chinese culture, traditions, and values through book reading, conversation, and other mediational means (e.g., media and newspapers). For example, as mentioned in the multiliteracy section, Dawei's mother used one of the reading sessions to teach Dawei about Chinese New Year and its associated traditions and practices (such as sending greeting card to parents, other family members and friends).

Enlai's mother said: 我們主要用故事來介紹香港以及中國的文化，每次到了節日就再說一次，我女兒就說了十幾年，真的有印象，用這種辦法加深他們的認識。

*We mainly use the story-telling method to introduce Hong Kong and Chinese culture to them. We repeatedly tell the same story every time as we celebrate Chinese festivals. We repeated them to our older daughter for over ten years. Our older daughter remembers the stories. We use this method to help them remember. (Translation from Cantonese)*

Shing's mother shared similar sentiments and explained that it is important to maintain Chinese culture: 我也告訴他們一些中國人的習俗、禮貌、尊重長輩等。也跟他們說一下節日，例如端午節，我們會買粽子，中秋節會買月餅，去表達自己是一個中國人。他們去上中文學校的時候，老師也有說，但是他們可能很快就忘掉了。

*I tell them about Chinese customs, Chinese manners, to respect elders, etc. I also tell them about some Chinese festivals. For example, we buy steamed rice dumplings during the Dragon Boat festival or moon cakes during the Mid-Autumn festival to represent ourselves as Chinese. When they attend Chinese school, teachers also tell them about Chinese festivals. But they forget quickly. (Translation from Mandarin)*

All children knew and celebrated some of the major Chinese festivals (such as Chinese New Year, Spring festival, Dragon Boat festival, Moon festivals, and Winter festival) through other cultural activities. For

example, Chinglan shared with me how her arts teacher told the class about Chinese New Year and then asked the students to draw something about it. The following drawing represents what Chinglan learned in that lesson and came to incorporate some important symbols (e.g., red pocket, firecrackers, and Chinese New Year greetings) as well as her use of red and golden colours. The colour of red means 'good luck' in Chinese culture. In Chinese metaphysics, red symbolizes the fire element. The golden color is similar to the yellow color, which symbolizes the earth element. It is a symbolic representation for the storage of money element or wealth.

**Figure 45. Happy New Year! Ox**



During my field observations in schools in late January 2009, all of the children's schools celebrated Chinese New Year and the parents were pleased that the schools were taking the initiative in decorating schools

with a Chinese New Year theme and inviting children to share what they knew about Chinese New Year. For example, the following photos were taken in Chinglan's and Shing's schools, respectively. In Shing's school, all students were engaged to create Chinese New Years lanterns which are among the important symbols of the Chinese New Year. The idea is to co-create a cheerful environment as the full moon shines bright in the sky and Chinese people will gather at the festival place holding up colorful lanterns creating a completely lit-up environment.

**Figure 46. Decorations for Chinese New Year in Schools**



In this study, it is evident that all children are given ample opportunities to learn more about their Chinese cultural heritage at home, in schools and in communities. All parents showed support towards Chinese history, culture, traditions, and values which is consistent with existing research findings (e.g., Costigan & Su, 2004; Li, 2006). Despite cultural knowledge being embedded in the children, the children are evolving agents trying to make sense of their lived experiences in relation to their ongoing identity construction.

### ***Theme #2: Families as Meritocracy***

Another theme shared by all the children is their views towards identity construction through activities that stress competition and high standards. Young children's learning and practices are inevitably shaped by others (such as parents) in social networks. The following data is illustrative of Shing's mother's involvement in her son's test results.

Shing attended a basketball session. He was walking very quietly next to his mother while I asked her about how their day went.

Mother: 剛才罵小孩, 一路罵過來。 (*I was just scolding Shing on our way.*)

Paul: 不聽話? (*He's not listening to you?*)

Mother: 沒有呀, 上禮拜, 這禮拜考 Science。然後他, 我叫他讀, 他跟我說, "I don't like test." 我說老師請你 study, 你就要study. (*Last week, he had a*

*science test. Then, I told him to study, he told me, “I don’t like tests.” I said to him, “Teacher asks you to study, you have to study.”)*

Paul: Mmmhmm.

Mother: 他不想。我想OK, 反正這個是the first test。如果他考得不好, 他都OK。(He didn’t want to study. I thought, OK, well it was the first test. If he did not do well, he would still be OK.)

Paul: Mmmhmm.

Mother: 他拿到一個B。我說, 如果你下次拿個B, I refuse to sign. 他知道我很生氣。(He got a B. I said, “If you got a B next time, I will refuse to sign [your agenda]. He knew I was angry.)

***A few weeks later, Shing shared his science test mark with his mother.***

Mother: There is only one kid who got 100, right?

Shing: I got 88.

Mother: OK, Great.

In addition to the above conversations, the following photo is also illustrative of how Shing comes to know that his mother has a clear expectation of him as a learner.

**Figure 47. Shing's Chinese Report Card**

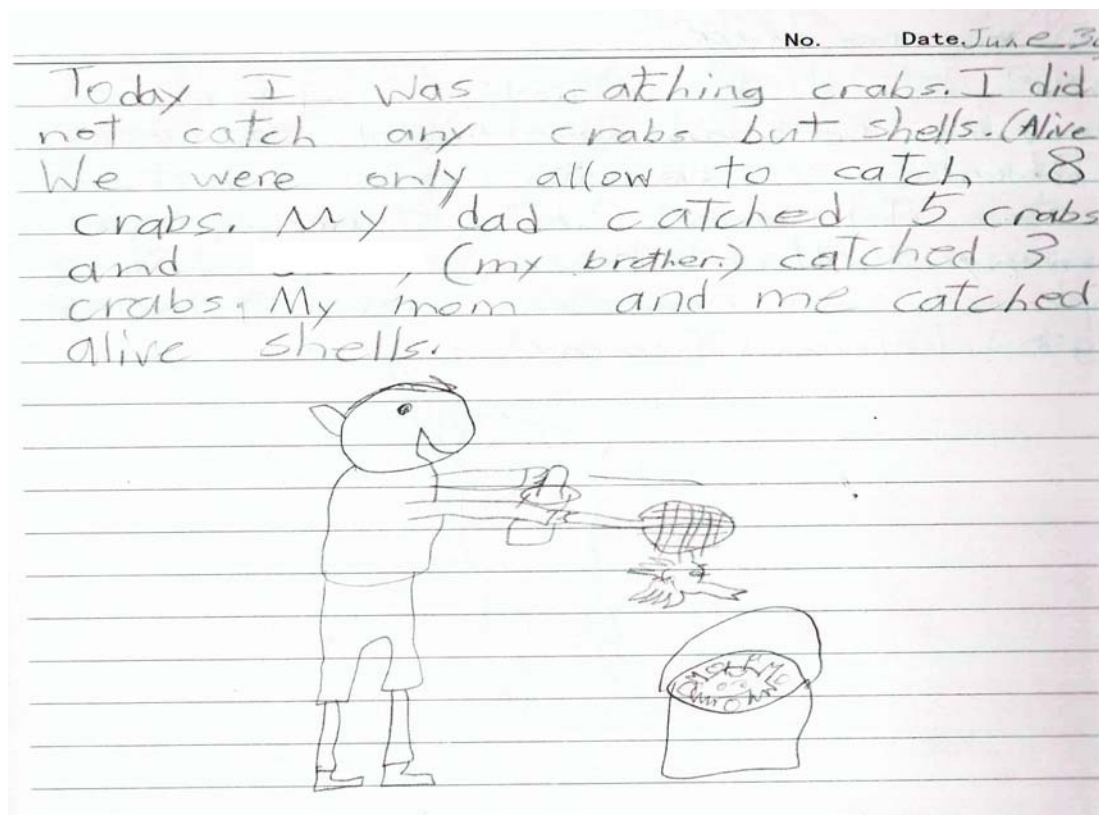
第二學期成績 Second Semester Report 2/29/08 - 6/19/08		3/29/08 期中成績 First Term	5/31/08 期末成績 Second Term
項目 Topics		成績項目 Topics	
1. 聽國語的能力 Listening		A	A
2. 說國語的能力 Speaking		A	A
3. 讀國語的能力 Reading		A	A
4. 寫國語的能力 Writing		A+	A+
5. 漢語拼音的學習 Phonetics		A	A
6. 家庭作業 Assignments		A+	A+
項目 Topics		學習態度 Effort	
1. 興趣和注意力 Interest/Concentration		A	A
2. 課堂秩序的遵守 Behaviour		A	A
3. 學習靜思語的成果 Still Thoughts		A	A
平時成績 (平均) Quiz		98.62	99.14
期中/期末考試 Term Examination		62	98.5
學期總平均 Term Average		90	
缺席 Absence _____ 遲到 Late _____ 早退 Early Dismissal _____			
教師評語 Teacher's Comments			
期中 First Term			
期中考卷上, 空白太多, 你沒有增加作答, 所以成績不甚理想。希望你不能控制情緒, 克服自己的缺點。			
期末 2nd Term			
聰明靈敏, 表現優異, 視中文學習更上一層樓。			

Shing's response to achieving 62% on a Chinese mid-term shows that he has internalized his mother expectations. Even though it was clear that Shing worked hard and obtained A and A+ during the semester, he told his mother that he did not get 100% on his mid-term examination because his teacher was on sick leave, and the substitute teacher was very strict about the amount of time for the exam, so he did not have the time to go through and check his answers. Shing knows that he will be held to a high standard and failure to meet this standard requires an explanation to his mother and to himself.

## Journal Examples

Children's awareness of competition and high expectations is evident throughout their journal entries. Research has noted that one way to fulfill family obligations among Asian children is by doing well in school (Salili, 1995; Sue & Okazaki, 1990). Not only were children expected to do their best in school-related tasks, but they were also expected to be the best when engaging in extra-curricular activities.

