

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: HERITAGE LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE  
AND BILITERACY DEVELOPMENT FOR  
IMMIGRANTS' CHILDREN: A STUDY OF  
CHINESE IMMIGRANTS' FAMILY  
LANGUAGE POLICY AND BILITERACY  
PRACTICES

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This study reports on research that examines the family language policy (FLP) and biliteracy practices of middle-class Chinese immigrant families in a metropolitan area in the southwest of the U.S. by exploring language practices pattern among family members, language and literacy environment at home, parents' language management, parents' language attitudes and ideologies, and biliteracy practices. In this study, I employed mixed methods, including survey and interviews, to investigate Chinese immigrant parents' FLP, biliteracy practices, their life stories, and their experience of raising and nurturing children in an English-dominant society. Survey questionnaires were distributed to 55 Chinese immigrant parents and interviews were conducted with five families, including mothers and children. One finding from this study is that the language practices pattern at home shows the trend of language shift among the Chinese

immigrants' children. Children prefer speaking English with parents, siblings, and peers, and home literacy environment for children manifests an English-dominant trend. Chinese immigrant parents' language attitudes and ideologies are largely influenced by English-only ideology. The priority for learning English surpasses the importance of Chinese learning, which is demonstrated by the English-dominant home literacy practices and an English-dominant language policy. Parents invest more in English literacy activities and materials for children, and very few parents implement Chinese-only policy for their children. A second finding from this study is that a multitude of factors from different sources shape and influence Chinese immigrants' FLP and biliteracy practices. The factors consist of family-related factors, social factors, linguistic factors, and individual factors. A third finding from this study is that a wide variety of strategies are adopted by Chinese immigrant families, which have raised quite balanced bilingual children, to help children maintain Chinese heritage language (HL) and develop both English and Chinese literacy. The close examination and comparison of different families with English monolingual children, with children who have limited knowledge of HL, and with quite balanced bilingual children, this study discovers that immigrant parents, especially mothers, play a fundamental and irreplaceable role in their children's HL maintenance and biliteracy development and it recommends to immigrant parents in how to implement the findings of this study to nurture their children to become bilingual and biliterate. Due to the limited number and restricted area and group of participant sampling, the results of this study may not be generalized to other groups in different contexts.

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## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my parents, especially to my father, who passed away during my pursuit of the doctoral study. I believe he must have witnessed and blessed my life and study in heaven, and I believe he must be very proud of my achievements.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Brief Introduction and Overview**

#### Motivation for the Study

The motivation of the study comes from my experiences living in the United States. I have had opportunities to know many of the local Chinese immigrants' families through attending the church and Chinese families' gatherings since I first came to the U.S. in 2007 as a graduate student. According to my observations, the children of these Chinese immigrants' families, no matter at what age, from preschoolers to college students, usually spoke English among themselves and they seldom spoke Chinese to their parents or to other Chinese-speaking people. They usually attended English-speaking fellowships and socialized more in the English-speaking circle. I, from time to time, also heard the parents complain about their children's poor Chinese and unwillingness to speak Chinese with them. One of the parents complained in Chinese, "I once asked my son to speak only Chinese with me, but it turned out that he kept silent all the time and did not even say a word!" This phenomenon was really counterintuitive because it was so natural to speak Chinese with the parents if a child grew up in a Chinese-speaking family. It was clear that parents' Chinese language ability or willingness to speak Chinese was not transmitted to their children automatically.

I paid special attention to Chinese immigrants' children and became more interested in Chinese immigrants' families and their children later because I got pregnant with my first baby boy and settled down in the U.S. in 2010 when I started my doctoral study. I had a chance to observe children and parents in a Chinese weekend school located in the university where I studied. It was amazing and impressive to see hundreds of Chinese parents sending their children

to learn Chinese every weekend. What surprised me the most was hearing many of these children still speaking English with the teacher, with parents, and among themselves. What's more perplexing was that even some of the parents spoke English to their children right outside of the Chinese classroom. Again, it was so counterintuitive because the children were learning Chinese. Shouldn't Chinese be the language spoken between them and the teacher, the parents and among themselves? It was clear that just attending Chinese weekend school didn't guarantee Chinese HL maintenance and development.

Quoting He's (2008) words, this dissertation is motivated by the matters of heart. I kept wondering why it is so difficult to speak and maintain Chinese for these children since they all have parents who are Chinese native speakers, and what parents can do to help their children preserve Chinese language and what parents can do to help the children develop bilingual and even biliterate ability in this English-dominant country. As a Chinese immigrant parent myself, I decided to look into this phenomenon further simply because I wish my two sons (the older one is five year old and the younger one is seven months now) can grow up not only with speaking fluent Chinese but also with reading and writing in Chinese. I can communicate with them deeply in Chinese, and meanwhile they can enjoy reading Chinese books and literature. I take pride in being Chinese and in China's long history and culture. I believe that being able to read and write in Chinese will provide my children with access to a rich history and culture of five-thousand years and help them better understand their roots. I simply do not want to be one of the complaining parents I mentioned above. I wonder what I can do to help my children not only preserve Chinese language but also develop Chinese literacy in this English-dominant country. As a language researcher and educator, I am deeply concerned with Chinese HL maintenance and English-Chinese biliteracy development for Chinese immigrants' children. I hope that my



experience and my research can help Chinese immigrant parents make an informed decision when they have concerns about their children's language development, and ultimately help them raise bilingual and biliterate children.

### Overview of the study

With the increasing number of Chinese-origin immigrants in the U.S. and the increasing importance of Chinese language in the global stage, maintaining Chinese HL has received more attention from both HL researchers and Chinese-origin immigrant parents. The purpose of this study is to examine four aspects in Chinese immigrants' families: (1) language practices among family members, (2) language management, and (3) parental language attitudes and ideologies, as well as (4) biliteracy practices. Spolsky (2004) proposed a conceptual framework of family language policy (FLP), which includes the first three aspects, that is, language practices, language management, and language attitudes and ideologies. I will discuss the conceptual framework in more details in Chapter 3. To be more specific, this study investigates the patterns of language use and language environment in Chinese immigrants' families, Chinese immigrant parents' language beliefs and attitudes, and Chinese families' language management on Chinese-English bilingual development as well as the parents' biliteracy practices for their children. This study also explores possible factors which may influence Chinese immigrant FLP and biliteracy practices. Meanwhile, it also discusses how HL maintenance and biliteracy development may be influenced by FLP and biliteracy practices at home milieu.

This study was conducted in a large metropolitan area in the southwest of the U.S. The major research sites were a local Chinese church and a Chinese weekend school. Surveys were distributed in person to the major caregiver, either the father or mother, in a Chinese immigrants'

family. Interviews were conducted with five focal families, including five mothers and the children.

This study was designed to investigate three overarching research questions:

1. What is Chinese immigrant parents' family language policy (FLP) and biliteracy practices?
  - 1.1. What are language practices among family members and what is language environment in Chinese immigrant families?
  - 1.2. What are Chinese immigrant parents' language attitudes and ideologies of importance to Chinese and English, bilingual and biliteracy development?
  - 1.3. What language management practices are utilized by Chinese immigrant parents?
  - 1.4. What biliteracy practices are employed in Chinese immigrant families?
2. What factors may influence Chinese immigrant parents' FLP and biliteracy practices?
  - 2.1. What factors may influence Chinese immigrant parents' family language practices?
  - 2.2. What factors may influence Chinese immigrant parents' family language management and parental language attitudes and ideologies?
  - 2.3. What factors may influence Chinese immigrant parents' biliteracy practices?
3. What strategies are utilized by Chinese immigrant families to help children maintain Chinese heritage language as well as develop English-Chinese biliteracy?

#### Significance of the Study

This study is the first one which employs both surveys and interviews to examine Chinese immigrants' FLP and biliteracy practices. Thus, the findings of this study will provide a detailed picture of family language practices, language management practices, and literacy practices which occur in Chinese immigrant families as well as parental language attitudes and

ideologies. Furthermore, various complex factors which influence the FLP and biliteracy practices will be discussed. It also investigates how FLP and biliteracy practices may influence HL maintenance and biliteracy development. This study will provide valuable information regarding how HL is maintained and how being bilingual and biliterate is developed. Understanding language use, language management, parental language attitudes and ideologies, and biliteracy practices at immigrant children's homes are crucial for HL researchers and language educators because home environment lays a foundation for HL and biliteracy development. School teachers, including mainstream teachers and HL weekend school teachers, often do not have the knowledge base about the children's culturally specific ways of learning outside of school. It is also critical for immigrant parents themselves to be aware of their language attitudes and practices at home and realize the importance of their role in supporting HL maintenance and biliteracy development. Implications drawn from this study would raise immigrant parents' awareness of their crucial role on HL maintenance and biliteracy development and help immigrant parents make informed decision on FLP so that the HL can be successfully transmitted to immigrants' children and biliteracy can be developed, considering complex factors which may influence immigrants' FLP and biliteracy practices in immigrants' families. In addition, this study intends to provide literacy practices and strategies which parents can utilize for helping children develop bilingual and biliterate ability. Language teachers in the public schools and HL weekend school will have a better understanding of the home language and literacy environment and activities in immigrant families and better help the immigrants' children develop biliteracy.

Since HL maintenance and biliteracy development is a relatively less explored area of research, and FLP and biliteracy practices in immigrants' families have kept largely unknown.

This study will add an additional piece of the puzzle in the field of HL maintenance and biliteracy development from the perspective of FLP, and it will contribute to the development of a theory of HL maintenance and biliteracy development.

### Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations in this study:

The participants, Chinese immigrants' families, in this study are not representative of all the Chinese immigrants' families in the U.S. in two aspects. Firstly, the metropolitan area in the southwest where the study was conducted is not a typical urban enter, where Chinese immigrants are densely populated, such as New York City, San Francisco, or Los Angeles. Therefore, the characteristics of Chinese immigrants in this study, which will be discussed more in Chapter 3, might not be representative of all the Chinese immigrants in the U.S., and thus the results and findings of this study might not be applied to the Chinese immigrant families which live in the areas with dense Chinese immigrant population. Nevertheless, it can shed light on the Chinese immigrants' families in the areas with smaller Chinese populations.

Secondly, this study focuses solely on one group of Chinese immigrants who are highly educated and considered middle class in the U.S., and attend local church on a regular basis. Thus, the Chinese immigrants in this study are not representative of other Chinese immigrants with lower education and social class, or those who do not regularly attend church, but the findings inform our growing understanding of similar situated Chinese immigrants.

### Definition of Key Terms

In consideration of the need for precision and clarifying the understanding of the terms, this section introduces definitions of key terms and how they are used in this dissertation.

*Heritage Language:* Fishman (2001, p. 81) defined heritage language (HL) as “those that are LOTEs (languages other than English) and that have a particular family relevance to the learners.” Polinsky and Kagan (2007) proposed a broad and a narrow definition of heritage language. A broadly defined HL is part of one’s family and cultural heritage, the language may not be spoken at home, and one has no functional proficiency in the language and would most likely have to study that language as a second language (L2) learner. A typical example is someone whose family immigrated to the U.S. in the 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a third or fourth generation born in the country, he/she may have an “ethnic” or cultural interest in the language but no ability to speak or comprehend it. A narrowly defined HL “was first in the order of acquisition but was not completely acquired because of individual’s shift to another dominant language” (p.369). In this dissertation, the narrowly defined HL is adopted. HL in this dissertation mainly refer to immigrants’ first language. HL may be alternatively used with first language (L1), home language, family language, or minority language in this dissertation.

*Heritage Language Speakers:* According to Valdés (2001), a heritage language speaker in the U.S. context is an individual “who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or merely understands the heritage language, and who is to some degree bilingual in English and the heritage language” (p. 38). In the literature review in Chapter 2, the HL speakers mostly refer to the school-aged children from Asian/Chinese immigrant families, and two studies involve college-aged HL speakers. In current study, HL speakers refer to Chinese HL speakers who are the second generation children of Chinese-origin immigrants.

*Chinese Heritage Language Learners:* Due to the fact that Chinese-origin immigrant families come from different places of China and dialects or languages other than Mandarin may be spoken at home, children in these families may be exposed to dialects spoken by parents or

grandparents primarily or exposed to both dialects and Mandarin at home. Wong and Xiao (2010) state that “current studies on Chinese heritage language usually take an all-inclusive approach with broad definition, considering both Mandarin and dialect speakers as Chinese heritage learners” (p. 153). According to Wiley (2014), “many ethnic Chinese are speakers of Chinese “dialects” or languages in addition to Mandarin. For Chinese immigrant families whose home language is not Mandarin in the U.S. may wish to enroll their children in Chinese heritage schools even though Mandarin is not their home language. In such cases, Mandarin may function as a “surrogate” heritage language, which can connect ethnic Chinese children with Chinese culture” (p. 22). Furthermore, Wiley argues that it is problematic to assume that immigrants’ children have a single heritage language and may reflect a monolingual bias that assumes that everyone has only one “mother tongue” since much of the world’s population is multilingual. In my study, Chinese heritage language learners refer to Chinese origin immigrant families’ children whose home language is either Mandarin or dialect, or who have been exposed to both Mandarin and dialect at home. Therefore, either Mandarin or dialect is their heritage language, or both Mandarin and dialect are their heritage languages for Chinese HL learners in my study.

*Literacy*: in 1980s, literacy is referred to the activities and skills associated directly with the use of print: reading and writing, and any other derivative activities (Snow, 1983). Its definition was expanded in late 1990s to refer to the social practice of meaning construction from text with distinct characteristics among different groups (August & Hakuta, 1997). Literacy is more than being able to read and write. It is the ability to use these skills in socially appropriate situations. Psychologist Lev Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory discusses how language and social interaction are involved in the process of human development and learning shapes our understanding of literacy development, which is the multifaceted act of constructing meaning,

such as cultural, linguistic, and text schemata from printed text within a sociocultural context. According to Curdt-Christiansen (2009), from the perspective of home literacy researchers who tend to focus on micro issues such as home literacy environment and how various forms of family capital, including physical, human and social capitals, can be transformed into educational attainment of children (Coleman 1988; Li 2007), literacy is viewed as a language socialization process and a social practice involving not only the ability to decode and encode printed texts, but also the ideologically shaped ways of reading and writing that reflect values, beliefs, attitudes, culture and individuals' life worlds (Street 2001; Gee 2005). In case of immigrants' children who are exposed to both family languages at home and societal language in school, they may be able to develop multiliteracy. Recent research has evidenced that influence on children's multiliteracy development goes far beyond the school context (Gregory 1997; Heath 1983; Taylor and Dorsey- Gaines 1988; Gregory and Kenner 2003). Families and communities as resources and funds of knowledge (Moll 1992) can contribute greatly to children's multilingual and multiliterate development.

*Latent literacy:* According to Tse (2001), latent literacy "is any literacy ability that goes unused, but it serves as the basis for further literacy development at some later time... This latent literacy serves as a foundation upon which the HL speakers can build later in their life" (p. 693). Latent literacy is developed early in life (childhood) and thus important for further literacy development.

*Biliteracy:* Baker (1996) has pointed out that identifying who is bilingual or biliterate requires setting arbitrary standards. Expecting identical ability in two or more languages is generally considered an idealized notion of bilingualism, and researchers generally opt for more realistic definitions. Hornberger (1990) refers biliteracy as "any and all instances in which

communication occurs in two (or more) languages in or around written material without prescribing any required proficiency levels as a qualification” (p. 213). According to Hornberger and Skilton-Sylvester (2000), biliteracy can be represented as a continuum. At one end of the continuum is the idealized educated bilingual, fully literate in both languages, while at other end are bilinguals whose use of the spoken language is restricted to the home and who have no knowledge of the written language. In this dissertation, the biliteracy refers to dual-literacy of Chinese HL and English.

*Home Literacy Environment (HLE)*: According to Zhang and Koda (2011), it is a packed term with a set of factors that are related to children’s literacy experience at home. The factors consist of parents’ education level, socioeconomic status (SES), number of books, parents’ reading behaviors, parent-child shared reading, home media, and child independent reading. For HL children, home literacy environment may include parents’ attitude toward HL and English, parents’ language use with the children and literacy practices and experiences at home.

*Language/Ethnolinguistic Vitality*: Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977) proposed a framework to refer the vitality of an ethnolinguistic group to reflect the degree to which a group is “likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations” (p. 306). According to Tse (2001), it refers to the status and prestige of a language as seen from an individual’s perspective as shaped by a host of social, political, cultural, and psychological influences. For HL speakers, language vitality of a HL can vary. HL speakers who perceive the HL as high levels of vitality tend to maintain the HL. In Tse’s (2001) study, language vitality factors include HL peer group, institutional support, and home support. In Li’s (2006) study, she uses the term “ethnolinguistic vitality” instead of “language vitality”.



*Language Ideology*: It has been defined by van Dijk (1998) as the “shared frameworks of social beliefs that organize and coordinate the social interpretations and practices of groups and their member” (p. 8) It is the subconscious beliefs and assumptions about the social utility of a particular language in a given society that reflect values and patterns rooted in a society’s linguistic culture (Schiffman, 2006). Tollefson (2000) defined it as “a shared body of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world, including cultural assumptions about language, the nature and purpose of communication” (p. 43). Curdt-Christiansen (2009) argued that language ideologies were often seen as the driving force and major component of language policy as language ideologies are based on the perceived value, power and utility of various languages, and she further argued that the process of realizing any language policy entailed closer analysis of ideology formation and the sources of ideology formation since language ideology reflects the sociopolitical and economic interests of the policy makers (e.g., parents in terms of family language policy). More specifically, language ideology is embodied by language attitudes. Ruiz (1984) presents a typology for understanding language attitudes in any given society: language as a problem, language as a right, and language as a resource. Different language attitudes are also rooted in different underlying language ideologies, cultural goals, and social goals (Hornberger, 1991).

## Chapter 2

### Background of the Study and Literature Review

#### *The Significance of Maintaining Heritage Languages in the U.S.*

People compare the United States as a “melting pot” or a “salad bowl” for immigrants. According to 2008-2012 American Community Survey (ACS), there are currently four major language groups in the U.S., including Spanish or Spanish creole, Indo-European languages, Asian and Pacific Island languages, and all other languages, with about 381 languages being spoken, and more than 59 million people, including 12 million children ages five to seventeen, speak other languages than English at home according to the 2008-2012 ACS 5-year estimate. Although many languages are spoken at home in the U.S., the 2008-2012 ACS demonstrates that 79.5% of the population speak only English and 20.5% of the population speak a language other than English, with 91.3% speaking English “very well” and 8.7% speaking English less than “very well”. It has been shown consistently that language shift is much more common than language maintenance among immigrants’ children in the U.S. (Hakuta & D’Andrea, 1992; Li, 1994; Portes & Hao, 1998; Shin, 2005; Wong Fillmore, 1991; Zhang, 2008). According to Fishman (1966, 1991, 2001), language shift from native languages to English usually occurs over three generations: The first generation learns the dominant language while continuing to actively use their native language at home; the second generation usually learns English fast and reach high proficiency level while speaking relatively limited home language; the third generation speaks English in all domains while having very limited or no knowledge of their native language. MacSwan (2000) refers language shift to a process that involves a generational switch in language use. A family or community begins life as monolingual speakers of a minority

language, then some members become bilingual over the course of time, generally in the second or third generation. MacSwan argued that there was situations where use of the minority language was highly stigmatized, some members might deny knowledge of their heritage language, “or found it progressively less useful in the larger society as most topics in daily life become more familiar with the socially dominant language” (p. 27). Language shift not only occurs over generations but also within a lifetime. Second-generation children probably start to diminish the use of their home language and increase the use of English in the early childhood and as early as preschool (Wong Fillmore, 1991). Once they enter the school, their use of English increases and eventually displace and replace their home language completely (Hakuta & D’Andrea, 1992). According to MacSwan (2000), language shift occurs across generations and language loss may occur individually. However, it is essential to differentiate language loss with a change in language choice or a loss of language proficiency. MacSwan argues that language loss may occur at the individual level in some very young children of immigrants, apparently limited to children in the preschool years who are still in the process of developing their native language (minority language) and meanwhile acquiring another native language (majority language). Wiley (2005) argues that this process of language shift has accelerated and has reduced to two generations in the U.S. due to the English-only movement and more high-stake tests are taking place in the public schools in recent years. This phenomenon has also been documented by other researchers (Wong Fillmore, 1991; Hinton, 1999; Portes & Hao, 1998; Zhang, 2008). We assume that when children acquire a second language, they add it to their first language, so the outcome will be bilingualism. However, Tse (2001) demonstrates that few second generation immigrants can be described as bilingual/biliterate under the broad view proposed by Hornberger (1990) that “any and all instances in which communication occurs in

two (or more) languages in or around written material, without prescribing any required proficiency levels as a qualification” (p. 213).

