

MEMORIES OF LANGUAGE LOST AND LEARNED: PARENTS AND THE
SHAPING OF CHINESE AS A HERITAGE LANGUAGE IN CANADA

by

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Abstract

Within the complex context of English language dominance and multiculturalism policy, Chinese language education is at a remarkable moment in Vancouver where history, politics and the economy are intertwined with demographic changes. This dissertation seeks to understand Chinese as a heritage language (CHL) in Canada through the stories of Chinese Canadian parents' struggles and choices regarding their own heritage language.

This study takes a life history research approach, which understands individuals' life stories through a historical lens (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). The study consists of 10 parents from two groups of self-identified Chinese Canadians who reside in Metro Vancouver. The first group (Group 1) consists of parents who were either born in Canada or immigrated before the age of 4, had limited exposure to their heritage language, and predominantly speak English. The second group (Group 2) consists of parents who immigrated to Canada in their adulthood from Mainland China, Taiwan or Hong Kong, speak one or more of a variety of Chinese languages, and learned to speak English as an additional language.

Beginning with the theoretical framework that perceives language practice as the outcome of the interrelation between socio-historical distributions of capital and the dispositions of individuals that are shaped and reshaped in their situated field (Bourdieu, 1991), this study captures CHL along multiple timescales (Braudel, 1958/2009) to understand the long term historical continuities of Chinese language education in a city shaped by colonial language hierarchies. The parents' narratives show that despite the increasing popularity of learning Chinese and the rise of the Chinese economy, the challenges of CHL education have largely remained the same over decades. This study argues that English monolingualism as a foundational property in Canada is the root of the problem for CHL education and Chinese language programs in public schools, not the "increasing" presence of Chinese. As long as the unmarkedness of English today is (mis)recognized as natural and neutral, the markedness of Chinese as social other will still remain.

Preface

This thesis is the intellectual property of its author, Ai Mizuta. The research was approved by UBC's Research Ethics Board, certificate H12-01239, project name "Bilingualism for all? Language policies, ideologies and Chinese language education in Metro Vancouver."

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Seventy years have passed since Chinese Canadians gained their rights to vote in Canada.¹ Half a century has passed since racial criteria were removed from Canada's immigration policy. Canada has become a country that is known for accommodating residents from diverse backgrounds with minimal backlash against a multiculturalism policy that was introduced in the 1970s (Wong & Guo, 2015). For example, anti-Muslim sentiment is documented to be much lower in Canada than in other parts of the world, and 85% of Canadians consider multiculturalism important (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2010). Counter-intuitively, however, language education does not necessarily reflect Canada's openness to ethnic diversity: multiculturalism does not equate to multilingualism. Studies show that multilingual speakers in Anglophone provinces of Canada are subject to an intense pressure to become English monolingual (e.g., Cummins, 2005; Cummins & Danesi, 1990; Kiernan, 2010; Kouritzin, 1999; G. Li, 2003). In fact, scholars have observed that heritage language loss is almost complete within three generations in Canada, no slower than the U.S., where there is no official multicultural policy (Alba, Logan, Lutz, & Stults, 2002; Churchill, 2003; Houle, 2011; Swidinsky & Swidinsky, 1997). This is part of my family history. My mother-in-law speaks Cantonese and Mandarin whereas my father-in-law speaks Mandarin, Cantonese and several other Chinese dialects. Their nine grandchildren do not speak any of the Chinese languages.

Among various heritage languages spoken in Canada,² the presence of "Chinese" (i.e., one of many Chinese languages) is particularly old, dating back as early as the 1770s (Meares, 1790/1916). Chinese is used here as an umbrella term that encompasses different groups of languages and dialects. The conventionally accepted groups are Gan, Mandarin, Hakka, Min (e.g., Taiwanese), Wu, Xiang and Yue (e.g., Cantonese) (Ramsey, 1987). As

¹ Chinese Canadians were disenfranchised since the 1870s. In 1947, Chinese Canadians gained the right to vote in federal elections although the election didn't happen until 1949. Provincially, in 1949, British Columbia allowed Chinese Canadians to vote for provincial elections. See Chapter 2 for more details.

² In Canada, heritage language refers to the languages of immigrants other than English and French, and does not include indigenous languages, whereas in the U.S., the term includes indigenous languages and immigrants' languages other than English (Cummins, 1992, 2005).

Pennycook (2012) asserts, what counts as Chinese—or English—is an ideological construct. For example, “despite the mutual unintelligibility” among the Chinese varieties, “Chinese have generally been reluctant to call them different languages” (Wiley et al., 2008, p. 6). Such belief regarding what counts as a language or a dialect is also related to the construct of standard written Chinese, as “the written standard overrides the different oral varieties as a standard” (Ramsey, 1987, p. 18).

Due to the long history of Chinese immigration to British Columbia, ethnic Chinese communities in Vancouver are incredibly diverse and the strategic importance of English and/or Chinese competence has varied considerably over time. Within the complex context of English language dominance and the policy of multiculturalism, Chinese language education in Vancouver is at a remarkable moment where history, politics and the economy are intertwined with demographic changes. In 2011, the ethnic Chinese population accounted for 18% of the whole population of Metro Vancouver (Statistics Canada, 2012). Vancouver, a city that was built upon white supremacy and a long history of both Chinese immigration and exclusion (Roy, 1989), is now experiencing the increasing importance of the economy of China as well as Chinese culture and language. The challenges of adjustment to the new global economic and sociopolitical reality and strategic aspirations to become the Asia-Pacific Gateway of North America, however, are sometimes confounded by a colonial legacy that remains ubiquitous though often hidden in today’s Vancouver (Stanley, 2009). Chinese language education is a particularly revealing site where we can see the conflict between past and future.

1.2 Background and Motivation

I came to Vancouver in 2006 from Tokyo to work for the Japanese Consulate as a researcher. My task there was to investigate the issues surrounding multiculturalism in British Columbia. More specifically, the consulate was interested in how multiculturalism worked in Vancouver, and how the city and the province were handling the large increase in the Chinese population. Quickly, I was intrigued by the long history and diversity of Chinese Canadian communities in Vancouver. As an individual who grew up in Japan and Australia, and who went through language attrition in both Japanese and English at different stages of life, my interest soon became focused on Chinese language education within the complex context of English language dominance and multiculturalism policy.

In 2008, I became involved in a parents' movement aimed at creating an early-start Mandarin bilingual education program in Vancouver. While many parents who spoke Chinese were extremely concerned with their children's Chinese learning, and expressed their desires to have their children enrolled in the early-start Chinese bilingual program, some of the members of the organization—predominantly English-speaking parents who were ethnic Chinese and non-Chinese—were strongly opposed to the idea that the program would include Chinese-speaking households. They claimed that those who speak Chinese as their home language should learn English first, and that these speakers should learn Chinese at a heritage language school. With the recent rise of immigration from China to Vancouver, this exclusion of children whose home language is Chinese from early-start programs was puzzling to me, in particular because of the success of two-way immersion models in the U.S. (e.g., De Jong & Howard, 2009; Marian, Shook, & Schroeder, 2013), and bilingual programs in Alberta (J. Wu, 2005). But the harder I tried to convince the parents of the efficacy of including Chinese speaking children and exposing their English language speaking children to more rather than fewer Chinese speakers, the more I felt an incommensurable gap. What made them feel so strongly that Chinese speakers should only learn English? Some parents got so emotional that the discussion often involved tears. I was puzzled especially because many parents who argued for an English speakers' program that kept Chinese-speaking children out were themselves of ethnic Chinese background. I suspected, and perhaps assumed, that they themselves had struggled learning Chinese as they grew up in Canada; but then why were they so strongly opposed to having Chinese speakers join the program?

As a researcher who had already completed a master's degree in language education, my purpose—perhaps beyond my role as a researcher for the Japanese consulate—was to support the creation of a bilingual program that would draw from the most current and best language education research, and that could take advantage of Vancouver's abundance of engaged students and parents from all linguistic backgrounds. Vancouver seemed to be a perfect place for an effective early-start Chinese language bilingual program, a belief that was widely shared among parents, school administrators, and the vocal advocates for the creation of the program. However, after several months of attending the parents' group meetings, it became clear to me that the extensive research and the existence of successful programs that warranted the implementation of a program that contained both English

speakers and non-English speakers was not just being ignored, but actively being shunned. I was shocked when two of the school boards in Metro Vancouver decided that only fluent English speakers at the age of 4 or 5 years old could join the early-start Chinese program in kindergarten. It was as if Chinese-speaking households were being told to wait for another generation so that their children could become English-only speakers, and then their monolingual grandchildren could join the program and learn Chinese. If an integrative program is possible in the U.S. or other parts of Canada (i.e., Alberta), why was it not possible in Vancouver? Was there something unique about Vancouver and British Columbia that counter-intuitively constrained and limited the potential for Chinese language education rather than leveraged the immense linguistic and cultural capital contained within its diverse population? Before exploring the experiences of individual ethnic Chinese parents, I realized that there was a need to understand the past and present of Chinese Canadians in British Columbia.

After marrying a Chinese Canadian who was born and raised in Vancouver and raising children of both Japanese and Chinese heritage, I came to understand the situation at a deeper embodied level as I began myself to live the experience of many parents of minority language background. I could feel the challenges of speaking Japanese to my daughters within an English-dominant environment, and the challenges seemed to be growing day by day. I cannot help speaking English to her, even though I am most comfortable myself speaking Japanese.³

Speaking your native language to your own daughters. It would seem somehow natural even without a conscious choice. But speaking Japanese or English to my children rarely seemed the result of a conscious choice, even as I berated myself for not being disciplined enough to speak only Japanese to her even when I was with her alone. Was something else going on? At times I am bewildered by the fact that even though I am familiar with theories about language education, there seemed to be more involved in language use between parent and child than the theories could adequately explain.

³ I spent part of my childhood in Brisbane, Australia learning English while losing most of my Japanese. However, within a few years after going back to Japan, I almost completely lost my English while still struggling to read and write Japanese. It took me about 7 years to feel comfortable academically in Japanese before entering university, while relearning English required more work.

I was not the only person who had stories to tell about the difficulty of speaking or learning a non-English language in Vancouver. Many Chinese Canadian friends and family members who were raised in Canada often told me about their regrets about not having learned Chinese as they grew up. I found myself wanting to know more about their stories. Why didn't they learn it, and what kind of events triggered their regrets? They often happened to be parents who were hoping that their children would learn Chinese. Why did they want their children to learn Chinese, and how was this connected—or not—to their own experiences of not learning Chinese as children? I also met new immigrants from China who seemed heavily invested in their children's Chinese language education. What were their experiences regarding their children's language use, and how did their thoughts and feelings connect with the experience of Canada-born Chinese parents? These kinds of questions motivated me to conduct the present study.

It was because of my own experience of parenting, and hearing about some of the experiences of other parents, that I became convinced that in order to properly understand children's language education in both home and school settings, we must take into account the embodied practices that Bourdieu (1991) defines as *habitus*. Some of these practices seem to be consciously controlled and the result of reasoned decisions, but what is more analytically interesting is how we can understand those aspects of embodiment that involve affect and feeling and bodily habit. One of the most powerful aspects of the way in which racial and linguistic hierarchies have shaped language learning in Canada is the emotional depth of beliefs and feelings about English language use. As a scholar, to understand how the parents and others who helped organize the Mandarin language program in Metro Vancouver felt about speaking English and Chinese required an analytical approach that took seriously how embodied practices are created and what effects these practices have.

1.3 About this Study

This dissertation seeks to understand Chinese as a heritage language (CHL) in Canada through the stories of Chinese Canadian parents' struggles, dilemmas, and choices regarding their own heritage language. As discussed in a number of research studies, understanding parents' attitudes and roles has been crucial to CHL research (e.g., Chik, 2010; Curdt-Christiansen, 2003, 2009, 2014; G. Li, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c; G. Li & Wang, 2012). However, the Chinese Canadian parents who are, together with the children

themselves, the main stakeholders of CHL are incredibly diverse in terms of language backgrounds, places of origin, socioeconomic status, and citizenship and immigration categories. In terms of CHL education in Metro Vancouver, parents have been positioned differently depending on whether they predominantly speak English or Chinese (Mizuta, 2009, 2015, 2016; Mizuta & Kubota, 2012). On one end of the spectrum, there are parents who grew up in Canada and have themselves gone through CHL learning. These parents predominantly speak English and often have limited knowledge of a Chinese language. On the other end of the spectrum, there are parents who grew up in Chinese-speaking environments and recently migrated to Canada. These parents speak various dialects of Chinese and learned English as an additional language. This study aims to capture CHL from the perspectives of parents all along this spectrum.

The conceptual framework of this study is based on Bourdieu's (1977b, 1991) constructs of *habitus*, *capital* and *field*. The concepts of habitus and field explain why individuals consciously and unconsciously choose or resist learning or using particular languages in different social contexts. Because linguistic practices are perceived as an exchange of symbolic, cultural or economic capital, and because these forms of capital are not equally distributed within society, those who possess linguistic habitus⁴ with greater capital in the given field are *unmarked* and *normalized* (e.g., standardized English) and have symbolic dominance over those who are *marked* as they do not possess the right habitus (e.g., non-standardized English).

Methodologically, this study takes a life history research approach, which understands individuals' life stories through a historical lens (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). The study consists of 10 parents from two groups of self-identified Chinese Canadians who reside in Metro Vancouver. The first group (Group 1) consists of parents who were either born in Canada or immigrated before the age of 4, had limited exposure to their heritage language, and predominantly speak English. The second group (Group 2) consists of parents who

⁴ In this paper, I take Atkinson's (2011) view that habitus is both a singular and a plural form of habitus. As Atkinson posits, "there seems to be no shortage of confusion, especially at conferences but also in print (including Bourdieu's own writings in English), over the plural form of the Latin word habitus. 'Habitués' and, as in this case, 'habiti' have both appeared, but in actual fact the correct plural form of habitus, as far as I am aware, is simply habitus" (p. 344).

immigrated to Canada in their adulthood from Mainland China, Taiwan or Hong Kong. The Group 2 participants predominantly speak one or more of a variety of Chinese languages, and learned to speak English as an additional language. All of the participants from both groups are parents with aspirations for their children to learn Chinese (i.e., Mandarin, Cantonese, and/or Taiwanese).

Beginning with the theoretical framework that language practice is the outcome of the interrelation between socio-historical distributions of capital and the dispositions of individuals (i.e., habitus) that are shaped and reshaped in their situated field (Bourdieu, 1977a, 1991), in this study I am interested in capturing CHL on multiple timescales, or temporalities (Braudel, 1958/2009; Holland & Lave, 2001, 2009; Lemke, 2001, 2009; Wortham, 2005). The life history approach allows me to situate individuals' stories in the historical context of Canadian society both in terms of continuity and change and additionally to understand Chinese language education in the historicity of multiple individual timelines. By understanding language practice through the framework of habitus and field (which are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2), this study aims to understand how narratives such as the cycle of generational differences both express meaningful stories about life experiences while also hiding the workings of linguistic capital and status. By paying attention to the workings of time, and the multiple timelines within which my subjects narrate and understand their existence, I hope in this study to analyze language learning in ways that are respectful of and attentive to their stories and yet also able to understand the long term historical continuities of Chinese language education in a city shaped by colonial language hierarchies.

1.4 What is Chinese as a Heritage Language (CHL)?

In Canada, heritage languages refer to the languages other than English and French that were brought by immigrants (Cummins, 1992). There is no doubt, then, that Chinese *is* one of Canada's heritage languages. However, when we say Chinese *as* a heritage language (CHL), it presupposes that Chinese is not always a heritage language in Canada, but only under certain conditions. In other words, terms such as *Chinese as a foreign language* or *Chinese as a second language* coexist within Canada even though Chinese *is* one of Canada's heritage languages. The different labels assigned to Chinese (e.g., as a heritage language, as a second language, as a foreign language) are reflections of the assumption that

languages should be taught differently depending on the category of learners and the learning contexts. For example, if you are a mainstream English speaker, it is assumed that Chinese should be taught as a foreign language (i.e., when learned in Canada) or second language (when learned in a Chinese-speaking context, typically abroad; see Cummins, 2005, p. 586). In contrast, when Chinese is taught as a heritage language, it often assumes that the learners already have some familiarity with the language as a home language, or they have ancestral connections to the language (Cummins, 2005). (For comprehensive definitions of CHL learners, see He, 2008a; D. Li & Duff, 2008.) As a result, CHL learners in Canada and elsewhere are incredibly diverse, with varying proficiency levels in Chinese, and varying familiarity and sense of belonging to or affiliation with their heritage (D. Li & Duff, 2014).

However, as D. Li and Duff (2014) posit, the definitions and labels may not match how learners position themselves. Interestingly, the parents group for an early-start Mandarin bilingual program in British Columbia that is the focus of part of this study emphasized that the program *should not* be a heritage language program but rather a second language program despite the fact that many parents involved in the movement were ethnic Chinese—descendants of global Chinese migration. As a result, by the end of the movement their claim that the program was not a Chinese as a heritage language program had successfully excluded Chinese-speaking households from the parents’ group (for more details, see Chapter 2). In this instance, terms such as heritage language, heritage program, or heritage learners were used as exclusionary markers by parents who positioned themselves as English speakers despite the fact that they and their children would themselves be classified into the category of CHL learners within some scholarly definitions. Along with other stakeholders, the parents’ group created a discourse about Chinese language use that ended up excluding those they defined as “heritage language speakers” from the program, in the same process *shaping* and *reshaping* the very meaning of CHL. Indeed, as Wiley (2001a) posits, “deciding on what types of learners should be included under the heritage language label raises a number of issues related to identity and inclusion and exclusion” (p. 35). The title of this dissertation, “the shaping of CHL,” reflects how sites of struggle over language education

such as the parents' movement are dynamic processes of inclusion and exclusion that define in visceral ways what "heritage" and belonging mean.⁵

1.5 Research Questions

In this study of the shaping of CHL, the over-arching research question is: **How can we make sense of Chinese Canadian parents' stories regarding Chinese language education when we situate the stories and analyses within the long history of Chinese in Canada?**

Sub-questions examined are:

Research Question #1: What are the trajectories of English-speaking Chinese Canadian parents' (Group 1) attitudes, feelings, perceptions and practices regarding CHL from childhood to parenthood?

RQ#1 focuses on Group 1 parents only because these parents were the ones who are able to tell the stories of what it was like to be growing up as ethnic Chinese and learning (or not learning) their heritage languages.

Research Question #2: What are the recurring problems and issues regarding CHL learning in Canada that are addressed in both Group 1 parents' stories of childhood experiences and Group 2 parents' stories of contemporary Canada?

Research Question #3: What are the similarities and differences between Group 1 parents and Group 2 parents regarding their desires, challenges and obstacles in raising their children to be bilingual?

RQs #2 and #3 address the ways in which the stories of two groups of Chinese Canadian parents intersect with each other regarding their life experiences and their perceptions of Chinese language education.

1.6 Potential Significance

Until the 2000s, scholarship on Chinese language learning in North America focused upon teaching Chinese as a foreign language to English speakers (McGinnis, 2008).

⁵ This resonates with Curdt-Christiansen and Hancock's (2014) view of heritage language to some extent: "Heritage language is viewed as a language in motion, a language that meshes constantly with local languages and cultures, that evolves with global sociopolitical changes and is a part of a larger sociocultural system" (p. 2).

However, with the rise of China as a global economic powerhouse, and the increasing influx of Chinese immigrants from Mainland China to many parts of the world, and increasing numbers of non-native speakers of Chinese now studying or living in Chinese-speaking environments as well, CHL has become an increasingly popular topic of inquiry in applied linguistics and language education since 2000 (Curdt-Christiansen & Hancock, 2014). These studies include Chinese language ideologies and learners' socialization in communities and home environments (e.g., Chik, 2010; Curdt-Christiansen, 2003, 2009, 2014; Duff & Li, 2014; Jia, 2008; D. Li & Duff, 2008, 2014; Tse, 2001a; W. Li & Zhu, 2014; W. Li & Wu, 2008), parents' (and grandparents') investment and practices in their children's CHL learning (Curdt-Christiansen, 2014; Lao, 2004; G. Li, 2006a, 2006c, 2007, 2010; Xiao, 2008), learners' attitudes and motivations in CHL learning (e.g., Dai & Zhang, 2008; Lu & Li, 2008; G. Li, 2013), identity formation and heterogeneity of CHL learners (e.g., Francis, Mau, & Archer, 2014; He, 2006, 2008b; Kelleher, 2008; D. Li & Duff, 2008, 2014; Tse, 2000a; Wiley et al., 2008), curriculum, pedagogies and issues of Chinese heritage language schools in North America and Europe (e.g., Chiu, 2011; Hancock, 2014; Jiang, 2010; M. Li, 2005; J. Li & Juffermans, 2014; Lü, 2014), and Chinese language programs within mainstream curriculum in Asia and Australia (e.g., Chen & Zhang, 2014; Shouhui & Dongbo, 2014; Kelleher, 2008; Wang, 2014) among many other research foci.

Outside of academia, however, the recent rise of China economically and the increasing impact of immigration from Mainland China since 2000 has had different effects. Whereas before the year 2000, the vast majority of ethnic Chinese immigrants to Canada were from locations outside of Mainland China such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Southeast Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America, since 2000 the majority of Chinese immigrants to Canada have come from Mainland China (Guo & DeVoretz, 2006). Their increasing presence has reinforced a sense of alarm, expressed in newspaper articles about rising property values and real estate speculation, for instance, that the rising wealth and prosperity of China—through the increasing wealth of immigrants from China—has had a negative impact in Canada (e.g., Bains, 2016; Dmitrieva, 2016).

School boards in British Columbia have to some extent tried to meet the demands from the parents' advocacy group regarding the emerging need for Chinese language education. However, the rationale for this perceived need has varied, with a general emphasis

upon the need to prepare English-speaking students for engagement with a globally powerful China (Mandarin for BC Schools, 2008; Woolley, 2009). This perception that Chinese bilingual education is for English speakers has overshadowed any perception of need for public schools to deal with Chinese as a heritage language for children of Mainland Chinese immigrants (See Chapter 2). There has been a large gap in the response of school boards to English-speaking households in contrast to Chinese-speaking ones and a lack of familiarity with successful, more inclusive educational initiatives elsewhere. The differing experiences and language learning challenges of both English- and Chinese-speaking households remains to be accounted for. Moreover, understanding these experiences and challenges only as a recent or new phenomenon is insufficient and potentially misleading. It is crucial to understand Chinese language education today as part of the longer-term historical patterns of Chinese immigrants as Canadians and the continuity of English dominance in Canada. Therefore, while situated in CHL studies, the mainstay of this study is a critical perspective on the dominance of English, which situates language policy, language education and language practice as sites of struggles where power inequalities are produced and reproduced as well as contested and challenged (Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Bourdieu, 1991; Cummins, 2005; Cummins & Danesi, 1990; Cummins et al., 2005; Kubota, 2004, 2014a, 2014b, 2015; Kubota & Lin, 2009; May, 2005, 2014; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Pennycook, 2001, 2008, 2012; Phillipson, 1992; Ricento, 2005, 2013; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Shohamy, 2006; Tollefson, 2000, 2006).

1.7 Structure of the Thesis

This study consists of nine chapters. The present chapter outlines the purpose of the study and research questions. Chapter 2 situates this study within the historical continuity of Chinese immigration to British Columbia since the late 18th century, and the continuity of discourses about Chinese as social *other* even as formal anti-Chinese policies and legislation were abolished in the mid-20th century. Focusing on the long term continuity and consequences of Chinese exclusion helps explain how the introduction of official bilingualism and multiculturalism policy in the 1970s and 1980s in Canada reified the English language dominance that had been a product of anti-Chinese practices, even as multiculturalism as an ideal seemed to repudiate a long history of Chinese exclusion.

Chapter 3 outlines the theoretical framework of this study that draws on Bourdieu's (1977b, 1991) conceptual lens of *habitus*, *capital* and *field*, and introduces the concept of *symbolic violence* to understand the power of English in Canadian society. In addition, this chapter links Bourdieu's theoretical constructs with scholarship on heritage language learning (e.g., Dagenais, 2003; Heller, 2000), investment theory (e.g., Norton, 2000), and recent developments in CHL studies with a particular focus on the identity development of CHL learners (e.g., Curdt-Christiansen, 2014; Duff, 2014; Francis et al., 2014; Hancock, 2014; He, 2008b; D. Li & Duff, 2008, 2014).

Chapter 4 introduces life history research as a methodological approach to this study. After reviewing the definitions of life history research (Goodson & Sikes, 2001), it outlines the rationale for recruiting the 10 participants, the recruitment process, and the context of the semi-structured interviews. This is followed by discussions of how I understand research interviews (Bruner, 1990; Coughlan & Duff, 1994; Duff, 2008a; Holstein & Gubrium, 2004; Talmy, 2010, 2011), the process of transcribing (Duff, 2008a; Ochs, 1979; Silverman, 2000), and analyzing life histories (Bertaux, 1981b). The concept of multiple timescales (Blommaert, 2005) as an analytical method is introduced here.

Chapter 5 and 6 respond to Research Question 1 regarding the language learning trajectories of parents who grew up in Canada and their investment in their children's Chinese language education. Chapter 5 presents the stories of three parents, namely Lily, Emily and Jack (all names in the thesis are pseudonyms), that had a common theme of "being embarrassed for being Chinese" since childhood and how such bodily emotions of shame (Bourdieu, 1991; Duff, 2014) have been reshaped as they became parents. Chapter 6 presents the stories of two parents, namely Joyce and Harry, that shared a theme of "positioning Mandarin speakers as social other" since childhood, and describes how that sense of othering has shaped their investment in their children's Mandarin language learning.

Chapter 7 presents the stories of five Chinese immigrant parents, namely Mia, Oliver, Isabelle, Thomas and Sophia. The main focus of the stories is their desires for their children to learn Chinese, and the challenges and struggles they have experienced in Metro Vancouver to raise their children to be bilingual. Their stories are followed by a cross-group analysis of all of the parents' investment in their children's Chinese language learning (Research Question 3).

Chapter 8 discusses the recurring problems of CHL education in Canada by comparing the stories of the two groups in response to Research Questions 2 and 3. The discussion focuses on the problems of weekend/afterschool heritage language schools as a matter of the discordance between habitus and field (Section 8.2), and the structural problem of Chinese bilingual programs that segregate native Mandarin speakers and English speakers (Sections 8.3 and 8.4).

Finally, Chapter 9 reviews and synthesizes the findings through the historical lens discussed in Chapter 2, and addresses the over-arching research question. This is followed by a discussion of the implications for future research and educational policy. The ultimate goal of this dissertation is to identify the practical changes in language education that are necessary if British Columbia genuinely aspires to benefit from its historical connections to Asia. If British Columbia hopes to become the Asia-Pacific Gateway of Canada (Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, 2016), fundamental changes must be made in terms of how investments are made in linguistic capital and in how educational institutions understand and leverage the individual aspirations of BC residents. Although the ten parents who took part in this study represent only a handful of the larger group of parents who aspire for their children to learn Chinese, the beliefs and feelings that they so powerfully embody need to be better understood because in aggregate their individual practices promise to reshape our society. At this moment in history, their habitus reflect the contradictions and paradoxes of a colonial society that prizes English monolingualism. Our future depends upon finding ways to reshape Chinese language education in a way that builds upon the linguistic capital of our residents rather than destroys it.

Chapter 2: Sociohistorical Contexts of Chinese Canadians

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline three aspects of the sociohistorical contexts of Chinese language education in Metro Vancouver. The first aspect is the long history of Chinese migrants to British Columbia from a critical historical perspective. Here, I focus on the construction of the Chinese as social others in British Columbia since the late 19th century, and how language use became a site of political contestation and exclusion. The second aspect is language policy within Canada including language education in British Columbia, especially within local school boards in the Metro Vancouver region. Here, the focus is on the mythic narrative of the English and French as the two founding member groups of Canada and a description of how this story of the hegemony of the two founding groups continues to affect local language education policies in the 21st century. The third aspect is the debates concerning Chinese-English bilingual education in Metro Vancouver. I discuss two main arenas of public discourse in which these historical and current factors can be seen. One is discussions surrounding the parental advocacy group that initiated the launching of early-start bilingual program in Metro Vancouver. The parents' discourse regarding the exclusion of Chinese speakers from the program is of particular interest here. The other arena of interest is the public debate observed in local newspaper articles and comments about Chinese language education.

2.2 The “Othering” of Chinese in British Columbia

2.2.1 History of Chinese in British Columbia

For thousands of years, before the resettling of what is now called British Columbia by Europeans, Chinese, and other migrants, the region was inhabited by indigenous First Nations. The region was home to 32 indigenous languages and 59 dialects, many of which are nearly extinct today as they have been replaced by the English language through policies such as residential schooling (First People's Heritage, Language and Culture Council, 2010). If the presence of the English language in British Columbia today seems natural, it is only because English-speaking colonizers ensured that indigenous languages and cultures were nearly eradicated through the Indian Act and systematic policies such as the potlatch ban, the reserve system, residential schooling, and “sweeps” that took aboriginal children away from

their parents. Simultaneously, they enacted policies and discourses that alienated and excluded other non-white resettlers⁶, especially trans-Pacific migrants such as the Chinese, manufacturing the common sense that only white English speakers belonged to this place (Stanley, 2009).

The colonization of British Columbia was one of the latest projects of British colonial expansion that had been in process since the 17th century. However, this project entailed a challenge that other colonies in North America located east of British Columbia did not have. Cantonese-speaking migrants from Guangdong province, mostly using the British port of Hong Kong, were also entering the territory at the same time as English-speaking migrants from Europe, the United States, and other British colonies (Meares, 1790/1916). The migration of Cantonese labourers and merchants continued to the early 20th century, and a mixed society was built where First Nations peoples, trans-Pacific migrants from Guangdong, and trans-Atlantic European migrants coexisted for most of British Columbia's history as a colonial society. But after Dominion in 1867, the rise of anti-Chinese politics resulted in the establishment of a series of laws that disenfranchised the Chinese (P. S. Li, 1998; Stanley, 2009, 2011; Yee, 1988). Following the confederation of British Columbia in 1871, the British Columbia Qualifications of Voters Act passed in 1872 took away the voting rights of Chinese and First Nations people, and the Birth, Death, and Marriages Act prohibited them from registering their birth, death and marriages. Several land-owning regulations were established, and by the mid-1870s, Chinese and First Nations people were barred from pre-empting lands (European settlers were offered the opportunity to receive "free" land claimed to be owned by the Crown, although 98% of British Columbia was never ceded through treaty or war by indigenous First Nations). In concert with the clearing of First Nations from their lands, the framing of settlement in the new nation as the privilege of European migrants became the norm, with Chinese and other non-white migrants the target of racially discriminatory laws.

Thousands of Chinese workers were employed as the major labour force for the construction of the western section of Canadian Pacific Railway between 1881 and 1885.

⁶ I follow Stanley's and other historians' usage of "resettler" instead of the more common term "settler" to indicate that anybody other than the First Nation people came to Canada from somewhere else, and therefore "resettled" in Canada.

The completion of the railway made possible the mass migration of Europeans from the east coast. Emulating the popular success of anti-Chinese politics in other regions of the west coast of North America, in particular in California in the 1870s, the increasing number of British and other European migrants arriving in British Columbia after the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway fostered political movements built around anti-Chinese restrictions (Yu, 2008). The federal government responded with a Royal Commission, which agreed with the rhetoric of anti-Chinese agitators that Chinese workers would take away jobs from European immigrants, despite the fact that Chinese workers had predated most European workers in British Columbia before the completion of the railway. The federal parliament passed the Chinese Immigration Act in 1885 that imposed a head tax on Chinese immigrants entering the country, following the example of the anti-Chinese poll tax in New Zealand of 1881. In 1885, anti-Chinese riots took place in Vancouver, and Chinese workers were forcibly driven away from the city by white mobs. They were only able to resettle in the places that were not valued by the white settlers and ended up resettling at the northern end of False Creek, which became the Vancouver Chinatown (K. Anderson, 1991). Anti-Asian politics reached a crescendo of violence in 1907 when the Asiatic Exclusion League and Vancouver labour unions organized a riot that attacked Chinatown and Japan Town. Rallying around slogans proclaiming a “White Man’s Province” and “White Canada Forever,” the riot resulted in anti-Asian legislation in 1908 that curbed Japanese and East Indian migration to Canada, continuing through the subsequent decades until the federal parliament passed the Chinese Immigration Act in 1923, also known as the “exclusion” act, that restricted almost all forms of Chinese immigration to Canada (Ward, 2003). In general, the first half of British Columbia’s history was marked by the coordination of laws that were consistently built around white supremacy, with persistent anti-Chinese and anti-Asian legislation created in concert with foundational acts of national constitution such as the Indian Act designed to create an explicit racial hierarchy in Canada (Backhouse, 1999).

2.2.2 School segregation of Chinese children in British Columbia

English-language discourses in North America about civilizational hierarchy in the 19th and early 20th centuries consistently labelled the Chinese as uncivilized and inassimilable heathens (despite a continued desire for Chinese luxury goods such as silk, tea, and Chinese ceramics), reversing a trend in the 18th century when discourses about Chinese

civilization commonly contained admiration for the material advancement of Chinese technology.⁷ Combined with the discourses in British Columbia and other white resettler societies in California and the Australian colonies about Chinese workers as unfair competition for white workers, a common anti-Chinese discourse uniting working-class politics and nation building around white supremacy marked disparate societies shifting from the status of British colonies to new national imaginaries (Lake & Reynolds, 2008; Price, 1974). Such anti-Chinese sentiments were addressed throughout the *Report of the 1885 Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration*. For example, former Surveyor-General Pearse commented regarding the Chinese immigration to Canada as follows:

I object to seeing Chinamen on the land either as owners in fee, or as lessees, for the plain reason that we want here a white men's community, with civilized habits and religious aspirations, and not a community of "Heathen Chinees" who can never assimilate with us, or do ought to elevate us, and who can be of no possible value to a state in any capacity other than that of drawers of water and hewers of wood. (Canada Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration, 1885, p. 97)

White supremacist ideals were also carried into educational institutions. Chinese, Japanese, and First Nations adults were barred from voting and becoming school trustees, and their children were segregated from regular classrooms (Ashworth, 1979; Stanley, 2011). First Nations children were sent to residential schools, which became compulsory in 1920. In 1902, Victoria School District separated Chinese Canadian students from the regular classroom at the North Ward School. In 1907, the school board passed a resolution that "no pupils be admitted to the schools until they can so understand the English language as to be amenable to the ordinary regulations and school discipline" (as cited in Stanley, 2011, p. 99). In the following year, they changed the resolution so that only "native-born" students could attend school, even if the non-native-born students spoke English. The school board then opened a school in Chinatown specifically for the native-born Chinese Canadians who met the English requirement level (Wong, 1999). Thus, Chinese who were born outside Canada

⁷ In addition to the list of Chinese luxury goods that led European explorers to voyages of discovery between the 15th and 18th centuries, see Bodde's (1948) now-classic essay *Chinese Ideas in the West*, which outlined the list of European borrowings from China in the 18th century such as the idea of a meritocratic civil service.

were not allowed to attend school, even if they learned English. Segregated schooling for Chinese students, and in many cases for Japanese students, was implemented in Vancouver and other parts of British Columbia. The official reason may have been to teach them English, but children of non-English-speaking European origins were not subject to segregation. Only non-white, Chinese, Japanese, South Asians, and First Nations students were targeted for segregation. Stanley (2011) argued,

Segregated schooling was not only the logical outcome of white supremacist thinking, of racialized assumptions about Chinese and Japanese difference and a way of organizing a racist social geography; it also reinforced racialized difference by putting that difference into effect. In the first place, students in segregated classes were identified as being different. Subsequently, because of poor-quality instruction, they were made more different through the experience of schooling that almost guaranteed they would not adequately learn English or so called Canadian ways. (p. 111)

In 1922, as the number of Chinese Canadian students increased, the Victoria School District had to make new arrangements that would completely separate Chinese students from the white students. The newspaper archives and minutes of the Victoria School Board trustee meetings show that the school trustees argued that “segregation would be ‘of great advantage’ to the children involved, ‘as special stress could be put on [the] subjects most needed by them, such as English, etc.’” (Stanley, 2011, p. 2). In addition, many white residents of Victoria claimed that Chinese children were so different from their children (e.g., intellectually, morally, and socially) that they did not belong to British Columbia and public schooling (Lai, 1987; Stanley, 2011; Wong, 1999). The Chinese Canadian students in Victoria reacted to the school board’s decision and organized a strike for a year. Although this strike did not overturn segregated schooling, it pushed the school board to allow English-speaking Chinese children to go back to regular classrooms, but only after being carefully tested. J. M. Campbell, then principal of the North Ward School in 1925, wrote that the “oriental” children born in Victoria were different from those born in the “Orient” because they spoke English very well and were eager to participate in school activities. He commented that they were almost like the white students. Therefore, he wrote, they were “‘promoted’ to classes with ‘white’ students” (Stanley, 2011, p. 226).

The implementation of segregation in British Columbia schooling, both for First Nations students in residential schools and for Chinese Canadian students in public schools, created a link between English-language use and racial superiority and between the policy of eradication of First Nations languages and the promotion of English-language use among Chinese in Canada. Although in practice the adoption of the English language did not create formal equality between white and non-white students, the presumption existed that the English language was superior to non-English languages, and this distinction was maintained not only in schools but also in employment and public sites of social interaction.⁸

2.2.3 The “Chinese as problem” in today’s British Columbia

The disenfranchisement of Chinese Canadians ended in 1947. The exclusionary immigration law against the Chinese also ended in 1947, but even after the exclusion was repealed, Chinese immigration was restricted to family reunification. It was not until 1967, after Canadian immigration policy had eliminated “race” and “place of origin” as criteria, that large-scale immigration resumed from Asian countries (P. S. Li, 1998; Yee, 1988).

Large-scale migration from Hong Kong and Taiwan began in the 1970s, increased in the 1980s and 1990s from Hong Kong in particular as anxiety rose about the 1997 reversion of Hong Kong from British to Chinese control. Since 2000, however, migration from Mainland China has been the major source of Chinese immigration to British Columbia (and Canada) (Statistics Canada, 2015b). Formally, the anti-Chinese legislation and racial hierarchy built around white supremacy that marked the first half of British Columbia history has been unbuilt. The school segregation, head tax, disenfranchisement, and exclusionary immigration acts against the Chinese people have been left in the past. More than four decades have passed since the declaration of multicultural policy in 1971, and Canada has come to be known for accommodating residents from diverse backgrounds, with limited backlash against non-white migrants in comparison to other countries and a relatively high acceptance of the ideal of multiculturalism (Wong & Guo, 2015). Since 2005, British Columbia has actively positioned itself as the Asia-Pacific gateway of North America, with

⁸ In 1909, about a hundred Francophones moved from Quebec and Ontario to work for a lumber company. The company was seeking French workers to replace Asian workers to have a white work force. A francophone community in Coquitlam, BC called Maillardville was founded. They built a Catholic Church and French school to maintain their language, culture and religion (Lapointe, 2007).

particular emphasis on business with China and India (Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, 2016). Although the primary emphasis is on building infrastructure for goods, the gateway initiatives have now extended to educational programs. One of the priorities is for Canada to gain international recognition as the preferred destination for education. For example, British Columbia signed 12 memorandums of understanding of educational cooperation with China and South Korea in 2008 to help attract students from these countries to study in British Columbia (Government of British Columbia, 2009). However, the challenge of adjustment to the new economic and sociopolitical reality of highly developed Asian economies and British Columbia's aspirations to become the Asia-Pacific gateway of North America is confounded by a colonial legacy that is still ubiquitous in today's Vancouver (Stanley, 2009).

School segregation that explicitly targets non-white children is over. But the increasing presence of Chinese in Canadian society is still often seen as a problem in the mainstream media. For instance, the rhetoric of "Asian monster houses" and "Hongcouver" in the 1990s reflected discourses of resentment about the wealth of new immigrants, a discourse that returned in 2015, and continues, as Chinese migrants are again blamed for the housing "affordability crisis" and questions are raised about the role of "foreign" investment in real estate with the word "foreign" standing in for "Chinese" (Gillis, Sorensen, & Macdonald, 2016; Gold, 2015). An article in *Maclean's* magazine asked if Canadian universities had become "Too Asian" (Findlay & Köhler, 2010). In 2012, a resident of the city of Richmond (a southern suburb of Metro Vancouver), where more than 60% of the population is ethnic Chinese, sought a city ordinance to restrict Chinese-language signage. Hot debates about whether restaurants and other small businesses in Richmond should be forced to have English signage in addition to Chinese were featured in both local and national newspapers (e.g., Todd, 2015b; Hopper, 2014; Matak, 2015). English-language use, a normative condition in British Columbia that took over a century of racially discriminatory legislation and education policy to produce, was the common-sense, "normal" condition of Western Canada that was now being threatened by new Chinese immigrants. The commonality among these incidents was that the Chinese remained the "problem" threatening the normal order in which white English speakers were positioned as natural and neutral, Chinese language use was positioned as un-Canadian and unneighbourly, and using the language without translation for the benefit of English speakers was unfair (Cui, 2015).

The history of British Columbia, marked by the long-term, ongoing process of manufacturing English as the neutral norm, has been elided and forgotten. Indeed, the political work of over a century of anti-Asian politics and white supremacy in creating English-language use as a social and political marker of superiority has been relegated to historical irrelevance. However, contemporary hierarchies of language use in British Columbia are the legacy of the province's history, renewed and reshaped by the global dominance of English. In fact, the global spread of English is also one of the colonial legacies of the British empire (Phillipson, 1992; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Without taking into consideration the genealogy of the contemporary language hierarchies in the historical development of British Columbia, current debates over language use cannot be adequately analyzed or understood. In Chapter 3, I discuss the relationship between the transformation of British Columbia's policy regarding racial hierarchy and the ongoing anti-Chinese sentiment through Bourdieu's theoretical lens (1977b).

2.3 Multiculturalism Within a Bilingual Framework

For most of Canadian history, until the late 20th century, English-language dominance was both a political policy and a constant implementation as educational practice. In September 1969, the government of Pierre Trudeau enacted the Official Languages Act, which gave equal status to English and French as Canada's official languages (Department of Justice Canada, 2009). Subsequently, in 1971, Trudeau declared in Parliament that Canada would adopt a multiculturalism policy. He announced,

For although there are two official languages, there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other. No citizens or group of citizens is other than Canadian, and all should be treated equally. (House of Commons, 1971, p. 8545)

Since then, Canada has embraced the ideal of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework. But what does it mean to give equal status to all cultures without acknowledging the status of their languages? What are the implications of this policy for language education policies and practices? In particular, how does the acknowledgement of English dominance as a historical legacy that required remedy for Francophone speakers (with the implementation of official bilingualism and, thus, the power of the federal government to enforce bilingualism in the civil service and federal institutions) act in accordance with the lack of acknowledgement of similar or greater effects on other non-English language speakers?

2.3.1 The making of official bilingualism

In this section, I draw on Haque's (2005, 2010) work to demonstrate how the adoption of official bilingualism in Canada erased the history of white supremacy at the same time that it reified its effects. By examining the process of public hearings and the reports of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, Haque showed how the imagining of two "founding races"—English and French—legitimized the white supremacy of Canadian colonialism, erasing the appropriation of land from First Nations even as it redefined all other "ethnic" immigrants as eventually belonging to one of two language groups, either English or French. In tracing the genealogy of the bilingual policy of Canada in the Official Languages Act in 1969, Haque revealed how the conflation of "founding races" and "founding languages" functioned to reimagine Canada as a white settlers' country. Despite the diversity within language groups throughout the colonial and national periods of Canadian history, all language communities that did not speak either English or French were generalized as "other ethnic groups" and positioned as secondary to the two founding races. Indigenous languages were treated as "primitive" in contrast with the "modern" English and French, and were excluded from being recognized as the "founding races" of Canada (Haque & Patrick, 2015).

The Royal Commission claimed that language was a personal choice; therefore anyone could belong to either of the two dominant linguistic groups as they wished. At the same time, they argued that as a result of linguistic integration, Canada had "two classes of citizens, one consisting of Anglophones of British origin and Francophones of French origin and the other of Anglophones and Francophones of other origins" (as cited in Haque, 2010, p. 272).

This matter of personal choice suggested to the authors that this "free choice" resulted in "two classes of citizens"—classes which replicated the original terms of reference divisions with the "two founding races." On one hand the founding races were now termed the "Anglophones of British origin and Francophones of French origin", and on the other hand "other ethnic groups" were now termed "Anglophones and Francophones of other origins. . . . In fact, by retaining the division of the two groups in this way, the hierarchy of race and ethnicity had not been eliminated, but rather had been shifted onto a linguistic hierarchy." (Haque, 2010, p. 273)

By reimagining over a century of coercive language policy (such as the elimination of First Nations languages through residential schooling and the suppression of non-English-language use among immigrant children) as “personal choice” and a seemingly natural process of linguistic integration, the Royal Commission relegated all nonofficial language users to relative irrelevance. Multiculturalism would recognize cultural diversity, but linguistic diversity was enshrined as limited to bilingualism. Haque’s (2005, 2010) analysis reconceptualized Canadian bilingual/multicultural policy, capturing how bilingualism helped legitimate the coercive legacies of white supremacy and Anglo superiority in language. Language policy would become the means to solve national problems of cohesion (e.g., the conflicts between Francophones and Anglophones) while reifying existing racial hierarchies. The elevation of the French to equal status with the English through official bilingualism also expanded the privileges of white supremacy and Anglo racial superiority to the *pure laine* Quebecois⁹ (as members of one of the two “founding races”), relegating all “other ethnic groups” to secondary status. This is an example of *linguicism* (Phillipson, 1992; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000) where language is used as “the means for effecting and maintaining an unequal allocation of power and resources” (Phillipson, 1992, p. 55).

2.3.2 Second language education policy in British Columbia

2.3.2.1 French as a default second language

The national bilingual/multicultural policy of Canada has discursively shaped the provincial educational policy of British Columbia (BC). In the preamble of the province’s language policy, it is written that

The Government of British Columbia recognizes that the province is culturally, linguistically and economically diverse. A language policy must reflect this diversity and respond to the needs of the community. The Ministry of Education, Skills and Training encourages all students to develop language skills which will assist them to live and function more effectively in British Columbia’s ethno-culturally diverse environment and in a bilingual Canada. (BC Ministry of Education, 1997a, p. 2)

The policy of BC emphasizes the value of multilingual resources that reflect the linguistic

⁹ Pure laine (dyed in the wool) Quebecois refers to Canadians whose ancestors are exclusively French Canadians although there has been political discussion surrounding who is “real” Quebecois (see Ha, 2015).

diversity of the community but simultaneously refers to “bilingual Canada” as if two realities existed: multilingualism in BC and bilingualism in Canada (Carr, 2009). BC’s second language education policy reflects this duality (multilingualism and bilingualism) in an interesting way. The BC government requires all students in Grades 5 to 8 to learn a second language. The language curriculum approved by the BC government includes ASL, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Punjabi, and Spanish. This diversity of language options is quite impressive, reflecting some of the existing diversity within BC society. However, there is a clause in the policy that says:

School boards will choose which second languages will be offered. Core French will be the language offered if the Board of Education does not offer an alternative. (BC Ministry of Education, 1997b)

This clause is technically unnecessary because all school boards have the right to choose any of the nine languages. However, in an elusive way, this clause has built a hierarchy between French and other languages: languages other than French are demoted to being an “alternative,” while Core French has been assigned to be the default language to be taught. Indeed, BC policy has followed federal policy in giving special status to French over other languages, including Asian languages, that are not only demographically more common in contemporary BC¹⁰ but also have long histories of use that—in the case of Chinese—predate the province’s confederation into Canada. In a manner parallel to the process outlined by Haque (2005, 2010) for the adoption of federal bilingual policy, the province has continued to imagine itself as part of a white settlers’ nation that elides the racial exclusions of its history. In practice, although a wide variety of international languages were included in the BC curriculum, almost all schools selected French as the default language to teach “because it was easier to find staff and materials for French than for other languages” (Duff, 2008b, p. 84) due, in part, to the generous federal financial support for teacher training and material development. In addition, school boards in BC offer very few bilingual programs in languages other than French compared to the United States or many other parts of Canada. The discourse of official bilingualism shaped BC educational policy in according French special status and creating a linguistic hierarchy of English and French above other

¹⁰ Based on Census Canada 2011, there were 347,345 Chinese speakers and 182,915 Punjabi speakers, while there were only 57,275 French speakers in BC (Statistics Canada, 2012).

languages. In addition, because of the official bilingualism, French has been given more funding and professional development support from the federal government (BC Ministry of Education, 2013). It seems that the long legacy of Asian exclusion and Anglo superiority in BC has been reinforced by the policy of official bilingualism and its practical implications.

2.3.2.2 Target population for early-start Chinese education

The School Board of Edmonton (Alberta) provides early bilingual education programs in seven languages: Arabic, ASL, Chinese (Mandarin), German, Hebrew, Spanish, and Ukrainian. The early Mandarin bilingual program has been running for over 25 years. There are 12 schools (five elementary, four middle, and three high schools) that run the program, with around 2,000 students enrolled in 2013 (Edmonton Chinese Bilingual Association, 2013). In contrast, in Metro Vancouver, until recently Mandarin had been only taught as a second language from Grades 5 to 12, mostly starting from Grade 9, at a very limited number of schools. There was only one school in Vancouver that was originally labeled as a Mandarin bilingual program, offered from Grades 4 to 7, but in reality Mandarin is now only taught in a Language Arts class. Despite the diversity of languages brought to and spoken in Vancouver through the long history of Chinese immigration (e.g., Cantonese, Mandarin, Taiwanese), there has been no strategic plan or policy to enhance or retain such multilingual resources within public schooling.

However, strong lobbying from a parents' group led to the establishment of early-start Chinese programs in several school districts in Metro Vancouver (see next section for the genesis of the parental movement). In 2010, the Coquitlam School Board in Metro Vancouver launched an early-start Chinese bilingual program. The Burnaby School Board in Metro Vancouver also started a Chinese language arts program where students receive Mandarin as a component of language arts approximately 150 minutes per week starting from kindergarten. In 2011, the Vancouver School Board launched an early-start Chinese bilingual program. The program guidelines of these programs offer important perspectives on who is entitled to learn Chinese. For example, when the program launched, the Burnaby School Board website had a "what's new" corner where the school board described its program in the following way:

In the Fall of 2010 the District will be offering a new Mandarin Language Arts Program for students entering kindergarten and grade 1. This program is designed for

students whose first language is not Mandarin. (Burnaby School District 41 Board of Education, 2010a)

On another page that appears after clicking the “for more information” button, the school board claims,

The program is designed for students who:

- ◆ Have strong English oral language skills
- ◆ Will be entering kindergarten or grade 1 in September 2010

(Burnaby School District 41 Board of Education, 2010b)

On the one hand, students whose first language is Mandarin are excluded from the program. On the other hand, students whose oral English skills are not strong enough are excluded from the program as well. After 6 years, the “what’s new” corner no longer exists, and the line that says “whose first language is not Mandarin” has been taken out. However, in the updated program description, they added a new phrase that the program “is an enriching and rewarding opportunity for students to celebrate and appreciate an additional language and culture” (Burnaby School District 41 Board of Education, 2016). By using the term “additional,” together with the phrase “the program is designed for students who have strong English language skills,” which they did not eliminate, the program guideline suggests that the program is not for Mandarin first-language students.

Subsequently, the Vancouver School Board launched an early-start Mandarin bilingual program in Fall 2011. The school board set the guidelines for program registration as follows:

Any child who has little or no prior knowledge of Mandarin, who is a resident of Vancouver, and who is entering Kindergarten or grade one is eligible for the Early Mandarin Bilingual program.

It is important that the students entering the program have adequate English skills since the program will be taught 50% in Mandarin and 50% in English. (Vancouver School Board, 2010)

Similar to the Burnaby program, the Vancouver School Board described the condition of “no prior knowledge of Mandarin” first. Then, it mentioned the necessity of having adequate English proficiency. They claimed that the reason to have English-language skills is because the program will be run 50% in Mandarin and 50% in English. This logic is puzzling in two

ways. First, if 50% of English instruction is the reason to have strong English-language skills, then why is it necessary that children without English-language skills go to regular English-only schools? Second, if 50% of English instruction is a sufficient reason to require English-language skills, why is it that those who have Mandarin-language skills are excluded from the program even though 50% of the instruction will be conducted in Mandarin?

More than five years have passed since the launch of the program, and the program guideline has been slightly modified. Similar to the Burnaby program, they got rid of the “no prior knowledge of Mandarin” phrase. As of July 2016, the guideline says, “the day is structured to allow 50% of time to be in Mandarin: Mandarin Language Arts, Music, Physical Education, and Career and Personal Planning. The program is intended for children who have fluency in English.” In addition, it says, “applicants will be notified as to placement in February. All students are required to participate in an English Language Proficiency assessment, as this program is for children who have fluency in English. The assessment occurs in February prior to confirmation of placement” (Vancouver School Board, 2016).

The guidelines of the two programs in Metro Vancouver show that only English speakers at the age of 5 are given access to Mandarin and the opportunity to gain more linguistic capital. Speaking English at the age of 4 or 5 normally means that one of the child’s parents speak English at home. This excludes many immigrant families where the language spoken at home is not English. Only Anglophones and those who stopped using their heritage languages at home (“the Anglophones of other origins”) are perceived as the ideal language learners for early Mandarin instruction.

The Mandarin bilingual program in Coquitlam is in stark contrast to the two programs. The program guideline says,

Regardless of their first language, the program offers all students the possibility of completing fifty percent of the prescribed B.C. curriculum in Mandarin (Mandarin Language Arts, Math, Health and Career, and P.E.) and 50 per cent [*sic*] of the prescribed B.C. curriculum in English (English Language Arts, Science and Social Studies and Fine Arts). (Coquitlam School District 43, 2016)

However, there is also a line that says, “Students develop their knowledge of other cultures.” Whether this implies Chinese cultures as “other” for the students or simply means diverse

cultures is unknown. Nevertheless, having no requirements for English fluency is encouraging as it shows it is possible to have a Mandarin bilingual program that includes Mandarin speakers.¹¹

2.4 Debates over Chinese Bilingual Education in Metro Vancouver

Strangely enough, the exclusion of Mandarin speakers and English as an Additional Language (EAL) students from language programs is not unique to the school boards. It resonates with the local discourses of the parents' group advocating for Mandarin bilingual education, as well as the public debates seen in newspapers. In this section, I briefly sketch the debates regarding Chinese bilingual education in Metro Vancouver.

2.4.1 Parental advocacy for early-start Chinese bilingual program

2.4.1.1 Overview of the movement

In spring 2008, a group of parents in Vancouver and North Vancouver formed an organization called Mandarin for BC Schools to advocate for early-childhood Mandarin bilingual education in the public school system. The group organized within various areas of Metro Vancouver, with separate chapters representing Vancouver, North Vancouver, Tri-Cities, Burnaby, and Richmond. The group initially advocated for adapting the Edmonton bilingual program model as one of the best-practice models at the beginning of the movement. The Edmonton model evolved over two and a half decades of its existence, but in general it was structured as a two-way bilingual immersion model, with 50% of the school subjects (such as math, physical education, or language arts) taught in Mandarin and the other 50% (such as social studies and history) taught in English. Although the program initially started as a heritage-language program for Cantonese speakers, the Edmonton model came to accommodate students from various backgrounds, with high success reported in the acquisition of both languages among students. A study by J. Wu (2005) showed that the students acquired high command of both English and Mandarin regardless of their background, even if they spoke neither English nor Mandarin when they entered the school.

¹¹ One could speculate that the fact that the Coquitlam bilingual program has been partly funded by the Confucius Institute, an educational institute affiliated with the Chinese government with its mission to promote Chinese language and culture (Steffenhagen, 2012), is related to the difference in the policy from the other two programs in Metro Vancouver. Further research is necessary to understand the reasons behind the difference in the programs.

In addition, the students' performance in the Provincial Achievement Tests of Alberta (all of the achievement tests were in English) showed that the average score of the students from the Mandarin bilingual program was higher than the provincial and the school district average.

In 2008, parents' advocacy in Vancouver for early-start Mandarin bilingual education received widespread attention from both English and Chinese media. Chinese media reported the news as a great opportunity for ethnic Chinese children to maintain and enhance their Mandarin proficiency (e.g., "90 jianting," 2008; "Rexin," 2008). However, as the movement gained momentum, the parents of Mandarin for BC Schools headed in a different direction from those in Edmonton: they decided to exclude Chinese speakers from the movement.

2.4.1.2 Advocating for an English speakers-only program

Initially, some of the parents in the Mandarin for BC Schools movement were Mandarin speakers. By Mandarin speakers, I mean parents who immigrated from Mainland China and who spoke English as an additional language. However, as it became clearer that the leaders of the movement, who were all parents who spoke English predominantly and were pursuing a program that was aimed primarily for children who spoke English as their first language (i.e., their own children), several Mandarin-speaking parents began to question why their children would not be included. The desire of Mandarin-speaking parents for bilingual Mandarin/English education for their children was a featured part of a story broadcast by local Mandarin television news (Din, 2008). In this news story, Chinese speakers argued that attending heritage-language schools once a week was not sufficient to maintain and develop their children's Mandarin ability and that their children needed bilingual Mandarin/English classes as much as English-speaking children.