**Figure 48. Dawei's Crabs Picking**

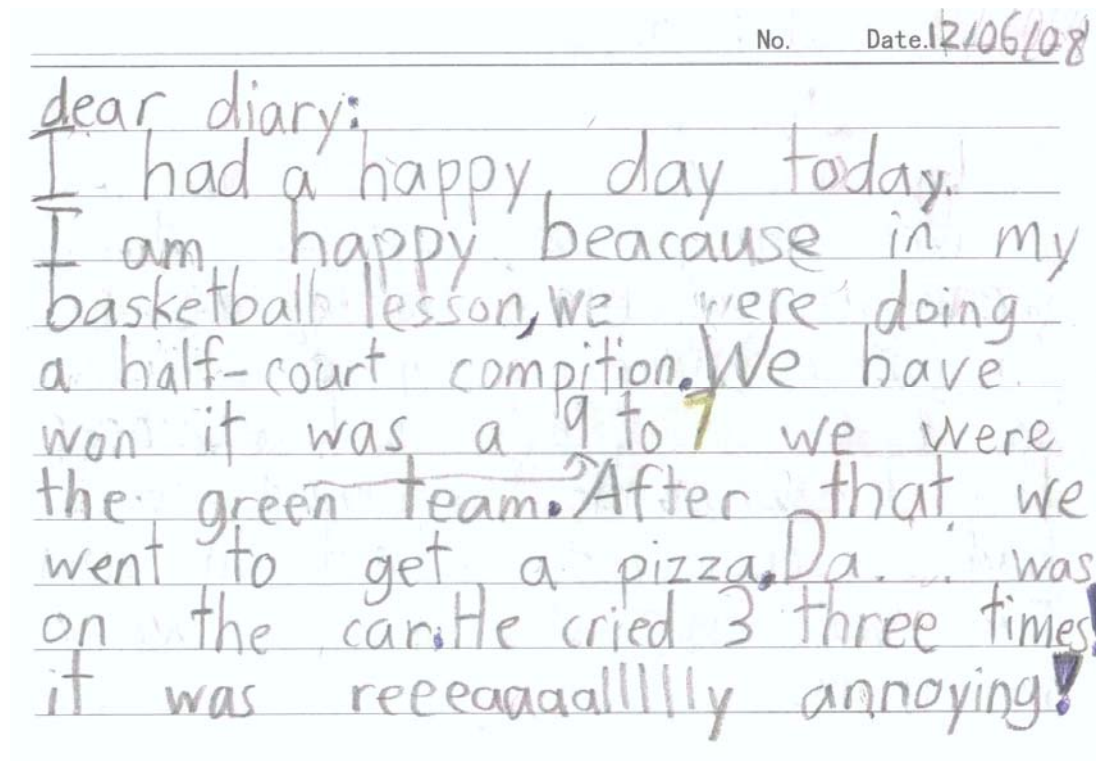


In this journal entry, Dawei described one of his favorite family outings – catching crabs. If one does not know Dawei and his family, one may simply view this as a ‘plain’ description of crab-catching during a



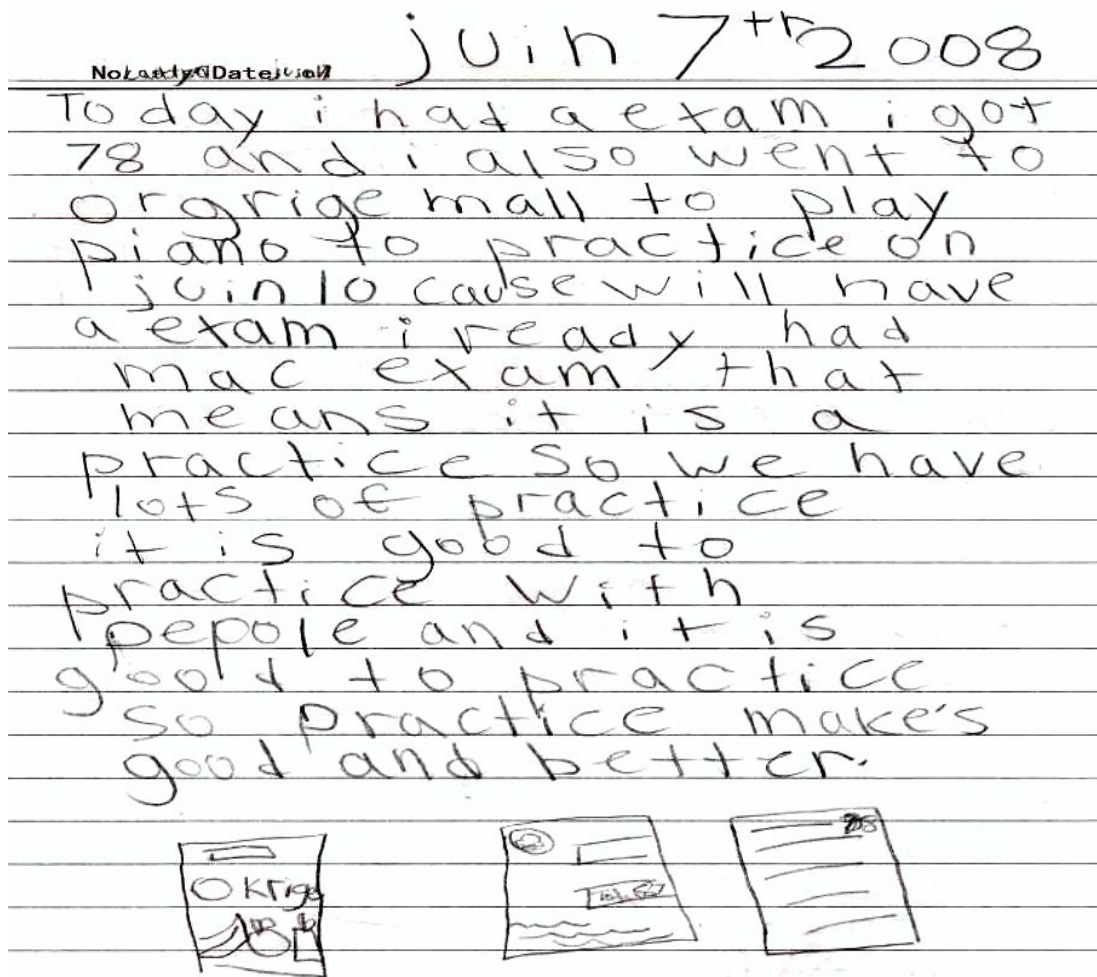
family outing activity. However, Dawei's description is actually loaded with cultural nuance. Specifically, he was not at his best because he was not able to catch any crabs. Since I got to know Dawei, he takes every task very seriously and competitively.

**Figure 49. Minghoa Playing Basketball**



Here is another of the children who take competition seriously. In this entry, Minghoa was happy because his team won the half-court competition. As I came to know Minghoa, I realized that his father always wants his children to be the best at everything they do.

**Figure 50. Chinglan's Academic and Piano Exams**



In this journal entry, Chinglan did not indicate how she felt about the 78 mark she got on an exam. She simply described the mark; however, she recognized that in order to improve her marks and piano skills, she has to internalize the value that practice makes perfect.

**Figure 51. "See If I get 100"**

No. \_\_\_\_\_ Date. NOV 10 2008  
Today at ballet it  
was really fun.  
When I got home from  
ballet my leg was  
hurting really badly.  
But it is fine now.  
I took a bath at my  
mom's bathroom.  
Tomorrow I have  
dictée so I study  
as hard as I can.  
Let's see if we  
have 100, I mean, I  
have 100.

In another of Chinglan's journal entries, it is clear that she has high expectations of herself. For example, I have observed how studious Chinglan was when studying for dictée. In one occasion, after Chinglan finished her piano lesson and was waiting for her older brother, Chinglan reviewed French words. After she finished reviewing, her mother would give her a mock quiz. This showed how involved Chinglan's mother was in her daughter's learning.

Not only had Chinglan come to internalize an awareness of competition and high expectations, but her brother also exhibited that as well. I recorded the following discussion: Chinglan and Tom were having a music lesson at their teacher's house.

01 Tom: Wait, I got 82? [He received the mock written music exam back from his teacher. He was whining about his mark.]

02 Music Teacher: OK. 不唔好理住, 你做咗先. (*Don't worry about this, do the other part first.*)

03 Tom: What is this? This is 80 plus... [He was recalculating the score on his exam.]

04 Music Teacher: But I am right. [She then focuses on Chinglan and ignores Tom. He started to review his errors on his exam.]

This exchange between Tom and his music teacher illustrated that Tom acts as an agent to improve his grade; however, his teacher allows him no voice. The exchange highlighted the power relations between teacher and student. Tom was powerless in his attempt to change his teacher's view of his performance. He evaluated this learning situation, and was strategic and employed self-regulatory strategies (such as arguing with his teacher) to meet goals set by his family and himself.

Tom's actions exemplify Pintrich's (2000) view that students assess learning situations, and based on their evaluation, they choose to use multiple goals as opposed to adopting an "either-or goal orientation" approach when carrying out learning tasks. For example, students may have mastery goals, because they like to learn subject materials and use deep learning strategies to help learn those materials. At the same time, students may also have performance-approach goals, because competition

may help increase their desire to demonstrate their abilities, which in turn prompts them to achieve high scores on tests (Harackiewicz, Barron, & Pintrich, 2002; Wolters, 2004). Students who have performance-avoidance goals tend to be disorganized in their studies, use surface strategies to process information, and show a lack of help-seeking behaviour (Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Middleton & Midgley, 1997).

Tom demonstrated that he had both mastery goals and performance-approach goals. He had performance-approach goals because he loved the music outcomes of playing piano. At the same time, he had mastery goals because he wanted a good mark that would be acceptable for his parents as well as himself. It is noteworthy to point out that Asian students tend to simultaneously possess a high need for academic success (because of the cultural emphasis on educational achievement), and a high need for avoiding punishment (Rao, Moely, & Sachs, 2000). This emotional dilemma may give insights into explaining Asian students' persistence on achievement tasks and fear of showing an inability to achieve or a failure to uphold parental standards. Chinese students tend to be motivated by the fear of failure (Zusho, Pintrich, & Cortina, 2005). This may in turn cause them to increase their efforts in order to avoid receiving low grades and criticism from their family members (Rao et al., 2000).

Chinese parents in my study had high expectation of their children and expected them to do well in all academic and extra-curricular activities. This discourse sets the stage for children to come to know themselves as individuals who can compete in a number of arenas and succeed. The above excerpts, journals, and photos highlight how these high expectations are transmitted from parents to children around test-taking performance and evaluation.

Children's journals show the interplay of Chinese and Canadian cultures and how these influence children's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours in their ongoing interactions with self and others. For example, children learn from their parents that one's success in life is measurable and quantifiable, which is illustrated in the conversations between Shing and his mother, who were on their way to attend a basketball session in a local community centre (where I joined them for the activity). In particular, the children's journals explicated an elaborate interpretation of self and identities through their views towards examination and competition, which demonstrated their emerging awareness of their own culture and its associated beliefs, customs, and values.