As early as 1951, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) acknowledged the importance of maintaining one’s native language and considered it as a basic human right, and in the summary of the report of the UNESCO Meeting of specialists, it states that the mother tongue is a person’s natural means of self-expression, and one of his/her first needs is to develop his/her power of self-expression to the full. Similarly, in 1996, the federally-funded National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project in the paper-- Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century states:

Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience.

The United States must educate students who are equipped linguistically and culturally to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad. This imperative envisions a future in which ALL students will develop and maintain proficiency in English and at least one other language, modern or classical. Children who come to school from non-English-speaking backgrounds should also have opportunities to develop further proficiencies in their first language. (p. 7)

Not only is maintaining and developing one’s native language a basic human right for immigrants in the U.S., but also does it involve the nation’s current and future competitiveness in the world. In their position paper presented in National Council of State Supervisor of Foreign Languages (NCSSFL), Wang and Garcia (2002) argue:

If the United States is to remain a world leader, it must develop for its citizens the

opportunity to learn to communicate adequately in many tongues and in the context of many cultures. It must provide for orderly development of native or ancestral languages as well as a choice of other languages for all its people. It is understood, however, that development of the official language of the nation English is important to all citizens. (p. 1)

Therefore, it is necessary and significant to build on the existing language resources from the perspective of human rights as well as from the perspective of national competitiveness. Many researchers and educators in the U.S. have realized the crucial importance of maintaining the HL and developing bilingualism, and different scholars and researchers address this issue from the different aspects. Focusing on the national self-interests, Brecht and Ingold (2002) and Wang and Garcia (2002) promote the importance of HL and propose that HL should be regarded as valuable resources and assets for the individual, the community, and the nation. Focusing on the issue of being bilingual, researchers have demonstrated the benefits of being bilingual from cognitive, psychological, and sociocultural perspectives (Hakuta & Diaz, 1985; Krashen, 1998). Other researchers focus on the immigrants' children and the significance of maintaining and developing HLs for them. Children who are more motivated to learn their HLs tend to have more positive outlook on their ethnic identity (Tse, 2000), better academic achievement (Lee, 2002), better social interactions and relationship with HL peers and more personal gains (Cho, 2000). A number of scholars have also long contended that loss of HL would lead to a series of consequences, including inter-generational conflict (Krashen, 1998; Qin, 2006; Wong Fillmore, 1991), increasing separation with HL community (Krashen, 1998; Wong Fillmore, 1991), and identity crisis (Tse, 2000).

### *Factors Causing Language Shift*

Given the fact that HL is valuable and beneficial, one would wonder why language shift ever happens and why the process of language shift is actually accelerating. Broadly speaking, Wong Fillmore (2000) argues that language ideology significantly influences the societal language attitudes and language attitudes contribute to language acquisition and language use. The dominant language ideology in current U.S. society is “language as a problem” (Ruiz, 1984). Language policies, such as English-only movement, the passage of Proposition 227 in California, Proposition 203 in Arizona, along with the passage of Massachusetts, which has largely eliminated bilingual education and minority language instruction from the public schools, have shown hostility toward immigrants’ languages and a great pressure for children to assimilate English. Furthermore, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 leaves little space for HL development other than English and negatively affects the HL maintenance (Kondo, 2006). More specifically, there are various micro-level factors which influence HL maintenance and development. Among them, researchers have found common and crucial factors— parental language attitudes and home literacy environment (Kondo, 1998; Li, 2006; Luo & Wiseman, 2000; Mills, 2001). Wong Fillmore (2000) pinpointed the crucial role of the family can play in providing the basic elements for successfully educating immigrant children, including “a sense of belonging; knowledge of who one is and where one comes from; an understanding of how one is connected to the important others and events in one’s life; the ability to deal with adversity; and knowing one’s responsibility to self, family, community” (p. 206). Moreover, home literacy environment, which consists of the amount of reading materials in the home, the frequency of library visits, adult literacy-related behaviors, adult-child reading and television viewing, has a unique contribution to early literacy development (Griffin & Morrison, 1997). Some researchers

have proposed that the lack of exposure to HL and literacy may lead to language shift. Tse (2001) finds out that second-generation children with biliteracy of HL and English are very rare in the U.S., as McQuillan (1996) argues, “literacy seems to be one of the principal casualties of language shift” (p. 34). Therefore, a crucial question arises for the immigrant parents and language educators: How can we raise and nurture a bilingual and even biliterate child in an English-dominant country?

To answer this question, researchers provided their suggestions and insights. Fishman (1991) argues that home should be a protected domain for minority language and minority language should be actively used in the home and community domains. He emphasizes that “it is in the family that peculiar bond with language and language activities is fostered, shared and fashioned into personal and social identity” (p. 409). Without strong family support and commitment, efforts for language maintenance in other domains, such as school, church may serve only as symbols. Hinton (1999) argues that under the present sociopolitical climate against the bilingual education, the responsibility to maintain and develop HL falls on the shoulder of the immigrant parents. Wiley and Valdés (2000) also point out that HL maintenance continues to be the sole responsibility of individuals and families.

Therefore, immigrant families play a crucial and irreplaceable role on not only helping their children with self-identification and self-positioning in the host society but also facilitating their children with HL, literacy, and culture maintenance. Actually, immigrant parents in the U.S. face a huge dilemma (Shin, 2005). On the one hand, most of them expect their children to maintain the HL in order to communicate comfortably with the children and transmit their native culture and values to the children. On the other hand, they also expect their children to master perfect English and to immerse into the culture and values of the host society in order to

successfully assimilate into it. Consequently, there exist more potential conflicts and issues of language, culture, values, and identity in the immigrant families, especially after the children go to the school and have more contact with English-speaking peers (Qin, 2006).

Immigrant parents usually follow the children's step of assimilation. In immigrant families, children are normally the introducer and facilitator of language, culture, and values of the host society (Zhang, 2008). Influenced by the adverse societal attitudes toward HL, immigrant parents sometimes demonstrate ambivalent attitudes toward their own languages. In a number of studies on Asian immigrant parents' language attitudes and home language environment, researchers (e.g., Lao, 2004; Li, 2006; Shin, 2005) demonstrate that although Asian/Chinese parents largely value their own first language and being bilingual, they tend to urge their children to learn perfect English as quickly as possible and put the English as priority in order to succeed academically and assimilate socially at expense of losing the HL. There is an obvious discrepancy between immigrant parents' beliefs and language practices (Lao, 2004; Li, 2006; Shin, 2005).

Previous HL maintenance and biliteracy research (e.g., Hakuta & Diaz, 1985; Portes & Hao, 1998) has mainly focused on immigrants from Hispanic backgrounds. Second-generation children from Asian backgrounds have received little attention since this population has been regarded as the "model minority" in the U.S. It seems that they have fewer problems to learn English and better assimilate into the society. In their study, Portes and Hao (1998) found out that among the Spanish-speaking students most prone to preserve their parents' linguistic heritage and fewer than half were fluent bilinguals, while among those of Asian background, fewer than 10 percent were fluent bilinguals.



## Chinese in the U.S.

### *Chinese Immigrants in the U.S.*

To provide the background information on Chinese immigrant families in my study, it is necessary to provide a brief history of Chinese immigrants in the U.S. Chang (2003) described the three major immigrant waves: The first wave occurred during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to 1880s because of California gold rush; the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Law through Congress in 1882, had blocked all Chinese immigrants for more than sixty years. The second wave took place after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century to 1970s; the third wave started in the beginning of 1980s with the China's opening-up policy and economic reform until now. These three waves include different Chinese populations. The first wave of Chinese were mainly labors from South China, Guangdong (Canton) province to arrive in the western coast and take up heavy-labor work. They spoke Cantonese and they were confined in Chinatown. The second wave of Chinese immigrants consists of mainly people from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Because of the Civil War in China between the Nationalist party (Kuomintang) and Communist party, many businessmen, bureaucrats, intellectuals fled the mainland China to Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the U.S. was the final destination. Most of them speak English and Mandarin Chinese or some dialect. The third wave of Chinese immigrants includes increasing students and scholars from mainland China (PRC) and Taiwan, and most of them are from professional backgrounds, especially science and engineering. They speak Mandarin Chinese and their hometown dialects/Fangyan. People from mainland China use simplified Chinese characters, and people from Taiwan and Hong Kong use traditional Chinese characters (Chang, 2003). My study will focus on the third wave Chinese immigrants' families which came to the

U.S. in 1990s and afterwards particularly, and I will discuss the demographic information of my participants in Chapter 3 in more detail.

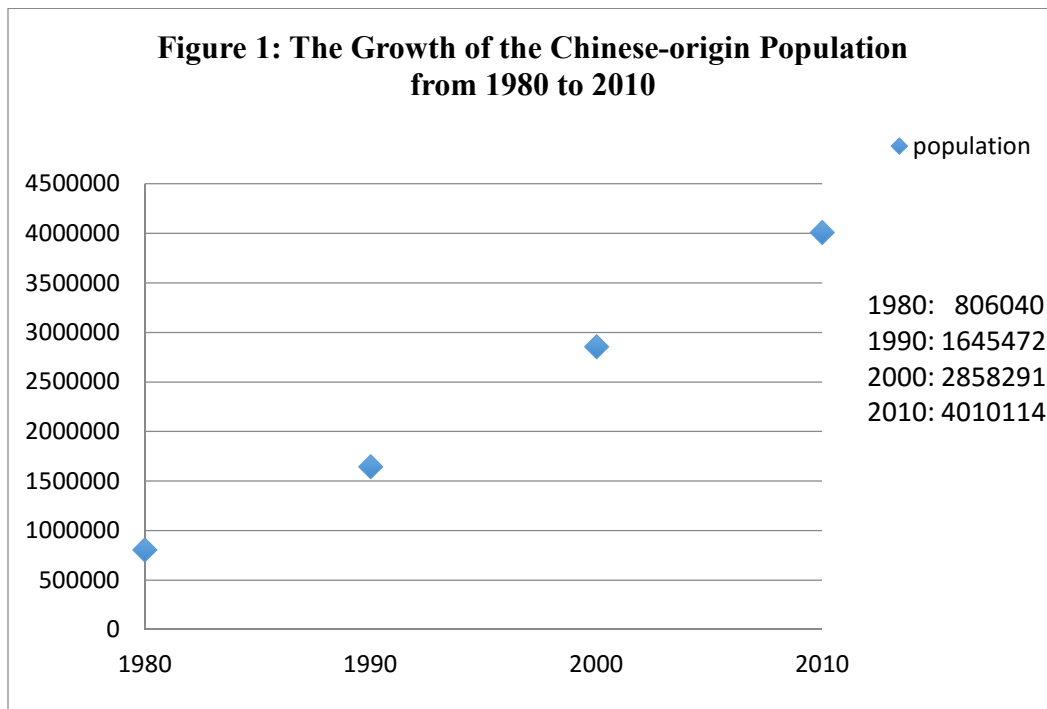
### *Chinese Population in the U.S.*

With the dramatic increase of Asian immigrant populations, especially immigrants from China, the issue of Asian HL maintenance has attracted increasing attention (He & Xiao, 2008; Kondo, 2006; Shin, 2005; Wang, 2007). For Chinese HL, specifically, because of the rapidly growing Chinese-origin immigrant population within the last three decades, Chinese is now the third-most-spoken language and the largest of the Asian language group, with more than 4 million speakers in the U.S. (US Census, 2010), who are mostly recent immigrants or the descendants of the immigrants. On the other hand, globalization trends and international cooperation with China has promoted learning Chinese as a foreign language among English-speaking Americans. Since the early 1990s, Chinese has been identified as one of the “critical languages to the U.S. now and in the future” by the Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) and National Security Education Program (NSEP) and has received funding priorities subsequently (Wang, 2007). In many public schools and colleges, Chinese is being offered as a strategic foreign language course.

The Chinese population in the U.S. has been growing rapidly and reached over 2.5 million in 2000, and over four million in 2010, making it the largest Asian group, and second-largest immigrant group in the country (US Bureau of the Census, 2010). The 2010 Census also shows that Chinese Americans are the largest subgroup of Asian Americans, comprising almost 25% of all Asian Americans. Seventy-one percent of the Chinese are foreign-born, among whom 38% are naturalized citizens and 33% are not citizens. Of the foreign born Chinese population, 75% entered the U.S. in the past two decades. According to the 2005-2007 ACS, about 17% of

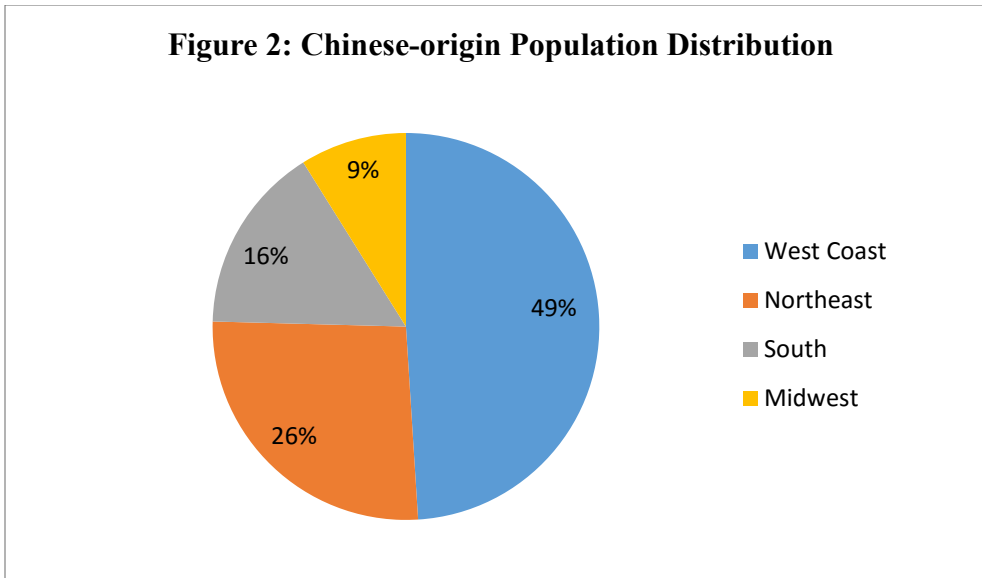
the Chinese American population spoke English only; while 83% spoke a language other than English. About 47% reported they spoke English less than “very well”.

Figure 1 shows the rapid growth of the Chinese population from 1980 to 2010 (from 806,040 to 4,010,114). The current Chinese population has increased five times than three decades ago. Forty-nine percent of the Chinese-origin immigrants live in the West coast (39% in California); 26.4% of the Chinese population live in the Northeast (NY, Boston, and capital regions); 15.7% live in the South, and 8.9% live in the Midwest. Figure 2 demonstrates the general Chinese population distribution in the U.S.



Data Source: US Census, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010

**Figure 2: Chinese-origin Population Distribution**



Data Source: US Census, 2010

According to the United States Census(2010), the top ten metropolitan areas with the largest Chinese population in 2010 were New York, Northern New Jersey-Long island, NY-NJ-PA (695,000), Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA (544,000), San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA (477,000), San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara (173,000), Honolulu, HI (155,000), Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH (123,000), Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI (110,000), Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV (110,000), Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA (101,000), and Houston-Sugar land-Baytown, TX (78,000) (See Table 1). These top ten metro areas consist of nearly 70% of the total Chinese-origin population in the U.S., and almost half of the Chinese-origin immigrants live in just two states: California and New York. Therefore, the Chinese population is most concentrated in the eastern and western coastal areas, with smaller concentrations scattered throughout the U.S.

Table 1

Top Ten Metro Areas with the Most Chinese Population

Metro Areas	Population
New York, Northern New Jersey-Long island, NY-NJ-PA	695,000
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	544,000
San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	477,000
San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara	173,000
Honolulu, HI	155,000
Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH	123,000
Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI	112,000
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	110,000
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	101,000
Houston-Sugar land-Baytown, TX	78,000

Data Source: US Census, 2010

*Chinese Languages in the U.S.*

The increase of Chinese ethnic immigrants from different places of origin in China and other parts of Asia has brought in a variety of Chinese languages/dialects to the U.S. society, many of which are not mutually intelligible. According to Wiley and colleagues (2008), when “Chinese” is used to refer to ethnicity or national origin, it can be referred to speakers of any

language, and “Chinese” is an ambiguous and problematic label in terms of HL because it is an umbrella term to include different linguistic varieties and dialects which are different from the standard Mandarin Chinese, which is used for education and media in China. Many Chinese dialects are not mutually intelligible. Besides the dialectal differences, there are two versions of the writing system: simplified characters for Mainland China and Singapore and traditional characters for Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macau.

According to the 2007-11 American Community Survey (ACS), about 2.8 million speak Chinese at home. California and New York, Hawaii and Massachusetts have the highest percentage of Chinese speakers. Chinese, mostly of the Cantonese variety, is the third most-spoken language in the United States, especially in California. Over 2.4 million Americans speak some variety of Chinese as shown in Table 2, with Mandarin becoming increasingly more common due to immigration from mainland China and Taiwan. In New York City at least, although Mandarin is spoken as a native language among only ten percent of Chinese speakers, it is used as a secondary dialect among the greatest number of them and is on its way to replace Cantonese as their lingua franca. In addition, the immigration from Fujian is creating an increasingly large number of Min dialect speakers. Wu, a dialect group previously unknown in the U. S., is now spoken by a minority of recent Chinese immigrants, who come from Jiangsu province, Zhejiang province, and city of Shanghai. The following table is adopted from the ACS survey conducted during 2006-2008.

Table 2

## Varieties of Chinese Language and Population

<b>Varieties of Chinese language</b>	<b>population</b>
Chinese in total	2,455,583
Chinese	1,554,505
Cantonese	437,301
Mandarin	381,121
Formosan	76,131
Fuchow	2,671
Wu	2,477
Hakka	1,086
Kan, Hsiang	291

Source: American Community Survey 2006-2008

I argue that the number of Chinese language and dialects speakers may be underestimated in the survey report, especially for some dialect speakers, such as Fuchow. Moreover, even for American census, there is not a clear definition for what is called “Chinese language” since over 1.5 million populations under the label of “Chinese” as shown in the table above, instead of a specific dialect or variety. However, the ACS report still provides us with a general picture of the population distribution of Chinese language and dialects speakers.

There has been evidence (e.g., Wiley, 2005; Wiley & al., 2008; Wong & Xiao, 2010) demonstrating that because of the advantageous status of Mandarin over other Chinese varieties, Chinese “dialect” speakers tend to choose Mandarin as an HL to be maintained in their second-generation children, even if it may in fact not be the primary language of the home.