When asked in English by the Chinese news reporter about the rationale for a target population only of non-Mandarin speaking children, one of the English-speaking leaders of the parents' group explained:

The reason for why the proposal has been for English-speaking children is because the Vancouver School Board does desire that the children have strong English skills for learning second languages. So this program is actually for Mandarin as a second language, not for primarily Mandarin for first language speakers. That's not to say that Mandarin speaking parents can't organize themselves together, and ask for a different program similar to ours. (Din, 2008)

The first sentence (“The reason for why . . . second languages”) and the second sentence (“So this program . . . first language speakers”) are connected with the conjunction “so,” presumably indicating cause and effect with the first sentence being the reason the decision has been made—that is, the program is not for Mandarin speaking children. However, the fact that second language learners are required to have strong English skills does not necessitate the exclusion of Mandarin speaking children from the program. They could, in practice, have strong English skills as bilingual speakers growing up in Canada. Relatedly, the statement that a student learning Mandarin should be able to speak English does not mean that the program has to be a “Mandarin as a second language” (MSL) program, a clever play on “English as a second language” (ESL) that implies that the program is not for ESL learners but for MSL learners. The final sentence (“That is not to say . . .”) is telling, clearly revealing that Mandarin speaking parents were the unwelcomed “other” within this initiative; they should organize something different for themselves that is similar to “ours.” Here, the English requirement as the minimum for learning a second language is used to establish a dichotomy between English speakers and Mandarin speakers. The two groups are mutually exclusive. The possibility that speakers of both languages can learn together is discursively excluded and categorically impossible. This was despite the fact that representatives from the Edmonton program had visited Vancouver and had clearly explained to the parents the long-standing admission of both Chinese and non-Chinese speaking children in their program and how the presence of Mandarin speaking children had not been detrimental but, indeed, had been pedagogically useful (Lindholm-Leary, 2011; Wong & Yee, 2008).

This discursive othering of Chinese speakers by the parents’ group is also present in other sites. For example, the FAQ corner of the parents’ website (Mandarin for BC Schools, 2008) represents what the parents’ group anticipated as important questions to answer surrounding their initiative. The FAQ is presented in dialogic form as a series of 12 questions and answers between the questioner and the responder. For example;

1. What are the subjects to be taught in Mandarin

[Response] In Edmonton's example; Math, Phys Ed, Language Arts could be taught in Mandarin, History, Social Studies, Geography could be taught in English. In a BILINGUAL program, 50% of the subject matter is taught in the target language and

the remaining in English. This ensures that students attain and maintain a high level command of English as well as the target language. (see Appendix for a full version of FAQ).

Here, the responder is positioned rhetorically as a knowledgeable expert on the topic, revealing expertise through the unfolding of this range of sample questions with the dialogue presented as an open arena answering questions from any source.

Throughout the responses to the first ten questions, the B.C. parents' group constructs positive images of bilingual education as a feasible program that leads to high-level command of both English and Mandarin and wider learning opportunities. First, the parents' group positions the Edmonton bilingual program as an ideal example. The Edmonton program is presented as a model that enables the students to gain and maintain high levels of both English and Mandarin. Then, the parents' group claims that Edmonton is happy to share their curriculum, suggesting the feasibility of quickly implementing existing curriculum without having to create it from the scratch. The parents' group further advocates that bilingual programs expand the opportunities and varieties of learning, showing that in the Edmonton model, it is even possible to become trilingual in English, Mandarin, and French.

However, in Question 11, it turns out that the program is not inclusive for everyone but only open to English-speaking households, as it states that "the purpose of this Mandarin bilingual program is to give interested students from English-speaking backgrounds to gain language proficiency an opportunity [*sic*] that they would not otherwise have." The parents' group further claims in Question 12 that the bilingual program would not appeal to Chinese speakers because they would want to learn English.

12. What if the program is overwhelmed with applications from students with Mandarin speaking backgrounds?

[Response] The reality is that this program would most appeal to students from English-speaking backgrounds. Students from Mandarin-speaking backgrounds would most likely be seeking enrolment in English kindergarten/Grade 1 to increase their English fluency. This is proven by the fact that most French immersion students come from English-speaking backgrounds. In the future, if space and staffing permits, students with Chinese-speaking backgrounds could enter the program at various

feeder points depending on their abilities (to be assessed by teachers). (Mandarin for BC Schools, 2008)

The question highlights a sense of fear by a potential applicant that the students of Mandarin-speaking background would dominate the program. The parents' group does not repeat the claim it made in the response to Question 11 (i.e., "the purpose of this Mandarin bilingual program is to give interested students from English-speaking backgrounds to gain language proficiency an opportunity [*sic*] that they would not otherwise have."). Instead, the parents group uses the lack of English skills of the Mandarin speakers as the reason not to include Mandarin speakers in the program. Framing it this way, as if Mandarin speakers would naturally be seeking placement in English-only programs, attributes the exclusion of Mandarin speakers to their desire to be in other English-only programs. There is also the implication that this imputed desire to learn English should be their first priority and should be pursued apart from the English-speaking children who want to learn Mandarin. There is an unstated assumption that Mandarin speakers should, and must, learn English first (with the possibility that they could then join the program later).¹² But as we saw in the news story in the previous section, it was clear that many parents from Mandarin-speaking households did want to have their children enrol in the proposed Mandarin bilingual program, and they did not see their desires for their children to learn English to be in conflict with their children's entry into the Mandarin-English bilingual program.

Despite the fact that students learn both languages in the Edmonton bilingual program, that crucial feature of the program was explicitly ignored when the parents' group referred to the Mandarin speakers. There was an ongoing conflation of Mandarin and Chinese in their argument, with all Chinese speakers generalized into one group as those who are not entitled to learn Mandarin in kindergarten/Grade 1 but who may be allowed to join after several years of learning English. This argument also reproduced the fallacy of language learning that English-only instruction is the best option for children with limited English proficiency, even though decades of research has shown that learning English while maintaining and improving one's mother tongue is more beneficial (e.g., Cummins, 2001,

¹² At the parents' information session I attended, it was clear that the leader of the parents group consulted with the School Board, and after the consultation, the parents' group decided to push for Mandarin as a second language program for children who are fluent in English.

2005; Cummins & Danesi, 1990; De Jong & Howard, 2009; Marian et al., 2013).

In summary, the English-speaking parents leading the BC Parents for Mandarin initiative framed Mandarin language learning as added value for English speakers, creating an idealized bilingual Mandarin/English speaker whose primary language is English. At the same time, they carefully excluded from the proposed program any kindergarten-age children whose primary language was Chinese. Despite the tremendous difference in the dialects of Cantonese and Mandarin, Cantonese speakers were not considered eligible “Mandarin as second language” learners, a category reserved for English-speaking children by the creation of the necessity for “English as second language” learners to first learn English outside of the program. The parents’ discourse reframed Mandarin/English bilingualism not as a desirable goal for all interested Canadians but one limited to English-speaking households. In an odd paradox, the parents’ group positioned Mandarin speakers as the “other” to whom their children would eventually speak someday but who would not be included as a group with which their children should learn.

2.4.2 Public debates on Chinese bilingual education

As the parents’ movement gained traction with the local school boards, local newspapers published a number of articles about the proposed Chinese bilingual program. Since most of the articles were also published online, readers were able to leave comments. Although not a representative sample of readers’ opinions as many readers would not care to spend the extra time to comment, these comments provided a revealing illustration of the discourses about second-language learning described in this chapter. The comments responding to an article from the *Vancouver Sun*, published when one of the school districts of Metro Vancouver announced the launch of their early-start bilingual program (Steffenhagen, 2009), might serve as an illustration for several of the points made in this chapter. The article itself is short, with only minimum information about the school board’s decision to start the Mandarin bilingual program. As of July 2012, three years later, there were 11 comments posted to the article—a relatively small number. But they are nevertheless interesting in how they reflect discursive patterns regarding language use in British Columbia and Canada. Because of the generally dialogic nature of the comment thread (e.g., each reader responding to the previous comments of other readers), I have preserved the order in which they appeared (e.g., if one is a response to another), beginning with the most negative

comments. Whether supportive or not of the program, however, the remarks in general illustrate the contours of discourses about language learning in British Columbia. All misspellings in the comments have been left as they were written.

2.4.2.1 *Negative reactions*

Excerpt 2.1

how sad . . . our country is french and english and now we train our young to speak another language especially when i can be reasonably positive that these students nor their parents speak an adequate level of basic english. (Wall e)

Excerpt 2.2

this is terrible news and very insulting towards me and towards Canada. This is a multi-culturual country, yes, but NOT A CHINESE ONE! The NATIONAL languages of Canada are English and French, and that is it. (mare)

The first comment, by Wall e, that “our country is french and english,” is straightforward in reflecting over four decades of bilingual policy. What is interesting is how this is tied to a statement that he or she can be “reasonably positive” that neither “these students nor their parents speak an adequate level of basic English.” The broad assumption that any student interested in speaking Chinese must be from a non-English-speaking background did not in fact correspond with the majority of the families in the BC Parents for Mandarin group (the parents were overwhelmingly English speakers, as noted above). However, the assumption within the comment that anyone wanting to speak Chinese must be Chinese is clear. The “official languages” of Canada are threatened by any attempt to allow Canadians to speak other languages, let alone teach or learn them.

The prima facie truth of this threat is unquestioned in Mare’s comment as well. Similar to Wall e, Mare is strongly against Chinese bilingual education based upon the rationale that allowing the teaching of Chinese undermines official English/French bilingualism and is equivalent to making Canada a “Chinese” country.

Excerpt 2.3

I cant believe my taxes are going to pay for a language that is not a native one of the country. If you want to speak mandarin goto china . . . in canada you learn english but can take it as an elective. Canada is a weak country with no backbone to allow

something like this. Believe it or not this is a type of racism. What about all the other nationalities that come here are we going to have an immersion program for them too? (I am an immigrant too) Those who believe Canada is a melting pot of nationalities is very misled and has never been out of the Metro Vancouver and Toronto areas. Anywhere outside these cities is mostly white native Canadians and aboriginal peoples. (bman)

Even when the commentator does not specifically refer to Canada's bilingual policy, a discourse of national belonging centered on language use is clear. In contrast to more, bman dismisses the demographic reality of multiculturalism, claiming that outside of the cities of Vancouver and Toronto, the country is "white native Canadians" and "aboriginal people." Bman asserts that the language "native" to Canada is English, acknowledging the existence of "aboriginal" peoples, even as the use of the term "native" for English-speakers suggests that white Canadians are as "native" as those who are aboriginal. The colonial appropriation of aboriginal title and privileges—discursively accomplished with granting white Canadians "native" status—certainly ignores the long history of the suppression of First Nations languages, let alone the seizure of land and resources. But perhaps more pertinent to this chapter's argument, it also establishes the English language as having a prior "native" existence (rather than, for instance, the historical perspective argued in this chapter, that English language dominance still requires a continual and ongoing process of the suppression of other languages). With this rhetorical alchemy of making the "native" out of the non-native, the ongoing process of suppressing languages other than English and French is justified not as an ongoing element of a longer historical process but as a burgeoning threat to the "reality" of an already accomplished "native white" Canada.

In many ways, bman's comments illustrate how bilingual policy merely added French to the long-standing use of English dominance in Canadian nation building and white supremacy. If we were to add the phrase "and French" every time bman used the term "English," the narrative of a "native white Canada" belonging to the "founding races" would create minimal change discursively. The introduction of Chinese language learning threatens the nation by allowing those who speak other languages to retain them. What is remarkable is how bman appeals to the discourses of antiracism, claiming that this threat to "native Canada," through allowing "immigrants" to make English language use "elective," was a

form of “racism” in itself. For bman, allowing Chinese immigrants to retain their language while compelling other immigrants to lose their languages, strangely enough, is a form of “racism” (whether it is against those who already speak English or other migrants who still do not speak English is unclear). All should be made to learn English, without exception. Over a century and a half of English-language policies and racial hierarchies that discriminated against non-whites who did not speak “proper English” is constructed as the foundation of “native” Canada, and the threat from Chinese to “native white Canadians” is turned in a phrase to become a new form of “racism.” The discourse of English/French official bilingualism in shaping the learning of other languages is perhaps most substantively illustrated in Astarte’s comment below, which explicates the consequences for the funding of language learning if languages other than French are taught in BC.

Excerpt 2.4

Here are my concerns about a Mandarin Immersion Program: a) Children learning French (which is mandatory and our other national language) in Elementary and Middle school are being generally taught by teachers who do not speak the language. In many cases the teachers do not even have grade 12 French. We need to look at ensuring that the language programs that already exist are being staffed and funded properly. b) Coquitlam¹³ has a 2 million budget shortfall this year (2009/10), how can they afford to fund this program while at the same time cutting basic services? (astarte)

Asserting a zero-sum game in which the total funding for language learning is in fact shrinking with budget deficits, Astarte does not dismiss the teaching of Chinese with the same directness as the other commentators, only asserting that the teaching of French is done poorly and requires more funding.¹⁴ Grounded in official bilingualism and the necessity of learning the national language of French, any use of resources for teaching languages other than French is inappropriate and further undermines an already ineffective system. Even as Astarte rhetorically appeals to practical considerations, any question about why British Columbia, with its minute number of Francophone speakers, struggles to find French teachers and whether it makes practical sense to allocate scarce resources to teaching a

¹³ A neighbouring school district that had just implemented a Mandarin-English bilingual program.

language so ineffectively is obviated by the discursive commitment to official bilingualism and the status of French as a national language.

2.4.2.2 *Optimism*

The three comments that expressed positive opinions about the program were each revealing about larger discourses about multilingualism within BC and the rhetorical use of practicality and a future “reality” where Mandarin was going to be needed:

Excerpt 2.5

This is wonderful news! We need to prepare our kids for the reality that will be their future! (jana)

Jana’s assertion that Mandarin is the language of the “future”—a relatively novel discourse that arose in BC only in the first decade of the 21st century—and that English-speaking children needed to be prepared for the coming “reality” echoed the narratives used by the BC Parents for Mandarin group to advocate for the Mandarin bilingual program. Presumably, this comment was written by one of the parents in the group. Perhaps, the rise of this discourse—perhaps best captured in a special issue of the *Globe and Mail* on October 23, 2004, titled “China Rising,” which featured a headline written in Chinese characters with English text reading, “If you can’t read this, better start brushing up”—narrates a fear of illegibility and illiteracy for English language Canadians who are unable to understand Mandarin as China has become a global economic power (Duff et al., 2013; Duff, Anderson, Doherty, & Wang, 2015). What is interesting about this discourse in relation to the discourses about Canada as a bilingual English/French nation is the question of just who is implied by the “we” and “our” pronouns in Jana’s comment. Although the discourse of embracing languages such as Mandarin might seem well intentioned and “progressive” in its rejection of monolingualism, or in questioning the practicality of focusing only on the two official languages of English and French, the assumption of who is naturally being referred to with the pronoun “we” is relatively hidden by this seemingly open embrace. Discursively, the “we,” in fact, maps onto the “white

¹⁴ As noted in footnote 14, the Coquitlam program was funded by the Chinese government in the initial setup and continued to receive funding from a Confucius Institute set up in Coquitlam school district (Strandberg, 2015). Therefore, it is not a zero sum game as Astarte argues.

native Canada” presumed by the anti-Chinese commentators. English speakers, rather than those Canadians whose mother tongue is a Chinese language (numbering over 1.12 million nationally in the 2011 census according to Statistics Canada (2015a)), are the presumed “we” and the target audience for the new language programs.

The bounded borders of the “we” are actually shared by most of the commentators, whether negative or positive, toward the proposed Mandarin bilingual program. For instance, wall e’s comment (Excerpt 2.1), mentioned above, that he or she could “be reasonably positive” that in a Chinese language program neither the “students nor their parents” would “speak an adequate level of basic English,” made explicit the fear that the non-English-speaking other who should be learning better English would be the primary proponent and beneficiary of the proposed program. Indeed, “ms” explicitly counters wall e’s claims by stating, “Many supporters of this program are not immigrants but native born Canadians who speak and write fluent English.”

Excerpt 2.6

wall e, how sad that you make comments on those you know nothing about. Many supporters of this program are not immigrants but native born Canadians who speak and write fluent English. Why is it so many are so closed minded about wanting their children to learning new languages be it Mandarin, Spanish, etc. Bman, this is a type of racism? Just because a group has a voice to fight for what they want. If other groups want to do the same then I fully support them. I would simply like to have other options for my children other than French. One of the reason why there is a huge waiting list for French immersion is because that is the ONLY other option for parents. I wonder . . . If this program was offered as another language other than Mandarin would there be such a fuss? (ms)

Similarly, the final comment by “I” expresses the idea that the program is intended for English speakers and not for those who already speak Mandarin.

Excerpt 2.7

Just as for French Immersion, this program will be offered to children whose first language is English. Children who are fluent in Mandarin would not reap the benefits of this program. Somewhat akin to putting a child whose first language is

English is an ESL class. Offering this program is absolutely exciting and will help put our children on equal footing with the rest of the children in the world who are taught a 2nd or 3rd language to a fluent level. (I)

This argument parallels both jana and bman's presumption that Mandarin speakers should primarily be learning only English and should not be provided (in the words of "I") with the "benefits" of Mandarin instruction. Within the discourse of English/French bilingualism, even if half of the class time in the proposed program is in English, this amount of English instruction will not be enough because the other 50% in Mandarin is too much. As "I" provocatively puts it, teaching Mandarin to Mandarin speakers is "akin to putting a child whose first language is English in an ESL class."

The structural equivalence of Mandarin and English instruction in the 50/50 bilingual environment of the bilingual programs in other cities (e.g., the Chinese bilingual program in Edmonton and Calgary, and two-way immersion programs throughout the U.S.)—and the fact that both Mandarin speakers and English speakers would receive the same amount of instruction in each language—is filtered through the discourses of Canadian language policy by both supporters and opponents of the proposed program. The debate over whether Canadians should speak second languages other than French is limited to English speakers. It is considered unquestionable that 50% Mandarin is too much Mandarin and too little English for children whose first language is Mandarin.¹⁵

Both ms's and I's comments, rather than countering the nativism presumed in wall e's comment, in actuality presume the same boundary around who constitutes the "we" of

¹⁵ This resonates with the studies on the language education policy and practices in British Columbia (e.g., Carr, 2009; Mady, 2010). The BC government offers an exemption for certain students from taking a second language course. The students who are exempted from the second language course are those who are "receiving English as a Second Language services and [are] unable to demonstrate their learning in relation to the expected learning outcomes of the second language course" (BC Ministry of Education, 1997b). Therefore, the policy does not exclude all EAL (English as an Additional Language) students, but only those who couldn't demonstrate the expected outcomes. In reality, though, it is often the case that school teachers and administrators exclude many more EAL students (Carr, 2009; Mady, 2010). Both Carr (2009) and Mady (2010) claim that in many cases, the exclusion of EAL students is based on the teachers and schools beliefs about how language should be learned. They believe that one must learn English before starting to learn the second language.

Canada, or at least the readership of the Vancouver Sun newspaper. By insisting that the supporters of the program are “native born Canadians who speak and write fluent English,” ms reiterates rather than repudiates the discourse of threat from non-English speakers. As in the discourse of the BC Parents for Mandarin group, the proposed program will avoid the problem of allowing non-English speakers to continue speaking Chinese through the solution of teaching Chinese exclusively to children who are primarily monolingual English speakers. Ms’s questioning of people who are “close-minded” about learning new languages might seem to be a straightforward critique of the policy of English/French official bilingualism, but strangely enough it leaves intact the core assumption that English-speaking Canadians are the normative “we.” Ms says she wants her children to have choices beyond French immersion. Rhetorically, Ms, like bman, alludes to anti-Chinese sentiments and the history of racism when she poses the question, “I wonder . . . If this program was offered as another language other than Mandarin would there be such a fuss?” Ms’s unstated answer seems to tie the denial of the choice of Mandarin to English-speaking children (including ms’s own) to the existence of anti-Chinese discrimination in BC. However, in asserting the privilege of English speakers—but not Mandarin speakers—to enhance their Chinese language abilities, ms helps reinforce the centrality of Anglophone norms. It is striking that the idealism of the supporters of multilingual education, illustrated so well by “I,” hope that proposed programs such as Mandarin bilingual immersion “will help put our children on equal footing with the rest of the children in the world who are taught a 2nd or 3rd language”—an aspiration aimed not at “immigrant” children who are already in practice more likely to be functionally multilingual (and whose non-English language ability should be suppressed through English-only schooling) but at the English-speaking children who have already been so profoundly shaped into monolingual English use.

2.4.2.3 *Skepticism*

The final set of comments illustrates skepticism about the utility of Mandarin in BC, as well as the practical possibility of Mandarin language acquisition that is at odds with both critics and supporters of the proposed program. Interestingly, such comments evince a realism about language use that is in stark contrast to the comments discussed earlier, which in spite of being either negative or positive are more abstractly ideological in

narrating which languages should be spoken in Canada. This last set of comments shows a theoretical and practical interpretation of language acquisition that is seemingly grounded in Vancouver and British Columbia's demography, as well as an understanding of the challenge that many Asian languages present to English-speaking learners.

Excerpt 2.8

What's the point of incorporating Mandarin when the majority of Chinese in Vancouver speak Cantonese? (Illou)

Illou questions the teaching of Mandarin not because of its lack of status as an official language of Canada but because Cantonese is spoken more than Mandarin in Vancouver. Illou's emphasis upon the practical utility of teaching Cantonese as a means for facilitating better communication in Vancouver is striking in comparison to the discourse of "practicality" used by the BC Parents for Mandarin group about Mandarin language acquisition as a tool for international business and the "future" reality of the global rise of the economy of China. Indeed, Illou's emphasis on both the local context of language use and the linguistic makeup of the community within which students live is almost utterly missing from arguments made in general by the parents advocating for Mandarin instruction. Although it is not clear whether Illou is suggesting that a Cantonese program would allow Anglophones to practice with Cantonese speaking Vancouverites or Cantonese would be a preferred choice of most Chinese speaking households, Illou's comment stands out in comparison to the discourses about language use shaped by Canadian language policy compared to the lack of narratives about Mandarin language learning that are grounded in the demographics of language use in Vancouver.

The practical challenge of Mandarin acquisition for English-language speakers is raised by both "a" and "do be" shown below, who share similar questions about the potential effectiveness of the program.

Excerpt 2.9

For the reasons stated, I think it is a good idea to offer a course in Mandarin . . . or in Cantonese or Japanese or Punjabi. However, aside from French, it is too ambitious for public schools to offer another language as an immersion-type program. I think that it is very misleading to promote an "immersion" experience in other languages because the likelihood of students achieving a reasonable measure

of conversant and written skills within a classroom—semester environment is not realistic. Parents and students alike will be disappointed when their child does not become fluent during their public school sessions. (a)

Excerpt 2.10

You are mistaken if you think that kids will learn Mandarin as quickly and as well as they learn French (and take into consideration that in reality they don't learn French that quickly, neither that well). Mandarin is a language of considerable difficulty and we cannot expect the same outcomes from Mandarin immersion as we do from FI (French Immersion). Thinking that this will put our students on an equal footing with other students around the world is merely wishful thinking. (do be)

Although supportive of multilingualism, they both argue that just having a classroom experience is not enough because Mandarin is such a difficult language for English speakers to learn in comparison to French. In fact, research has shown that it generally requires more hours of instruction for adults English speakers to learn Mandarin (Smith, Chin, Louie, & Makersas, 1993; U.S. Department of State, n.d.). The skepticism evinced by these commentators is insightful, and it is even likely that the comments arise from personal experience or observation. The example used by the BC Parents for Mandarin of the success of the Edmonton public school program also belies such skepticism. The practical difficulty of learning Mandarin, in other words, is also shaped discursively by the poverty of discourses that narrate successful multilingual learning in BC, which itself is reflective of the long-term historical success of English language dominance as a language policy and practice in BC.

Perhaps the comment that best illustrates the ambivalence and paradox contained in discourses about non-English language acquisition in British Columbia was made by “the crow”:

Excerpt 2.11

how about instead of people having to learn mandarin to do business on the bc coast those people that run business just learn the language spoken on the coast and the country. LOL this is a joke (the crow)

At first glance, this statement captures the same sentiments expressed by “wall e,” “mare,” and “bman,” that non-English-language speakers in BC should just learn English. But by using the phrase “people that run business” and then ending with “LOL this is a joke,” the crow introduces the possibility that his/her statement is satire or sarcasm, the common weapon of Internet “trolls” who delight in provoking reactions within discussion boards and comment threads. Is his/her assertion that those who “run business” and who wield economic power should be made to speak English a joke about the futility of the “nativists” such as “wall e” and “mare” in the face of the rising power of Chinese business interests that will someday control BC? The target of the crow’s joke is unclear and most likely deliberately so. Perhaps the joke is on those wanting to do business with the Chinese who think that learning Mandarin will be enough to succeed or whose desire to use language in such a starkly instrumental way is futile.

Within the context of the crow’s “joke,” all of the discourses about language learning explicated in this chapter are thrown into question. Bman’s earlier statement (Excerpt 2.3), that “If you want to speak mandarin go to china,” is potentially turned on its head, framed no longer as a straightforward but archaic rallying cry of white supremacy, calling for the Chinese other to “go home” to China, but as a statement both mocking and capturing the aspirations of Mandarin program supporters who dream of their children learning Mandarin and being successful in business in China and in British Columbia. If you want to go to China to do business, or even if you want to stay in BC to do business, learn to speak Mandarin. The utopian future imagined by program supporters and the dystopic future feared by “native white Canadians” are the same future, with each discursively narrating a different practical path for language learning.

2.5 Conclusion

More than 20 years ago, Cummins and Danesi (1990) argued, If multilingualism is regarded as a valuable asset both for the individual and for the society, then why do so many Canadians vehemently oppose the teaching of heritage languages? Why do many parents who demand that their children be given the opportunity to become bilingual in French and English protest angrily at the fact that their tax dollars are being used to teach the languages of immigrant children? Why is

it appropriate to promote multilingualism in private schools . . . but not in the public school system? Is multilingualism good for the rich but bad for the poor? (p. 2)

They further argued,

The vehemence of the negative reaction to heritage language instruction in the public school system can be understood in the context of the persistence of Anglo-conformity . . . in the minds and hearts of many Canadians. Thus, while “multiculturalism” contributes as surface veneer to Canadian identity, at a deeper level, in English Canada, identity is still largely rooted in Anglo-conformity. The proclamation of “multiculturalism” as both Canadian policy and Canadian identity, while acting as a catalyst for many worthwhile policies and initiatives, has served to obscure the continuing reality of racist assumptions and traditions among a major segment of the Canadian population. (p. 15)

Many years have passed since the exclusion of Chinese students from the public schools in 1907. There have been profound changes brought to Canadian society with the introduction of multiculturalism policy in the 1970s. Immigration from Asian nations has changed the face of British Columbia dramatically since the 1980s. Most notably, in examining the historical and discursive contexts for language learning in British Columbia, the economic rise of China has created new discourses about economic realities and future language needs for English-language speakers. But as Cummins and Danesi (1990) observed more than two decades ago, Canadian society has still not let go of Anglo conformity as the default norm and the boundary around definitions of who “we” are.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Lens of *Habitus* and *Field*

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, I discussed the sociohistorical and political contexts of Chinese language education in British Columbia. From the formation of anti-Chinese legislation in the early 20th century to the bilingual and multicultural legislation in the late 20th century, Canada has changed greatly in how it treats Chinese Canadians in terms of policy. However, I have also discussed how anti-Chinese sentiment is still prevalent in today's British Columbia despite such policy changes. On the one hand, there is a discontinuity of anti-Chinese policies and law. On the other hand, there is the continuity of anti-Chinese discourse. I turn to Bourdieu's (1977b) theory of *habitus* and *field* as a lens to understand the discordance between policy and discourse. As I discuss in Section 3.3, the significance of the concept of habitus is in its emphasis on the embodiment of social structure. In order to illustrate what an embodiment of social structure means within the context of minority language learning in an English dominant society, I will begin with a personal anecdote about raising my children to speak Japanese in Vancouver. By telling a story about how personal struggles and feelings at an individual level can be refractions of larger social processes, I hope to evoke what is a dominant and recurring theme of this dissertation. Social structures register at multiple levels, ranging from institutional forms such as legislative policy down to the embodied feelings of individuals. The constraining effects of habitus are most powerfully felt, however, not in the abstract rules of law and legislation, but in its affective impact on our emotions and desires.

3.2 Understanding My Experience of Bilingual Parenting through Bourdieu

When my first daughter was born, I was determined to speak, read, and write with her exclusively in Japanese and accept her utterances only if she spoke in Japanese, with the hope that she would become fully bilingual in English and Japanese. For about two years, I was quite successful in doing that. I spoke Japanese to her while my husband and other family members spoke English to her. I did not care if there were other people around us who did not understand Japanese; I tried my best to stay with the language. I was determined that I would never let myself drift toward the "easy path" of using English with my daughter. Since I was the person who was taking care of her the majority of time, she had higher

proficiency in Japanese than in English. However, the situation changed as soon as she started going to daycare. One day, only a week after starting daycare, she came home and I overheard her speaking English to her stuffed animals. She had been socializing with her English-speaking caregivers and peers for a week and learning a great deal of English as a result. Nothing bothered me at that point. I was even pleased to see her learning so much already. However, the more English she learned, the more I found myself speaking English with her, despite my intention to speak only Japanese.¹⁶ As a student of bilingual education for more than 10 years, I should have known better than to drift away from my native language. Many parents and scholars that I know have argued that parents should never give up speaking in the minority language no matter what, and I have advised other parents to stick with their language even if it is very hard to do so. My sister, who has been living in Germany, reminded me that several years ago, when her son was a toddler, she asked me if it was okay to speak in German with her son at the playground. My response was, in Japanese, “no, sister. I know it’s hard but please stick with Japanese.” Yet, here I was, unable to stick to that same disciplined choice for myself and my daughters, despite knowing that scholarly studies (e.g., Saunders, 1988; Takeuchi, 2006) and the practical experiences of fellow parents in similar situations supported the advice I had given to my sister. English slipped out of my mouth before I could think. It was my bodily reaction. I admit that to some extent I felt that I should talk to my daughter in English because it would be more useful to her as she was getting used to daycare, even though I knew that in the long run she would benefit greatly from my speaking to her in Japanese (Cummins, 2001; Oh & Fuligni, 2010). I also worried that people around us felt alienated when I spoke to her in Japanese because they did not understand the language. Once I started speaking to my daughter in English when others were around, I felt relief, mixed with some sense of guilt for giving up Japanese (for more examples of Japanese-speaking mothers’ experience in Canada, see Minami, 2013).

I have also found myself switching more often to English at the playground when other parents are around, probably because of the *double consciousness* that I have always had: looking at the world (and at myself) through the eyes of what I perceived as

¹⁶ I have been following the One Parent One Language method that has been commonly used in bilingual parenting, which was first introduced by Dr. Maurice Grammont in 1902. Although the method has been contested recently, it has been advocated as one of the efficient ways to raise bilingual children (Yip & Matthews, 2007).

“mainstream Canadians” despite the fact that I am a Japanese immigrant (cf. Du Bois, 1903/2007). I am conscious not only of being different, but of how my difference might be perceived by the “native-born” Canadians around me. I do not want people to think we are immigrants who have never learned English; I want people to think we are trying to belong here and that we have “fit in.” Quite often, when I am at a cash register with my daughters waiting to pay for my groceries, there would be a group of international students speaking Japanese, Korean, Mandarin or Cantonese, discussing in their languages with each other, for example, which bill is the right one to use. I could see the confused face of the cashier and other people lining up. When it is my turn to pay, I would speak English to my kids rather loudly to show everyone around that I am not like “them.” It is even better if I have my own grocery bags to show that I not only speak English to my kids, but I am also environmentally conscious as a Vancouverite.¹⁷ I am not like “them” who use plastic bags. I cannot control my behavior even though I know I am doing something wrong. This is definitely not the example I want to show my daughters. Why can’t I be proud of speaking Japanese? Why can’t I speak in Japanese with my daughters AND show my grocery bags? By the time I finish paying for my groceries, items whose names are mixed with Japanese (i.e., Japanese rice, tofu), Chinese (i.e., Chinese broccoli) and the *unmarked* products (i.e., milk, pasta, chicken, etc.), I feel sad and pathetic. Indeed, trying to fit in by *othering* East Asian fellow customers has become an unconscious practice, often followed by mixed feelings of regret and superiority, probably a habit that got instilled in me when I lived in Australia as a child. Also, it was connected to my Japanese background in which speaking English was connected to becoming a *kokusaijin* (international person), which is as white as Japanese can be (Kubota, 1998; Mizuta, 2009). Still, I try to speak Japanese with my daughters when I can, although I speak increasingly more English with her. My agency in speaking exclusively in Japanese is seemingly constrained by social pressure, though no one has ever said anything overtly when I was speaking Japanese. The social pressure is not external, but internal. Who knows what the cashier and the people are *really* thinking? Maybe it is all in my head that they looked annoyed at the “Asians.” In many cases, I do not consciously make the choice to speak English in a particular moment—it has become a habit, a matter of unconscious reflex since the first step taken down that easy path.

¹⁷ Being “green” is one of Vancouverites’ identities, in my view.

3.3 Habitus and Field

How can I understand my ongoing dilemma with my daughter's language education? Why is it that I keep failing myself despite all I know about bilingual education studies and all I have been told by my parents and friends about sticking with Japanese? Why do I blame myself that I have not been a responsible parent because I failed to have the discipline to only communicate in Japanese with my daughters? After all, English is my second language, and it requires more effort to speak English than Japanese. Furthermore, nobody told me to speak English to my daughters: My English-speaking husband has been encouraging me to speak to her in Japanese. I should be totally free to make my own choice. Speaking English with my daughters hardly makes any sense. However, if I reflect on my experience through Bourdieu's (1977b) theory of *habitus* and *field*, my failure to speak Japanese to my daughters begins to make sense. For Bourdieu, social structure was not an object that was imposed on human agency, but he understood it as *embodied*, working in and through our dispositions, namely habitus. This theory was developed in his attempt to overcome "the antinomy of objectivism and subjectivism" (Wacquant, 2007, p. 267). While objectivism as represented in structuralism has argued that the objective social structure is foremost what determines individual agency (if there is any), subjectivism as represented in constructivism has taken "these individual representations as its basis: with Herbert Blumer and Harold Garfinkel, it asserts that social reality is but the sum total of the innumerable acts of interpretation whereby people jointly construct meaningful lines of (inter)action" (Wacquant, 2007, p. 267). However, Bourdieu considered this seemingly antinomic relation between objectivism and subjectivism as dialectic and interlinked with each other: they cannot be understood separately. Thus, he developed the theory of habitus and field. Synthesizing and developing the concept of habitus proposed by scholars such as Norbert Elias and Marcell Mauss (as cited in Reed-Danahay, 2004¹⁸) through the work of "Hegel, Husserl, Weber, Durkheim" (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 12), Bourdieu defined *habitus* as follows:

Systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively "regulated" and "regular" without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively

¹⁸ For a comprehensive review of the history of habitus, see Reed-Danahay (2004).

adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor.

(Bourdieu, 1977b, p. 72)

In other words, habitus is a system of dispositions that functions as a generator of human *practice*. By dispositions, Bourdieu means a person's way of living, tastes, characteristics, tendencies, habits, or perceptions. Furthermore, as Reed-Danahay (2004) describes, "for Bourdieu, emotion and feeling are part of the habitus, which is both structured by, and helps structure, systems of power and domination" (p. 102). The dispositions are durable in the way that they are inculcated in the individual's body as if they were second nature. They are transposable in the way that they generate practices that individuals were not aware of when they initially acquired those dispositions. Bourdieu argues that habitus is created and redefined through the life history of individuals in society as they acquire dispositions in particular *fields* in which they are positioned. A *field* can be understood as a structured social arena where individuals are positioned according to the resources, or *capital*, they have:

For Bourdieu (1986), a capital is any resource effective in a given social arena that enables one to appropriate the specific profits arising out of participation and contest in it. Capital comes in three principal species: economic (material and financial assets), cultural (scarce symbolic goods, skills, and titles), and social (resources accrued by virtue of membership in a group). A fourth species, symbolic capital, designates the effects of any form of capital when people do not perceive them as such (as when we attribute lofty moral qualities to members of the upper class as a result of their "donating" time and money to charities). (Wacquant, 2007, p. 268)

The different forms of capital are often convertible, or fungible. For example, those who are economically rich are more likely to receive higher education, and thus gain more cultural capital.

According to Bourdieu, practice is the product of the recursive relation between habitus and fields where individuals seek and struggle to acquire, maintain, or change the distribution of capital or their positions in the field. Metaphoric terms such as *market* or *game* are often used to describe such sites of struggle, with the term *market* often associated with fields where the economic nature of exchange practices most defines how power and

capital are acquired and reproduced. The game metaphor is a telling way of understanding how Bourdieu understands the interplay between habitus, practices, and social hierarchy and often serves as a description of fields where participants consciously or unconsciously accept explicit or implicit rules. In order to win the game, the player needs to have a “feel for the game” (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 66) as well as skills and abilities. However, such senses and skills are unequally distributed among the players. Habitus in the field can be understood as the feel for the game, and capital in the field can be understood as the skills to play the game. If one possesses habitus that match the field, it is highly likely that person will play better than others in that field. Those who do not have the habitus of the dominant group are likely to accept the social order because the idea that the dominant group is superior is inculcated in their bodies, literally, as the lack of the proper habitus required to play the game successfully. From this viewpoint, my speaking English to my daughters at the playground or the grocery store can be understood as my bodily reaction to the feel for the game. It is an example of myself “submitting . . . to the dominant judgment, sometimes in internal conflict and division of self, of experiencing the insidious complicity that a body slipping from the control of consciousness and will maintains with the censures inherent to social structures” (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 39).

However, at the core of these concepts lies the view of society as a site of “contention, not stasis” and “struggle, not ‘reproduction’” (Wacquant, 2007, p. 265). The field is always contested, and it is possible to change the game. Indeed, in *Homo Academicus*, Bourdieu (1988) employed the concept of habitus and field to understand the political and academic transformation that happened in the May 1968 riot at Paris University. Just as games in the fields are subject to change, it is important to note that Bourdieu (1977a, 1977b, 1990a, 1991) claims that habitus is neither a static set of dispositions in one’s life, nor is it unchangingly reproduced from one generation to another. This view of continuity and discontinuity of habitus has impacted language socialization theory in understanding how individuals are socialized through language practices (Duff, 2007; Garrett & Baquedano-López, 2002; Ochs & Schieffelin, 2011). He argues that “the habitus, product of history, produces individual and collective practices—more history—in accordance with the schemes generated by history” (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 54). This historical embeddedness of habitus is crucial. Blommaert (2005) argues,

Bourdieu does emphasize the dimension of durability in anything he says about habitus—habitus as a system of perceiving conditions for thought and action, as a sediment of structure in our agency—but he does so within a *historical*, not a timeless frame. That means he does so within a frame that allows for considerable change, even *within the same synchrony* since different historically grounded forms of habitus may be involved in the same event. Habitus is durable, but not static. In order to understand this important nuance, we need to turn to Bourdieu—the ethnographer. (p. 222)

Although initially fascinated by Lévi-Strauss’s structuralism, it was Bourdieu’s ethnographic experience during his research in colonial Algeria that turned him away from structuralism. He learned that everything had to be understood as a situated practice within the “internal dynamics of social systems” (Blommaert, 2005, p. 227), not within the closed and static structure. He witnessed how dispositions change when the habitus is no longer harmonious with the field. As Wacquant (2007) describes,

Habitus is... a principle of *both social continuity and discontinuity*: continuity because it stores social forces into the individual organism and transports them across time and space; discontinuity because it can be modified through the acquisition of new dispositions and because it can trigger innovation whenever it encounters a social setting discrepant with the setting from which it issues. (p. 268)

Let me apply this idea of habitus as historical to understand today’s Vancouver. The increasing presence of ethnic Chinese in the last 30 years has changed the city in profound ways. Chinese Canadians were banned from becoming lawyers and doctors until 1947. Today, the city has many lawyers and doctors who are ethnic Chinese. In many cases, property owners were bound by a covenant that restricted selling houses to the “orientals.” Today, many houses in Vancouver are owned by Chinese Canadians and more recently arrived ethnic Chinese. But these changes have often been witnessed with mixed feelings by the people who claim Vancouver as their own. There were “Hongcouver” debates over the large number of people emigrating from Hong Kong to Canada in the late 1980s; in the 1990s, “Asian monster house” debates over the houses built by Chinese and South Asians that were perceived to ruin the traditional scenery and neighbourhoods of Vancouver; and the University of British Columbia was called the “University of a Billion Chinese,” with the

connotation that the university is flooded with too many and too-competitive Chinese students (The Vancouver Sun, 2007). These debates often featured emotionally charged comments and opinions. For example, if Asians built large houses, they have been considered “monstrous” because of their size, revoltingly ugly and ruining the scenery, whereas the enormous mansions built by the English and Scottish have been perceived as “heritage” character homes that needed to be preserved as a neo-Tudor reflection of the history of Vancouver. Their large size was not “monstrous.” Habitus, which includes taste, is a telling way to describe such a contradictory reasoning. What we can see here is the discrepancy between the habitus of some Vancouverites and the changes in the field and capital (e.g., wealthy Chinese bringing in their economic capital, becoming the major developers and consumers of luxury homes and condominiums in the city). I would argue that the analytical power of the concept of habitus and field is that it allows us to understand both reproduction and transformation as temporal states of ongoing struggle and contention. The anti-Chinese sentiment in Vancouver, as well as the changes the city has experienced in the last 30 years, can be understood as the product of the relationship between habitus and fields.

3.4 Language Ideology and Symbolic Violence

Language activity is also a form of practice, which is generated through the relation between linguistic habitus and field. Linguistic habitus comprises a system of dispositions, which in relation to the field, generates one’s utterances or expectation of the value of one’s linguistic capital. According to Bourdieu (1977a, 1977b, 1991), language activities can also be understood as economic exchange because all language activities happen in certain fields where some people have more linguistic capital than others. That is, some people can produce or engage in linguistic practices in a way that is highly valued in a particular field, whereas others cannot. The value of one’s linguistic habitus depends on its relation to the officially sanctioned standard language. For a particular language or dialect to be imposed as a legitimate language, it is necessary to have a unified linguistic market in which other languages and dialects are devalued against the legitimate language. To realize such a linguistic market, it is crucial that institutions such as schools and political organizations reproduce the power of dominant language. As a result, certain languages are given legitimacy through shared belief, myth, and misconception by both those who have linguistic

capital and those who do not. Indeed, a dominant language is legitimized through the misrecognition of both the dominant group and the subordinate group. Bourdieu uses the term *misrecognition* because there is no intrinsic value or superiority in the official language, but individuals are made to believe in its superiority. The symbolic value of the official language is rarely questioned, and it is taken for granted. Bourdieu (1991) argues:

The legitimacy of the official language has nothing in common with an explicitly professed, deliberate, and revocable belief, or with an intentional act of accepting a “norm.” It is inscribed, in a practical state, in dispositions which are impalpably inculcated, through a long and slow process of acquisition, by the sanctions of the linguistic market, and which are therefore adjusted, without any cynical calculation or consciously experienced constraint, to the chances of material and symbolic profit which the laws of price formation characteristic of a given market objectively offer to the holders of a given linguistic capital. (p. 51)

The legitimacy of a particular language is inculcated in our bodies as we interact in a particular linguistic market. Legitimacy becomes commonsense and perceived as natural. Such perceived natural legitimacy is what Bourdieu calls *symbolic power*.

The legitimization of a certain language, or the creation of standard language, is also a process of normalizing certain linguistic habitus. Bourdieu argues that the dictionary is “the exemplary result” (1991, p. 48) of such normalization of linguistic habitus. He views educational systems as a major mechanism for the “construction, legitimization, and imposition of an official language” (1991, p. 49). By placing a standard form of written language as superior to conversational spoken language and dialects, and by imposing this hierarchy of language use in everyday practices at school, the symbolic power of the standard form will be inscribed in the students of both dominant and dominated groups. Accordingly, students who have the linguistic habitus that matches the standard language will gain more symbolic capital than those who do not. Those who do not have the linguistic habitus that matches with that dominant habitus in the given field will be repeatedly and constantly intimidated through correction. This is a form of *symbolic violence*, and Bourdieu argues that such feelings of intimidation become inscribed in the linguistic habitus of the subordinate group. The term dominant and dominated may give the impression that his argument of linguistic habitus and capital does not concern today’s Canadian society where

class stratification is vague. But as history shows (see Chapter 2), English became one of the official languages of Canada precisely because the British became the dominant group of the society through colonialism. The dominance of English in Canada is a great example of symbolic violence. The dominance of English—the street names in English, the school names in English—became part of the “natural” landscape of Canada, and those who initially did not have the “right” habitus strove to gain it. However, habitus is bodily inscribed dispositions that are durable. For example, habitus endures inside our bodies in the form of accent. Therefore, even though a non-English-speaking person makes the investment to gain the linguistic capital (English), it is not easy, and may be impossible, to qualify from the point of view of dominant society (i.e., unmarked accent). Studies have repeatedly shown that in North America, people who speak English with an accent, typically spoken by non-West Europeans, are discriminated against in the workplace and at school (Blommaert, 2009; Lippi-Green, 2012; Munro, 2003). The Multicultural Policy, the Charter of Human Rights, and other legal agreements declare that Canadian society strives to be a nondiscriminatory society, but discrimination against English with a marked accent has not ended.

The symbolic power of language is closely related to the concept of what is called *language ideology*. A number of studies have focused on language ideologies—the attitudes and beliefs associated with language and language use, and the role and status of language (Blommaert, 1999; Woolard, 1992; Tollefson, 2000)—as constituted by and constitutive of the unequal power relations in the society (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). However, I must emphasize that Bourdieu tried to move beyond the concept of ideology, especially as the term ideology connotes Marxist structuralism that presupposes the dichotomy between structure and human agency. Indeed, the purpose of developing social constructs of habitus and field was to overcome the antinomy—the opposing beliefs that contradict each other—between objectivism and subjectivism. While ideology in the Marxist tradition can be defined as “false ideas that legitimate a dominant political power” (Eagleton, 1991, p. 1), the term “ideology” has not yet settled with a single definition as Eagleton shows in his at least six different definitions of ideology. An extended concept of Marxist ideology developed by Althusser (1971) did look at how ideological state apparatuses (e.g., school, family, or mass media) influence individual consciousness and thus reproduce power. In fact, Eagleton argues that Althusser’s concept of ideology is not only confined to consciousness but

“alludes in the main to our affective, unconscious relations with the world, to the ways in which we are pre-reflectively bound up in social reality” (p. 18). However, as Bourdieu argued in his conversation with Eagleton (Bourdieu & Eagleton, 1992), Bourdieu had deliberately avoided using the term ideology and “tried to substitute concepts like ‘symbolic domination’ or ‘symbolic power’ or ‘symbolic violence’ for the concept of ideology” because the concept of ideology has “very often been misused or used in a vague manner” (p. 111).¹⁹ As I agree with Bourdieu’s concern and acknowledge the usefulness of his concepts of symbolic power and violence (when understood together with his concepts of habitus and field), this study was an attempt to analyze Chinese Canadian parents’ stories through Bourdieu’s social constructs while minimizing the use of the term ideology following his footage.

While the significance of Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic power is that he noticed the significance of prereflexive bodily reaction in social reproduction, it is crucial that symbolic power is always understood as ethnographic, situated in practice. The symbolic power attached to a particular language is constantly practiced through symbolic violence—“the subtle imposition of systems of meaning that legitimize and thus solidify structures of inequality” (Wacquant, 2007, p. 264)—willingly or unwillingly accepted by the subordinate group. Simultaneously, Wacquant argues, “these hierarchies can be challenged, transformed, and overturned” (p. 264). What lies at the core of Bourdieu’s thought is “contention, not stasis—struggle, not ‘reproduction’” (Wacquant, 2007, p. 265).

3.5 Heritage Language Education through Bourdieu’s Lens

Although Bourdieu argues that not all practices are reducible to an economic logic, several scholars (Dagenais, 2003; Heller, 2000; Woolard, 1992) have pointed out that his language theory does not explain in depth why some people learn nonprestigious languages (i.e., heritage languages that are not valued in the mainstream society). Heller (2000) argues that language as a form of symbolic capital not only refers to the power of the dominant language or the economic value of the language, but also to the minority languages through which minority communities strengthen their solidarity and their diasporic identities, capitalize on their hybridity, and resist marginalization. Norton (2000) posits that language

¹⁹ In addition, Bourdieu (1992) articulated his problem with “the aristocratic thinking of Althusser” (p. 113) in which “the true knowledge” is only available to theorists (p. 113).

learning should be viewed as an *investment* by learners (or in this case, their parents) in “symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital” (p.10). In other words, even a minority language that has no institutional power in the society can possess both symbolic and material value for linguistic minorities.

I would argue, however, that from my interpretation of Bourdieu, such symbolic value for a minority language does not equate to symbolic capital for the minority language in the same sense as for the dominant language.²⁰ For Bourdieu, symbolic capital and symbolic power always function to maintain the dominance of a particular group. It is important not to confuse this point; minority language as a form of cultural capital does not by itself lead to symbolic power in the dominant market. Using the term *symbolic* in the heritage language learning context might be somewhat misleading because Bourdieu clearly uses the term when analyzing the maintenance of dominance. However, Norton’s (1997, 2000) concept of investment which drew on Bourdieu’s concept of language and economic exchange enables us to make connections between the linguistic markets of heritage communities and the linguistic market of mainstream society.²¹ According to Norton, learners’ investment in learning a language is strongly related to the concept of *imagined communities* and *imagined identities*.

For many learners, the target language community is not only a reconstruction of past communities and historically constituted relationships, but also a community of the imagination, a desired community that offers possibilities for an enhanced range of identity options in the future. An imagined community assumed an imagined identity, and a learner’s investment in the target language can be understood within this context. (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 415)

As Meredith (2014) posits, “imagined” does not mean that a community or an identity is not “real” but “it extends beyond the here and now to include desired and future identity and community possibilities” (p. 218).

²⁰ Heller (2000) observes for example, in a small town of Southern Ontario, bilingualism is required for “lowest-paid front-line” (p. 12) jobs but it becomes less important in the higher positions. In addition, the variety of French spoken by the local Francophones is not valued by the company because they do not speak standard French.

²¹ We can add the globalized market to this argument too as English has become the de facto lingua franca in the world while Mandarin has increasingly become more powerful than Cantonese in the global market.

Therefore, it might be understood that those who succeed in maintaining their heritage language do so because they perceive the value of the language even within the dominant linguistic market, whether as a way to bolster identity to resist marginalization or to access community networks that require competence in that minority language. In contrast, the failure to maintain one's heritage language, which has been common in Canada (Cummins & Danesi, 1990; Fillmore, 1996; Guardado, 2002; Kouritzin, 1999; Park, 2013), could be the result of not perceiving the value of the heritage language in the mainstream linguistic market, or perceiving its value to lie only in the nonmainstream heritage linguistic market (such as that of family and relatives and ethnic enclave communities). As a result, the heritage language learner places less value on participating in that heritage linguistic market because the dominant linguistic market (i.e., English) is more important or perceived to be more rewarding for him or her.²² However, such a take on investment positions heritage language learners as if they had control over the decisions they have made. Why, despite my conscious choices to maintain the Japanese language for my daughters, do I keep failing myself? The concept of investment entails a danger to reduce every decision based on desires and conscious choice made by individuals when in fact Bourdieu's (1991) concept of capital denies the reduction to conscious calculation. As Thompson (1991) elaborates:

While agents orient themselves towards specific interests or goals, their action is only rarely the outcome of a conscious deliberation or calculation in which the pros and cons of different strategies are carefully weighed up, their costs and benefits assessed, etc. To view action as the outcome of conscious calculation ... is to neglect the fact that, by virtue of the habitus, individuals are *already predisposed* to act in certain ways, pursue certain goals, avow certain tastes, and so on. (p. 16)

While the updated version of investment proposed by Darvin and Norton (2015) includes ideology and habitus as constitutive of investment, it still frames learners' desire to be part of

²² At the playground where I often take my daughters, located inside the university campus, I see many young children speaking Chinese with each other. At the same time, I hear and read episodes about non-Chinese-speaking people getting angry with those people who are speaking Chinese to each other on the street or on the bus. And as I mentioned earlier, I myself switch to English in public. These phenomena can be explained through Bourdieu's concept of habitus and field.

the “imagined community” as an unproblematic practice that gives learners the agency to negotiate their identity:

What learners desire can also be shaped by habitus; however, it is through desire that learners are compelled to act and exercise their agency. Whether it is because learners want to be part of a country or a peer group, to seek romance, or to achieve financial security, learners invest because there is something that they want for themselves. (p. 46)

This notion of investment based on an optimistic version of imagined community and desire may explain many kinds of investment. However, does this explain heritage language loss? This is a recurring question that I explored in the analysis of parents’ stories from Chapter 5 onward.

3.6 Identity in Chinese as a Heritage Language (CHL)

Several scholars have addressed the importance of identity construction and negotiation, with a particular focus on Chinese as a heritage language (CHL) (Curdt-Christiansen, 2014; Duff, 2014; Francis et al., 2014; Hancock, 2014; He, 2004b, 2008b; D. Li & Duff, 2008, 2014; W. Li & Zhu, 2014; Tse, 2000a). For example, He (2008b) “locates identity as the centerpiece rather than the background of heritage language development” (p. 110) and suggests an *enrichment hypothesis*, *multiplicity hypothesis*, and *transformation hypothesis* as the identity dimension of CHL development. The enrichment hypothesis suggests “the degree of success in CHL development correlates positively with the extent to which the learner has created a niche (linguistic, social, cultural) in the English-speaking community” (p. 117). The multiplicity hypothesis suggests “the degree of success in CHL development correlates positively with the ease with which the learner is able to manage differences and discontinuities presented by multiple speech roles in multiple, intersecting communities” (p. 118). Finally, the transformation hypothesis refers to the learner’s motivation to “inherit heritage practices” as well as “transform the speech community” (p. 118).

Similarly, the study by Francis et al. (2014) shows that highly motivated CHL learners in Britain were able to tie learning Chinese with their identity as Chinese British. When asked for the reasons to learn Chinese, many CHL learners in their study simply responded that it was because they were Chinese. They also displayed a sense of shame and

embarrassment if they failed to learn Chinese as Chinese proficiency was perceived as “the key signifier of Chinese identity” (p. 216). It is interesting to note that these students also tied the importance of knowing Chinese and their identity with their “embodied ‘race’” (p. 213) using the *banana* metaphor of being yellow outside but white inside. The students understood the intertwining relationship among language, race and identity through normalcy, appropriateness and correctness. Therefore, if you look Chinese, it was important to speak Chinese because it signifies your “‘correct’ ethnic identity” (p. 213). On the other hand, Chinese British youth who had limited Chinese proficiency rooted their Chineseness in their familiarity and affinity with their Chinese cultural practices such as food, family gathering and seasonal festivals, and displayed their hybrid identities as Chinese and British. These students’ accounts of the relationship between language and identity resonate with Ang’s (2001) autobiographical work on her dilemma as Peranakan Chinese²³ who did not learn to speak Chinese. As her family migrated to the Netherlands, and later as she moved to Australia, she has suffered from the discrepancy between her perceived identity as Chinese and her multilingual repertoire (i.e., Bahasa Indonesia, Dutch and English) that did not include Chinese. In other words, her multilingual repertoire did not signify her “correct” ethnic identity: therefore she was labeled as “fake Chinese” (p. 30). She maintained that Chineseness should not be essentialized or equated with speaking Chinese but should be seen as a hybrid and complex identity that encompasses transnational identities developed across time and space.

Indeed, as case studies of CHL learners show (e.g., D. Li & Duff, 2008, 2014), CHL learners in Canada are incredibly diverse in terms of the country of origin, dialects, transnational histories and the language socialization trajectories. Heritage language (HL) learners’ motivation is “inextricably linked with learners’ identities (past, present, and future)” (D. Li & Duff, 2014, p. 233), and learners’ identities “must be seen as dynamic, multiple, situated, and diverse” (D. Li & Duff, 2008, p. 27). D. Li and Duff posit that it is crucial that HL educators understand HL learners’ ambivalence towards their multiple identities and their complicated relationship with the heritage language as a result of their trajectories

²³ Peranakan Chinese refers to Chinese descendants who were born and raised in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia.

related to being positioned favorably or unfavorably by their family, peers, and heritage communities, as well as by the mainstream society.

Parents' investment in their children's CHL learning also involves issues surrounding identity. Several studies have shown that parents' desire to pass on the Chinese language was based on the idea that the language is an integral part of their children's Chinese identity (e.g., Chik, 2010; Curdt-Christiansen, 2003, 2014; Hancock, 2014). Parents in these studies often tied the idea of not speaking Chinese with shame for not being a "real" Chinese (Chik, 2010; Curdt-Christiansen, 2003, 2014; Duff, 2014; Hancock, 2014). Some parents hoped that by knowing Chinese, their children would develop "feelings of affinity toward and acceptance of" their Chinese ethnicity (Chik, 2010, p. 129). However, Chik's study on Chinese American heritage language learning and loss shows that these desires of parents are often rejected by their children as they insist they are American, not Chinese American, and refuse to learn Chinese despite their parents' fear that without knowing Chinese, their children will be completely "lost" and become "white" (p. 127).