The children's journals also demonstrated their negotiation of cultures, which informed my discussion of cultural issues relevant to educators. The learning environment is competitive in the Asian education system. For example, Schneider and Lee (1990) reported that Asian

parents in their study are more concerned with their children's academic performance and spend more time in supervising their schoolwork than do American parents. Other research has shown that students may work hard to prepare for examinations, but because the standard has been set so high, no matter how much effort they put into their studies, some students are bound to encounter failure. Indeed, the children's definition of success is related to their academic achievement (Salili & Lai, 2003).

It is also plausible that the children reflect the inculcation of obedience to authority (e.g., expressing an understanding of upholding and honouring the family's name by way of doing well in school) which is related to the notion of "face". Hwang (2006) stated that "In Western social psychology, "face" is conceptualized as an individual's situated identity, or identity in a particular situation" (p. 277). One of the faces manifested in Chinese culture is social face which is "gained either through the status achieved by one's talent, endeavours, or ability; or through the status ascribed by one's consanguineous relationships" (Hwang, 2006, p. 277). Stockman (2000) further noted that many Chinese parents hope to "transfer to their child whatever cultural capital they have and purchase more if possible, and thus to maintain or improve their family's social position" (p. 112). This way of being is shown through the parents' attitudes towards their children's learning and academic achievement. Based on the home observations and interviews, all the parents have high expectations and standards of achievement for their children.

## Chapter Summary

Presenting portraits of young French Immersion Chinese children's lived experiences provides a broader family, school, and community discourse in addressing multilingual children's language use and literacy practices. As an ethnographer, my task was to observe and document how the children interacted with others through multiple language and literacy practices in their social networks. The children are at a phase in their development where they continue to learn more about their own culture and the dominant culture through school and social interactions (e.g., how they come to make sense of living in western culture, while understanding that their parents' culture of origin is eastern in orientation). Martin and Sugarman (2001) explain that "[t]he self is an ongoing, dynamic process of construction, a constantly emerging achievement made possible by appropriating the means to reflexively self-refer, including a socioculturally enabled...theory of self" (p. 104). As the children continue to refine their own cultural frames of reference through language use, they will become more aware of how they and other people represent themselves through different language practices. In other words, through this process the children will become more aware of how they want to represent themselves through language use in the way they interact with others.



## **Chapter 10**

### **Discussion**

In the preceding chapters, I first presented data on how multiple literacy practices shaped the children's representations of self and multiple identities observed during the field observations and interviews (see Chapter 7). I followed by presenting data on how the children came to use multiple languages for different purposes at different times in diverse sociocultural and linguistic contexts (see Chapters 8 and 9). In this chapter, I will utilize the aforementioned data to answer two research questions posed in this ethnographic study.

To address the first research question, "What are the language and literacy practices of young multilingual Chinese children in the study?", the findings have shown that children's language and literacy are facilitated by their parents. Hence, the language and literacy practices that I came to observe in the study are overwhelmingly focused on print-based activities for all five young multilingual Chinese children. By analyzing the children's diaries and artifacts, coupled with field observations at home, in school, and in the community during the past 10 months, three themes that emerged were: 1) appropriating cultural values through literacy practices; 2) children's use of scripts to identify with culture; and 3) cultural traditions of repeated practice.

To garner an awareness of these themes, I addressed how different activities took place and with whom the children carried out those conversations in my discussion sections. The children provided candid responses during field observations and interviews as well as artifacts to help me understand how their daily activities and routines had assisted them in exploring multiliteracy practices. All parents are crucial mediating agents in assisting their children to develop and maintain multiliteracy practices. For example, engaging with parents in multiliteracy activities (e.g., practicing reading and writing in English, French, and Chinese languages) has shed light on the children's language use which is relevant to their representations of self and multiple identities. The children showed that they used different languages as they engaged with others (such as their parents) in different activities to make their intentions known.

The second research question was: "How does the use of English, French, and Cantonese/Mandarin languages in these literacy practices contribute to multilingual children's representation of self and construction of identities?" Two themes that emerged were: 1) inter-generational transmission of cultural values and 2) children as agents of language use. The maintenance of one's heritage language is largely dependent on parents and children's attitudes, which will affect how they maintain the heritage language over time. When exploring children's

construction of self and identities, the two emerging themes are 1) children's identity construction is tied to cultural activities and 2) the family as meritocracy.

In this dissertation I tried to explore the different layers of lived experiences connected to young French Immersion Chinese children's multilingual repertoires and construction of identity. Through observations and interviews, I came to conclude that all children and their family members constantly travelled across different socio-cultural and linguistic communities in their everyday lives. Both the children and their family members had diverse linguistic resources to seamlessly and effortlessly integrate different complex communicative demands when interacting with others at home, in school and in the community.

The wide range of data collected in this dissertation showed that the children fluidly cross socio-cultural and linguistic contexts on a daily basis, and that the children have demonstrated the diverse use of language at home, in school, and in the community. The findings have also shown that how the children chose to convey who they were to others depended upon how they interacted with others, which in turn shaped how they chose to position themselves through language use in their social and cultural interactions. This reinforces the sociolinguistic view that the self is fluid (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004).

As discussed in my theoretical framework in Chapter 4, the self is developed through language use within one's social network. Not only do the children demonstrate that they "live between ideas of self, other, the world, and one's place in the past, present and future" (Franquiz, 1999, p. 31), but that who they are is based on their present self-construal, which is deeply connected to their upbringing and parents' past, which in turn influences how they come to construe themselves in the future. As of right now, as young children engage in their identity construction processes, all of their experiences will add to their perception and identification of who they are (Berger, 1998). As Berger noted:

The first step in this process of self-definition is usually an attempt to establish the integrity of one's personality, that is, to see one's emotion, thinking, and behavior as consistent from one situation or relationship to another. Later, the adolescent's search for identity broadens, as the young person attempts to integrate his or her sense of self with the many roles that are associated with becoming a young adult. (p. 137)

The point of this discussion is that in order to describe young children's identities, they need to discern, identify, and describe what they understand about their language use. Pavlenko (2001) noted that:

One's subjectivities are not entirely a product of one's own free choice and agency: they are co-constructed with others who can

accept or reject them and impose alternative identities instead.

Often, depending on the power balance, it is others who define who we are, putting us in a position where we have to either accept or resist and negotiate these definitions (p. 135).

While young children are able to communicate what they think, their thoughts are influenced by their parents. Nonetheless, children can put their ideas together as part of the identity construction process. The degree to which Chinese cultural and parental influences sustain the children's fluid identities remains to be seen.

At some points in multilingual speakers' lives, they come to notice the tension between who they think they are and who they are expected to be in the community. Tsui (2007) notes that such tensions particularly exist between dominant and minority languages and between the national identity and the speaker's own identity. This has implications for children's psychological health and well-being. The findings of this dissertation research contribute to the literature with respect to young French Immersion Chinese children's multiliteracy and multilingual development and also shed new light on how they describe their emerging sense of self and multiple identities.

### **Limitations**

In this study, I adopted the ethnographic approach within a sociolinguistic framework (Pavlenko, & Blackledge, 2004) to explore what

the world was like through the eyes of young Chinese children in French Immersion programs. While this approach helped deepen my understanding of the children's and their parents' lived experiences and enhanced my analysis of their language use and identity construction across contexts and time, the approach is not without limitations. In this section, I will address limitations and concerns raised by the literature. These are brought forth as a result of differences in paradigms, history, and approaches to research.

### ***Criticisms of Ethnography***

***Assuming everyone knows “ethnography.”*** Since everyone uses the term ethnography differently, it can cause confusion when the ethnographer does not explicitly state his/her definition and assumptions (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1989). I agree that it is important to communicate one's assumptions explicitly to readers (whether one uses a quantitative or qualitative research paradigm). To address this, I adopted an ethnographic approach within a sociolinguistic framework (Pavlenko, & Blackledge, 2004) to help understand the range and complexity of young children's use of language in social networks and identity construction across contexts and time. What readers see displayed in this dissertation are a group of young French Immersion Chinese children's perceptions of their language use and identity construction in diverse socio-cultural linguistic contexts.

***Lack of Research Guidelines.*** A related criticism of ethnographic research is that there is a lack of specific guidelines regarding data collection – how much, and what type of data should be collected. As a result, ethnographers may go off on a research tangent to investigate new questions which often arise but may not be worthy of exploration. In this study, my field observations were guided by Purcell-Gates' (1996, 2000, 2004) research which helped document how parents facilitated literacy practices with their children at home and recorded social-cultural linguistic factors that shaped children's identity construction. Through initial home interviews, I tried to have a good understanding and reference point for my subsequent field exploration and observations.

***Manipulation of Data Collection.*** Another general criticism is that ethnographers can manipulate recorded observations and analytical details. For example, audiotapes omit facial expressions, gestures, and postures, and video recordings only capture a specific moment in time which does not necessarily reflect the broader historical and cultural context. Both of these methods can be manipulated by the ethnographers (Have, 2004). I acknowledge that although any given example of participants' behaviours and social interactions are audio- and/or videotaped at a specific moment in time, the transcription of audio- and/or videotapes as a whole in conjunction with playing them back will allow participants to check for the accuracy of ethnographers'

transcriptions and translation of those observed activities and interactions. In this study, reliability of the data was accomplished by cross-checking numerous data sources (reviewing data with participants and thesis supervisors). Errors were noted and corrected.

A related criticism is that the write-up is not a straightforward reflection of what ethnographers have observed. With mountainous amounts of data, ethnographers are often faced with a dilemma as to what to include or exclude in their write-up. It is sometimes predicated on their own perspectives and perceptions. Ongoing meeting with thesis supervisors to insure that data captured emerging themes that link to research questions. Furthermore, new ways to code and analyze the data also occurred through conversations with participants, which further helped refine original texts at a more finely-graded level.

***Can “Outsiders” Really Have “Insiders” Experiences?*** Another fundamental criticism lies in the fact that using ethnography for research, particularly in regard to what extent outsiders fully understand insiders’ points of view is seen as invalid. To address this, Pavlenko (2001) argues that “the person can only be a meaningful entity, both to himself or herself and to others, by being “read” in terms of the discourse available in that society” (p. 133). The phrase ““read” in terms of the discourse available in that society” is central to my analysis in this dissertation research. Not only is my ethnic background Chinese, but I was also born in Hong Kong,



have learned Chinese history since Grade 1, and have been living in Canada since 1994. As Bourdieu (1977) would put it, I am able to access my “cultural capital” to “read” how young Chinese children come to describe themselves in a shared space through drawings (e.g., language maps), written materials (e.g., journals), and artifacts produced by them. All of these will allow me to read and be able to interpret how young Chinese children construct their identities while attending a French Immersion program in B.C and living in a multicultural Canadian society.