## Literature Review

### Scope/Delimitations

Although this study focuses on Chinese immigrant parents' FLP and biliteracy practices in the U.S., this section will review the studies which examine the Asian immigrant population in both U.S. and Canada, with a special attention to Chinese immigrant parents. Secondly, the "HL learners" discussed in this section are mostly school-aged children who are using or learning their first-learned non-dominant languages as their primary or secondary languages. Only two studies (e.g., Kondo, 1998, Tse, 2001) focus on HL college-aged students. Thirdly, most of the immigrant parents discussed in this section are middle-class, with one exception of Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe's (2009) study. They include low-income and dialect-speaking families and compared their language attitudes with those of the middle-class and Mandarin-speaking families. Lastly, some of studies I review discuss various factors which may influence the HL maintenance and literacy development, I will specifically focus on analyzing a crucial factor—home environment.

### Review of Literature

#### *Heritage Language Speakers' Linguistic Profiles*

Before reviewing the relevant studies, it is important to first discuss the unique linguistic profiles of HL speakers who are different in first/native language (L1) speakers and second language (L2) learners in order to better understand this issue. Research has demonstrated that children from different social class and cultural background have equal ability to successfully acquire their native language (MacSwan, 2000; Rolstad, 2015). However, in the case of immigrants' children, namely heritage language speakers, may not be able to achieve full command of their family/heritage language and same language and literacy proficiency as their



parents and peers raised in home countries due to restricted access to HL in limited contexts during the age of primary linguistic development (Montrul, 2010). Montrul (2010) discussed the linguistic characteristics of most heritage language speaker: “the vast majority of adult heritage speakers typically have very strong command of the majority language, while language proficiency and literacy in the family language varies considerably. For most heritage speakers, the home language is the weaker language. Language proficiency in the home language can range from mere receptive skills (most often listening) to intermediate and advanced oral and written skills, depending on the language, the community, and a host of other sociolinguistic circumstances” (p. 5). Montrul defines heritage language acquisition as incomplete language acquisition since most heritage language children receive schooling in the majority language and their heritage language is minority language which is only used at home in an informal context. She specifically categorizes three different situations for heritage language speakers. One group of heritage language children are simultaneous bilinguals: They were exposed to the heritage language and the majority language since birth, either because one or the two parents also speak the majority language, or because the child received child care in the majority language. Another group of heritage language children are sequential bilinguals or heritage language-dominant, at least up to age 5 (preschool). In these cases, perhaps the two parents speak the minority language and the language is used almost exclusively at home. The last group of children immigrate with their parents in mid-childhood (ages 7–9). These children acquire the majority language predominantly at school, after the foundations of the heritage language are in place. Highlighting the effect of age in incomplete acquisition, Montrul (2008) showed that the extent of incomplete acquisition is greater in heritage speakers who are simultaneous bilinguals than in heritage language speakers who are sequential bilinguals and have had a longer period of sustained

exposure to the heritage language before intense exposure to the majority language began. Montrul's (2010) categorization provides a general framework to understand different scenarios of heritage language speakers. However, the real situation is far more complex than that. The age difference when children expose to the majority language as well as the amount of majority language exposure may vary greatly before schooling in different families. Kaufman and Aronoff (1991) studied a young child who came to the U.S. at the age of two years and seven months as a monolingual speaker of Hebrew. By the age of three, the children became bilingual in English and Hebrew. By the age of three years and six months, the child had developed more native ability in English and nonnative ability in Hebrew. MacSwan (2000) argued that it was essential to note that the child in Kaufman and Aronoff's study spoke English natively, even though the exposure to it did not begin until the second year of life.

Furthermore, Montrul (2010) discussed the specific linguistic system of heritage language speakers, including phonetics and phonology, vocabulary, morphosyntax, and syntax by reviewing relevant studies. The findings of these studies suggest that heritage language speakers' linguistic knowledge display gaps and variations with native-speaking counterparts. Take vocabulary for example, heritage language speakers usually know many words in their heritage language, but most often these are words related to common objects used in the home and childhood vocabulary. In fact, heritage language speakers also have significant gaps in their vocabulary and find it difficult to retrieve words they do not use very frequently (Polinsky, 2007). However, Montrul argued that the gaps in heritage speakers' linguistic knowledge and incomplete acquisition of family/heritage language did not mean that they had acquired a rogue grammar or that their linguistic knowledge was chaotic. Linguistically oriented studies of heritage language systems show that in many respects heritage language grammars reveal

processes of simplification attested in language contact situations, the emergence of new linguistic varieties, and diachronic language change. MacSwan (2000) similarly argued that language contact may lead to a kind of grammatical borrowing or grammatical code switching which is a phenomenon that grammatical resources from the L2 are used in the L1. He further explained that language contact also resulted in the creation of new linguistic forms and diachronic change.

In the following section, a number of studies are reviewed with two different topics: The roles of home literacy environment for maintaining HL and developing bilingualism/biliteracy by examining the HL speakers' perceptions and experiences; Asian/Chinese immigrant parents' attitudes toward HLs maintenance and bilingualism/biliteracy by examining the immigrant parents' perceptions and home language and literacy practices. I will constantly compare and contrast the results of the studies and critique the studies. At the end of this section, I will present my summary of the literature.

*The Roles of Home Literacy Environment for Maintaining HLs and Developing  
Bilingualism/Biliteracy*

Most studies on the home literacy environment and its impact on reading development are focused on monolingual children. Very limited research has been conducted on bilingual children's HL literacy. Researchers (e.g., Fishman, 1991; Hinton, 1999; Zhang & Koda, 2011) argue that given HL children's limited exposure to both oral language and print in the community and school, home literacy environment presumably plays an even more important role in HL literacy development. I am going to review five empirical studies in this section. Two studies (e.g., Kondo, 1998; Tse, 2001) explore complex factors which contribute to HL

maintenance and HL literacy development, and among the factors, home environment plays a determining role in shaping HL children's attitudes and learning and literacy experiences. Three studies (e.g., Luo & Wiseman, 2000; Zhang & Koda, 2011; Lu & Koda, 2011) investigate the relation between home literacy environment and Chinese children's biliteracy skills.

By examining the HL speakers' perceptions, both Kondo (1998) and Tse (2001) conduct case studies and interviews with college-aged HL speakers in the U.S, while Luo and Wiseman (2000), Zhang & Koda (2011), and Lu and Koda (2011) conduct surveys to elicit data on language use at home, home HL literacy environment, and Chinese HL children's HL proficiency and literacy skills in the U.S. by examining either HL speakers' perceptions or parents' perceptions.

Kondo (1998) examined social-psychological factors which affect HL maintenance by analyzing six second-generation Japanese HL speakers' reflections on their language use and language contacts in childhood and adolescence. The participants were Japanese HL speakers who study at the University of Hawaii. Kondo collected data mainly through extensive interviews, which lasted 4-7 hours for each participant. The participants' Japanese oral proficiency was evaluated by an oral proficiency test (OPT) with an American Council on the Teaching Foreign languages (ACTFL) tester. The students also took the Japanese language proficiency test for "nonnative" speakers of Japanese and wrote an essay for literacy skills evaluation. Four participants were assessed as bilinguals and two participants were assessed as semibilinguals. Kondo used the term "semibilingual" to refer to "individuals whose ability to speak Japanese is limited to small utterances or fragments, but who have been exposed to it regularly" (p. 397). Although Kondo states that this term is different from "semilinguals", it is reminiscent of "semilingualism", which Cummins (1979) defined as less than native-like

proficiency in both languages. Semilingualism has been strongly criticized in the literature (MacSwan, 2000; Wiley, 2005). I will avoid use of the term “semibilingual” to avoid confusion, and instead using the phrase--the participants with limited knowledge of the HL.

Each participant reflected their language experience and told stories about their lives and experience from elementary school to high school. Kondo found out that strong assimilative force of the dominant culture existed even in multicultural/multiethnic Hawaii. And in this sociocultural milieu, Japanese mothers played a critical role in second-generation children’s Japanese heritage language maintenance, especially in oral skills.

Kondo argued that “Japanese mothers influence their children’s individual network of linguistic contact (INLC) not only through the language they choose for communication but also influence their children’s INLC by becoming facilitators of their children’s learning opportunities in Japanese.” (p. 392). All four bilinguals’ mothers tried to make their children connect with Japanese as much as possible by providing interesting learning materials, arranging alternate bilingual education, and sending their children to live in Japan during the vacations. All four bilinguals recalled that their mother only spoke Japanese to them and taught them Japanese either by themselves or sent the children to Japanese schools in the U.S. or in Japan. And all four bilinguals recalled that they spoke Japanese most of the time before entering the elementary school. One of the bilinguals—Craig, was sent to Japan by his mother after ninth grade to study in an international school in Japan, where most of the students were bilinguals and where Craig developed a positive attitude toward being bilingual and became fascinated with Japanese comic books. Kondo stated what Craig told her, “I just wish my mother sent me to Japan earlier. It was so sad to leave high school. It was one of my best times in my life.” (p. 380). A second bilingual—Lori had been speaking Japanese solely at home since her mother had very limited

English, but she did not learn reading and writing Japanese until high school. A third bilingual—Jon recalled that his mother never used English at home, and he talked to his mother in Japanese and English. However, he never talked with his younger sister in Japanese. His mother hired a private tutor to teach him how to read and write in Japanese when he entered the elementary school, and it lasted once a week for three years. The learning experience was not bad for Jon because his best friend was also learning it with the tutor. He paid frequent visits to Japan when he was in elementary and junior high school and spent the whole summer with his grandparents, who also had visited Hawaii regularly. Interestingly, Jon took Chinese to fulfill the foreign language requirement in secondary school because he thought that he already knew Japanese and *hanzi* (Chinese characters) and learning Chinese would be beneficial for his future career. The fourth bilingual—Amy spoke only Japanese with her mother and she attended Japanese language school during the whole elementary school time. However, she recalled that the school is more like a baby-sitting place instead of a language school. She did not have Japanese-speaking classmates or friends during the secondary school; however, she visited her grandparents in Japan every year.

Interestingly, three of the four bilinguals' families had "one-parent one language" family language policy, and all four mothers spoke only Japanese to their children while three fathers spoke only English to their children. Similarly, all four bilinguals experienced a stage of resisting learning or speaking Japanese at some point in their early school life, and later began to relearn the language in high school. These bilinguals even thought that "one of the best things that their mothers did for them was not giving up speaking Japanese to them" (p. 392).

In contrast to the four bilinguals, the two other participants with limited knowledge of Japanese HL—Alan and Susan tended to switch to English at a very early age, even though they

spoke Japanese when they were little. Both participants recalled that they hardly had Japanese contact at home and their mothers spoke English to them all the time. Alan started English immersion since kindergarten. He reported that his mother spoke English to him and his brother and never forced them to speak Japanese. Although he watched a lot of Japanese cartoons, he understood the cartoons with English subtitles. His mother sent him to Japanese heritage language school and he attended the school for 11 years; however, Alan recalled that the school was only a place for socializing with his peers who spoke English to each other. Similarly, Susan reported that her mother spoke English with her at home, and her parents never insisted that she spoke or learned Japanese at home. She also recalled that she did not learn any Japanese until high school.

Similarly, Tse (2001) examined ten college bilinguals' previous HL learning experiences. Different from Kondo's (1998) study, Tse focused on the bilinguals who had managed to develop high levels of literacy in both English and their HL in order to identify the key factors which may lead to becoming successful bilinguals and biliterates. Actually, only 10 bilingual participants, including seven Spanish HL speakers, two Japanese HL speakers, and one Cantonese HL speaker, met the researcher's criteria with a very wide and aggressive recruitment approach in southern California, which has a large population of immigrants. This indicates that biliterates in U.S. are quite rare, and Asian/Chinese HL speakers with biliteracy are even rarer according to this study.

Tse (2001) employed rigorous assessments to test the participants' biliterate ability. She used a screening survey to elicit self-reported language proficiency data and biographical information, and then she conducted interviews in which the participants were asked to read a passage in their HL and to write a summary in English. She later conducted in-depth semi-

structured interviews with each participant and asked them to recall their life and literacy experiences, which is similar to Kondo's (1998) method. She found out there are two main factors influencing HL literacy development: (1). language vitality factor, which includes HL peer group, institutional support, and home support; (2). literacy environment and experiences factor, which includes exposure to the HL, identity development and latent literacy, and formal HL instruction. I think that among the two major factors, the significance of home for HL literacy and biliteracy development is outstanding because parents not only provides supportive HL environment at home but also can go beyond the home milieu to maximize the HL exposure and contact for HL children. Therefore, home environment plays a fundamental as well as a far-reaching roles in HL maintenance and biliteracy development.

All ten participants received strong home support for HL maintenance. None of the participants recalled parental pressure to abandon the HL in favor of English. Instead, their parents still chose to use or only use HL to communicate with them at home. Meanwhile, the parents did not ignore the importance of English literacy development for their children and encouraged the children to read and write in English.

For factors related to literacy environment and experiences, Tse (2001) claimed that all ten participants had access to language and literacy environments in the home and community at an early age. Most of the participants had exposure to print of HL through religious texts, and their parents were active members in local church or temple. In addition, they took part in other literacy activities, which included bedtime readings, independent reading/leisure reading, and recreational activities. Tse argued that this early exposure to literacy results in all of the participants' development of "latent literacy" (see Definition of Terms), which facilitated their HL literacy further in high school or in college when the participants showed a greater interest in



developing their HL and they viewed the minority identity as an integral part of their overall identity.

Tse (2001) concluded that “being exposed to the heritage language in meaningful day-to-day activities in various domains was critical to the development of native-language literacy among the participants in this study” (p. 700). I argue that the participants’ homes not only provide a supportive environment for HL vitality but also provide early HL literacy exposure and experiences, which is critical for develop HL literacy. Therefore, home literacy environment has laid a solid foundation for the participants to develop future and further literacy.

The findings in Kondo’s (1998) and Tse’s (2001) studies are significant for three reasons. First of all, there is a paucity of HL maintenance studies which employ extensive interviews to examine HL speakers’ previous learning experiences. The interviews allow us to look into the issue in more details and to recognize the most influential factors which may affect HL maintenance and literacy development as well as biliteracy development. Kondo’s study compares quite balanced bilinguals with unbalanced bilinguals, and Tse’s study focuses on balanced bilinguals. Both studies reveal a common contributor for HL maintenance and biliteracy development—home environment, which support Fishman’s (1991) argument about the crucial role of home on HL maintenance and literacy development. Secondly, these two studies seem to answer a critical question which concerns the parents and teachers the most: Does learning HL hinder English language and literacy development? The participants in the studies who manage to maintain their HL proficiency and literacy seem to have no problem with their English literacy ability and are able to develop quite balanced biliteracy. Their parents not only emphasize the HL development but also pay great attention to their English literacy development. Finally, both studies do not merely use self-reported language proficiency data but

also use rigorous measurements for screening and evaluating the participants' HL and English proficiency, which largely lack in many studies. However, one may argue if it is sufficient or reliable to rely solely on the participants' recollection of memories and pure interview data.

Examining the issue from a different lens, the following three studies use surveys or questionnaires and literacy tasks and conduct correlational studies. Luo and Wiseman (2000) examined both familial and peer influences on Chinese HL speakers' HL maintenance. The researchers hypothesized that family dynamics (e.g., parental attitude toward Chinese HL maintenance, parents-child cohesion, and grandparents-child cohesion), peer influence, and age of immigration are correlated to (1) Chinese HL speakers' Chinese fluency, (2) Chinese use, (3) their attitudes toward Chinese HL maintenance, and (4) their English fluency and use. The researchers recruited 250 Chinese immigrants' children whose average age is 15.4 years from three Chinese schools, two local Chinese churches, and a university in southern California to complete the questionnaire.

Different from other studies, Luo and Wiseman (2000) distinguished father and mother attitudes in the questionnaire. The findings suggest that father and mother's attitudes toward HL were positively associated with immigrant children's HL preservation. However, what's different was that father's attitude was significantly associated with children's frequency use of Chinese, while mother's attitude toward HL was significant in predicting children's attitude toward HL maintenance and English proficiency. In addition, the researchers found out that mother-child cohesiveness was a significant factor on children's Chinese proficiency, Chinese use, and children's attitude toward HL maintenance, while father-child cohesiveness did not appear to be a significant factor. This finding echoes Kondo's (1998) argument that mother plays an important and irreplaceable role in children's HL development and maintenance. This study also

posited that parent-child cohesiveness was a mediating factor in the relation between parental attitude toward HL maintenance and the result of children's HL maintenance. Moreover, grandparents-child cohesiveness and child's HL maintenance was also positively correlated. The researchers explained that children in highly cohesive grandparent-child group tended to use Chinese more frequently and proficiently, and had more positive attitude toward HL maintenance since "grandparents can be the best resource for the knowledge of their ethnic culture and language" (p. 321).

Zhang and Koda (2011) investigated the pattern of Chinese HL use and literacy practices at home as well as the relationship between home literacy environment and HL proficiency, particularly on HL word knowledge. The participants were thirty-six 3<sup>rd</sup> grade young Chinese HL speakers who attended a weekend Chinese school in west Pennsylvania. The instruments in the study consisted of two parts: questionnaire for information about Chinese HL use and literacy practices; word knowledge measures for Chinese character structure and vocabulary breadth.

The study had the following major findings: (1). Most of the Chinese HL children's parents speak Chinese to them while Chinese HL children prefer speaking English or mixture of both English and Chinese when talking to their parents. (2). HL literacy practices at home are mostly related to HL homework while very few children are involved in reading unrelated to HL homework, either independently or with their parents/siblings (e.g., rarely or 1-2 times in a month). (3). There seems to have a negative correlation between schoolwork-related reading and school-unrelated reading. The authors argue that "presumably, children would spend more of their time on English literacy practice, while constraining their allocation of time for independent reading in their HL" (p. 14). (4). There is a strong correlation between parents' language use with children and children's vocabulary breadth, but not character structure knowledge. (5). there

is a positive relation between children's schoolwork-related reading practice and their HL word knowledge, but there is no significant relation between two types of reading, e.g., independent and shared reading, and HL character-structure knowledge and vocabulary breadth. The researchers explained the reason why there was no relation between readings and HL literacy skills was due to the limited exposure to HL print in the HL community and home, and Chinese HL children in this study learned to read largely through their experience in the weekend school. 1-2 times a month HL reading unrelated to schoolwork was far from enough to develop HL literacy. This result resonates with Tse's (2001) study, which argues that leisure reading may contribute to the HL literacy development. Zhang and Koda (2011) also proposed that there might be a threshold level for leisure reading (e.g., 3-4 times in a week), which may benefit HL literacy learning and development.

Lu and Koda (2011) investigated the effect of Chinese immigrant families' home language and literacy support on the children's biliteracy skills. The researchers recruited two groups of participants: 37 children and 35 parents. The 37 Chinese HL speakers were in grade 1 and 2 at a Chinese weekend school in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and they were selected according to three criteria: (1) no schooling in China; (2) both parents are native speakers of Chinese and (3) grade levels in children's American schools match their grade levels in the Chinese weekend school. Parents were asked to complete a questionnaire which elicited information on home language support and home literacy support, which included language use between family members, Chinese language exposure, home literacy environment, and literacy practices, and meanwhile children were asked to complete three tasks which assess their biliteracy skills of both Chinese and English, including oral vocabulary knowledge, phonological awareness, and decoding.