While I agree that identity construction and negotiation are certainly important aspects of heritage language learning, I would argue that Bourdieu's concept of habitus and field enables us to look beyond the principle that language learning is an investment and identity negotiation that implies some sort of conscious, reflective, interactive and strategic practice. In addition, with the postmodern trend to view identity as fluid, dynamic, hybrid and multiple, there is a danger that we are left with a free-floating, vague idea of identity (Davey, 2009; Speller, 2008). My using English with my children in front of the cashier to fit into Canadian society while othering Japanese, Korean and Chinese students—the racialized others that I belong to—may easily be analyzed as "performing fluid and hybrid identity" as if I were willingly choosing which language to speak from my linguistic repertoire. I may even be celebrated as somebody who is able to "negotiate" her identity depending on the context she is situated in. Such analysis is not only naïve as it overlooks the symbolic violence, but is also offensive. Indeed, Kubota (2014a) warns, "while notions such as hybridity, fluidity, and multiplicity are potentially liberating, they can obscure actual struggles and inequalities" (p. 17). Liberating perhaps for researchers, but not for their subjects who have to experience this every day, everywhere. At least, to me, there is nothing liberating about it because I know by reproducing English dominance, I have undermined

who I am and who my daughters could be: quite the opposite of liberating. To avoid falling into such obscurity of inequalities, I take Davey's (2009) suggestion of looking at identity through the lens of habitus:

If habitus is to be of most use, then, it is in reminding us of the subjective dimension of social class, as individuals' embodiment of structures beyond the labels affixed to them. It is here we see most clearly the distinction between what habitus offers and the more agency-focused concept of "identity." . . . In giving primacy to active identity construction we risk attributing too great a capacity to agency, as if individuals are free to try out different identities. Habitus fastens the subject more firmly to social structures, and habitus can be seen as generating classed practices linked to where groups of individuals are positioned through similar stocks of economic, cultural and social capital. (p. 287)

However, this is not to say that our identity is fixed, and that our future is limited to fate. As I mentioned earlier, habitus is subject to change and transformation as we face discordance with the new field throughout our life. However, the concept of habitus brings the importance of historical continuity to the idea of identity. Speller (2008) describes the relationship between habitus and identity as follows:

We need not fall from the false tangibility or substantialism of the biographical illusion into a vague post-modern notion of "fluid identity." Bourdieu's theory of *habitus* explains the continuity through change and change through continuity that best describes the transformations that occur as agents travel along their *social trajectories*—understood as a series of positions successively occupied by the same agent in social space As our positions change, as we 'socially age' (an aging which inevitably accompanies but is relatively independent of biological aging), we develop different interests, lifestyles and consumer practices, even manners of speech and dress. In short, we conform to the social and economic conditions that correspond to each position on our trajectory.

There is continuity, however, that runs through all our position-takings, although it is not the same as a consciously adhered to rule or intention. The embodiment of our social position, our habitus tends to reproduce the conditions in

which it was produced through its actions, adjusting our expectations, tastes, ambitions, sympathies and antipathies to our life chances and opportunities. (pp. 2-3)

I believe the interrelations among habitus, capital and field adds further insight to our understanding of the difficulty of developing one's heritage language within particular fields where the hierarchies of historical language dominance have shaped the embodied dispositions of individuals, such as is illustrated by my narrative about my daughters illustrates. Therefore, in my study, I looked for a research method that could capture the continuity and discontinuity of one's habitus and its relationship with capital and symbolic violence in the field in which one is positioned. In the following chapter, I discuss the methodological approach of this study, namely life history research.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Research—like life—is a contradictory, messy affair. Only on the pages of “how-to-do-it” research methods texts or in the classrooms of research methods courses can it be sorted out into linear stages, clear protocols, and firm principles. (Plummer, 2011, p. 195)

4.1 Introduction

This dissertation is a multiple case study of the life histories of Chinese Canadians’ struggles, resistance, aspirations and dilemmas regarding learning Chinese and passing on the language to the next generation. The cases consist of 10 parents from two groups of Chinese Canadians who reside in Metro Vancouver: the first group consists of parents who were either born in Canada or immigrated before the age of 4, and the second group consists of parents who immigrated to Canada in their adulthood from Mainland China, Taiwan or Hong Kong. All participants are parents with aspirations and desires for their children to learn Chinese languages, whether Mandarin, Cantonese or Taiwanese. Parents in the first group share a similar linguistic background in that they all speak English predominantly although they were taught Chinese in their childhoods from their parents, grandparents or at Chinese language school. On the other hand, parents in the second group speak Chinese (Cantonese or Mandarin) most comfortably, and they speak Chinese to their children at home.

Chinese Canadians who are invested in their children’s CHL education are incredibly diverse in many aspects (e.g., immigration status, first language, country of origins, economic status, etc.). Among many variables, the reason why I particularly chose to categorize the cases in two groups depending on their dominant language and immigration status stems from my observation and analysis of the Mandarin bilingual program movement in Metro Vancouver. As I showed in Chapter 2, parents have been divided between Chinese speakers and English speakers, and the language status which often reflects the immigration status has become a crucial factor in determining the availability of resources in learning Chinese. In order to understand the shaping of Chinese as a heritage language in Canada—that is Chinese Canadians’ trajectories, investments, struggles and desires regarding the Chinese language, which also address structural issues and problems of CHL education in

Canada—it was crucial that I understand CHL from both perspectives: Chinese Canadian parents who were raised in Canada and spoke English as their dominant language and who were recent immigrants from Chinese speaking countries who spoke Chinese predominantly. In addition, the method had to enable understanding the parents’ experience not as a new separate phenomenon but within the historical continuity. Therefore, I framed my research questions as follows and linked them to the notion of timescales, described in Section 4.6:

Research Question #1 What are the trajectories of English-speaking Chinese Canadian parents’ (Group 1) attitudes, feelings, perceptions and practices regarding CHL from childhood to parenthood? (Timescale One)

Research Question #2 What are the recurring problems and issues regarding CHL learning in Canada that were addressed in both Group 1 parents’ stories of childhood experiences and Group 2 parents’ stories of contemporary Canada? (Timescale Two)

Research Question #3 What are the differences and similarities between Group 1 parents and Group 2 regarding their desires, challenges and obstacles in raising their children to be bilingual? (Timescale Three)

The analyses of RQ 1 and 2 will be situated in the long history of Chinese immigration to Canada to address the over-arching research question, **“How can we make sense of Chinese Canadian parents’ stories regarding Chinese language education when we situate the stories and analyses of RQ 1 and 2 within the long history of Chinese in Canada?”**

4.2 Defining Life History Research

To address my research questions, I have employed life history research as the main method of this study. Life history research, which originated in sociology and anthropology, focuses on the life experiences of ordinary people (Chase, 2005; Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Kouritzin, 2000; Langness & Frank, 1981). Following the narrative turn in the social sciences²⁴, scholars in the second language education field started paying much more

²⁴ The *narrative turn* across human sciences took place in the 1960s reflecting the development of narratology (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Kreiswirth, 2005). Stemming mainly from French structuralism and semiotics, narratology set out goals such as discovering universal elements of internal structure in narratives and identifying and analyzing the grammars of different narrative genres. These narrative theories quickly migrated beyond narratology, and became popular tools of research across the human sciences in the 1970s. For example, in history, Hayden White’s (1973) *Metahistory* was groundbreaking as an

attention to second language learners' (L2) subjective accounts of their learning, and learners' diaries and journals became popular in the 1980s as a way to understand the process of second language learning (Pavlenko, 2007). More recently, biographic interviews and narratives as a means to understand linguistic trajectories and identity development of L2 learners, immigrants, and linguistic minorities have become popular among applied linguists and language educators (e.g., Benson, 2011; Benson, Barkhuizen, Bodycott, & Brown, 2013; Barkhuizen, 2014, 2015; Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2014; Bullough, 1998; Casanave, 2012; Casey, 1993; Čmejrková, 2003; Curtis & Romney, 2006; Duff et al., 2013; He, 2008b; Heinz, 2001; Hinton, 2001; Kanno, 2003; Kouritzin, 1999; Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001; D. Li & Duff, 2008, 2014; Mkhonza, 1995; Nekvapil, 2003; Ochs & Capps, 2001; Pavlenko, 1998, 2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2007, 2008; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000; Takei, 2015; Tse, 2000b; Vitanova, 2004, 2005).

Kouritzin's *Face[ts] of First Language Loss* (1999) is of particular relevance to the present work not only because she focused on heritage language loss but also because she explicitly situated her work within the tradition of life history research. It is a life history multiple-case study aimed at understanding the process and effects of minority first language loss from an emic perspective. She claimed that the existing studies on language loss had mainly focused on the linguistic aspects, which tend to look at first language loss as impersonal, painless events that naturally happen over generations. Drawing on Wong Fillmore (1996), however, Kouritzin argued that language loss is a deeply personal event that has both direct and indirect impact on personal, familial, and social relationships. Language loss is neither a neutral nor a natural event because one's linguistic environment is deeply related to the language ideologies of the particular sociocultural contexts in which one interacts with others. In order to fill this research gap, Kouritzin chose life history as her research methodology, enabling her to capture the discursive process and effects of first language loss, and the "intersection between language, identity, culture, and marginalization" (p. ix) from the participant perspective. Since Kouritzin made this argument, narrative

analysis of how generic structures of emplotment in 19th century European histories were ideologically informed, sparking a generation of structural analyses of historical narratives. In sociolinguistics, Labov and Waletzky (1967/1997) put forward a structural framework for narrative analysis based upon their coding of a large corpus of narrative data.

research that focused on the emic perspectives in language teaching and learning (LTL) has become increasingly popular and common in the past 15 years, used by different scholars with varying epistemological stances (Barkhuizen, 2014). Barkhuizen (2014) argues:

Perhaps it is true to say that since narrative research has emerged only relatively recently in LTL (research, that is, which is explicitly framed as narrative), it is still in the process of coalescing as a visible and legitimate research approach. I would argue that this creates a convenient opportunity for researchers to explore narrative work more freely without the constraints of prescriptive methodological parameters and to begin to locate themselves and their practice within the possibilities that narrative research has to offer. (p. 451)

Following Barkhuizen's suggestion to explore the possibilities of narrative studies, in this chapter, I would like to outline how I "appropriate" narrative research in my study as I particularly draw on life history research. First, how does life history research differ from other forms of qualitative methods that focus on the narratives of the participants? There is much confusion among different terms such as *narrative*, *life history*, *life story*, *personal narrative*, *oral history*, *testimonial*, and *performance narrative*, and indeed, the distinctions are blurry with little consensus as they all honor individuals' life experience, and their subjective views (Chase, 2005; Cole & Knowles, 2001; Denzin, 1989; Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995). While attempting "to make a distinction can become a semantic exercise" (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p. 19), the significance of life history research is in its emphasis on historical and political context of the narratives (Cole & Knowles, 2001; Goodson & Sikes, 2001). In discussing the difference between life history research and narrative research, Cole and Knowles (2001) argue:

We think of life history research as taking narrative one step further; that is life history research goes beyond the individual or the personal and place narrative accounts and interpretations within a broader context. . . . Whereas narrative research focuses on making meaning of individuals' experiences, life history research draws on individuals' experiences to make broader contextual meaning. (p. 20)

Similarly, Goodson and Sikes (2001) argue,

The distinction between life stories or narratives and life histories is, then, a crucial one. By providing contextual data, the life stories can be seen in the light of changing patterns of time and place in testimony and action as social constructions (p. 17).

As the purpose of my study is to interpret individuals' accounts about their heritage language learning experiences in the social, historical, and political contexts of those who have lived with positionalities specific to Chinese Canadians in Canada, I position this study as life history research.²⁵ It is also important to note that, as Plummer (2001) argued, life history need not always be a story of one's whole life, but can be partial, focusing on a particular topic or event.²⁶

4.3 Bourdieu and Personal Narrative/Life History Interview

As my theoretical framework heavily draws on Bourdieu's (1991) complex constructs of habitus, capital and field, as reviewed in Chapter 3, I believe it is important to understand his methodology for understanding habitus, capital and field. Bourdieu has relied heavily on personal narratives in his studies as he constantly claimed the importance of ethnographic understanding in research (Bourdieu, 1977b, 1988; Blommaert, 2005). He quickly abandoned ethnology and structuralism as his ethnographic experience in the military battles in colonial Algeria contradicted the ethnocentrism that ran at the heart of structuralist research at that time (Blommaert, 2005). What Bourdieu meant by ethnography, however, was different from what is generally understood in North America. Reed-Danahay (2004) describes Bourdieu's research methods as follows:

Bourdieu did not use conventional (at least in British and American circles) anthropological methods of conducting "fieldwork" that involve immersion in a particular locale (or "community") for long periods of time, methods that frequently are used to uncover cultural distinctiveness. He did some ethnographic observations in his work, but mostly used open-ended or semi-structured interviews, with a goal of

²⁵ While I use life history research to refer to this study in terms of research design, I will use the phrases life stories, life histories, narratives, or stories interchangeably to refer to the accounts of my research participants.

²⁶ The idea that life history research aims at connecting one's personal life experience with the larger society can be better understood if we situate life history as a particular kind of case study (Kouritzin, 2000; Duff, 2008). Palmer (2010) notes, "Individual life histories are, by their nature, case studies par excellence" (p. 528).

uncovering universally valid principles such as the operation of the habitus, with an emphasis on social class, rather than “cultural” differences. (p. 129)

She reviews Bourdieu’s collections of work and argues that his use of “extended personal narratives and life history narratives goes back as far as his earliest research in Béarn and Algeria during the late 1950s and early 1960s” (Reed-Danahay, 2004, p. 130), which predates the narrative turns in social sciences.²⁷ He treated narratives in Béarn as what Reed-Danahay (2004) calls autoethnographies, which “reveal the subjective experiences of persons in times of change, what Bourdieu called *hysteresis*, where there is no longer a harmony between habitus and structure” (p. 130). Unlike Bertaux (1981a), another French scholar whose interest in life stories was to collect people’s “practices rather than feelings or perceptions,” Bourdieu “took perceptions and feelings or emotions into account in his work because they were integral to his concepts of habitus and dispositions” (Reed-Danahay, 2004, p. 132). Bourdieu made extensive use of personal and biographical narratives in his career, including in *Homo Academicus* (1988), where he used personal narratives of prominent scholars to understand academic power and positions, and *The Weight of the World* (1999), where he and his team collected multiple life stories of suffering and the difficulties of individuals’ lives across different socioeconomic classes. Bourdieu (1999) argues,

Narratives about the most “personal” difficulties, the apparently most strictly subjective tensions and contradictions, frequently articulate the deepest structures of the social world and their contradictions. This is never so obvious as it is for occupants of precarious positions who turn out to be extraordinary “practical analysts”: situated at point where social structures “work,” and therefore worked over by the contradictions of these structures, these individuals are constrained, in order to live or to survive, to practice a kind of self-analysis, which often gives them access to the objective contradictions which have them in their grasp, and to the objective structures expressed in and by these contradictions. (p. 511)

His methodological approach provides important insights for my study, as the relationship between individuals and social structure is what I would like to explore through the life histories of Chinese Canadian parents. There are three points that I find particularly insightful for my study. First, Bourdieu focused on the interviewees’ personal perspectives

²⁷ See footnote 16.

and feelings rather than on the “linear life trajectory” (Reed-Danahay, 2004, p. 132). Because habitus is a bodily inscribed disposition, he took emotional reactions, such as shame and humiliation, as an index of one’s habitus (Reed-Danahay, 2004). These emotional reactions are often manifested in “blushing, stuttering, trembling, anger or impotent rage” when the body slips “from the control of the consciousness” (Bourdieu, 2001, pp. 38-39) despite our conscious efforts to control the body. The second point is on the reflexivity of the researcher (Bourdieu, 1988). He claimed that a researcher should always be aware of how his or her social position and political stance affected the way he or she perceived and understood the subjects (Blommaert, 2005; Bourdieu, 1988; Wacquant, 2007). At the same time, he was “diametrically opposed to the kind of narcissistic reflexivity celebrated by some ‘postmodern’ writers, for whom the analytical gaze turns back onto the private person of the analyst” (Wacquant, 2007, p. 173). The third point is to contextualize the stories in the sociohistorical contexts, which is also the focus of life history research as I described earlier. Bourdieu’s conception of habitus and field, which emphasizes the intertwining relationship between social structure and individual feelings and practices, makes sociohistorical contextualization even more significant. We cannot separate sociohistorical contexts from individual lives, and they always have to be understood together.

4.4 Collecting Life Stories

4.4.1 Recruiting participants

I recruited five parents from each of two groups of Chinese Canadians who reside in Metro Vancouver to share their experience surrounding Chinese language education with me. The first group consisted of parents who self-identified as ethnic Chinese, and who were either born in Canada or immigrated before the age of 4. The second group consisted of parents who immigrated to Canada in their adulthood from Mainland China, Taiwan, or Hong Kong. All participants were parents with desires for their children to learn a Chinese language, whether Mandarin, Cantonese, or Taiwanese. Parents of the first group shared a similar language background in that they all spoke English predominantly although as children they were taught Chinese either by their parents or grandparents or at weekend Chinese classes. In contrast, parents of the second group spoke Chinese (Cantonese or Mandarin) as their first language with varying proficiencies in English, and they preferred to speak Chinese to their children at home.

The reason for having two groups of parents was to understand CHL in Canada from both perspectives: Those who grew up in Canada and spoke English predominantly and those who grew up in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, and spoke Chinese as their first language. The two groups not only represent different language groups but also different historical positioning in Canada: The first group's stories encompass their experience in Canada from the time multicultural policy was newly enforced throughout the contemporary time as parents. The second group's stories encompass their experience in Canada in the contemporary time as new immigrants. Through understanding CHL from both perspectives, one of my goals was to identify the difference between the parents of Group 1 and Group 2 regarding their investment, the CHL education environment in Canada, and their thoughts and opinions. In addition, the study inquires whether the childhood experience narrated by Group 1 parents resonates with Group 2 parents' experience in contemporary Canada. This study aims to understand CHL in Canada through such historical continuity.

The rationale for gathering five participants for each group was to allow diversity within the group (e.g., gender, countries of origin, dialects, etc.) while taking into account the feasibility of data collection and in-depth analysis for each case. For each group, I sought some form of gender balance: at least two male-identified participants and two female-identified participants specifically for this reason.²⁸

Since 2008, I have been actively involved with parents interested in their children's Chinese language education. The longitudinal involvement allowed me to become familiar with Chinese parents' communities in Metro Vancouver. For initial recruitment, I relied on what had been called the snowball strategy (R. Atkinson & Flint, 2001): I asked the people I knew from my networking, who were then able to recommend people who were interested in sharing their Chinese language learning experience with me. This strategy is also aligned with what Bourdieu (1999) suggested in reducing the asymmetric power relationship between the researcher and research participants as "social proximity and familiarity provide two of the conditions of 'nonviolent' communication" (p. 609). I will come back to the topic of the power relationship between the researcher and the participants in Section 4.5.2. I was able to recruit all five Chinese immigrant participants, three females and two males, using

²⁸ Although I recognize that gender is a complex entity, for the sake of simplicity and brevity, I refer to these identities as simply "male" and "female" for the remainder of the dissertation.

this strategy. As for the parents raised in Canada, after employing the snowball strategy I still needed two more participants. I circulated an advertisement on a website and on community bulletin boards. Eventually, two parents contacted me, which gave that group three females and two males as well. Therefore, I had ten participants in total. For the sake of protecting the identities of the participants, I chose not to mention how each parent became my research participants. Even though I used pseudonyms for all participants who were involved, revealing the recruitment context could risk revealing their identities.²⁹

4.4.2 Interviews

When I approached the participants who grew up in Canada (Group 1), I asked them if they would tell me about their experiences surrounding Chinese language learning since childhood, and about their current experiences surrounding their children's Chinese language education. In approaching the participants who immigrated to Canada as adults, I asked if they would share their efforts and struggles in raising their children to be bilingual in Chinese and English since they immigrated to Canada. Each interview took between an hour and two hours. The interview took place at a time and place at the participants' convenience: at a café, at a cafeteria while eating lunch, at their office, at their house, or in an open room on campus. Each interview was audio recorded with my digital audio recorder on a table after the consent form was signed. For the Chinese-speaking participants, I prepared a Chinese version of the consent form.

I started each interview by introducing myself as a researcher who was interested in Chinese Canadian parents' experience regarding Chinese language learning. I also positioned myself as a wife of a Chinese Canadian male who spoke English predominantly, and as a mother invested in her children's Japanese language learning. While the table below summarizes the basic questions I asked in the interview, it is important to note that all interviews were highly interactive as I asked for more details, asked new questions, and changed subjects as the interview unfolded. I did not have to ask each question listed below

²⁹ Similarly, I chose not to reveal whether there were couples or not because this, too, would potentially reveal identities in this close-knit community. In this case, the child is given a different pseudonym even if she/he had the same parents. Also, the nature of my rapport with parents has been omitted to protect their identities.

to elicit stories from the participants as the stories generally flowed without the need for such explicit prompting. All interviews were conducted between Summer 2012 and Spring 2013.

During the interview, I took field notes consisting of any thoughts that emerged during the interview, or particular things I noticed that would not be recorded, such as the participant's facial expressions. I asked all participants to call me or email me if they wanted to add to or change anything they had told me in their interviews. They also gave me consent to contact them by email or phone if I came up with more questions while reviewing our interviews, which I did on several occasions.

Table 4.1 Interview Questions

Please tell me about yourself.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where were you born? ○ (If born in Canada) Where were your parents from? ○ What were the languages spoken at home as a child? ○ What languages do you speak now?
How did you learn Chinese? (For Group 1 parents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where did you learn Chinese? ○ Why did you learn it? ○ How did you feel about learning Chinese?
How did you learn English?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When and where did you learn English? ○ How did you feel about learning English? ○ What was your experience like?
Please tell me about your children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How old are they? ○ Where were they born? ○ What languages do you speak at home?
Please tell me about your children's Chinese language education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where do they learn Chinese? ○ Which language (Mandarin/Cantonese/Taiwanese)? ○ Why do you want them to learn Chinese? ○ Are they motivated to learn Chinese?
Anything you would like to add, opinions, ideas and questions about your children's Chinese language education?	

Because of my lack of oral Chinese proficiency, I asked the participants to either have an interview in English or in Chinese with an interpreter. As a result, all interviews

except for one were conducted in English. One participant in Group 2, Oliver, opted for an interview in Cantonese with an interpreter. For details regarding the arrangement of an interpreter, and the transcribing process, see Section 4.4.4 and 7.3.2.

4.4.3 The participants

I asked the participants if they wanted to choose their own pseudonyms, but they all asked me to choose names for them. In what follows, I have outlined brief introductions to the people who shared their stories with me. I chose English names over Chinese names because almost all participants used their English names with me for the interview.³⁰ All years and ages are from the time of the interview in 2012 and 2013, and not the current years and ages at the time of writing this dissertation. All participants had post-secondary degrees including some with graduate degrees.

4.4.3.1 Predominantly English-speaking parents

- **Emily:** Emily was born in Vancouver. She spoke English primarily with limited proficiency in Cantonese. Her parents were from China and they spoke Cantonese. At the time of the interview, her son was in Grade 1 at a Chinese bilingual school in Metro Vancouver.
- **Harry:** Harry was born in Alberta. He almost exclusively spoke English. His family had been in Canada for several generations. At the time of the interview, his son had finished his first year at a Chinese bilingual school in Metro Vancouver.
- **Jack:** Jack was born in Taiwan and moved to Toronto when he was three years old. His parents spoke Mandarin. He spoke English primarily but he relearned Mandarin as an adult and acquired French at a high level. At the time of the interview, his son was in Grade 1 at a Chinese bilingual school in Metro Vancouver.
- **Joyce:** Joyce was born in the United States and moved to Victoria as an infant. She spoke English primarily with limited proficiency in Taiwanese. Her parents were from Taiwan and they spoke Taiwanese. At the time of the interview, her son attended one of the Chinese bilingual schools in Metro Vancouver, and her younger daughter had learned several languages, including Mandarin and Cantonese, at daycare.

³⁰ The reason why so many Chinese Canadians choose to use their English name in Canada is in itself an interesting topic of inquiry.

- **Lily:** Lily was born in Manitoba. She spoke English predominantly while she relearned Cantonese as an adult. Her parents were from Hong Kong and they spoke Cantonese. She had been trying to give her preschool-aged daughter opportunities to learn Cantonese and Mandarin through playgroups and language schools.

4.4.3.2 *Predominantly Chinese-speaking parents*

- **Isabelle:** Isabelle was born in Hong Kong and immigrated to Canada about 15 years ago. She spoke Cantonese primarily. Her 12-year-old daughter was born in Canada and spoke English very fluently but was also capable of communicating in Cantonese. At home, Isabelle spoke Cantonese to her daughter while her daughter used both English and Cantonese.
- **Oliver:** Oliver grew up in Hong Kong and immigrated to Canada five years ago. He spoke Cantonese predominantly. His 10-year-old son was five years old when they came to Canada. At the time of the interview, his son was learning Mandarin at one of the Chinese bilingual schools in Metro Vancouver. At home, most conversations were carried out in Cantonese.
- **Mia:** Mia was born in China and immigrated to Canada 12 years ago. She spoke Mandarin as her first language. Her 16-year-old son had gone through regular English schooling until he entered a late French immersion program in Grade 6. He spoke English predominantly but was also capable of communication in Mandarin. At home, Mia spoke Mandarin with her son while her son used both Mandarin and English.
- **Sophia:** Sophia was born in Taiwan and immigrated to Canada after college and had two daughters. Since then, the family had moved to Taiwan and Shanghai, but she returned to Canada four years ago with her two daughters. She spoke Taiwanese and Mandarin primarily. Her two school-age daughters attend regular English school. They spoke English predominantly while maintaining some level of Mandarin. While Sophia tried to encourage her daughters to speak Mandarin at home, their language use was becoming increasingly more English.
- **Thomas:** Thomas was born in China and moved to Toronto to do his graduate studies 12 years ago. He spoke Mandarin as his first language. He had two school-age sons who attended regular English school. They spoke English predominantly while maintaining limited proficiencies in Mandarin.

Table 4.2 Predominantly English-Speaking (Group 1) Parents

Pseudonym	Place of birth	Heritage language	Children’s site of Chinese education when interview took place	Home language
Emily	Canada	Cantonese	Bilingual program	English
Harry	Canada	Toisanese	Bilingual program	English
Jack	Taiwan	Mandarin	Bilingual program	English
Joyce	USA	Taiwanese	Bilingual program	English
Lily	Canada	Cantonese	Play group	English

Table 4.3 Predominantly Chinese-Speaking (Group 2) Parents

Pseudonym	Place of birth	First Language	Children’s site of Chinese education when interview took place	Home language
Isabelle	Hong Kong	Cantonese	Cantonese at home, Mandarin at regular school	Cantonese and English
Oliver	Hong Kong	Cantonese	Cantonese at home, Mandarin at regular school	Cantonese and English
Mia	Mainland China	Mandarin	Home	Mandarin and English
Sophia	Taiwan	Mandarin	Home	Mandarin and English
Thomas	Mainland China	Mandarin	Home	Mandarin and English

4.4.4 Transcribing

As many applied linguists have argued, transcribing is not a neutral activity; rather, the researcher makes the decisions about how to describe what happened during the interview based on his/her theoretical orientation. Thus, transcription must be understood as “theory driven and theory saturated” (Duff, 2008a, p. 154; also see Ochs, 1979; Silverman, 2000). This also explains why I spent a section on Bourdieu’s methodological orientation in Section 4.3 to gain better understanding about the relationship between his theory and his methodology. As Bourdieu (1999) argued, transcribing is an act of “*translation* or even an

interpretation” (p. 621); it is also an act of power, as I discuss in Section 4.5.2. Because of this interpretive quality of the transcription process, it was important that I do the transcription myself. As I transcribed all audio-recorded English interviews myself, I focused mostly on the content because my primary aim is to understand what the participants’ stories tell us about Chinese language education in Canada; however, I also paid attention to the different prosody and pauses when I thought it was important to note them based on the context of what had been said. I particularly paid attention to their emotional tones, together with my field notes of their facial expression and gestures which I took during the interview. That is because symbolic violence often takes the form of “bodily emotions” of shame, joy, anxiety, timidity, etc. (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 38), and those bodily emotions needed to be noticed and interpreted in addition to the verbal content of the interview.

Although I would have preferred to translate and transcribe all interviews myself, my lack of Chinese meant that I needed to include others in the process in the case of Oliver’s interview. The interview with Oliver was conducted in Cantonese with an interpreter. The interpreter was a female university student who was fluent in both Cantonese and English. To transcribe that interview, I hired another bilingual university student who was highly proficient in English and Cantonese. I asked her to transcribe all the original speech as it was, and then to translate the Cantonese into English, even though Oliver’s speech was already translated into English during the interview by the original interpreter. It was important to have all Oliver’s accounts transcribed in Chinese and then translated into English by a different person to check for mistranslations during the actual interview.³¹

4.5 How I Understand Life History Interviews

4.5.1 Factual truth and co-constructed nature of interviews

Different scholars have long discussed the issues surrounding the truth-value in life history research. Kouritzin (2000) argues that in life history research, “it is not the events themselves that are of greatest importance, but the participants’ understandings of the events and their later impact on, or resolution in, the participants’ lives” (p. 4). In other words, whether the participant is telling us a story that is coherent with factual truths is not of primary interest for life history research. Rather, the question may be to explore why

³¹ The transcriber/translator had the original translator’s oral text on the recording.

participants might be telling stories that are not coherent with factual truth. As many life story and life history researchers have argued, we live and relive our lives through stories we tell to others and to ourselves (Atkinson, 1998; Denzin, 1989; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Goodson & Sikes, 2001). Clandinin and Connelly (1994) describe the relationship between life-as-lived and life-as-told as follows:

Stories are the closest we can come to experience as we and others tell of our experience. A story has a sense of being full, a sense of coming out of a personal and social history . . . Experience . . . is the stories people live. People live stories, and in the telling of them reaffirm them, modify them, and create new ones. (p. 415)

Rather than trying to represent the factual truth, life history researchers should therefore “simply acknowledge what they are able to do with the stories they use as data: namely, offer an interpretation through their writing and spell out the influences that may have coloured both the teller’s story and their interpretation of it” (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p. 45). But the life history interview adds another layer to this. The stories people tell are not only the product of the inner dialogue within themselves but also a product of the dialogue between the teller and the researcher. Indeed, “the life history is collaboratively constructed by a life story teller and life story interviewer/researcher” (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p. 62). In addition, as Briggs (2003) points out, the interviewees “often shape their responses in keeping with imaginings of future texts and audiences” (p. 246). I would argue that the researcher too, shape their questions and responses imagining the future texts and readers. Therefore, as a life history researcher, it is crucial that I present and analyze the life stories through the lens of those interactions, as situated social practice (Bruner, 1990; Holstein & Gubrium, 2004; Talmy, 2010).

If the story is one of the versions of recollecting a participant’s past, then the versions that were produced while the participants were interacting with me need to be presented in a way that shows their particular situatedness. Highlighting the interactional aspects of interviews means that we should no longer see interviewers as inert instruments that elicit answers from participants, but as taking an active role in the meaning-making process in collaboration with the participants (Bruner, 1990; Coughlan & Duff, 1994; Duff, 2008a; Gubrium & Holstein, 2009; Talmy, 2010, 2011). At the same time, participants are not “*passive vessels of answers* to whom interviewers direct their questions” (Holstein &

Gubrium, 2004, p. 144); they are also active in choosing what to say, and how to say it in relation to the local contingencies of the interview. This means that I should “consciously and conscientiously” attend to “both the interview process and the products that interviews generate in ways that are more sensitive to the social construction of knowledge” (Holstein & Gubrium, p. 142).

Therefore, erasing the voice of the researcher from the story and presenting it as a complete first-person narrative does not fit in with the stance I am taking. However, I do believe that readability is important for my research. If the purpose of the study is to provide a space for the reader to closely empathize with the storyteller, and to have a simulated experience of their life-as-told, editing the interview into a first-person narrative is a useful option. For example, in her study, Kouritzin (1999) presented the stories in a first-person narrative form despite the fact that she acknowledges the co-constructive and situated quality of the interviews. Before each story, she described the narrative context and interview context of the story so that the readers were reminded that each life story unfolded in a particular context. However, I am reluctant to rewrite the life history of my research participants in first-person narratives and to completely cut off the interaction between them and me. Based on my understanding of interview as interactions between the interviewer and interviewees, I framed each life history as what was told to me, and what I, as the interlocutor, was both prompting through questions and then re-presenting as the story. The purpose of doing this was to make clear that I was presenting their stories from my point of view, as my interpretation of their stories, utilizing quotes from the interviews and facilitating the reader’s understanding by enriching the story with necessary background information. I will omit the parts that I think are less related to the topic and edit the storylines in a way that facilitates reading. This is because, as I mentioned earlier, readability is important to me. I was initially thinking of writing the stories combining transcription quotes and my interpretation and analysis. This form is taken by Munro (1998) in *Subject to Fiction: Women Teachers’ Life History Narratives and the Cultural Politics of Resistance*. A slightly different style is found in Bourdieu et al. (1999) in *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society*. Bourdieu and his team first present the stories from their point of view, with interview quotes, while providing personal, historical, and social contexts of the stories, as well as their interpretation and analysis. Then, Bourdieu provides parts of

the interview transcription so that the reader can read the conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee with sufficient contextual information. I attempted to follow Bourdieu's approach by knitting in-depth analysis into the stories. However, I was afraid the readers would lose their focus from the life history, and also more importantly, knitting in-depth analysis into the stories might take away the readers' opportunity to do their own analyses of each life history. I decided to keep my analysis to a minimum when presenting each life story, and to make a separate space for in-depth and cross-case analyses. Indeed, we are living in the era of "crisis of representation" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 2), and there is no single way to present life history data. Therefore, it is crucial that I am reflexive about what I choose to write and how I choose to write.

Regarding the problem of representation, I must note that I did not correct "grammatical errors" that occurred in the interview. One reason for this is to stay true to parents' voice. By editing their utterance, there is a potential danger that I may change the nuance of the meaning they would want to convey. Another reason has to do with my position that supports the concept of English as a lingua franca and its fluid notion of grammatical correctness (Jenkins, 2009). In the interview, English clearly served as a lingua franca between the parents and me. As Smith (2015) argues, "there is no room for linguistic chauvinism" when English is used for communication among people of different linguist backgrounds. In reality, I myself suffered from the symbolic violence of the correctness of English as I discuss in the next section, and it is extremely difficult not to feel intimidated by grammatical errors. However, I hope that by not "correcting" the fluid use of English in a doctoral dissertation, and by showing that their utterance totally made sense to me even if it did not follow the "correct" grammar in the traditional way, I can resist the symbolic violence of what is considered legitimate and practice the notion of English as a lingua franca.

4.5.2 Relationship between researcher and participant

If we value the nature of interview as co-constructed, then we cannot avoid thinking about the impact of the relationship between researcher and participant (Briggs, 2003; Duff, 2008b; Talmy, 2010). Researchers have power over the participants not only within the interview context in which they can choose the topic and guide the interview process but also in the post interview context in which they can transcribe and *entextualize* the interaction,

and *recontextualize* the unit of interview into a different context from the interview context (Briggs, 2007). There are different ways to address this issue, one of them is to do a fine-grained transcription, and focus on the interview as a “topic of investigation itself” (Talmy, 2010, p. 132) as seen in studies of discourse analysis (e.g., Blommaert, 2005; Fairclough & Wodak, 2011; Gee, 2011), conversation analysis (e.g., Benwell & Stokoe, 2006) or positioning analysis (e.g., Bamberg, 2005; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008; Harré & Van Langenhove, 1999) among many others. However, when the topic of investigation is the content of the interviews and recurrent themes among multiple interviews³², the issues of power between researchers and participants must be addressed in a different way. For example, in the multiple narrative collections of social suffering, Bourdieu (1999) described the power inequality inherent in the relationship between an investigator and an interviewee in two ways: 1) that the investigator “starts the game, and sets up its rules” (p. 609), and 2) that the investigator enters the game with more capital, linguistic capital in particular, which reinforces the power asymmetry described in (1). He explained how his research team made efforts “to reduce as much as possible the symbolic violence exerted through that relationship” (p. 609). What he proposed was “*active and methodical listening*” which led to “controlled imitation, to adopting the interviewee’s language, views, feelings, and thoughts” (p. 609). This “controlled imitation” requires a total attentiveness during the interview, which is extremely hard to maintain, as well as an extensive knowledge about the research participants. He further argued,

Only the reflexivity synonymous with method, but a *reflex reflexivity* based on a craft, on a sociological “feel” or “eye,” allows one to perceive and monitor *on the spot*, as the interview is actually taking place, the effects of the social structure within which it is occurring. (p. 608)

Although I carried a lot of capital as the interviewer and researcher, this is not to say that all of my identities held more power than my interviewees. In my study, I was entering the interview site as a PhD student younger than most participants, a novice researcher, and a new mom without much experience as a parent. In this sense, all participants I interviewed

³² Interesting academic debates between the small story approach represented in positioning analysis and a Big story approach represented in biographical research have taken place between the scholars of the small story camp (e.g., Bamberg, 2004b, 2006; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008) and the Big story camp (e.g., Freeman, 2006).

were (a) more experienced as parents than I was, and (b) had longer working careers than I had. Many of them were busy people with professional careers and were raising children, so I felt apologetic about the time they were spending for me. Throughout the interview, I maintained the attitude that I wanted to learn from their experience. I always started the interview explaining why I was doing this research, and why I wanted to learn from their experience. I shared my own story about growing up struggling to learn two languages (Japanese and English) as a child, and how now, as a parent of a half-Japanese and half-Chinese Canadian daughter, I was trying hard to make sure she would at least learn Japanese and English. I may have known more theories about language education than they did, and I had ethnographic experience in being involved in the Mandarin bilingual program movement as a researcher from the Japanese Consulate, but they were absolutely the ones who could tell me what it was like to grow up in Canada as Chinese Canadians, or what it was like to be parents who were invested in their children's bilingual education. I felt the tension in the room always soften after I told my stories. It is hard to tell whether my story and my positionality that supports heritage language education affected their story telling, but I felt that telling these stories was an important step to at least somewhat shift/add nuance to the power balance and show where I was coming from as a person rather than just as a researcher. Later, I learned that this kind of gesture—sharing commonalities with the participants—has been called *reciprocity* (Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Oakley, 1981; Sikes, 1997).

Power relations can change from subject to subject even within the same study. When I interviewed the five native English speakers of ethnic Chinese parents, I was—on some level—afraid of them finding out that I make some grammatical errors when speaking English. I was the one with less (English) linguistic capital. I wanted them to see me as a legitimate interviewer conducting doctoral research, and that they could tell me anything without feeling awkward; I did not want them to feel that they had to adjust either the content or the wording of their narratives so that I could understand. I tried very hard to be as smooth and eloquent as possible. On the other hand, with the five recent Chinese immigrant parents, although I felt the same way about trying to appear as a legitimate researcher without coming across as intimidating, there was less pressure on me. Four of the Chinese immigrant parents chose interviews in English, and one, as noted earlier, chose an interview in Cantonese with a

translator. With these four participants, we were in similar positions in terms of using English as our second (or third) language. However, the English proficiency of the four parents varied significantly. Therefore, depending on their proficiency, I tried to adjust the speed of my speech and the way I spoke, including the choice of vocabulary (Bourdieu, 1999).

On other occasions, whether the interviewees were native English speakers or not, I spoke as a specialist in bilingual education. For example, when I asked them what they thought would be the best for their children's Chinese language education, I sometimes told them my own ideas based on other research after they responded. These moments may have created some power issues even though I aimed to not sound authoritative. Nevertheless, when I present each life story and analyze it, I have striven to be reflexive in my writing and sensitive to the traces of power inequality during the interview.

4.6 From Life History Interviews to Life History Research

As I discussed in Section 4.2, what makes life history research distinct from other kinds of narrative research is in its emphasis on sociohistorical and political contexts of the stories told. Bertaux (1981b) argues for the importance of looking at the data through both theoretical and historical lens, which he calls “synthesis” (p. 40). Synthesis “should not be a separate step” that happens after data collection but should be a “continuous process of concentration upon the invisible but ever-present level of social relations” (p. 40). In other words, the stories should be understood “in the light of changing patterns of time and place in testimony and action as social constructions” (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p. 17). This is the analytical approach I have taken as I analyze the stories through the lens of habitus, capital and field as well as the sociohistorical lens.

For the sociohistorical analysis of data, I applied the concept of historicity from Braudel (1958/2009). He argued, “whether we are dealing with the past or the present, an awareness of the plurality of temporalities is indispensable to a common methodology of the human sciences” (p. 173). Blommaert (1999, 2005, 2010) applied Braudel's concept of historicity, and developed the notion of “layered simultaneity” to understand the relationship between language and society.

The first kind is *courte durée*, the “‘short term’—which is on the scale of the individual, of daily life, of our illusions, of our momentary awarenesses” (Braudel,

1958/2009, p. 173). The second kind of scale is what he calls “the ‘recitative’ or the cyclical phase (*conjoncture*), the cycle, even the ‘intercycle’” (p. 176). The length of the recitative can vary from a dozen years to a half-century. The recitative has been the preferred duration for studies in economics and sociology. However, Braudel claims the importance of moving beyond the recitative to “the history of long, even very long, duration (*longue durée*)” (p. 174). Blommaert (1999) elaborated this concept as “slow processes that are beyond the reach of individuals, the time of social, political and climate and geology” (p. 3), a concept that is crucial for capturing language in society.

This notion of multiple temporalities ties in with the notion of multiple timescales in applied linguistics as developed by Holland and Lave (2001, 2009) in their concept of “history in person.” The concept views human practice as interrelations between individuals’ life trajectories and the larger socio-historical trajectories. Lemke (2001, 2009) also ties the concept of multiple timelines and the dynamical theory of eco-social complex systems to the understanding of the relationship between meaning making and identity across time and space. In language socialization, the concept of different timescales, such as “socio-historical, ontogenic, local and microgenetic” timescales (Wortham, 2005, p. 99), is used to understand how individuals are socialized through different language practices.

The importance of being able to analytically shift timescales, for example, is particularly important because of the dual temporal belonging of Group 1 parents. Their perspectives on Chinese language education in Canada simultaneously exist both within a timeline of memories of their own childhood and within their present moments as parents of children. Their relationship with their children is both a temporal echo of a different moment in time when they themselves were children learning or not learning Chinese, while simultaneously living through a present moment of strategic parenting decisions for their own children’s language education. By focusing on the life stories of Group 1 parents from childhood to parenthood and examining in what ways their attitudes toward speaking Chinese have been shaped and reshaped over the years (Research Question 1), I am able to analyze their complex and sometimes contradictory and paradoxical perspectives on Chinese language education.

In answering this question, I thoroughly read the transcripts and field notes of Group 1 parents’ interviews through the lens of habitus, capital and field. Whenever there was a

storyline that informed me of habitus, I highlighted it as habitus together with the keyword for the habitus. For example, when Jack mentioned he felt embarrassed about his parents' "poor" English, I marked the storyline as "habitus-bodily emotions-shame." The same procedure was followed for capital and field. For example, when Emily mentioned her investment in her son's Mandarin learning as related to economic reasons, I highlighted that particular storyline as "capital-economy." Quite often, changes in the field led to recognizing the capital of the Chinese language (e.g., traveling to Asia). Therefore, when Emily moved from a suburb of Vancouver to the city of Vancouver and realized the value of Chinese, I highlighted that storyline as "change of field-Chinese as cultural capital). After making sense of the stories through the lens of habitus, capital and field, I looked for recurring themes and patterns within each case. Then I examined whether any of the themes and patterns were shared across some (if not all) cases.

After marking out several recurring themes, I focused on the themes that would respond to Research Questions #1. The themes are: 1) Being marked for being Chinese (Lily, Emily and Jack), 2) Chinese as social other (Harry and Joyce), 3) Quitting CHL schools (Lily, Jack, Harry), 4) The changing value of the Chinese language (all).

Another analytical approach to multiple timescales involves moving beyond the lifespans of individual parents by explicitly comparing the timelines of the life stories of Group 1 and Group 2 parents. This is addressed in *Research Question #2: What are the recurring issues of learning CHL that came up in both Group 1 parents' childhood stories and Group 2 parents' current stories?* Here, I focus on how the accounts of Group 1 parents of their remembered challenges and problems in learning Chinese resonate with the accounts of Group 2 parents' struggles with their own children's Chinese learning. In what ways do the childhood experiences of Chinese Canadian parents who grew up in Canada in the late 20th century resonate with the ongoing experience of recently immigrated Chinese Canadian parents today in the 21st century? Are the experiences of being a child of Chinese immigrants during the 1980s and 1990s—narrated in the memories of Group 1 parents—corollary to the experiences of children of Chinese immigrants in the 2010s, narrated through the perspectives of Group 2 parents?

In exploring these questions, I thoroughly examined the transcripts and field notes of Group 2 interviews and looked for recurring problems across the cases regarding the parents'

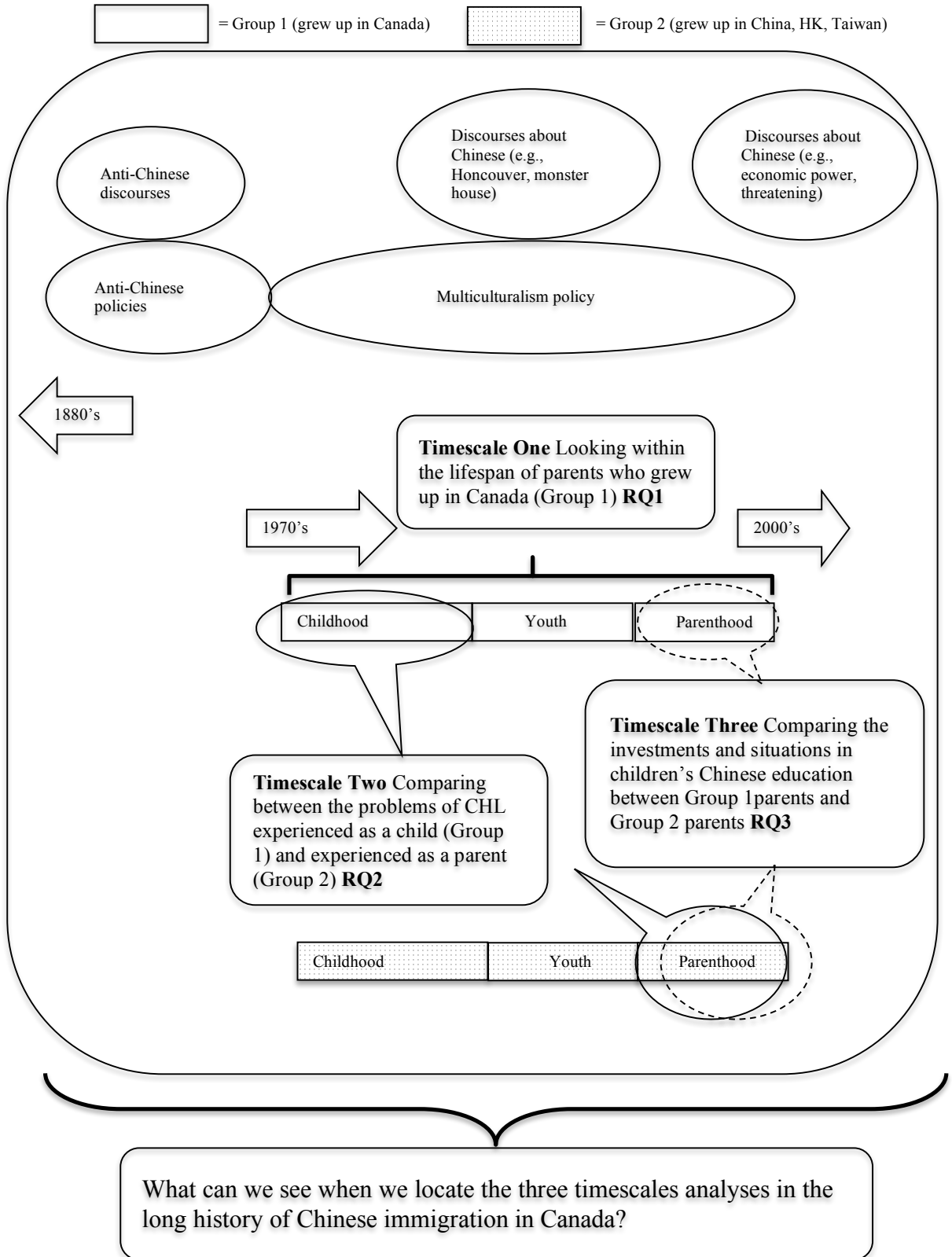
investments and struggles for their children's Chinese language education. Then, I interpreted the problems through the lens of habitus, capital and field, and wrote them out as preliminary analysis. I compared the analysis with Research Question #1 and identified problems that were repeated across the two groups, namely the lack of motivation of children to learn Chinese growing up in English dominant society (D. Li & Duff, 2014), and the problem of weekend/afterschool CHL schools (Jiang, 2010). The extensive analysis of the problem of CHL schools and its relation to children's lack of motivation in learning Chinese is addressed in Chapter 8.

The third analysis of multiple timescales is addressed in *Research Question #3: What are the similarities and differences between Group 1 parents and Group 2 regarding their desires, challenges and obstacles in raising their children to be bilingual?* This question concerns the comparison between narratives of generational belonging measured against the temporal moment of immigration. The "immigrant cycle" of generations has a long history both as a social scientific category of analysis as well as a popular narrative of self-understanding and belonging (Mannheim, 1927/1957; Yu, 2001). This putative cycle seems to exist outside of time, so that a migrant during any historical period of time is defined as a "first generation immigrant" through the act of moving spatially from one country to another. Their children become "second generation" by growing up in a different nation than their parents, with assumptions about cultural and linguistic changes that result in gaps in communication and in identity and belonging. As a narrative of generational belonging, this cycle is a timeline that helps shape understandings of when and where a person lives, explaining both temporally (first versus second and third generation) and spatially (growing up in different locations) any perceived differences between parents and children. As parents who understand themselves as coming from different generations of immigration, what are the differences in their investments, challenges and obstacles in raising their children to be bilingual in contemporary Canada? The two groups displayed some differences in their reasoning for their investment in their children's Chinese language education, which will be discussed in Chapter 7. The question regarding differences and similarities in their challenges in raising their children to be bilingual will be explored in Chapter 8 (Section 8.3), namely the problem of access to Mandarin education within the regular school system.

And lastly, each life story should be situated in the historicity of *longue durée*, the history of Chinese Canadians and Chinese language education as well as colonialism in British Columbia since the late 19th century. How can we make sense of analyses that emerge from the three research questions in light of *longue durée*? This is explored in the final chapter. Figure 4.1 is a visual explanation of the research questions in relation to different timescales.

In the next chapter (Chapter 5), I present the first theme, “being marked for being Chinese” through the stories of Lily, Emily and Jack.

Figure 4.1 Research Questions and Multiple Timescales



Chapter 5: Being Chinese as being Othered: Lily, Emily and Jack

5.1 Introduction

The practical acts of knowledge and recognition of the magical frontier between the dominant and the dominated that are triggered by the magic of symbolic power and through which the dominated, often unwittingly, sometimes unwillingly, contribute to their own domination by tacitly accepting the limits imposed, often take the form of *bodily emotions* – shame, humiliation, timidity, anxiety, guilt – or *passions* and *sentiments* – love, admiration, respect. (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 38)

One of the recurring themes that was addressed by several English-speaking parents in my study who grew up in Canada, namely Lily, Emily and Jack, was how they were being *marked* for being Chinese by their peers since childhood. That sense of being marked was often associated with feelings of embarrassment and shame. Shaming is a common theme of inquiry in language socialization studies across different languages and cultures as it is “a socially very powerful and potentially stigmatizing form of socialization into normative practices and ideologies” (Duff, 2014, p. 22). Indeed, not all habitus are made equal: “Some are normalized, while others are pathological. . . . Part of the ‘second sense’ embodied in habitus entails a judgment of other habitus” (Lawler, 2008, p. 131). Symbolic violence is in effect when individuals feel inadequate for their habitus (e.g., the way they look, eat, speak, etc.), and feel the need to acquire a different habitus, or rather give up and withdraw from the field. According to the parents’ stories, what kind of events and experience shaped their ideas of being Chinese and being marked? What kind of habitus was marked by their friends and family as they grew up in Canada? And finally, how did they come to terms with their “bodily emotions” and become parents who are invested in their children’s Chinese language learning? This chapter takes the bodily emotions of shame and embarrassment expressed in the stories of Lily, Emily and Jack as a starting point for analysis of the symbolic violence in Canadian society on Chinese Canadians, and the ways these bodily emotions shaped and reshaped their relationship with their Chinese heritage and language. For each individual, I present the full story, which is followed by the analysis.

5.2 Lily

5.2.1 Introduction

Lily was born and raised in Canada. Lily's parents spoke Cantonese but discouraged her from speaking and learning the language. Lily grew up speaking English predominantly, but after college she decided to learn Cantonese, and moved to a Cantonese-speaking city in China. Several years later, she came back to Canada and became a teacher. At the time of the interview, she had been trying to give her preschool daughter Amber opportunities to learn Cantonese and Mandarin through playgroups and language schools.³³

5.2.2 Childhood: “You have a Chinese face but it’s useless . . .”

Lily's parents immigrated to Manitoba from Hong Kong, and she was born in the late 1970s in Manitoba. She lived with both her maternal and paternal grandparents until she was three years old, “totally immersed in Cantonese” for the “first three years of [her] life.” When Lily was three years old, she and her younger sister moved to Edmonton with her parents and her maternal grandparents. Because her parents had “three jobs each,” her grandmother took care of Lily and her sister. As Lily said, “My grandmother, she could only speak Cantonese, she didn’t speak English at all. So I was totally immersed.” However, things apparently changed when her grandmother passed away when she was 10: “After that, I really didn’t get any more Cantonese at all because my parents really felt like being in Canada, there was no use for Cantonese whatsoever.” Her parents, in Lily’s words, were “kind of self-hating Chinese people.” With an animated tone in her voice, Lily described how “my mom would look in the mirror and say ‘you have a Chinese face but it’s useless, you live in Canada, you gotta learn English, you gotta learn French!’”

³³A Note on Quotations

1. Words omitted within a sentence are indicated with three spaced periods, “. . . .”
2. Full sentences omitted are indicated with four spaced periods, “.”
3. Interviewer’s omitted utterances are indicated with five spaced periods “.”
4. Commas or periods within quotes have been placed for readability without necessarily indicating pauses in the original interview.
5. Pauses longer than 3 seconds in the interview, however, are indicated with three periods in brackets “(. . .).”
6. No corrections were made to grammar as I explained in 4.5.1.

Although Lily's story shows that her parents spoke Cantonese to each other, they consciously used English to communicate with Lily and her sister. "Even though to this day she has like accents, and everything, and you know her first language is Cantonese, she felt very very strongly that there is no place for Cantonese in my life. So you know, when my grandmother died, I was 10, I basically had no one speak to me in Cantonese so I kind of forgot everything." When I remarked to Lily that I found it interesting that her parents kept speaking Cantonese to each other, she agreed: "Yah, very interesting." Lily wondered "what they were thinking," and mused "I don't know if my dad agreed with my mom, but I think once my mom started speaking in English, and . . . because we were in school, English just kind of took over. So we felt more comfortable in English." Lily went on to remark "you know, that feeling of my mom, feeling ashamed of being Chinese, like that, kind of got instilled in me too, so I really, I thought 'what was the point?' So I don't think I took interest in Chinese until I was in high school, like upper high school."

I asked if Lily ever had problems learning English. If her grandmother who was taking care of her all the time only spoke Cantonese, what was it like for her to go to school for the first time? Surrounded by English speakers all of a sudden, did she have a hard time adjusting? Contrary to my assumptions, she answered definitively that, "I always understood English. I never not understood English." Lily explained that "We watched a lot of TV. Basically, we were raised by the TV, like Sesame Street. When we moved to Edmonton when I was three, we had some babysitters that were English- speaking, so I was three years old, so basically don't remember ever not understanding my English." I asked her whether she had any Chinese Canadian friends around where she grew up in Edmonton. She answered, "I think there were some Chinese but not where we lived," and she described herself as "the only Chinese in my class." Lily went on to excitedly describe how her friends, "not like being racist or anything," but they would put "their hands over my face and say 'it's so flat!' and they were like 'it's so different!' and they were like my best friends!" Lily noted her friends' curiosity about her being Chinese: "we would go to each other's houses, well not my house because I wasn't allowed, but I would go to their house, and just literally be like 'you are so different, your hair is so smooth' and just (...) you know they would ask me questions that I didn't really know." For example, they would ask what she ate at home. "Funny enough," Lily says that her parents "didn't speak Chinese [to me] but they cooked

Chinese [for me].” She also told me that she got “special treatment” from her teachers because “they had this misconception that all Chinese kids were smart.” As a result, Lily says she would receive an A without “trying hard.” However, she moved to Ottawa when she was 13 years old, where things were different: She wasn’t the only Chinese around anymore.

5.2.3 Adolescence: “I always wanted to know about Chinese culture . . . ”

In the late 80s in Ottawa, Lily met other classmates who were just like her: Canada-born Chinese. She would hang out with them. “I was like, ‘hey, I’m the same as you.’” Lily would ask questions about what she didn’t understand about Chinese culture: “You know like my friend Greg, I would learn a lot from him.” However, when it came to newly-arrived immigrants from China, there was a language barrier. “They were brand-new immigrants, and didn’t know a word of English. So I didn’t really connect with them because I didn’t really know that much, I didn’t know any Chinese, right?”

She tried to attend Chinese classes when she was 15 years old, “but there just wasn’t anything in my level.” Lily attended a Cantonese class that was held at a Chinese school on Saturdays. She went with her classmate Greg, who like her was of Chinese descent but did not speak Cantonese. I asked her, “What made you feel interested?” Lily answered, “Well I felt interested because (...) I don’t know, I thought, I always wanted to know about Chinese culture, and I would ask my parents. Maybe the fact that my mom was so resistant and my dad was so resistant, that made me want to know more, because you know when you are older you are just like, why are they hiding this from me, and you know, so then I really start questioning, and I went to Chinese school.” However, Lily’s courageous attempt ended up being not quite successful: “15 for the first time, I tried to, you know I tried to understand a lot, I could speak some, but it’s very broken. But it was way too hard. Like they were already writing the characters, there was nothing for me at 15, at the basic basic level, there was nothing that would like, you know basic characters and stuff like that. And basically, when I went into the class, the teacher put me in the desk in the corner and told me I was a bad student and she said ‘copy these numbers, and until you can finish this block, like this, then you can come back and join the class, after you do the test.’” After three weeks of receiving sighs and harsh remarks from the teacher, both Lily and Greg gave up and stopped attending the school. Nevertheless, her desire to learn Chinese language and culture kept growing. Lily says, “so after that, I was always thinking about I wanna learn Chinese, I wanna know more

about my (...) and same with my sister, like we would have this conversation like ‘we don’t know anything about our culture.’”