In summary, the ethnographic methods (e.g., field observations and drawing) allow ethnographers to learn more about a group of people’s behaviours than by simply analyzing participants’ behaviours in light of “dependent and independent” variables via statistical analysis. Furthermore, how participants behave in a controlled laboratory setting may be different from how they actually behave in a “setting in which [behaviours] habitually occur” (Have, 2004, p. 108). Employing ethnographic methodologies helped explore and illuminate the experiences of young Chinese children enrolled in French Immersion programs and their relationship to children’s language use and identity construction. By analyzing the children’s language maps, diaries, and artifacts, coupled with field observations at home, in school, and in the community, I came to understand the rich contextual nuances of Chinese children’s and their parents’ lived experiences and how the children’s identity construction

was fluid across socio-cultural and linguistic contexts. Van Maanen (1995) put it simply: “In the case of ethnography, what [ethnographers] continue to look for is the close study of culture as lived by particular people, in particular places, doing particular things at particular times” (p. 23).

## **Implications**

### ***Parents***

Overall, parents were satisfied with their children’s language learning as well as with the teachers and schools. For example, Shing’s mother said:

老師們很好，老師會很熱心和我說哪裏買這些法語書，也有鼓勵小朋友自己用法語寫日記，帶到學校去修改，我覺得是一種好好鼓勵學習的方式。

*Teachers are very good. They are also helpful in telling me where to buy French books, and encourage children to write a daily dairy in French, and bring it to school for correction, I feel it is a very good learning style. (Translation from Mandarin)*

At this point, the parents were not concerned about their children and reported that all classroom teachers had positive comments regarding their children’s French language development. All parents believed that if their children had difficulty learning French, their teachers would notify them to provide additional help and support with their children’s multiliteracy development (e.g., homework).

Nonetheless, while parents' involvement is a key ingredient in their children's academic success, how these parents help their children learn French is still an important pedagogical issue. As reported by some parents, they did not understand French and expressed concerns regarding French literacy transmission even though their schools told the parents not to worry. At the family level, we need to:

- 1) Consult with French Immersion children and their parents so that we have an in-depth understanding about what help and information they need but do not get, especially when children first start the educational program.
- 2) Disseminate information widely to Asian parents, especially those who are newly arrived, so that they know where to find the support and resources they need in order to ease their children's adjustment in French Immersion programs.

This consultation and dissemination is sorely needed, because it acknowledges the central role children and parents play—ensuring that their voice is heard and reflected in the B.C school policies and support.

### ***Educators***

How educators help multilingual students to comprehend dominant cultural knowledge via school curricula and instruction is an important pedagogical issue. At the classroom level, educators need to:

- 1) Learn how to effectively develop and maintain a closer communication with children and parents. As Smythe and Toohey (2009) wrote, “schools and teachers have such minimal knowledge of the outside school lives of their multilingual and multicultural students that they are unable to build upon the ‘funds of knowledge’ that students and other members of their communities have” (p. 37).
- 2) (Re)evaluate the French Immersion curriculum. Educators are responsible for developing lesson plans, learning objectives, and assessment criteria. It is in this sense that teachers are obligated to find out how to “make the linguistic and cultural knowledge children bring to classrooms resources for all” (Dagenais et al., 2006, p. 216).
- 3) Provide children with incentives to partake in greater classroom activities. As Dagenais et al. (2006) suggested, “teachers, researchers and policy makers need to create activities that involve such [multilingual] students at whatever level of proficiency they are situated” (p. 216). To achieve this, teachers, researchers and policy-makers need to find out what resources currently exist that are helpful to multilingual children and what resources are lacking in order to address these students’ academic and integration needs.

In order to promote multilingual, multiliteracy, and multicultural understanding among young children from diverse cultures in French Immersion programs, educators must be self-reflective. Educators need to

understand how cultural privileges originated and how these may influence their teaching practices. For example, to what extent do teachers of multilingual children in French Immersion perceive and value the social status of the children's heritage language in their classrooms? One way to become self-reflective is by way of developing the knowledge and skills to question their own assumptions and beliefs about multilingual students. This study served to highlight how these assumptions may differ from the children's lived experiences.

Educators may also need to find ways to instill cultural knowledge of both dominant and minority cultures in order to assist multilingual students in constructing their identities. Dagenais et al. (2006) pointed out "multilingual children need to be able to claim desirable identities at school, including identities of expertise" (p. 216). Educators can play a crucial role in modelling for young multilingual students' language use as well as their ongoing identity construction. Ethnographic research has reported that while both teachers and students generally use the authorized dominant language for official school-related tasks, many reported using unauthorized languages in schools (Canagarajah, 2006). The choice of using an unauthorized language reflected individuals' preferred identity, which highlights their negotiation, resistance, and reconfiguration in language. Building a positive language socialization so that multilingual children do not feel the pressure to conform to the dominant cultural norms and values is important. Hence, skills based on

multicultural communication are sorely needed in French Immersion teachers' professional development in order to understand the changing ethnic fabric in Canadian schools.

### ***School Policies***

While early school policy-makers adopted the linguists' viewpoint that it may be detrimental for children to learn multiple languages because it may strain their language-learning capacity, researchers (e.g., Grosjean, 2008; Castellotti & Moore, 2010) have argued that it is not about proficiency in languages, it is when and how children use their languages to meet their communicative needs. School policy-makers need to develop and maintain an open dialogue which would allow consultations with school administrators, educators, agencies and organizations on the allocation of French Immersion-related resources in order to meet the need for multilingual students to engage in a variety of language and literacy practices.

In terms of preparing future teachers, policies should be created that:

- 1) Allow educators to become knowledgeable in working with multilingual and multicultural students.
- 2) Include a "hands-on" practicum where French Immersion teachers are grounded in sociolinguistic framework in order to broaden their

knowledge and instill a core competency throughout their entire teacher training.

- 3) Allow for follow-up with pre-service and in-service teachers and provide appropriate tools for effective pedagogies that are appropriate to multilingual and multicultural students.

School curricula and policies are essential ingredients for cultivating students' knowledge and their own identities. How school policy-makers help multilingual children construct healthy identities depends upon how they embrace the concept of multilingualism and the complex factors associated with its mainstream issues (such as multiliteracy and multicultural education). Improved multicultural communication among students and teachers are imperative to provide skills and content via school curricula and instruction to help understand their beliefs and assumptions about others.

School policy-makers are the front line in developing school curricula and policies that promote cultural diversity, accommodation, and integration. Instilling knowledge and skills based on multicultural communication and relations can aid children's ongoing identity construction and their ability to relate to others (Moore, 2006; Moore & Gajo, 2009). The present findings can clarify educators' and school policy-makers' worries about multilingual students' language development and allow them to reflect upon the current and changing ethnic diversity in

B.C. schools.

In summary, I hope that parents, teachers, school policy-makers, and researchers can gain an emic, insider's perspective on some of the contextual factors that may affect young children's language practices and uses as well as construction of identities in Canada. Gaining such insights can undoubtedly help educators and researchers develop more culturally sensitive interpretations of multilingual children's selves and identities in future research.

### **Future Directions**

Much of what we know about multilingual children's language use and identity construction has been primarily informed by North American research (e.g., Erikson, 1968). The extent to which identity models or theories apply to different groups of Asian (immigrant) children has yet to be rigorously and systematically examined, however. This dissertation research was much needed research in investigating young French Immersion Chinese children's language use and identity construction in western Canada. Based on my reflections upon the literature review and the data, the following research questions have yet to be explored.

#### ***Children***

There is a steady increase among young immigrant children residing in Canada. Researchers may want to investigate how young Asian



immigrant children make sense of their multilingual, multiliteracy, and multicultural practices and how these practices shape their identity construction in Canada. In conducting research on young Asian immigrant children, researchers may want to investigate: How are the identities of young Canadian-born Asian children different from those of Asian immigrant children? What are the similarities and differences between younger and older Asian children's construction of identity? Li (2001) notes that "[h]uman learning has been approached from many perspectives, but cultural models of learning are less researched" (p. 134). He stated that "we can further this line of inquiry into the diverse models of learning and their role in shaping learning and achievement in the world's cultures" (p. 134).

### ***Parents***

Some researchers have pointed out that young children who are being shaped are not metacognitively aware of the shaping taking place. For example, to what extent do parents' traditional cultural beliefs about learning shape their children's perception of learning and identities? What are young vs. older Asian children's perceptions of Confucius' teachings? How do Confucius' teachings embedded in heritage language schools affect young and older Asian children's identity construction? Zusho et al. (2005) note that in order to broaden researchers' understanding of (immigrant) children's academic achievements, "further research

examining the role of culture and context in motivation, cognition, learning, and achievement is sorely needed” (p. 153).

### **Schools**

School ultimately adopt policies affecting many multilingual and multicultural students who enroll in French Immersion programs in BC. To review existing/upcoming policies, schools must go further to promote understanding of multilingual and multicultural children and support research in consultation and cooperation with educators, students, and parents. Dagenais et al. (2006) noted that “policy-makers need to be alert to...find creative ways to encourage such [multilingual children’s] interaction” in immersion programs (p. 216). For example, how can students effectively acquire the necessary knowledge and skills via school French Immersion curricula and instruction? Students’ responses can help refine existing school curricula and instruction.

Future ethnographers can explore how teachers’ professional development embeds multicultural communication and relations in student-teachers and actual students during their teaching practicum. For example, student-teachers and their students can work together to create a legitimate space for minority codes and discourses in and outside of school (Canagarajah, 2006). This can be one way to help “outsiders” understand how “insiders” language use and cultural knowledge is constructed and disseminated through different communicative practices.

In summary, there is a conspicuous dearth of scholarly work on young French Immersion Chinese/Asian children in Canada. I believe researchers need to conduct good quality research to help better inform parents, educators and school policy-makers about these children. Researchers need to undertake further conceptual and empirical research to advance the understanding of young children's representations of self and multiple identities through their language use and interactions with others at home, in school and in their local community. Researchers who conduct this line of research need to understand and interpret their findings within participants' social-cultural linguistic contexts. The above suggested research areas/questions may yield further insights into the complexity of language use and identity construction among young children in Canada.

### **Reflections Upon the Research**

It was a tremendous learning experience and research journey working with the supportive families in this study. The findings of this study help illuminate significant gaps in the literature with respect to how young Chinese children use multiple languages to represent their emerging sense of self and multiple identities in activities. The temporary research journey that I took with the children and families will provide educators and researchers with a different cultural lens to gain a deeper understanding of some of the complexities and intricacies in the children's

multilingual, multiliteracy, and multicultural practices, which were situated among the dominant English community, French Immersion class, and Chinese culture. It is my hope that this study will further stimulate educators' and researchers' intellectual curiosity about young children's language use and identity construction in a Canadian multicultural context.