The parents' questionnaire showed that language use varies considerably since more than half of parents speak Chinese most of the time (80%) and 21% use Chinese half of the time at home, while 26% of the parents reported that the dominant home language is English. Chinese language exposure, e.g., Chinese families' gatherings and Chinese TV viewing, was quite limited according to the parents, because 66% of the parents reported that they were not able to meet with other Chinese families frequently, and majority of the children watched little TV in neither language.

For home literacy support, it was found out that English literacy practices dominated the home literacy environment. Seventy percent of the children are engaged in English literacy activities at home most (80%) of the time, while only 44% participated in Chinese literacy activities most of the time, and 56% of the children spent little or no time on Chinese literacy activities, which were limited to Chinese homework assigned by the Chinese school every week. In addition, most (72%) of the families frequently visited bookstores or libraries for English books, and only 6.3% of the families searched for Chinese books. However, the parents reported that they owned a substantial number of books both in English and in Chinese. Therefore, it seems that Chinese parents have "invested much more time and energy in facilitating their children's English literacy learning over Chinese literacy learning," (p. 54).

To investigate the relationship between home language support and children's biliteracy skills, the children was divided into two groups: "high in Chinese" group (N=14), which spoke and received Chinese to and from their parents 80% of the time, and "high in English" group (N=23), which spoke and received English to and from their parents 50% of the time or more. Lu and Koda (2011) found out that only Chinese oral vocabulary performance was significantly different between the two groups, not Chinese phonological awareness and Chinese decoding.

However, for English literacy measures, both groups did not differ significantly. What was interesting was that the “high in Chinese” group demonstrated better performance on phonological awareness in either Chinese or English.

Moreover, to examine the relation between home literacy support and children’s biliteracy skills, the children was also divided into two groups: “high in Chinese” group (N=10), which read in Chinese with the parents or by themselves at least 2-3 times a week, and the rest was in “low in Chinese” group (N=27). The result not surprisingly showed that “high in Chinese” group scored higher above the mean on both Chinese oral vocabulary and Chinese character knowledge than “low in Chinese” group.

In summary, this study affirms Zhang and Koda’s (2011) study in that home language support in Chinese is crucial for helping children’s oral vocabulary knowledge and breadth. However, it is still not crystal clear if home literacy support/environment is supportive of developing HL literacy skills because the relationship is not statistically significant. However, it does significantly help oral vocabulary acquisition and has a positive influence on children’s literacy skills acquisition. More importantly, “high in Chinese” groups perform the same and even better with “high in English/low in Chinese” in terms of phonological awareness tasks, which may suggest that HL development does not hinder children’s acquisition of English. To the contrast, HL development may facilitate children’s English development since some of the literacy skills may be transferrable from HL to English.

Both Luo and Wiseman (2000) and Zhang and Koda’s (2011) studies elicited both questionnaire data and task data from HL speakers. Differently, Lu & Koda’s (2011) study elicited questionnaire information from the immigrant parents and language task data from HL

speakers. Luo & Wiseman's study included more heterogeneous HL speakers' population, ranging from junior high HL speakers to college-level HL speakers, while Zhang & Koda and Lu and Koda's study focused on elementary-school HL speakers.

These three correlational studies have their respective strengths and drawbacks. The first study conducted by Luo and Wiseman (2000) examined the family dynamic thoroughly by distinguishing father and mother's language attitudes and also taking the important variables, such as, parent-child cohesion and grandparent-cohesion into the consideration, which lack in other two correlation studies. The sample size of 250 HL speaker participants in Luo & Wiseman's study is sufficient to make generalization. However, on the other hand, the college students and junior high students may have very different perceptions regarding to the issues and different levels of HL and English proficiency. The mixture of the different-aged participants may skew the results, and I think that the results may be more accurate if the researchers focus on the participants with similar ages.

The second study conducted by Zhang and Koda (2011) specifically focused on the relationship between home literacy environment and HL vocabulary development by examining 36 Grade one CHL speakers' HL speaking and reading frequency, and the third study conducted by Lu and Koda (2011) focused on the relationship between home literacy environment and biliteracy skills, which included vocabulary knowledge as well as phonological awareness. Both studies use questionnaire to elicit information on home literacy environment, but the questionnaire items which are included are different. Zhang and Koda's questionnaire focused on frequency, including home language use, child independent reading, and child-parent joint reading. In contrast, Lu and Koda's questionnaire items seem to be more fine-tuned and more inclusive, which include home language support variables (e.g., language use between child and

parents, language used in Chinese family gatherings, frequency of Chinese family gatherings, and exposure to TV) as well as home literacy support variables (e.g., frequency of child-parent joint reading, frequency of child-independent reading, number of books for parents, number of books for children, time spent on doing Chinese homework, and frequency of library/bookstore visits). I argue that home language support and literacy support variables in the study could include more items in order for the readers to gain a more comprehensive picture of home literacy environment. In addition, the measure scales in the study are confusing. Some items have 3-point scale, and other items have 4 or 5-point scale. It will be better if the measure scales in the questionnaire keep consistent. Furthermore, both studies have limited number of participants, which may constraint the generalizability of the studies.

In the current study, I have modified and adapted the questionnaire items employed in Lu and Koda's (2011) study. I have also kept the measure scales of all items consistent with 5-point scale.

*Asian/Chinese Immigrant Parents' Attitudes toward HLs Maintenance and  
Bilingualism/Biliteracy and Literacy Practices at Home*

According to the previous research, language attitudes are closely related to language acquisition and language use, and immigrant parents' language attitudes play a crucial role on HL maintenance and bilingual/biliteracy development (Kondo, 1998; Luo & Wiseman, 2000; Tse, 2001). Meanwhile, parents' language attitudes may influence children's language attitudes (Luo & Wiseman, 2000). Fishman (1991) emphasized the connection between language ideologies and language maintenance/shift. He argued that reversing language shift requires reversing the resistant attitudes toward threatened languages among both dominant language



speakers and minority language speakers. In the following section, I review four studies which examine Asian/Chinese immigrant parents' language attitudes and language use/practices. Lao (2004) and Shin (2005) explored the issues by conducting surveys, while Li (2005) and Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe (2009) examined the issue by conducting in-depth interviews with parents and/or children and participants observations.

Lao's (2004) study surveyed eighty-six parents who enrolled their children in a Chinese-English bilingual preschool in San Francisco. She specifically examined five issues, which consist of (1) their attitudes toward bilingual education; (2) the reasons for sending their children to a Chinese-English bilingual school; (3) their use of Chinese and English; (4) their expectations for their children's bilingual development; (5) the language environment at home.

Lao (2004) designed the survey which included four sections in the study. The first section aimed to elicit information on participants' language proficiency and language use. The second section concerned on parents' expectations for their children, the reasons for enrolling their children in this bilingual preschool, and their attitudes toward bilingual education. The third section elicited information on language environment at home, and the last section included the participants' demographic information. Lao analyzed the results of the survey according to the five aspects in the previous paragraph. In terms of attitudes towards bilingual education, Lao provided six statements for the participants to choose from "agree", "disagree", and "not sure". Nearly all the participants (88% of the Chinese-dominant parents and 97% of the English-dominant parents) agreed that the goal of bilingual education was the development of both English and Chinese. More than half of the participants (64% of the Chinese-dominant parents and 70% of the English-dominant parents) believed that first language literacy development will facilitate the second language literacy development. However, there were sizable parents (26%

of the Chinese-dominant parents and 30% of the English-dominant parents) were not sure about the literacy transfer. Fewer participants (58% of the Chinese-dominant parents and 50% of the English-dominant parents) thought that learning subject matter in L1 helps students learn subject matter in L2, while more parents (26% of the Chinese-dominant parents and 47% of the English-dominant parents) were not sure about this statement. More than half of the parents (63% of the Chinese-dominant parents and 65% of the English-dominant parents) believed that if a student was proficient in both L1 and L2, s/he should be enrolled in a classroom where the L1 was part of the curriculum. However, there were still 12% of the Chinese-dominant parents and 29% of the English-dominant parents who were not sure about it, and surprisingly, 24.5% of the Chinese-dominant parents disagreed. Since they enrolled their children in the bilingual program, it was surprising that parents did not think L1 should be in the curriculum. The researcher did not explain the reason, but I think it is important to look further into these parents' beliefs and attitudes in order to better understand the issue. The fifth statement was similar to the fourth one, but the results were different. Eight-two percent of the Chinese-dominant parents and 71% of the English-dominant parents disagreed that *students must learn English as quickly as possible; therefore, there is no need to develop the L1 in school*. Half of the parents (55% of the Chinese-dominant parents and 53% of the English-dominant parents) still believed that children would learn English better and faster in English-only classes. And only one fifth of the parents disagreed. There were some arbitrary parental beliefs and attitudes toward bilingual education, and the survey designed by the researcher was not able to provide more detailed information and explain the reasons.

For the reasons parents sent their children to Chinese-English bilingual program, the Chinese-dominant parents differed slightly from the English-dominant parents. The top three

reasons for Chinese-dominant parents were: (1) better career opportunities; (2) communication with the Chinese-speaking community; (3) a positive self-image, while the top three reasons for English-dominant parents were: (1) to help children to be Chinese-English bilingual; (2) communication with the Chinese-speaking community; (3) better career opportunities. Chinese-dominant parents also differed from the English-dominant parents in terms of their expectations for children's Chinese proficiency. Chinese-dominant parents have higher expectations. More than half (57%) of the Chinese-dominant parents expected their children to achieve middle school to high school-level literacy, while more than half (62%) of English-dominant parents expected their children to achieve conversational level and elementary school-level literacy. However, Lao stated that English-dominant parents wanted their children to stay in Chinese-English bilingual program longer until high school, while Chinese-dominant parents tended to desire mainstream schools for their children starting from middle schools.

Regarding the desired language and actual practice at home, Lao (2004) reported that there was a mismatch between the desired language and actual practice. Both Chinese and English were desired at home for both groups, and 40% of the Chinese-dominant parents desired Chinese only. However, merely 29% of the Chinese-dominant parents spoke to their children in Chinese only. “The majority of the English-dominant parents spoke to their children exclusively (61%) or mostly (35.5%) in English” (p.111). For the last issue—language environment at home, Lao asked the parents to report the number of books in Chinese and English, the frequency of parents reading stories in Chinese and English to children, and language in which parents read for pleasure. According to Lao, about 25% of both groups possess more than 20 books in Chinese, while almost all (94%) of the English-dominant parents and a majority (69%) of Chinese-dominant parents reported that their children had more than 20 books in English at

home. For the book reading frequency, both groups behaved quite differently. It was surprising that more Chinese-dominant parents (79%) read story in English than English-dominant parent (30%) almost every day, and 62.5% of the Chinese-dominant parents never read story to their children in Chinese. All English-dominant parents reported that they read for pleasure only in English, while almost half (44%) of the Chinese-dominant parents read for leisure in both languages. From the survey results of the language literacy environment, Lao argued that the literacy environment at home for both groups' children is still English-dominant, and Chinese practice and reinforcement lack largely at home, as she further explains that "high-level bilingualism and biliteracy are difficult to achieve when the exposure to oral and written Chinese is limited in their daily life" (p. 114).

Different from Lao's (2004) study which mainly focuses on Chinese immigrant parents, Shin (2005) surveyed 251 Korean immigrant parents across the U.S. to examine the parents' language attitudes and language practices at home. Comparing to Lao's study, Shin's study provided more detailed demographic information of the parents and designs more detailed survey items to elicit parents' language attitudes. Shin found out that Korean parents in this study strongly desired their children to be Korean-English bilinguals. They seemed to be very interested in Korean maintenance. Seventy-five percent of the parents wish to bring the children to visit Korea and study Korean, and 80% would like to see Korean language offered in public schools. They had different language preference for homes and for public places: more (63%) parents desire their children to use Korean and 36% desire Korean and English mixture at home; while 40% of the parents desired English for the children and 50% prefer Korean-English mixture outside the home. In addition, most parents were positive or neutral about siblings speaking English among themselves at home, and only 14% did not like so. Shin presented an

interesting phenomenon that “many parents seem to view this as an opportunity to learn English from their children” (p. 134).

Shin (2005) also conducted a series of chi-square tests to investigate the various factors which may affect parents’ language attitudes by examining the relationships between various measures of the parents’ attitudes toward their children’s bilingual development (e.g., desired home language, desired outside language, Korean visits, and Korean as a subject offered in schools) and their demographic backgrounds, including length of residence, education, age of arrival, and gender. Shin found out that parents’ attitude toward the use of English was related to the amount of English exposure they had. Shin explained that the longer the parents live in the U.S. the more they desired English spoken at home, and the younger they immigrated to the U.S. the more they favored more frequent use of English both at home and outside home for their children. In addition, considerably more women than men indicated interest in seeing Korean offered in public schools.

In terms of literacy practices at home, Shin’s (2005) study demonstrated considerable similarities between Korean parents and Chinese parents reported in Lao’s (2004) study. First of all, she reported that 82% of the parents taught Korean to their children, but only 55% read to their children in Korean. Shin argued that it may be due to a lack of children’s books in Korean at home. Similarly, Lao’s (2004) study also revealed that few Chinese parents read stories to their children in Chinese on a daily basis and most of Chinese HL children had less than 20 books in Chinese and much more books in English due to the lack of access to Chinese literacy in the U.S. Secondly, Korean parents in Shin’s study behaved similarly with Chinese parents in terms of English literacy practices at home. More parents read to children in English (55%), and 65% in Lao’s (2004) study. In addition, almost half of the parents helped children with their

homework in English. This result also resonates with Lu and Koda's (2011) study that HL literacy activities are limited to HL homework for 1-2 hours a week, and English literacy activities dominate at home. Finally, Shin made similar conclusion with Lu and Koda that parents considered English literacy development as higher priority over HL literacy development. Shin explained that it was probably "due to the fact that English is closely linked to school performance whereas Korean is not" (p.137).

Furthermore, Shin (2005) also found out that there was a contradiction between Korean parents' language attitudes and behaviors, as Lao (2004) revealed that there was a disparity between Chinese parents' desired home language and actual home language use. Shin explained that besides the lack of Korean literacy materials, the more important reason was hidden in parents' minds. That is Korean literacy development has "little direct relevance to children's school performance.....whereas the mastery of English is seen to exert immediate influence on children's success in school, acquisition and maintenance of Korean bear little urgency in the minds of many parents" (p. 140). Shin further summarized several reasons for immigrant parents choose to switch to English, and one of the most outstanding reasons was parents' perception that English was critical for academic and social success in America.

Different from the previous two studies which employ surveys to examine parents' language attitudes and language practices, Li (2006) and Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe (2009) conducted ethnographic interviews and participant observations to investigate the issues.

Li (2006) conducted an ethnographic study to examine three Chinese immigrants' families' biliteracy practices at home in Canada, where Chinese, including Mandarin and Cantonese, has become the second most common language spoken at home. She employed a

variety of ethnographic methods including direct observation, participant observation, interviews, and document collection to collect data. In this study, Li provided a detailed description of the three children's biliteracy experiences in the home milieu. She argued that although the three children shared similar cultural backgrounds, their home literacy practices differed in activities and in linguistic and cultural orientations. The most outstanding finding in Li's study is that these three families' children respective language learning and literacy practices at home are intricately shaped by the parents' perceptions toward the host society as well as the parents' attitudes toward the dominant language and HL and the degree of direction of parental support.

By comparing the three families, Li (2006) argued that the families' literacy practices were influenced by their language attitudes, and their differential language attitudes were shaped by their attitudes toward their own status in the society. Both the Chan's and Ma's family viewed their children's educational success as a crucial factor to become successful in the mainstream society and to overcome the feelings of being sojourners and of being discriminated. Therefore, their home literacy practices were English dominant. In contrast, Tang's family desired their daughter to function and live in both countries and viewed their status as assets to Canadian society, so they invested more time and efforts in Alana's Chinese literacy development and in promoting her Chinese use at home. Li's study strongly supports that home context is a crucial environment for the success or failure of biliteracy development. What parents do and do not is vital for children's biliteracy development. Although all three parents hope their children to be bilingual and biliterate, their actual home literacy practices vary greatly. Anthony and Kevin's parents do not provide any support for their Chinese learning at home except for sending them to

the weekend Chinese school. However, Alana's parents provide a wide variety of resources to facilitate her Chinese literacy development.

Li's (2006) study is significant because it reveals an intricate factor which influence parents' language attitudes—the parents' perceptions of their status in the society, which previous studies do not find out. Although previous studies find out that Chinese immigrant parents desire their children to be bilingual/biliterate, their expectations usually surrender the reality. In fact, there may have hidden reasons to explain the gap between parents' attitudes and actual practices. Li's study successfully discovers one of the reasons by comparing different Chinese immigrant families. Her study also tells stories with adequate details of these three families and examines the actual language use and literacy practices at Chinese immigrants' home in Canada.

With similar research methods, Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe's (2009) study explored the first-generation Chinese parents' and second-generation children's attitudes toward the maintenance of Chinese in U.S., and the Chinese parents' efforts on children's HL maintenance and the children's response to those efforts. Zhang selected two important while different Chinese communities in Philadelphia for this study: 12 middle-class Mandarin-speaking Chinese parents from University City and suburban area and 6 lower-class Fujianese-speaking Chinese parents from Chinatown. The first-generation parents all entered the U.S. after they reach adulthood, and second-generation children (from 6 to 14) were either born in the U.S. or came to the U.S. at a young age.

The researcher—Zhang was an active member in the two Chinese communities. According to her, participant observation was an ongoing activity throughout her five-year



doctoral study. In addition to her formal interviews with the parents and children, she has had continuous informal conversations with the parents and children in various community activities. She claimed that the variety of conversations with the participants also facilitates the relationship between her and her participants in the formal interviews.

Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe's (2009) found out that the Chinese immigrant parents valued their HL very much in general. Their positive attitudes toward Chinese HL were embodied in different perspectives. Some parents regarded their HL as an important resource that their children could take advantage of in their academic advancement and future career. Interestingly, HL hoped to be maintained by both groups of parents was Mandarin, as Zhang argued that it refuted the common notion that immigrant children's HL was simply the home language spoken by the family. Because of the superior status of Mandarin as a national, academic, and standard language as well as a lingua franca across China, all Fujianese-speaking parents wanted their children to learn Mandarin. Some parents saw the HL as related to their ethnic identity and as an important heritage which connected the second-generation children to their home country and culture. According to the interviews with the parents, Zhang argued that first-generation Chinese parents generally had a very strong sense of Chinese ethnic identity, and sought to transmit ethnic identity to their children by maintaining the HL. Even though there was considerable diversity among the Chinese immigrants in U.S., "a common language called 'Chinese' shared by all immigrants of Chinese origin could represent a national, unified identity, ethnicity as well as a common culture" (p. 85). Other parents viewed the HL as a necessary family bond which reinforces family ties and contributes to family cohesion. Zhang stated that both groups of Chinese immigrant parents were more familiar and comfortable with speaking Mandarin Chinese and they all chose to use Mandarin Chinese to be interviewed, as one of the

parents indicated that he was not able to communicate with his child deeply in Chinese. With strong positive attitudes toward the HL, the Chinese parents in Zhang's study spent considerable time, money, and energy to help their children maintain Chinese. According to Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe's (2009), the parents used Chinese solely as the home language, and some of the parents taught Chinese to their children. Some parents even bought Chinese textbooks and assigned extra Chinese homework to the children every day. In addition, some parents took their children to visit China on vacation and many parents sent their children to Chinese weekend schools and participated in various ethnic activities in the Chinese community.