5.2.4 Young adulthood: “I decided to take on a job in China . . . ”

Lily’s desire to learn Chinese, however, was not fulfilled until she graduated from university and moved to China. There was a Mandarin course offered at her university but she felt “Mandarin was too far reaching.” She explained to me, “I felt like I should start with Cantonese because I had Cantonese It wasn’t until I was in China and realize that the characters are quite similar, right? I mean simplified comes from a traditional, so I realized there is a lot of similarities, then it wasn’t as daunting as a task.³⁴ But when I was in university, I was like Mandarin is a whole new (...) and I actually want to get good marks. I don’t want to take this course when I’m not getting good grades, so I didn’t even go there, I didn’t research about that.” In addition, Lily explained that she didn’t feel Mandarin was a cool language to learn in the 90s.

After she completed her B.Ed., she went to teach at an international school in a Cantonese-speaking city. “I just told myself ‘I want to learn what it’s like to be a Chinese person’ you know, and the first year didn’t go so well ’cause I had a Canadian roommate, you know, I did learn a lot of Cantonese. I was pretty fluent after the first year, so that was really cool, and really fun, ’cause (...) you know everyone I worked with didn’t know Cantonese at all, and I kind of had this magic of two languages, so it was really fun, and I was also surprised at myself how much I was able to learn.” I asked her if she thought the language was already inside her just waiting to be awakened. “I think so, especially because I heard it since I was so young, and just my desire to learn, and it wasn’t really until my second year when I was like ‘you know it’s not enough to have a Canadian roommate. It’s just not enough.’ So I decided to get a local roommate. She was Chinese, she was from the city, and she taught me a lot, like I can ask her like anything, right?” Her roommate explained everything from what dating was like to the “slang things that I didn’t understand.”

While Lily was sharing her Cantonese learning experience with me, her voice was

³⁴ Many Cantonese speakers in Canada came from Hong Kong where traditional Chinese characters are used. Cantonese speakers from Mainland China in more recent waves of immigration would have learned simplified Chinese characters, however.

filled with excitement and joy: “It was really great!” She took further steps to learn Chinese. She started taking classes at the local university and learned the Chinese characters: “I think by the end, I was able to read like 2000 characters.” She told me she studied “pretty hard,” and in her third year, she went to Beijing to learn Mandarin. It was an intensive class, which in her words was “really hard.” However, she found simplified characters much easier to pick up than traditional characters because “you can learn a lot more characters” compared to traditional characters with many strokes. I asked if her perspectives on Mandarin had changed by then compared to when she was in university in Canada in the 1990s. She revealed that even before she moved to Beijing, when she was living in a Cantonese city, she “got the sense” that Mandarin was “the language.” She continued, “I even got the sense from the citizens there that Cantonese is probably a dying language,” and her local friends were able to find “jobs easier if they could speak Mandarin,” and so “I started to get interested.”

After the intensive Mandarin learning in Beijing, Lily moved to Australia to teach at another international school for two years. “I moved to Australia, and basically didn’t keep up my Chinese at all.” She explained, “I tried to find Chinese friends, but . . . I could not find a Chinese friend, none that I clicked with, so it was really sad. So quickly I like lost all my characters.” She felt “really upset about it,” even though she could still probably “write a couple of hundreds, recognize maybe a thousand.” Lily commented, “I don’t know, it’s kind of sad, so now I’m coming to, like this full circle with my daughter.”

5.2.5 Parenthood: “If she’s gonna look Chinese and all that . . . I want her to learn Chinese.”

After teaching in Australia for two years, Lily returned to Canada, and got a teaching job in Metro Vancouver. She married a husband of Filipino descent who was born and raised in Canada. “He actually knows less of his first language than me.” When her daughter Amber was born, she thought “if she’s gonna look Chinese³⁵ and all that, and I, you know, it’s an important part of me, and you know, I want her to learn Chinese, so (...) but it’s been

³⁵ It is interesting that even though her daughter is half Filipino, Lily mentioned her looks as “Chinese and all that.” “All that” may refer to Asian in general, or it could be that her husband is Sino-Filipino. Or it may refer to all that is not white. For example, my daughter is half Japanese and half Chinese but in this context, I would not say, “she looks Japanese and Chinese” but I would say “she looks Japanese and all that so she’d better learn Japanese” because it is about the markedness of the face that matters.

hard, I haven't (...) especially Cantonese, I don't think there is anything out there that I think would be fun or enriching her right now." Lily's attitude toward Chinese as a mother contrasts with own mother, who told her that "you have a Chinese face but it's useless," but Lily worries about the availability and viability of language learning options. Amber is still very young, but Lily doesn't feel like there will be many options for her daughter when she grows up: "I mean, I know that because I'm a teacher . . . and they run these after school Cantonese classes. And from what I can see, they are taught by these like retired teachers from Hong Kong. So when I was teaching grade one . . . my students, would have to go to Chinese school after school was done, they would drag on me, they would hide in my class (...) they are like 'Ms. Fang, do we have to go, can we just stay with you, please, we'll work with you, anything.'" Lily's voice imitated her students' desperate tone. Lily asked her Grade 1 students the reason why they didn't like the Chinese after school program. "Oh she yells at us, she makes us copy words, you know it's not fun." Therefore, from her experience, Amber's Chinese learning doesn't look very promising: "Those are the Cantonese classes that I know of, and I was like that sounds like so not fun (...) you know I tried looking around, there's not really that much."

Lily looked into both Mandarin and Cantonese classes for her daughter but could not find anything accessible. She then decided to start a small Cantonese playgroup. She set up her playgroup on one of the websites that was known for advertising community events. Within 24 hours, she got 12 people signed up: there were two Caucasian women who "believed that (...) Chinese language was taking over the world," a man from Hong Kong who spoke Cantonese as his first language, a Chinese Canadian woman from a Cantonese background who spoke very little Cantonese, a Cantonese speaking woman from Hong Kong, and a woman from Beijing who spoke Cantonese in "a beautiful Mandarin accent." However, as Lily recalled, some parents got too demanding even though Lily was "just volunteering" her time, and the playgroup was completely free of charge. Lily recalls, "And then, you know, after my mat leave, I start going back to work, and was like I don't have time for this."

Lily went back to her teaching job. She was facing a hard time finding opportunities for Amber to learn Chinese. At the time of the interview, Amber went to preschool and daycare but Lily had not found anything close by that offered Chinese. I asked her if she was thinking about putting Amber in a French immersion or Chinese bilingual program in the

future. She gave me an immediate “yah.” I asked her if she had any preference. She answered, “um (...) well my husband was like did a French immersion, I think, and he felt like it really helped him get jobs and stuff like But what’s the use of it in BC? You know. Um, it’s only going to help her with limited types of jobs, um, I don’t know, even nice if she could learn Cantonese or Mandarin cause that’s my ethnicity, so you know (...) I (...) I don’t know. Something about (...) you know she looks Chinese, and you know, I think it’s important to her (...) history.” Since this was the second time Lily mentioned Amber’s Chinese face and that it was important for her to speak Chinese, I was curious. I grappled with a way of articulating my question: “so did you ever feel as you were growing up, you look Chinese, yet, you don’t speak Chinese. Well, you speak limited Chinese, and you felt like you are not totally belonging to Canada (...) like did you feel, did you ever feel like you are supposed to speak (...)?” Lily answered, “yeah, I kind of felt, I definitely had like identity issues, like ‘what am I Canadian?’ and I felt like ‘people don’t understand me,’ but I lived in Asia, I felt like ‘I don’t understand these people, and I don’t feel like it’s me either.’ Yeah, I kind of felt like that (...)” I asked her if the way she looked made her feel she didn’t belong to Canada. She answered, “yah, like when they were saying about my face, I (...) I think so, I would think um, yeah, sometimes I felt like because I look Chinese, I really should speak Chinese.”

5.2.6 Having a Chinese face as a teacher: “Wow, you are one of us!”

As a teacher, however, she told me having a Chinese face had been helpful. “Even when I was in . . . the Canadian international school in China, basically all the students were Chinese descendants And as soon as they walk into the classroom, and see there is a Chinese face, they would just feel at ease. You know, there was a bit of (...) in other classes when there was like a Caucasian, it took them a while. There were just like I don’t trust this person, you know, a little bit of that. But right away, they were just like ‘wow, you are one of us!’ and just, even if the kids could speak a little bit of English, as soon as they see a Caucasian person, they would freeze like ‘huh!’, but with me, they were just like ‘ah.’ I would like re-phrase it in English, and somehow because it comes from like a Chinese face, they understood me completely. So there was a lot of that when I was overseas in China. And same thing here, a lot of Asian descent students, and I really feel like when they see me, they are like ‘oh you are one of us!’ You know what it’s like to live an immigrant life in (...) you

know especially this year, this year I taught older kids, and so if they got a bad mark, they would be like ‘you know what that means (...) like if we get a B, that’s like an Asian fail. You know how it is.’ And you know they would say stuff like that, and just like, there would be like that instant connection, yeah, just because of my face, cause I’m not speaking [Chinese] in my job, I speak completely in English.”

Not only through her appearance, but also through her teaching practice, she had tried to connect with her students. When Lily taught an ELL (English Language Learners) class, she encouraged her students to speak out in their first language, whether it was Chinese or Tamil. She said it helped her students improve their English a great deal once she started to encourage speaking in their first language. Even the students whose previous teachers reported that they had not learned English suddenly boosted their English skills. “When someone said that to them, ‘write it down in English’ . . . they are like ‘forget it, I don’t want to write.’ I would tell them ‘you know just say it in Chinese first, just think about it, flowing out of They would just say it to me in Cantonese, and I was learning from them too, so it was kind of fun (...) you know they learned so much.” However, Lily did not get support from other teachers. “There were a lot of people that were just like ‘well you are not helping them learn,’ stuff like that. ‘You are holding them back,’ you know, so feel like no other way to go except for stop them speaking Chinese.” I thought the reactions from other teachers were similar to Lily’s mother telling her as a child that speaking Chinese was “useless” and that she “gotta learn English.” However, there has been some change in her parents’ attitude toward their heritage: “I started educating them, about being Chinese, and they start taking in interest (...) so now, they kind of embraced the culture a bit more, and since then, they’ve gone back. I think after my dad was away [from Hong Kong] for thirty years, more than thirty years, he went back, he went back to Hong Kong.”

5.3 Analysis of Lily’s Story: Chinese Face and Shame

The visible manifestation of her Chineseness has been a recurring theme in Lily’s story. Lily spent her childhood immersed in Cantonese. However, after her grandparents passed away when she was 10 years old, she no longer had the opportunity to speak or listen to Cantonese. Her parents were “kind of self-hating Chinese people feeling ashamed of being Chinese.” Although Lily did not physically move to a new *field*, there was a tremendous change in the value of Cantonese after her grandparents passed away. “My mom

would look in the mirror and say, ‘you have a Chinese face but it’s useless, you live in Canada, you gotta learn English, you gotta learn French!’” According to her mother, there was no perceived capital value of the Chinese language in the *field* (Prairie Canada) they were situated. Not only did Lily lose connection with the Chinese language, she remarked that a sense of shame for being Chinese was instilled in her. Considering the fact that Lily specifically situated this scene in front of the mirror, I wondered how the two—learning Chinese and having a “Chinese face”—played out in her life. How are the two aspects of Chineseness related to each other?

In the neighbourhood in which she grew up, a small town near Edmonton where she was the only Chinese in her class, having a “Chinese face” was a marked feature. Her friends put their hands on her face and exclaimed, “it’s so flat!” I assumed that being marked for having a “Chinese face” by her friends would only make her distance herself from the Chinese language. However, as she later remarked, it was in fact during those times that she felt she should be speaking Chinese: “because I look Chinese, I really should speak Chinese.” Perhaps, the sense of not fully belonging to Canada, as she wondered, “‘what am I Canadian?’ and I felt like ‘people don’t understand me,’” led her to feel that she should speak the language of her people. She had been marked as different, and she wondered whether she should accept and embrace that difference. Although her mother tried to make Lily more “Canadian” by dismissing her “Chinese face” and only having her learn English and French, Lily could not escape her “Chinese face.”

However, when she moved to a new *field* (i.e. Ottawa) as a teenager, she met other Canadian-born Chinese students. For the first time in her life, she was able to find somebody just like her, as she exclaimed “I was like, ‘hey, I’m the same as you.’” It was then that she started to take an interest in learning Chinese language and culture in a proactive way. When she was 15 years old, she attended a class to learn Cantonese for the first time. Unlike her previous *field* in the suburb of Edmonton where there was no presence of Chinese around her, the new *field* in Ottawa clearly highlighted what she had missed out as Chinese. She wanted to know what her parents had been “hiding” from her as she realized she didn’t know anything about Chinese culture. This episode shows that habitus is not a fixed disposition that determines one’s practice, but it is subject to constant reconstruction. As Reay (2004) argues, “when habitus encounters a field with which it is not familiar, the resulting

disjunctures can generate change and transformation” (p. 436). In Lily’s case, despite her account that her parents were “so resistant” to teaching their daughters Chinese culture and language and that their shame of being Chinese was instilled in her, Lily was able to overcome the bodily emotions of shame, at least to the extent of reaching out to her heritage language and culture. Her first attempt to learn Chinese, however, was dismissed by the local heritage language school teacher (see next section for further discussion). After quitting her local CHL school, she had a growing desire to learn Chinese. A Mandarin course was offered at university but because she only knew Cantonese, she felt like it was “too far reaching.” In addition, Mandarin had a low capital value at that time in the late 1990s and did not interest her.

When she graduated from university, she made a proactive choice to move to a Cantonese-speaking city and “know what it’s like to be a Chinese person.” Her decision to learn Cantonese can be understood as an investment to become part of the imagined community of Cantonese speakers and to become the person she imagined she might become (her “imagined identity”) (Darvin & Norton, 2015; Norton, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2011). As her story shows, she worked very hard and learned how to speak and write at a high level. She was surprised at how much she was able to learn. She attributes her success in learning Chinese, in addition to her strong investment and a strong desire to learn, to the fact that she had listened to the language since she was very young. In other words, she had the linguistic habitus—the inculcation of Cantonese that she heard from her grandparents since she was so young—that was ready to be utilized if she was placed in the right field. Canada was not the right field for her habitus, not even the CHL school. Her new field, an international school in a Cantonese city, was different from Canada. First and foremost, Cantonese had capital value in the city. In addition, Lily was positioned in a unique situation in the Cantonese city because she was not expected to speak Cantonese. As she remarked, “everyone I worked with didn’t know Cantonese at all, and I kind of had this magic of two languages.” For the first time in her life, her limited linguistic habitus regarding Cantonese became an asset.

Here, the “Chinese face” theme was brought up again. The story contrasts the self which Lily narrated at the timescale in the “Cantonese city” with the prior self in Canada, whose physical features were such an object of curiosity to her white friends. The new field gave a different meaning to her “Chinese face.” At the international school, students

appreciated her “Chinese face” as they exclaimed, “you are one of us!” Lily recalled that as soon as she walked in the classroom, the students would “feel at ease” because she had a “Chinese face.” Indeed, her face was not to be marked anymore. This is the very first moment in her life story when having a “Chinese face” and learning Chinese came together as positive dispositions. At last, there was harmony between her habitus and field: her “Chinese face” and her ability to speak both English and Chinese were perceived as capital in this field. This is not to say, however, that she finally found where she truly belonged. She remarked, “[In Canada] I felt like ‘people don’t understand me,’ but I lived in Asia, I felt like ‘I don’t understand these people, and I don’t feel like it’s me either.’” Perhaps, growing up in Canada, many forms of habitus were inculcated in Lily that were not in harmony with the Chinese city as a field. An imagined community, “a desired community that offers possibilities for an enhanced range of identity options in the future” (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 415), is indeed only an “imagined” one. What happens when the language learners encounter the “reality” that is different from what they have imagined? In Lily’s case, once she left China, she stopped learning the language. She remarked she felt terrible about not keeping up with it, but at the same time there was no incentive for her to resume her study. Here, we can see the limited effects of one’s imagination on learning, whether it is an imagined community or imagined identity.

At the time of the interview, she was teaching English for English as an Additional Language (EAL) students at a public school in Metro Vancouver where the majority of the students are of Asian descent. Just like when she was teaching at the international school, she noticed that the students felt comfortable being taught by her because of her face. She remarked, “there would be like that instant connection, yeah, just because of my face, cause I’m not speaking in my job, I speak completely in English.” Her “Chinese face” is capitalized in the EAL field among her students. On the other hand, when she tried to capitalize her students’ first languages that are not English, other teachers criticized her. The students’ linguistic habitus was not seen as valuable capital by other teachers at school. Lily was told that she should stop letting them speak Cantonese, and that she was “holding them back.” These teachers seem to be repeating the same message as Lily’s mother: English is valuable; Chinese is useless, or even harmful.

As we can see, in contrast to what her mother told her in front of the mirror, Lily

seems to have embraced both her “Chinese face” and the Chinese language as “an important part” of her. As a mother of her two-year-old daughter Amber, she remarked, “I’m coming to, like, this full circle with my daughter.” Yet, embracing her “Chinese face” does not mean that it has become an unmarked feature to her. She repeatedly told me that she wanted her daughter to learn Chinese because she was “gonna look Chinese.” It is interesting that Lily kept saying that her daughter “looks Chinese,” not that she *is* Chinese. It is indeed the *markedness* of the look of her daughter that matters when Lily projects her own childhood on her daughter. We can see here how habitus is not about reproducing the same practice as her mother, yet it never disappears. As Bourdieu (1977a, 1977b, 1990a, 1991) remarked, individuals are not entirely free in changing the habitus. It can be changed only within the constraints of the socio-historical contexts. That is because individuals recognize such material changes through the filter of the primary or earlier habitus they have already acquired. In Lily’s case, despite the fact that her parents were “self-hating Chinese,” and Lily felt as if there were no point of learning Chinese, the new fields which she encountered in her teenage and adulthood made her see the value of learning Chinese. Her idea about having a Chinese face has changed from something shameful to something that she could make use of in her work. Nevertheless, that bodily emotion of being marked by her friends has not disappeared. Rather than reproducing the same practice as her mother, trying to erase her daughter’s Chineseness as much as possible by not letting her learn Chinese, Lily wants her daughter to embrace her Chinese-ness because no matter how well she speaks English, she will always look Chinese.

Lily is making every effort to give her daughter the opportunity to learn Chinese. However, as her endeavor for her daughter’s Chinese language learning shows, she does not have full agency in providing Chinese language education. Indeed, today’s Vancouver, as a field, is different from the field where Lily grew up. The Chinese language has a much higher capital value, as people came to her Cantonese meet-up group thinking “Chinese is going to take over the world.” However, there is a structural lack of resources to learn Chinese in today’s Vancouver. As Lily’s account of the after-school Chinese class shows, Vancouver’s heritage schools resemble her own experience attending the Chinese heritage school in Edmonton. Despite Lily’s desire, the possibility of her daughter acquiring the Chinese language remains unclear. I will discuss this issue of limited access to CHL learning

in today's Vancouver in depth in Chapter 8. On a positive note, Lily has been "educating" her "self-hating Chinese" parents to embrace their heritage and their language. Although it is uncertain to what extent her mother would embrace her "Chinese face," there has been some change. Lily influenced her parents, who took a trip back to Hong Kong for the first time in more than 30 years. Habitus construction is not necessarily a linear process that is inculcated by the old to the young, but rather can work in both directions.

5.4 Emily

5.4.1 Introduction

Emily was born and raised in Metro Vancouver. Although her parents spoke Cantonese to her, English became her main language as she grew up. At the time of the interview, she expressed how difficult it was to communicate with her parents because her parents did not speak English well, while she did not speak Cantonese well enough. She had two children at the time of the interview, and the oldest son was attending an early-start Mandarin English bilingual program.

5.4.2 Childhood: "I was more teased for being Chinese, not for speaking but just being Chinese"

"So I was born here in Vancouver, and grew up in Vancouver, like right in Vancouver, but we did move to the suburb when I was 9 years old, so I went to elementary school in Vancouver with, yes, it was mostly Asian children. And my parents, and we had my grandmother living with us as well, so we spoke Chinese, Cantonese at home, so I guess the only time I spoke English was in school, or with my friends." I commented, "but your friends were almost all Asians." Emily responded, "They were mostly Asian . . . but when we moved to the suburb, it's the opposite. They were all Caucasians, and I was one of three Chinese students in the school." Emily told me she spoke Cantonese until she went to kindergarten: "I have an older brother, three years older, my mom tells me that an old Chinese woman looked after me when I was a baby up until school, and my grandmother looked after us when my parents were working." I asked her if she had any difficulty speaking English for the first time at kindergarten. Emily answered, "no I don't remember too much difficulties, but maybe I was quiet, and didn't talk too much, and listened more maybe."

In the suburb of Vancouver in the 1980s, Emily's parents opened a Chinese restaurant. Emily helped her parents after school. She communicated in Cantonese with her parents but because the customers were nearly all English-speaking Caucasians, she spoke English with the customers. Emily told me about her parents: "They are from Hong Kong, and China, so my dad has been in Canada since he was probably 16, so he's been here a long time, so his English is more broken. It's better than my mom's, he can carry on a conversation, but their education is very low." I asked her if she ever felt embarrassed speaking Cantonese. She replied, "There was racism there at that time. I was more teased for being Chinese, not for speaking but just being Chinese in that area." I asked her if it was hard. She recalled, "Yeah, there were some (...) some racial things in that (...)" She didn't go into further detail. I somehow could not bring myself to ask for more details either. The tone of her voice and her eyes looking down the table kept me from asking for more. She told me the "racial things" continued up until she was in high school: "It got better but there was still very few Chinese people. So I kept in touch with my friends here in Vancouver, Chinese friends (laugh). But I only saw them a few times a year, but um (...) it wasn't too bad, so yah I was mostly English by that time."

Emily did not attend any of the weekend Chinese schools to learn Cantonese: "[My parents] were busy working and they probably just thought just learn at home, and they are not that educated so they just didn't realize the importance of educating their children? (laugh)" I wondered if she always communicated in Cantonese with her parents, asking: "So with your parents, they always spoke in Cantonese to you for sure, but were you always responding in Cantonese? Or did it become difficult for you to say something complicated . . . as you get older?" Emily answered, "yes . . . I still I respond in English sometimes, yah I definitely start to respond in English."

I asked her if she ever felt disadvantaged at school because her parents were not able to help her with her studies. She replied, "They never read to me, you know. Here, I read to my kids, my son every night, right? And they never read to me or anything so it's like, so that's something I never did a lot when I was young was to read." However, despite this perceived lack of educational preparation at home, she did well at school: "I did okay, I mean I did well enough to go to university, and get a good job, you know. I wish I had a doctor or dentistry or anything, but a good job Yeah, but parents were not involved in my

education, or anything. It's a miracle that I decided to go on to university on my own, you know."

5.4.3 Young adulthood: "I just wish I kept up with it"

After graduating from high school, Emily moved back to Vancouver to attend university: "I moved back to Vancouver and lived with my grandmother And in university, there was a lot of Chinese people . . . so I got a lot of Chinese friends and they (...) I would say they spoke some Chinese but it was mostly English. But I would hear Chinese here and there." I asked her if she took any Chinese courses at university. Emily responded, "I wanted to take Mandarin . . . but I guess like course loads of Sciences, and I wish I had, and it was on the lists of things, class to take, but I never took it because I heard it was really hard." She also told me she wanted to take French: "I took French from grade 4 to grade 12, and I really enjoyed it. I actually did really well in it, and I should have continued in university, and then, I didn't I really wanted to, I really like languages. Yah, and I did take Japanese one semester because I needed an Arts course, and it was in the summer time, but I loved it. It was great, I learned a lot. It was easy to learn, but I didn't have anybody to practice with . . . but it was great, I really like languages." However, she did not have a chance to take any Chinese classes: "I never took any Chinese, Cantonese or Mandarin (...) I may have taken one, but I never finished it. Because my husband was taking Cantonese, so I took it with him but we never finished it."

She told me she had been to China several times. I asked her if she found it easy to communicate in Cantonese. She replied, "Yah, 'cause we were immersed in Chinese, so we have to speak Chinese. They don't understand English that well, so and everything is in Chinese, so yah, when you are there, and you are talking and listening and hearing it 24/7, you kind of pick up a few words, phrases, and understand the sentences more, and learn how to speak." I asked her if that was one of the moments she felt so glad she spoke Cantonese. She agreed enthusiastically, "Yah yah, that's right, that's right, happy to have that second language. I just wish I had kept up with it since it's important to have a second language." I asked her, "What do you mean by keeping up . . . you still speak Cantonese with your parents, right?" Emily explained what she meant: "Yeah, probably, so here is the problem, they don't speak English very well, I don't speak Chinese very well, so our conversations are limited now 'cause I can't go to them and show them in English cause they won't understand it. I

would have to try it and convert it to Cantonese, that's broken, when it comes to more in-depth you know I wish I knew more vocabulary and just yah, yah! It's tough." The tone of her voice went higher, mixed with a sigh, and I felt her disappointment.

5.4.4 Parenthood: "Actually my husband wanted more Mandarin for my son more than I did"

Emily's oldest son who is in Grade 1 is learning Mandarin at school. I asked her why she wanted him to learn Mandarin. She answered, "I guess, you know, if you live in Vancouver, and if you go to Richmond, you'll see these Chinese, and you hear all the Mandarin. And then all the real estate, when we went to a real estate, you hear all these people coming from China buying here houses, and you just hear it when you are looking at open houses. You hear people speaking in Mandarin and thinking I wish I could understand, could speak it. I don't know, get some better deals or something. Or it's being immersed in that Mandarin language hearing it more than Cantonese made me think, we gotta (...) you hear China is a power house . . . And actually my husband wanted more Mandarin for my son more than I did. (laugh)" Her son had been exposed to three languages at preschool other than English, namely French, Mandarin and Spanish. I was very excited to hear about the preschool. I asked for more information, thinking maybe my daughter should go there. Emily remarked, "So I guess when he was learning Mandarin there, it was really good, and you know, being a new parent, reading up on children's educations and stuff, and because I enjoyed languages, and we always knew having second language is really important, whatever French, Mandarin or Arabic right, but we decided, living in Vancouver . . . French is not useful unless you work for the federal government in Ottawa, or if you want promotions There are some jobs where you are required to be bilingual, but not if you work in the provinces, so only if you want a job in Ottawa . . . If you speak French, there might be a few more jobs available, so we just thought, starting from preschool we thought this is great to learn second languages. . . . but we didn't want French actually. We weren't into the French immersion schools." She further explained why: "I knew, I have friends . . . who were in French immersion in the same year as me, but they were in French immersion, and I look at them now and they didn't really do anything with it (...) Only one of them became a French teacher. . . . So yah, we weren't too crazy about French, but if there were no options it would have been French, but then there were these other options, and there was

Mandarin, and Montessori We put our names in every program, for kindergarten. We never realized how difficult kindergarten decision would be. We didn't want to send him to the school down the street, so we applied for all of them, and we never even got, we weren't even on the lists for all of them, we were on the waiting lists But for the Mandarin one, they called 'don't worry, he'll get in,' because they said that they knew six kids ahead of him who didn't speak English, because they said you have to be able to speak English to get into the program, because they don't have the resources to teach English and Mandarin, so they said 'don't worry he'll get in.'" Emily asked her son what he did with the teacher during the test: "They ask some questions; 'how old are you? Do you have a brother?' Basic questions; 'what do you like to do?' I guess they want you to respond in English. And they might play some games, talk about colours, basic questions, I guess they just want that response He passed the test, and then there were this spot, and he got in. So yah, the reason we put him in Mandarin was we want Mandarin more because we knew that for business in the future." I asked Emily, "So not much to do with your being Chinese?" She responded, "Well, no we wanted one of the language from one of us but I don't speak really speak Mandarin so it wasn't because of that, right?" I asked, "Well, kind of related still same Chinese (...) do you think that?" She replied, "That might have been a li---ttle." She sounded unsure. So I asked Emily if it was more about the investment for her son's future than about his heritage. She immediately responded with a bright tone, "Yah, yah, more of an investment for our children for work and just opportunities."

Emily showed some concern about the Mandarin program, especially regarding the curriculum that did not seem to be well set at the time of the interview. I asked her, "Let's say . . . your son is going to be in the program no matter what, no matter what the structure is, your child is in. Would you prefer having Mandarin speaking children in the classroom, or do you prefer the environment right now where everybody is English speaker." Emily immediately replied, "Oh yah, it will probably be better if there were Mandarin-speaking children 'cause then they would converse in Mandarin more. I don't think they are doing that right now other than in the classroom. I don't think they do it at recess or lunch." I commented, "Some parents are worried that they are not going to be able to help with their homework." Emily agreed, "oh yah, that was a big one." I asked her if she felt the same way. Her voice went high and loud: "It's huge! That's why we wanna speak Mandarin. I am

taking Mandarin right now, I hope to keep up with it, so yah, that was one of the big things ‘cause even I hear from my French immersion friends whose kids are in French immersion, from Grade 3, 4, they are having tough time. Their French, teaching, helping with their homework. That’s in French, and this is you know Mandarin, we’re not gonna do it, and husband has no Mandarin. He’s not gonna help. He’ll help with the English part so one of us has to help then.” Emily has been planning to give her son the opportunity to learn Mandarin outside the classroom: “And the other thing that we are thinking of doing is that we wanna take our kids to Taiwan or China, in the summer time, like or a Mandarin immersion for three weeks or one month? So that we are all immersed in it.” She was already planning to travel to Taiwan for a couple of months that summer and put her son to the local school for at least a month. I wanted to hear from her more about her thoughts on helping her son with Mandarin. I explained to her about the program in Edmonton Chinese bilingual program where they accept children from Mandarin speaking backgrounds as well. I told her about my experience at one conference where I met parents of the program in Edmonton that they were very surprised to learn that Vancouver parents were very worried about helping their children with Chinese homework. She answered, “Yah, I don’t know. I think the group of parents who put their kids in these specific programs, we have something . . . we have a plan, something, I don’t know We wanna be involved, just don’t wanna send the kids to school. Yah, wanna know what he’s learning, and help him, his learning, and I guess, I don’t know (...) I guess (...) yah it’s weird that we all feel this way. (laugh)”

Emily is thinking of putting her younger daughter in the same school. I commented, “So you like it, apparently.” She answered, “No, it’s more for logistics. There is no way I am sending my daughter to another school, dropping one off there, and one off there, don’t wanna do that. No . . . and it’s better if they both learn the same language, and they can communicate at home, right or bad. (laugh)” Finally, I asked her what she thought about her children’s language education compared to her own. She responded, “I guess I’m glad that, ‘cause I have some Cantonese, although my son doesn’t, my kids don’t speak Cantonese, I’m glad that I’m happy that we put him in a second language program that he’s got (...) because I think having a second language kind of tweaks your brain a bit, yah, you would just think differently. You are more open-minded and then, and then with him being in that

Mandarin culture, and . . . you know we live in Vancouver and there are so many Asians so it's good to have the second language.”

5.5 Analysis of Emily's Story: Teased for being Chinese

Emily's stories about her early childhood exposure to Chinese are similar to Lily's stories in that they were both immersed in Cantonese through their grandmothers. However, unlike Lily, Emily's parents did not tell her that Cantonese was useless in her life in Canada or that she should only learn English and French. Therefore, Cantonese remained in use inside the house even after the family moved away from her grandmother's home in Vancouver to a suburb of Vancouver. Unlike Vancouver where most of her friends were Asian, the new neighbourhood was predominantly white, and she was “one of three Chinese students in the school.” She recalled, “There was racism there at that time. I was more teased for being Chinese, not for speaking but just being Chinese in that area.” In a way, this is similar to Lily's experience about her “flat” face being marked by her friends. However, while Lily remarked that it was those times when she felt that she should be speaking Chinese, Emily's account indicates that it almost didn't matter what language she spoke: How she looked mattered more than what she spoke. Although Cantonese continued to be the primary language used with her parents, she “was mostly English” by the time she was in high school. Despite the fact that Emily's parents were not “self-hating Chinese” like Lily's mother, and despite the fact that they kept speaking Cantonese to Emily, Emily still was not able to maintain her Chinese language skills. It came to the point that she could not fully communicate with her parents, as she remarked, “here is the problem, they don't speak English very well, I don't speak Chinese very well, so our conversations are limited now 'cause I can't go to them and show them in English 'cause they won't understand it.” Clearly, in the field in which she grew up, namely Langley, the Chinese language was not valued as a form of capital while “just being Chinese” was enough to be teased.³⁶ It was not until she moved back to Vancouver to attend university that she met many other Chinese Canadian students like herself. She was no longer teased for “being Chinese.” This drastic change in field enabled her to be interested in taking courses in Mandarin. However, the

³⁶ Emily's parents ran a Chinese restaurant, which was filled with local non-Chinese customers. It was interesting that while she was being teased for being Chinese, her heritage food was popular.

university program structure did not encourage students to take language courses. In her program, learning a language was not given high capital value. Hence, she had to give up learning Mandarin at that time. Again, it shows how agency works in a limited way. Despite the fact that Emily was interested in learning languages, the competing forms of capital in her field (e.g., science courses versus language courses) prevented her from pursuing her interest. She remarked, “I never took any Chinese, Cantonese or Mandarin (...) I may have taken one, but I never finished it.”

Today, Emily and her husband are making efforts to provide their children with the opportunity to learn different languages. As her anecdote about real estate business and Mandarin shows, speaking Mandarin may lead to more economic capital in today’s Metro Vancouver. In fact, they perceived that Mandarin has a higher market value than French, and therefore, when it was time to register their child for different special programs for kindergarten, they put a Mandarin bilingual program as their first choice over a French immersion program. Unlike Lily, Emily did not produce any accounts regarding how her son’s face looked. I assumed, given that her husband was Lebanese, her children did not have the typical “Chinese face” in Lily’s sense. Although Emily wanted either her or her husband’s heritage language, namely Arabic or Cantonese to be taught to her children, they ended up being invested in Mandarin education. As Emily remarked, having her son learn Mandarin had little to do with his Chinese heritage, but it was more about the investment for future opportunities that Mandarin might open up for her son. In addition, she sees the educational benefit of learning a second language that “tweaks your brain a little bit differently.” She appreciates that the second language, being Mandarin, it is great that he will be open-minded to the Mandarin culture because “there are so many Asians” in Vancouver. It is interesting to see how Emily is positioning her son in today’s field as the one who has to be open-minded to the Chinese, and not as the potential victim of close-mindedness that she once was back in Langley. This shows a stark contrast from Lily’s reasoning with regards to why she wanted her daughter to learn Chinese. In fact, Emily’s anecdote about her son being accepted to the Mandarin bilingual program after skipping ahead of six children on the waiting lists who did not speak English indicates how her son and herself were positioned as the English-speaking mainstream within the field of school registration. After the secretary talked to Emily on the phone, for some reasons, she was able to jump up the waiting lists

before her son took the English test. As I recall her sinking voice tone and her downward gaze when she told me about the discrimination she experienced up until high school and how she stopped talking about it and concluded, “it was hard,” I would argue that the bodily emotions of being shamed by her schoolmates have not disappeared. However, she has experienced layers of changes in the field since then. There has been a significant increase in the Chinese population in Metro Vancouver, and an accompanying increase in the capital value of Chinese. At the same time, her positionality in the field has changed from somebody who was teased just for being Chinese to somebody who grew up in Canada and speaks English without a marked accent and who is accorded the privilege of having her son accepted as an English speaker to the Mandarin program ahead of six other families.

5.6 Jack

5.6.1 Introduction

Jack came to Canada from Taiwan as a young child. Although his parents tried to have him learn Mandarin, he grew up not learning the language. However, after he graduated from college, he decided to learn Chinese as he moved to Taiwan to take a job. While he worked very hard to learn the language, he addressed how he did not feel like he belonged in Taiwan. When he came back to Canada, he went through a serious identity crisis struggling to find where he truly belonged. At the time of the interview, he was the father of two children, and his older son has been learning Mandarin at one of the bilingual programs.

5.6.2 Childhood: “I just didn’t want to be different, that’s all”

“I don’t have very much memory of Taiwan because I think by the age of three and a half or maybe four, my family, my father and my mother picked up their family which is me, my big sister and my big brother, all three of us, well all five of us basically immigrated to Toronto, Canada, and that would be 1973, I think. So I was probably four years old, maybe three and a half or something like that when that happened. So um, I don’t really have very many memories of Taiwan, or living in that particular Chinese culture, from that particular part of my life because I was really much too young for that, maybe just a couple of weird dreamy like type of memories and that’s about it.” His parents insisted that the family speak Mandarin in the house because “they thought that was really important.” Jack explains, “it was probably important because their English never got really well, really really very low

advanced anyways. My parents, you know as soon as they came to Canada, they had to work jobs, they had to make some money, so they didn't really have time to learn English? You know, night courses and stuff like that, they never really (...) I think my mom might have tried a little bit, but I don't think she had enough support for it, you know? It's a lot more important to actually be in an environment where you need to speak English (...) my mom was never in that kind of environment. I mean the jobs that she could only find were kind of like short order cooks or something like that, right? So it wasn't very conducive to learn English for her." Despite this family environment, Jack remarked, "I think I grew up for the most part pretty much not really paying too much attention to my Chinese heritage, even though my parents tried to make me pay attention to it . . . I think I felt a little bit ashamed of it, like a lot of kids, felt a little bit ashamed of how my parents' English was so poor, (laugh) and um, all those things, right?"

Jack grew up in a neighbourhood where the demographics "were primarily pretty mixed, very multicultural," and he is "very proud of that fact." He remarked, "I think I learned a lot about different cultures and other types of people because of that, and also, it caused me to grow up with a very open attitude about cultures and different races, um (...) because as a kid you can see that um kids can get along pretty well without actually worrying about how they come from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds, right? And I carry that kind of value with me. As an adult of course it's changed those values for me, I think about it a lot more sophisticated, you know, much more sophisticated manner than I did when I was as a kid, but overall, I grew up with a lot of Cantonese speakers around, so we always spoke English cause I didn't really understand Cantonese, and they are mostly Cantonese. I mean most of the Chinese immigrants at the time were from Hong Kong You know it was a lower middle class, working class neighbourhood, and so there are a lot of immigrants from all over the world. We had Jamaican, Guyanese, Indians, it was (...) I really liked that, I really liked having a lot different friends. . . . I also came to quick realization that even the Chinese that I spoke at home, wasn't the Chinese that most of the Chinese kids were speaking which was always Cantonese." When I asked him if there were any Mandarin speaking children in his neighbourhood, he said, "Not really, my family whenever I met another kid that actually spoke Mandarin, I would automatically feel some kind of close

affinity with this kid. (laugh) But (...) that only happened like once or twice, in my life.” He added, “during public school.”

Jack stayed in Toronto until he was 18 years old but he did not really learn Chinese outside the house. He recalled, “My parents tried to send me to Chinese school on maybe three, on three different occasions I guess there’s not much to tell because I think on all three occasions, I think maybe they tried to send me to Chinese school when I was in grade three and four, and um (...) and I had another friend who also spoke Chinese and both of us went there, and then he quit, and as soon as he quit, I quit, so we just quit. We didn’t want to try very hard. Uh, and then . . . even when I was in Grade 10, my parents tried to get me back in the Chinese school, and then I was in a classroom where there are all these 10 year old, and I was a 16 year old kid, in the same class as them, stuff like that. And then, in that high school period, I think I might have tried, I actually put in an effort to study really hard for about four months and then, I quit again cause high school just got too busy for me. Overall, I just didn’t see the applicability of learning the language, and also made me feel a little bit like I stood out, right? Like all other kids got to go home and watch cartoons or play football after school. How come I sit in more classes? So I didn’t like that, and I also at that time didn’t value Chinese language like I do now. Um (...) and I just didn’t want to be different, that’s all.” I commented, “I don’t know anybody who enjoyed going to Chinese school when they were little.” He laughed out loud.

5.6.3 Young adulthood: “I decided that I really wanted to learn Chinese”

Jack moved to Montreal to attend university in the late 1980s. He recalled, “I think my parents had always made me feel really guilty for never having to really learn Chinese that well. I mean, they weren’t totally fair when I think about it now because at the end of the day, I was four years old when I came to Canada, while my brother was 14 years old when he came to Canada, and my sister was 11 years old when they came to Canada, so obviously they had a lot more education in the Chinese language than I did, right? So I was always made fun of by my parents and my brother, not so much my sister, for not speaking Chinese very well. So that got to the point where I just didn’t want to learn anymore, because they kind of discouraged me a little bit by making fun of me so much, so after a while, I just didn’t want to learn it at all.” However, his attitude changed by the end of university in the early 1990s: “By the time I was around 22 or 23, I really wanted to travel, so I traveled to

Colombia, and I traveled to a couple of places, and I really wanted to travel to Asia, and I thought that was time for me to also go to where I was born, didn't know anything about Taiwan at that time, didn't know anything about China at the time, not a whole lot. I didn't even know that there was actually a cultural difference between the Taiwanese that live in Taiwan and my parents, who are culturally Shanghainese people that moved to Taiwan you know after the mass exodus after the civil war in China, and who started a new life there So at that point of time, that's when I decided that I really wanted to learn Chinese. So I lived in Taiwan for about a year, when I was in (...) I think I was 23 at that time, I was there with my wife, who I mean the woman that who is my wife right now, and I studied pretty hard, I gotta say. I was teaching English to little kids, making money." Jack didn't stay in Taipei, but in the south area of Taiwan, "which is a lot more Taiwanese than Taipei." He laughed and continued, "so I really noticed a difference between my culture and the Taiwanese culture. So I lived there for about a year, and I think I made myself study for about three or four hours a day, basically. . . . I didn't really take classes, to be honest with you, I just got myself a couple of dictionaries, a couple of workbooks . . . At that point, my language ability was like a third grader's, and I was also illiterate. I knew how to write a few characters but not that much, so what I wanted to do first and foremost, was to learn how to write characters and how to read characters. So you probably have an idea that to learn that is nothing but just write, repetition, memorization of characters, right? There are some things to do to help yourself remember how to write the characters, right? But it's not like English where you learn how to spell and you can sound out a whole word by just looking up the letters. So a lot of time, I was just practicing the whole time, and my goal was to really get to the point where I can read a Chinese newspaper. Didn't quite make that goal, right? Need more than a year probably. You know I increased my vocabulary, up to maybe about 2500 words or something like that, which was fine. And I think that was as far." He concluded, "I think that's pretty much the extent my education of the Chinese language (...) since then I haven't had a real chance to take it any further. And now I live such a busy life, I don't have a chance to do so."

I asked him about what changed him from being discouraged from wanting to learn the language to having a desire to learn the language. He took some time to think about it, and asked himself, "what made me want to go to Taiwan than anywhere else, and then learn the language (...)" Then, he told me: "I think I was thinking about going to Taiwan, or going

to (...) you know what, I don't know if it was necessarily Taiwan, that I really wanted to go to. I think I just wanted to go to Asia, you know. I looked into going to Japan to teach English, um (...) but then I was told that if I was (...) if I looked Asian, nobody wanted to learn English from an Asian looking person. . . I needed to get a job in an architecture firm, and my dad knew somebody that was in Taiwan, and he said, 'do you wanna go and work there for a while?' and I thought 'okay, fine.' And since that opportunity came up, I think I just decided, okay well then, I'm gonna also take the opportunity to learn Chinese. Um, at that time, what made me want to learn Chinese, certainly there was like always that overhanging guilt that my parents like did such a great job in breeding in myself, which was that you know, you should have learned Chinese, right?" Also, the year before that he spent two months in Colombia, and "learned a little bit of Spanish." He remarked, "I found that incredibly gratifying being able to communicate with other people and their language. I never experienced that before . . . As soon as I experienced how fun it could be to experience other cultures, and also, definitely realize when you travel for the first time that if you don't speak the language, you are not experiencing the culture as intensely as if you actually spoke the language. So that's why I decided 'okay, I want to learn as many language as I can.' if I'm in Taiwan, I might as well learn Chinese. If I'm in Quebec, I might as well learn French." I asked him, "So not much to do with, um of course there was a guilt, not learning Chinese, you know, but not so much to do with your identity or heritage at that point?" Jack replied, "I think you are right, it's a tough question to answer, but I think you are right about that (...) um, I don't (...) I think I think at the time, I only had some very vague and misdirected notions about my (...) my heritage culture for my parents . . . but I think I was more interested in just becoming a worldly person."

5.6.4 Adulthood: "I went through a very serious identity crisis"

After returning from Taiwan in the mid 1990s, Jack and his wife stayed in Montreal for a few more years: "We ended up staying there for about another eight years, 'cause I actually wanted to learn French, more than anything else at that time. (laugh) This is interesting for you, this is interesting, probably. When I got back from Asia, I went through a very serious identity crisis, yah, because I realize (...) I don't know, I just had certain sensitivities about culture and about my place in society and um (...) and I got, I was very very confused about who I was (...) if I was culturally Chinese . . . 'Was I really Chinese?"

How Canadian a person am I?’ I also felt like I needed to prove my (...) my Canadian-ness to everybody in Canada. (...) That’s why I wanted to learn French.” I asked him if he ever felt like an outsider, not being Canadian enough in his childhood growing up in Toronto. He answered, “I think I had a certain amount of outsider experience but I think I kind of suppressed that feeling. For all my childhood, and I pretty much wanted to pretend that it wasn’t true. (...) That I wasn’t viewed as an outsider by various segments of the Canadian population. Um, I wanted the utopic type of situation that I found myself in where all my friends were of all these different ethnic, ethnicities. I wanted that to be like everywhere I went in Canada, and I you know, living in Montreal you realize it’s not like that. (...) And then you grow up and you realize in the adult world, it’s not that simple as well. And then you go travel around the world, you learn about history, and learn about how maybe different non-white ethnicities treat each other poorly?” I laughed and agreed. And then, simultaneously, we exclaimed, “but they treat white people really really well!”

Jack continued his narrative, saying: “that made me really frustrated as well. So um, all of those things kind of put me into this identity crisis where I needed to figure out who I was . . . By that time I had come back to Canada and realized that I was Canadian. Believe it or not, when I went to Taiwan, I thought maybe (...) maybe I would end up living there. And then . . . it only took me about two months living there to realize ‘aghhhhhh! My gosh, this is not my homeland at all!’ right? ‘This is not where I feel comfortable, this is not where I can live forever.’ So when I came back from traveling, I realized I had to embrace Canada, I had to prove to myself, to everybody that I could be really really Canadian.” I was intrigued to hear this. I asked Jack, “in Taiwan, did you, whenever you talked to Taiwanese people, did you make sure people know that you are Canadian? . . . How Canadian were you in Taiwan?” He responded: “I think when I spoke to people, or citizens of Taiwan, they automatically knew that I wasn’t Taiwanese, they automatically knew that I was different. So there you go, I’m in a situation where I’m starting to realize that everywhere I go on this world, people view me as different, so that was probably part of my identity crisis right there, right? Even though I was born there, I didn’t have citizenship there, and everybody was treating me as different anyways. And I don’t know if it comes down to the way I look, because sometimes whenever, like I’ve been to various parts of China now, and including Taiwan, and everybody tells me I look Chinese but or maybe I’m not. Maybe I’m Japanese, maybe I’m

from Korean, maybe I'm from the south part if I'm in the north part of China. And if I'm in the south part of China, I'm from the north part of China, everybody thinks I'm just not from their region, right? Although I have full Chinese blood, I just don't know why people, like judge me that way? As soon as I open my mouth, then they are really really sure that I'm not from their particular area because my accent is a very strange kind of accent that's based on the way Taiwanese people speak Mandarin. There is a Taiwanese accent involved in there, not to mention that some of my vocabulary are just kind of like Shanghainese that's been kind of spliced in there by my parents, basically. So I think to answer your question, I was very different and . . . all viewed me as different, and you know, a couple of times they even refused to associate themselves with me as soon as they found out that I was the son of mainlanders. Um (...) but that was a small minority, most people I think were generally pretty friendly. Yah."

I asked him, "did you feel more (...) like love towards Canada when you were in Taiwan? 'Oh I really am Canadian' that kind of feeling." He immediately responded, "Absolutely, yah! I also felt uncomfortable with the (...) with looking like everybody else around because I've always been really enjoying looking different from most people (laugh), actually, I always like that right?" I laughed as he continued: "That's another identity crisis too, suddenly if your identity is rooted in looking somewhat different, when you are surrounded by people that look more like you, 'what is my identity?'" I added, "I'm not so special anymore." He responded, "Exactly!" He elaborated more on his desire to learn French: "I felt like I had a higher claim of legitimacy as a citizen of Canada if I was fully bilingual in English and French because that is Canadian, and they are both Canada's official languages. And also I knew that I could brag about it in front of everybody who didn't speak the two languages of Canada." I asked him how well he learned French. He answered, "Pretty well. I didn't master the language, it's really hard to master any language I think, um (...) but I got to a point where I could hold the business meeting in French. I don't think I got to the point where I could actually write an Email in French though without making any grammatical errors cause that's impossible." When I asked Jack if he used French for his work, he replied, "Not a whole lot, but it has certainly opened doors for me and along my career path it has helped to get me to the place where I am right now in my career. I mean, my first job when I came to Vancouver was actually translating a French set of specification,

building specifications into English. It was really dry work, but it was easy, like I don't think that I could actually translate from English to French, but French to English is no problem, yah." I praised his efforts, and said, "So it's useful, definitely, the language."

But his point was not so much about the practical usefulness of the language, as he explained to me: "Yeah, well, I mean, my attitude is definitely like knowing as many language as possible, is very useful, not just from a selfish career oriented kind of outlook but also um (...) I remain very kind of strongly idealistic about the future about world, and I really feel like we have to have mutual understanding between all the nations and between all citizens of the world. Otherwise, we're not gonna make it, right? We are just not gonna survive. And I think it's kind of an optimism that's necessary, especially when you have kids, right? I used to let myself get depressed before I had kids, I used to let myself get depressed about how the world seems to be just going more and more negative, and sometimes we always reverted to the wars and tribalist thoughts that actually really annoyed me. (...) I was always annoyed by the kind of like tribalism that I experienced when I was in Quebec, you know. (...) I was in Quebec just when the referendum³⁷ had had ramped up and then finished, and that was always annoying, you always get annoyed, you get highly philosophical about it, and get annoyed by how much of the human race just can't seem to learn how to love each other. But for me, I just feel like, if you wanna understand people, you will wanna learn as many language as possible, and I always wanted to learn English, French, Chinese, and Spanish, as I figured out with those four languages, I can probably speak to about 90% of the people in this world. And to this day, I use my three languages whenever I can, I mean I talk to strangers with those three languages whenever I can. We were just vacationing in Montreal last summer, and I chatted at people in Chinese, French or English all the time."

I was impressed and told him so. He responded, "Yah yah, it's just kind of nice, I mean for me my (...) I didn't think like this all the time, but my personal philosophy is that we live in a society, we live in a global society, so we have to be civil to each other, and, a language barrier is one of the biggest barrier keeps people from treating each other. You know, there are cultural barrier which are barriers as well, and of course social economic

³⁷ Here, Jack is referring to a referendum that took place in 1995 in the province of Quebec. The voters were asked whether Quebec should become independent from Canada and proclaim sovereignty. The result was an extremely close match with the numbers of "no" barely exceeded the separatists' "yes."

barriers, but if you can't even share a language, then you can't even start a conversation. There is no dialogue, and that's very frustrating."

5.6.5 Parenthood: "we wanted to make sure that our kids would learn the languages"

Jack is now a father of two young children. His wife is from an English-speaking family but just like Jack, she learned some French when she lived in Montreal. Jack remarked, "I think both of us have very similar philosophies about how fun and stimulating and socially responsible it is to speak more than one language." Then, he started talking about his children's language education: "When we had our son . . . and it was time to start choosing schools, we automatically thought that he's going to be in French immersion. There's a French immersion school near where we live . . . You know for me, I mean, learning a new language is about (...) about being able to speak with lots of different societies and also penetrating yourself into cultures to understand different ways of thinking. Um (...) but also the third benefit that I am very aware of, it develops your brain really well, right? I honestly think that, I think not only are you learning a language, but you are also learning a way of thinking that's different from the way you are used to, you are learning another culture all together So there are so many advantages to learning languages. That's why we wanted to make sure that our kids would learn the languages as well, and it came just by coincidence that they are starting this, piloting this Mandarin program, like I never expected that to happen. I actually find it very commendable that the school board is actually trying to do this program because, let's face it, Chinese isn't an official language of Canada. There's no real reason to be teaching except for the fact that they think it's a good idea, and it is a good idea . . . It actually kind of represents in my mind, kind of a new way of thinking, it's starting, while the English/French kind of dichotomy still exists in very strong form, you know we realize that this country, especially in the urban centres, the face of this country is changing dramatically right now."

His older son Alex entered the early-start Mandarin bilingual program. Alex was in Grade 1 at the time of the interview. Jack continued with an enthusiastic tone: "So when I first enrolled him in there, I had these ideals, right? I would be side by side learning Chinese with my son of something like that, but um (...) we are not really speaking Chinese a whole lot in the household right now, and Alex isn't at a point where he wants to speak Chinese, with me. Or you know, we might practice a little bit, but it hasn't gotten anymore complex

than me asking him a question, and him just answering yes or no. He doesn't elaborate anymore, and I'm wondering if he will begin to do so. Um (...) the program itself, I guess I might have had higher expectations than what they are delivering right now Like sure, I mean, ideologically or ideally, if he came graduate out of Grade 12 and he could have, his Mandarin was so good that he could actually you know attend a Chinese university in China in a completely Chinese . . . that would be great but I don't think it's going to happen. I don't think they are going to teach him that much."

I asked Jack if he applied to a French immersion program at all. "We had to make a decision between Mandarin or French, and the French school was like you know five minute walk away, meanwhile this one is way out of the way, and didn't even have afterschool child care, which is a big sacrifice we are making, and (...) but at the end of the day, I kind of felt like, well, French is a little bit more accessible later on in your life, but what's really not accessible for most non-Chinese speakers to learn Chinese is the development of the tonal systems, and being able to hear all the sounds, and I use myself as a reference, right? I can teach myself how to read and write Chinese because I knew what the words were, in oral fashion, and so by having that advantage, I mean I didn't even know a tonal system existed in Chinese until I started studying it as a young adult, right? But by having that advantage, even though I was illiterate, I had an advantage over anybody who never actually spoke Chinese because I can teach myself Chinese, just by knowing the words themselves and looking at the words and figuring out what they meant. And you know, when you see the pinyin version of the word, if you don't know what the word is, you are not sure if you are actually saying it right or not, but because I knew how to say the word, it was a lot easier for me to say 'oh, okay, that g-a-o that means gao, I got it, right? So it was very useful in that respect, and I gotta say that's basically my basic expectation of my children's Chinese level when they graduate. I mean they will have the ear for it, and it will be a big advantage already. Because I mean, I got friends, I got a couple of white American friends who have been studying Chinese for up to 25 years now, right? They still speak with an accent, (laugh) they still speak with an accent where Chinese people can't understand them sometimes, right? So it's that kind of language, it's very very orally based, you know."

I tried to clarify what he meant: "So it was more to do with how hard it is to learn the language, and better start it when you are young, rather than that he's part Chinese or

Chinese would be more useful?” Jack replied, “Right, well Chinese being useful in the future, given the kind of growth that nation of China has had, and also given the amount of immigration we are experiencing from mainland China, I think that will be very useful as well, but um, I’m not the kind of parent who’s really trying to make my kids into um some super star, wealthy famous whatever, it’s not very traditional Chinese to be like that, but I’m not pushing my kids to be like that so much . . . Really, the main consideration is the ability to open up a different culture to my kids, and getting them the tools that they need to be able to become really good world citizens. That’s really my strongest philosophy. (...) Sure if it helps them make a career and if they want to make a lot of money and they want to make a really serious career, they will have these tools as well that is helpful, that’s really um, that’s more secondary. The primary thing is about enlightening their minds, really.”

I asked Jack, “Do you think he would, in the future, like you did, might have that kind of identity (...) well crisis, and knowing Chinese might help that?” I wasn’t sure if he ever thought about that. However, he answered, “Hmm (...) that’s a really good question, because I have thought about that. But it’s . . . um, it’s (...) I don’t know if he will have an identity crisis. Um, the world that my son and daughter are growing up in the Vancouver context, it’s so dramatically different from the context that I grew up in, you know in a city like Toronto in the seventies, where immigration from the Asian countries has just started, and people were just getting used to that. I mean I faced certain amount of racism, right? So the lines that delineated who I was as being different from other people do not exist anymore for my son. I mean he will probably learn about it, he will learn about class society anyways for sure, right? And different demographics, but I don’t think he’s going to be prejudiced against like the way I was, especially when he’s not even full Chinese. I mean he’s half white anyways, right? It’s kind of cute to see how for him, the definition of being Chinese has very little to do with race or ethnicity, or culture, he just figures you are Chinese if you speak Chinese, which is really cute, right? It’s really cute.”

Jack was also planning to put his three-year-old daughter into the Mandarin bilingual program in the future despite some concerns about the program: “I’m not really exactly fed up about the program, and thinking that that’s a waste of time for my kids. I mean he’s made a bunch of good friends, I really um (...) you know another component about the public school system is that I do think that kids who are enrolled in special programs regardless of

what the program is, it could be whatever, arts, or music or French, or Chinese or um you know Montessori or whatever, parents enrolled their children into special programs in the public school system obviously have a stronger interest in their children's education. And just because of that fact, I feel a lot more secure about my son's peerage. I feel like he's going to be surrounded by kids whose parents are also very interested in their education, and he's not going to be surrounded by kids whose parents aren't interested in their education." I commented, "Especially language, learning other languages." Jack replied, "Especially language, but any program. If kids are in a special program, they are automatically having advantage because they are surrounded by other kids who have some values, learn from their parents about how education is important, so that's another reason why I want to send my kids to a special program. I was a kid that went to a special program, when I was in public school in Toronto, and I had the best time in my life, I really really enjoyed it." I asked him for more detail. He explained to me about the program: "I was in a program for intellectually gifted children, for smart kids, yah (laugh) So 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, so that's 6 years. I think I was recognized as being a smart kid even before then, because even in Grade 2 and 3, my teachers would give me, the only kid in the class where I get a Grade 3 instead of everybody else would have Grade 2 spelling book and stuff right?" I confirmed with him, "And that happened without having an English environment at home, right?" He agreed.