### **Conclusions**

There are many ways in which we can describe 'identity' in the literature. Many western researchers and theorists have attempted to theorize the concept of identity from a single perspective in the past. How one theorizes identity is indeed influenced by which theoretical framework one adopts. This dissertation has taken a sociolinguistic perspective of multilingualism which is influenced by scholars such as Grosjean and Fishman whose view is that identity construction is the product of the dynamic interplay of social interaction between young children and significant others (e.g., parents) in activities.

The data collected in this ethnographic inquiry within a sociolinguistic framework presented a unique portrait of five young French Immersion Chinese children's multilingual, multiliteracy, and multicultural development as well as identity construction. Through field observations and interviews with the children and their parents, I hope that teachers, school policy-makers, and researchers can gain an insider's

perspective on some of the contextual factors that shape young French Immersion children's use of languages and representations of self and multiple identities in Canada. The present study has lent support to the existing literature on children's language use and identity construction. That is, children's identity construction has been shown to be fluid across socio-cultural linguistic contexts, and continues to be influenced by new social interactions.

As Martin and Sugarman (2001) note, who we are is based on our present self-construal, which is deeply connected to our past, which in turn influences how we will construe ourselves in the future. Through field observations, I came to observe that the children "live between ideas of self, other, the world, and [their] place in the past, present and future" (Franquiz, 1999, p. 31). Their identity construction is not an end product, rather it is a new beginning for further exploration and understanding of their own identities in relation to their social and cultural contexts. I hope the readers have learned more about how young French Immersion children negotiate socio-cultural linguistic spaces and how cultural activities and multiliteracy practices shape their identity construction in the ever-changing multilingual and multicultural Canadian society.

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## Appendix A

### Introduction Letter to Parents

**Dear Parents/Guardian(s),**

My name is Paul Yeung. I am a doctoral educational psychology candidate in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. My thesis concerns young French Immersion Chinese children's language literacy development, multilingual practices, and identity formation in Canada.

Your family's participation will provide valuable insights into the kinds of language practices you and your child have adopted, and how that may affect children's identity formation in Canada. This will be vital to school boards, social service organizations, and the government to help multilingual children to deal with their emerging ethnic identities and achieve their full potential in school.

My goal is to observe the kinds of language literacy development and language practices you and your child have adopted over a seven-day period. Both home observations and interviews are anonymous, will be tape recorded, and can take place at your earliest convenience. I will also seek your approval to photograph the physical spaces where parent-child interactions occur.

You and your child can refuse to answer any of the questions and are free to terminate either the home visit or the interview at any time. All the information you and your child provide will be treated in a strictly confidential manner.

Your consent for your child to participate in the study will be greatly appreciated. **Please fill out the form below and return it to your child's school teacher regardless of whether or not you are interested in the study.**

If you are interested in this study and/or have any questions, please contact me at 778-371-5274 or e-mail me at pauly@sfu.ca.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Yeung, Ph.D Candidate  
Faculty of Education, Simons Fraser University

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#### **Reply Slip for Engaging with Languages: Portraits of Young French Immersion Chinese Children's Identity Formation in Canada**

**Parent Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Child Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Telephone No.:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Daytime contact:** from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
**Evening contact:** from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### Introduction Letter to Parents (Traditional Chinese)

親愛的家長或監護人：

我是西門菲沙大學的教育心理學博士生Paul Yeung。我的博士論文是關於加拿大的中國家庭和兒童多種語言發展、語言實踐、和使用什麼方法去應付他們自己民族身分形成的看法。

在這項研究中，您和貴子女的參與可提供更多有關家長如何幫助子女面對在加拿大學習多種語言的挑戰。而這些挑戰會怎樣影響小孩子對個人民族身分的看法。這些資料能夠使學校當局、社區機構以及政府更全面地了解學習多種語言的中國家庭和兒童在民族身分形成時所面對的挑戰和需要。

本研究需要六個中國家庭，找6至10歲的小孩，去進行家訪，而家訪將被舉辦在三個月期間。每次家訪約需30分鐘。家訪和面談是匿名的，會被錄音，在您盡早方便時進行。我會在獲得允許下拍攝父母和孩子語言交往的物理空間。您和貴子女可拒絕回答任何問題，或可以隨時終止家訪。所有資訊您和貴子女提供將以嚴密對待和將被完全保密。

本人對您同意小孩參與該研究深表謝意。如果您對這項研究感興趣，或者有任何問題，您可直接與本人Paul Yeung聯絡 (電話：778-371-5274或電郵：paul@sfu.ca)。最後，請填寫下表，不論您對這項研究感興趣與否，我希望您將表格交回小孩的學校老師。

此致，

Paul Yeung, 博士研究學生

✂-----  
學習多種語言：加拿大法語班的中國幼兒民族身份形成錄

父母姓名： \_\_\_\_\_

子女姓名： \_\_\_\_\_

聯絡電話： \_\_\_\_\_

日間聯絡時間： \_\_\_\_\_

夜間聯絡時間： \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### Introduction Letter to Parents (Simplified Chinese)

亲爱的家长或监护人：

我是西门菲沙大学的教育心理学博士生Paul Yeung。我的博士论文是关于加拿大的中国家庭和儿童多种语言发展、语言实践、和使用什麼方法去应付他们自己民族身分形成的看法。

在这项研究中，您和贵子女的参与可提供更多有关家长如何帮助子女面对在加拿大学习多种语言的挑战。而这些挑战会怎样影响小孩子对个人民族身分的看法。这些资料能够使学校当局、社区机构以及政府更全面地了解学习多种语言的中国家庭和儿童在民族身分形成时所面临的挑战和需要。

本研究需要找到六个中国家庭，6至10岁的小孩，去进行家访，而家访将被举办在叁个月期间。每次家访约需30分钟。家访和面谈是匿名的，会被录音，在您尽早方便时进行。我会在获得允许下拍摄父母和孩子语言交往的物理空间。您和贵子女可拒绝回答任何问题，或可以随时终止家访。所有资讯您和贵子女提供将以严密对待和将被完全保密。

本人对您同意小孩参与该研究深表谢意。如果您对这项研究感兴趣，或者有任何问题，您可直接与本人Paul Yeung联络 (电话：778-371-5274或电邮：paulyeung@sfu.ca)。最後，请填写下表，不论您对这项研究感兴趣与否，我希望您将表格交回小孩的学校老师。

此致，

Paul Yeung, 博士研究生

✂-----

学习多种语言：加拿大法语班的中国幼儿民族身份形成录

父母姓名： \_\_\_\_\_

子女姓名： \_\_\_\_\_

联络电话： \_\_\_\_\_

日间联络时间： \_\_\_\_\_

夜间联络时间： \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D

### Introduction Letter to Children

**Dear Children,**

My name is Paul Yeung. I am a doctoral educational psychology candidate in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. My thesis concerns young French Immersion Chinese children's language development (i.e., Chinese, English, and French) and identity formation (i.e., how you view yourself) in Canada.

Your participation will help me understand the kinds of language practices you have adopted, and how that may affect your identity formation in Canada. You can also help school boards, social service organizations, and the government to better understand how multilingual children see themselves and achieve their full potential in school.

My goal is to observe the kinds of language development and language practices you and your parent/guardian have adopted over a seven-day period. Both home observations and interviews are anonymous, will be tape-recorded, and can take place at your earliest convenience. I will also seek your approval to photograph the physical spaces where parent-child interactions occur.

You can refuse to answer any of the questions and are free to stop the home visit or the interview at any time. All the information you provide will be treated in a strictly confidential manner.

While your consent to participate in the study will be greatly appreciated, **I will only contact those children who are interested in the study.** I will then explain the informed consent form to you. I will ask you and your parent/ guardian to sign a consent form prior to my initial home visit.

If you and your parent/guardian are interested in this study and/or have any questions, please contact me at 778-371-5274 or e-mail me at pauly@sfu.ca.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Yeung, Ph.D Candidate  
Faculty of Education, Simons Fraser University

**Ps: Dear parents/guardians,**

After you have reviewed the content of this introductory script, would you please print your name and sign at the bottom? The purpose is to ensure that I have your permission to show this letter to your child.

**Name of Parent or Guardian (PRINT):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix E

### Form 2 - Informed Consent By Participants In a Research Study

The University and those conducting this research study subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of participants. This research is being conducted under permission of the Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board. The chief concern of the Board is for the health, safety and psychological well-being of research participants.

Should you wish to obtain information about your rights as a participant in research, or about the responsibilities of researchers, or if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the manner in which you were treated in this study, please contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics by email at hal\_weinberg@sfu.ca or phone at 778-782-6593.

Your signature on this form will signify that you have received a document which describes the procedures, whether there are possible risks, and benefits of this research study, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the documents describing the study, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

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**Title:** Engaging with languages: Portraits of young French immersion Chinese children's identity formation in Canada

**Investigator Name:** Paul Yeung

**Investigator Department:** Faculty of Education

---

Having been asked to participate in the research study named above, I certify that I have read the procedures specified in the *Study Information Document* describing the study. I understand the procedures to be used in this study and the personal risks to me in taking part in the study as described below:

**Purpose and goals of this study:** The proposed study will help illuminate significant gaps in the literature with respects to what strategies young French Immersion Chinese children use to deal with their emerging ethnic identity.

**Benefits of study to the development of new knowledge:** The proposed study will help parents, teachers, school policy-makers, and researchers gain an insider's perspective on some of the contextual factors that may affect young children's development, language practices, and construction of identity in Canada.

**What the participants will be required to do:**

- 1) You will be asked independently to record your daily feelings pertaining to ethnic identity over a three-month period.
- 2) You will be asked independently to record which language(s) you use to communicate, and with whom, over a three-month period.
- 3) During home visits, a snapshot of interaction between you and your child, you and others, etc. will be observed and audio-taped. I will obtain the permission from you if I can photograph the physical spaces where parent-child interactions occur.
- 4) I will also conduct anonymous interviews with you regarding your child's language development and identity formation.

**Risks to the participant, third parties or society:**

There are no physical or psychological risks involved in participating in this research study. Your refusal to allow your child to participate or your child's refusal to participate will have no adverse effects on your child's grade and/or evaluation in the class.

**Inclusion of names of participants in reports of the study:**

In order to preserve anonymity, a special code will be assigned to each participant. He/she will also be asked to come up with a pseudo-name prior to his/her interview.