In contrast to their parents' strong positive attitudes toward the HL, most Chinese children viewed learning Chinese as a burden and consider it unnecessary and irrelevant according to the researchers' report. Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe stated that "the enthusiasm follows a descending pattern with age" (p. 89) for children because in the study the children participants' age range from 7 to 13 and she can observe their learning attitudes difference. She explained that the children in third-grade or higher generally express little motivation to learn Chinese since the "pressures for linguistic and cultural conformity in the school environments are great, especially as the children enter adolescence" (p. 90). The majority of her children participants considered Chinese a difficult language and thought Chinese writing system was complex and hard to learn. Zhang also observed that the second-generation children seldom spoke Chinese with their co-ethnic peers and they only spoke Chinese when they have to.

Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe's (2009) study revealed that Chinese parents and children held opposite attitudes towards the HL and parents' efforts did not receive positive response from the children. Therefore, a crucial important arises: What factors prevent Chinese parents from transmitting positive language attitudes and the HL to their children in an English-dominant

society? In their article, the researchers argue that individual families and immigrant community alone are not sufficient to fight against the assimilative forces of English, and HL needs to be recognized by mainstream teachers and general public. Furthermore, Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe's suggest that the HL needs to be incorporated into the school curriculum and validate the children's HL learning outside of the school. The realization of HL maintenance has to be done cooperatively by parents, teachers, and society at large.

Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe' suggest that the HL need to be recognized in the schools and parents and teachers need to work together in order to help children maintain the HL. However, the researchers did not provide sufficient information on how parents' attitudes and beliefs were translated into practices on a daily basis. Although the parents considered Chinese important and make considerable efforts to help children learn Chinese, family language practices, particularly literacy practices in these families, remained unknown in this study. A critical question which needs further investigation arises: What language(s) is exactly used between the parents and children and what literacy activities take place in the families? Shin (2005) and Li (2006) both find that a gap between parents' language attitudes and language use exist in both Korean and Chinese immigrant families. In addition to the influences from schools and society, immigrant parents themselves may be also responsible for the negative attitudes held by the children since parents are always the first teachers, and the mismatch between parents' language attitudes and language practices may confuse the children.

It will be also interesting to compare the Mandarin-speaking parents with the Fujianese-speaking parents' language practices at home and to explore the reasons behind two groups of parents' language behaviors. Furthermore, the efforts made by the parents may be not effective enough to help maintain and develop HL. In contrast, those efforts may play a negative role.

Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe's (2009) reported that some of the older children showed no interest in keeping up learning Chinese, and regarded it as a tedious and unprofitable task forced by their parents. Also, Chinese children usually spoke English among themselves even in Chinese classes. From the perspective of language acquisition, attending Chinese weekend school (2 hours a week) alone is far from enough for children to maintain and develop the HL, and if what the children learned in school is not reinforced at home, the time will be wasted. In Kondo's (1998) study, some of the participants in her study reported that they had attended Japanese weekend school for over five-ten years and their Japanese was still at a very basic level. What really makes the difference is the actual language practices at home, as Li (2006) argues. Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe's (2009) study presents the general parental and children's attitudes toward the HL, but some of the conclusions tend to be the researchers' assumptions, and it just touches the surface of the issues and fails to provide more detailed descriptions of the actual language use and literacy practices at these families' homes. The reason why parents' positive attitudes toward the HL are not able to transmit to the children needs to be looked deeper and further. More questions still need investigation: Whether the parents' positive attitudes toward the HL are translated into actual practices? What is the home literacy environment in these families?

In the section, I reviewed four studies which examine the immigrant parents' attitudes towards the HL/bilingualism as well as language uses and literacy practices at home. Lao (2004) and Shin (2005) use survey method, and Li (2006) and Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe's (2009) use ethnographic interviews and participant observations to collect the data. In the following section, I summarize all studies in Table 3.

## Summary and Critique of the Literature

In this section, I first summarize the research methods and major finding of all the studies chronologically in the table below.

Table 3

### Summary of the Literature

References	Research methods	Participants	Findings
Kondo (1998)	Extensive Interviews	Six Japanese HL speakers: College students at the University of Hawaii	Japanese mothers play a critical role in second-generation children's Japanese heritage language maintenance, especially in oral skills.
Luo & Wiseman (2000)	Questionnaire	250 Chinese immigrants' children: Average age is 15.4 years	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Father and mother's attitudes toward HL are positively associated with immigrant children's HL preservation.</li> <li>2. Mother-child cohesiveness is a significant factor/mediator on children's Chinese proficiency, Chinese use, and children's attitude toward HL maintenance.</li> <li>3. Grandparents-child cohesiveness is positively correlated with immigrant children's HL maintenance.</li> </ol>
Tse (2001)	Extensive semi-structured interviews	Ten HL speakers with quite balanced bilingual and biliterate abilities: College students at southern California	<p>Two main factors influencing HL literacy development:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Language vitality factor, which includes HL peer group, institutional support, and home support;</li> </ol>

			2. Literacy environment and experiences factor, which includes exposure to the HL, identity development and latent literacy, and formal HL instruction.
Lao (2004)	Survey	Eighty-six Chinese immigrant parents who enroll their children in a Chinese-English bilingual program at San Francisco	<p>1. There is a mismatch between the desired language and actual practice;</p> <p>2. There are contradictory beliefs and perceptions among parents about bilingual education;</p> <p>3. Literacy environment at home for children is English-dominant, and Chinese practice and reinforcement lack largely at home.</p>
Shin (2005)	Survey	251 Korean immigrant parents across the U.S.	<p>1. Korean parents strongly desire their children to be Korean-English bilinguals;</p> <p>2. Parents' attitude toward the use of English is related to the amount of English exposure they had. More parents desire their children to use Korean at home; while half of the parents desire English and Korean-English mixture outside the home;</p> <p>3. 82% of the parents teach Korean to their children, but only 55% read to their children in Korean, and literacy practices are limited to Korean homework;</p> <p>4. There is a mismatch between the parents' language attitudes and actual practices.</p>

Li (2006)	Direct observation; Participant observations; Interviews; Documents	Three Chinese immigrant families in Canada	Three families' children different language learning and literacy practices at home are intricately shaped by the parents' perceptions toward the host society as well as the parents' attitudes toward dominant language and HL.
Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe's (2009)	Participant observations; Interviews	Eighty Chinese families: 12 Mandarin-speaking middle class families and 6 Fujianese lower-class families	Both groups of parents value the HL, and make efforts to help maintain the HL. However, the children respond negatively toward HL maintenance.
Lu & Koda (2011)	Questionnaire; Biliteracy tasks	37 grade 1 and 2 Chinese HL children (for home language support, one group(14): high in Chinese, one group (23): high in English; for home literacy support, one group (10): high in Chinese, one group (27): high in English);  35 parents of the student participants in Pennsylvania.	1. Half of parents speak Chinese most of the time and 21% use Chinese half of the time at home, while 26% report that the dominant home language is English;  2. English literacy practices dominate the home literacy environment;  3. "High in Chinese" group performs better in Chinese oral vocabulary and Chinese character knowledge.
Zhang & Koda (2011)	Questionnaire; tasks	Thirty-six 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade Chinese HL speakers in west Pennsylvania.	1. Most of the Chinese parents speak Chinese to their children while Chinese HL children prefer speaking English or mixture of both English and Chinese to their parents.

			<p>2. HL literacy practices at home are mostly related to HL homework while very few children are involved in reading unrelated to HL homework, either independently or with their parents/siblings</p> <p>3. There is a strong correlation between parents' language use with children and children's vocabulary breadth, but not character structure knowledge.</p>
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By reviewing the literature, I consider the role of home environment in HL maintenance and biliteracy development, parental attitudes towards bilingualism and HL maintenance, and literacy practices at home. The overall findings are that home environment is crucial for HL maintenance and biliteracy development; immigrant parental attitudes towards the HL and bilingualism are generally positive, but there is a gap between the parents' positive attitudes and actual language and literacy practices. Language used and literacy practices at home are still English-dominant in Chinese immigrants' homes.

The two case studies conducted by Kondo (1998) and Tse (2000) discovered that home support, especially mothers' support, had a critical influence on children's HL maintenance and biliteracy development. For all the balanced HL speakers in both studies, they recalled that their mothers insisted on speaking the HL with them and facilitatde their HL learning by creating and providing various accesses to HL exposure and input. One the other hand, their mothers also paid great attention to their English learning. Three correlation studies conducted by Luo and Wiseman (2000), Zhang and Koda (2011), and Lu and Koda (2011) also found out that parents'



attitudes and home literacy practices had a significant influence on children's attitudes and HL maintenance. And parents' HL language use and home literacy practices were correlated to children's HL language use and literacy skills. Interestingly, according to Luo and Wiseman, family dynamics, including parent-child cohesiveness and grandparent-child cohesiveness, were also related to HL maintenance and they served as a mediator between parental language attitudes and children's HL maintenance, which meant that if parents and children have a good relationship, parents' positive attitudes toward the HL were easier to transmit to their children and in turn children would better maintain the HL.

Lao (2004), Shin (2005), and Li (2006) examined the parents' attitudes toward the HL and bilingualism as well as the language use and literacy practices at home. Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe (2009) investigated both the parents' and children's attitudes toward the HL, but they generally described the efforts made by parents for maintaining the HL. Lao (2004) and Shin (2005) used survey, while Li (2006) and Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe (2009) employed participant's observation and interviews to collect data. Although Lao examined Chinese immigrant parents and Shin's studies focused on Korean immigrant population, they came to make the similar conclusions. Both groups of parents demonstrated strong desire for their children to be bilingual. However, their desire was not consistent with their actual language practices. There were considerable parents speaking English to their children at home and few parents taught HL reading and writing to their children. Moreover, more parents spent more time reading English to their children and fewer parents read to their children in the HL. Children had much more English books than books in the HL. Furthermore, Li (2006) revealed that immigrant parents' attitudes toward the HL and dominant language were affected by their perceptions of their social status in the mainstream society and their vision for the future. I think what Shin and

Li argued has similarity. Parents' emphasis on education is also a means to express their visions for the children's future. They hoped that their children succeeded in the mainstream society if the children could receive the better education.

Zhang and Koda (2011), Lu and Koda (2011), Lao (2004), Shin (2005), and Li (2006) all examined the language use and literacy practices in immigrant families. Zhang and Koda, Lu and Koda, and Lao used questionnaires, and Shin used survey, while Li employed observation and interviews. Studies which used questionnaires and survey presented a general pattern of language use and literacy practices, while the ethnographic study provided more details and flavors of the language use and literacy practices which took place in immigrant families. I think the ethnographic study can discover some important findings which questionnaire and survey are not able to do so. Questionnaire and survey studies discover that considerable immigrant parents choose to speak English to their children and most of the children speak English to their parents and among the siblings. Literacy practices at home are English-dominant, and parents take the children to the bookstores and libraries and look for English books. Parents who read books to children usually read English books, and children possess far more English books than Chinese books. In contrast, HL literacy practices are limited to the homework assigned by weekend HL classes. The researchers argue that there is a general lack of children's books in HLs available both at home and at public. Although Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe (2009) stated that some Mandarin-speaking parents made efforts to teach the children Chinese at home by using the Chinese textbooks and storybooks bought from China, it was still unclear how often the parents teach the children and how many Chinese books the children had, comparing to the number of English books, and how often the children read Chinese books jointly and independently. Tse's (2001) study found out that leisure reading contributed to the development of HL literacy, and

Zhang and Koda's (2011) study supported Tse's finding and they further argued that "young HL learners would have to go beyond a threshold level of schoolwork-unrelated reading practice, for example, 3-4 times in a week, for their HL literacy learning to be benefited" (p. 15).

Ethnographic study conducted by Li (2006) investigated three different Chinese immigrant families' language use and literacy practices. One family's literacy practices were different from other two families in the study and different from the majority of the families in other studies. Li's study provided an answer to the question: Why do immigrants' families use language and practice literacy differently, even though they are under the same assimilation pressure and come from the similar culture background? Li concluded that self-perceptions and visions for future may influence the immigrant parents' language choice and literacy practices at home.

## Chapter 3

### Research Design

In this chapter, I provide my research design which begins with a rationale for employing mixed method, followed by conceptual framework, research questions, study design, and data analysis procedures.

#### *Rationale for using a mixed method*

This study aims to provide a comprehensive and clear picture of the patterns of language use and home language and literacy environment in Chinese immigrants' families, to better understand Chinese immigrant parents' language beliefs and attitudes towards Chinese, English, and bilingualism, and to examine the literacy practices and investment on English development and Chinese language maintenance in Chinese immigrant families. By exploring the Chinese immigrants' FLP, this study explores the factors which may influence FLP and thus influence the HL maintenance and biliteracy development. On the one hand, statistical analysis drawn from quantitative data can reveal the general patterns of Chinese immigrants' FLP. However, survey data is not able to capture the characteristics of nuances, subtleties, and uniqueness on the issues of HL maintenance and biliteracy development. Therefore, besides providing a broad picture of the issues, I attempt to describe and narrate individual family's stories and experiences to provide a richer and fuller picture. Qualitative data, on the other hand, provide a real life stories and voices of the people as they make meanings out of their experiences. I believe that quantitative and qualitative methods are compatible and compensative for answering my research questions. A mixed method allows me to understand the issues of HL maintenance and biliteracy development from both broad and specific perspectives, which will ultimately strengthen the findings. Each immigrant family has its own unique experiences, but they also

have some similarities. Questionnaire and survey studies are able to provide us with a general picture of language use and literacy practices at immigrants' homes and ethnographic studies are able to describe more details in the general picture. Combining both enables us to have a fuller and better understanding of the issues of HL maintenance and biliteracy development.

### Conceptual Framework in the Current Study

#### *Language Socialization*

In her study, Li (2006) employed the framework of language socialization to situate the study. According to Li, language socialization “focuses on the process of becoming a culturally competent member through language use in social activities” (p. 358). According to Schieffelin and Ochs (1986), language socialization is a concept to mean both socialization through language and socialization to use language. Children become linguistically and culturally competent members of their community through interactions with care-givers and other more competent members of their community. Through this language socialization, children learn the behaviors that are culturally appropriate in their community. Ochs (1986) stated that “Children acquire a world view as they acquire a language.” (p. 2-3). Based on Schieffelin and Ochs’ theory, Li stated, “Language and literacy learning is seen as part of a process through which novice learners acquire particular values and relationships from experts in the social context where learning takes place” (p. 358). Park and King (2003) argued that developing an understanding of the ways that children are socialized at home is increasingly important since a culturally and linguistically diverse student population, or will soon be, the norm in most U.S. schools. For bilingual speakers or HL speakers, language practices co-exist and interact with different cultural values and beliefs as well as multiple social contexts. The interactions between different cultural values and belief systems as well as social languages between school and home

shape HL speakers' social identities and language choice. By describing the home language use and home literacy activities which take place in Chinese immigrant families, Li presented different language socialization patterns in the three Chinese families' homes. The dominant-language socialization patterns in two of the families lead to the children's switch to English, while HL socialization patterns in one of the families contribute to the child's retaining of the HL as well as the child's dominant language acquisition.

Kondo (1998) examined the socio-psychological factors which affect the HL maintenance and uses the term "individual network of linguistic contact" (INLC) to describe the language socialization process of six Japanese HL speakers. The INLC can be considered as integral part of the language socialization process, in which Japanese mothers have a great influence on their children's INLC not only through the language they choose for communication but also by becoming facilitators of their children's learning opportunities in Japanese. Four quite balanced Japanese HL speakers recall that their mothers always speak Japanese to them and create and provide various socio-cultural activities for them to learn Japanese. Other two unbalanced Japanese HL speakers are socialized dominantly with English due to their mothers' English use with them and lack of the HL learning opportunities provided by their mothers. Similarly to Li (2006)'s study, the language socialization processes for balanced HL speakers and unbalanced HL speakers are distinctive.

Shin (2005) also argued that language socialization practices in immigrants' families convey explicit or implicit information to the children which language is more important. Parents' attitudes toward dominant language and HL significantly influence the ways in which they socialize their children to view, learn and use the languages. And how immigrant parents

socialize their children in turn may determine if the children will grow up to become monolinguals or bilinguals.

### *Family Language Policy*

Spolsky (2004) proposed a language policy model, which distinguishes three components in the language policy of a speech community. The three components contain its language practices, its language beliefs or ideology, and its language intervention, planning or management. He maintained that like in any other social unit, language policy at the family level may be analyzed with reference to language practices, beliefs and management. The family is considered as an extremely important domain for studying language policy because of its critical role in forming the child's linguistic environment. In fact, family language policy not only shape the immigrant children's linguistic environment but also influence their sociocultural environment.

Although the literatures I reviewed do not adopt the family language policy (FLP) as the conceptual framework to investigate the issue of HL maintenance, they are, to some extent, related to FLP model to conduct their research. For example, the language socialization framework oriented Li (2006), Kondo (1998), and Shin's (2005) studies to examine the language and literacy practices, language beliefs, and language management in immigrant families since all three components are embodied in the process of immigrant children's language socialization. Beyond the FLP conceptual framework, language socialization framework attempts to understand the sociopolitical factors which may shape the immigrants' FLP. According to Li's study, immigrant families' self-identification and self-awareness of social status in the host society may influence the FLP, and in turn have an impact on HL maintenance and biliteracy development. In addition, language socialization framework can explore the influence the family

has beyond the family domain. Kondo (1998)'s study supports that immigrant parents, especially mothers, have an important role on helping children establish close connections with co-ethnic group members and on facilitating children's HL and biliteracy development beyond the home context. I argue that the family influence can be included in the language management components of FLP to embrace the social domain of HL maintenance and biliteracy development. Language management in FLP not only can contain the efforts made by parents within the home context but also can include any efforts and investments made by parents outside of the family context, as King and Fogle (2013) argued that FLP addresses "child language learning and use as functions of parental ideologies, decision-making, and strategies concerning language and literacies, as well as broader social and cultural context of family life" (p, 172). According to Curdt-Christiansen (2013), the study of FLP can reveal the conflicts that family members must negotiate between the realities of social pressure, political impositions, and public education demands on the one hand, and the desire for culture loyalty and linguistic continuity on the other.

### Research Questions

This study is designed to answer the following three overarching research questions:

1. What is Chinese immigrant parents' family language policy (FLP) and biliteracy practices?
  - 1.1. What are language practices among family members and what is language environment in Chinese immigrant families?
  - 1.2. What are Chinese immigrant parents' language attitudes and ideologies of importance of Chinese and English, bilingual and biliteracy development?
  - 1.3. What language managements are utilized by Chinese immigrant parents?



- 1.4. What biliteracy practices are employed in Chinese immigrant families?
2. What factors may influence Chinese immigrant parents' FLP and biliteracy practices?
  - 2.1. What factors may influence Chinese immigrant parents' family language practices?
  - 2.2. What factors may influence Chinese immigrant parents' family language management and parental language attitudes and ideologies?
  - 2.3. What factors may influence Chinese immigrant parents' biliteracy practices?
3. What strategies are utilized by Chinese immigrant families to help children maintain Chinese heritage language as well as develop English-Chinese biliteracy?

### Study Design

#### *Research Sites*

My research sites were located in a large metropolitan area in the southwest of the U.S., where I have participated in both academic and church life and have had the opportunities to get to know considerable Chinese families in the Chinese communities. According to 2008 American Community Survey, the Chinese population in this area was 15,319. This number has increased greatly since the state ranks the second for Asian population growth in the nation, and Chinese immigrants make up the largest share of the U.S. Asian population according to 2010 U.S. Census. This metropolitan area is a center for technology industry. It is the headquarters of a number of well-known companies, such as Intel and PayPal, and it has numerous companies which involve with engineering and programming. It is also a home to a comprehensive state public university. The Chinese church where I conducted my study is the biggest Chinese church in the area with hundreds of Chinese people attending the church every Friday night and Sunday morning. The Chinese weekend school where I collected my survey data is affiliated with the church.