I asked Jack what he thought about the program policy that targeted English-speaking children. He replied, "It does seem to me that our kids are just getting lazy, they are not talking Chinese with each other, because they all share English, and it's too easy for them to just converse with each other in English . . . I haven't heard any of my, any of these kids speak Chinese to each other actually outside of the classroom, they just revert right to English." I commented that parents tended to be worried that they would not be able to help their children with Chinese. He exclaimed, "I'm sorry but you know I never got any help for my homework from my parents! My parents never helped me, they were incapable of helping me with my homework, but I did all right, I wasn't so bad you know. I figured it out myself, and in fact, I don't know, parenting is very very strange these days for me and it's new for me, right? But I feel like we just pamper our kids a little bit too much- we expect we are supposed to do the homework for them now, which is ridiculous, totally ridiculous. You are right, I guess that is kind of a weird philosophy to ensure that everybody actually should

have English as a basic language before they go.” In this context, I told him about the idea that children from Chinese-speaking households were supposed to go to weekend Chinese language schools if they wanted to learn Chinese. I wondered what he thought about that idea based on his own experience. He gave me a very clear view: “Sending them to just weekend only Chinese school, it tends to (...) I don’t know what word I should use, but it’s almost like ghettoizing that part of your life. You compartmentalize that part of your life and it doesn’t apply to other six days of your week, which is not that helpful. At least that’s how I felt when I was a kid I gotta say when I was a kid, I recoiled from my parents’ reasons for sending me to Chinese school, you know, they always said that ‘you know Chinese people aren’t doing so well in the world right now, but don’t worry, China is gonna be coming back, they are gonna be coming back,’ right? They were actually right, they were right, but I didn’t care, I didn’t care about that, right? . . . I mean if there is one thing for sure I know about myself is I don’t like tribalist thought based on ethnicities or culture because at the end of the day, our ethnicity is not so pure no matter what, you can go back a few generations and you’ll find something different, right? (laugh) . . . You know dividing classifying human race, do ethnic kind of classification, is just a dead end philosophy really, so when I hear people, when I hear you say like some people think if you are Chinese, you should just learn Chinese at a Chinese school, it’s kind of almost racist, right? . . . It’s kind of close-minded. You want your kids to learn Chinese but the same time, you want, you don’t want them to mix too much with the regular Chinese people. It’s kind of like people . . . who want to sell their houses to rich Chinese mainlanders but at the same time, they don’t really seem to want people to actually move to Vancouver. (laugh).”

5.7 Analysis of Jack’s Story: Embarrassment, Fitting In, and Identity Crisis

Jack’s story shows that his parents were different from Lily’s parents, who dismissed the value of speaking Chinese and having a “Chinese face,” and Emily’s parents who were neither proactive nor dismissive about their daughter’s Chinese language education. His parents insisted that the whole family spoke Mandarin at home. Jack attributed his parents’ idea about speaking Chinese at home to the fact that “their English never got really well.” It is important to note that all three participants in this section, Lily, Emily and Jack, had parents who were working at workplaces where they had little opportunities to learn English, and that they all commented that their parents’ English was very poor. Nevertheless, the

practice that they imposed on their children accounted by Lily and Jack turned out differently: Lily's parents insisted Chinese was not important whereas Jack's parents insisted he spoke Chinese at home. Jack's parents practice can be understood as an effort to construct a family field where the parents' linguistic habitus (i.e., Mandarin) was valued regardless of its value in the mainstream Canadian society back then in the 1970s. Despite Jack's parents' desire, however, Jack grew up "not really paying too much attention" to his Chinese heritage. He even felt "ashamed of it" which he added was "like a lot of kids," particularly about the fact that his parents' English was "so poor." Such feeling of shame and embarrassment about his own parents who had not embodied the legitimized habitus (i.e., unmarked accent) and his own heritage is a form of symbolic violence in effect (Bourdieu, 1991). Jack did not need to be bullied or made fun by his friends to feel embarrassed. It was his *feel for the game* (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 66) that he had embodied growing up in Canada that gave him the sense of inadequacy in the *field*. While it is understandable why Lily whose mother discouraged her from speaking Chinese, or Emily who grew up in a white neighbourhood felt ashamed of their Chinese heritage, Jack's story is telling that even though his parents encouraged him to learn Chinese, and even though he grew up in a multicultural neighbourhood, still he felt embarrassed about his Chinese heritage.

However, unlike Lily and Emily who were visibly marked for being Chinese, Jack expressed his shame specifically towards the way his parents spoke. Perhaps in the neighbourhood in which he grew up where everybody looked different from each other, it was the language factor that stood out even more than Lily and Emily's neighbourhood. Then, it makes sense that despite being raised by parents who were proud of their Chinese heritage, and despite growing up in a multicultural neighbourhood, Jack still felt ashamed of his Chinese heritage. We can see here two contradicting views inside Jack. On one hand, he believed in "the utopic type of situation" where he found himself with people of all different ethnicities. Even though he "had a certain amount of outsider experience," he "suppressed that feeling" and pretended "that it wasn't true." On the other hand, he expressed that he was ashamed of his Chinese heritage, and he felt like he "stood out," especially on the occasions that he attended the weekend heritage language school.

His appreciation for having childhood friends from different cultures and ethnicities did not connect to his appreciation for different languages until he stepped out of the English

dominant field and actually experienced a field that was functioning without English. As he remarked, the open-mindedness to different cultures and ethnicities—the early disposition that was constructed during his childhood in Toronto—was carried on, and transformed into something more sophisticated and complicated as he traveled around the world. He became aware of the importance of learning other languages not only for understanding different cultures, but also to signify who he was: he wanted to become a “worldly person.” In other words, learning different languages gained a new meaning for Jack that signified the accumulation of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Moving back to Taiwan where he was born to gain working experience, he decided that he “really wanted to learn Chinese.” Although he remarked that he was mostly interested in becoming a worldly person, he admitted that he had “an overhanging guilt” for not speaking Chinese that his parents “did such a great job in breeding in” him. Perhaps the sense of embarrassment about his parents’ English and the sense of guilt about not learning their language are two sides of the same coin. Jack’s sense of guilt could be understood as an affective reaction to the discordance between his *feel for the game* (Bourdieu, 1990a) which distanced him from his Chinese heritage and his father’s ideal image of a child who speaks Chinese. With that sense of guilt, he went to Taiwan thinking that perhaps he could end up living in his homeland. However, as soon as two months later, he realized “this is not my homeland at all.” Again, just like Lily, the initial investment to learn Chinese may have been linked to the desire to be a member of the imagined community that was tied to their heritage. However, as Jack remarked, he only had “a vague and misdirected notion” about his heritage. It did not take long until he realized he did not belong to his heritage society. Both Lily and Jack imagined a community that they hoped would be the place they could truly belong. The sense of being an outsider in Canada had led them to create this hopeful imagined community despite the fact that they both felt ashamed of their heritage as children. Perhaps the sense of shame and embarrassment for being Chinese was nurtured by being linguistically and physically marked by friends, and standing out from their peers. It makes sense that they hoped in going back to their heritage society that they would not stand out and finally belong. However, in both cases, the imagined community was merely imagined.

Jack came back to Canada as he realized he “had to embrace Canada” and had to “prove” to himself and everyone else that he “could be really really Canadian.” French being

the official language of Canada, he felt that he “had a higher claim of legitimacy as a citizen of Canada.” In other words, speaking English perfectly was not enough to prove he was Canadian. By embodying linguistic dispositions that included French in addition to English, he perceived his legitimacy as a Canadian citizen went higher. It is interesting to see how Lily and Jack reacted to the sense of being an outsider differently. They both felt that they did not belong to either world, Canada or their heritage society, but Lily never went for French to acquire a higher claim of being Canadian. It was the “Chinese face” that she needed to embrace, thus the language she should learn. She projected the same logic on her daughter: she should learn Chinese as well. In contrast, Jack did not project his sense of being an outsider onto his son. In fact, he did not expect that his children would experience the same kind of prejudice because of the change that he had seen in Vancouver becoming increasingly Asian, and also because of the fact that his children were half “white.” He chose Mandarin for his son, not because he wanted to save his son from having an identity crisis, which Jack assumed he probably wouldn’t but because he believed that it was a harder language to acquire than French. He thought it was crucial to be introduced to the language at an early age. Although Jack himself never learned Mandarin proactively as a child, he was able to acquire the basic habitus that was necessary to learn the language by himself when he decided to do so. He was able to distinguish different tones and look up the words in the dictionary. Indeed, while his linguistic dispositions shifted through schooling as English became his dominant language, his early dispositions as a native Mandarin speaker were not entirely overwritten by the new disposition; another telling example of the continuity and discontinuity of habitus (Reay, 1995). Jack is now invested in passing on that basic linguistic habitus to his son.

5.8 Summary and Discussion

In this chapter, I have placed the bodily emotions of shame and embarrassment as a starting point for my analysis of Lily, Emily and Jack’s relationship with the Chinese language. The embodied negative dispositions toward their heritage became redefined resulting from a change of inhabited fields. Indeed, as Garrett and Baquedano-López (2002) argue, “a dual perspective” (p. 344) that highlights both practice as socially structured and practice as contingent and open for change is crucial. However, we have also seen in Lily and Jack’s case that their investment in learning Chinese was shuttered after they realized

that the community they imagined and desired to belong to (i.e., China for Lily, Taiwan for Jack) turned out to be an unfulfilled desire. I argued that the reason for withdrawal was due to the discordance between their habitus and the new field in which they were positioned. The investment theory (Darvin & Norton, 2015) that places emphasis on learners' agency and desire to become a member of an "imagined community" does not take into account such discordance. Perhaps the concept of "imagined community" originally coined by B. Anderson (1991) fits better in cases such as Lily's and Jack's. According to Anderson, individuals imagine the ideal characteristics of the ideal member of the community (nation, in particular), whether it is linguistic, cultural, religious or political. In Canada's case, the linguistic boundary of the imagined community has been constructed around the official bilingualism policy of English and French. These imaginations construct (albeit imperfectly and unevenly in actual practice) habitus as well as a market in which particular language, culture, religion and/or political inclination are valued and given symbolic capital within an array of fields. Whereas Anderson's concept of imagined community is about the material conditions which make it possible for abstract symbols to create an imagining of homogeneity and coherence even as unequal sociopolitical constraints and sanctions are imposed upon individuals, the concept of imagined community in second language acquisition (SLA) studies tends to emphasize learners' agency to imagine the community they desire to join in order to expand their future possibilities and opportunities.

In addition, we can also see that a change in habitus only happens in a limited way. For example, in Lily's case, she was able to embrace her "Chinese face" by learning Chinese, which was the opposite practice of what her mother instilled in her. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the field she inhabits today is quite different from the one where she was marked by her "Chinese face," she still wants her daughter to be able to speak Chinese because of the way her daughter "looks." Here, we can see the power of symbolic violence as "the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2002, p. 273). Rather than being free from the judgment she received as a child, she is projecting the judgment on her child.³⁸ Her investment in her daughter's Chinese language

³⁸ I am not being judgmental about Lily's practice. In fact, this is very much what I have been doing, and will be doing to my daughters, too. Because I feel they would never fully belong to Canada (they will be always asked where they "really" came from), I feel that they

learning shows how symbolic violence, as Bourdieu and Wacquant argued, could be reproduced by the very person who suffered from it. Lily accepted “the limits imposed” (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 38) on her as fully belonging to English-speaking Canada, and today her practicing those limits. Indeed, investment in their children’s education is a site where we can see how habitus changed as their field changed, and more specifically, how they made sense with the symbolic violence. It is a point of analysis where the parents’ past and present come together. Their present investment cannot be understood without understanding their history of Chinese language learning and how their habitus both shifted and retained continuity as fields changed.

In contrast to Lily, Jack shows a completely different orientation to his children’s Chinese language education from Lily. Despite the fact that he went through a difficult time to gain a sense of belonging to Canada and decided to master French in order to have a higher claim as a Canadian citizen, he did not project his own struggle onto his son. When he envisioned his son’s future, French was no longer as important. First of all, because his son is “half white,” Jack expects his son will not face racism in the way he did. Secondly, Jack believes that Canadian society has changed dramatically, and his children will not experience discrimination the same way he did. Although “the French/English dichotomy still exists,” he remarked, “the face of this country is changing dramatically right now.” Indeed, while parents’ investment is a meeting point of past and present, it is also future-oriented in that parents envision what would be the best for their children as they grow up. Even as Lily is projecting the negative judgment of her past on her daughter, the investment is future-oriented as she considers it is necessary for her daughter to speak Chinese so that she wouldn’t have to go through the same identity problem she used to have in the future. In this sense, she is preparing her daughter for the struggles her daughter may, or may not, go through.

Whereas Lily made clear that her daughter’s Chinese heritage is the reason for her investment in Chinese language education, Emily and Jack were ambivalent about their heritage connections to their children’s Mandarin education. While Emily was unsure about heritage as a factor, she sounded very certain that having her son learning Mandarin was an

should learn Japanese or Chinese in addition to English. I am complicit in the symbolic violence that has been imposed on non-white Canadians as secondary citizens.

investment for his future to have better jobs and opportunities. In addition, she connected her son's language learning with an ideal of learning about other cultures in general, of which Chinese was no different. Rather than positioning Chinese as her son's heritage language, Emily positioned it within an array of exotic "other" cultures and languages for her son to understand and learn about, an interesting change from how she was othered for being Chinese as a child.

In a manner that was distinctive, Jack was even more clear that he was motivated by this ideal of cosmopolitan worldliness, rather than a mere crass investment for future jobs and economic opportunities. Learning Chinese was one way of making his son a worldly person. Although both Emily and Jack emphasized how this ideal was distinct from mere calculations about the economic value of speaking other languages in addition to English, both also seemed to understand how this worldliness could be considered an investment. In shaping their children to become open to other cultures, becoming a worldly person could be understood as a form of investment in *intercultural capital*, "that is the capacity to engage in acts of knowledge, power and exchange across time/space divides and social geographies, across diverse communities, populations and epistemic stances" (Luke, 2004, p. 1429). Although seemingly not as crass as calculations about linguistic ability as economic capital, this sense of "worldliness" was invoked by both Emily and Jack as a form of embodied disposition in their children.

Table 5.1 schematically summarizes Lily, Emily and Jack's trajectories of Chinese language learning in relation to investment in their children's Chinese language education. In the next chapter, two more stories of Chinese Canadian parents who grew up in Canada, namely Harry and Joyce, will be introduced and analyzed. Both Harry and Joyce presented stories that are different from Lily, Emily and Jack regarding the bodily emotions of shame and embarrassment for being Chinese, and therefore provide different trajectories of their relationship with CHL learning.

Table 5.1 Trajectories of Group 1 Parents' Chinese language learning

	Lily	Emily	Jack
Parents' own relationship with Chinese language learning	Shame—Learned Chinese—Embraced being Chinese	Shame—Did not develop Cantonese	Shame—Learned Chinese—Identity crisis—Learned French
Situation of children's Chinese language learning	Cantonese playgroup	Early Mandarin Bilingual Program	Early Mandarin Bilingual Program
Reasons for Investment	Projecting her own identity struggle	Economic capital, worldly person, skill	Skill, worldly person

Chapter 6: Distancing Oneself from *Other* Chinese: Harry and Joyce

6.1 Introduction

Harry and Joyce's life stories present an interesting contrast from Lily, Emily and Jack in that they did not provide any accounts that signified a sense of shame for being Chinese as they grew up in Canada. Rather, the recurring theme of their stories was how they positioned themselves differently from other Chinese. First, I present the life story of Harry, a third generation Chinese Canadian male who grew up in Alberta. His story will be followed by an analysis focusing on how he distanced himself from other ethnic Chinese students, and also how he made sense of not speaking Chinese. Then, I present the story of Joyce, a Taiwanese Canadian female who grew up in British Columbia. She shows a stark contrast from another Taiwanese Canadian participant, Jack, in terms of her relationship with Mandarin.

6.2 Harry

6.1.1 Introduction

Harry is a third generation Chinese Canadian. His parents were born and raised in Canada and did not speak Chinese to him as he grew up. While he had several opportunities to learn Cantonese and Mandarin during different stages of his life, he chose not to pursue the language for practical reasons. Although he grew up in Alberta in an English-only environment, he had a strong interest in his own children learning Chinese. At the time of the interview, his son attended one of the bilingual programs in metro Vancouver to learn Mandarin.

6.1.2 Learning Chinese in childhood: “Much like music, didn’t work”

Harry's grandparents immigrated from Guangdong (southern China) in the early 20th century. His parents were both born in Canada: “They were both brought up in Chinese speaking families and environments, both Toisan³⁹ speaking, and um, because my mom grew up in Vancouver, she had a little bit more exposure to the Chinese language and that Chinese community where she can practice her Chinese, whereas my father grew up in Calgary,

³⁹ Toisan is a county level village in Guangdong province where Toisanese is spoken. Historically, many Chinese Canadians came from Toisan. Toisanese and Cantonese both belong to Yue Chinese.

Alberta, where there was virtually very few Asian families or Chinese families, and he stopped sort of speaking Chinese when he went into grade school. Um, of course, I was born in Calgary, Alberta, with my three other brothers, and my parents spoke English at home, and if you speak to my parents, they have no accents.” Harry says his parents were most comfortable speaking in English, and he didn’t learn Chinese as a child: “I don’t think my mother or my father ever thought (...) well, they wanted us to learn, but um because my father wasn’t that great at Toisan, they couldn’t really communicate, and they didn’t really feel the need to press that on us. So going into my language studies now, there weren’t a lot of opportunities. There were some classes around, mostly run by Christian churches, and I think my brothers, my mom put my brothers into it.” However, she did this only for the older brothers. Harry, being the second youngest did not join the class when he was very young: “Yup yup, much like music, didn’t work, and the language, it didn’t work, and by the time you get to the youngest brother, forget it.” I was giggling, but then he switched his tone to a serious one, “well, you know, it’s kind of unfortunate because now, I do feel regret, I was given the opportunity I must have been 14 years old . . . and thrown into a Mandarin scripture course, and my parents didn’t speak Mandarin, and I didn’t see any usefulness in it.” The class was held at a church once a week on Saturdays, and he went with his younger brother. “I remember going in there, and it was myself and my little brother, and um, the teacher spoke Mandarin the whole time, so we just couldn’t when you are 14 and 12 years, it’s too much to learn, yeah.” He also added, “It was taken away from my play time.” This was the first time he had the opportunity to learn Chinese in his life. But he told me it was too late.

I asked him whether he remembered spending time with his grandparents. He answered, “A little bit, and I (...) as a young kid, but um obviously respected them, but um (...) felt there was a barrier, with communication, not being able to communicate with them (...) and of course they were from a different era in growing up, so they wouldn’t come play with me (...) like my parents would do, right? They won’t (...) the kids are to play on their own, and we’ll take care of the business right, so a little different.” Harry told me there was also another reason for the distance between his grandparents and their grandchildren: “Well, I guess another dynamic I think is, they were the immigrants, right? And they wanted to have their children and their descendants you know, integrated to the society, and do well in the

society, and that part of that is learning English, right? Um (...) I'm sure they would have loved to being able to speak to their (...) ⁴⁰ and maybe that might have been a difference?"

I wondered what it was like to be Chinese as a child back in the 1970s and 80s in Calgary and if he had any Chinese friends around. Harry replied, "I had two Chinese kids in the rest of my grade (...) and maybe maybe, handful in the whole school, growing up, so very limited. Oh we did have, I did have one neighbor down the block who was Chinese, he spoke Toisan as well, I think, but not real connection, so I kind of, I perceived myself as (...)" He paused for a while, so I intervened, a "white kid?" He immediately replied, "Yup, yup, pretty much." He told me he felt different from other Chinese children who just immigrated, or even from those whose parents immigrated: "Even if it was, the next generation, their parents might have immigrated, but I still felt differently (...) I didn't feel connection to them (...) so as far as friend, well they would still be friends, but I wouldn't pursue that, and I wouldn't be really close to someone that much. There were (...) but there were a few Chinese friends that were in my similar situation, where their grandparents immigrated, and in that sense, there were a couple that you immediately have connection, I think, so I got to be good friends with them."

6.1.3 Chinese learning in adolescence: "Never seriously pursued it"

Other than his short attendance at the Saturday Chinese language school when he was 14, the only time he learned Chinese was one summer at university when he took a two-month study tour to Taiwan in the early 1990s, which according to him was called the "love boat." It was supposedly where Chinese Canadian boys met Chinese Canadian girls who were also on the study tour. I asked him if he felt motivated to learn Chinese. He answered, "It was Mandarin. I felt motivated to speak to the girls, but ah, other than that, no, and again, lack of foresight. I mean, you know having a second language, especially Chinese now." I commented, "At that time it wasn't that useful." Harry replied, "No, at that time it was more Japanese, it was more that in business or primarily business yes, and I did a little bit of Japanese . . . but language was not my thing."

Going to this tour wasn't connected to any kind of heritage searching either. "Nothing with my heritage. I didn't feel that connection. Of course my connection was going, because I was going with a lot of other Asians, that were very much like me, who maybe didn't know

⁴⁰ In this context, I assumed he meant to say "to speak to their [grandchildren]."

Mandarin, growing up in the sort of same environment, same dynamics, parents, grandparents spoke, maybe parents still speak, they had their China connection somehow, and that's the only connection." I realized I forgot to ask Harry why he initially even decided to go to the tour. I asked him in follow-up email. Harry replied that "the real reason" was that his cousin dragged him onto the tour. Although he heard from his older cousins who had joined the tour before how much fun and great the tour was, Harry wasn't quite convinced. So his cousin "bribed" him with "a post-trip to HK and Hawaii." He added, "For me it wasn't about learning a new language, but for acquiring new experiences (travel)."

Returning to the interview, he told me that after the trip, he felt that there was a need to have additional languages. However, "it wasn't in my capability (laugh)." Harry came back to his not-learning-Chinese experience on several occasions during the interview. "Personally, I never thought, okay, I'm going to take a crack at this and really learn it. I mean, I took the courses, so I took that one in Taiwan, and of course I would play around with the language, because I had another girlfriend who spoke Mandarin, play around with that, but never seriously pursued it, because I didn't think I would be able to get capable enough to where I could speak it fluently."

Nevertheless, he started to see the growing importance of speaking Chinese: "I mean the real China dynamic was I mean you know, Chinese, it would be nice to speak it, when I did travel there, when I did the Taiwan trip, after that, I went into Beijing, on another couple of occasion, I went to China, or surrounding countries, and felt like I should really learn the language because look at all this opportunity, right? And it was really, but again, I said, 'no, I am happy where I am, and in the path that I am on.' You know, and now, kind of regretting it, and even now, you know with the, the last ten years with China really became a powerhouse, economically, it's attractive. But too bad."

In order to explore what he meant by "now, kind of regretting it," I asked Harry, "did you ever feel like, 'Oh, I'm Chinese, but I don't speak Chinese,' like that kind of dilemma?" Harry answered, "Only when I'm in, when I was in China. So in Hong Kong, or China, you know What happens there is you get discriminated against if you don't speak the language. So first time I was in Hong Kong, this was a while ago, I don't think it happens anymore but in Hong Kong, taxi driver says, you know he says 'you don't speak Chinese? What's wrong with you?' So felt it then, now I mean, this is a global world, some people do,

some people don't, I don't feel any, I still regret that I didn't know, but I don't feel bad part of it is my arrogance (laugh). Because I thought, 'you're just a taxi driver!' Isn't it bad?" I laughed. I still asked him if he would have liked to learn Chinese when he was younger. Harry answered, "I think I would have liked to have done some stuff differently. But I don't think there was any forces that would have pushed me, at that time, there was no other forces. My parents, they tried their best, but again, it's just, you know the church school, wasn't facilitative, wouldn't work with me, you know I didn't have a lot of friends who spoke, blah blah blah, you know for all those other reasons, there is no force, I didn't have the foresight of thinking China is going to be a big dominant player."

6.1.4 Parenting: "French or Mandarin, I would lean toward Mandarin"

Today, as a father of two young children, Harry tried to do things differently. He told me that one of the reasons he put his six-year-old son Connor into an early-start Chinese bilingual program was because he felt it was crucial to start early, reflecting on his own experience and how difficult it was to learn Chinese when he was already 14 years old. I assumed maybe Harry wanted his son to learn Chinese so that he could somehow reconnect to his heritage but Harry immediately denied this: "Oh no, no no, because Mandarin is not my language anyway. It's more educational, from educational perspective, you know, delve in the skill set, and providing the opportunity. I think you know, it is a (...) it will be strange if he speaks Chinese (...) and I can't. He will be able to take me around China, if I'll be lost (laugh)." He continued, carefully choosing the words: "That will be great. But you know (...) it's not from that part (...) it's not like I never played baseball, and I really want him to play baseball to you know, prove the Mah (his pseudo family name) in me, you know, it's not like that." He elaborated on the reason why he put his son into the early-start Chinese bilingual program: "To learn a second language, that's important, like he should learn music, just like he should learn how to kick a ball but, and especially having it be Mandarin, having that opportunity is fantastic. I think that because Chinese is more complex language, it would help him learn other languages, he can always learn French, or other ones But the future obviously is going to the language which opens up lots of opportunities for him, and Chinese more so than French." However, he confessed that initially that he was aiming for French immersion, "just because that felt the only opportunity, there wasn't anything else." He didn't know about the Chinese program, which was brand new at that time. When it was time

to decide between regular public school, private school or bilingual/immersion school, he and his wife decided to sign up for both the French and Chinese program as both programs were overflowing. Connor didn't get into the French program, but "won the lottery on Chinese." Although the commute to the Mandarin bilingual school took half an hour, they decided to take the spot. However, a month later, the French immersion program contacted them to say that the spot had become available. He recalled, "We really had to think hard about that because, our first choice was French, just because that was sort of more um (...) established, and we weren't sure about this program. But a month in, you know, it's inconvenient to go to the Mandarin school but the teacher is great, umm, he's comfortable, he's happy with the friends, and we thought, Mandarin is probably a better language to learn, so in the end, we decided to keep him in. It was a couple of days' decision though. I remember we were kind of moaning over that for a while, but after we made the decision, we slept well. I don't think there was any 'oh we made the wrong decision' kind of thing, we thought for sure you know this was the right way to go."

I was at some level surprised to hear that his son learning Chinese didn't have much to do with his heritage, so I asked him out of curiosity whether he would have had his son go into this program even if he had not been Chinese. He answered, "I would have. Just to see, just noticing the dynamics of the world right now, you know, on a global basis, China is going to be a dominant player, and if I, if I were to think about this, if I had an option between (...) well, one, definitely learn the second language, two, learn it early, choose a best program, but the underlying thing is, well, choose the best program is the best thing, and then the underlying thing is, what language is more applicable, and French or Mandarin (...) I would lean toward Mandarin." He told me that growing up in Alberta, he never felt the importance of French: "I didn't really see the applicability because we never been to Eastern Canada, never went to Europe of course."

He says that overall he is happy with the bilingual program: "As far as kindergarten, I think it's been great. I think the curriculum, at the kindergarten level is much more than, he would have got in a solely English kindergarten, so I think that's great." Given the policy that the program targeted fluent English speakers, I asked him whether he would have liked it if the program accepted Chinese-speaking children as well. He mentioned the Edmonton Chinese bilingual program that had students from both English and Chinese backgrounds. I

told him about the two-way bilingual programs in the United States that also accepted both language groups. Harry commented, “Do they? I don’t know how they all worked out and integrate that but I think it can’t hurt. I don’t think it can hurt right? I think because there are so many Mandarin speaking kids in all the schools around Vancouver, why not? Sort of supplement that somehow, because yeah, in the end, I think if Connor is playing with his friends, they are speaking in English.” At the same time, he said he is “not critical of anything” about the program: “I just wonder what else is there to sort of help improve the program. ‘Cause I’m sure there are other things that can be learned. I mean the basic structure that they put in together is basic, it’s quite basic principle, and you know easy to accommodate. I hope it’s progressive, and can be adapted and changed.”

I asked Harry if he would have liked to be in the program as a child if there had been a similar opportunity back then. I expected a “yes,” but what came out from Harry was rather different: “Well, what is different (...) this is (...) you know, I grew up in Calgary, very much at the time, very much a redneck town, some areas, it still is, but you know . . . I think you know, my community was very much sort of a farm community, and new immigrants were Eastern European or whatever right? European, a bit of a frontier town, so if there was a school, like this, and . . . my parents were, ‘okay you are going in there.’ I mean of course, as a child, you would have just done it. I don’t think I would have (...) I probably would have felt like I was an outcast, a little bit. I mean, you know, cause that age, you are crossing over to do other things right? So you are going to school, and then you are going to play sports with other friends, you’ll go play on a hockey team, soccer team, and you may not, and you are going to say, ‘you are doing what?’ You know, you really would, I don’t know, I don’t know if I would get picked on, but certainly say ‘you are different.’”

6.3 Analysis of Harry’s Story: Chinese as the Social Other

One of the patterns that was shared among the five participants, namely Lily, Harry, Emily, Jack and Joyce, was that they discovered the value of Chinese as cultural, linguistic or economic capital in their adulthood. Lily and Jack proactively chose to pursue the language in search of the community to which they truly belonged. Conversely, Harry chose not to pursue the language. The recurring theme in his childhood story was his distancing himself from other Chinese children. Given that he was the only third generation Chinese Canadian in this group and that his parents spoke English without a marked accent, he remarked that he

always felt different from other Chinese Canadian schoolmates. Even if they were born here, their parents were often immigrants themselves. Therefore, he associated himself more with his “white” schoolmates. As I will argue more in depth in Chapter 8 regarding heritage language school, he had a very low investment in learning Chinese as a teenager. His attitude towards the Chinese language articulated in his remark as “I didn’t see any usefulness in it” resonates with the account of Jason, a composite character reflecting many Chinese American students’ experiences in He’s (2008b) study. Indeed, this account is quite common among many CHL learners (D. Li & Duff, 2014). Even when he went to Taiwan for a study tour when he was a university student, learning the language was never his priority. At that time in the early 1990s, Mandarin still had relatively low capital value compared to Japanese, and with his “lack of foresight” he did not see the value of the language. After the trip, he realized the importance of having an additional language but he would “never seriously pursue it” because he thought it was not in his capability to acquire the language to the point that he could speak fluently. This is an example of how habitus works in terms of limiting one’s choice:

Bourdieu views the dispositions, which make up habitus, as the products of opportunities and constraints framing the individual’s earlier life experience. . . . The most improbable practices are rejected as unthinkable, but, concomitantly, only a particular range of possible practices is considered. Early on in the ‘Logic of Practice’ Bourdieu lambastes existentialists, such as Sartre for holding up an illusion of limitless choice. Choice is at the heart of habitus, which he likens to “the art of inventing” (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 55), but at the same time the choices inscribed in the habitus are very clearly limited. (Reay, 1995, p. 355)

Harry recounted that he decided to stay on his career path, and not to pursue the language. Although the increasing power of China made him regret that he had not learned the language, he concluded, “it’s attractive, but too bad.” In the interview context, his “too bad” had a light tone that gave me the impression that while he did regret that he never pursued Chinese, he accepted this reality and was happy with his decision within his capability. In fact, although he regretted the fact that he did not learn Chinese, he remarked that he seldom felt bad about himself not knowing the language. Unlike Lily and Jack, and many other ethnic Chinese around the world discussed elsewhere (e.g., Ang, 2001; Duff, 2014; Francis et

al., 2014; Kouritzin, 1999), it seemed that he never had an identity issue from not speaking Chinese. This is well-represented in the episode when he was criticized by the taxi driver in Hong Kong. He remarked in “the global world, some people do, some people don’t,” and that “you’re just a taxi driver.” Indeed, Harry was well-positioned in the global world where English has symbolic power over other languages.⁴¹ On the other hand, even as the capital value of Chinese was increasing, speaking Chinese did not guarantee a better position in the field or more social and economic capital gain in the field.

However, as he became a parent, he was invested in his son’s Chinese language education. Unlike Lily, he did not connect his son’s Chinese language learning with his heritage. In fact, he strongly denied “no no no,” and emphasized the educational benefit of learning the language, just like learning how to play an instrument. It was a skill set that he did not acquire as a child. Here, we can see the discontinuity of habitus. Rather than passing on his English monolingual habitus, his story indicates that he was willing to change that. However, the theme of positioning of Chinese as social other was still present as he strongly denied heritage as the reason for his choices. He chose Chinese over French because he thought it was “more complex,” and because he thought Chinese was more applicable in the global world. Because Harry’s chance of acquiring Chinese was limited by the fact that he had not started early enough, he accounted that he decided to put his son in an early-start Chinese bilingual program. Indeed, Harry did not have the “right” habitus for the Chinese scripture class which was supposedly meant for those who already had high proficiency in Chinese when he was 14 years old. In addition, the Chinese weekend school had no significance in the mainstream field, and all it meant was that it took away his playing time with his friends. And because of those early dispositions, even as the Chinese language became attractive as the economic power of China increased, learning Chinese was excluded from his choice as an adult. With his son, the situation is different in this sense as well because Chinese is taught within the regular schooling system. Unlike Harry, his son didn’t have to deal with the separation between the Chinese language learning field and the mainstream schooling field (issues regarding heritage language schools will be discussed in Chapter 8).

⁴¹ Especially in Hong Kong with its British colonial history between 1841 and 1997.

Although Harry was happy that his son had the opportunity to learn Chinese in the way that he could not have, he did not wish that he had done the same thing as his son. The field in which he grew up was different from today's Vancouver, and he would have felt like he was "an outcast" going to a Chinese bilingual school if there was one at that time. Even though he regretted he had not learn Chinese, and even though he was asked to wish for whatever he wanted to do differently, he still chose not to learn Chinese. He chose what he felt was appropriate in that field that he was situated in. The *feel for the game* (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 66) made him choose, even in his imagination, not to go to a Chinese bilingual school. There is perhaps no clearer example showing how agency is conditioned by habitus and field (Ahearn, 2001).

6.4 Joyce

6.1.5 Introduction

Joyce was born in the U.S. but moved to Victoria, BC when she was a young child. Her parents were from Taiwan, and she spoke Taiwanese⁴² with her parents as a child. However, her Taiwanese proficiency was limited, as she told me she often could not finish a whole sentence. Her parents avoided Mandarin for political reasons, but she had the opportunity to learn Mandarin when she spent a year in Taiwan as a child. Although she did not have any exposure to Mandarin after she came back to Victoria, when she moved to Vancouver after college, she started to learn Mandarin. At the time of the interview, she had been trying to speak to her two children in Taiwanese but had faced several challenges. Her son was attending one of the Mandarin bilingual schools in Metro Vancouver.

6.1.6 Childhood: "It was a politically conscious decision by our parents not to speak Mandarin . . ."

"I was born in the United States . . . and then we moved to Canada. I was under a year old. . . . I was born in the States when my father came over to do his graduate study At home in Victoria, we spoke Taiwanese (...) or Taiwanese with English. So when I look back at the language, pretty much half Taiwanese, half English. My

⁴² Taiwanese is a variety of Hokkien dialect which belongs to Min Chinese. Taiwanese and Mandarin belong to different language groups.

grandparents, both grandparents spoke Japanese,⁴³ so I actually studied Japanese . . . because of my grandparents, and to communicate with them.” Joyce was careful to point out that, “It was a politically conscious decision by our parents not to speak Mandarin.” As a language enforced upon native Taiwanese by the Kuomintang (KMT) government that took political control of Taiwan after 1949, Mandarin education had deep political meaning for Joyce’s parents.⁴⁴

Joyce spoke Taiwanese only until she went to kindergarten: “In kindergarten I got the most improved English award, apparently. Because we were speaking Taiwanese at home.” The first time Joyce was exposed to Mandarin was when she was in Grade 4. Her family stayed in Taiwan for a year for her father’s work. Joyce and her sister went to a local school where the main instructional language was Mandarin: “I got to be the head of the class because I was supposed to be in Grade 4, but because I had no Mandarin, they put us in Grade 1 It was interesting because it was probably the hardest that I worked in my elementary school education.” Joyce described how in Taiwan “we went to school six days a week” and there was “homework” and everyone wore uniforms. “And when we came back to Canada, I went straight up to Grade 5, and I didn’t miss anything.” Although her parents avoided having their daughters learn Mandarin in Canada, Joyce noted that it was okay for them to learn Mandarin at a Taiwanese school: “The teacher, our teacher was our next door neighbor, and also taught my uncle when he was younger (...) so she was more understanding (...) she was more understanding of the situation.”

After a year in Taiwan, her family moved back to Canada. She was no longer exposed to Mandarin. She didn’t go to any of the Chinese weekend schools in Victoria: “Because there was no Taiwanese . . . because in Victoria it was Cantonese Chinese school. And if it was Mandarin, they definitely wouldn’t. I would have a better chance to go to

⁴³ Japanese was imposed on Taiwanese during Japanese colonialism between 1895 and 1945.

⁴⁴ While we did not talk about the “deep political meaning” of learning Japanese, it is known that educated Taiwanese often preferred prewar Japanese colonial rule to postwar Chinese Nationalists (Mendel, 1970). As Hsaiu (2005) argues, “Taiwanese nationalists, especially those humanist intellectuals in the fields of literature, history, and language movements, began openly to destigmatize the colonial experience of the Taiwanese people and to construct a positive historical memory of the colonial period with a view to discrediting the GMD (KMT) rule. It has not been unusual for the period of Japanese colonial rule to have attracted undisguised—if limited—admiration” (p. 268).

Cantonese school than to Mandarin (laugh).”⁴⁵ I told her how interesting it was to hear about her anti-KMT parents distancing her from Mandarin. Joyce laughed out loud and said, “If it was Japanese school, actually, if there was anything, I would have been sent to Japanese school before any of the other ones. Just because of the strong appreciation of Japanese (...) really, that’s (...) obviously it has had some effect because my first language in university was Japanese. Yah, actually, it’s true (...) interesting!”

When I asked her if she felt like she belonged to Taiwan as she was growing up, she answered, “It’s different because I was not made in Taiwan. I wasn’t born in Taiwan. But my parents were very Taiwanese. And they distilled in us very much Taiwanese, a Taiwanese presence. So a lot of the childhood growing up was going to . . . you know Taiwanese conference, Taiwanese Canadian conference, Taiwanese American. So you know, we met a lot of, I met a lot of friends, who are the same, you know. Taiwanese friends who also grew up here.”

6.1.7 Adolescence: “I probably felt inadequate in some way”

When Joyce was an undergraduate student, she chose Japanese as her first foreign language “so that I could write to my grandparents in Japanese.” Because of her upbringing, she said she was not attracted to Mandarin at all. However, when she moved to Vancouver to work and do her graduate study, she decided to take a course in Mandarin. I asked her, “So in grad school, why did you decide to take Mandarin?” Joyce answered, “Oh because by then, I’ve been in Vancouver for . . . I’ve been in Vancouver for three years already.” In Vancouver, she got involved in a Taiwanese church group: “So this was the getting involved in the Taiwanese church in the YTA⁴⁶ so you have Taiwanese Association, so lots of, most of the people in YTA were very, you know they speak Mandarin, so you know, I felt like I should probably learn it, right? The characters are very similar to Japanese, so I could read the characters . . . and subsequently, I mean, this is a, you know, I’ve done Italian, Spanish, so I like languages (...) so I think that’s with me, I like languages.” I asked her if she decided

⁴⁵ KMT, originally a political party in Mainland China retreated to Taiwan in 1949 after losing to the Communist Party of China. From 1949 to 1987, KMT implemented a Mandarin Language Policy which strictly restricted the use of Taiwanese (Sandel, 2003). While KMT has envisioned Taiwan’s integration into China, there was a strong resentment toward Mandarin among anti-KMT population such as Joyce’s parents.

⁴⁶ A youth section of the Taiwanese Association

to learn Mandarin in order to have stronger connection with the church. She immediately answered, “No, because church was in Taiwanese, very much in Taiwanese, but hanging around with Taiwanese, most Taiwanese speak Taiwanese and Mandarin (...) so my Mandarin was lacking, right? But it was more for the characters. Because it’s the reading, the characters are so hard to learn again once you (...) you can learn them but to read them and stuff, that’s hard.” So I asked her if she learned Mandarin as a way to connect to her heritage as Chinese. She gave herself a short moment to think and responded, “Mmmmm, no, because my Taiwanese is better than my Mandarin.” I confirmed with her, “So for you, it was an instrumental reason, it wasn’t much to do with your identity.” Joyce immediately answered, “No because identity is more of Taiwanese than Mandarin.” She agreed with me that she learned Mandarin just as an additional language but added, “And I probably felt inadequate in some way because, because other people, you know it’s the going into the restaurant, and not being able to read the language, or the special. . . So really, that’s the purpose, right? There are things that you are supposed to be able to read that I didn’t have.” According to Joyce, she could understand spoken Mandarin more than she could speak. She would mix Mandarin and English, “cause I can’t do the whole sentence.”

6. 1. 8 Parenting: “What it came down to me was that having another language . . .”

Joyce is now the mother of a Grade 1 boy, Steven, and a toddler girl, Sara, and is devoted to her children’s language learning: “I did not want my child to be a monolingual child.” Compared to her childhood in Victoria, she said it was very different for her children growing up in Metro Vancouver: “So Steven, even with preschool, throughout his preschool and daycare, has been predominantly Asians. And he’s been one of the few that’s Asian that doesn’t speak Mandarin.” She hoped that Steven would pick up some Mandarin from his friends at daycare but unfortunately, that didn’t happen.

When Steven was four, he entered a French/English bilingual preschool. Joyce recalled that many children who attended the preschool were multilingual in Chinese, Farsi and other languages although there were also students who only spoke English at home. At home, Joyce tried to speak Taiwanese to Steven as much as possible. However, she told me in a disappointed tone, “In the beginning, I started speaking Taiwanese to him, but in the household it actually is (...) because my husband and I speak English to each other, it was easy. And because I, a lot of things like animals, other than dog, cat, chicken, horse and cow,

I don't know the names for animal. Giraffe, hippo in Taiwanese, or Mandarin, and then it becomes English. Or emotions, happy and sad, I'm mad, and then, other, other emotions. I just . . . because my vocabulary is limited, by the age of four or five, I speak to him entirely in English . . . but if I think back, I did definitely, you know I could do all the rooms, parts of the body, in Taiwanese, right? So still some words he knows but I realize, most of the time, I revert to English." I asked her if she would take her children to a Taiwanese weekend school. She responded, "There are actually schools that do Taiwanese on the weekend, but that (...) so okay . . . if it was a choice between French and Taiwanese, I'd probably do French over Taiwanese, just because he had it before, and to have exposure. Between Cantonese and Taiwanese, I would do Taiwanese."

After attending the French/English bilingual preschool for six months, Steven entered one of the early-start Mandarin bilingual programs in Metro Vancouver. However, initially it wasn't Joyce's first choice to attend the Mandarin bilingual program: "I actually really wanted him to get into French because he's done the French preschool, and when I was looking through the website, I realized there was a Mandarin program. Um, there wasn't much information about it, it wasn't advertised . . . There was no publicity, but when I saw it, I thought, oh, I might as well apply. It's a lottery, so you never know I wanted French but really what it came down to me was that having another language." Although Steven was on the waitlist for both French and Mandarin program, he was admitted to the Mandarin program first. Joyce told me, "I think it was wise to go with the English, like an English test," referring to the English test that the Mandarin program implemented for the applicants. I asked her if Steven took the English test. She answered, "We didn't. They let us not go through it, because the secretary could tell that we spoke English at home." I asked her why she thought it was wise of them to do the English test. She gave me an answer which I felt was very candid: "I think that it was wise to (...) um from talking to the teachers, the teachers thought that would be better, because then, you are not dealing with ESL so that you are dealing with the population where they have the basic English. So I, personally for me, I felt that that was nicer because I didn't want my child to not be ahead (...) or to be behind, because other kids were (...) were ahead with their Mandarin." I then asked her, "Even though his English, he's more advanced in English? Compared to them right?" Joyce responded, "I know. I actually I know in the other places that works, but I felt that this was,

this works for us. Although a lot of parents laugh because it feels like we are in the remedial class because the rest of the population speak Mandarin (laugh).”

However, after several weeks in the school term, they got a call that there was an open spot in the French program similar to what happened with Emily and Harry. It was an extremely hard decision to make but in the end, Joyce decided to stay in the Mandarin program. First of all, Steven wanted to stay in the school where he already made friends. Secondly, there were practical reasons such as availability in the daycare spot. On top of that, Joyce said, “It came down to fundamentally, Mandarin is a harder language to learn. We live in Vancouver, so um, it’s important to have. I did not want my child to be a monolingual child So if I can’t do it at home, then, if there’s a way to do it at school, then that’s important to me.” Her Taiwanese parents were not necessarily very supportive about the decision, however: “Actually, even now, the opinion is, ‘why are you learning Mandarin? You should be learning French instead.’”

Nevertheless, Joyce was happy about the decision to stay in the program, and she was planning to put her daughter Sara in the same program in the future. At the time of the interview, Sara was going to a Mandarin/Cantonese/English Daycare. According to Joyce, Sara sang and spoke in three languages, while Joyce tried Taiwanese with her as well. I asked her if she would choose Mandarin even if Sara could get into the French immersion program. She replied, “I would like to do both actually. Because I think, I think the main reason is (...) because I think the French preschool does an excellent job.” I asked Joyce why she thought French was important. She immediately responded, “It’s mainly because it’s our national language. And every single label has French on it so if we look at anything, you know, it’s not pronounced the same . . . and French is the basis for you know, Italian, Spanish, right?”

As for the reason why she wanted her children to learn Mandarin, I asked her if it was mainly a business factor or a heritage factor. She gave a little thought and answered, “I think it’s a little bit of both. So it’s partly heritage, it’s partly business. It’s partly the environment that we are in. And really, I look at it as a skill. I think bottom line, it’s like swimming, it’s like being able to do certain sports. Speaking in another language is a skill, and if you have the opportunity to have them learn that at an early age, they are more likely to do it right? I think my problem” with Canada and the United States, Joyce explained, is that “North

America is very monolingual, people only think in one language. If you go anywhere else in the world, people speak more than one. So I think . . . if you have the opportunity to do it, it's something to do.”

6.5 Analysis of Joyce's Story: From Othering Mandarin to Learning Mandarin

In Joyce's story, we could see that the recurring theme of othering Mandarin speakers showed up in different ways from Harry's story. Her story was unique in that her language education trajectory was closely tied to her parents' anti-KMT political view. They deliberately avoided exposure to Mandarin while speaking Taiwanese at home. Mandarin had no capital value in her household. Therefore, while Joyce had distanced herself from Mandarin speakers until she graduated from university, the othering of Mandarin speakers was in relation to her Taiwanese (and anti-KMT) identity. In contrast, Harry distanced himself from Mandarin, and perhaps other Chinese variety including his heritage (i.e., Toisan) in relation to his Canadian identity as a native English speaker.

She only spoke Taiwanese until she went to kindergarten, but was able to learn English without any memory of having difficulty. Soon, her dominant language shifted from Taiwanese to English as she remarked, “I cannot finish the whole sentence.” It is surprising to see how quickly early childhood disposition can be modified through schooling when it comes to a shift from a home language to the dominant language. Indeed, Bourdieu states the significance of schooling in reconstructing habitus. Reay (1995) argues, “while habitus reflects the social position in which it was constructed, it also carries within it the genesis of new creative responses which are capable of transcending the social conditions in which it was produced” (p. 356). Learning English at the cost of one's mother tongue—a storyline that had been shared by Lily, Emily and Jack as well—is a telling example how habitus can change as the child enters a new field (i.e., from home to school) and be exposed to peers with different habitus with a higher capital value and symbolic power (i.e., English).

The first time she was exposed to Mandarin was when the family went back to Taiwan for a year. It is interesting to see that her parents did not mind their daughters learning Mandarin when the field shifted to Taiwan from Canada because the teacher understood his political view. But as soon as the family moved back to Victoria, she lost touch with any Mandarin. As she remarked about her parents: “they distilled in us very much

Taiwanese, a Taiwanese presence,” and she kept identifying herself with other Taiwanese friends who grew up in Canada.

Even as an undergraduate student, she was never attracted to Mandarin. She chose Japanese so that she could communicate with her grandparents who learned Japanese during the Japanese colonization of Taiwan. However, after she moved to Vancouver to work, she got involved in a Taiwanese church where she met many young Taiwanese. Here, she noticed that most of the people there spoke Taiwanese and Mandarin. She immediately felt a lack in Mandarin, and that she needed to learn the language. In this new field that she entered, Mandarin had capital value, but she did not have the habitus to fit in this new field. She decided to invest in Mandarin for the first time for herself. However, her identity remained rooted in speaking and being Taiwanese, and for her Mandarin was an additional language to learn just like she enjoyed learning Spanish and Italian. At the same time, she remarked that she felt inadequate not being able to read the specials at Chinese restaurants even though she was Chinese. Therefore, Joyce’s investment in learning Mandarin at graduate school had a dual rationale. One was as an investment to fulfill her *imagined* identity (Norton, 2000) in her new Taiwanese Canadian circle, and the other was an investment in acquiring an “adequate” habitus as Chinese (i.e., being able to read the specials written in Chinese characters at Chinese restaurants), which did not necessarily have to be learned through Mandarin.

As she became a parent, her language education practice for her two children became heavily connected to her disenchantment with the English monolingualism in North America. To begin with, she attempted to use Taiwanese as much as possible with her children. However, she was only able to practice this to a limited extent because Joyce herself did not have enough Taiwanese proficiency to engage in complicated conversation with her children. Moreover, since her husband did not understand any Taiwanese, it became a difficult task because she did not want to exclude him from the conversation. The household as a micro-field was another site of struggle in which different habitus exist. When the parents do not share the same habitus, and when either one forces her/his habitus for parenting, there is a

possibility that the other parent is “excluded”⁴⁷: “You are almost creating a different relationship,” as Joyce put. Given that the husband speaks the language of power in the macro field, namely English, it becomes even more challenging to stick with Taiwanese. However, she did not give up raising her children to be non-monolingual. She sent her older son to a French-English bilingual preschool, and her younger daughter to a multilingual daycare.

When it was time to register her older son to kindergarten, her first choice was a French immersion program. French held a high profile for Joyce because it is one of Canada’s national languages, and also because she considered it to be the basis to learn other Latin languages such as Italian and Spanish. While French had a higher capital value for Joyce, she registered her son to a Mandarin bilingual program because that space was offered first. In addition, there were multiple factors for choosing Mandarin. Joyce remarked, “It’s partly heritage, it’s partly business. It’s partly the environment that we are in.” And ultimately, it was about acquiring a skill, like a sport. But acquiring a second language was particularly important to her because of her desire for her son not to be monolingual. Her investment in her son’s Mandarin education was connected to her desire to inculcate her son with the dispositions that could fulfill his heritage as well as provide him with greater cultural and economic capital. Ironically, her son was admitted to the Mandarin bilingual program because the parents were speaking English at home, not Chinese. He was able to jump ahead of the children from Chinese speaking households, according to Joyce. She also commented, “I think it was wise to go with the English, like an English test,” which indicates that while she did not want her children to be English monolinguals, she also appreciated the fact that the program targeted those who spoke English at home. The issue regarding the difference in access to Chinese language education between children of English-speaking households and Chinese-speaking households will be revisited in Chapter 8 after I introduce the stories of Chinese immigrant parents in Chapter 7

Joyce’s relationship with Mandarin has changed dramatically since childhood. While her parents saw very little value in Mandarin during her childhood in Victoria, she quickly

⁴⁷ One of the reasons it became hard for me to stick with Japanese in communicating with my daughters was the strong sense of guilt that I was excluding my husband from our conversation (even though he probably didn’t care).

started seeing Mandarin as having social and cultural capital through her engagement with a Taiwanese Canadian youth group after moving to Vancouver. As a parent, she saw Mandarin as having educational capital and economic capital, but most importantly, learning Mandarin was about acquiring a multilingual habitus from an early stage. She maintained that her children's heritage was Taiwanese, and she tried to teach them as much as possible about Taiwan. However, while her parents very much instilled a Taiwanese presence in her, she explicitly refused to impose that on her children. As she mentioned, she did not even mind if her son's friend's parents were KMT members in Taiwan because for her it was about the children, not the parents. Her mother, in contrast, still questioned why her grandson was learning Mandarin. She argued, according to Joyce, that he should be learning French. As we have seen throughout this chapter, habitus does not necessarily reproduce practices or beliefs (Garrett & Baquedano-López, 2002). While her parents' habitus helped shape Joyce's own disdain of monolingualism and developed into her educational philosophy, her political position regarding Mandarin and Taiwanese nationalism differed significantly from her parents.

6.6 Summary and Discussion

Harry and Joyce did not make any remarks that associated speaking Chinese with shame. Rather than feeling ashamed of his/her heritage like Lily, Emily and Jack, for Harry, Chinese was the social *other*. Joyce's case is unique in that her parents consciously distanced their children from Mandarin because of their political position as anti-KMT, Taiwanese nationalists. She was actively involved in Taiwanese American/Canadian activities and did not associate her heritage with shame at all during the interview. However, despite the difference in the way they positioned themselves as Chinese Canadian, in all five cases, we can see both continuity and discontinuity of habitus (Garrett & Baquedano-López, 2002). For example, some of Harry and Joyce's dispositions remained consistent: Harry kept distancing himself from becoming a Chinese language learner, and Joyce maintained her pride in Taiwanese language and culture. However, in terms of Mandarin language learning, Joyce's feelings and practices underwent great change as she moved to Vancouver and became part of a new community. The political and linguistic dispositions inculcated by her parents that kept Joyce from learning Mandarin were redefined as Mandarin became a language of utility to belong in the Taiwanese youth community of Vancouver. This resonates with many CHL

learners in the U.S. and Canada (He, 2008b; D. Li & Duff, 2014) in how language practice is a result of embodied memories, skills and investment that are “both hetero-temporal and hetero-spatial” (He, 2008b, p. 110). Indeed, As Wacquant (2007) argued,

Habitus is... a principle of *both social continuity and discontinuity*: continuity because it stores social forces into the individual organism and transports them across time and space; discontinuity because it can be modified through the acquisition of new dispositions and because it can trigger innovation whenever it encounters a social setting discrepant with the setting from which it issues. (p. 268)

The reshaping and change of habitus is even more apparent when we look at Harry and Joyce’s investment in their children’s Chinese language education. Harry admitted that the reason why he wasn’t able to pursue Chinese was because it was too late by the time he noticed the value of Chinese, especially Mandarin. Therefore, for his son, he started early. His investment indicated his desire to give his son different linguistic dispositions from himself. Whether it will be successful or not is still unknown but Harry practiced his agency within his capacity. Luckily, his son was able to get into the early start Mandarin program from kindergarten. As with Joyce, while her parents’ rejection of Mandarin still persisted (e.g., Joyce’s mother asking why Mandarin and not French for Steven), Joyce did not reproduce that Mandarin speaker—Taiwanese speaker dichotomy. However, it is interesting to see from her account that there is now a new dichotomy, which is the English speaker—Mandarin speaker dichotomy within the context of her son’s schooling. While she acknowledged the greatness of multilingualism, she was clear that she was glad the program was designed for English speakers. Mandarin speakers were still positioned as social other, however in different dynamics in comparison with their positioning in her parents’ time.

When I first encountered the second and third generation Chinese Canadian parents who were invested in their children’s Chinese education, I assumed it was simply their desire to reconnect to their heritage language which they themselves had lost. However, I realized that was not the case with most parents. Their stories show that parents’ investment in their children’s Chinese education is a site where different languages possess competitive capital value in the past and present field as well as the imagined future field. Whether to invest in

French or Mandarin was a recurring theme throughout the five stories.⁴⁸ Harry, Emily and Joyce happened to register their children to the Mandarin program because that was the first available program before French immersion program. Indeed, Joyce expressed her strong desire for her son to learn French because it was a national language of Canada. However, because the French immersion program accepted her son only after several weeks in the school term, she decided to keep her son in the Mandarin program. In addition to the fact that her son was enjoying the program, she considered Mandarin to have a higher value in Vancouver, and it was a harder language to learn than French. In other words, she considered Mandarin to have a higher investment return than French. However, it is important to note that the decision was based not solely on the capital value of the two languages. In fact, it was other practical reasons such as the availability of the program and daycare arrangements that mattered as well.

In contrast, growing up in Alberta, Harry remarked that he never considered French to be an important language. He did initially prefer the French immersion program to Mandarin bilingual program, but that was not because he considered French to be a better language to learn. It was because the program was more established whereas the Mandarin bilingual program was a brand new program for which he had little information. In fact, he perceived Mandarin to have higher value than French in today's global economy. Emily and Lily (stories in Chapter 5) took similar positioning to Harry regarding French. Emily clearly remarked that she did not want French. According to Emily, French was only relevant for certain kinds of jobs in the federal government. In other words, she did not perceive French as useful capital in the field where her son would be positioned. This was a similar view to Lily who remarked, "What's the use of it in B.C? It's only going to help her with limited types of jobs."