**Statement of confidentiality:**

The data of this study will maintain confidentiality of your name and the contributions you have made to the extent allowed by the law. All information that is obtained during this study will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and will be maintained in accordance with journal publication data requirements (2 – 3 years). Once the record maintenance requirements have expired, I will destroy all the interview tapes and photos in a confidential manner.

**Contact of participants at a future time or use of the data in other studies:**

I will obtain the permission from you if I can use some of the photos in my written thesis, oral defense, and/or future conferences and publications.

**Interview of employees about their company or agency:**

Once I know who the participating children are and in which French immersion school they study, I will send the SFU ethics approval form to those school principals. I will inform them that I may contact their teachers for a non-structured interview about the participating children's language development and identity formation.

I understand that I may withdraw my participation at any time. I also understand that I may register any complaint with the Director of the Office of Research Ethics:

**Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director  
Office of Research Ethics,  
Simon Fraser University, 8888 University Drive, Burnaby, B.C., V5A  
1S6  
Email: hal\_weinberg@sfu.ca**

I may obtain copies of the results of this study, upon its completion by contacting:

**Name:** Paul Yeung                      **Email:** pauly@sfu.ca  
**Tel:** 778-371-5274                      **Fax:** 778-371-5274

I understand the contributions and risks of my participation in this study and agree to participate:

**The participant and witness shall fill in this area. Please print legibly.**

<b>Participant Last Name:</b>	<b>Participant First Name:</b>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**Participant Contact Information:**

<b>Participant Signature (for adults):</b>	<b>Witness (if required by the Office of Research Ethics):</b>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Date (use format MM/DD/YYYY)</b>	<b>Contact at a future time/use of data in other studies</b>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

## Appendix F

### Form 2 - Informed Consent By Participants In a Research Study (Traditional Chinese)

大學和進行這項研究的人員必會遵守研究的道德規則和保障參加研究者的興趣、舒適及安全。Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board 已批准這項研究。委員會主要關注研究參加者的身體健康、安全及心理健康。

如想查詢參加者應有的權利、研究人員的責任、或有任何問題、憂慮或投訴關於你在這研究的待遇，請聯絡 Office of Research Ethics 理事，電郵 [hal\\_weinberg@sfu.ca](mailto:hal_weinberg@sfu.ca) 或 致電 778-782-6593。

您在這表格上的簽名，表示您已獲得一份文件列明這項研究進程序，可能性風險和利益。您已獲得充分機會去考慮這份文件中研究的詳細資料，而您自願參與這項研究。

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**研究課題:**學習多種語言：加拿大法語班的中國幼兒民族身份形成錄  
**調查員:** Paul Yeung  
**調查部門:**教育學院

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我被邀請參加這項研究，我聲明我已閱讀有關這研究的內容和文件及其程序。我明白這項研究所用的方法和參加這項研究的個人風險，如下所述：

#### 研究目的:

研究法語班的中國幼兒使用什麼策略來處理他們日漸形成的民族身分。

#### 研究對開發新知識的好處:

本項研究能幫助父母，老師及學校政策制定者、社區機構以及研究人員全面地了解影響中國家庭及其兒童發展，學習多種語言和加拿大建構民族身份的挑戰。

#### 參加者的職責:

1. 父母/監護人和子女將會獨立地記錄每日他們對自己民族身分看法。
2. 父母/監護人和子女將會獨立地記錄每日語言交談圖。
3. 在家訪期間、我會觀察父母和孩子，孩子和其他人之間的語言實踐，並將以錄音方式進行。
4. 我會與父母，孩子，和跟孩子有頻繁交往的其它人進行匿名問訪。

#### 對於參加者、第三方或社會的風險:

參與本項研究沒有身體上或心理上的風險。

#### 關於參加者在研究的報告中的名字:

為了保持匿名，將給每位參加者分配一個特別好碼。並請求每位參加者在他/她的

問訪前使用一個假冒名字。

**研究保密性:**

這項研究資料將在法律範圍內保護您的名字和貢獻。在這項研究期間所有資料會保留在一個鎖著的文件櫃內。一旦記錄過期，我會使用機密方式去刪除所有採訪磁帶和相片。

**有關將來聯繫參加者或在其他研究中使用數據:**

我會在獲得父母/監護人允許的情況下，在我的論文，答辯，或者未來會議和出版物中使用一些相片。

我明白我有權隨時終止參加這項研究。我亦明白我可以向 Office of Research Ethics:

研究道德規則的主席 **Dr. Hal Weinberg** 做任何的投訴。

**Simon Fraser University, 8888 University Drive, Burnaby, B.C., V5A 1S6**

電郵: [hal\\_weinberg@sfu.ca](mailto:hal_weinberg@sfu.ca)

我可以在研究完成后向研究者索取研究結果副本:

研究員: Paul Yeung

電郵: [pauely@sfu.ca](mailto:pauely@sfu.ca)

電話: 778-371-5274

電傳: 778-371-5274

我明白我的貢獻和這項研究的風險並同意參與。

參加者和見証人請清晰地填好下表

參加者名字:

聯絡資料:

參加者的署名:

日期: 年 月 日

見証人(如需要):

有關將來聯繫參加者或在其他研究中使用數據

## Appendix G

### Form 2 - Informed Consent By Participants In a Research Study (Simplified Chinese)

大学和进行这项研究的人员必会遵守研究的道德规则和保障参加研究者的兴趣、舒适及安全。Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board 已批准这项研究。委员会主要关注研究参加者的身体健康、安全及心理健康。

如想查询参加者应有的权利、研究人员的责任、或有任何问题、忧虑或投诉关于你在这研究的待遇，请联络 Office of Research Ethics 理事，电邮 hweinber@sfu.ca 或致电 778-782-6593。

您在这表格上的签名，表示您已获得一份文件列明这项研究进行程序，可能性风险和利益。您已获得充分机会去考虑这份文件中研究的详细资料，而您自愿参与这项研究。

---

**研究课题:**学习多种语言：加拿大法语班的中国幼儿民族形成录  
**调查员:** Paul Yeung  
**调查部门:**教育学院

---

我被邀请参加这项研究，我声明我已阅读有关这研究的内容和文件及其程序。我明白这项研究所用的方法和参加这项研究的个人风险，如下所述：

#### 研究目的:

研究法语班的中国幼儿使用什麼策略来处理他们日渐形成的民族身分。

#### 研究对开发新知识的好处:

本项研究能帮助父母，老师及学校政策制定者、社区机构以及研究人员全面地了解影响中国家庭及其儿童发展，学习多种语言和加拿大建构民族身份的挑战。

#### 参加者的职责:

1. 在叁个月的期间，父母/监护人和子女将会独立地记录每日他们对自己民族身分看法。
2. 在叁个月的期间，父母/监护人和子女将会独立地记录每日语言交谈图。
3. 在家访期间、我会观察父母和孩子，孩子和其他人之间的语言实践，并将以录音方式进行。
4. 我会与父母，孩子，和跟孩子有频繁交往的其它人进行匿名问访。

#### 对於参加者、第叁方或社会的风险:

参与本项研究没有身体上或心理上的风险。

**關於參加者在研究的報告中的名字:**

為了保持匿名，將給每位參加者分配一個特別好碼。並請求每位參加者在他/她的訪前使用一個假冒名字。

**研究保密性:**

這項研究資料將在法律範圍內保護您的名字和貢獻。在這項研究期間所有資料將會保留在一個鎖著的文件櫃內。一旦記錄過期，我會使用機密方式去刪除所有採訪磁帶和相片。

**有關將來聯繫參加者或在其他研究中使用數據:**

我會在獲得父母/監護人允許的情況下，在我的論文，答辯，或者未來會議和出版物中使用一些相片。

我明白我有权随时终止参加这项研究。我亦明白我可以向 Office of Research Ethics:

研究道德规则的主席 **Dr. Hal Weinberg** 做任何的投诉。

**Simon Fraser University, 8888 University Drive, Burnaby, B.C., V5A 1S6**

電郵: **hal\_weinberg@sfu.ca**

我可以在研究完成后向研究者索取研究结果副本:

研究员: Paul Yeung

电邮: pauly@sfu.ca

电话: 778-371-5274

电传: 778-371-5274

我明白我的贡献和这项研究的风险并同意参与。

**參加者和見證人請清晰地填好下表**

**參加者名字:**

**聯絡資料:**

**參加者的署名:**

**見證人(如需要):**

**日期:** 年 月 日

**有關將來聯繫參加者或在其他研究中使用數據**

## Appendix H

### Form 3: INFORMED CONSENT FOR MINORS (under age of 19)

#### Consent by Parent/Guardian to allow participation of their Children in a research study.

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Title: **Engaging with languages: Portraits of young French immersion Chinese children's identity formation in Canada**

Investigator Name: **Paul Yeung**

Investigator Department: **Faculty of Education**

---

The University and those conducting this study subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of participants. This form and the information it contains are given to you for your own protection and to ensure your full understanding of the procedures, risks, and benefits described below.

#### **Benefits of study to the development of new knowledge:**

The proposed study will help illuminate significant gaps in the literature with respects to what strategies young French Immersion (FI) Chinese children use to deal with their emerging ethnic identity. This study will in turn help teachers, school policy-makers, and researchers gain an insider's perspective on some of the contextual factors that may affect young children's development, language practices, and construction of identity in Canada.

#### **Procedures:**

- 1) Children will be asked independently to record their daily feelings and behaviours pertaining to ethnic identity over a seven-day period.
- 2) Children will be asked independently to record which language(s) they use to communicate, and with whom, over a seven-day period.
- 3) During home visits, a snapshot of interaction between you and your parent, you and others, etc. will be observed and audio-taped. I will obtain the permission from you if I can photograph the physical spaces where those interactions occur.
- 4) I will also conduct interview with you regarding your own language development and identity formation.

#### **Risks to the participant, third parties or society:**

There are no physical or psychological risks involved in participating in this research study. Your refusal to allow your child to participate or your child's refusal to participate will have no adverse effects on your child's grade and/or evaluation in the class.



**Summarize:**

The introductory letter and consent forms will be made available in both English and Chinese. If there are any differences between the English version and its Chinese version, the English version shall prevail.

Your signature on this form will signify that you have received a document which describes the procedures, possible risks, and benefits of this research study, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the document, and that you voluntarily agree to allow the minor named below to participate in the study.