### *Participants*

The participants in the survey study were 55 Chinese immigrant parents, either father or mother, and the participants in the interviews were five mothers and their children. In order to participate in the survey, the participants must be Chinese-speaking immigrant parents who were born in either mainland China or Taiwan and who must currently have children in K-12 grade in the U.S. For the purpose of this study on focusing on Chinese immigrant families, both father and mother must be Chinese ethnic, Chinese-speaking, and originally from mainland China or Taiwan. The questionnaires were sent out either in hard copy directly to the parents or through email attachment.

In order to get accurate data of language choices and literacy practices at home, I asked each participating family which adult family member (either father or mother) spends the most time with the children and take charge of the children's education, and I chose that person to complete the survey. I recruited the participants through attending the church and contacting Chinese weekend schools, as well as through my personal contacts. I recruited 55 participants to complete the survey questionnaires.

For the interview part, I employed purpose sampling method to choose my interviewees. I chose five families and interviewed both the mothers and children. To examine the differences of FLP in individual families and how different FLP and biliteracy practices lead to different outcomes of HL maintenance and biliteracy development, I purposely chose the Chinese immigrant families with children who have varied proficiency in Chinese. I interviewed three Chinese immigrant families which have successfully help the children maintain HL and develop a certain level of biliteracy and I also interviewed one Chinese immigrant family which has a child who is more English-dominant with some level of Chinese proficiency, as well as a child

who has very limited HL proficiency and is English-monolingual. By comparing the different FLP and biliteracy practices among different Chinese immigrant families, it is hoped to identify the crucial factors or conditions which may determine the success or failure of HL maintenance and biliteracy development.

The criteria of participating interviews for mothers is that both mother and father in the family need to be born in mainland China or Taiwan and immigrated to the US later in their lives, which means that their native language should be Chinese, either Mandarin or some dialect. The criteria for participating interviews for children is that the children need to be born in the U.S. or moved to the U.S. before age of six and have not received formal instruction of Chinese language in home country.

### *Instruments*

This study's data comes from a survey and interviews.

#### *Survey*

A survey questionnaire was completed by Chinese immigrant parents. Based on the previous studies, such as Shin (2005), Lao (2004), and Lu and Koda (2011), which also employed questionnaire to elicit data, I adopted and modified some questionnaire items which were used in these studies. I also designed some questionnaire items and formatted the questionnaire items according to the FLP model, combining it with language socialization framework. The questionnaire includes four components: language use and language environment in the family, parental language beliefs and attitudes towards bilingualism and biliteracy development, parental language investments and efforts, and background questions. The questionnaires were written in both simplified and traditional Chinese characters. I distributed the simplified version to the participants from mainland China and distributed the

traditional version to the participants from Taiwan. Although they are Chinese-English bilinguals, it may be still faster and easier for them to understand the questionnaire in Chinese. I translated the questionnaire from Chinese to English in the Appendix A.

*Part one: Language use and language environment at home.* I designed this part of the questionnaire, basing mainly on Shin's (2005) study. This section contains six questions which elicit language use among family members. In addition, 12 questions were used to provide information on language environment at home, including books read at home for both parents and children, TV programs watched at home for both parents and children, music listened at home for both parents and children, movies watched at home for both parents and children, and Internet webpages used at home for both parents and children. Number one represents *always English*, number two represents *most of English*, number three represents *half English and half Chinese*, number four represents *most of Chinese*, and number five represents *always Chinese*.

*Part two: Language beliefs and language attitudes.* This section was designed to elicit parental language beliefs of English and Chinese, perceived children's capacity of developing bilingual and biliterate proficiency, parental attitudes towards HL maintenance and bilingual development. Twenty statements were used in this section and some of the statements were adopted from Lao's (2004) study on examining parents' attitudes towards Chinese-English bilingual education and Chinese use. Number one represents *strongly disagree*, number two represents *disagree*, number three represents *neutral*, number four represents *agree*, and number five represents *strongly agree*.

*Part three: Language and literacy management investments.* This section contains 12 questions which elicit information with regard to family literacy activities, literacy investments, family socialization, HL maintenance efforts, and family dynamics. Some of the questions

regarding literacy practices and environment were adopted from Lu and Koda (2011)'s study on language and literacy support on biliteracy acquisition among Chinese heritage learners.

*Part four: Background information.* This section includes questions regarding the parents' native languages, gender, age of arrival, length of residence, education level, occupations, self-identification, and perceived children identity.

#### *Interview*

I recruited parent participants who have completed the survey and demonstrated the interests in participating in the further interview study. I purposely chose five families in which the children's Chinese HL proficiency varies, ranging from very limited Chinese proficiency, a certain level/intermediate level of Chinese proficiency to advanced Chinese proficiency. Interviews were conducted with both mothers and children in the participating families.

The interviews with each Chinese immigrant mothers served the purpose of inquiring their life stories and experiences in the U.S. as well as their FLP and biliteracy practices with their children. The interviews with each mother lasted about 2 to 3 hours in total, and the mothers were interviewed twice. After I finished transcribing the first interview data, I conducted the second interviews to clarify any unclear answers and to follow up with any emergent questions. The interviews with all five mothers were conducted in Mandarin Chinese. The interviews with the participating mothers were conducted in person either at the participating families' home or a location the mother chose.

The purposes of interviewing children lie in two aspects. It not only serves to supplement their mothers' responses and examine their FLP and biliteracy practices from children's perspective, more importantly, it also aims to evaluate the children's Chinese spoken and literacy proficiency. The interviews with each child lasted about 2 hours. All the interviews with the

participating children were conducted in person at their home. In order to assess the children's Chinese spoken proficiency, I first began asking them in Chinese what language they would like to be interviewed, English or Mandarin Chinese. All five children could understand this question and claimed that they could understand Mandarin Chinese fine and chose to be asked by Mandarin Chinese. However, not all five children responded the first question in Chinese. One of the five children talked in English throughout the conversation, even though he could understand most of my interview questions. During the interviews, if the children did not understand my questions in Chinese, I explained them in English. To assess the children's Chinese spoken proficiency, I began with asking simple and informal questions (see Appendix C), and I then gradually asked more sophisticated questions as the conversation went on. To assess the children's Chinese literacy proficiency, I began with requesting them to write down their Chinese name, and then asked them to read the titles of four masterpieces of Chinese classic literature (see Appendix D) and a short article, which I chose from a Chinese online magazine *Qingnianwenzhai (Youth Digest)* (see Appendix E).

To interview mothers and children, a list of questions was used as prompts to facilitate a conversation between the mothers and me (see Appendix B) and between the children and me (see Appendix C). However, the interviewees were asked to tell stories and anecdotes related to the questions. They were given freedom in how they answer them, and the sequence of the questions was modified when necessary.

## Data Analysis Procedures

### *Analysis of Survey Results*

All the questionnaire items elicit quantitative data, and I employed descriptive statistics, mainly percentile to analyze the data in each part in order to answer the first two research

questions. Part one provides information on language environment in Chinese immigrant families. I used percentile to present and analyze the data so that I can see which language is more dominant in the families and how the family language environment looks like in Chinese immigrants' families. Part two presents family's language ideologies. For each statement about language ideologies, I provided the percentages to see the parents' attitudes and beliefs. For example, a statement: *Chinese is becoming more important, and it will become the future global language*. Score one represents *strongly disagree*, score two represents *disagree*, score three represents *neutral*, score four represents *agree*, and score five represents *strongly disagree*. I calculated how many percent of parents think of each score/opinion. Part three provides information on language management and family literacy environment. The questionnaire items elicit information on family biliteracy activities, such as, the number of Chinese and English books, the frequency of reading Chinese or English books to children. I also used percentage to describe the literacy activities by comparing Chinese and English ones.

#### *Analysis of Interview data*

Qualitative data were composed of interviews with both mothers and children. The interview data were audiotaped by a digital device and later transferred to the personal computer for transcribing. For the interviews spoken in Mandarin Chinese by the mothers and children, I provided the English translation in my dissertation. However, I kept the Chinese in the text when the children spoke both languages and did code-switching.

These data were analyzed using content analysis, which allows the researcher to "systematically and objectively identify the special messages" (Berg, 2001, p. 240) recorded on the written text. Since data collection and analysis is a selective process (Miles & Huberman, 1994), the data were coded and theme-categorized mainly based on the research questions. I

went back to each assertion to find cases to demonstrate the assertion using crafted selection. The emergent themes were not analyzed in this study since they were not the focus of my dissertation; however, they will be coded used in a future study. In order to identify the crucial factors which influence FLP, literacy practices, HL maintenance, and biliteracy development, cross-case analysis was used to compare and contrast the participating five Chinese immigrant families' different language policy and literacy practices. In addition, the five children's Chinese proficiency was also compared.



## Chapter 4

### Findings/Discussions

The findings and discussions of the study are presented in this chapter, and the findings are presented in two parts. The first part presents the results from the quantitative study, and the second part presents the findings from the qualitative analysis.

I began my findings and discussions with the following three questions:

1. What is Chinese immigrant parents' family language policy (FLP) and biliteracy practices?
  - 1.1. What are language practices among family members and what is language environment in Chinese immigrant families?
  - 1.2. What are Chinese immigrant parents' language attitudes and ideologies of importance of Chinese and English, bilingual and biliteracy development?
  - 1.3. What language managements are utilized by Chinese immigrant parents?
  - 1.4. What biliteracy practices are employed in Chinese immigrant families?
2. What factors may influence Chinese immigrant parents' FLP and biliteracy practices?
  - 2.1. What factors may influence Chinese immigrant parents' family language practices?
  - 2.2. What factors may influence Chinese immigrant parents' family language management and parental language attitudes and ideologies?
  - 2.3. What factors may influence Chinese immigrant parents' biliteracy practices?
3. What strategies are utilized by Chinese immigrant families to help children maintain Chinese heritage language as well as develop English-Chinese biliteracy?

To investigate research question 1 and 2, both quantitative and qualitative procedures were employed, while only qualitative procedure was adopted to examine research question 3.

### *Results from Quantitative Study*

The demographic information breakdown for parent respondents can be found in the tables below. Table 4 illustrates who filled out the survey in the families. The majority of the parent respondents were female. Of the 55 participants, about four fifth (80%, n=44) of the respondents were mothers and only one fifth (20%, n=11) of the respondents were fathers, which suggests that the main caregivers in Chinese immigrants' families are mothers, and usually mother is the person who takes care of the children, including their daily life and study, and spend more time with the children than fathers. This result corresponds well with Na's (2001) study conducted in the similar area. She also found out that mothers spent time helping children with homework most of the time.

Table 4

Gender Characteristics of Those Completing the Survey (N=55)

Gender	N	%
Female	44	80
Male	11	20
Total	55	100

As shown in table 5, about half of the participants (45%, n=25) arrived in the U.S. around the age of twenty to twenty-five and about half of the participants (43%, n=24) have been living in the country for over 10 to 15 years. There are a considerable number of participants (41%, n=23) came to the country over 25 years old and almost half of the participants (45%, n=25) have been living in the country for more than 15 years. The participants' age of arrival demonstrates that the majority (73%, n=40) of the participants came to the U.S. for their post-

Bachelor degrees, and the participants' length of residence shows that the majority (87%, n=49) of them came to the U.S. in the recent 10 to 20 years, which means the participants in my study are the third wave of the Chinese immigrants in the U.S. (details in the chapter 2). Table 5 shows the participants' age of arrival in the U.S. and table 6 shows the years of participants' residence in the U.S.

Table 5

Participants' Age of Arrival in the U.S. (N=55)

Age of arrival	N	%
15-20	5	9
20-25	25	45
25-30	15	28
30 and above	10	13
Total	55	100

Table 6

The Length of Participants' Residence in the U.S. (N=55)

Length of Residence	N	%
Beyond 20 years	12	21
15-20 years	13	23
10-15 years	24	43
5-15 years	6	13
Total	55	100

As stated in the Chapter 2, the third wave Chinese immigrants were mainly comprised of professionals. Not surprisingly, the survey respondents fit the profile of the third wave Chinese immigrants. Table 7 shows that all of the respondents and their spouses accomplished college or graduate education, and the majority and almost half of the parents (42%, n=23) have Master’s degree, and about one fourth of the parents have Bachelor degree (25%, n=14) and Doctoral degree (20%, n=11). The percentage demonstrates that the majority (83%, n=46) of the Chinese immigrants’ families come to the U.S. between age of twenty and thirty and more than half of them (62%, n=34) have pursued their Master’s and Doctoral degrees. Therefore, the sample in the survey study is highly educated and is considered as middle class of the host society. The parents in the families may grow up with a dialect or Mandarin Chinese and were educated in Mandarin Chinese, and later further their studies in English and has worked and lived in an English-speaking environment ever since. The parents in the families tend to be Chinese and English bilingual and biliterate, but they may feel more comfortable communicating with Chinese.

Table 7

Education Levels of the Parents (N=55)

Education of both parents	N	%
Bachelor degree	14	25
Master	23	42
Doctoral	11	20
Post-doctoral	7	13
Total	55	100

Table 8 below demonstrates the occupation patterns of the parent respondents and their spouses. The participants in the survey show an interesting trend of the middle-class Chinese immigrants' families. Almost half of the participants' families, mostly fathers, work as engineers and one fifth (20%, n=11) of the mothers are stay-at-home mothers.

Table 8

Occupations of the Parents (N=55)

Occupations of both parents	N	%
Engineer	26	47
Housewife	11	20
Accountant	4	7
Business	4	7
Faculty	4	7
Food service, and others	6	12
Total	55	100

*Language practices at home*

As described earlier in chapter 2, when using the label "Chinese," there is ambiguity for the reason that it includes language varieties other than Mandarin. In my study, the sub-diversity of Chinese was generally ignored due to the reason that this was not the focus of the study.

Therefore, here Chinese may refer to any language variety respondents speak.

The results of the Part I of the survey, which is the language practices and language environment in the home milieu demonstrate that Chinese is the language spoken between the parents. The survey shows that more than half (51%) of the parents always speak Chinese and

42% of the parents speak mostly Chinese with each other, and only 7% of the parents speak half English and half Chinese, which indicates that Chinese is still the language for communication between Chinese parents, even though they were highly educated in English and have been living in the U.S. for quite a long time. The result also implies that children in these families have been exposed to Chinese language through listening to their parents' conversations more or less since they were very little, and they may at least have certain level of proficiency of understanding spoken Chinese at least.

However, the language spoken between parents and children presents a different pattern. For the first children before going to school, the language of communication is primarily Chinese, and English is the language choice of very few participants. 45% of the participants speak mostly Chinese and 42% always speak Chinese, and only very few parents (9%) speak half English and half Chinese and 4% speak mostly English. After the children go to school, the percentage of English spoken increases significantly. Parents speak more English with children. About one fifth (21%) of the participants speak half English and half Chinese and 13% of the participants speak mostly English. The percentage of always speaking Chinese decrease dramatically from 42% to 21%. The results indicate that schooling has great influence on language practices between parents and children. After children enter school, they become to prefer speaking English and to switch to English for communication with their parents, as Wong Fillmore (1991, 2000) argued that family language shift can take place as early as at preschool time. Shin (2005) found similar results for children in Korean immigrants' families.

For the second children, parents speak relatively more English than with the first children. Before the second children go to school, about one fifth (20%) of the participants speak half English and half Chinese, comparing to with the first children (9%). The percentages of

speaking Chinese decrease slightly for the second children. 38% of the participants speak mostly Chinese and 38% always speak Chinese with the second children, while 45% of the participants speak mostly Chinese and 42% always speak Chinese with the first children. After the second children go to school, the percentage of speaking mostly English increase significantly from 4% to 20%, and always speaking Chinese decrease slightly from 38% to 26%. Again, in her study, Shin (2005) also found out that Korean parents speak more English with the second child than the first child in Korean immigrants' families.

It is worth noticing that the percentage of speaking mostly Chinese increases from 38% to 42% for the second children in this study, which means that the parents in these families speak more English with the first children while they speak more Chinese with the second children. It indicates that the language practices have changed for a couple of families and this result also indicates that FLP for some of the families are not static but dynamic and it can be changeable and evolved. Similar result was also found in Park's (2007) study on Korean HL maintenance. In Park's study, it was found out that some of Korean immigrant parents' family language policy was not necessarily consistent. They applied one policy to one child, and then apply another policy to the other child. Park argued that parents tend to actively evaluate and modify their beliefs and thus change their language policy through their experience, observation and education, and the parents experimented with children and consistently negotiated and renegotiated with children about their language policy.

The language spoken between the children in the families demonstrates the trend of English language preference. More than half (61%) of the children prefer speaking English with siblings and Chinese peers. 28% of them speak mostly English and 33% always speak English,

and only one fifth (22%) of the children speak Chinese between each other. 12% of them speak mostly Chinese and only 10% always speak Chinese.

Na (2010) also found the similar language practices patterns among family members in the similar area. This picture also corresponds to Li's (1994) conclusion that variations in language choice patterns are found to be associated primarily with age, with older speakers using either Chinese only or the Chinese dominant language choice patterns, and the younger adopting either bilingual or English-dominant patterns.

Table 9 below summarizes the survey of the Part I: Language practices in the family.

Table 9

Language Practices in the Family (N=55)

	Always English		Mostly English		Half English and half Chinese		Mostly Chinese		Always Chinese		Total	
Number and percentage	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Language spoken with spouse	0	0	0	0	4	7	23	42	28	51	55	100
Language spoken with the first child now	0	0	7	13	12	21	25	45	11	21	55	100
Language spoken with the first child before going to school	0	0	2	4	5	9	25	45	23	42	55	100
Language spoken with	0	0	11	20	7	12	23	42	14	26	55	100



the second child now							
Language spoken with the second child before going to school	0 0	2 4	11 20	21 38%	21 38%	55 100%	
Language spoken between children	18 33	15 28	9 17	7 12%	6 10%	55 100%	

*Language/Literacy environment in the family*

By examining the families’ language/literacy environment, including the parents and children’s language choice for medias, books, and social circle, the Part I of the survey also reveals the different patterns and language preference between parents and children in the Chinese immigrants’ families.

According to the survey results, the parents demonstrate a trend of preference of English-Chinese bilingual mixture for TV watching, music listening, and entertainments enjoyment (see Table 10). The results also show that the parents prefer reading books and browsing the Internet in both English and Chinese, and Chinese mostly.

Thirty-eight percent of the participants watch TV in both English and Chinese and 38% of them enjoy entertainments in both English and Chinese. 45% of the participants listen to music in both languages. Forty-two percent of them read books in both English and Chinese and 34% read books in Chinese mostly. Similarly, 40% of the participants browse the Internet in both languages and 38% of them browse the Internet in Chinese mostly. Although the language environment and preference for the parents is mainly English-Chinese bilingual, the social circle

for them is still within Chinese-speaking circles. More than half (55%) of the parents stay in the Chinese-speaking social circle mostly. The results also suggest that the parent participants fit well with the profile of the third wave of Chinese immigration in the U.S., which was discussed in chapter 2.