School choice forced all parents except Lily, whose child was still a preschooler when the interview took place to choose either French or Mandarin. However, they all addressed the benefit of learning a second language at an early stage for the child's brain development. If it was not Mandarin, it could have been any other language. Joyce remarked that if they lived in the United States, she would have chosen Spanish. The driving force of

⁴⁸ The competition between Chinese and French also came up in the case study by D. Li & Duff (2014).

her investment in her children’s language education was her strong disagreement with monolingualism in North America. As a result, she has been invested in multiple languages including Taiwanese for her children. For Harry, learning a language was about acquiring a skill set, just like learning the piano and learning new sports. He clearly denied the idea that he wanted his son to learn Mandarin because of his heritage.

Table 6.1, below, is an extension of Table 5.1 with the addition of Harry and Joyce. It summarizes the trajectories of Chinese language learning in relation to investment in their children’s Chinese language education.

Table 6.1 Trajectories of Chinese Language Learning and Investment in Their Children’s Chinese Language Education

	Lily	Emily	Jack	Harry	Joyce
Parents’ own relationship with Chinese language learning	Shame— Learned Chinese— Embracing being Chinese	Shame— Did not develop Cantonese	Shame— Learned Chinese— Identity crisis— Learned French	Chinese as social other— Chose not to learn Chinese	Mandarin speakers as social other— Learned Mandarin as an adult
Situation of children’s Chinese language learning	Cantonese playgroup (not successful)	Early-Mandarin Bilingual Program	Early-Mandarin Bilingual Program	Early-Mandarin Bilingual Program	Early-Mandarin Bilingual Program
Reasons for Investment	Projecting her own identity struggle	Economic capital, worldly person, skill	Skill, worldly person	Skill, economic capital	Skill, heritage, economic capital

As we can see, all five parents were invested in socializing their children into a particular habitus, which they believed best for their children as they envisioned the fields in which their children would be positioned in the future. However, this is not to say that parents had full agency in their children’s language education. The resources were limited, and parents made choices from what there was available. Lily struggled to create the opportunity for her daughter to learn Cantonese, and at the time of the interview, she was at the stage of almost giving up.

This chapter as well as the previous chapter (Chapter 5) have explored research question 1, “What are the trajectories of English-speaking Chinese Canadian parents’ (Group 1) attitudes, feelings, perceptions and practices regarding CHL from childhood to parenthood?” It seems that Canada, especially Vancouver, has come a long way compared to the time when these parents grew up. Jack remarked about the early start Mandarin bilingual program (in Chapter 5) as follows:

I never expected that to happen. I actually find it very commendable that the school board is actually trying to do this program because, let’s face it, Chinese isn’t an official language of Canada. There’s no real reason to be teaching except for the fact that they think it’s a good idea.

Indeed, one of the main reasons the school board started the program was because learning Mandarin was becoming increasingly popular, in particular for the parents who advocated for the program, as the language of imagined future opportunities for their children. Not only is the language associated with the powerful economy of China, but also the increasing numbers of immigrants from China who have a major presence in today’s Metro Vancouver. Having a “Chinese face” presumably does not carry the same meaning as it used to for Lily, Emily and Jack in their childhood, when it was often associated with negative aspects of being “different.” With the increasing popularity of Chinese as a language of the “future,” there would also presumably be plenty more opportunities to learn Chinese for heritage learners. The potential value of Chinese seems to have become established in a way that was perhaps unimaginable when these parents were young. Vancouver seems to have come a long way. But has it really?

This brings me to my second and third research questions: “What are the immigrant Chinese parents’ (Group 2) investments in Chinese language education? What are the recurring issues in Chinese language education that are shared across the two groups?” In the following chapter, these questions will be examined as I present the stories of five immigrant Chinese parents.

Chapter 7: Stories of Chinese Immigrant Parents: Mia, Oliver, Isabelle, Thomas and Sophia

7.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is the five Chinese immigrant parents (Group 2) interviewed who reside in Metro Vancouver. What makes these parents different from the Group 1 parents who grew up here is that their habitus were constructed outside of Canada, including their language: Chinese. Two parents came from Mainland China speaking Mandarin as their first language, two parents came from Hong Kong speaking Cantonese as their first language, and one parent came from Taiwan speaking Mandarin as her first language. According to the stories, all parents received post-secondary education while some pursued graduate degrees. The question to explore in this chapter is, “How do the Group 2 parents differ from Group 1 parents—who grew up in an English dominant environment—regarding their desire and investment in their children’s Chinese language education?”

The stories of Group 2 parents turned out quite differently from the stories of Group 1. This is partly due to my interview method: With Group 1 parents, I asked them to share their relationship with the Chinese language from childhood to today as parents. I was particularly interested in revealing how dispositions toward Chinese language were shaped and reshaped in the English dominant field throughout different life stages. On the other hand, with Group 2 parents, the interview focus was on their experience regarding their children’s language education in Canada. I did ask them to share their own language learning trajectories, Chinese and English, but these were not the main focus of the interview. Rather, my goal was to understand their struggles and dilemmas in raising their children in an English-dominant environment and to compare their stories with the stories of parents who grew up in Canada (Group 1).

The stories will be presented in a different style from the Group 1 stories: an analysis of the parents’ investment in language education (mainly but not limited to Chinese) will be interwoven throughout the five stories. I chose to do so after initially attempting to present the stories in a manner parallel to the Group 1 parents (separating the stories and analysis into two separate chapters); however, given that the reader had already read the stories of Group 1, leaving out the comparative lens when presenting the stories of Group 2 seemed not

only unnatural but, to use the word used by Richardson (1994), “boring,” trying to be “scientific” (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 1) by strictly matching the style between Group 1 and Group 2. The analysis will be focused in this chapter on the parents’ investment in their children’s language education, and the difference in this investment between Group 1 and Group 2.

7.2 Mia

7.2.1 Introduction

Mia was born in Mainland China and grew up speaking Mandarin as her first language. After college, she moved to Hong Kong with her husband, and learned Cantonese for her job. Although she learned English at school in China, it wasn’t until the family moved to Canada that she started using English in her daily life. At the time of the interview, her son was already a high school student. She told me the challenges and obstacles of raising her son to be bilingual. Although her first language is Mandarin, she was also a fluent English speaker and opted for an English interview.

7.2.2 Before immigrating to Canada: “I wanted him to learn Mandarin”

“I was brought up in China. After I graduated from my university . . . I worked in a bank for several years, then I moved to Hong Kong, and lived there for seven years (...) I was China’s first banking computer system operator, first generation.” When she moved to Hong Kong with her husband, who is also a Mandarin speaker, she changed her profession to a stock consultant. She recalled, “interesting job . . . better than the computer operator (laugh). Even though that’s a really good pay job, but I really liked the second one.” She went back to Mainland China to give birth to her first son because her mother was a pediatrician. She took a one-year maternity leave from work and lived with her parents during her leave. After her maternity leave, she went back and forth between Hong Kong and Mainland China: “We visited my parents very often . . . ’cause I wanted him to learn Mandarin So actually, I lived with my parents every year, like each year, I spent some time with my parents Sometimes four months, sometimes in fall, and sometimes (...) two times usually.”

I asked her when she learned to speak English. Mia responded, “Um (...) in Hong Kong well, we learn English as a second language in high school of course, and also in

university, but mainly in Hong Kong because we had a Filipino person help us I started to practice my oral English with her.” However, she remarked, “Not much because she speaks Cantonese as well Sometimes she would speak a couple of English to me, and it was very simple English.” Mia learned Cantonese in Hong Kong as an adult. I asked her if she felt more comfortable speaking English or Cantonese. She replied, “Now about the same, but before definitely Cantonese better.” She told me it wasn’t that hard to learn Cantonese, “cause you don’t have to learn the original form⁴⁹, the original form is the same, but the only thing you have to learn is the oral As long as you can catch the tone. Cause Mandarin has four-five tones, Cantonese has eight, yah eight I didn’t really speak for the first three months, but after that cause you live here, I have to speak (...) so I start to speak. (...) I think I caught up fairly quick.”

7.2.3 Coming to Canada: “A real childhood, so I decided to come”

Mia and her husband decided to move to Canada when their son was in preschool. I asked her, “So you came to Canada, what made you, what brought you here?” She thought for a moment and responded, “Mainly about my son, first my husband’s family was here, so he got a big family here, but cause I’m the only daughter in my family, my parents really didn’t want me to go that far, so that’s why we lived in Hong Kong, so it’s closer. But after my son was born, I start to think, cause in China, in Hong Kong, it’s really competitive, and all I heard from my husband’s brothers, my sisters-in-law, I start to feel like, ‘Oh maybe I should come’ you know, better environment My nephew, niece, we often talk about what they were doing, how’s the teacher, how’s the school life. And I was really surprised that my sister-in-law told me that there’s no homework. I was like ‘oh- wow!’ (laugh). Cause I had some relatives in Hong Kong, and Hong Kong’s better, maybe, I don’t know, a little better than Mainland China, but still it’s really like intense.” I asked her, “So comparing that you thought you wanted your son to have more relaxing environment, than a competitive one.” She replied, “Yah yah, a real childhood, so I decided to come.”

“Okay, so you came to Canada, and what did you do first?” She responded immediately, “I went to ESL, I realized I was level 3 ESL, so I went to um the immigrant ESL And then, I went to a community college, I did all the English.” I asked her if it

⁴⁹ As Mia mentions, Mandarin has four tones while Cantonese has six or more tones depending on how they are counted.

was for free. “No, you have to pay, after ESL, after the free class.” She went there for two years while she had some part time jobs: “After that, I finished high school English, and I started to think, um, cause I don’t feel fulfilled, comparing to my previous life, right? So I thought maybe I should go back to university, so I applied.” Mia was accepted and completed her Bachelor in three years in a different field from what she studied back in China. After that, she decided to go further to do her Master’s degree.

7.2.4 Preschool–Grade 4: “The teacher said ‘oh I almost forgot he was ESL student’”

Mia’s elder son went to a Mandarin preschool in Mainland China while he was staying with his grandparents. When he was in Hong Kong, he stayed home with his father’s family who spoke Mandarin as well. “He understands Cantonese, but he speaks mainly Mandarin.” When the family immigrated, first they lived in a suburban area of Metro Vancouver. He started kindergarten as soon as he turned five. Mia recalled her son’s kindergarten life: “Oh he had a super nice, I think she was award-winning teacher, she was really really nice he was really happy. Like we all prepared for the hard days, right? He didn’t even know one word, but, um, he always wanted to go to school. So we said ‘oh today, you are going to school,’ and he got everything ready, and the door was open, and the teacher welcomed him, and he was like ‘bye bye’ like that. And he went in, and we were waiting outside for 10 minutes . . . but no, he was really happy. Hahaha. He was happy.” I asked her, “How was his English then, after he spent some time in kindergarten?” Mia replied, “It was really smooth, it was a smooth transition. I didn’t feel any stress, any struggle from him . . . I got many many positive feedbacks from his teacher, and he was happy.”

When Mia’s elder son was in Grade 1, the family moved to the central area of Metro Vancouver. He transferred to one of the mini schools⁵⁰: “They were mainly English-speaking kids but then there were more Asian kids. I also volunteered in his school, in his library so I know the teacher, I know how he’s doing I can show you his report card, always like ‘this kid has a talent in Music.’” I commented, “So he never had problems in English for sure.” Mia recalled, “No. I think by grade one or two, there was one time, I think it was during coffee time, the teacher said ‘Oh I almost forgot he was ESL student.’”

When I asked her about his Mandarin, she remarked, “For elementary school, it was

⁵⁰ In the local school board context, mini schools are located within their host schools; they provide special programs for a small number of students.

still good ‘cause I kept teaching him once or twice a week I got every like a every word for the thing, word for piano, word for sofa Mainly I wanted to teach him to read.” She also made sure he would communicate with his grandparents: “Even after we came to Canada, we still set up the camera, video conversation, with my parents, so either Friday night or Saturday night, he would sit in front of the computer and talk with his grandparents, and that really really helped his Chinese language.”

He didn’t go to any of the weekend Chinese schools: “I let him try one time, he doesn’t like it There was a big elementary school I heard so I took him to the Chinese school, I think Sunday school, I talked to the person there, and they say ‘Oh, why don’t you just try, see if he likes it.’ But he didn’t like it.” I asked her the reason. “Maybe, it’s just, you know kids never like Sunday school you know Oh, for one thing, he’s the late kid, right? So everybody knows each other, and you are the one who is sitting at the back, so that gives you uncomfortable feeling, I think that’s (...) it would be better if . . . I found one of the friends there and . . . make him think that ‘oh I have a friend there,’ right?”

7.2.5 Grade 6 to high school: “Start to realize he’s Chinese as well”

After finishing grade 5, Mia’s son told Mia that he wanted to enroll in late French immersion program: “It happened that the school has late French immersion program. And all his friends were going to the French program, and one day he came back and said, ‘Mom, I want to go to French Immersion program’ and I was like ‘what?’ Because to me, Chinese is much more important than French, right? I was ‘Are you sure?’ ‘Yeah, all my friends are going, I’m going too.’ Okay, I went to talk to the teacher, to the principal even, and they said ‘oh why don’t you give him a try. It’s no harm, you know,’ (laugh) ‘okay.’” Her son continued to stay in the program even as he entered high school: “But the high school, it’s late immersion and early immersion combined together. And there were more early immersion there, and he was one of the few late immersion⁵¹ there, so he thought his

⁵¹ The early French immersion program starts in kindergarten while the late French immersion program starts in grade 6 in British Columbia. Early French immersion normally starts with 100% French instruction in kindergarten, gradually increasing the amount of English instruction up to 75% in Grade 11 and 12. Late French immersion program normally starts with 100% French instruction in Grade 6. In Grade 7, English is used for English language arts and may be used for other subjects but not exceeding 20% of the total instructional time. From Grade 8 onwards, the two streams merge and share the same curriculum and French instructional time. (Province of British Columbia, 1996)

pronunciation, his grammar is not good as the early immersion But then, I think the first year he got a very good grade, and he even got a distinction award, and that gave me courage and confidence.”

During the first year of French immersion, Mia took a break from teaching him Chinese at home: “After he started French, I thought you know because French is completely new language for him, so I gave him one year. Even though I still let him watch TV, watch cartoons, talk to him in Mandarin, but I didn’t really teach him Mandarin because I wanted to give him more time to learn, to getting used to French.” I asked Mia if he ever resisted speaking Mandarin to his parents. “Yeah . . . during elementary school, it was okay, because I often say, ‘oh please say it in Mandarin because we don’t really understand what you are saying.’ But later, it’s ‘mom, you are lying because you go to school as well, right? You know English.’ [So I said to him] ‘okay, now you are old enough.’ (laugh)” I asked her if he still spoke Mandarin to her. “Sometimes it’s mixed. Sometimes, half half, there’s kind of code switch every sometimes, but we um, like always always remind ourselves to speak in Mandarin.” However, his use of Mandarin is limited to inside the house “because even though we have some friends, but my friends, all children speak English, when they met together, they spoke English.”

In addition to speaking Mandarin at home, Mia had been sending her son back to China almost every two years. It started in elementary school: “There was one time teacher said ‘oh where were you born?’ ‘I was born in China.’ ‘Do you know anything about China?’ And then the teacher told me the only thing he knew about China was panda and the Great Wall, so that freaked me out. I was like no way, so started to send him back, and every time he came back his Chinese is improving a lot.” Her evaluation of her son’s level of proficiency was quite high: “Good enough to understand daily conversation, and watch cartoons, understand movies, maybe 80%.” I asked her if she could explain why she thought Mandarin was important for her son. She carefully chose her words and explained to me: “For one thing, it’s his family language, that’s for sure, that’s the most important thing. And it’s also part of his identity, right? As a Chinese.” For Mia, her son learning Chinese was important for him to connect to his family as well as his ethnic identity. It was part of Mia’s own habitus that she desired to pass on. I asked her, “Do you think he has a strong sense of ‘Oh I’m Chinese’ or ‘I’m Chinese Canadian?’” Mia responded, “Yah, he knows.

Before he's always 'go Canucks!⁵²' person, right? (laugh) But now as he gets older, he start to realize he's Chinese as well I think it's just because I think it comes to him naturally, maybe because we sent him back to China, he understands (...) like more than before." Mia told me that her son usually stayed in China during the summer, and the previous time, she sent him to a camp: "It's a root-seeking (...) search your root For all those . . . Chinese-Canadian kids I'm really proud of him. He went there by himself. When he goes, it's a whole camp thing, right? But after that he went by himself. He traveled by himself. So he was 14 But he's tall, right? So people didn't really think he's only 14." So when he came back, "he had a whole stack of business card." That was two years before our interview, and since then, her son had not gone back to China. Again, Mia told me there was no opportunity for him to use Mandarin outside the house. There were Chinese classes at his high school. However, the level was not suitable for him. "Cause his school's Mandarin is too hard, cause grade 10, 11, Mandarin, it's too hard for him. Because he never really, he never seriously learned writing, right? So that's the hard part for him, but for listening, speaking, he's all right."

When I asked her if she thought it would have been nice to have a supporting system other than the weekend schools, she answered immediately, "Oh, yeah, there is one thing. It would be better if he can go to a program, there is a program like a Chinese program Bilingual program for him. But he is not qualified because he has Chinese background, right? If they have this kind of program for this kind of children, it would be very popular It would be a lot easier, if he goes to one of those programs, like later immersion, right? If there is a Chinese program, he's definitely there, but he doesn't have any choice." We talked about the early-start bilingual program that would not accept Mandarin speakers. She sighed, "That's so sad I have a new baby, right? I strongly strongly want that kind of program for him, for my little one, so that he's able to, he has opportunity to learn Mandarin, to learn Chinese. Not that I have to send him back to China to learn Chinese."

⁵² Canucks is the name of Vancouver's NHL hockey team.

7.3 Oliver

7.3.1 Introduction

Oliver moved to Canada from Hong Kong 10 years before our interview. He had a teenage son who was studying Mandarin at school in Metro Vancouver. He had been teaching his son Cantonese at home. While he was happy with his son's fluency in Cantonese, he expressed some concerns regarding his son's literacy skills and the difficulty for many other children to learn Chinese.

7.3.2 Transcribing and writing the story (capturing the subtleties of translation)

Because Oliver opted for an interview in Cantonese, I made an arrangement to conduct the interview with an interpreter. The interpreter, Leah, was a female university student who was fluent in Cantonese and English. Female students were ideal candidates for me for this work because we shared similar social status, if not the same, and therefore less likely to change the power dynamics between the interviewee and me. For example, if I had asked my father-in-law, who is much older than Oliver, to be the interpreter, it could have changed the power dynamics. I considered it would be better to have somebody similar to me in terms of age, gender and social status.

To transcribe the interview, I asked another Cantonese/English fluent student, Mo, to transcribe the conversation in both English and Cantonese. It was important to have another person do this so that I could check if Leah was translating my speech in the way that I expected, or if the translation was somehow different from what I expected. Also, it was helpful to compare what Oliver said in Chinese and how Leah translated it in English. The story that follows is written in English, however. For my utterances, I referred to a) my English speech as recorded, and b) Mo's English translation of Leah's Chinese translation of my English speech. While there were minor discrepancies between the two, the differences in translation did not affect the meaning I wanted to convey in the interview. For Oliver's utterances, I referred to a) the English translation of Oliver's speech by Leah, and b) the English translation of Oliver's speech by Mo. In most cases, I ended up using Mo's English translation of Oliver's utterance for the story because it was more detailed and somewhat

more accurate.⁵³ This means that there is a discrepancy between what was happening in the interview from my point of view at that time and the story written below because I was only referring to Leah's translation during the interview. However, from Oliver's point of view, it is closer to the actual interview if I use Mo's English translation, which is based on the transcribed utterance. That is why I made the decision to use Mo's translation over Leah's when there were differences between the two translations.

7.3.3 Coming to Canada: "I told him to speak Chinese with me, I don't know English"

As noted earlier, Oliver came to Canada about 10 years ago from Hong Kong. He spoke Cantonese and "a little bit" of Mandarin. He didn't tell me anything more about himself in Hong Kong, and I sensed that he didn't want to talk much about it. I didn't want him to feel like I was pushing him, especially at the very beginning of the interview, so I left that topic there unexplored. When I asked him the reason he came to Canada, he gave me a very short answer: "I like it here." I looked at him and wondered if that was all he was going to say. It seemed to me that he didn't want to tell me any more than that. He told me he came to Canada with his wife and his son. His son was around five years old when the family immigrated. His son spoke Cantonese, and didn't speak English at all when they immigrated. He started regular kindergarten in Canada. I asked him how his son adjusted to the new environment. Oliver responded, "It seemed very easy to me. He was still young, so it was very easy to catch up." Oliver's son spoke Cantonese at home but spoke English with his friends. From Oliver's point of view, his son was able to speak English very fluently by the time he was in Grade 3. I asked him if his son's level of Cantonese deteriorated during those years. "It didn't get worse," he replied. I was surprised to hear that and asked him if his son sometimes responded to him in English. Oliver responded, "yeah, sometimes. But that's how young people are. Sometimes, when they speak to us in Cantonese the sentences will be switched around. . . What should go in front is put in the back. It happens a lot." Oliver didn't seem to care too much. I wondered if his son had any relatives who spoke Chinese with him. Oliver told me almost everybody spoke English among his relatives. However, with his grandparents, he would speak Cantonese "very willingly." He also mentioned, "I

⁵³ I compared Mo's transcribed Cantonese speech written in Chinese with both Leah and Mo's English translation, to see which was more accurate.

told him, ‘When you talk to me, you have to speak Chinese.’ I told him to speak Chinese with me. I don’t know English.”

I asked Oliver if he was ever worried that his son would forget Chinese, referring to the stories of many parents who attempted to send their children to weekend Chinese classes. Oliver answered, “I never worried. He liked it. We’ve taught him at home. I felt like he accepted it. Back then he really liked to read this *Master Q* comic books [in Chinese]. . . . He even reads it now. He borrows it from the library.”

7.3.4 Learning Mandarin: “Because he doesn’t speak it often he’s not very fluent”

From Grade 4, his son started learning Mandarin at his school program where they have Mandarin Language Arts. I asked Oliver if he would have preferred that it was Cantonese that his son was learning. He responded, “Either one is fine.” To Oliver, because Mandarin and Cantonese share the same writing system, it didn’t matter. In fact, he said, “It’s better to speak another language, to learn more.” About his son’s Mandarin proficiency, he remarked, “I don’t have any chance to speak with him but I think it’s average.” He mentioned the reason why he thought his son wasn’t learning to speak very well: “The most important thing is that they don’t have the chance to communicate, so the Mandarin is not as good because he doesn’t speak it very often. Because he doesn’t speak it often he’s not very fluent. He speaks Cantonese with us quite often so Cantonese is better So the important thing is, ‘what language do they speak with their friends and classmates?’”

Oliver assessed his son’s reading and writing skills as “okay.” Until Grade 3, Oliver taught his son how to read and write in traditional Chinese characters. Since Grade 4 at school, they taught a simplified version so “he had to take time to adjust.” According to Oliver, his son preferred the traditional script system because “it’s prettier.” At the same time, Oliver mentioned, “He doesn’t know that much.” I asked him if he expected his son to speak Chinese at a very high level, or was the level he was at right now okay to him. Oliver responded, “I don’t expect him to be very good. It’s okay.” I asked him if he was thinking about his son going back to Hong Kong or China in the future to work or study. He replied, “I think that we hope it will be like that in the future, but it’s his decision. Another thing is that if he chooses to learn Chinese, I think going back to Hong Kong, Taiwan or China would be better. If he wants to stay and work and live here, I will tell him to take French. Because if you continue to live here, your life will be affected by the second language you

choose.” I asked the reason why he thought learning French was important if he wanted to stay in Canada. Oliver answered, “Because in Canada if you want to be a government official you have to know French. It’s better because knowing English only is not enough. You can learn other cultures too because French is from Quebec. Of course, as an immigrant from another country, it’s better to know the language of your home country, too. That is how I see it. Of course, he has the right to learn French or Spanish. So it’s up to the child if they want to learn a few more languages or not.” To Oliver, language learning was a choice that determined future capital, but in a manner limited geographically. In the linguistic market of Canada, speaking French created the possibility of careers in the government civil service. On the other hand, if his son chose Chinese, he would be better off looking for work in Hong Kong, Taiwan or China. Oliver’s awareness of the practical opportunities afforded by language abilities aligned language learning as a capital investment that would only achieve a return within a specific field. If his son wanted to pursue Chinese, Oliver believed that in practice this would create more future opportunities in Chinese speaking locations, but learning French was useful both for creating job opportunities in the Canadian government.

Listening to Oliver’s story, I received the impression that his son was quite comfortable with his Chinese heritage. I asked, “Do you think he feels totally Canadian or he’s very aware that he’s Chinese? As a father, what’s your impression?” Oliver said, “He is Canadian, but we have told him that we are Chinese Canadians ‘you are Canadian,’ he was born here⁵⁴, but the important thing is, ‘your parents are Chinese.’ So he would know what his own parents are like. So I’m just teaching him more knowledge: the problems in China in the past, the problems in China now, teaching him more so he knows more. But he doesn’t like to read about Chinese history. He likes to read about European history before World War II It depends on where it’s coming from, but I do tell him roughly about the relationship between Hong Kong and China because we were originally from Hong Kong. After 1997 we returned to being part of China. So I have been teaching him about the history of Hong Kong and China.” I asked him, “Some parents would think to be Chinese Canadian, it’s important that their child understands the festivals in China, like the Mid-Autumn Festival, New Year’s. Do you think that’s important too?” He replied, “I feel it’s not

⁵⁴ I assume that his son was born in Canada and the family went back to Hong Kong before they immigrated to Canada when he was five years old.

important but nowadays in this society, young people are surrounded by this kind of information.” Also, regarding the meanings of each festival, “We would tell him, but he won’t remember.” Oliver evinced a desire similar to Mia’s in considering Chinese language use as an important way for his son to connect to his parents, and to understand who he was. In a similar vein, learning about the history of Hong Kong and China was also important for him to acquire a sense of who he was. Like Mia, Oliver’s investment in his son’s Chinese language education can be understood as sharing and passing on the parents’ habitus to their children even within a new field.

I was curious about why he had never sent his son to weekend Chinese classes. I asked him again why he never thought of doing that. “I didn’t expect him to go because currently his Chinese is good enough to manage the tests at school. In the future, if he wants to improve more, then he can go back to Hong Kong or China by himself to do so.”

7.3.5 Thoughts on Chinese education: “if there was a bilingual kindergarten program, it would have been better”

I asked about his thoughts on learning Chinese through an early-start bilingual program. He said, “If there was a bilingual kindergarten program, it would have been better, and I would have let him take that. But we didn’t have it at that time. It only started a couple of years ago. . . . With the bilingual program starting early, it would have been very easy to learn the language. Like a sponge, whatever you put in there he would absorb it.” According to Oliver, having exposure to Chinese when at an early stage was crucial: “Nowadays, it’s pretty common for children to feel very reluctant to speak Chinese at home if they were born here. From 0 to 5 years old, they spoke English at home. Even if they are from a Chinese family and they speak Chinese, when they start kindergarten, 90% of kids would not want to speak Chinese because Chinese is very hard to learn. Chinese is very hard to learn, and the characters are very hard to write. . . . They don’t want to learn, because it’s very hard to write Chinese characters. You have to like to write them. If you can’t write them then you won’t like it, then you wouldn’t want to learn that language Gradually, they will forget how to speak. Another thing is the problem in the family, whether the parents or grandparents speak Chinese. We know that here, there are no problems for English . . . But their Chinese depends on our efforts to speak to them as often as possible for them to learn. If you don’t speak, then you won’t learn. Especially since Chinese is the hardest language to

learn.” I asked Oliver if his son was willing to talk about complicated topics in Cantonese. Oliver answered, “It’s okay. Sometimes I tell him some idioms and explain what they mean. For example, some idioms consist of four characters . . . So I would explain to him to understand the meaning. He is interested but that doesn’t mean he is very good at it or he can handle Chinese well.” He also mentioned, “When we are just talking, I wouldn’t say such complicated things. Even when you speak English, when you are just talking, you wouldn’t say complicated things like an essay. So he is still okay. But when he is writing, there is a difficulty. I know why some children don’t want to learn Chinese. Some of them as they go to weekend Chinese school . . . they don’t want to continue anymore because they are afraid to write. They are afraid to write passages. So then it becomes that they don’t want to take it. So many children as they learn Chinese, they don’t want to learn it anymore . . . Writing is very hard unless you have been taking Chinese before. For example, if you already have experience taking Chinese classes in Hong Kong before coming here, it won’t feel as difficult. Or from Mainland China, it won’t be as difficult Speaking and writing are both important. I strongly agree with that starting from kindergarten, this will be better for the children . . . Starting from kindergarten.” I mentioned the fact that there were not enough bilingual programs to accommodate many students, especially those whose first language was not English. He gave me his thoughts: “I see it as a problem why they can’t do bilingual here, English and Chinese. It may concern many things. The problem may have something to do with the government or it could be racism. If I was Korean, Malaysian, Vietnamese, why can’t I be bilingual with English and Vietnamese? If I am Japanese, I am from elsewhere in Southeast Asia, why can’t I be bilingual? Filipino . . . or South Asian. They have a large population in Vancouver right now. Why can’t they be bilingual? So there is a problem right now in Vancouver.”

7.4 Isabelle

7.4.1 Introduction

Isabelle and her husband moved to Canada from Hong Kong. Her daughter was born in Vancouver and at the time of the interview was in Grade 7 at the local Mandarin bilingual program. The home language was Cantonese, and she managed to send her daughter to weekend Cantonese classes until she was in Grade 4. During the interview, she expressed her concerns regarding her daughter’s literacy skills. Although she spoke Cantonese as her first

language, she opted for an interview in English. However, the consent form (written in both English and Chinese) seemed to have made her nervous about the formality of the interview. Although she told me she understood, I must acknowledge that the procedure created some tensions in the air, which I had never felt with other participants. Therefore, the interview began with a rather formal atmosphere in comparison to other interviews.

7.4.2 Preschool to Grade 3: “She’s Chinese so she needs to learn the Chinese”

Isabelle moved to Vancouver from Hong Kong with her husband after they got married. Her husband’s parents immigrated to Canada in the 1980s, and his grandparents immigrated to the U.S. even before that. Isabelle didn’t give me much more detail about her husband. After Isabelle and her husband arrived from Hong Kong to Vancouver, she got a job at a bank. But when her daughter was born, she decided to leave her job and stay home. She stayed home with her daughter speaking Cantonese to her. When she was three years old, Isabelle sent her to a Chinese bilingual preschool in Metro Vancouver. The preschool was run in Cantonese and English. After three years in the bilingual preschool, she went to a regular English elementary school. I asked her how her daughter coped with English when she started kindergarten: “Did you feel any pressure for her to learn English? Basically she was speaking Cantonese mainly with you, and then she went to kindergarten, suddenly in all English environment right? . . . Was it hard for her, you think?” Isabelle responded, “It’s not hard for her because . . . before preschool, I took her to the library and community centre, and so I took her to play with other kids together, so that’s why she still was comfortable speaking English . . . she watched TV, sometimes I will teach her vocabulary, English vocabulary, and she watched TV, and read English book, so before she went to the preschool, she read a little bit sentence.” Isabelle told me her daughter had no problem learning English at school: “Kindergarten to Grade 3, she’s learning English pretty well, in the class (...) so the regular class, so still pretty good.” At the same time, her Cantonese was slipping away. Once a week, Isabelle put her daughter in a Cantonese language school, which was mostly for heritage speakers. I asked her if her daughter liked it. “I think she didn’t.” Her daughter told her, “I hate Chinese, I don’t like Chinese . . . the character, need to write down, so I don’t like it.” Other than practicing the characters, her daughter didn’t like that she had to go to school on the weekends. “Because mostly weekend they like to play, right? But we still need to do homework and take them to school, so they didn’t like it.” However, she kept

attending for four years. Isabelle explained, “Because . . . parents need to . . . encourage kids to learning Chinese is very important, right? Because we are Chinese, we need to (...) if you are Chinese, simply I just say . . . ‘you are Chinese, right? You cannot speak Chinese? . . . You speak Chinese differently, yah, what do you feel?’ We reminded her, so she’s Chinese so she needs to learn the Chinese. Learn Chinese culture.” Unlike the other parents Isabelle did not specifically mention anything about the family connection being a crucial rationale for her daughter to learn to speak Chinese. To her, knowing Chinese language and culture was an important part of being Chinese in a more general way.

So I asked Isabelle, “Okay (...) so it’s more like (...) not just for communicating, not just for tool, not like going back to China for business, but more about her identity?” Isabelle answered, “Yeah yeah yeah.” I asked her further, “You want her to learn Cantonese because she’s Chinese, and you wanted her to be comfortable being Chinese. Is that your reason why you wanted her to learn Cantonese?” Isabelle confirmed, “Yes. That’s why we keep her to learn Chinese.” She added, “It doesn’t matter, which, Mandarin or Cantonese.” I was surprised and gasped, “Oh it doesn’t matter?” Isabelle told me it didn’t matter because even though the tones are different, the written form was the same. However, she sighed, “my daughter cannot read books.”

7.4.3 Grade 4 to Grade 7: “I cannot force her which language to speak”

When her daughter was in Grade 4, Isabelle decided to put her in a special school program where they delivered Mandarin through Mandarin Language Arts class. The program only accepts students with strong English skills, and does not accept students with prior knowledge of Chinese literacy skills. I asked her about the student population of the program. She responded, “I think mostly Chinese (...) and half and half. Mostly Chinese parents, and half is the West (...) I think it’s the West, maybe because the mom is Chinese, and daddy is yeah (...) maybe mom is Japan, and daddy is (...) so depend (...) 50% is like that, Caucasian, and 50% is Chinese.” I asked her, “Did you hear a lot of English-speaking parents say it’s unfair that (...) let’s say, that friend speaks Mandarin at home, so she can speak better?” I asked that question thinking about the English-speaking parents at the early start Mandarin bilingual program complaining about the ‘advantage’ that Chinese heritage speakers would have over their children. Isabelle answered, “No, they don’t care,” which surprised me. She was not quite happy with the amount of time her daughter got exposed to

Mandarin: “Just only three times. Just only 45 minutes for each day. I think it’s not enough um (...) I think she speaks um (...) how do I say, I don’t think she speaks fluently Because the school, they . . . communicate still with English, right?” I asked Isabelle if her daughter spoke Cantonese to her. Isabelle responded, “Mostly . . . speaking in English, yah.” So I asked her, “So usually, you speak in Cantonese, and she responds in English?” Isabelle answered, “Yah yah.” She added, “We still (...) my husband and I encourage to speak Cantonese, or try to speak Mandarin but she (...) only small speak (laugh).” I told Isabelle how it was hard for my husband to keep up with his Cantonese, and how it got harder to communicate with his parents as he became older. Isabelle agreed, “It’s very hard, right? So mostly at school with friends speak English, right? We are parents, still want to keep Chinese, but we (...) nothing can do, if you not, if you don’t speak, we can’t force, right? Sometimes I speak Chinese, and she speaks English, right? But she understands, she can understand.”

To expose her daughter to more Chinese, Isabelle is thinking of sending her to China in the future: “My . . . friend’s daughter . . . graduated from university, and now she’s going to Hong Kong, take one year, and then, this year I think she’s going to China three months, so they still . . . feel that she is Chinese. Maybe, I hope my daughter was going to, like her . . . Hong Kong, and take the Chinese, and later on to learn more Chinese, so build up for Chinese. . . . Because she has little bit Chinese, um foundation, and recognize Chinese tone, so I think will catch up easily.” I asked her, “Hong Kong will be Cantonese right? You want her to learn more Cantonese?” Isabelle replied, “I think later on depend on kids right? . . . I cannot force her which language to speak, right? Because this is so Canadian, so multicultural environment, so that’s why so I cannot force kids which language to, right? So I guess we try to ‘you can keep learn more language which is best for you.’” Even though she has desires for her daughter to learn Chinese so that she can still be “Chinese,” Isabelle envisions a multicultural Canadian field for her daughter where Isabelle has no say in what her daughter should learn.

7.5 Thomas

7.5.1 Introduction

Thomas moved from Mainland China to Canada for his graduate studies. He had two sons who were born in Canada. Although he spoke Mandarin with his wife, his sons, who were 13 and 11 at the time of the interview, were speaking mostly English at home. Despite Thomas and his wife's efforts, he lamented that their sons had not been learning Chinese. His first language was Mandarin but he chose to conduct the interview in English without an interpreter.

7.5.2 Moving to Canada: "People are friendly, even in the bus"

"I was born in China, north side of China, so I speak Mandarin, um (...) then I immigrated to Canada, 12 years ago, study at a university in Toronto directly . . . stayed two years from 2000 to 2002, then about five and a half year of PhD to 2008. Then I moved to Vancouver. So back in China, beside Mandarin, I also learned English as a second language at school, so at work, I also had some chance to use English." I asked him if he went to a special school that focused on English. He answered, "No, no just regular school, but regular school in China, they have a system to learn English, even from elementary 'til to even undergraduate study in China, still learn English, that's important second language there, and so that I could . . . smoothly directly study at university. Then I moved to Vancouver to work, for now four years." I asked him if he understood any of the Chinese dialects. He replied, "No, I almost can say no. Cantonese . . . I don't understand at all."

Because I had done graduate studies in Toronto as well, we shared our stories about the weather and culture in Toronto as well as the difference between Toronto and Vancouver. As I saw him relax and become more comfortable with the conversation, I commented, "So you didn't really have a major cultural shocking experience or missing home . . ." Thomas replied, "Um, I won't say no, but not so much I could say because back in China, I have a, I worked, somehow in my work, I was exposed to foreigners, so I know them and they know me. And I also worked at university back in China, there are foreign teachers over there, so I know the culture when I first moved here. It's okay, although homesick always there."

7.5.3 Chinese language education for his sons: “Too much burden for the kids”

Now living in Metro Vancouver, Thomas said he used Mandarin at home with his family. His wife was also a Mandarin speaker. His older son, 13 at the time of the interview, was one year old when he came to Canada. “So I guess they speak English,” I remarked. “They speak English,” said Thomas. “Like more than Mandarin, maybe?” I asked. “Yes, you are absolutely right I never worry about their English, and I worry more about their Chinese from childhood. Yeah, at the beginning we were trying to speak Chinese as much as we can, within family. But we feel hard, right now, they seem to be losing more and more Chinese, and yeah, when they talk with their friends for sure, in English, and within this two guys, they talk in English, and sometimes we force them to answer in Chinese, well not force, but we try to encourage as much as we can, but still sometimes we couldn’t get Some of the things very complicated, they don’t understand. Then, some of the words they don’t know, how to reply in Chinese, that’s why we have to somehow use English.”

I asked Thomas if his children were involved in any Chinese language program. He immediately replied, “Yes, we try to send them to Chinese class, and we did so for many years . . . but things didn’t work very well They were Grade 1 and Grade 3 when we first moved here, and we found the class, we send them in. They frankly they didn’t like it at all That’s weekend two hours, taking their time, playing with their friends, that’s one thing I don’t um (...) the style of learning maybe not suitable for them because their level is not that high and their focusing more on reading and writing. But as parents, I personally want my kids at least know speaking and listening just basic skills. I know there are needs from other parents for reading and writing for high level kids but not suitable for my kids, so they always feel struggling.” This resonates with the expectations of immigrant Chinese parents in the U.S. as many parents did not expect their children to learn to be literate in Chinese and emphasized their oral proficiencies as they see the limits of heritage language schools (e.g., G. Li, 2006c; Liao & Larke, 2008; C. Wu, 2005). The problems of CHL schools will be discussed in depth in Chapter 8.

Another issue was that the children in the same level were much younger than his sons: “They don’t find the same age with them, basically young kids, so they didn’t feel comfortable.” His sons stayed in the program for two years, and quit: “That’s the only class we sent, we were trying to send them to somewhere else . . . but scheduling, driving you

know we don't want to Too much burden for the kids." I asked Thomas, "So you think basically the weekend school didn't really do much." Thomas thought for a moment and said, "I think weekend school could do well if they have their specific, you know students have the same interest, like if for me, as parents, we focus more on speaking, listening, understanding, instead of writing and reading. We didn't expect them to go that high level because we even heard some sad story although some Chinese kids they moved here with some level of Chinese they lose it anyways after 10 years because they never use in writing So we think as Chinese they should learn basically understand Chinese."

I was curious what Thomas would tell me about the reasons he wanted his sons to learn Chinese, so I asked: "Some parents want their children to learn Chinese because it's their language, they are Chinese, it's something to do with their identity. Some parents don't really care that part, but they want Chinese because it's going to be useful in the future, for business, or working, whatever. What would you think about your children?" Thomas thought for a moment and expressed his thoughts: "I think both, but first part is more important. Yah, right now, China, economy in China is seen really important in the whole world, so obviously that is an important tool. If you know Chinese, even some foreigners I know, some Indian or Korean, or even Western people, they learn Chinese. Obviously like us learning English, that's a tool. But more importantly, even if . . . we came from a small country . . . still as the identity, for their own culture, for sure, I, as first immigration, first generation, we definitely have a tie, you know want the kids to know who they are." The reason for Thomas' investment in his sons' Chinese language education is very similar to what Mia and Oliver remarked: it is to ensure the connection to their parents and their heritage to understand who they are. I commented, "You are an adult, you can see things wisely you know, kids can't see that far, right?" "Right, I know," Thomas replied. He told me about a conversation at home: "We were talking not that deep, not that far, um, about why they learn Chinese, basically we stress on, you are Chinese kids. Although you were born here, or you are Canadian, they consider as Canadian, but you are at least Chinese Canadian and you communicate well with your parents, you even need to know Chinese. I don't think they 100% take this idea, but somehow they agree they should somehow know Chinese but obviously that's a little bit more work than other kids who have just one language."

Thomas told me he wasn't planning to send his sons to a weekend Chinese school anymore: "If there is a good one, I still thinking of, but I don't really want to force them to do anything, but somehow, you need to give them a little pressure otherwise they (...) absolutely this is a burden to them We are not that tough parents, we really respect their feelings. Although we suggest that you should go to Chinese class, but that's always a burden." When I commented on the difficulty of relying solely on parents for their children's heritage language education, Thomas added, "And community, even each teacher they have their own different ideas, not systematic program delivered to the kids."

7.5.4 Schooling and language education: "It's kind of a shame! Chinese not allowed to learn Mandarin"

I asked Thomas if he wished there were Chinese classes offered at their regular school. He replied with a louder voice, "Oh, that will be great, but I know they have French as a second language, which is important. It is a second official language, somehow, I feel . . . Chinese community is larger, but impossible, but that would be hope." I asked him if he knew about the early start Chinese bilingual program from kindergarten, which unfortunately did not accept students with prior knowledge of Mandarin. He said, "I heard of that, which makes me feel uncomfortable well at least, I could see the goal, but at least wish I had the same opportunity." I explained to him about the debate that was going on: the idea that Chinese speakers should learn Chinese at home or at the weekend school, and the idea that Chinese speakers should learn English. He commented, "That's kind of to me, maybe this is not the right word, I cannot find correct on in English, but it's kind of a shame! Chinese not allowed to learn Mandarin. I think it's wrong. Many Chinese kids like my kids, they still need to learn Chinese. Their Chinese not good at all, they are basically nothing. I mean their English is same as the other English kids, so same amount of time, how come they can't learn Chinese very well?" I replied, "I know, it's this belief that . . . people have, you know, Chinese speaks Chinese at home, and Chinese children should learn English first." Thomas raised his voice, "Oh my goodness, that is kind of totally wrong idea! They always, they even think they are Canadian, and English is their language, Chinese is always a burden to them." I was surprised to see how upset he was. I tried to keep calm even though my heart was pounding with his reaction. I confirmed with him that his experience showed Chinese children had no problem learning English. He added, "If the Chinese learn Chinese, they

won't learn English well, that's kind of completely completely wrong! If talking about opportunity to expose more to Western people, I could understand, I could somehow understand, but still even for this reason, I think as a tax payer, or you know people for the kids they were born here, they live nothing different from those Western boys or girls, they should have the same opportunity. They should."

7.5.5 Struggling to teach Chinese at home: "They just don't want to watch Chinese"

Without weekend school and regular school support, I wondered what else as parents, Thomas and his wife could do for his sons' Chinese. I asked him if he had been taking his sons back to China for a vacation. "Vacation, yah, we could, if we can afford, time and money . . . but not so realistic. . . So we're still trying to every several years. We can go back visit my parents." I asked him if that helped his sons learn Chinese. "Oh that helps so much. So that's why I'm thinking if there is somehow similar school program reinforce . . . speak only Chinese for period time even certain days a week that's good enough. So once even one month back to China, since they cannot speak English . . . so they have to speak in Chinese so their Chinese improve . . . Every time we visit my parents, and the other thing is they don't lose their English at all, when they come back, everything is normal for their English." I commented, "Yeah, and they forget Chinese so easily." He replied immediately, "Oh yah, after a period of time."

At home, Thomas and his wife had been trying different things to attract his sons to learn Chinese: "We are always trying different ways like we watch Chinese movies and news from internet, and even at dinner time . . . trying to run background . . . Chinese movie and stuff, they can watch a little bit, but they are not interested at all. I can understand that's cultural wise, or they couldn't even follow. It's hard." I suggested cartoons. Thomas told me that cartoons worked well when they were younger, but not anymore. He tried some movies that were more age appropriate: "I think they might be interested but it appears that they are not because in English material they have enough enough materials to watch they just don't want to watch Chinese, although we think it might be interesting to them. But the other thing is that we don't want to force them to do that, to totally lose their interest so we just kind of, we watch, if you want to join us you are free to choose It's so hard, my little one is interested in kung fu, 'I can find a very nice kung fu movie or introduction stuff for you in Chinese,' but he's searching in English you know. It's amazing there are many

English.” I commented, “So . . . movies, videos shows, not really working at the moment.” “No no,” he replied.

I asked him if his sons enjoy talking to their grandparents over the phone. “No, we are trying, just several words,” Thomas replied. Nothing seemed to be working very well at the moment. I searched for different ideas. “What about their friends? They are all English-speaking friends?” I asked. “Well, I could say they all play with English-speaking friends, I know this, I hear some story like going to high school . . . there are kind of group of people, recently immigrated here, so Mandarin is their language, English is their second, even they need to go to ESL. I was trying, I was asking my kids, if they play together, but unfortunately they are two different groups, they cannot mix together, they don’t play with Chinese students, they are Chinese Canadian who was born here, they speak English.”

Finally, I asked him what his hope would be regarding their Chinese education. He said, “Just wish or hope is that a more Chinese program IN school. That’s important, or even in community, which is suitable and practical. And for the funds, I know it costs money for the government but I think I trust if somehow needs some help from the Chinese community, I’m willing to do myself, right? But there need to be a program first so that we can keep working on that.” When I told him that I hoped my research project might help policy makers to better understand the situation right now, and perhaps that might somehow lead to better programs, he said, “Great great, that’s why I’m very happy to attend this interview, and kind of help Chinese culture to somehow make it going for the kids. And I absolutely supporting other culture, you know, program, as well, if there is enough people or enough money, I am not only saying Chinese, but as Chinese parents, we definitely hope, maybe same as other culture, the kids . . . know who they are to know their identity.”

7.6 Sophia

7.6.1 Introduction

Sophia was born and raised in Taiwan, and moved to Canada with her parents when she was in her early 20s. Her two daughters were born in Canada, and spent several years in Shanghai and Taiwan. Although she had been trying very hard to raise their children to become bilingual (or trilingual with French), she expressed her struggles in motivating her daughters, who were Grade 7 and 5 at the time of the interview. By the time of the interview,

she was quite tired of pushing her daughters to learn Chinese. She was an extremely busy professional but we managed to meet between her appointments. She was a fluent English speaker and opted for an interview in English, which was her third language after Mandarin and Taiwanese.

7.6.2 Sophia's language background

“We spoke Mandarin at home, always speak Mandarin, at home. (...) Yah, Mandarin is my first language.” I asked her if her parents spoke Taiwanese or Mandarin. She replied, “Both, but when I was little, they spoke to me Taiwanese mostly.” She was introduced to English at school when she was in Grade 7. I asked her if she liked English. “At first, I didn't like it, and then eventually, I like it.” I asked her if she liked Vancouver when she first came. “Yes and no, because I was older, so it was still (...) I don't know, I find it difficult to, although my English level wasn't very low, but still, you know, it's still my second language, right? I think the education, English education in Taiwan is not so good, that's my opinion. So most people, we know how to read, or write, even writing is not so best way, but we learn everything, but we are not so good in terms of communicate verbally with people, you know.”

7.6.3 Primary school education of her daughters: “She is like trilingual”

After staying in Vancouver for a few years, Sophia went back to Taiwan. When she moved back to Canada, but to Ottawa this time, she was a mother of a four-year-old, Georgia, and a one-year-old, Doris. Sophia has spoken Mandarin with her daughters ever since they were born. “We were in Ottawa for two years, so by the time Georgia leave Ottawa, she finished kindergarten, but the thing was for her, it was a little bit kinda (...) because at that time when we didn't know . . . we would live in Ottawa for only two years . . . kindergarten have two years, junior kindergarten, she went to English one, and when senior kindergarten, they started French immersion unfortunately we left earlier.” The family moved to Shanghai after two years in Ottawa. “By the time, we went to Shanghai, when she was Grade 1, she was not so familiar with phonetics [in reading]. So the first year in international school, the language she study at school was English. But her English level was a little bit lower than most of the kids because she had Chinese, and she went to French immersion kindergarten, so she weren't familiar with phonetics and stuff, so she was a little bit behind.” I commented, “Yeah, totally natural for bilingual.” She replied, “Actually, she is not bilingual, she is like trilingual at that time because we sent her to French immersion.” I asked Sophia if the

international school in Shanghai taught Mandarin. She explained, “Actually, they . . . have a Chinese class, maybe three hours a week? Yah, but the dominant language, the first language was English. So up until now, her English is still much better than Chinese. Although when she was born, her first language was Chinese, but now, it’s more like her second language.”

Her younger daughter Doris went to daycare three days a week in the morning in Ottawa. “So she could speak English but . . . because she stayed with me at home quite a lot, so her Chinese was also pretty fluent,” recalled Sophia. When they moved to Shanghai, Doris attended a local school for one year “because we want her to learn more Chinese.” From the second year, she went to a school with an international department for “expat” children. The family stayed in Shanghai for three years. I asked her how her two daughters’ Chinese proficiency was by the time they left Shanghai. Sophia recalled, “ah (...) I wouldn’t say she is (...) I think Doris, fluent (...) yes, I guess Doris can say fluent, but the, I think (...) I would say, mmm, let’s see, her Chinese might be a little bit stronger than English, but these things change so dramatically. After she came back, her Chinese, you know she didn’t learn how to write, she learned how to read a little bit, but only very few characters, so her you know, when she came back, her English, you know . . . suddenly jump up, and her Chinese dramatically (...) dropped.” As for her older daughter Georgia, Sophia recalled, “I would say, her English was stronger.” However, “Georgia still maintained quite a bit of Chinese But Doris lost a lot Chinese, because her Chinese level, at the time she was only kindergarten, so her level was still pretty basic.”

7.6.4 The challenge of language maintenance: “I didn’t want to be the one to drag them learn Chinese”

When the family moved to Metro Vancouver, Georgia was starting Grade 4, and Doris was starting Grade 1. I asked Sophia, “So did you start thinking oh, maybe they should go to Chinese school?” She replied, “Yah, the first year, I was thinking, yah, I was looking for Chinese school for them in the, you know weekend, you know Chinese school in Vancouver just like, Saturday, usually about three hours. Yah, and the first semester, they didn’t go.” I commented, “So many other things going on.” She responded, “Exactly. I didn’t know, I was asking around. The thing is, I know I have to choose the right school for them so that they will be interested in Chinese because Georgia at that time when she was in international school, she already didn’t show much interest in Chinese. Doris was better,

because you know her school was like in the morning is English, in the afternoon is Chinese.” After the first term, Sophia sent her daughters to weekend Chinese language school. I asked her if they liked it. Sophia answered, “I think they didn’t like the idea of going to school In the weekend, you know. They didn’t really have a choice, they kind of whined a little bit, but they went They went for one and a half year, and we went back to Taiwan. So they went to Taiwan 2010 for two months, and I sent them to local school because I, at that time I thought it might be a good experience for them to go to local school to kind of cram up their Chinese (laugh).” I asked her if it was successful. Sophia answered, “I think. Georgia, in Canada she was Grade 4, but she went to Grade 3. Doris also dropped a year . . . went to Grade 1. Doris . . . improved significantly, Georgia . . . on the other hand struggled because Grade 3 Chinese was a little bit too much for her because everything is in Chinese, and grade 3 Chinese level is pretty high. Especially writing was very challenging for her.” Sophia told me Georgia was stressed out with the amount of homework, and because she had to help her, it turned out to be very stressful for Sophia as well.

I commented, “When they were going to the weekend school [in Vancouver], you were feeling like that’s not enough.” Sophia said, “ah...because they resist the idea. Especially Georgia told me ‘I hate Chinese.’ Doris didn’t say she hates Chinese but Doris is the younger one She didn’t really learn. She learned but she, she didn’t really care, she didn’t really care, so she’s just not learning much. Yes, she learned a little bit, but I saw very little improvement.” I commented, “Yeah, especially when it’s once a week, it’s not enough, right?” She responded, “Actually I reviewed [the content] for them three or four times a week, but still they didn’t like it, so I feel like I’m like a person who is dragging them. I felt pretty frustrated, I kind of felt (...) you know, I didn’t want to be the one to drag them learn Chinese, so that’s why, I was thinking about going back to Taiwan, and send them to local school. I think it’s like you know the, I want, I would like the outside environment to push them to learn, and hopefully somehow, for them to feel Chinese is a living language, and people use it all the time, everything, reading, writing, speaking, yah.”

When they came back to Vancouver from Taiwan, they took a break from learning Chinese. Sophia recalls, “I think they say ‘I don’t want to go’ or something, and (...) I forgot (...) I didn’t force them to go, I forgot. I think they didn’t go.” I asked her what happened with their Chinese proficiency once they stopped learning, if they forgot more Chinese. “Yes

and no. Georgia would speak, I mean before, when we first came back, Georgia will speak to me in Chinese more, and Doris too, but as soon as we got back, especially Doris, Doris was the one who made a big progress in Taiwan but like um when she came back, she's not really, she just (...) back to her own self . . . when I talk to her, she always answer in English. Georgia answer in more Mandarin (...), yes." So I asked her, "Even today?" The answer was, "No."

After they took a semester off from Chinese weekend school, they switched to a different weekend school. Sophia explained how her daughters did at their new school: "The thing is that Georgia's teacher was really funny lady, she loved the class, but then unfortunately the teacher for some reason had to go away, so she had a substitute teacher, and it was, she, the substitute teacher is from Taiwan, and is teaching in Taiwan, you know in regular school, and she was totally strict, she's like a, according to Georgia, monster teacher, she's so strict, and Georgia was so nervous about going to Chinese school, because every week she had to learn more than thirty new characters, Chinese characters She improved a lot but she didn't like it. Doris, her teacher wasn't pushing, but Doris again didn't learn much. They always both had a very good grade in Chinese school but Doris didn't learn much because her teacher didn't really kind of make her interest, so she learned but she wasn't try very hard." I asked her if they were still keeping up with the weekend school. Sophia answered, "No, they didn't go to the Chinese school because Georgia, going to high school Grade 8 this year, and she told me 'I will be very busy this year, this semester, I just want to know how capable . . . how I can juggle with the time,' so she want to take a break." Doris also stopped going because she was going to have the same teacher as last year. Sophia said, "I didn't think her teacher was pretty good So that's why I said 'forget it.'"

Since they both stopped going to Chinese weekend school, I wanted to know how much they were exposed to the language. Sophia explained the situation: "Actually before, I remember last summer, I watched like a TV series . . . they were really into, and they learned part of it, vocabulary, and her listening, really improved, but now they are not really into Chinese program so (...) but you know when I remember, I still kind of you know, have a mini twenty minutes, ask them to read something for me, maybe two times a week." I asked, "So now, do they still talk to you in Mandarin, or more English?" Sophia answered, "both, in English more."

7.6.5 Investment in learning Chinese: “learning Chinese is a big plus, just like learning French”

Finally, I asked her, “Why do you want them to learn Mandarin? Why do you think it’s important, like is it more for business, or (...) communication with your parents?” Sophia explained her motivation: “When they were one year, two years, three years old, I just thought you know Chinese is my mother tongue, right? So I want them to speak Chinese or understand Chinese, at least speak and understand. I’m not really force them to really read or write, but I think at least can communicate in Chinese. But now, in the past few years, I think you know, China the economy grow so they are going to be really you know powerful country. Some people might say it already is, but for me, the thing is that, when they are grown up, learning Chinese is a big plus, just like learning French, so you know, the school, they were teaching French, so you know I encourage them to learn French too, not just learn but [learn] well, because I also think in Canada, school is so relaxed, it’s not much to do, so the language is not just a one day thing or one week thing, or like one year thing, it takes long time to improve your language, so why don’t do it now.”

The focus of Sophia’s investment in her daughters’ Chinese education shifted from passing on her own habitus to accumulating economic capital in the coming future. In this sense, she equates the value of Chinese to French, a language that has no heritage value to her daughters. This is similar to Group 1 parents such as Harry, Emily, Jack and Joyce, who viewed learning Chinese as acquiring a skill that would economically benefit their children. I asked Sophia, “So language (...) are you basically the only person who speaks Mandarin to them, or do they have other Mandarin-speaking friends?” She replied, “They have a friend. Her parents speak Mandarin too, like she, the little girl can speak Mandarin, but whenever they are together, they speak English you know the thing is that I don’t know, the school, in their school, there are not a lot of Chinese speakers, they are some kids they are Cantonese but not Mandarin. Their school happen to not have a lot of Mandarin speaker, but I believe Georgia’s high school also lot of Cantonese. I think more Cantonese speaker or Filipino and Vietnamese, but not a lot of Mandarin speaker, and her friends are all English speaker. But I don’t know in the meantime, I kind of I feel like ‘why should I try so hard. (laugh) I don’t get much so why do I try so hard.’”