Name of Parent or Guardian  
(PRINT):

Name of Minor Participant:  
(PRINT):

who is the (*relationship to minor*)  
(PRINT):

I certify that I understand the procedures to be used and have fully explained them to the minor participant:

Name of minor participant:

and the participant knows that myself, or he or she has the right to withdraw from the study at any time, and that any complaints about the study may be brought to:

Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director  
Office of Research Ethics  
Simon Fraser University  
Tel: 778-782-6593  
Email: hal\_weinberg@sfu.ca

I may obtain copies of the results of this study, upon its completion by contacting the researcher named above or:

Print Name Parent or Guardian:

Signature of Parent or Guardian:

Date (use format MM/DD/YYYY) :

## Appendix I

### Form 3: INFORMED CONSENT FOR MINORS (under age of 19)

#### Consent by Parent/Guardian to allow participation of their Children in a research study. (Traditional Chinese)

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**研究課題:**學習多種語言：加拿大法語班的中國幼兒民族身份形成錄

**調查員:** Paul Yeung

**調查部門:**教育學院

---

大學和進行這項研究的人員必會遵守研究的道德規則和保障參加者的興趣、舒適及安全。這表格和資料內容是給於對您的保障和確保您明白所有程序、風險和利益，如下所述：

**研究目的:**研究法語班的中國幼兒使用什麼策略來處理他們日漸形成的民族身分。

**研究對開發新知識的好處:**本項研究能幫助父母，老師及學校政策制定者、社區機構以及研究人員全面地了解影響中國家庭及其兒童發展，學習多種語言和加拿大建構民族身份的挑戰。

**參加者的職責:**

1. 父母/監護人和子女將會獨立地記錄每日他們對自己民族身分看法。
2. 父母/監護人和子女將會獨立地記錄每日語言交談圖。
3. 在家訪期間、我會觀察父母和孩子，孩子和其他人之間的語言實踐，並將以錄音方式進行。
4. 我會與父母，孩子，和跟孩子有頻繁交往的其它人進行匿名問訪。

**對於參加者、第三方或社會的風險:**

參與本項研究沒有身體上或心理上的風險。

**總結:**

研究介紹信和研究同意書有英語和中文雙語表達。如英語和中文內容有任何分差，以英語版本為準。

您在這表格上的簽名，表示您已獲得一份文件列明這項研究進程序，可能性風險和利益。您已獲得充分機會去考慮這份文件中研究的詳細資料，而您自願參與這項研究。

家長或監護名字:

未成年參加者名字:

與未成年者關係

本人聲明我明白所有程序並已詳細解釋給未成年者參加者：

未成年參加者名字：

未成年參加者明白本人及他或她有權利隨時終止參加這項研究，所有關於研究的投訴可向以下主要研究者投訴或聯絡：

**Dr. Hal Weinberg, 研究道德規則的主席**

西門菲沙大學

電話: 778-782-6593

電郵: [hal\\_weinberg@sfu.ca](mailto:hal_weinberg@sfu.ca)

我可以在研究完成后向研究者索取研究結果副本：

研究員: Paul Yeung

電郵: [paulyeung@sfu.ca](mailto:paulyeung@sfu.ca)

電話: 778-371-5274

電傳: 778-371-5274

家長或監護人姓名：

家長或監護人的署名：

日期： 年 月 日

## Appendix J

### Form 3: INFORMED CONSENT FOR MINORS (under age of 19)

#### Consent by Parent/Guardian to allow participation of their Children in a research study. (Simplified Chinese)

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**研究课题:**学习多种语言: 加拿大法语班的中国幼儿民族形成录

**调查员:** Paul Yeung

**调查部门:**教育学院

---

大学和进行这项研究的人员必会遵守研究的道德规则和保障参加者的兴趣、舒适及安全。这表格和资料内容是给於对您的保障和确保您明白所有程序、风险和利益, 如下所述:

**研究目的:**研究法语班的中国幼儿使用什麼策略来处理他们日渐形成的民族身分。

**研究对开发新知识的好处:**本项研究能帮助父母, 老师及学校政策制定者、社区机构以及研究人员全面地了解影响中国家庭及其儿童发展, 学习多种语言和加拿大建构民族身份的挑战。

**参加者的职责:**

1. 在叁个月的期间, 父母/监护人和子女将会独立地记录每日他们对自己民族身分法。
2. 在叁个月的期间, 父母/监护人和子女将会独立地记录每日语言交谈图。
3. 在家访期间、我会观察父母和孩子, 孩子和其他人之间的语言实践, 并将以录音方式进行。
4. 我会与父母, 孩子, 和跟孩子有频繁交往的其它人进行匿名问访。

**对於参加者、第叁方或社会的风险:**参与本项研究没有身体上或心理上的风险。

**总结:**

究介绍信和研究同意书有英语和中文双语表达。如英语和中文内容有任何分差, 以英语版本为準。

您在这表格上的签名, 表示您已获得一份文件列明这项研究进行程序, 可能性风险利益。您已获得充分机会去考虑这份文件中研究的详细资料, 而您自愿参与这项研。

**家长或监护名字:**

**未成年参加者名字:**

与未成年者关系

本人声明我明白所有程序并已详细解释给未成年者参加者：

未成年参加者名字：

未成年参加者明白本人及他或她有权利随时终止参加这项研究，所有关于研究的投诉可向以下主要研究者投诉或联络：

**Dr. Hal Weinberg, 研究道德规则的主席**

西门菲沙大学

电话: **778-782-6593**

电邮: **hal\_weinberg@sfu.ca**

我可以在研究完成后向研究者索取研究结果副本：

研究员: Paul Yeung

电邮: pauly@sfu.ca

电话: 778-371-5274

电传: 778-371-5274

家长或监护人姓名：

家长或监护人的署名：

日期： 年 月 日

## Appendix K

### Form 5: Study Information Document

This document describes the goals of the study and the procedures to be used including their risks and benefits. If the study is not for the use of secondary data and there is no requirement to re-contact participants, then this document must be completed in the application. This document is referred to in your consent protocol as the information given to the participants before consent is given, to ensure that when the participant's consent is informed consent. Exceptions to the inclusion of a reference to this document in consent protocols may be approved.

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**Title:** Engaging with languages: Portraits of young French immersion Chinese children's identity formation in Canada

**Investigator Name:** Paul Yeung

**Investigator Department:** Faculty of Education

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	<b>Section A</b>
<b>Place</b>	The study will be conducted in the greater Vancouver area (i.e., Richmond, Vancouver, and Burnaby).
<b>Who are the participants (subjects) in this study?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Chinese (immigrant) children whose parents have enrolled them in French Immersion.</li><li>2) Participating children's parents.</li><li>3) Other family members with whom the children have frequent interaction (e.g., siblings, cousins, etc.).</li><li>4) Other persons with whom the children have frequent interaction (e.g., tutors, teachers from Chinese school, etc.).</li></ol>
<b>What will the participants be required to do?</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Both parents/guardian and children will be asked independently to record their daily feelings pertaining to ethnic identity over a three-month period.</li><li>2) Both parents/guardian and children will be asked independently to record which language(s) they use to communicate, and with whom, over a three-month period.</li><li>3) During home visits, a snapshot of interaction between parents and child, the child and others, etc. will be observed and audio-taped. I will obtain the permission from parent/guardian if I can photograph the</li></ol>

	<p>physical spaces where parent-child interactions occur.</p> <p>4) I will also conduct anonymous interviews with parents, children, and other persons with whom the children have frequent interaction.</p>
<b>How are the participants recruited?</b>	<p>Once I obtain the approval from school districts, I will seek approval from principals to make brief announcements in French Immersion classrooms and hand out introductory letters to prospective participants. If the parent/guardian expresses interest, he/she can contact me.</p> <p>Regarding other persons with whom the children have frequent interaction, I will ask the participants to contact them to see if they are willing to participate in the study. For those who are under 19 years old, I will explain the purpose of my study and the informed consent form to their parent/guardian and participant prior to each interview. The parent/guardian will need to sign the “Informed Consent for Minors” form on the children's behalf. For those who are above 19 years old, I will explain the purpose of my study and the informed consent form prior to each interview. The participant will then sign the “Informed Consent by Participants” form.</p>
	<b>Section B</b>
<b>Overall Goals of Study</b>	<p>This study is designed to investigate what strategies young French Immersion Chinese children use to deal with their emerging ethnic identity.</p>
<b>Risks to the participant, third parties or society:</b>	<p>There are no physical or psychological risks involved in participating in this research study.</p>
<b>Benefits of study to the development of new knowledge:</b>	<p>This study will help parents, teachers, school policy-makers, and researchers gain an insider’s perspective on some of the contextual factors that may affect young children’s development, language practices, and construction of identity in Canada.</p>
<b>How confidentiality and anonymity will</b>	<p>1) In order to preserve anonymity, a special code will be assigned to each participant. He/she will</p>

<p><b>be assured if applicable</b></p>	<p>also be asked to come up with a pseudo-name prior to his/her interview.</p> <p>2) All information that is obtained during this study will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and will be maintained in accordance with journal publication data requirements. Once the record maintenance requirements have expired, I will destroy all the interview tapes and photos in a confidential manner.</p>
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	<b>Section C</b>
<p><b>Approvals that may be required from agencies, communities or employers</b></p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Statement of Professional Ethics if consent procedure 2b is chosen and any other information or contingencies that may be appropriate:</b></p>	<p>I chose 2a.</p>
<p><b>Persons and contact information that participants can contact to discuss concerns.</b></p>	<p>Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director Office of Research Ethics Email: hal_weinberg@sfu.ca</p>



## Appendix L

### Form 5: Study Information Document (Traditional Chinese)

本文件描述研究目的和研究程序及其風險和好處。本文件的資料以在您參加者同意前已發給您以確保參加者的同意是在知情情況下同意的。

**研究課題:**學習多種語言：加拿大法語班的中國幼兒民族身份形成錄

**調查員:** Paul Yeung

**調查部門:**教育學院

	<b>Section A</b>
<b>地點:</b>	本研究將在加拿大卑詩省大溫地區進行(即：列治文，溫哥華，和本那比)
<b>研究對象:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. 中國（移民）兒童的父母註冊他們子女在讀法語課程參與兒童的父母</li><li>2. 與孩子有頻繁交往的其它家庭成員(即，兄弟姐妹、表兄弟、等)</li><li>3. 與孩子有頻繁交往的其它人(即，家庭教師、中文學校老師、等)</li></ol>
<b>參加者的職責:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>5. 在三個月的期間，父母/監護人和子女將會獨立地記錄每日他們對自己民族身分看法。</li><li>6. 在三個月的期間，父母/監護人和子女將會獨立地記錄每日語言交談圖。</li><li>7. 在家訪期間、我會觀察父母和孩子，孩子和其他人之間的語言實踐，並將以錄音方式進行。</li><li>8. 我會與父母，孩子，和跟孩子有頻繁交往的其它人進行匿名問訪。</li></ol>
<b>如何搜尋參加者:</b>	<p>一旦我獲得學區的同意，我會獲得校長同意去法語班作簡單通知並發放研究介紹信給參加者。如果父母/監護人有興趣，他或她可與我直接聯絡。</p> <p>有關與孩子有頻繁交往的其它人，我會問參加者聯係他們是否對該研究有感興趣。對年齡未滿十九歲的參加者，我會在問訪前對其父母/監護人解釋本研究的目的及研究同意協議表。父母/監護人需要為孩子簽註“未成年參加者同意表”。對年滿十九隨者，我會在問訪前對其解釋本研究的目的及研究同意協議表。參加者需要簽註“參加者同意表”。</p>