Table 10

Parents' Language Preferences (N=55)

	Always English		Mostly English		Half English and half Chinese		Mostly Chinese		Always Chinese		Total	
Number and percentage	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
TV	6	11%	9	17%	22	38%	9	17%	9	17%	55	100%
Books	2	3%	3	4%	23	42%	18	34%	9	17%	55	100%
Music	5	9%	9	17%	24	45%	11	19%	6	10%	55	100%
Entertainments	7	13%	11	20%	21	38%	15	28%	1	2%	55	100%
Internet	7	13%	3	6%	22	40%	21	38%	2	3%	55	100%
Social circle	7	13%	3	6%	10	19%	30	55%	5	7%	55	100%

However, the children show a different language preference from their parents (see Table 11). They prefer English in all the aspects. For reading books and browsing Internet, English is always the language chosen by the children. More than half (57%) of them read books in English always and 38% read in English mostly. Only 5% read in both English and Chinese. Similarly, 66% of the children always browse the websites in English and 25% of them browse the websites

in English mostly. Only 9% browse the Internet in both languages. For TV watching, music listening, and entertainments enjoyments, the primary language choice is still English for the children, but the percentage of Chinese increases slightly. Sixteen percent of the children watch TV in both languages, and 12% of them listen to music in both languages. Seventeen percent of the children enjoy entertainments in both languages. Children also demonstrate a different social circle preference from their parents. Most of the children (91%) stay in English-speaking social circle and only 9% have both English-speaking and Chinese-speaking friends.

The picture of children's language preferences basically matches the three-generation language shift: The majority of second-generation Chinese children are of bilingualism, however, they prefer English under all circumstances. This finding again corresponds well with Na's (2010) study. The results also confirmed Li's (1994) conclusion that a rapid inter-generational language shift from Chinese dominant to English dominant bilingualism was currently taking place. This language shift phenomenon is not merely happening in Chinese immigrants' children, it is also found out in other ethnic immigrant children. Kondo's (1998) study discovered that language shift took place for second-generation children in Japanese immigrant families even in multi-ethnic and multi-cultural Hawaii. Shin's (2005) study revealed the similar language shift for children in Korean immigrant families across the U.S.

Table 11

Children's Language Preferences (N=55)

	Always English		Mostly English		Half English and half Chinese		Mostly Chinese		Always Chinese		total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%

TV	21	38	21	38	9	16%	4	8%	0	0%	55	100%
Books	31	57	21	38	3	5%	0	0%	0	0%	55	100%
Music	23	42%	23	42%	7	12%	2	4%	0	0%	55	100%
Entertainments	21	38%	23	43%	10	17%	1	2%	0	0%	55	100%
Internet	36	66%	14	25%	5	9%	0	0%	0	0%	55	100%
Social circle	29	53%	21	38%	5	9%	0	0%	0	0%	55	100%

## Part II: Language Ideology

To examine the survey results of the participants' language ideology, twenty statements about the participants' language ideology were designed and analyzed. The twenty statements can be divided into five categories. The first three statements examine the participants' belief of general importance of both English and Chinese. The statements from four to six examine the participants' understanding of role of family influence on children's language and children's bilingual learning capacity. The statements from seven to ten reveal the participants' perceived importance of both languages. The statements from eleven to fifteen reveal the participants' belief about the benefits of Chinese, and the statements from sixteen to twenty look at the social aspects of bilingual learning. The results are analyzed according to these five categories.

For the first category (see Table 12), 34% of the participants agree the statement that *“English should be the only language spoken in the public places, such as in the school.”*, and 15% of them strongly agree, which means that about half (49%) of the participants embrace the idea of English only in public places, such as school, while 28% of the participants are unsure about the idea. Only 23% of the participants doubt about the idea. This result may indicate that *“English-only”* ideology dominates among the Chinese immigrant parents.

Less than half of the participants (40%) agree about the statement regarding the future significance of Chinese language “Chinese will become more and more important and the future Lingua Franca”, and 13% of them strongly agree about it, which means half (53%) of participants think that Chinese is becoming more important in the future. Interestingly, 44% of them express neither agreement nor disagreement about the statement, which means that they are not certain about the future importance of Chinese language. Almost half (47%) of the participants think that “*It’s equally important to learn both English and Chinese well*”, and 28% of them strongly agree about this statement, which means the majority of the participants (75%) perceive the equal importance of learning both English and Chinese. However, almost one quarter (23%) of the participants express the neutral point of view, and few participants (2%) disagree.

Table 12

Parents’ Language Ideologies on significance of English and Chinese (N=55)

	Strongly disagree		disagree		neutral		agree		Strong agree		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. English should be the only language spoken in the public places, such as in the school.	3	6%	9	17%	15	28%	19	34%	9	15%	55	100%
2. Chinese will become more and more	0	0%	2	3%	24	44%	22	40%	7	13%	55	100%

important and the future global language.						
3. It's equally important to learn both English and Chinese well.	0 0%	1 2%	13 23%	26 47%	15 28%	55 100%

In the second category of the statements (see Table 13), the majority of the participants (75%) agree about the idea that “*The family influence is one of the most important factors for children’s language development*”. Forty-seven percent of them agree and 28% strongly agree. There are still about one fifth (19%) of the participants neither agree nor disagree and 6% disagree. In terms of beliefs about the children’s English-Chinese bilingual learning capacity, more participants (74%) think that “*children are able to learn to speak both English and Chinese fluently*”, while fewer participants (55%) believe that “*children are able to learn to read and write in both English and Chinese*”. This result implies that parents may be more confident to help their children maintain oral proficiency of HL than literacy proficiency of HL. It is worth noticing that there are considerable number of participants who are suspicious about children’s bilingual learning capacity, especially about being biliterate in both languages. Twenty-one percent of the participants express neutral point of view about that “*children are able to learn to speak both English and Chinese fluently*”, and 34% of them express neutral point of view about the statement “*children are able to learn to read and write in both English and Chinese*” and 11% disagree.

Table 13

Parents' Language Ideologies on family influence on children's language and children's bilingual learning capacity (N=55)

	Strongly disagree		disagree		neutral		agree		Strong agree		total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
4. The family influence is one of the most important factors for children's language development.	0	0%	3	6%	10	19%	26	47%	16	28%	55	100%
5. Children are able to learn to speak in both Chinese and English simultaneously.	0	0%	3	5%	11	21%	28	51%	13	23%	55	100%
6. Children are able to learn to read and write in both Chinese and English simultaneously	0	0%	6	11%	19	34%	19	34%	11	21%	55	100%

By comparing the perceived importance of English and Chinese in the third category of the statements (see Table 14), it is quite obvious that the importance and superiority of English speaking, reading and writing prevails Chinese in all aspects. All the participants agree or strongly agree that *“it is very important to speak fluent English and to read and write in English for your children”*. However, not all the participants hold the same views for the importance of Chinese. 23% of them express neutral point of view regarding the importance of speaking Chinese. 19% of them express neutral point of view regarding the importance of reading and writing Chinese and 7% disagree that *“it is very important to read and write in Chinese for your children”*. The results correspond with the result of the third statement in the first category *“It’s equally important to learn both English and Chinese well”*.

Table 14

## Parents' Perceived Importance of Bilingual and Biliterate Ability (N=55)

	Strongly disagree		disagree		neutral		agree		Strong agree		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
7. You think it is important to speak fluent Chinese.	0	0%	0	0%	13	23%	25	45%	17	32%	55	100%
8. You think it is important to speak fluent English.	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	25	45%	30	55%	55	100%
9. You think it is very important to read and write in Chinese for your child(ren).	0	0%	4	7%	11	19%	24	44%	16	30%	55	100%
10. You think it is very important to read and write in English for your child(ren).	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	23	43%	32	57%	55	100%

The statements from eleven to fifteen examine the participants' belief about the benefits of learning Chinese (see Table 15). The results suggest that the most beneficial outcome of maintaining Chinese is to help children connect with the origin country. Almost all of the participants (97%) agree or strongly agree that "*Learning Chinese is helpful to connect with the relatives in the origin country*". The majority of the participants (85%) agree and strongly agree that "*Learning Chinese is helpful to learn Chinese culture*". Similarly, the majority of the participants (84%) agree and strongly agree "*Learning Chinese is beneficial for children's future study*". However, fewer participants (74%) agree and strongly agree that "*Learning Chinese is helpful to form the children's identity*", and 72% of them agree and strongly agree that "*Learning*



*Chinese is beneficial for the children's work*". It is worth noticing that about one fifth (21%) of the participants hold neutral point of view on the benefit of learning Chinese of forming the children's identity. and one forth (25%) of the participants hold neutral point of view on the benefit of learning Chinese for the children's future work. Fewer participants (15%) hold neutral point of view on the benefit of learning Chinese for the children's study. These results may indicate that there are sizable parents who are suspicious about the benefits of learning Chinese in helping their children form identity and their children's future work. Similar results are also found out in Na's (2010) study which also investigated the perceived benefits of learning Chinese for Chinese immigrants' children.

Table 15

Benefits of Maintaining Chinese (N=55)

	Strongly disagree		disagree		neutral		agree		Strong agree		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
11. Learning Chinese is helpful to learn Chinese culture.	0	0%	0	0%	8	15%	23	42%	24	43%	55	100%
12. Learning Chinese is helpful to connect with the relatives in the origin country.	0	0%	0	0%	2	3%	26	47%	27	50%	55	100%
13. Learning Chinese is helpful to form the children's identity.	0	0%	3	5%	11	21%	21	38%	20	36%	55	100%
14. Learning Chinese is beneficial for children's future study.	0	0%	1	2%	8	15%	23	43%	23	40%	55	100%

15. Learning Chinese is beneficial for children's future work.	0	0%	1	2%	14	26%	20	36%	20	36%	55	100%
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In the fifth category from the statements which examine the parents' beliefs on the social aspects of bilingual learning (see Table 16), the majority (70%) of the parents agree and strongly agree that "*The school your children go to should provide Chinese language classes*". However, 30% of them are not sure if the school should offer Chinese language classes. About half (49%) of the parents agree and strongly agree that "*children can only learn English faster and better in English only classroom*", and 23% hold neutral point of view and 28% disagree. Similar result was also found out in Lao's (1998) study. In her study, half of the parents believe that children will learn English better and faster in English-only classes, and only one fifth of the parents disagree. For the statement "*Chinese learning will interfere with English learning*", majority (82%) of the parents disagree and strongly disagree about it, and 15% of them are not sure about it and 3% of them express agreement.

The statement that "*It is NOT necessary for your children to master Chinese if they live and work in the U.S.*" reveal the perceived importance of Chinese in the U.S. hidden in the parents' minds. Over half (68%) of the parents disagree and strongly disagree about it. However, about one fifth (19%) of them still agree and 2% strongly agree about the idea, and 11% of them are not sure about it. This result again correspond with the third statement in the first category and seventh to tenth statements in the third category. Although more than half of the parents think that learning Chinese is as important as learning English, there are still a significant number of parents who are uncertain about the importance of Chinese language as well as Chinese learning in the U.S., especially when comparing to the importance of English learning.

Over half (55%) of the parents think that “*the social pressures in the U.S. make your children speak more English.*” Thirty-four percent of them are not certain about it and 11% of them disagree. This result indicates that parents have felt the hidden “English-only” ideology in the society and in their children’s life, and it also corresponds well with the first statement which reveals that parents’ beliefs on the status of English in the public.

Table 16

Parents’ Beliefs on Social Aspects of Bilingual Learning (N=55)

	Strongly disagree		disagree		neutral		agree		Strong agree		total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
16. The school your children go to should provide Chinese language classes.	0	0%	0	0%	17	30%	26	47%	12	23%	55	100%
17. Your children can only learn English faster and better in English only classroom.	0	0%	18	28%	12	23%	13	26%	12	23%	55	100%
18. Chinese learning will interfere with English learning.	16	25%	31	57%	6	15%	2	3%	0	0%	55	100%
19. It is NOT necessary for your children to master Chinese if they live and work in the U.S.	12	21%	26	47%	5	11%	10	19%	2	2%	55	100%
20. You feel that the social pressures in the U.S. make your children speak more English.	0	0%	5	11%	19	34%	26	47%	5	8%	55	100%

Part III: Language management and Literacy practices

The Part III consists of two aspects: Language management and literacy practices.

Question one to five investigate the family language management and question six to twelve compare the English-Chinese biliteracy practices in Chinese immigrants' families.

Regarding the parents' language requirement for their children at home (see Table 17), almost half (47%) of the participants do not have strict requirement of speaking a specific language and the parents let the children choose the language they prefer speaking. More than half (57%) of the participants require their children to speak Chinese mostly at home, and only very few (6%) of them require their children to speak only Chinese. No one require their children speak English at home. Different from my finding, Na (2010) found out that 44% of parents make their children speak only Chinese at home, which has much higher percentage of Chinese only at home requirement.

Table 17

Language Requirement at Home (N=55)

	Only English		Mostly English		Either English or Chinese		Mostly Chinese		Only Chinese		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Your language requirement for your children at home	0	0%	0	0%	26	47%	26	47%	3	6%	55	100%

The parents' language requirement contradicts with the actual language practices at home (see Part I). Although the parents do not require their children to speak English, speaking English

most of the time is the actual language practices for a significant number of parents and children. If the parents allow the children to choose the language freely, that is, they don't have language requirement of speaking Chinese only, the children usually prefer speaking English to their parents most of the time. It is worth noticing that only 6% of the parents require their children to speak Chinese only at home and vast majority of the parents don't require children to speak Chinese only at home.

For the second question, "*with whom your children speak Chinese the most?*" The majority (72%) of the parents indicate that their children speak Chinese the most with them. Fifteen percent of the parents think that their children speak Chinese the most with the relatives in the origin country, and 13% of them believe that their children speak Chinese the most with the grandparents. However, none of parents indicate that their children speak Chinese the most with children of other Chinese immigrant families or with their siblings.

For the third question, "*How much time do your children spend learning Chinese at home weekly?*" Less than half (38%) of the parents express that their children spend more than two hours learning Chinese at home. Over one fourth (28%) of them think that the learning time is about two hours. 21% of them indicate that the Chinese learning time is about only one hour weekly, and 13% of them indicate that their children spend very little time or don't learn Chinese at all at home. This result indicates that the children's weekly Chinese learning time is too little to maintain and further develop Chinese reading and writing ability. Besides attending the Chinese weekend school, the Chinese learning time for most of the children is doing homework from the weekend school. Doing the Chinese homework usually means that the children need parents' supervision and help. If the parents are busy with work or the children have many

extracurricular activities, Chinese learning time may be only limited to the Chinese weekend school.

For the fourth question “*How often do your children go back to the origin country?*”, the frequency of visiting the origin country is not very high. Only one fourth (27%) of children go back once a year. 34% of them go back every two or three years. 32% of them say that they go back every three or four years, and 7% of them even never go back.

For the fifth question “*How long do your children usually stay when they go back to the origin country?*”, the result show that the length of stay at the origin country is not long enough to develop close connections with the relatives and friends in the origin country. 32% of the children usually stay for only one or two weeks, and 47% of them stay for one month. Only 17% of them stay longer than one month but shorter than two months and very few (4%) of stay longer than two months.

Regarding the biliteracy practices (see Table 18), the majority of the parents begin to read books in both English and Chinese to their children at a very young age. Sixty-nine percent of participants read books in English and 66% read books in Chinese to the children between one and two years old. Thirteen percent of the participants read books in English and Chinese between three and four years old, which means that 82% of the parents start to read books in both English and Chinese before the age of four. The results suggest that most of the Chinese immigrant parents in this study put much emphasis on education and start reading books to children long before their children enter school. Tse (2001) argued that latent literacy, which was acquired during early childhood, was important to develop further literacy. Many Chinese immigrant parents in this study helped their children develop latent literacy in both English and Chinese. This latent literacy helped their children lay a foundation upon which the children can

build later in their life. After the children enter school, English literacy can be further developed through classroom formal instruction. However, it is not clear whether Chinese latent literacy can be further developed.

Table 18

Reading books to Children in English and Chinese (N=55)

	Never/seldom		1-2 years old		2-3 years old		3-4 years old		Over 4 years old		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
At what age, you or your spouse read books to your children in <b>English</b> ?	3	5%	38	69%	7	13%	0	0%	7	13%	55	100%
At what age, you or your spouse read books to your children in <b>Chinese</b> ?	7	13%	36	66%	7	13%	2	3%	3	5%	55	100%

Although the parents start to read to their children in both English and Chinese between one and two years old, the frequency of reading in English and Chinese books to children is sharply different. Reading books in English to the children has much higher frequency (see Table 19). Thirty-two percent of the parents read books in English almost every day to their children, while none of them read in Chinese every day. Forty-two percent of the parents read in English at least once a week, and 49% of them read in Chinese at least once a week. One fifth (19%) of

the parents read books in Chinese once/twice every one month and 32% of them never read in Chinese, and one fourth (25%) of them never read in English.

Table 19 to 21 provide results of children's literacy practices and activities, including independent reading, number of books, media watching. The children again demonstrate English preference in these three aspects, especially in independent reading. The reading frequency of English and Chinese forms a sharp contrast. The vast majority (95%) of the children read books in English frequently. Eighty-five percent of them read books in English every day and 10% of them read in English three/four times a week, while only very few (8%) of the children read books in Chinese every day and only 6% read three/four times a week. Almost half (48%) of the children never or seldom read books in Chinese. One fourth (25%) of them only read in Chinese once/twice a week, and 13% of them read in Chinese only once/twice a month. Tse (2001) argued that developing reading habit in HLs is crucial to develop HLs literacy since the participants with high biliteracy in her study enjoy reading books in HLs by themselves. Zhang and Koda (2011) also argued that there may exist a threshold to develop HL literacy and two hours per week is far from enough to achieve the goal. According to the literature, the results of reading time in Chinese in this study may suggest that the vast majority of the children in Chinese immigrants' families are unlikely to develop Chinese literacy since their HL reading time is very limited.



Table 19

Frequency of Reading books in English and Chinese (N=55)

	Never		Once/twice a month		Once/twice a week		Three/four times a week		everyday		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
How often do you read books in <b>English</b> to your children?	14	25%	1	1%	11	21%	11	21%	18	32%	55	100%
How often do you read to books in <b>Chinese</b> to your children?	18	32%	10	19%	18	32%	9	17%	0	0%	55	100%
Do your children read books in <b>English</b> by themselves?	0	0%	0	0%	2	5%	6	10%	47	85%	55	100%
Do your children read books in <b>Chinese</b> by themselves?	26	48%	7	13%	13	25%	3	6%	6	8%	55	100%

The children again demonstrate their English preference in reading from the results of the number of the books they possess in each language (see Table 20). Children have much more books in English than in Chinese. The majority (78%) of the children have more than 30 books in English. Among them, 68% of them have over 40 books in English. However, fewer than half (46%) of the children have over 30 books in Chinese. Over one fifth (21%) of them have books in Chinese fewer than 10, and the percentage for books in English is only 2%.

Table 20

Number of the Books in English and Chinese (N=55)

	Fewer than 10		10-20		20-30		30-40		Over 40		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
How many books in <b>English</b> do your children have?	1	2%	4	8%	7	12%	6	10%	37	68%	55	100%
How many books in <b>Chinese</b> do your children have?	11	21%	8	14%	10	19%	8	13%	18	33%	55	100%

According to the parents' responses, the children do not spend much time watch TV or videos in both English and Chinese (see Table 21), and nevertheless, the time for watching TV or videos in Chinese is far more less than in English. More than half (60%) of the children spend less than one hour watching TV or videos daily in English, while almost all of (98%) the children spend less than one hour in Chinese and the majority (85%) spend less than half an hour daily.

Table 21

Time Spent Watching TV/Videos in English and Chinese (N=55)

	Less than half an hour		Half an hour-an hour		An hour-one and half hour		One and half hour-two hours		Over two hours		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
How long do your children watch TV or videos in <b>English</b> daily?	16	30%	16	30%	10	19%	1	2%	12	20%	55	100%
How long do your children watch TV or videos in <b>Chinese</b> daily?	47	85%	7	13%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	55	100%

In terms of biliteracy investment, parents demonstrate different literacy investment pattern in different languages (See Table 22). Parents invest more often in English books, DVD, or games than in Chinese. About 33% of the parents buy literacy materials in English to their children every one to two months, while only 2% of them buy literacy materials in Chinese with the same frequency. Almost half (48%) of the parents never or seldom buy literacy materials in Chinese, while only few (9%) of the parents never or seldom do so in English.