I asked, “If there was a Mandarin bilingual school here, do you think you would have considered them to go to Mandarin-English bilingual school? From kindergarten?” Sophia replied immediately, “I think again, it’s not my choice, I would talk to them because they are the one going to school.” When I said, “If they are like five years old?” Sophia replied, “Oh for sure. For sure, if they are much younger, if they are like grade one or two, for sure, I would send them to that kind of program.” Sophia knew about the early-start Mandarin bilingual program that was not meant for those who already had Mandarin. “I think it’s so stupid, I think it’s totally stupid, so why, we don’t have, we are the person who want their kids to learn Mandarin, and they have no chance.” Because I didn’t expect such strong reactions from her, I tried to explain why the program was designed in that manner such as the fear that Mandarin speakers would not learn English. She said, “But this is bilingual, not just Chinese only right? I think it’s really silly.” I asked her, “You would have liked it if there was an opportunity?” Sophia replied, “Especially, when they are younger, now, they are older The thing is the level is so much higher, I don’t know if they can cope everything in Chinese, just like I tried in Taiwan, right? It’s just very difficult.” The interview ended with her disappointed tone.

7.7 Summary and Discussion

In this section, I will lay out the similarities and differences between parents who grew up in Canada (Group 1) and parents who immigrated to Canada as an adult (Group 2) regarding their investment in their children’s Chinese language education. This partly addresses *Research Question 3: What are the similarities and differences between Group 1 parents and Group 2 regarding their desires, challenges and obstacles in raising their children to be bilingual?* Tables 7.1 summarizes the Group 2 parents’ investment in Chinese language education.

As discussed in Chapter 6, Group 1 parents’ investment in Chinese was deeply related to their own relationship with Chinese language use and learning growing up in Canada. For example, the difference between Group 1 parents Lily and Harry in the investment in their children’s Chinese language education only makes sense when we understand how as ethnic Chinese they were positioned by others, and positioned themselves in the field within which they grew up, and what kind of habitus was constructed and reconstructed throughout their lives.

Table 7.1 Group 2 (Recently Immigrated Chinese Canadian) Parents’ Investment in Their Children’s Chinese Language Education

	Mia	Oliver	Isabelle	Thomas	Sophia
Parents’ own relationship with Chinese language learning	Mandarin as a mother tongue. Cantonese as a second language.	Cantonese as a mother tongue.	Cantonese as a mother tongue. Mandarin as a second language.	Mandarin as a mother tongue.	Taiwanese and Mandarin as mother tongues.
Reasons for investment	Family ties and identity.	Family ties and identity.	Chinese identity.	Family ties and identity. Economic capital.	Economic capital. Family ties.
Envisioned field for children	Canada, maybe China.	Canada, maybe China, Hong Kong or Taiwan.	Canada, maybe China, Hong Kong or Taiwan.	Canada, maybe China.	Canada, maybe China or Taiwan.

With the Group 2 parents, although I did not focus on their habitus construction because the main focus of the interview was their experiences as parents after their immigration to Canada as adults, nevertheless, several striking points should be made. First of all, perhaps obvious but bearing mention because of the prevalence of generalizations being made by observers in the media about Chinese immigrants, the stories of the five parents of Group 2 show that “Chinese immigrant parents” are not monolithic. In fact, they displayed very different trajectories as migrants from various parts of China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, and settlement within different areas of Canada. Some of them, and their children, migrated back and forth across the Pacific after their initial migration to Canada, while others remained in a single location. Their emphases on what they believed to be important for their children’s future varied. Nevertheless, the common theme across all five parents’ stories in Group 2 was the importance of their children learning Chinese as a way to connect with parents, extended families and their countries of origin (as has been reported by others; Curdt-Christiansen, 2003, 2009; Zhang, Ollila, & Harvey, 1998; G. Li & Wang, 2012). This finding resonates with Dagenais’s study (2003) on immigrant parents’ investment in their children’s heritage language maintenance as well as French and English acquisition in Metro Vancouver.

In Dagenais's study, the immigrant parents from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds expressed the importance for their children to learn their "heritage language" to maintain ties to their "heritage culture," and to "ensure membership in their language communities" (p. 277). In contrast, the commitment of Group 2 parents for their children to learn Chinese stemmed from a desire for parents to be understood by their children, and at the same time for their children to understand themselves and who they are as "Chinese." In other words, the parents were invested in sharing and passing on their own linguistic habitus to their children (Duff, 2014). The parents' accounts show their belief that having Chinese linguistic habitus would help their children position themselves in the field, even as they made a distinction between the utility of such a habitus in Canada versus in Chinese-speaking environments outside of Canada. Such desires to connect their children to their "heritage" displays a striking contrast from Group 1 parents such as Harry, Emily, Jack and Joyce, who almost uniformly viewed learning Chinese foremost as acquiring a skill for economic and educational benefit. In contrast, for instance, Oliver (Group 2) argued that learning Chinese as a form of economic capital was not the parents' decision to make but one up to the child, although he also clearly understood the consequences that such a decision would have on where his son would have more opportunity.

Parents' investment in language education was shaped by their envisioning of the potential field within which their children would eventually live and work (included in the third row of Tables 6.1 and 7.1). These visions were shaped by their own experiences and habitus—for Group 1 parents growing up in Canada as non-whites in an English-dominant linguistic environment. For example, Lily would not be invested in her daughter's Chinese language learning if she did not envision a *field* (Bourdieu, 1990a) where her daughter would be marked for having a "Chinese face." On the other hand, with Vancouver reputedly becoming the most Asian city in the world outside of Asia (Todd, 2014), as well as the fact that his children were half white, Jack envisioned a field where his children would suffer no racial discrimination. Similar to Jack, other Group 1 parents, namely Harry, Emily and Joyce's stories, show that these parents envisioned a future field for their children that would be significantly more "Asian" than their own childhood field was. They all narrated an envisioned field that would be profoundly affected by China as the powerhouse of the world economy.

Parents of Group 2, in striking contrast, emphasized the importance of Chinese education for their children as a means of intimate connection to the family's heritage and past rather than just envisioning a future field where Chinese is useful. The fact that their children came from Chinese parents and from a Chinese family remained a crucial factor for heritage maintenance no matter where they ended up, whether in Canada or Asia, and the importance of learning Chinese was not dependent upon the field in which they would someday be situated. Indeed, Sophia was the only Group 2 parent who expressed a marked shift from a heritage-oriented to capital-oriented investment in her children's language learning. According to Sophia, the future economic benefits for her daughters of learning Chinese were juxtaposed specifically with those of learning French in Canada. In this regard, Oliver's emphasis that it was his son's choice what languages he wanted to speak, and his awareness of how that would shape his son's future possibilities were striking. His own understanding of the value of French, which he considered to be beneficial for its cultural capital value contrasted with his own desire for his son to understand Chinese so he could understand his family heritage. There was a remarkable commitment on his part to the principle of not projecting his own desires for his son to have a connection to his Chinese heritage onto what were necessarily his son's own decisions about what language to learn, despite the huge consequences such a decision would have for where he would be able to work, and where he would get the most capital value in the future for that particular language.

On the other hand, Mia exclaimed how upset she was when her son told her he wanted to join the late French immersion program. Mia remarked that Chinese was much more important than French, and her understanding of Chinese language use as a crucial element of retaining Chinese heritage was clear. In Mia's mind, her son learning French meant a sacrifice in his learning Chinese. She stopped teaching him Chinese during the first year her son started the French immersion program because she thought it would be too confusing for her son. As with many of the Group 2 parents, she used as many means as possible to encourage Chinese language learning, sending him regularly every few years to China for extended visits, sharing movies and cartoons and other forms of popular culture, and attempting (unsuccessfully) to strictly regulate the use of Chinese in family conversations.

Indeed, time and resources are always limited, and parents often found themselves forced to choose either Chinese or French, which was the case for Group 1 parents. When given the opportunity to choose either Chinese or French, parents in both groups (except Joyce in Group 1 and Oliver in Group 2) weighed the return of investment, and settled on Chinese. While they acknowledged the fact that French is the official language of Canada, only Joyce in Group 1 valued the status of French as worth acquiring. Emily argued French was only beneficial for certain kinds of jobs in the government, while Harry confessed he never felt the importance of French growing up in Western Canada. In other words, Harry, Emily and Jack did not envision a field for their children where French had higher capital value than Chinese in their stories. As for Jack, even though he himself pursued French to prove to others that he was truly Canadian, he envisioned a different field for his children where such struggle would be unnecessary. Nevertheless, they all valued learning French as acquiring a skill set—a form of cultural capital in Bourdieu's (1986) concept—that is beneficial for their children's educational development just as learning any language regardless of the field they would be positioned in the future. For the Group 2 parents, whatever their recognition of French as having potential economic capital in Canada, they each expressed their strong ideas that Chinese was important for a sense of identity and connection to their family's heritage, even if they were not, as in Oliver's case, willing to impose language choices on their children.

One of the findings of this study is that parents' investment in transnational mobility was not as prevalent as observed by other studies (e.g., Dagenais, 2003; Duff, 2015; Guo & Devoretz, 2014; Mitchell, 2001). For example, Group 1 parents' narratives did indeed envision a field where Chinese language ability would allow their children to have access to the opportunities created by China's growing influence on the global economy; however, their investment was rooted in Vancouver where the local presence of Chinese immigrants, economy, language and culture was increasingly high. One of the main reasons they chose Chinese over French was precisely because of the significant presence of Chinese in Vancouver and British Columbia, and as Lily remarked regarding French, "what's the use of it in BC?" Jack, noting that he was "not one of those parents who want their kids to be a superstar," remarked that he did not expect his son to be able to go to university in China after graduating from the early start Mandarin program. Rather, his goal was to prepare his

son with basic Chinese linguistic habitus such as differentiating tones and speaking without an English accent so that when in the future his son decides to learn Chinese, which he perceived to be harder than French, he would have the right dispositions.

Even with the Group 2 parents, investment in transnational mobility was not prevalent. Isabelle did mention that she would like her daughter to go to China or Hong Kong after university to learn Chinese. Isabelle referred to her friend's daughter who spent a year in Hong Kong after graduating from university. She learned Chinese well enough so that her parents could "feel that she is Chinese." However, when I asked her which language, Cantonese or Mandarin she wanted her daughter to learn, Isabelle maintained that she could not force her daughter. She remarked, "I cannot force her which language to speak, right? Because this is so Canadian, so multicultural environment, so that's why so I cannot force kids which language to, right?" Even though she expressed her desires for her daughter to learn Chinese so that she could still be "Chinese," Isabelle envisioned a local Canadian field for her daughter where her Canadian daughter could not be forced to learn Chinese. Similarly, Oliver claimed that it was up to his son to decide where he wanted to live, and there was not a strong desire for transnational mobility as the rationale for language learning.

Mia sent her son to China for two months to join a camp specifically designed for Chinese Canadians. Her son had an amazing experience travelling by himself after the camp, meeting many people utilizing his Chinese. Does sending her son to this camp indicate her investment in transnational mobility? According to Mia's remark, it seems that it was an investment in learning Chinese and understanding that he was Chinese Canadian, rather than an investment in transnational mobility. Despite the wonderful experience her son had, she remarked that it would have been better if her two sons could learn Chinese in Canada, "not that I have to send him back to China to learn Chinese." It seems striking that despite the common perception across all of the parents of the growing economic power of China, and the opportunities that lay in China for those who can speak Chinese, that the perception of the utility of Chinese language learning was rarely calculated as a means to mobility alone. For both Group 1 and Group 2 parents, the value of Chinese was more varied and diffuse, but grounded in the context of Vancouver and Canada, involving complicated and yet clearly articulated desires for their children to learn Chinese despite the challenges and obstacles. These challenges and obstacles show that language learning for Chinese Canadians is very

much a product of Canada's "national" bilingual policy and the local language education policy, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter 8: Recurring Challenges of CHL Education across Generations

8.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the problems surrounding Chinese language education in Canada based on parents' stories from both groups. I have identified two recurring themes surrounding the problems of Chinese language education in Canada across the two groups, namely a) CHL schools as a site of habitus discordance and b) access issues surrounding learning Chinese within regular schooling. By access, I mean two things. First is the access to enter Chinese language programs, whether bilingual programs or Chinese Language Arts programs. Second is the access to the use of Chinese as a living language of everyday life.

8.2 Problems of Weekend/Afterschool CHL Schools

8.2.1 Introduction

A recurring theme within the narratives of both Group 1 and Group 2 parents was the problems of weekend or afterschool CHL schools. Interestingly, Group 1 parents' childhood experience regarding CHL schools resonates with Group 2 parents' experience of their children's CHL schooling despite the difference in time. In this section, I will first analyze Group 1 parents' narratives regarding their experience in CHL schools as a child through the lens of habitus, capital and field (Bourdieu, 1991). Then, I will analyze Group 2 parents' narratives regarding their experience as parents who have sent their children to CHL schools. Finally, I will compare the findings between the two groups.

8.2.2 Quitting Heritage Language School: Discordance between habitus and field

Among the five participants in Group 1, Lily, Harry and Jack addressed their experience in attending CHL schools. Lily sought out her local Cantonese school with her classmate when she was 15 years old because she felt like she did not know anything about her heritage culture. In contrast, Harry and Jack were sent to school by their parents: Harry, when he was 14 years old, and Jack when he was in Grades 3, 4 and 10. All three participants, however, stopped attending CHL schools after a short period of time. This section analyzes the participants' accounts regarding CHL schools in a comparative manner. Table 8.1 summarizes when and why they attended, as well as why they quit.

Table 8.1 Group 1 Parents' Experience with CHL Schools as Children

	Lily	Harry	Emily	Jack	Joyce
Occasions and length of attendance	15 years old (3 weeks)	14 years old (No account on the actual length)	Never	Grade 3, 4 (both for a short period of time) and Grade 10 (about 4 months)	Never
Reasons to attend/not to attend	She wanted to know more about her heritage.	Parents sent him and his younger brother.	Parents were not interested in education so did not push her.	Parents sent him.	There was no CHL school for Taiwanese language.
Reasons for quitting	It was too difficult, and the teacher was unwelcoming.	He did not see any usefulness. It was too difficult and too late.	NA	He felt it was not applicable to his life; he didn't want to stand out.	NA

Harry and Jack were sent to CHL schools by their parents, and their descriptions years later reflected their lack of choice in the decision. Harry remarked that he was “thrown into” the school, and Jack remarked “my parents tried to send me to Chinese school.” For both of them, it was their parents’ decision. Lily, on the other hand, was highly motivated to learn Cantonese language and culture when she sought out the local Cantonese school. Despite her strong investment, she ended up with similar, negative impressions of the program to those of Harry and Jack, and a similar outcome: quitting. From the perspective of habitus, attending CHL school forced children to deal with two types of discordance between their habitus and field. The first mismatch emerged as children raised in Canada confronted CHL schools as a distinctive field separated from mainstream schooling and requiring a very different habitus to thrive. Harry remarked, “I remember going in there, and it was myself and my little brother, and um, the teacher spoke Mandarin the whole time, so we just couldn’t when you are 14 and 12 years, it’s too much to learn, yeah.” Being raised within an English language environment by Canadian-born parents did not prepare Harry with a linguistic habitus that matched the field of Mandarin scripture class. Similarly, Lily remarked, “It was way too hard. Like they were already writing the characters, there was

nothing for me at 15, at the basic basic level.” Despite the fact that Lily was, unlike Harry and Jack, highly motivated to learn Chinese, Lily felt after a period of several weeks that, just like the both of them, she needed to quit. The teacher put Lily and her classmate Greg in the corner of the classroom, telling Lily that she was “a bad student,” and that they should not come back to class unless they finished the book and passed the test. Even though Lily and Greg ignored the teacher and kept going to class anyway, their resilience did not last long after continually enduring sighs of frustration and harsh remarks from the teacher. Whatever level of language ability the teacher assumed that they should have, it did not match the level they possessed. Speaking Chinese and writing Chinese are embodied skills.⁵⁵

Because so many CHL teachers embodied a language learning habitus forged in traditional Chinese language learning environments, their reactions to the very different habitus of children raised in English language environments were not merely a mismatch in terms of pedagogy, but involved bodily affective reactions such as the disdainful look in the teachers’ eyes accompanied by frustrated sighs. Lily told me about her students today who hid in her classroom as they resisted attending the Chinese heritage class because the teacher “yells” at them. She understood the reactions of her students because her childhood experience resonated with what her students were going through. For example, when evoked emotions such as frustration and disdain within teachers, and corresponding feelings of shame and a sense of inferiority among students. Despite the very different motivation for learning Chinese shown by Lily in contrast to Harry and Jack, this disjuncture between the habitus and fields for both teachers and students has been a dominant pattern in CHL schools in English language environments and a primary reason for so many students quitting CHL.

The second type of discordance in habitus and field is highlighted when we focus on mainstream schooling as the *field*. When I asked the reason why he and his brother quitted the CHL program, Harry mentioned that he “didn’t see any usefulness in” learning Chinese.

⁵⁵ I can speak from my own experience when I went back to Japan from Australia when I was in Grade 2—it was such a challenge catching up with my peers in writing Chinese characters. You are expected to keep writing the character over and over until your hand automatically makes the right strokes. I quickly adjusted to the repetitive practice as it was something every school child is engaged in without questioning. I feel so lucky that I can handwrite without thinking much, about 2000 Chinese characters today. But I know acquiring the same skill-set is impossible for my daughters who is not growing up in the same environment.

Similarly, Jack remarked, “I just didn’t see the applicability of learning the language.” The Chinese language was not valued as capital in the mainstream schooling field, so it is not surprising that they did not perceive a value in attending CHL schools. Jack clearly elaborated on this idea, “it’s almost like ghettoizing that part of your life. You compartmentalize that part of your life and it doesn’t apply to other six days of your week, which is not that helpful. At least that’s how I felt when I was a kid.” Not only was there was no perceived value and capital in attending CHL schools, but Harry and Jack had to also sacrifice what they valued highly in the mainstream schooling field: playing with their friends. Attending CHL schools meant that they needed to sit in the classroom while other friends were playing soccer. The lost social capital of relationships built through extracurricular activities such as sports was not offset by something gained through CHL. Even worse, it made them “different” from their friends. As Jack mentioned, “it made me feel a little bit like I stood out,” and “I just didn’t want to be different, that’s all.” Going to CHL schools did not match the “feel for the game” (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 66) of the schoolyard that Jack had already acquired, where relationships forged through play mattered. Similarly, when I asked Harry if he would learn Chinese if he had the chance to go back to his childhood, given that he now understood the value of Chinese, his answer was no. Even though he regretted that he did not learn Chinese, he would still choose not to learn Chinese because he would have felt like he was an outcast among his friends. The importance of social capital acquired through the bonds of play and camaraderie, which his subsequent life had further reinforced, was still not offset by the gain in linguistic capital that learning Chinese would have given him. Again, the feel for the game that Harry acquired went against attending a CHL school. It is interesting to see that despite the difference between Harry and Jack in the kind of neighbourhoods where they grew up—white neighbourhood and multicultural neighbourhood, respectively—they both shared similar dispositions toward attending Chinese schools. The symbolic dominance of English in regular schooling prevented them from seeing the value of learning Chinese at the time; however, for both Harry and Jack, even knowing the capital value of Chinese, it was not worth the investment at the cost of being an outcast in the social field, either at the time or in hindsight.

In Lily’s case, she was able to recognize the value of learning Chinese within the regular school field through her new encounters with her Chinese Canadian classmates.

Furthermore, attending CHL class was an activity she shared with her regular school friend, which made it possible for Lily to connect the two *fields*. Using Jack’s words, Lily did not have to “compartmentalize that part of [her] life.” Lily was able to avoid the second kind of mismatch because she was able to share her interest with her regular school friend; the low social capital value of Chinese in the regular school field, and the fact that attending CHL schools went against the feel for the game (*habitus*) regarding the importance of social relations. However, because she still faced the discordance between her linguistic *habitus* and that of the CHL school teacher—the first type of mismatch—she was not able to continue with her Chinese study. Lily, Harry and Jack’s story suggests that the key to successful CHL schooling is to avoid both kinds of discordance. Figure 8.2 and 8.2 below summarize the two types of discordance.

Figure 8.1 Type 1 Discordance

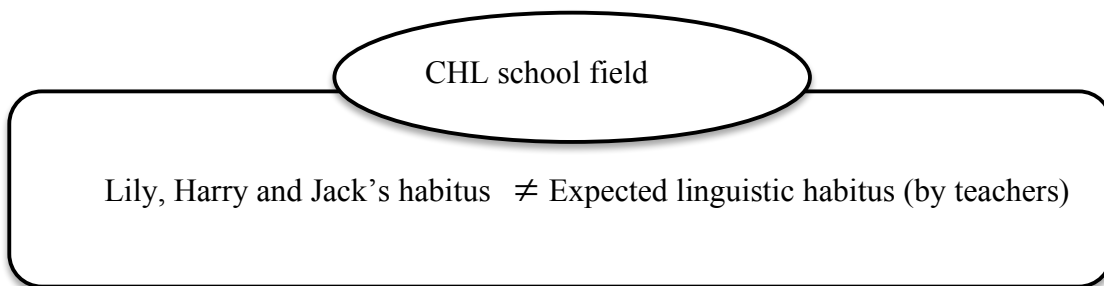
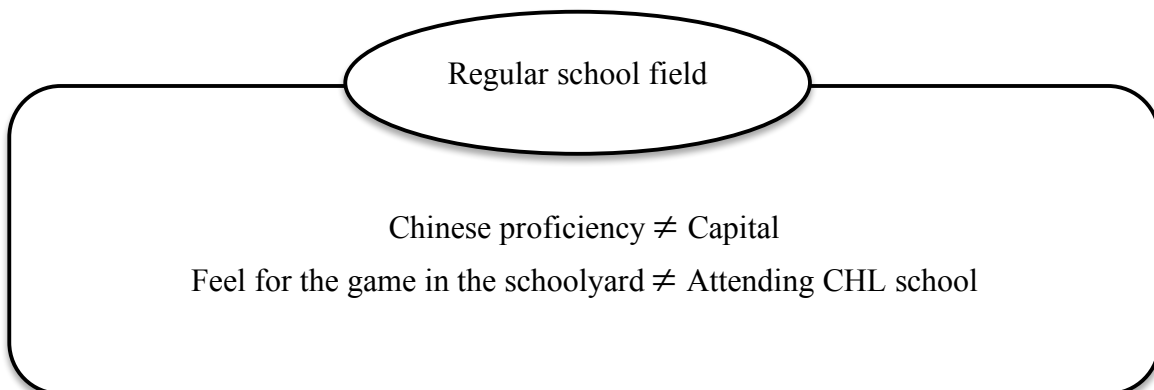


Figure 8.2 Type 2 Discordance



8.2.3 Struggles of the Chinese immigrant parents

With the exception of Oliver, all four parents of Group 2 attempted to send their children to weekend or afterschool CHL schools. Isabelle was able to keep her daughter going to the CHL school up until she was in Grade 4, even though her daughter told her, “I hate Chinese, I don’t like Chinese.” According to Isabelle, her daughter complained about a) writing Chinese characters, b) sacrificing weekends, and c) coming home with lots of homework. Similarly, Sophia made a great effort to have her two daughters learn Chinese at the weekend heritage school. However, her older daughter Georgia, who was Grade 4 at the time, resisted the idea of attending CHL school, telling Sophia “I hate Chinese.” Sophia felt “pretty frustrated,” and thought she “didn’t want to be the one to drag them learn Chinese.” She decided to go back to Taiwan for two months. She remarked, “I would like the outside environment to push them to learn, and hopefully somehow, for them to feel Chinese is a living language, and people use it all the time, everything, reading, writing, speaking.” Although they made some progress in Taiwan, once they moved back to Vancouver, it was difficult to keep up with Chinese as they shifted back to predominantly speaking English. After coming back from Taiwan, Sophia put the girls in a different CHL school from which they attended before but they eventually stopped attending because the teachers were not motivating. When they finally had a good teacher, the teacher had to leave. It is telling that Georgia called the new teacher who used to teach in Taiwan, a “monster teacher,” a bodily affective reaction almost like an allergic reaction to the strictness that the teachers supposedly embodied in their Chinese language education environment. This reminds me of Lily’s student who hid from their Chinese teachers.

As the examples of both Isabelle and Sophia show, the challenges for parents in keeping their kids interested in CHL schools are myriad. The excerpt below from the interview with Thomas illustrates in his words these challenges.

We try to send them to Chinese class, and we did so for many years . . . but things didn’t work very well They were Grade 1 and Grade 3 when we first moved here, and we found the class, we send them in. They frankly they didn’t like it at all That’s weekend two hours, taking their time, playing with their friends, that’s one thing I don’t um (...) the style of learning maybe not suitable for them because their level is not that high and they’re focusing more on reading and writing.

But as parents, I personally want my kids at least know speaking and listening just basic skills. I know there are needs from other parents for reading and writing for high level kids but not suitable for my kids, so they always feel struggling. (Thomas)

Thomas mentioned two of the commonly expressed reasons that children of Chinese-speaking parents in Canada turn away from attending CHL school. One is that the two hours on the weekend took away from “playtime” as well as causing scheduling issues with other activities, as similar to Harry and Jack’s accounts about their childhood experience attending CHL schools. The other is that the “style of learning” was not “suitable.” His sons struggled with learning reading and writing because their level of understanding of Chinese was not as high as others in the class. Thomas decided to pull them out from the CHL school because it was going to be “too much burden for the kids.” Pushing them too hard did not agree with his philosophy as a parent. In a sense, the “scheduling issues” revealed how the time invested in learning Chinese was in competition with activities that both the children and parents eventually considered more valuable. In this context, the quality of language instruction and the teacher’s teaching styles, both of which were mentioned by Isabelle and Sophia as issues for their daughters, were filtered by both children and parents through considerations of the competing value of other extracurricular activities. Rather than immediately considering the negative reactions to CHL schools as being the result of the particular faults of the individual teachers or the pedagogical approach of CHL school (I will examine the pedagogy of CHL school teachers in the next section), it is perhaps useful to first understand how the time used for Chinese school by heritage learners competes in their minds with other activities, and whether a parent is willing to override a child’s own evaluation of learning Chinese versus other activities, whether “playtime” or other extracurricular activities. Thomas concluded that he did not want to “push” his children “too hard,” and did not want to force them to continue in an activity that they did not enjoy or value in comparison to other activities.

In fact, I was surprised how parents did not come across as the stereotypical Chinese immigrant parents as being very deeply involved in their children’s education, “over programming” (G. Li & Wang, 2012, p. 345) their children’s activities.⁵⁶ Several parents

⁵⁶ This is not to say that their children were not involved in any extracurricular activities. For example, Sophia told me her daughter enjoys piano and figure skating lessons while other parents reported soccer and basketball as their children’s extracurricular activities.

analyzed their decisions on whether to keep their children in CHL school or not through a narrative frame of parenting philosophy about how much they should take their children's evaluations and feelings into account. "Decisions" are considered as being made as the result of the mismatch between the parent's desires and the child's own feelings about the time spent in the language learning environment. Mia, for instance, provided a similar story about her decision to take her son out of CHL school. Mia tried to put her son in the local CHL school on Sundays, but eventually decided to withdraw him because he didn't like it. According to Mia, her son didn't have any friends in the class and felt "left out." Despite her own desires for her son to learn Chinese, Mia made a decision, as Thomas had, not to "force" her son.

This sense of having to "force" a child against their own "feelings" reveals how the embodiment of habitus is often narrated. The sense of coercion or force and a feeling within parents of needing to compel children against the child's wishes are how the discordance of different bodily habitus can be seen and analyzed in the narration of "decisions" made by parents. Rather than dismissing such "decisions" as the result of a parental philosophy of valuing a child's feelings more than a parent's own desires or goals for their children's language learning, I understand their "decisions" to give up their children's CHL learning as a typical example of the working of symbolic violence (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2002): English dominance at the expense of heritage language learning are reproduced without coercion. In other words, it was the Chinese language that had to be "forced" on, not English. To further explore the working of symbolic violence in CHL learning, it is necessary to focus on affect and emotion as powerful manifestations of habitus as it is through the bodily emotions that we can see the working of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2001). In particular, how are we to explain the "dislike" of Chinese among the children of Group 2 parents as the product of their embodied habitus? We might find, interestingly enough, insights into the feelings expressed by Group 2 children that the Group 2 parents were reporting by comparing the Group 2 parents' narratives to those of Group 1 parents in their descriptions of their own experiences as children of Chinese Heritage Language schools.

8.2.4 History repeated: CHL schools and habitus discordance

As the stories of Isabelle, Sophia, Thomas and Mia show, a parent's "decision" about whether to keep a child in CHL programs is revealing of their habitus and discordance with

those of their children, more so than only considering their initial desires to place their children in CHL school. It is important to note at this point that from the stories told by the parents in this study, *not a single child* reported that they *liked* to attend the CHL schools. This may seem remarkable as an indictment of the ineffectiveness of CHL schools, and yet CHL schools have existed for nearly a century in Vancouver, and they continue to exist and despite this incredibly negative expression of feeling,⁵⁷ some children do stay long enough in CHL schools to obtain varying degrees of competency in Chinese. Is this a reflection of the continuing desire of heritage language parents for their children to learn Chinese, despite the resistance of their children? Are the parents whom I interviewed somehow exceptional in not having “forced” their children to stay in CHL schools? Or is the discordance itself not the variable? Is the actual variable just the length of time that different parents hold in abeyance the inevitable clash between parental desire and their children’s feelings?

The ubiquity of these narratives of parental “coercion” and “force” and children’s “feelings” in this study are indeed revealing of the structure of discordant habitus that shapes their narratives of affective experience of Chinese language learning within the English dominant field of Canadian language learning.

Let us reexamine the two main issues raised by the parents as the “negative” factors shaping their children’s feelings in response to language learning in CHL schools. The first factor involves the “teaching style” of CHL schools. As Isabelle, Sophia and Thomas claimed, their children struggled with writing Chinese characters over and over again. The episode Sophia shared about her daughter’s teacher who came from Taiwan being overly strict is telling. Indeed, the teachers of CHL schools tend to have different teaching styles from the Canadian teachers, represented by a strict teaching style. The “problem” of this kind of teaching style has been reported in Lü’s (2014) study of CHL school in the United States, as well as in Jiang’s (2010) study of CHL schools in British Columbia. Jiang argues,

Their way of teaching was heavily influenced by Confucian philosophy which emphasizes filial piety and believes that teachers are authority figures who transmit wisdom and should be respected as one’s parents. Therefore, the sorts of exciting

⁵⁷ Children’s resistance to attend heritage language schools is not unique to Chinese heritage children in Canada but also reported among Japanese Canadians and many other ethnolinguistic groups (e.g., Takei, 2015).

activities commonly seen in Western classrooms do not fit in with the serious atmosphere created in the long established traditional Chinese teaching. . . . As a result of the discrepancy between these two types of teaching style, CHL students often feel “caught” between educational cultures. (p. 49)

The problem of discrepancy between the pedagogies between regular schools and CHL schools also resonates with He’s (2004a) finding from the conversation analysis (CA) of classroom interactions between students and a teacher at a CHL school in the U.S., as well as W. Li and Zhu’s (2014) analysis of CHL teacher-student interactions in multiple CHL schools in Britain. For example, in He’s study, the teacher told the students that certain behaviors that were allowed in regular schools were not allowed in her classroom. The teacher used the social other “they” to refer to students and teachers of regular school while she used the inclusive “we” to refer to the CHL students and herself even though the students’ behavior was shaped by their socialization at regular schools. While teachers try to socialize the students into the Chinese classroom culture, W. Li and Zhu’s study of CHL school interactions (in Britain, at what are called Chinese complementary schools) shows that students are practicing their agency by arguing with the teachers, or not responding to teachers’ questions, and the Chinese values and pedagogies are therefore sometimes being challenged and contested. However, the fact that students are exercising their agency and that Chinese values and ideologies are conveyed in a fluid way through spontaneous interactions does not mean that the discrepancy the students are facing is not a problem to be improved.

In addition to the difference in teaching styles, studies (e.g., Chiu, 2011; Liu, 2005; W. Li & Zhu, 2014) have revealed the problems of textbooks commonly used in CHL schools as constructing “discourses based on a Chinese-dominant authoritarian Discourse” (Chiu, 2011, p. 77). As Liu (2005) argues, CHL students often experience “ideological shock” (p. 259) as a result of the discrepancy between their everyday life in North America and what is valued in the textbook. Chiu argues,

The confusion and disorientation between different ideologies will in turn result in resentment toward the less privileged/dominant identity/culture. Members of the less privileged groups will choose or sometimes, are forced to adopt the dominant perspective in order to make sense and interpret social reality. For CHL learners, giving up or refusing Chinese culture may sometimes be the more viable choice in

order to fit in, consequently, CHL language education is often rejected and resented.
(p. 77)

As a way of understanding the parents' dilemma about whether to keep their children in CHL schools, we might read such analysis through the conceptual lens of habitus and field, and interpret the students' struggle as discordance between the children's habitus and the teacher's habitus. The students' habitus is constructed during their school years in the dominant field. However, in the field of CHL schools, students are expected to have different habitus, the habitus that they could have been inculcated if they went to school in China or Taiwan. As a result, the children would not fit in with the habitus of the teacher shaping the CHL field, almost inevitably generating the commonly expressed claim among children, exemplified by Isabelle and Sophia's daughters, that "I hate Chinese." As I discussed in the previous section, the discordance between the children's habitus and the CHL field is a recurring problem that was raised by Group 1 parents' regarding their childhood experience (i.e., Type 1 discordance).

The second factor that I discussed in the previous section is that going to school on the weekend or after school means that children sacrifice other activities including their playtime. Therefore, unless they perceive the capital value in learning Chinese, going to CHL school is not worth the investment. Such problem was repeated by Group 2 parents' stories but this time, from the parents' perspective. Especially, parents struggle to motivate their children. Sophia took her daughters to Taiwan so that they could see for themselves that Chinese is actually a living language which people use in everyday life, and that it has value outside the CHL school. Interestingly, the narratives of Group 1 parents envisioned Vancouver as an Asian city where there is a practical need for speaking the language. However, what Group 2 parents were narrating through their experience with their children's Chinese language learning was quite different from that perspective. Their children only spoke English amongst each other, even among Chinese immigrant children, and attending CHL schools on the weekend was not worth the sacrifice in comparison to almost *any* other activity. This resonates with the Type 2 discordance that was revealed throughout the Group 1 parents' *childhood* memories. Interestingly, the same figure that summarized Group 1 parents' childhood experiences can represent today's Chinese Canadian children of recent

Chinese immigrants as well (see Figure 8.3 and 8.4, where Group 2 children’s habitus has been added below the retrospective experiences of Group 1 children, who are now parents)

Figure 8.3 The Recurring Pattern of Type 1 Discordance

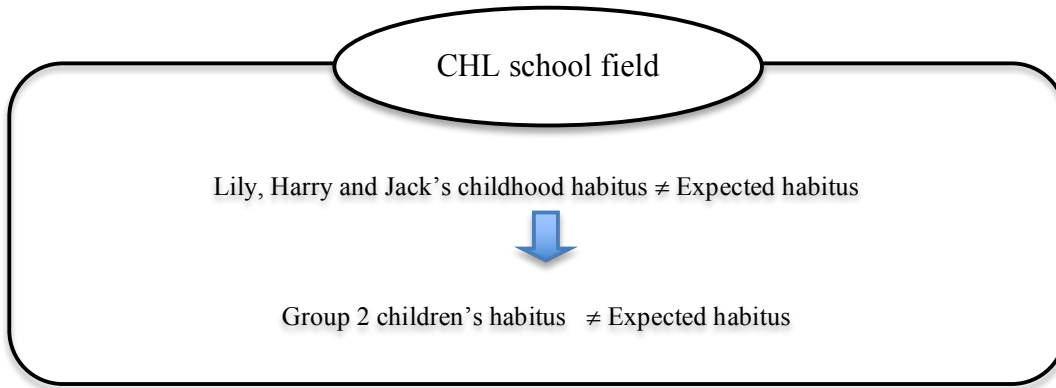
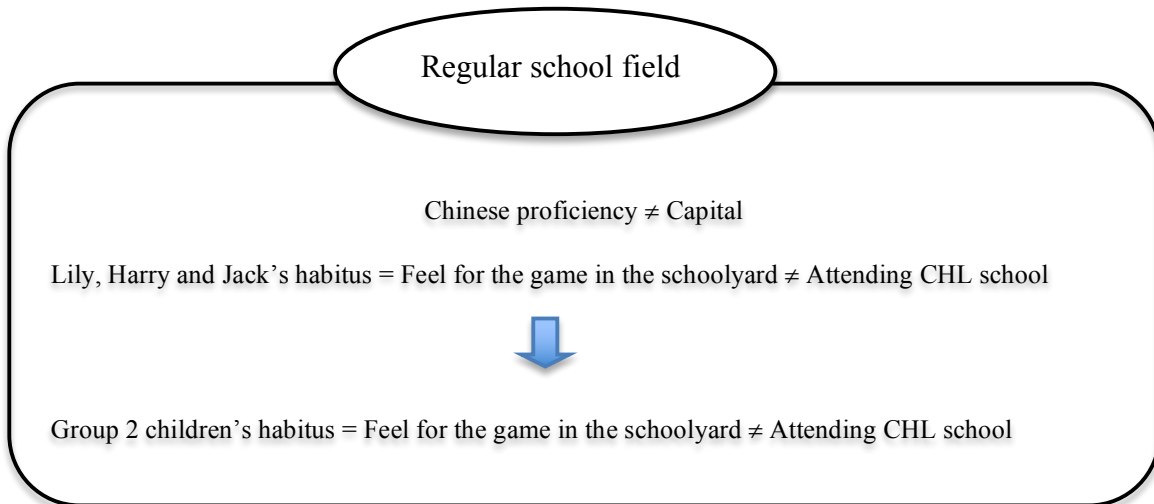


Figure 8.4 The Recurring Pattern of Type 2 Discordance



The third recurring theme that I observed in Group 2 parents’ stories was their complaints about class quality, consistency and variety lead us to the third problem of CHL schools. This problem involves the lack of structural stability as well as flexibility of CHL schools. As Sophia claimed, there could be good teachers, but they come and go, and the learning experience varies greatly by the teachers. Thomas pointed out the problem: “even each teacher, they have their own different ideas, not systematic program delivered to the

kids.” At the same time, there was also a difficulty in finding a school that matches their needs. As Thomas claimed, he would have preferred if there were classes that focused on basic speaking skills rather than repetitive writing and reading skills. The lack of structural stability and flexibility are two sides of one coin that arise from a lack of teaching resources and teacher education for the local context. CHL schools are community based, and the funding from the government has been scarce (Jiang, 2010). Based on her interview with one of the CHL school administrators, Jiang argued,

The tuition at her Chinese School for one term is \$170 per student. That amounts to about \$3-5 per hour, which is affordable for the students’ families, but makes it difficult for the school to sustain its programs, cover its overhead, and pay its teachers. More financial support from the government would not only give students more books, more field trips, and more classroom activities, but also would signify the value placed by the government on CHL, which in turn would enhance the status of the language, build up school administrators’ confidence and students’ and teachers’ motivation, and improve the quality of teaching. Nevertheless, currently, with a wide range of budget cut in education, BC’s Chinese schools will most likely have to depend entirely on the goodwill of local Chinese communities in the province for their funding. (pp. 56-57)

If more resources were available for the CHL schools, would that increase the quality of teaching as well as classes that meet the parents and students’ needs? Could more funding support from the government resolve the discordance between students and teachers’ habitus discussed earlier? In order to solve the mismatch between the students and teachers’ habitus, there is definitely a need for training opportunities for the teachers to understand what kind of teaching/learning styles are effective for students in Canada.

On the other hand, the type 2 discordance—the problem of sacrificing playtime for something that is not valuable in the children’s eyes—would remain a problem. Indeed, As Jack remarked, the problem of sending children to CHL schools involved “forcing” them to “compartmentalize their life,” another use again of the term “force” to describe the challenge of children whose “feelings” about CHL learning were so commonly negative.

Is it useful to think about these narratives of negative “feelings” as *more* than specific responses to particular problems such as teaching style and mismatches between learning

outcomes and pedagogical approach (for instance, with the sons of Thomas, the desire to speak and listen with comprehension versus the teaching of reading and writing)? Is there something beyond the particular issues that can account for the depth of feeling and the ubiquity of the narratives of “force” and “coercion” to describe the clash between parents and children’s “feelings”? Is there a structural difficulty to overcome what is being revealed through these evocative narratives?

8.3 Learning Chinese within Regular Schooling

If the two fields, Chinese language learning and regular schooling, merge into one field, will the discordance be overcome? On the one hand, most of the Group 1 parents, namely Harry, Emily, Jack and Joyce, registered their children in a Mandarin bilingual program that starts at kindergarten within the public school system. On the other hand, Group 2 parents, Isabelle and Oliver, were sending their children to a public school that offers a Chinese program. This program offers Mandarin through Mandarin Language Arts, and although it is not an extensive bilingual program, the students have the opportunity to learn the language within the regular schooling time. The program starts at Grade 4, aimed at students who have strong English oral and literacy skills, and have no Chinese literacy skills (Vancouver School Board, 2010). Having the opportunity to learn Chinese within the regular school field seems to be a good alternative to CHL schools.

However, has placing Chinese language learning within regular public schooling solved the recurring problems of learning Chinese at CHL schools? Have these programs removed the discordance between habitus and field that were identified both in the stories of Group 1 parents’ childhoods as well as in contemporary stories of Group 2 parents?

According to Isabelle, her daughter was able to get into the Chinese program because she only spoke Cantonese and not Mandarin. This might also have been the case for Oliver’s son, given that he also came from a Cantonese family. None of the other parents’ children, who all happened to be Mandarin speakers, attended the program. In any case, it is not clear what the school board means by “Mandarin Language Arts” and “Chinese literacy skills,” and whether having prior knowledge of Chinese literacy through Cantonese is acceptable.

Both Oliver and Isabelle seemed invested in their children’s Chinese education because of their own heritage. Even though they were Cantonese speakers, they both remarked that it did not matter whether their children learned Cantonese or Mandarin

because they shared the same writing system. At the same time, they both admitted that their children had not been acquiring literacy skills: Oliver remarked, “he doesn’t know much,” while Isabelle sighed, “my daughter cannot read books.” Oliver, however, remarked that he didn’t expect too much. His son’s Chinese literacy skills, at the least, were at a high enough level to cope with the tests at school. In contrast, Isabelle expressed her disappointment with her daughter’s Chinese literacy skills. When she noticed I was jotting down field notes in Chinese characters, she was surprised and asked me how I learned to write, and described how she was struggling with her daughter’s ability to read and write Chinese. I told her that in Japan, school children learn Chinese characters every day from Grade 1 until high school. She acknowledged that her daughter’s exposure to Chinese was not enough, “just only three times. Just only 45 minutes for each day. I think it’s not enough.” Isabelle and Oliver both mentioned children spoke English with each other and that they didn’t want to speak Chinese among friends.

Even when learning Chinese at a regular public school rather than a CHL school, Type 2 discordance is only partly overcome. English was still the dominant language of use among friends, not Chinese. The parents considered it unrealistic to ask the students to speak in Mandarin when they only had exposure to the language three times a week starting at Grade 4. Oliver described what he saw as the vicious circle in which children who are raised in Canada get trapped: because the Chinese language is difficult, they become afraid of learning the language, and as a result they don’t want to learn the language, which makes the task of learning even more difficult. This vicious circle seems to resonate with the stories of Mia, Isabelle, Thomas and Sophia. It is the “difficulty” of the Chinese language compared to the ease of speaking English that is narrated as the problem. Despite the strong desire among the parents to have their children learn Chinese, the parents gradually got worn out fighting against their children’s resistance.

Having the opportunity to learn Chinese during regular school time rather than on weekends may have seemed to provide a relief from the discordance described in the previous section between “playtime” and other extracurricular activities being preferable to time in CHL school. Nevertheless, even when Chinese language learning was embedded within regular schooling time, the same description of parents needing to “force” children to speak shaped their narratives. Is it really the “difficulty” of Chinese as a language to learn

that is at the heart of the struggle? Or is that difficulty also, from the perspective of the parents, a product of when the language is being introduced and the amount of exposure?

As Oliver remarked, articulating his awareness of this challenge, it would be preferable if the children start schooling in a bilingual environment early on. In fact, Mia, Thomas, Sophia and Oliver expressed their desire to have their children enroll in an early-start bilingual program from kindergarten. In the next section, we will focus on access issues regarding the early-start bilingual program.

8.4 Access Problems: Early-Start Chinese Bilingual Program

Group 1 parents consistently told me during the interviews that the context of Vancouver today is different from when and where they grew up: Learning Mandarin is more highly valued now relative to during their own childhood. The existence of parents' advocacy groups lobbying for early-start Chinese bilingual programs in many cities within Lower Mainland, and school boards responding to such demands were clear evidence to all of them that things had changed. Group 1 parents such as Harry, Emily, Jack and Joyce were all able to register their children in one of the early-start bilingual programs. Jack described his reaction to the launch of the program as follows:

it came just by coincidence that they are starting this, piloting this Mandarin program, like I never expected that to happen. I actually find it very commendable that the school board is actually trying to do this program because, let's face it, Chinese isn't an official language of Canada. There's no real reason to be teaching except for the fact that they think it's a good idea, and it is a good idea . . . It actually kind of represents in my mind, kind of a new way of thinking, it's starting, while the English/French kind of dichotomy still exists in very strong form, you know we realize that this country, especially in the urban centres, the face of this country is changing dramatically right now. (Jack)

The demographic changes in urban Canada, in particular Vancouver and Toronto, seem to have wrought a new reality for language learning. Despite the continuing dominance of English/French bilingualism, the "changing face" of Canada seems to have created a "new way of thinking." But has it really? The analysis of the discordance in habitus described by Group 2 parents in this chapter, in particular how it was expressed through the affective language of "force" and differences in "feeling" between Group 2 parents and their children,

was eerily reminiscent and parallel to the descriptions of Group 1 parents' own Chinese language learning experiences as children.

In spite of their own strong desire to have their children speak Chinese, Group 2 parents' narrated their struggles to motivate their children to learn Chinese in today's Vancouver. In comparing the stories of Group 1 parents remembering their own childhood experiences with Group 2 parents describing the challenges of their children's experiences, it is striking that the problems that Group 1 parents faced as children still seem to be the problems today even with the popular discourse about the popularity of Mandarin with the rise of the Chinese economy (Duff et al., 2015).

The existence of a Grade 4 start for Mandarin Language Arts within a regular school does not seem to have fundamentally changed the dynamic of Chinese as a language of marginal utility within the learning environment. Despite the "changing face" of Vancouver generally, the language learning environment for the Mandarin Language Arts program, at least from the point of view of one parent, retains a challenge of discordance between "heritage language" parents and children. The key reasons for this, I would argue, are twofold: 1) it introduces Mandarin as Language Arts and not as an immersion program to non-Mandarin speakers at the age of 9 who have embodied the habitus as English speakers in an English-dominant language field, and 2) it excludes Mandarin native speakers from the program and thus shelters the students from language use environments where Mandarin has real utility, but even more importantly introduces a segregated language learning environment where "real" Mandarin speakers remain an abstraction. Perhaps the best example of this, ironically enough, was given by a teacher in the Grade 4-7 Mandarin Arts Program and one of her students in a public presentation in 2008 where she urged the school board administrators to similarly exclude Mandarin speaking students from the proposed early start Mandarin programs. This teacher who had been working for the Mandarin Arts Program for many years argued that the discrepancy between the levels of Mandarin proficiency would make teaching not only difficult but would also put the children from an English-speaking background in a very hard position. Then, she introduced one of her former students—a male ethnic Chinese student from an English-speaking background—to speak to the conference participants. He shared his experience about the difficulty he had been facing during the transition from this Mandarin Language Arts program where there were virtually

no native Mandarin speakers to a new high school where there were native Mandarin speakers in the Chinese class. He remarked how he felt ashamed, embarrassed, and intimidated by the fluent Mandarin speakers. After his speech, the teacher urged the new early-start Mandarin bilingual program (with its proposed kindergarten entry) to not include children from Mandarin speaking households to “protect” those who were not fluent Mandarin speakers from feeling intimidated.

As I described in Chapter 2, Section 3, the kindergarten-entry, early-start bilingual program launched in 2011 has targeted fluent English speakers with no prior knowledge of Mandarin just as this teacher urged school board administrators. But has segregating Mandarin native speakers from Mandarin language learners achieved the goal of sheltering language learners from the feelings of shame, inadequacy and insecurity embodied within the habitus of the Mandarin learners? Or is the separation of Mandarin speakers from language learners for so many years a potential source of these embodied feelings?

8.4.1 English-speaking parents’ responses to the English-speaker-only policy

One of the downsides of having English speakers only in the program is the fact that only the teacher speaks Mandarin, and therefore, children are not exposed to Mandarin as a language which children themselves use for play and social interaction. Emily commented on this problem as follows:

Oh yah, it will probably be better if there were Mandarin speaking children cause then they would converse in Mandarin more. I don’t think they are doing that right now other than in the classroom. I don’t think they do it at recess or lunch. (Emily)

Similarly, Harry and Jack told me having Mandarin-speaking children may benefit their children to learn Mandarin. Their children came to the program with their English dominant linguistic habitus, and it is only natural that the students would keep using the language in the environment where everybody speaks English more fluently than Chinese. Not only that, as a result of being sheltered and “protected” from fluent Mandarin speakers for many years, one can imagine that the students will feel intimidated when they actually encounter fluent Mandarin speakers (apart from their teachers), just like the male student at the conference in 2008 recounted. Similar to the problem that Isabelle and Oliver addressed regarding the Chinese program that their children attend, the early-start Chinese bilingual program also

limits students' access to Mandarin in the everyday context. If the program accepted Mandarin speakers to the program, there would have been much more exposure to Mandarin. Unfortunately, that is not the case.

Among the Group 1 parents who enrolled their children in the early-start Chinese bilingual program, Emily and Joyce shared their experience regarding the process of registering their children into the program. Emily's son took the oral test, and passed it whereas Joyce's son was exempted from taking it. "They let us not go through it, because the secretary could tell that we spoke English at home." It is interesting to note that Joyce was readily aware that her son was being exempted not because of his own language competency in English, but because of hers. In practice, for the early-start Mandarin program, the assessment of the parent's English ability through something as simple as a phone call was enough. Although I was unable to interview any school board staff about the criteria used for such judgments, it is clear that without a formal protocol or checklist that systematically examined whether a parent's speech acts on the phone met minimum criteria (for instance, competency in English grammatical structure, extent of vocabulary, or knowledge of English literature), that the assessments were being made informally, likely based upon pronunciation (a lack of "Chinese accented English," a linguistic habitus that is extremely difficult to change) or simple mistakes in the grammatical order of subject/object that could be assessed in a short phone call.

Perhaps one of the most striking findings in this study was how several Group 1 parents, in spite of their own childhood experiences as Chinese heritage language learners, accepted the exclusion of children of Mandarin speaking parents from the program. Joyce, for instance, was supportive of the rationale given for only accepting English-speaking children. When Joyce told me about her son's daycare and preschool experience where many children were bilingual speaking Mandarin, Tagalog or Farsi, I noticed the excitement in her voice. She told me she had been hoping that her son would pick up some Mandarin from his friends. However, when it came to schooling from kindergarten, this enthusiasm for a multilingual learning environment disappeared; Joyce did not want other children who already spoke Mandarin to be learning with her son. It was a striking shift, and yet, many

parents, as Emily remarked, seemed to be in agreement with Joyce.⁵⁸ When I asked Emily if she thought having Mandarin speakers in school would be a problem because they would get help from their parents, Emily replied, “it’s huge!” It was surprising to hear this from Emily, who had earlier remarked that her own parents never helped her with homework, but according to Emily, parents of this bilingual program would be eager to be involved in their children’s schooling even though she laughed and admitted it was weird they all felt that way.

Jack explained to me how parents in this program are different from the parents of regular programs:

I do think that kids who are enrolled in special programs regardless of what the program is, it could be whatever, arts, or music or French, or Chinese or um you know Montessori or whatever, parents enrolled their children into special programs in the public school system obviously have a stronger interest in their children’s education. And just because of that fact, I feel a lot more secure about my son’s peerage. I feel like he’s going to be surrounded by kids whose parents are also very interested in their education, and he’s not going to be surrounded by kids whose parents aren’t interested in their education. (Jack)

Perhaps because some of the initial set of parents in the early-start program had been involved in the activism and lobbying of the school boards for the creation of the program, there was an even stronger sense among them that parents in the program would be heavily involved in their children’s learning. Some of the Group 1 parents also expressed a similar fear of unfair competition for their children from classmates whose parents could help with Mandarin. In other words, the awareness among non-Mandarin speaking parents that they could not help their children with Mandarin homework created a narrative that children of Mandarin-speaking parents should be kept out of the program, justified primarily in order to prevent those children from having an advantage or being ahead in their learning compared to their own children.

⁵⁸ In fact, one of the hot debates that happened during the symposium in 2008 that was organized by the parents’ advocacy group to start Mandarin bilingual program in Vancouver was about the disadvantage of English-speaking students: Parents were worried about the fact that they could not help with the homework, and students from Chinese households would be ahead of their children.

It is interesting to note the significance placed by parents in Metro Vancouver on their ability to help or not help with homework, and how anxious they were about competition for their children from children of Mandarin speaking parents. In the U.S., two-way immersion programs where speakers of English and the target language enroll together have been implemented for decades, and in Edmonton, the bilingual program accepts students from any language background, including many children from Mandarin-speaking households. Some of the parents who were involved in the lobbying for the early-start program in Metro Vancouver were aware of the approach in Edmonton and how it differed from the exclusion of children of Mandarin speaking parents implemented at the Grade 4 Mandarin Language Arts program. They knew this information because of a presentation from Edmonton teachers, parents, and school administrators given to parents and Vancouver School Board trustees in 2008. Indeed, in this public event, the teachers, parents and administrators of the Edmonton Chinese bilingual program expressed their puzzlement at hearing so many questions about “helping with homework” from the anxious Metro Vancouver parents during the event (Aubry, Li, Wong, & Wu, 2008). However, none of the Group 1 parents who were interviewed in this study were aware of the different approach in the U.S. and in Edmonton.

As I explained to Jack during the interview about how I was puzzled about the “helping with homework,” he started to himself question the rationale of having English speakers only in the program:

I’m sorry but you know I never got any help for my homework from my parents! My parents never helped me, they were incapable of helping me with my homework, but I did all right, I wasn’t so bad you know. I figured it out myself, and in fact, I don’t know, parenting is very very strange these days for me and it’s new for me, right? But I feel like we just pamper our kids a little bit too much we expect we are supposed to do the homework for them now, which is ridiculous, totally ridiculous. (Jack)

Although I had merely raised my own puzzlement at how involved the parents believed they should be in their children’s homework (perhaps because of my own upbringing in Japan where schoolwork was generally left to children to perform without aid from parents), Jack came to realize that even from his own experience the amount of parental involvement in homework had been minimal. Jack went one step further as he thought more about how the

presumption of parental involvement correlated with the belief that children of Mandarin-speaking parents should not be included in the program: “I guess that is kind of a weird philosophy to ensure that everybody actually should have English as a basic language before they go. (Jack)”

It should be noted that Jack had accepted, as did many of the parents of children in the early start bilingual program, that the rationale for the exclusion of Mandarin speakers made sense. And yet during our interview, Jack had come to realize as he thought about his own experience through our conversation that the policy did not make sense: He came from a Mandarin-speaking family, yet never had any help from his parents, and he was already ahead of other children in English in Grade 2. As an interviewer and researcher, this moment was one of the most fascinating and revealing throughout the hours and hours of interviews I conducted for this study. To literally observe as one of the participants realized the discordance between his own habitus and the one that dominated the field of his children’s language learning, and to see him work out the cognitive dissonance that such a discordance created, came to frame my interpretations of not only Jack’s interview, but also of other parents’ interviews.

Although such a moment may be uncommon, it is a rare revelation of how macro structures that shape the embodiment of habitus within individuals can create moments of dissonance at the micro level of individual narration. Methodologically, looking for and being responsive to these moments when an individual’s story-telling reflects the discordance of broader underlying structures of habitus is one of the powerful consequences of approaching analyses from Bourdieu’s framework of habitus and field. As Bourdieu (1999) argues, “only the reflexivity synonymous with method, but a *reflex reflexivity* based on a craft, on a sociological “feel” or “eye,” allows one to perceive and monitor *on the spot*, as the interview is actually taking place, the effects of the social structure within which it is occurring” (p. 608).

Another study focusing on the program’s design and implementation might reveal the assumptions about language learning that shaped the English-speaking students only policy, or whether the “homework-anxious” parents who advocated for an English speakers-only program affected the creation of program policy. What is pertinent for this study is that the program design, in only accepting fluent English speakers, had a formative impact on the

way that students are exposed to Mandarin both inside and outside the classroom, in essence structuring a Mandarin language program that (except for the teacher) deliberately segregated language learners from native speakers of the target language. It also had a profound impact on the Chinese learning trajectories of those who speak languages other than English at home, in particular sending a powerful message that the children of Mandarin-speaking households were not welcome.