	<b>Section B</b>
<b>研究目的:</b>	研究法語班的中國幼兒使用什麼策略來處理他們日漸形成的文化身分。
<b>對於參加者、第三方或社會的風險:</b>	參與本項研究沒有身體上或心理上的風險。
<b>研究對開發新知識的好處:</b>	本項研究能幫助父母，老師及學校政策制定者、社區機構以及研究人員全面地了解影響中國家庭及其兒童發展，學習多種語言和加拿大建構身份的挑戰。
<b>如何確保研究保密性及匿名性:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 為了保持匿名，將給每位參加者分配一個特別好碼。並請求每位參加者在他/她的問訪前使用一個假冒名字。</li> <li>2. 在這項研究期間所有資料將會保留在一個鎖著的文件櫃內。一旦記錄過期，</li> <li>3. 我會使用機密方式去刪除所有採訪磁帶和相片。</li> </ol>

	<b>Section C</b>
<b>參加者能和下列人員聯係來討論擔心的問題。</b>	<p>Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director  Office of Research Ethics  Email: hal_weinberg@sfu.ca</p>

## Appendix M

### Form 5: Study Information Document (Simplified Chinese)

本文件描述研究目的和研究程序及其风险和好处。本文件的资料以在您参加者同意前已发给您以确保参加者的同意是在知情情况下同意的。

**研究课题:** 学习多种语言: 加拿大法语班的中国幼儿民族形成录

**调查员:** Paul Yeung

**调查部门:** 教育学院

	<b>Section A</b>
<b>地点:</b>	本研究将在加拿大卑诗省大温地区进行(即: 列治文, 温哥华, 和本那比)
<b>研究对象:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. 中国(移民)儿童的父母注册他们子女在读法语课程参与儿童的父母</li><li>2. 与孩子有频繁交往的其它家庭成员(即, 兄弟姐妹、表兄弟、等)</li><li>3. 与孩子有频繁交往的其它人(即, 家庭教师、中文学校老师、等)</li></ol>
<b>参加者的职责:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. 在叁个月的期间, 父母/监护人和子女将会独立地记录每日他们对自己民族身分看法。</li><li>2. 在叁个月的期间, 父母/监护人和子女将会独立地记录每日语言交谈图。</li><li>3. 在家访期间、我会观察父母和孩子, 孩子和其他人之间的语言实践, 并将以录音方式进行。</li><li>4. 我会与父母, 孩子, 和跟孩子有频繁交往的其它人进行匿名问访。</li></ol>
<b>如何搜寻参加者:</b>	<p>一旦我获得学区的同意, 我会获得校长同意去法语班作简单通知并发放研究介绍信给参加者。如果父母/监护人有兴趣, 他或她可与我直接联络。</p> <p>有关与孩子有频繁交往的其它人, 我会问参加者联系他们是否对该研究有兴趣。对年龄未满十九岁的参加者, 我会在问访前对其父母/监护人解释本研究的目的是研究同意协议表。父母/监护人需要为孩子签註“未成年参加者同意表”。对年满十九随者, 我会在问访前对其解释本研究的目的是研究同意协议表。参加者需要签註“参加者同意表”。</p>

	<b>Section B</b>
研究目的:	调查法语班的中国幼儿使用什麼策略来处理他们日渐形成的文化身分。
对於参加者、第叁方或社会的风险:	参与本项研究没有身体上或心理上的风险。
研究对开发新知识的好处:	本项研究能帮助父母, 老师及学校政策制定者、社区机构以及研究人员全面地了解影响中国家庭及其儿童发展, 学习多种语言和加拿大建构身份的挑战。
如何确保研究保密性及匿名性:	<p>为了保持匿名, 将给每位参加者分配一个特别好码。并请求每位参加者在他/她的问访前使用一个假冒名字。</p> <p>在这项研究期间所有资料将会保留在一个锁著的文件柜内。一旦记录过期, 我会使用机密方式去删除所有采访磁带和相片。</p>
	<b>Section C</b>
参加者能和下列人员联系来讨论担心的问题:	<p>Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director Office of Research Ethics Email: hal_weinberg@sfu.ca</p>

## Appendix N

### Initial Home Interview Guide (English/Chinese)

We are very much interested in understanding your child's home language practices in French, English, Chinese, and other languages. This will help us understand the rich and varied home experiences of Chinese children who participate in French Immersion. I will be audio taping our conversation which is confidential. Your participation is voluntary, meaning that you can stop the interview whenever you like.

我們對了解你的孩子在家庭中法語，英語，中文和其他語言的使用非常感興趣。這些將會幫助我們了解參加法語課程的華裔兒童的豐富和不同的家庭經驗。訪談內容將被錄音，我們的談話將會是保密的。並且你的參與是自願的，表示你可以隨時終止我們的訪問。

#### Language Practices/ 語言實踐:

- 1) (Name of focal child) has proficiency in several languages. Is there any difference in the way you communicate with (name of focal child) and his/her siblings now, as opposed to when they were young?

*(孩子的名字)具備有多種語言的溝通能力，你現在和(孩子的名字)和他的兄弟姐妹的語言溝通上和小時候有沒有什麼分別？*

- 2) Are you always aware of what language you use when you speak with somebody who shares the same languages as you? If you choose a particular language, can you tell me why?

*你有沒有察覺你用哪種語言和同一種語言的人溝通？如果你選用某種語言，請告訴我為什麼？*

- 3) Which language is most important to your everyday life?

*在日常生活中哪種語言對你最重要？*

**Code-switching/語言輪換:**

- 4) Do you ever use different languages in the same conversation? Can you describe the situation?

*在同一個談話中你曾否使用不同的語言來交談？你可以描述這個情況嗎？*

- 5) Does (name of focal child) help you with translation between languages? (Prompt with activities such as parent-teacher interviews, reading notes, phone calls, etc.)

*(孩子的名字)有沒有幫助你翻譯語言？（以活動提示：譬如家長老師談話，讀筆記，電話等）*

- 6) How do you feel about (name of focal child)'s use of different languages in different situations?

*你對(孩子的名字)在不同情況下用不同的語言感覺是怎樣？*

- 7) Is there anything about (name of focal child)'s use of language that you would like to change?

*你對(孩子的名字)的語言使用方面，你覺得有沒有什麼方面需要改變？*

- 8) If (name of focal child) does not know how say something in Chinese, how do you help him/her finish his/her sentence?

*如果(孩子的名字)不懂得用中文去表達一些事情，你會怎樣幫助他/她完成這個句子？*

**Parents' Perceptions of Their Child's Friendships/家長對子女友誼的看法:**

- 9) Did (name of focal child) find it easy to make friends at school? What things are important to (name of focal child)'s friendship-making (e.g., languages, knowing about the latest child game, etc.)

*在學校裡(孩子的名字)覺得容易交朋友嗎？哪些因素對(孩子的名字)交朋友是重要的？（例如：語言，認識最新的兒童遊戲等）*

- 10) Do you visit with any of the parents of the children (name of focal child) knows?

*你曾經拜訪過(孩子的名字)的朋友的家長嗎？*

- 11) Are there activities where you can meet the families of (name of focal child)'s friends (e.g., soccer, swimming?)

*是否有些活動你能夠遇見(孩子的名字)的朋友的家長?(例如: 足球, 游泳等)*

- 12) Do you allow (name of focal child) to bring classmates/friends home?

*你容許(孩子的名字)帶朋友或同學回家嗎?*

- 13) Does (name of focal child) have a special friend? What is it that makes this child such a special friend?

*(孩子的名字)有一個特別的朋友嗎? 什麼因素使這小孩成為(孩子的名字)的特別朋友?*

- 14) In what languages do they communicate with each other?

*他們用什麼語言溝通?*

**Community Involvement/社區參與:**

- 15) Can you tell me about the kinds of involvement you and (name of focal child) have in your school and your local community?

*你可否告訴我關於你和(孩子的名字)在學校和社區所參與的活動嗎?*

- 16) For what reasons does (name of focal child) enjoy going to school?

*什麼原因使(孩子的名字)喜歡去上學?*

- 17) Has (name of focal child) ever complained about going to school or about events at the school? When? How did you help (name of focal child)?

*(孩子的名字)有沒有抱怨過上學或在學校裡的事情? 什麼時候? 你怎麼幫助(孩子的名字)?*

- 18) Do you and (name of focal child) go to church? Attend religious gatherings?

*你和(孩子的名字)去教會嗎? 參加宗教聚會嗎?*

19) What language do they use in church or at the religious gathering?

*在教會或宗教聚會中他們用什麼語言？*

20) Have you and (name of focal child) ever gone to your local community centre?

*你和(孩子的名字)有沒有去你們的社區中心嗎？*

### **Living Context/ 居住環境**

21) What are your reasons for choosing to live in Richmond?

*什麼原因使你選擇居住在列治文？*

22) There are many Chinese businesses and families living in Richmond. Can you describe how this may have influenced (name of focal child)?

*在列治文區內有許多中文的商戶和家庭，你可以描述這對你(孩子的名字)有什麼的影響？*

### **Conclusion/ 結論**

23) How important is it to maintain your Chinese cultural heritage? In what ways do you try to keep Chinese culture alive in your family?

*維持中國文化對你有多麼的重要？在你的家庭裡你怎樣去維持中國文化？*

24) Have you ever talked to (name of focal child) about Chinese culture and history?

*你曾否與(孩子的名字)談及中國文化和中國歷史？*

25) What does your family do during various Chinese festivals?

*你的家庭怎樣度過不同的中國節日？*

26) Overall, would you say that you feel like a Chinese? Canadian? Chinese-Canadian?

*總括來說你覺得你是中國人，加拿大人還是加國華僑？*



27) Overall, would you say that (name of focal child) feels like a Chinese?  
Canadian? Chinese-Canadian?

*總括來說你覺得你(孩子的名字)是中國人，加拿大人還是加國華僑？*