8.4.2 Chinese-speaking parents' desire for enrolment in early-start bilingual program

One of the themes in the Group 2 parents' narratives that came up again and again was, to my surprise, an emotional response to the fact that their children could not enroll in the early-start Mandarin program. The articulation of their children's ineligibility was almost always accompanied by an affective sensibility—frustration, sadness, anger:

That's so sad I have a new baby, right? I strongly strongly want that kind of program for him, for my little one, so that he's able to, he has opportunity to learn Mandarin, to learn Chinese. Not that I have to send him back to China to learn Chinese. (Mia)

The exclusion from the early start program was correlated by many parents with a sense of their children being deprived of the opportunity to become multilingual because of their background as non-English speakers. In other words, in today's Vancouver, while English speakers are given the opportunity to learn Mandarin starting at kindergarten, Chinese speakers are not. When I commented about the policy that stated it was important to be fluent in English because the program would be 50% taught in English (Vancouver School Board, 2010), and also about the parents' advocacy group that claimed that children from Chinese speaking household would learn English first at the regular program (Mandarin for BC Schools, 2008), Thomas expressed his opinion in a voice that in comparison to the rest of the interview was highly agitated with emotion:

Oh my goodness, that is kind of totally wrong idea! They always, they even think they are Canadian, and English is their language, Chinese is always a burden to them if the Chinese learn Chinese, they won't learn English well, that's kind of completely completely wrong! If talking about opportunity to expose more to

Western people, I could understand, I could somehow understand, but still even for this reason, I think as a tax payer, or you know people for the kids they were born here, they live nothing different from those Western boys or girls, they should have the same opportunity. They should. (Thomas)

That this was one of the few moments during his interview that Thomas visibly showed emotion should be noted. The anger in his voice was palpable, and changed both the timbre and volume of his voice, as well as his body language and the length of his phrases. In particular, when Thomas heard that the reason given by the school board as to why children of Mandarin speaking parents could not enroll in the program was related to their lack of English fluency, his reaction was even more agitated. Perhaps because he had just been explaining earlier how much of a struggle he had faced motivating his children to learn Chinese because they only wanted to speak English (Thomas had been one of the Group 2 parents who used the term of needing to “force” his children to describe the difficulty of encouraging his sons to learn Chinese), the paradox of children such as his being kept out for the opposite reason seemed to incense him.

Indeed, none of the Group 2 parents interviewed ever raised any issues about their children’s English. Although I asked each of them whether they thought that their children were having any difficulties learning English, all of them believed that their children had easily picked up English. The problem expressed again and again was quite the opposite: their children’s language use was becoming increasingly English dominant once they started schooling and the main challenge was the retention of Chinese.

Most of the parents also believed that if their children’s schooling, right from kindergarten, placed a value on speaking Chinese, that there would be a much better possibility that they would not only maintain but develop their Chinese. Whether they are right in this presumption or not, it is nevertheless telling that they believed that their children were resistant to learning Chinese, and that none of them lacked either motivation or opportunity to learn English. It is perhaps one of the most important findings in this study that not a single Group 2 parent expressed the belief that their children faced any challenges learning English.

8.5 Conclusion

Has the global economic reality of China's increasing presence, together with the local demographic reality of the increasing population of ethnic Chinese, fundamentally changed the terrain of Chinese language education in Metro Vancouver, as reflected in the launch of early start Chinese bilingual program? From the beginning of the research for this dissertation, the answer to that question seemed somewhat obvious, and, to be frank, there were times during the creation of the dissertation's research design when it seemed that this question would be relatively uninteresting to answer because the answer found would be a straightforward "yes."

As this chapter has shown, however, the answer is in fact more complex, and in many ways the answer is a surprising "no." Some English-speaking parents with ethnic Chinese background had realized the opportunity to have their children learn Chinese in the program. Their children's presence in the program, however, did not reflect a fundamental shift in the field of English and non-English language education in Vancouver over the decades since they were themselves children. Indeed, their children, overwhelmingly English language speakers, did not themselves represent any fundamental shift in the habitus of an English dominant language learning field where the "feel for the game" (Bourdieu, 1990a) allows English speakers to enjoy the privilege of learning other languages.

This chapter has primarily aimed at a discussion of how the embodied habitus revealed in Group 1 and 2 parents in their narratives about language learning in CHL schools reflects how the habitus of English dominant language use generates embodied affects—the feelings among children for instance of not 'enjoying' or even 'hating' the learning of Chinese in CHL schools. These affects are analyzed within a larger field as embodied habitus; in other words, as macro patterns within a structure rather than isolated micro level feelings at the level of individuals.

This chapter also examined how the creation of Mandarin language programs within public schools did not obviate or remove the embodied effects of these larger macro patterns. Indeed, the exclusion of Mandarin speaking children from the programs accords with how Group 1 parents had themselves embodied the habitus of English speakers, even though there were several instances of discordance that became revealed as moments of reflexivity within the narratives.

Most poignantly, within the narratives of Group 2 immigrant Chinese-speaking parents, their struggles to motivate their children to learn Chinese in weekend CHL schools reveals a long term continuity in the ways in which Chinese language education for heritage language speakers creates embodied affects. These affects were observed and narrated by parents in descriptions of their children, but the complementary effects in the parents were also observable. The recurring theme of having to “force” children to learn Chinese, and the frustration at the necessity of “deciding” or “choosing” to not go against the children’s feelings and desires, all point to the powerful ways in which embodied habitus are revealed in emotion and affective expression.

Perhaps most surprising as a research finding in this chapter, and indeed within the dissertation as a whole, is how these narratives of children’s resistance to attending CHL schools reveal an ongoing and longstanding discordance between habitus and field that has not changed over the decades. The discordance described by Group 2 parents was very similar to what the Group 1 parents experienced as children decades earlier. Immigrant Chinese families found themselves still trapped in the same situation described by Group 1 parents about their own Chinese language learning experiences growing up.

The problems of weekend CHL schools are multilayered. More funding and resources for teaching improvement may solve the discordance between habitus and field to some extent. However, there is a structural problem if we depend solely on CHL schools as a site of Chinese language education, forcing children to “compartmentalize their life” as Jack claimed. It would be more effective to integrate the two fields: the Chinese language learning field and the regular schooling field. Learning Chinese at a public school, as Isabelle and Oliver’s children have done in the Mandarin Language Arts program, is arguably better than at a weekend Chinese Heritage School. However, as Isabelle and Oliver observed, children there did not have enough opportunity to practice speaking Mandarin as well as reading and writing Chinese. Given that the program starts from Grade 4 for only several hours a week, and given that the program is not a heritage program intended for Mandarin speakers, it seems almost predictable that students will not become fluent in Mandarin, and will primarily speak English with each other.

Even the early-start Mandarin bilingual program, designed to mitigate the effects of English language dominance by beginning language learning at the age of 5, has suffered

from a curious artifact of the long history of colonialism and English language dominance. Because Mandarin speakers are deliberately excluded from the program, the children are not exposed to Mandarin as a peer language. As Harry, Emily and Jack remarked, children in the program primarily spoke only English with each other. The “sheltering” of English language speakers away from fluent speakers of the target language they wish to learn, seems a *prima facie* contradiction. And yet this became the normative assumption of what was “best” for the new early start Mandarin programs in metropolitan Vancouver.

The exclusion of Mandarin speakers has been justified by the alleged need for the children of Mandarin-speaking parents to concentrate on learning English. This study has found among both Group 1 and Group 2 parents a universal lack of apprehension about the need to put any effort at all into their children’s English language learning. Group 1 parents all remarked that in their childhood they never had problem with learning English, and Group 2 parents again and again observed their children’s ease in learning English as opposed to their struggles with Chinese. Given the ubiquitous absence of any descriptions among any of the parents of any difficulties facing children in Vancouver in learning and speaking English, the justification for excluding Chinese speaking children from Mandarin programs seems threadbare at best, and at its worst a racial profiling more a legacy of a long history of anti-Chinese discrimination and attempts at educational segregation.

Decades of research has demonstrated that developing a child’s mother tongue will increase his/her educational development—including their English learning outcomes (e.g., Baker, 2000; Cummins, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Marian et al., 2013). Indeed, if there are both Mandarin speakers and English speakers in a classroom, and if both Mandarin proficiency and English proficiency are valued equally, studies of two-way bilingual (also often called dual immersion) programs have found that neither English speakers nor Mandarin speakers enjoy structural advantages (e.g., Freeman, Freeman, & Mercuri, 2005; Gomez, 2000). Such valuing of both languages in the classroom mitigate the effects of the general dominance of the English language outside of the classroom, creating a language learning environment that encourages social use of both languages among peers.

The *prima facie* absurdity of the exclusion of Mandarin speakers from the Mandarin programs is perhaps best elaborated upon by Jack, who observed:

You want your kids to learn Chinese but the same time . . . you don't want them to mix too much with the regular Chinese people. It's kind of like people . . . who want to sell their houses to rich Chinese mainlanders but at the same time, they don't really seem to want people to actually move to Vancouver. (Jack)

Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

The purpose of this concluding chapter is to synthesize the findings I have addressed in the previous chapters. Using Bourdieu's (1991) construct of habitus, capital and field, this study was an endeavor to understand the shaping of CHL in Canada through the stories of Chinese Canadian parents who reside in Metro Vancouver. In doing so, I have applied the concept of multiple temporalities (Braudel, 1958/2000) to understand CHL within the historical continuity of Chinese in Canada. This study analyzed parents' life stories on three timescales. The first timescale (RQ #1) looks at the lifespan of the parents who grew up in Canada, from childhood to parenthood, in order to understand the shaping and reshaping of their habitus. The second timescale (RQ #2) compares the problems and challenges of CHL in recent years with the problems and challenges three decades ago through the stories of recent immigrant parents' experiences and the memories of parents who grew up earlier in Canada. The third timescale (RQ#3) focuses on today's Canada but compares the stories of parents who grew up here with those who immigrated as adults to understand how their differences in time spent in Canada affected their reasons for investing in their children's language education and the resources available to them.

9.2 Limitations and Future Research Directions

There are limitations to this study that have consequences for future research possibilities. First, given the small number of the interviewees, the stories of the participants may not apply to the heritage language learning experience of all other Chinese Canadians, as Chinese Canadian communities are diverse and heterogeneous. For example, all participants had post-secondary degrees while some had graduate degrees. While I did not ask their income, it was clear that they all worked hard to provide their children with education and skills. Their aspirations in their children's language education could be different from those with much limited educational capital. Further research that explores the implications of social class in CHL is needed (Block, 2014; Kubota, 2014b; G. Li, 2013).

Secondly, the study did not include the participants' children in understanding their own present experiences. It is my hope to expand this exploration to include the children's voices in my future research.

The third point is an inevitable feature rather than a limitation for any interview research: the stories were told to me in a unique interview context where the interviewees responded to various cues from me ranging from my project description, the consent form, my questions and responses, and the myriad interactional contingencies in the interview. In addition, the interviews were conducted within the limited context and timeframe of the parents' busy schedules. Additional interview opportunities, not only with me but also with other researchers, would undoubtedly have broadened the available stories as well as deepened understandings of their experiences.

While there are limitations, this study demonstrated the possibility of life history research as a useful method to contribute to our understanding of CHL as a site of a long discursive process of othering Chinese in Canada. Especially, life history research is a powerful method to understand the parents' understanding of their past, which helps us make sense of the present dynamics of their language investment. In contextualizing the life stories of the parents within the contemporary Canadian context, my experience in being involved in the parents' movement to start a Mandarin bilingual program from 2008 to 2010, from a particular standpoint of supporting an inclusive program, as well as my continuing involvement with parents who are invested in their children's Chinese language development since 2011 were crucial. Future research might involve classroom observation and comparison between different Chinese-English bilingual programs in Metro Vancouver to better understand the dynamics between students from different language backgrounds, and also to see how policies regarding students' home-language backgrounds are reflected in practice.

9.3 Significance and Contributions

This study builds on the existing scholarship regarding the desires, challenges and obstacles of CHL learning in the Canadian context (Curdt-Christiansen, 2003, 2009, 2014; D. Li & Duff, 2008, 2014; Kouritzin, 1999) as well as the scholarship of other English dominant sites (e.g., Francis et al., 2014; He, 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2010; G. Li, 2006b, 2010). While acknowledging CHL research as exploring "the many pathways of

learning ‘Chinese,’ being ‘Chinese’ and becoming ‘Chinese’” (Curdt-Christiansen & Hancock, 2014, p. 1), the present study has revealed the other side of the same coin—how CHL has historically been a site of struggle for othering and excluding Chinese from belonging in Canadian society. In addition, this study has revealed that the challenges and obstacles that CHL learners and their parents have faced are largely due to structural issues rather than contingent problems. Accordingly, the inadequacy of present forms of Chinese heritage language education cannot be solved with anything less than structural solutions.

In the U.S., heritage language education and bilingual education have been richly discussed and analyzed in the context of the English-Only Movement and the No Child Left Behind Act. Therefore, while English monolingualism and the stigmatization of heritage language speakers as the social other have been salient in heritage language education research in the U.S. context (e.g., Chik, 2010; Cummins, 2000; Garcia, 2005; Gonzalez & Melis, 2012; Krashen, 1996; W. L. Li, 1982; Tollefson & Tsui, 2004; Tse, 2001b; Wiley, 2000; Wright, 2007), they have not been the focus for CHL research in Canada. This could be understood as a positive outcome in how “Canadian education has generally avoided the dysfunctional ideological battles that have characterized education in the United States during this period (e.g., in relation to reading instruction, bilingual education, school funding, etc.)” (Cummins, 2014, p. 8). However, Cummins further argues that “with respect to the education of immigrant-background students, we have failed to ensure that Canadian school administrators and educators in mainstream classrooms have had opportunities and incentives to develop the instructional expertise to teach these students effectively” (p. 9).”

This study is a reminder that the hidden English monolingualism and Anglo-conformity of Canada criticized by Cummins and Danesi (1990) over 25 years ago is still salient in today’s CHL in Metro Vancouver, even though the city has seemingly transformed into an “Asian city” (Todd, 2014). In that sense, this study was an attempt to bridge CHL research in Canada with critical perspectives from other areas of heritage language research.

This study also builds on critical perspectives towards the applicability of the multi/plurilinguistic turn as a panacea. It accords with skepticism that approaches

valorizing “multiple identities” and the hybridity and fluidity of linguistic identities have plausibility in addressing linguistic inequality, language loss, and racism (Kubota, 2014a; May, 2005, 2014, 2016). This study provided lived stories of Chinese language loss and learning, but not within the context of a novel rupture or disjuncture in the historical continuity of language education and linguistic capital within Canada. The metaphor of “turn” is symbolic in that it suggests a theoretical, analytical or even existential rupture from the past, but this study has found that there has been no radical change in the positioning of Chinese as other in Canadian society. When we locate the life stories of Chinese Canadian parents on the historical map of Chinese Canadians, it becomes clear that the problem today is a recurrence of the problem of the past. Unfortunately, the world has not “turned.” Indeed, in calling attention to the historical continuity of English monolingualism in CHL studies, this study avoids the pitfalls of much of the scholarly embrace of the new “diversity,” agreeing with Makoni (2012) that oftentimes, the idea of the sudden appearance of a novel diversity masks a “careful concealment of power differences” (p. 192).

9.4 Timescale One: From Childhood to Parenthood

As I discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, parents’ dispositions toward CHL have been shaped and reshaped as the parents grew up and were socialized into different fields. While the trajectories were different among the parents, the commonality that was shared across the cases is that they came to “discover” at some point between adolescence and parenthood the importance of knowing Chinese as a language. This is partly due to the recruiting process that I recruited parents who were invested in their children’s Chinese language education. Nevertheless, such changing attitudes toward their heritage language is a common theme discussed elsewhere (e.g., He, 2008b; Kouritzin, 1999; D. Li & Duff, 2014). While the present study builds on that common theme, my use of Bourdieu has offered a way to analyze and understand that for those perceived to be “Chinese” within Canadian society, there are structures of power and hierarchy which become embodied in individuals. My focus is on how the embodiment of broader social hierarchies shaped and reshaped Chinese Canadian parents’ beliefs and feelings about both English and Chinese language use. Understanding their investments in the value of learning Chinese through this critical perspective allows us to avoid simplifying decisions about learning Chinese

into mere strategic calculations that are rational choices. Affect and embodied practices are crucial for understanding why parents often become so “emotional” about language use, how analyses that rely on definitions of what is reasonable and rational behaviour out of self-interest are so limited, and why analyses that treat “identity” primarily as strategic personal choices are so misguided.

For instance, Lily’s investment in learning Cantonese, and her understanding of it as her heritage language, was clearly rooted in her own search for who she was. Lily’s narrative indexed her sense of not fully belonging to Canada. She never forgot how her mother had marked her “Chinese face” as “useless in Canada” and how her friends had denigrated her facial features as “so flat.” However, her desire to learn Cantonese cannot be understood as just a choice to learn more about her heritage and identity. Her desire and the visceral memory of her feeling of shame are both aspects of the embodied emotion that Bourdieu’s conception of habitus so powerfully captures and conveys. The embodiment of otherness—the shame of possessing that face as a child—had led her to search for the right linguistic habitus that would match her racialized face (Francis et al., 2014). Later in her life, she materialized the desire and the opportunity to acquire Cantonese because she had moved to a Cantonese-speaking city, where for the first time she felt her Chinese face had become an asset. Moving into a new structure of possibilities—into a new social field—reshaped her linguistic habitus. Analyzing the change in her desires as changing aspects of her heritage and sense of identity would merely describe the change. This study has understood the shifts in beliefs and desires as more than individual choices regarding heritage and identity by framing the shifts within social fields and within multiple timescales in order to anchor individual feelings within broader social structures.

Similarly for Jack, the decisions he made about what languages he wanted to learn as a young adult and why his children should be educated to be multilingual were shaped by the linguistic fields that structured his own childhood. The embodiment of his habitus continued to shape his feelings even as he travelled to work all over the world. While he always had an “overhanging guilt” of not speaking Mandarin despite his parent’s wishes, that alone did not motivate him to learn Mandarin. In his self-narration, Jack decided to learn Mandarin because his job happened to be in Taiwan and because he had a desire to

become a “worldly person.” At the same time, he also thought maybe Taiwan could become the home where he truly belonged.

However, as with Lily, Jack’s desire to belong to the Chinese community was shuttered by the cruel reality of not being able to fit in. The discordance between his Canadian habitus, the one that had led Jack to imagine that being a bilingual French-English speaker would help him belong in Canada, and the realities of experience within a new social field, for example his feelings of shame and exclusion for speaking English-accented Chinese in a Chinese-speaking community, made him feel that he could not truly belong in either. Jack’s feelings, these affective embodiments of habitus shaped by social fields, eventually were narrated as an embrace of “worldliness” and a transcendent ability to move within, across and between many worlds, such as when he told of an afternoon at the beach speaking to people in English, French, and Chinese. While the concept of investment and belonging in an imagined community (Darvin & Norton, 2015; Norton, 2000) is useful in understanding why learners are invested in learning additional languages, I have argued that scholarly conceptions of imagined communities that emphasize learners’ desires and the agency of their decisions may be too optimistic and misapprehend the force of the social fields which shape such desires and sometimes belie the narration of such decisions. Rather, the original conception of imagined community proposed by Benedict Anderson (1991) that emphasizes the construct of community through the process of *othering* and imagining who is outside and excluded, just as much as who is inside and included, is more applicable to Lily and Jack’s stories.

Anderson drew his theorization of nationalism as a form of imagined community from the post-colonial nation-building associated with decolonizing societies in Southeast Asia. His approach was rich and generative precisely because he was able to analyze the visceral and often vicious politics of identity in post-colonial nations that struggled with the heterogeneity of colonized subjects contained within the abstractly conceived boundaries bequeathed by colonial rule. It is crucial that researchers do not dwell on the explicit narrations of imagined belonging and inclusion, but take into consideration the generative processes of non-belonging and exclusion when applying the concept of imagined communities in their analyses.

Othering as one of the unavoidable consequences of imagined community was poignantly revealed in Jack's anecdote that after he came back to Canada, he learned French to prove that he was "really" Canadian. As a matter of fact, from many perspectives, Jack was already "really" Canadian: he has Canadian citizenship, and he spoke English predominantly with the proper "accent." However, he clearly felt this was not enough to "really" become Canadian. Where did this feeling originate? Was it only an individual idiosyncrasy or proclivity? Or, as this study argues, can his perception of a feeling within himself also serve as a means for us to analyze how individuals affectively embody the social fields that shape their habitus? The affective power of exclusion that Lily, Jack and Emily and so many others in Canada who "feel" shame about their marked feature is the embodiment of larger fields that structure who in Canada feels excluded by their language use, who must struggle to overcome these feelings, and who has the privilege of feeling included as a matter of ease.

For Jack, Canada as an imagined community was not an ephemeral set of imaginings that aggregate from the thoughts and beliefs of individuals, but a structured set of fields in which social, cultural and linguistic capital produce embodied habitus and shape feelings of belonging or not belonging within individuals. Any individual may have a range of affective responses to the fields they inhabit and differ from other individuals precisely because of these differences in how their habitus embody the social fields within which they are habituated. Bourdieu's insight was that we can understand these individuals most critically and clearly in analyzing how amidst their individual differences they are being differentially shaped by sharing the same field.

Anderson (1991), in trying to explain the power of national identity, emphasized the political work that abstractions played in both uniting and dividing people. Such abstractions were most necessary for the political work they performed in places such as former European colonies in Southeast Asia where lines on a map divided people who had prior organic bonds of feeling and community, or where new national boundaries contained a heterogeneous mix of people who had no prior reason to feel affective bonds to each other. If we are to analyze Canada using conceptions such as national identity as an "imagined community," it is necessary to keep in mind that Canada emerged as a nation from a set of European colonies that spatially bounded a heterogeneous array of

peoples. Racial and linguistic differences and hierarchies—sets of practices that among other uses provided a toolkit for colonial rule—did not disappear as Canada became a nation, nor did they disappear as Canada embraced multiculturalism as an abstract ideal and government policy in the 1970s and 1980s (Kubota, 2014b).

As I argued in Chapter 2, the official bilingualism of English and French has reified the racial hierarchy that already existed in Canada (Haque, 2005). Like Lily, Jack was well aware of his positionality as the racialized other. One can argue that Jack was negotiating his identity by learning French and performing his multiple identities as an English speaking-Chinese speaking-French speaking Canadian. The problem of this seemingly liberating argument is the tendency to overlook power inequalities (Kubota, 2014a). The use of conceptions such as “imagined community” and “identity” that use words such as “negotiate” and “fluid” implies a set of pragmatic choices and decisions that indicate individual agency and empowerment that do not align with the findings of this study.

Dynamic change is within the power of the individual to choose, whereas the analytical perspective that this study has striven to detail relies upon a conception of dynamic change that does not use the metaphor of “negotiation,” which implies relations between agents of relatively equal power making self-interested choices. Neither is this study arguing for analyzing social relations as a set of asymmetrical and coercive relations between individuals who are divided between the powerful and the relatively powerless. The advantage of using Bourdieu’s conception of habitus for understanding the beliefs and feelings narrated by the parents about their children’s language education is that we can understand all ten of the parents as inhabiting a shared set of social fields—the most telling of which is the field of linguistic capital in Canada. How they understand their own practices as a set of decisions/choices can be analyzed simultaneously as a set of stories of self-understanding and at the same time a narrative expression—through a conversation with me—if their affective embodiment of the hierarchies produced by the fields of Canada’s linguistic and cultural capital.

Speaking personally from a position as somebody who constantly and unwillingly switches between Japanese and English to fit in and to *other* fellow racialized Asians, I would explicitly argue that the conception of negotiating hybrid and fluid identities does

not liberate Chinese from being the racialized other, but rather, it obscures the racial hierarchies by misapprehending “identity” as a set of liberated choices made by liberal subjects. Lauding the “agency” of racialized subjects for the negotiations they undertake and the “contingent” choices they make, as if their lives were composed of the type of strategic and contingent decisions made at the voting booth or purchases at the electronics store, distorts the constraints within which individuals live. Celebrating “multiple” or “hybrid” identities and the “fluid” manner in which they are expressed also under-analyzes the narration of experience and self-identity as a source for understanding social life. Within the historical context of racial categorizations that differentiated access to economic resources as well as political power such as the franchise, non-whites could not choose their own “race” because to be defined as one of the non-white races relegated an individual to non-belonging. Being non-white meant that they were the other who was to be excluded from the imagining of Canada, but more concretely the manifold legal, financial, cultural, political, and linguistic privileges granted by belonging to the “white” race (Harris, 1993).

As May (2005) posits, “multiple identities, including multiple linguistic identities, are now the order of the day” (p. 329). However, he argues, “in recognising the salience of contingency and hybridity, we are also concerned to explore their limits as theoretical constructs, as well as pointing out some key lacunae in their use” (p. 330). Especially, he points out how the concept tends to place language use among linguistic minorities as if they had a choice is highly problematic. In this study, a number of participants narrated dynamic changes over time in how they understood their own language use and the value of speaking English and Chinese (and in Jack’s case in particular, in speaking French). The changes over time, however, should not be construed within a teleology of liberation, as if their growth from child to adult reflected an ever-increasing self-awareness that led to reconciliation and fulfillment, with each version of self being added to another in an accretive process until a healthier, happier person with “multiple identities” is the result. Although some of the subject’s stories could indeed be interpreted by themselves and others as having followed such a narrative arc, what this study has striven to show is that the dynamic changes that all ten of the participants expressed in their stories can be understood within multiple timescales, not only the timeline of childhood to adulthood.

Larger societal timescales, reflecting long term continuities in linguistic and racial hierarchies, as well as comparative timescales such as between parents within different historical moments, and even aspirational timescales such as the projected futures imagined by parents for children, allow an analysis of how multiple narratives of time are constantly evoked in the interviewee's stories. These multiple timescales give us an array of insights into how individuals reshape their linguistic practices as they inhabit new social fields, as well as how they come to understand and narrate those changes to themselves and others. These multiple timescales also allow us to see the longer-term continuities in Canada of hierarchies in linguistic capital, as well as racial belonging and non-belonging.

9.5 Timescale Two: What has not Changed in Four Decades

Despite the sociopolitical and economic changes outlined in Chapter 2 regarding Chinese Canadians over the past four decades, recurring challenges remain for learning Chinese as a heritage language. Just as Chinese Canadian parents who grew up in Canada (Group 1) talked about their resistance to learning Chinese as children decades ago, parents who immigrated from China talked about their children's resistance to learning Chinese now. This recurring effect was especially obvious when we looked at their accounts of Chinese heritage language school. This study argues that there are two kinds of discordance between CHL learners' habitus and field. The first discordance occurs when children's habitus—developed in Canadian public or private schools—create a mismatch with the pedagogy of CHL schools. As already revealed in other studies (e.g., Chik, 2010; Chiu, 2011; Jiang, 2010), the textbooks and classroom pedagogies that are used in CHL schools impose what teachers believe are the proper Chinese traditional values, causing negative reactions or even “shock” (Liu, 2005) within students. The second discordance, subtle and yet perhaps even more debilitating in overall effect, is caused by a mismatch in conceptions about the ideal use of time outside of regular school hours. At first, CHL classes seem to be just another activity within the array of afterschool and weekend activities experienced by all schoolchildren, and yet the recurring narrative of mismatch is consistent across so many of the narratives in this study: eventually Chinese Canadian children begin to define CHL classes differently from other activities such as sports or clubs or even other kinds of language learning.

Attending CHL schools after school or on the weekends to learn Chinese does not accord with the children's "feel for the game" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 66). The "feel for the game" metaphor represents the relationship between habitus and field that directs the children without being told to "acknowledge what is at stake" (p. 66) in the given field.

These two discordances between habitus and field created the narratives of force and resistance that Group 1 parents used to explain their childhood Chinese language education. In an echo and recurrence of what the Group 1 parents experienced as children, Group 2 parents today express the challenges they face in sending their children to the CHL schools, describing with bewilderment the resistance they encounter. Exemplified by Isabelle's daughter (as well as Sophia's daughter) in the explicit expression "I hate Chinese," what they are observing and describing is the very same narrative expression of affective discordance that Group 1 parents remember with such visceral emotion.

Of course, the lengths of time that differing parents are able to hold in abeyance the inevitable clash between parental desire and their children's feelings varied: Isabelle and Sophia were able to "force" their children to attend CHL schools for several years whereas Mia and Thomas did not "force" them. But this conflict between the "feelings" of parents and children is grounded in the underlying discordance produced by the mismatch between habitus and field that marks CHL in Canada. Even Sophia, who was able to send her daughters to CHL schools for many years, got tired at the end and stopped "forcing" them because she felt, "why should I try so hard. (laugh) I don't get much so why do I try so hard." While children's resistance to learn Chinese has been discussed elsewhere (e.g., Chik, 2010; D. Li & Duff, 2014; Francis et al., 2014; Liu, 2005), this study shows how despite the discourse of "change" that claims (and fears) the increasing presence and prevalence of Chinese in Canada and globally (e.g., Duff et al., 2015), the visceral reaction among Chinese Canadian children to learning Chinese as a heritage language remains a recurring response to an enduring continuity. History continues to repeat itself in the discordance between the habitus of growing up Chinese in Canada and the racial hierarchies that continue to shape the linguistic capital of learning Chinese.

9.6 Timescale Three: Comparing Parents' Stories in Contemporary Time

9.6.1 Investment

Parents of both Group 1 and Group 2 narrated the justifications for their investment in their children's language learning as future oriented. It might be obvious to state that parents are concerned with their children's future, but the particular expressions and narratives of time that parents used in describing Chinese language education are nevertheless revealing. While parents' investment in their children's Chinese language education varied across cases, it is worth noting that among the parents' who grew up in Canada (Group 1), only Lily emphasized the "heritage" aspects. Even then, she did not express "heritage" as a backward-looking narrative of time (i.e., speaking Chinese in honour of ancestors, thinking about being at the end of a long line of Chinese speakers, or retaining the ongoing traditions of an ancient culture or civilization). Interestingly, Lily described her emphasis on Chinese language education as a "heritage" matter by stating the importance of matching the way her daughter *looked* with the language she spoke. Lily's desire for her daughter to learn Chinese—either Mandarin or Cantonese—was justified by her concerns that since her daughter looked Chinese, she would be expected to speak Chinese and judged for not being able to do so.⁵⁹

Other than Lily, none of the Group 1 parents narrated the reasons for their investment in their children's Chinese language education as a matter of Chinese heritage. Indeed, the place of heritage or ancestry was surprisingly limited. Harry, for example, completely dismissed the heritage aspect of learning Mandarin. Even Jack, who was extraordinarily articulate about his own life as a series of "identity" crises, was careful not to project his own experiences of these identity crises onto his children, even though they were in his words "half white." He did not foresee his children's future as one marked by being "mixed" or "hybrid" or possessing "multiple" identities. Their heritage was not their destiny.

It should be noted again that even Lily's use of the term heritage did not narrate her children's heritage as being a product of their past ancestry. Lily's husband is Filipino,

⁵⁹ This resonates with my own mother's account. The other day when we were on Face Time, she told me (in Japanese) "you know, your girls, they have that face, so they won't pass as fully Canadian. If you really think about their well-being, you should teach them Japanese."

so technically speaking, Lily's daughter and Jack's children are both "half Chinese." Despite what some social observers might interpret as the multiple and mixed ethnicities of Lily's daughter, Lily's concern for her daughter's language education was narrated through imagining her daughter's future as a racialized "other" for the rest of her life. This future orientation, almost studiously disconnected from backward-looking notions of time that emphasized heritage as a product of ancestry, marked the narrations of time across all of the Group 1 parents' stories. The past, it seems, was something that needed to be escaped.

Linguistic capital as a form of future investment, in contrast, was explicitly expressed by almost all of the parents in both Group 1 and Group 2. While all the parents had given serious consideration to French for their children's second language, Mandarin was eventually chosen because of parents' perceptions about 1) the demography of Vancouver, and 2) the difficulty for English speakers of acquiring Chinese in comparison to French. Again, notions of time were important considerations even here. All of the parents were aware of the need to invest in inculcating a linguistic habitus while their children were young because Chinese is so hard to acquire as an adult. The projected future of Vancouver as a city in which Mandarin would become ever more important was correlated with the rise of China as an economic powerhouse. However, parents also drew upon the value of learning Mandarin as intercultural capital (Luke, 2004; Pöllmann, 2013), and as a portable and embodied skill similar to knowing how to play a musical instrument. Emily, Jack and Joyce all expressed their belief in the importance of learning Mandarin based on the demographic characteristics of Vancouver. Emily's account was particularly telling. For her, rather than fostering their children's heritage identity as Chinese, learning Mandarin was primarily for learning about social others:

I think having a second language kind of tweaks your brain a bit, yah, you would just think differently. You are more open-minded . . . and then with him being in that Mandarin culture, and . . . you know we live in Vancouver and there are so many Asians so it's good to have the second language. (Emily)

In contrast, Group 2 parents emphasized the importance of learning Chinese so that their children would understand where they came from, and to build connections with their extended family. The desire for the Group 2 parents to pass their linguistic and

cultural habitus on to their children was in marked contrast to the Group 1 parents. Although both were narrated as stories of future-oriented time, the Group 2 parents expressed a desire for their children to conserve their parents' habitus while the Group 1 parents aspired for their children to possess a different habitus than themselves. As noted in the previous section, the Group 2 parents' desire to pass on their habitus to their children often faced challenges because their children resisted, and the parents had to "force" their children. Perhaps as migrants themselves, Group 2 parents understood the forms of portable linguistic and cultural capital that best facilitated mobility and fungibility across a variety of geographic locations and social fields. In aspiring to pass that flexibility on to their children, however, they encountered the discordance between habitus and field described in the Section 9.4.

Parents' desires and decisions about their children's language education were clearly connected to the imagined field that the parents envisioned for their children's future. They decided which languages their children should acquire in order to be better positioned in the envisioned field, and investments were explicitly made with beliefs about providing children with a maximal amount of linguistic and cultural capital in a future range of competitive environments. However, these decisions were necessarily made within structural constraints, and both the growing demographic complexity of Vancouver and the enduring continuity of linguistic hierarchies have shaped these desires and decisions.

Surprisingly perhaps, considering the amount of contemporary chatter about global citizenship and their own trans-Pacific mobility, the parents rarely expressed their desires for their children through narrations of future global mobility. Rather, they invariably envisioned a future field rooted in the context of Canada. Although the Group 2 parents hoped that their children would retain a habitus where multiple language ability provided maximal linguistic capital, considerations of which languages that would entail were constrained. Isabelle and Oliver felt that in Canada, even if they believed it was the best for their children's future, parents could not "force" their children to learn Chinese. Multiculturalism for them meant a constraint on their ability to make decisions about what was best for their children's future as well as a need to respect their children's desires regarding what they liked and did not like.

This focus on what is different about Canada as a matter of freedom of choice and a respect for children's desires is an interesting and revealing narration of structural constraint as a matter of *greater* rather than *lesser* possibilities. The idea that in Canada there is a greater emphasis upon freedom of choice belies the structural constraint of lessened possibilities for learning multiple languages, in particular Chinese. The narrative discourse of multiculturalism and liberal freedom of choice actually obscures powerful workings of the linguistic field in Canada. For Isabelle and Oliver, as with so many parents who eventually give up trying to "force" their children to learn Chinese, a structural constraint is perceived as a set of choices. The inability to overcome the discordance of habitus and field discussed in Section 9.4, made so difficult because of the powerfully visceral and embodied affects that discordance produces, is explained as a conflict between an immigrant generation of parents and their children over flexibility and respecting the freedom of children to make their own choices based upon what they like and don't like.

The prevalence of French language acquisition as an easier and preferred alternative to Chinese is revealing in this aspect. Many Group 2 parents learned to embrace French as a non-English language for their children, fulfilling a desire inculcated as part of their own habitus that proficiencies in multiple languages are a powerful form of capital, and a canny reading and "feel for the game" of the bilingual English/French field in Canada that leaves little room for Chinese. Oliver, Sophia and Thomas all expressed the importance for their children to learn French, while Mia's son attended a late French immersion program. Although they all realized that French would provide limited local possibilities in Vancouver (especially in comparison to Cantonese or Mandarin) and limited global possibilities within familiar contexts across the Pacific in Asia, they nevertheless embraced the acquisition of French as a choice toward greater social and educational enrichment. For Group 2 parents, it is more feasible to embrace the limited future to which you are constrained than to struggle against constraints for which you have a limited choice.

Recent studies surrounding Chinese migration have emphasized transnational identities that are fluid and hybrid as migrants move across multiple locations (Duff, 2015; Guo & Devoretz, 2014). The Group 2 parents' narratives in this study indeed have

shown their desires for their children to keep ties with their Chinese heritage while they embrace their Canadian identities, embodying both ties. However, for such desires to be connected to two locations is not necessarily *transcending* individuals from the constraints of nation states. The narratives of the Group 2 parents show clearly their desires for their children to learn Chinese. However, these desires were often incompatible with the structural constraints of linguistic hierarchies and how institutions reflect the linguistic fields that endure in Canada. Even as the parents narrated their understanding of the “Canadian-ness” of their children and embraced what they saw as the ideals of multiculturalism and English/French bilingualism, they were also simultaneously expressing a discordance between their own habitus and their attempts to fit their desires into the new fields into which they had migrated themselves and their children. As Waldinger and Fitzgerald (2004) argue, migrants’ networks between multiple locations generate “a multiplicity of imagined communities (Anderson, 1983)” (p. 1178). However, they argue,

On occasion, these imagined communities conform to the root meaning of *transnational*—extending *beyond* loyalties that connect to any specific place of origin or ethnic or national group. Yet, what immigration scholars describe as transnationalism is usually its opposite: highly particularistic attachments antithetical to those by-products of globalization denoted by the concept of “transnational civil society” and its related manifestations (Florini, 2000). (p. 1178)

The Chinese immigrant parents’ commitment to embrace Canadian values, while unwillingly sacrificing their children’s ties to their heritage language should be taken seriously. As I argued in Chapter 2, “Chinese as social other” discourse is still prominent in today’s Metro Vancouver. The underlying assumption of this discourse is that Chinese people are inassimilable, and do not respect Canadian society, whether it be the “monster house” discourse of the 1990s and again recently in the 2010s, the Chinese language signage discourse in Richmond in 2014-2015, or the “foreign” investment and “high housing prices” discourse of 2015-2016. As this dissertation was being completed, the Provincial Government of British Columbia enacted a “Foreign Ownership Property Transfer Tax” of 15% that was widely understood to target Mainland Chinese migrants:

the tax was a response to over a year of newspaper stories delineating the threat of Chinese financial corruption for the local real estate market and the presumed impact of Chinese “foreigners” on raising property prices in Richmond and Vancouver (Lupick, 2016; McMartin, 2016; Todd, 2015a). Waldinger and Fitzgerald’s (2004) warning is that scholars should be careful not to misread what migrants are saying and doing in terms of their particularistic attachments whereas many scholars who extol the novelty of transnationalism and global connections argue that something has fundamentally changed in how global mobility has reshaped local/global connections. Whether in newspaper articles that echo over a century of racialized discourses of belonging and non-belonging with regards to Chinese in Canada or in the ways in which the children of Chinese immigrants growing up in Canada continue to learn to “hate” speaking Chinese, there is more continuity underlying where and when we are now, despite the changes that have occurred.

The embodied power of habitus and field is best revealed not when habitus and field are in concordance (i.e., when we choose to want what we are allowed to have), but when there are contradictions and incoherencies in what we say we want and what we actually get. This study has been primarily about looking at a particular place and moment when narrations of choices and decisions reveal discordances between habitus and field when people’s expressions begin to fracture and buckle because what they desire and feel is made unstable by the unfamiliar or changing ground upon which they find themselves. It is when things don’t seem to make sense that we find a clarifying window for analysis. In a city that has so many residents of Chinese ancestry, why are there seemingly senseless limits and constraints on access to CHL education?

9.6.2 Access to Chinese education

I have argued that bilingual Chinese/English programs, if well designed, could be the solution to overcome the discordance between the regular school field and CHL field (Type 2 discordance). However, although the children of the parents in this study are all Canadians, we have observed how in their local schooling contexts, they have been positioned differently depending on the language they (and their parents) spoke, and therefore had different access to the few bilingual programs (in comparison to Edmonton, for instance) that have been created. Because Group 1 parents were positioned as English

speakers in the application process, and because their children spoke English at home, they were able to learn Mandarin as a “second language” in the early-start bilingual program. On the other hand, Group 2 parents who spoke Chinese predominantly at home were left to teach Chinese to the children either by themselves or at afterschool/weekend CHL schools, where they faced multiple challenges. Isabelle’s daughter and Oliver’s son, who spoke Cantonese at home, attended a Grade 4 start Mandarin program, but they both lamented the limited learning experience offered by the program. In both the early-start bilingual program and Grade 4 start Mandarin program, I have argued that the primary practical problem was that they accepted virtually no Mandarin native speakers in the program. The segregation between English speakers and Mandarin speakers has limited the Mandarin language exposure for the English speakers while simultaneously preventing Mandarin speakers from developing their “heritage” language in a manner where their Chinese language ability is valued rather than denigrated in the regular school field.

9.7 Historical Parallels and Continuity and Change

The trend in sociolinguistics that views increasing diversity as a discontinuity from the “clearly defined and predictable” past (e.g., Blommaert, 2013, p. 4)—as represented in the term *superdiversity* originally coined by a social scientist (Vertovec, 2007) to explore the phenomenon in the United Kingdom—has recently become a valued concept for analyzing nations in Western Europe (Pavlenko, in press). However, as Pavlenko critiques the discourse of superdiversity, immigration patterns today are no more complex and unpredictable than compared to the past, something known as well by historians who immediately dismissed such ahistorical claims for historical disjuncture. Similarly, May (2016) posits that a “presentist” view of diversity and multilingualism is Eurocentric and historically inadequate. Such criticism particularly applies to the context of Canada in understanding the shaping of CHL. For example, the increasing population of ethnic Chinese in British Columbia is a return to the British Columbia before anti-Chinese policy was introduced in the late 19th century. “Chinese made up almost 20 percent of the non-aboriginal population” (Yu, 2009, p. 1016) in 1881 until deliberate policies of Chinese exclusion and legal discrimination suppressed their numbers. The proportion decreased to 10% in 1901, and “it took a full century before that proportion

was reached again” (p. 1026). The dismantling of anti-Chinese policies in the late 20th century seemingly allowed a return to the diversity of an earlier moment in history and the most recent census in 2011 shows the proportion of Chinese at the level of 10% of B.C.’s population (Statistics Canada, 2013). Of course, it is not simply about numbers, and in many senses, Chinese migrants in the 19th century and those today have widely different characteristics, from the languages (dialects) they speak to their educational background and their capacity for social and geographic mobility. The continuing presence of a Chinese Canadian community even after the implementation of Chinese exclusion in 1923, and the long term continuity of the structures of anti-Chinese discourses of non-belonging, however, argue against the radical disjuncture asserted by proponents of the rise of “superdiversity.”

If the appearance of Chinese signage in a small European city seemed to indicate a profound shift in global migration patterns (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011), Chinese language signs in Richmond, a neighbouring city of Vancouver, have become the agitated symbol of dystopic urban change. For residents who seek city ordinances to restrict the “Chinese,” the novelty of Chinese signs seem a harbinger of the end of days. But for centuries, Chinese signage has existed in British Columbia. Just as with the appearance of Chinese signage in European cities, it is often the delusion of novelty that has led to the affects of surprise and shock. In Vancouver, as long as Chinese signs were confined to Chinatown, a quaint and exotic ghetto that was defined as not belonging to the imagined community of Canadian society, it was a nonissue. But as Chinese restaurants and Chinese signage began to be observed on other blocks and in other neighborhoods, something changed in the frameworks of perception. I would argue, however, that it is not the change in numbers per se that has created the shock and surprise, but rather a sense of threat to the continuity of English language dominance.

There is a continuity of English monolingualism that ties these two sites: 19th century Chinatown and 21st century Richmond. As the “increasing” presence of Chinese is talked about as the new reality of Canada, anti-Chinese discourse has shaped much of the sense of the rise of “new problems” such as high housing prices. It is revealing, for instance, that this sense of “high” housing prices as a novel innovation occurs in a city where real estate speculation and the creation of wealth through the continual rise of

housing prices has been one of the primary engines of wealth for European settlers since the first moment that the British Crown unilaterally seized land from indigenous peoples (Lupick, 2016). Who can make money in the real estate market, and who can benefit from owning land, has always been a racialized property in British Columbia, and we must understand English monolingualism as a similar racialized property that reflects the differential possession of linguistic capital that affords more value to some people than others (Harris, 1993). In understanding the sense of threat that Chinese language education produces, we must understand how both the racial hierarchies in the ownership of property and the continuing power of English monolingualism are legacies of an enduring history, not a novel change suddenly thrust upon us by migration. English monolingualism as a foundational property in Canada is the root of the problem for CHL and Chinese language programs in public schools, not the “increasing” presence of Chinese.

When we situate the multiple timescale analyses of the parents’ life stories in the historicity of *longue durée* (Braudel, 1958/2009, p. 174), what can we see? The segregation of Chinese students in the Victoria and Vancouver School Boards in the early 20th century is different from the segregation of native Mandarin speakers from the bilingual programs today in many ways. First of all, in the early 20th century, Chinese students were not allowed to attend English-only public schools with white students, whereas the segregation in question today is about learning Chinese together with English speaking children. Second, the sociopolitical contexts are quite different in that in the early 20th century, Canada openly and explicitly implemented a series of white supremacist policies that undermined indigenous and Asian languages and cultures, whereas today, the nation is committed to a multiculturalism policy that explicitly values all cultures. But when we look at the discourse surrounding Chinese bilingual education today, there is a striking parallel between now and then in the underlying desirability that Chinese should primarily learn and speak English. Indeed, in the early 20th century, if Chinese students spoke English very well, they were “‘promoted’ to classes with ‘white’ students” after “being carefully tested” because the principal thought they were then almost like the white students (Stanley, 2011, p. 226).

It is not a coincidence that in today's Canadian classrooms, "Native English speakers" enjoy the unmarked norm (Duff, 2002); rather, it is the continuity of a colonial structure in which non-white Canadians get promoted to the unmarked English speakers' norm. Chinese Canadian parents were able to enrol their children in the Vancouver bilingual program as a result of their acquisition of English speakers' habitus. This can be understood as part of the long historical continuity of "promoting" those marked as Chinese to "almost" white Canadians. Is the present moment within which Group 1 parents live also the future for the children of Group 2 parents two decades in the future? Thomas's account is telling:

[My children] think they are Canadian, and English is their language, Chinese is always a burden to them. . . . I think as a taxpayer, or you know people for the kids they were born here, they live nothing different from those Western boys or girls, they should have the same opportunity. (Thomas)

While Thomas's children did not have the opportunity to learn Chinese within the regular school system, their children (Thomas's grandchildren) will as a result of being successfully promoted into the status of English-only speakers. Ironically, what Thomas calls "Western boys and girls" will be the future for his children if nothing is going to be changed. Cummins et al. (2005) posit that Canada (as well as the U.S.) has produced a paradoxical contradiction in language education: "the bizarre scenario of schools successfully transforming fluent speakers of foreign languages into monolingual English speakers, at the same time as they struggle, largely unsuccessfully, to transform English monolingual students into foreign language speakers" (p. 586). In reality, many students are probably not entirely monolingual but speakers of varying levels of heritage languages who will be described by researchers as negotiating their "hybrid" and "multiple" identities through their limited multilingual repertoire. But that is the result of the "bizarre scenario" of favouring English monolingualism over encouraging the development of heritage languages, and we must not be deluded by putting too much emphasis on the seeming fluidity and agency of hybridity. Jack and Lily's stories showed that even as they completed the "bizarre scenario," and became the unmarked native speakers of English, they still suffered from the embodiment of the marking of being the

social other. They were promoted to “almost white,” but in feeling that they did not fully belong in Canada, they had to look for other identity options.

Manufacturing English into the unmarked norm of Canada was deeply tied with white supremacist discourse and policies from the late 19th century to mid 20th century. As long as the unmarkedness of English today is (mis)recognized as natural and neutral, I would argue that the markedness of Chinese as social other will still remain. How individuals perceive somebody as social other, and how individuals feel they are positioned as social other, are both the long-term products of the inculcation of social structure, and in particular racialized norms in individual bodies (Bourdieu, 1990a). The concept of habitus explains why, despite so much change in policy and in the socioeconomic contexts of Chinese in Canada, the embodiment of otherness persists. Fortunately, however, it also shows how things could change. When the discordance between habitus and field is most acute, the possibility arises of an awareness that one’s habitus is no longer viable. Rather than adjusting one’s habitus, as so many of the parents have done, can we change the field?

9.8 Implications

This study calls for active discussions among policy makers, school administrators, teachers and researchers for structural change in Chinese language education in Metro Vancouver. This study also shows the historical challenges of situating weekend/afterschool CHL schools as the most accessible Chinese learning options for CHL learners. While CHL schools and researchers can work together to improve pedagogies and textbooks to eliminate type 1 discordance (i.e., the gap between the students’ habitus and the expected habitus at CHL schools), I would call for serious consideration to overcome type 2 discordance (i.e., the gap between the feel for the game in the regular school field and attending CHL schools) and stop reproducing CHL learners as the social other. One way of doing this is to overcome the CHL learners—non-CHL learners dichotomy, and integrate CHL learning into the regular school field. Australia has been implementing this integration model while maintaining weekend/afterschool heritage language schools as an extra community resource since 1991 (Chen & Zhang, 2014). Similar to Vancouver, there has been an issue of discrepancy between Chinese background speakers and non-Chinese background speakers especially in the

highest levels of coursework (Orton, 2010), but researchers, teachers and the Board of Studies have striven to overcome the problem, and have streamlined the program from K to G12 to accommodate students from all ethnolinguistic backgrounds (see Chen & Zhang, 2014). While the gap between the curriculum design and available teaching resources has been an issue to overcome, the integrated model from K-12 is one large step forward from what British Columbia has offered. Given that Australia and Canada have a very similar history regarding the white supremacist policies and Chinese migration (Yu, 2009), it should not be impossible to implement similar program designs in British Columbia.⁶⁰

Another way of integrating CHL education into mainstream education is to include children from all backgrounds in the early-start bilingual program, similar to the bilingual program in Edmonton. While Coquitlam school boards have been including students from all backgrounds (including those from Chinese-speaking households), one school in the entire province is not sufficient. Since Edmonton has had over a dozen such bilingual programs for the last 25 years, it remains puzzling (despite the analytical explanations given in this study) why bilingual programs in Metro Vancouver cannot similarly include children from all linguistic backgrounds or increase the number of programs.

Finally, the two-way Chinese immersion program that has been implemented in the U.S. has proven its effectiveness in integrating students from both Chinese and English speaking backgrounds (Lindholm-Leary, 2011). Two-way immersion program is different from the Edmonton model discussed above in which students' first language is not taken into account. In contrast, two-way immersion program equalizes the population of each language group (i.e., English and Chinese). There have been two-way immersion programs in both Mandarin-English and Cantonese-English in San Francisco, despite the initiatives to replace bilingual education with English only instruction such as Proposition 227 in 1998 and No Child Left Behind legislation in 2001 (Jorae, 2009). Similar to Australia, San Francisco also shares a parallel history with British Columbia regarding

⁶⁰ When I lived in Australia in the early 1980s, the White Australia Policy had only recently been abolished in 1978. While I have many fond memories of living there, I have no doubt that my “double consciousness,” to use W.E.B. Du Bois’ (1903/2007) term, was inculcated during those years as a child.

the long history of transpacific Chinese migration and the implementation of anti-Asian policies. As the University of British Columbia began to offer in 2015 the first accredited Cantonese course in any Canadian university, there is no better timing to start a discussion about teaching Cantonese in K-12. No matter which options we take, there will be criticism, just as I outlined in Chapter 2, from people who will dismiss and denigrate the teaching of Chinese, in particular to children from a Chinese background. But without changing the field, the habitus of positioning Chinese as social other will not change (Reay, 2004).

As Duff (2014) posits, there are commonalities between non-CHL learners and CHL learners in many respects regarding the challenges and dilemma they face in learning Chinese (e.g., maintaining literacy skills, choosing traditional or simplified Chinese) as well as their desire to be positioned as legitimate speakers of Chinese while negotiating their cosmopolitan and transnational identities. This is where the rhetorical adoption of a multi/plurilinguistic turn can become useful for situating students not in a CHL/non-CHL dichotomy but understanding the commonalities among all multiple language learners. An inclusive model that allows learning Chinese as well as learning *in* Chinese for everybody in the regular school system could and should become available in British Columbia. It is crucial that teachers, school boards, community support groups and researchers all work together in creating a cohesive program, utilizing the existing examples of successful programs that have been implemented elsewhere.

Meanwhile, within the existing system of English-only schooling, researchers and educators can work together to transform the educational field through classroom practices that question the unmarkedness of native English speakers (e.g., Cummins, 2005; New London Group, 2000; Meredith, 2014). It is necessary that learning Chinese and other heritage languages in Canada becomes an asset that is appreciated in the regular schooling field, and attending heritage language schools becomes a practice that matches “the feel for the game” (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 66) that children quickly learn to intuit and embody. It is time we learn from the stories within this study of parents’ memories of language lost and learned, and move on from the debilitations we inflict on children who have the privilege of being born into multilingual households. Rather than demeaning and denigrating the use of non-English languages as a handicap, we should be embracing and

developing the multilingual potential of all our children. But we have a long way to go.

As a final note, I will end this doctoral dissertation with an anecdote. My five-year-old daughter began attending kindergarten a month after I completed the draft of this dissertation. Born in the fall of 2011 just as I completed my comprehensive exams, her growth in language learning as a child has paralleled and provoked my research on parents' perspectives regarding language learning in Vancouver. She has been a touchstone and inspiration for the importance of understanding the social structures that shape both her as a child and me as a parent here in Vancouver and a reminder at every moment that the theories and analyses that I read and write are not mere abstractions but grounded in the daily reality of innumerable children and parents who live within the same situation as she and I. I was thrilled that she was one of the lottery winners given the privilege of attending one of the best and most sought after public elementary schools in all of Vancouver, a school that has a heterogeneous mix of children from parents who hail from all over the world. As I walked within the beautiful brightly lit walls of the newly constructed school, admiring the modern elegance of the structure, I saw a sign written with clear and authoritative text with a picture of a Canadian flag, a message from the school administration to all of the children within its halls: "At XXXXX (name of the school), we speak English."

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Appendix

FAQ in “Mandarin For BC Schools” Website

1. What are the subjects to be taught in Mandarin?

In Edmonton's example; Math, Phys Ed, Language Arts could be taught in Mandarin, History, Social Studies, Geography could be taught in English. In a BILINGUAL program, 50% of the subject matter is taught in the target language and the remaining in English. This ensures that students attain and maintain a high level command of English as well as the target language.

2. Are the Edmonton schools happy and willing to share their curriculum materials?

Yes!! Both the school board and the Edmonton Chinese Bilingual Education Association generously offered to help us get our program off the ground.

3. Does this program need to be approved at the provincial level or just at the school board level?

This program needs to be approved at each individual school district level. So, the Vancouver program will need Vancouver School Board (VSB) approval and North Van program will need the North Van School District (NVSD) approval.

4. What are the class sizes?

As per the BC rules, Kindergarten max is 22 kids, and Grade 1 max is 24 kids.

5. How many Edmonton schools offer the Mandarin Bilingual program?

12 in total (5 elementary, 4 middle, 3 high schools), with 2,000 students enrolled out of a total of 80,000 students in Edmonton.

6. Would banding together with other school districts help to show support?

Absolutely! And it is more efficient too – why not work together towards our common goal? Vancouver + Burnaby + North Shore would make up a majority of the population in BC.

7. How do you “measure” interest in starting this program?

Acid test: How many parents would sign their children up for this program! If we can get 2 classes going (K & 1) we think that would be enough to get the program up and running! We do not know which school the program will be launched at.

8. Assuming the school is not in the same area as where I live, how will get my child to school?

We intend to work out a transportation plan (ie school bus service) that may or may not be subsidized.

9. Will this cost me any money? How will the School Board pay for such programs?

The answer about funding for such programs would be best answered by the local school board as each district has its unique budget and spending priorities. Ordinarily, programs are all funded by the global school board budget. Remember that our children will be taught by teachers regardless of what program they are in and teachers will teach whatever children are in the system. Therefore, other than startup costs (for initial resources for such a program), the costs should be within the existing school budget. Because this would be a public school program, parents would not be expected to pay out of pocket for their child to attend. Of course, there may

be limited enrollment (and therefore spaces), but cost to the student to attend should not be an issue. As in any public school program, parents are free to do their own fund-raising to purchase resources that would benefit their children's learning.

10. What about French? Wouldn't this take away from French learning programs?

Remember that we are trying to increase CHOICE for our students within the public school system. Currently, there is only French immersion (based on lottery selection due to high demand). If there were more programs of choice, school boards would not have to resort to lotteries to determine student entry. Also, students would have more diverse educational opportunities. In fact, our children could conceivably become tri-lingual as French is introduced as another language of learning as is done at the Grade 3 level in the Edmonton Mandarin bilingual program. Wouldn't that be a fantastic gift of language for them?

11. Why not just have these people who are interested in learning Mandarin just go to heritage language schools?

Heritage language schools are suitable for children who already have oral fluency in the language and they focus on literacy i.e. writing skills. It is assumed that children speak Chinese in the home and thus conversational/spoken skills are not taught in heritage language skills (or minimally done). Hence, heritage language schools are not suitable for English-speaking households. One cannot hope to acquire oral fluency attending a heritage language school once a week. The analogy would be trying to learn English by attending a Saturday morning class to learn your abc's, learn to read a few words and the rest of the week being immersed in a Chinese environment. Although one might eventually read a bit of English, oral fluency would certainly be limited.

The purpose of this Mandarin bilingual program is to give interested students from English-speaking backgrounds to gain language proficiency in an opportunity that they would not otherwise have.

12. What if the program is overwhelmed with applications from students with Mandarin speaking backgrounds?

The reality is that this program would most appeal to students from English-speaking backgrounds. Students from Mandarin-speaking backgrounds would most likely be seeking enrollment in English kindergarten/Grade 1 to increase their English fluency. This is proven by the fact that most French immersion students come from English speaking backgrounds. In the future, if space and staffing permits, students with Chinese-speaking backgrounds could enter the program at various feeder points depending on their abilities (to be assessed by teachers).

Source retrieved on November 25, 2009, from <http://www.FAQMandarinForBCSchools.org>