Table 22

Parents' Literacy Investment on English and Chinese (N=55)

	Never/seldom		Once/twice every one year		Once/twice every half a year		Once every 2-3 months		Once every 1-2 months		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
How often do you usually buy books, DVD, or games in <b>English</b> for your children?	5	9%	6	11%	15	28%	10	19%	19	33%	55	100%
How often do you usually buy books, DVD, or games in <b>Chinese</b> for your children?	26	48%	16	30%	8	13%	4	7%	1	2%	55	100%

The results of home literacy practices and home literacy environment in this study correspond well with the previous studies, such as Lao (1994), Lu and Koda (2011) and Zhang and Koda (2011). The results of this study confirm that home literacy practices for children in Chinese immigrants' families are mostly and merely related to homework from the Chinese weekend school if the children go to the school, and independent reading and HL literacy reinforcements are rarely practiced at home. In addition, home literacy environment is English-dominant in Chinese immigrants' families.

*Findings from Qualitative Study*

I purposely chose five families with children whose Chinese proficiency are varied, ranging from very limited Chinese proficiency, certain level of Chinese proficiency, to high Chinese proficiency. I assumed that different FLP and biliteracy practices in these families may lead to the children’s varied Chinese language and biliteracy proficiency. Through examining and comparing these five families’ language practices, language management, language ideologies, as well as biliteracy practices, four different types FLP was revealed, which include English as the priority language, testing as the priority, both English and Chinese as the priority languages, and Chinese as the priority language. Meanwhile, some factors which may influence FLP emerged from the interview data. To provide a backdrop of each type of the family’s FLP, Table 23 below summarizes the profile of the participating families.

Table 23

Summary of the Family Backgrounds

	W family	Z family	J family	L family	A family
Parents’ working status	Two working parents	One working parent	One working parent	One working and one self-employed	Single mother
Parents’ education level	Mother: Master degree Father: Master degree	Mother: Doctoral degree Father: Master degree	Mother: Master degree Father: Master degree	Mother: College degree Father: College degree	Mother: College degree
Occupations of the parents	Mother: civil engineer	Mother: electronic engineer	Mother: stay at home	Mother: Navy	Mother: stay at home

	Father: architecture engineer		Father: technical manager	Father: self- employed	
Age of arrival of both parents	Mother: 20  Father: 23	Mother: 28  Father: 30	Mother: 26  Father: 28	Mother: 17  Father: 16	Mother: 28
Year of arrival of the interviewees	Mother: 1992	Mother: 2001	Mother: 1997	Mother: 1988	Mother: 1990
The interviewees' origin	A central city in mainland China	A northern city in mainland China	A northeastern city in mainland China	A southern city in Taiwan	A northern city in mainland China
Child(ren) and age	Two sons  David: 15  Richard: 13	One daughter  Jessica: 15	Three sons  Kim: 14  Kaleb: 8  Kason: 2	One daughter  Jasmine: 17	Two sons  Eason: 22  Adam: 19
Birth place or age of arrival	U.S.	China  Arrived at five and half	U.S.	U. S.	U.S.

In the following sections, I present and analyze the family background, language practices (language spoken between parents and children, language spoken between the children and extended family members), language management and biliteracy practices (English and

Chinese language management and English-Chinese biliteracy practices), parental language attitudes and ideologies of each family.

### English as the Priority Language FLP

#### *Family background*

The W family is a two parents working family with two sons, David (15 years old) and Richard (13 years old). The mother, who is from a central city of mainland China, came to the United States in 1992 for the Bachelor degree at a Western public state university. It is quite rare that Chinese students will come to the U.S. for bachelor degrees in early 90s. The mother told me that she experienced a period of struggling time to adapt to the study and life in the U.S. even though she thought her English was better than her Chinese peers. She had to work part-time in McDonald's besides her full-time study and that was the first time she stepped into an American restaurant because such western fast-food restaurants had not appeared in the inner cities in mainland China. She pursued the Master degree later in the same university and met her husband, who also comes from mainland China for his Master degree. They have been living and working in the same area ever since they graduated from the graduate school. The mother said that she had lived longer time (twenty-three years) in the area than in China (twenty years) and she was almost "native" to the area. The mother thinks that her English is pretty good and that she does not have any problems communicating with both her sons in English, as she explained, "Kids are smart. My kids know that they can speak with me in English without any problems."

#### *Language use and practices in English as the priority family*

##### *Language spoken between the parents and children*

English is the communication language between the parents and children while Chinese is the communication language between the parents. According to the mother, her first son (David) was diagnosed as language delay by the pediatrician when he was 2 years old because

David can only speak 3 or 4 words at that time. The pediatrician suspected that being bilingual may be the factor so she recommended David to be evaluated by the speech therapist. From the birth, David was taken care of by his Chinese-speaking grandparents for the first 11 months and a Cantonese-speaking nanny for another half year. From about one year to 2 years old, he was sent to a home daycare and the caregiver was a Chinese native speaker but she speaks English to the children because there were English-speaking white children in the daycare. (Actually, David was exposed to three languages: Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese, and English up until he was 2.) The mother carefully followed the pediatrician's suggestions and her son did all the evaluations. The mother also told me that she did some online research about language delay at that time and asked other older parents' opinions and the result she found out about her son was very minor, but she still decided to enroll her son in the early intervention program since the evaluation results recommended so. The intervention program was run by the State. A special instructor came to visit David three times a week and one hour a time for a year. From 3-4 years old, David was sent to a special preschool which focuses on language development three hours a day, and then move on with language enriched full day kindergarten until he was five.

Starting from 2 years old, the language exposure and input for David was English mainly. In order to cooperate with the program, the mother decided to speak only English to her son, as she recalled, "either the special instructor or the pediatrician suggest that we stick to one language first to make it easier. We talked to kids in English most of the time, afraid of confusing them if we talk in both languages." The mother and father both talk to their children most in English, but the father talks a little more Chinese to their children than the mother, with 70% English and 30% Chinese. However, the language used between the mother and father is still mainly Chinese, mixed with 10% English.



For her second son (Richard) who is two years younger than David, the mother employed the same language practices with him. She spoke mostly English to Richard and sent him to the same special program when he was between 2-3 years old. When the mother talks about the special program for both her sons, she commented, "I think the program might have helped with David's language delay, and also the proper ways to speak and to interact with the teacher(s) and other kids, but not necessarily the ultimate language capacity. One thing is really good about the program is the smaller teacher to kids ratio. Children get much more individual attentions, and in general the teachers were better trained and more knowledgeable and more caring."

The mother also admitted that she tried to ask their children to speak Chinese after she thought their English was good enough when they were in elementary schools. However, the children are not willing to speak in Chinese, especially for the older son, David because he thinks he speaks Chinese with an accent which sounds weird. If the mother forces them to speak Chinese, the children won't speak at all. When I asked when the parents use Chinese with the children, the mother told me that only when they talk about very trivial things, such as, what do you want to eat? The children can understand. What the children can speak is very simple and fragmented Chinese. However, for the serious and important matters, such as schoolwork and things happened in school or daily life, English is the communication language. The mother also told me that she still expected their children to learn some Chinese, so she intentionally spoke more Chinese to her children nowadays than before.

#### *Language spoken between the extended family members and children*

All the relatives in W family are currently living in the U.S, including both grandparents and the mother's sister family. Mother's side grandparents are living in the North with the sister and father's side grandparents are living in a nearby city of the W family.

The mother never goes back to China after her arrival in the U.S, and the father goes to China for business trips occasionally. Both children therefore have never been to China. During summer vacations, they will fly north to spend the summer with their cousins whose ages are very close to them. David and Richard speak English with their cousins, their aunt and uncle. Both grandparents can understand their grandsons' English and speak fairly good English. Mother's side grandmother was educated in a Christian private school in China and grandfather was a biology professor in China. Father's side grandmother was a college English teacher in China. Therefore both grandmothers can communicate with their grandsons in English, although sometimes they will mix English and Chinese in the conversations with the grandsons. They speak Chinese only when they are nagging or complaining about something.

In summary, both children in the W family speak English with all the family members, including the parents, the grandparents, the aunt and uncle, and the cousins. Chinese for them is a language which they only hear unintentionally from the conversations between their parents and the conversations between their parents with grandparents. It is not necessary and no opportunities for them to speak the language within the family domain.

#### *Language management and literacy practices*

##### *English management and literacy practices*

In the W family, English has always been the priority and communication language. The mother eagerly hoped her sons to assimilate into the English-speaking environment and didn't tolerate any slight delay of English language development for her sons. She sent both her sons to the early intervention program to learn to speak and interact with the teachers and other children with proper mainstream ways. For that reason, English is the only language spoken with the children since the older son was 2 and since the younger son was born. The mother said, "I've always read books with them regularly since they were toddlers, until they were about third

grade, on our own and/or as part of the homework and school recommendations. Right now, Richard (the younger one) speaks more clearly, pronunciation wise; however, in terms of reading and writing, David is better. I think the latter has more to do with logical training and composition skills, and David is better in that regards. I've constantly helped both in their English home work to this day, grammar, vocabulary, essays, and composition, etc., you name it." It is obvious that the mother has put much emphasis on English and made great efforts on helping her sons with their English development.

#### *Chinese management and literacy practices*

David, like many other children in Chinese immigrant families, also went to the weekend Chinese school. The mother told me that she sent David to the Chinese school when he was in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade and it only lasted one year. She said that she felt a little guilty to let her son quit Chinese learning, but she had tried her best at that time. Learning Chinese was a burden for both her and her son because she had to accompany David in the classroom for two hours and help him with the Chinese homework, which usually takes several hours to complete. Both her and her son felt frustrated, relieved, and exhausted after completing the homework. The weekends were almost spent and ruined on Chinese learning, which seemed like a tedious, difficult, and time-consuming task for David. Moreover, David's father was sent to another city to work at that year, and the mother was really stretched out and burnt out. After discussing with her husband, the mother decided to let her son quit Chinese. The mother later clarified that it was mainly his dad's idea to let David study Chinese and she didn't want to be the one who would be blamed for her son's Chinese in the future, so she had to ask for her husband's opinions before quitting. Therefore, quitting Chinese was both parents' decisions.

#### *Parental language attitudes and ideologies*

The language attitudes and ideologies of the W family are clearly reflected by their daily language use and practices. The parents think English is the priority language and choose English as the language spoken with their children. Even though the mother researched the issue of language delay online and consulted with other Chinese parents and her conclusion was that her son's language development was quite normal under being exposed to three languages from the birth, she still decided to enroll her son in the early intervention program and spoke English only from then in order to help her son assimilate into the mainstream smoothly and quickly. The mother told me, "We wanted to move to another house that located within K School District when David was four. To qualify for their equivalent special program, David was re-evaluated by the K School District, and the results identified him as at age with his language abilities. At that point we felt that David was thriving in G special pre-school and we wanted him to stay and to reinforce the progress so we decided not to move. By the time he finished kindergarten and was about to enter 1st grade, the G School District conducted another evaluation on him and identified him as at age with his language development, thus concluded his completion with the special program."

Even though David was evaluated as "normal" for his language ability for his age at age of four, the mother still wanted her son to be in that special program and continued to speak English only with her son. The mother not only hopes her son to learn English language itself but also desires her son to get more attention from the teacher and learn to act and interact with others with the ways which are appropriate in the mainstream society, as her commented on the special program "the proper ways to speak and to interact with the teacher(s) and other kids." For her, it is crucial to learn English language as well as to learn the American mainstream ways behaving and interacting with others for her sons. Maintaining and developing Chinese language

and culture, however, is far less significant for her and for her sons, as she said, “Unless they will do business with Chinese or in China in the future, I don’t expect and force them to learn Chinese. It all depends on their willingness.” In the follow-up interview, the mother admitted that “I somehow view Chinese less important than other Chinese parents. I always believe that once kids are ready and really into it, they can always pick up the language later in their life.” However, David was sent to the Chinese weekend school to learn Chinese when he was in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade. The mother said, “It was mainly his dad’s idea”. David also told me that his dad spoke more Chinese than his mom did and also wanted him to take Chinese classes, as he said, “My dad wants me to take Chinese classes because he thinks China is going to grow stronger economically in the future. We (America) are going down but China is going up now”. There seems to be a difference of the attitudes towards Chinese between the mother and father. For the importance of English, there is no doubt for both parents to think it is a must to ensure their children’s present and future success in the American society. For the significance of Chinese, the parents may have different opinions. The father thinks that it is necessary for the children to learn Chinese because China is becoming a super economic power in the world. However, the mother does not think Chinese as important or necessary as the father does. That’s why she had to get the approval from her husband to let David quit Chinese weekend class, as the mother told me, “I have to ask his dad’s opinion about quitting Chinese because I don’t want to be the one who will be blamed in the future”.

Because the mother put great emphasis on her sons’ education and made great efforts to ensure her sons to adapt to the school life successfully in America, it is not difficult to understand why she only speaks English with her sons. There are some other factors which could contribute to the fact that the mother only speaks English to her sons, including her English

proficiency, her family background, and her education background. However, her hope for her sons' successful and smooth assimilation into the mainstream is one significant factor.

### *Interview with the child*

The interview with David confirms what the mother was interviewed. The language spoken with his parents are English most of the time. However, there is language use difference between the mother and father with their children, as David told me, "My dad speaks to us a lot of Chinese which he expects us to pick up, but he doesn't care which language we respond."

### *Chinese language and literacy proficiency*

Before I interviewed David, I asked him which language he preferred to be interviewed: Chinese or English. He told me either one is fine with him. So I chose to speak Chinese to him in order to assess his Chinese listening comprehension, and he responded in English. When I asked my interview questions, he can understand most of them without further clarifications. However, he did misunderstand one or two questions and I had to explain them in English. Also, he asked for clarifications for some Chinese vocabularies which he was not familiar with. Regarding the speaking part, as his mother told me that he was very conscious of his Chinese pronunciation. He thinks he speaks Chinese with an American accent. He reinforced that he could not pronounce the word "shui" for "水", "yu" for "雨" properly. He said, "I speak Chinese like an American, I just cannot pronounce them correctly." During the interview, he only spoke three Chinese words. He also told me that his brother Richard could pronounce better than him and liked to show off if Richard knew some Chinese vocabularies. David also learned some Chinese vocabularies from his grandmother, as he said, "My grandmother told me the word "chikui" (吃虧), at first, I don't understand it, but she explains it to me and I finally got it."

Through the interview with David, I think his Chinese is limited to listening and understanding very simple sentences. He may learn some new Chinese vocabularies from his dad and grandparents, but he never got a chance to use them in life. There isn't any opportunity to force or require him to speak Chinese, even in the extended family domain. In addition, he was not able to pronounce his Chinese name correctly and did not know what characters represent his name. Therefore, his Chinese is pretty rudimentary and only limited to understanding sentences with daily vocabulary and simple structures. According to my assessment, David is an English monolingual with very limited HL listening proficiency.

### *Connection to China*

David was born in the U.S. and he has never been to China. He told me that his dad has been back to China several times for business trips, but his mom has never been back. When I asked if he had a Chinese name, he tried quite hard to pronounce it and I tried to repeat what he said. It turned out to be a failure after several attempts. David said, "They (parents) only told me my English name. They told me my Chinese name just a couple years ago. I don't really remember."

To David, China is only a geographic name and a remote country. David knows very little about China and Chinese culture. When I asked how much he knows about China, he told me that he took world history class and he knew most of the dynasties. For the contemporary and current China, he knows very little because according to him, "We just learned about past China. We talk about a lot of American current affairs at home. I know foot-binding." What David knows about China is quite negative. When I asked if he wants to go to China for travel, he told me, "No! When you sneeze, it is black. It is crowded and dark, busy and kind of dirty." I further

asked him if he is interested in seeing the Terracotta and Great Wall in person. He showed no interests in either one, “I see photos of Terracotta and they are pretty much the same to me. I see photos of the Great Wall. It was built with the bones and blood of the dead soldiers. When the building soldiers died, they were just buried into the wall. It is a little scary. It must have ghosts.”

When I asked what food his mother usually cooks, he told me that usually it was Chinese food, as he said, “My mom usually cooks Chinese food. She will stir fry some vegetables and meat together and cook rice. I don’t really know the names of the dishes. I don’t have favorite Chinese dishes. I don’t really care what food she cooks, American or Chinese. I will eat whatever she prepares.”

To David, he sees no connection between himself and China in any way and shows no interests in visiting China and even in Chinese food. He would rather travel to Europe and Hawaii, instead of China. When I asked about his hobby, he told me that he didn’t like to watch TV or watch the sports. He only likes to play the video games at home.

### Testing as the Priority FLP

#### *Family background*

The Z family is a single working parent with one daughter Jessica (15 years old) who is in the first year of her high school. The mother came to the U.S. in 2001 to study the doctoral degree in electronic engineering at a western public university. When she finished the doctoral study in 2005, she got a job at a big local technology company and she has been working there ever since. Jessica was raised by her grandparents from one year old to five years old in China because her mother came to the U.S. when Jessica was one year old. Jessica was brought to the U.S. by her grandparents and got reunited with her mother when she was over five years old and



she entered the kindergarten in the school. The grandparents stayed with Jessica for another half year and then returned to China.

*Language use and practices in test as the priority family*

*Language spoken between the parents and children*

According to the mother, both parents speak Chinese to the child most of the time. However, from time to time, the parents also speak English with the child for the sake of convenience. The mother told me that Jessica was gradually losing Chinese because what she was able to express in Chinese was gradually decreasing. She speaks more and more English now. “Jessica speaks the daily trivial things with 50% Chinese, such as some names of Chinese dishes, and speaks all other things in English, like what happens in school, what makes her sad or happy, and long narrative statements, etc.” However, the parents do not intentionally ask the daughter to speak in Chinese when she responds, as the mother said, “We don’t force her to speak Chinese. We don’t oppose her when she speaks English to us. Usually, I speak Chinese to her and she responds in English. I will ask her again in Chinese if I don’t understand her English and she will explain. We can understand what she speaks in English without any big problems. We haven’t had any communication barriers so far. It seems that we (parents) are becoming more and more insensitive when she speaks English. I don’t really feel she is talking in English to me.” In Z family, the language use between parents and child has been evolved as the daughter becomes more fluent in speaking English and the parents become more comfortable in listening in English. The parents still keep Chinese as communication language between themselves, and they still speak to their daughter in Chinese most of the time. However, the daughter has switched from complete Chinese at first arrival gradually to complete English with

very few Chinese words. This process takes about ten years (from 5 years old to 15 years old) to take place gradually and unconsciously, even the parents don't realize and notice the change, just like what the mother said, "we are becoming more and more insensitive when she speaks English to us and we don't feel she is speaking English. However, I didn't realize that she could lose Chinese until she was not able to understand what a simple written Chinese sentence means I showed to her one day. There is really such a thing: incomprehensible." For the mother, her daughter's incomprehension of a simple written Chinese surprised her greatly and has become an alarm signal.

#### *Language spoken the extended family members and children*

Before age of six, Jessica was mainly taken care of by her grandparents. So Chinese is the language spoken between her and her grandparents. All the relatives in Z family are currently living in north China. The parents will video chat with the grandparents through the internet every weekend. Jessica speaks with her grandparents in Chinese then. According to the mother, usually, it is the grandparents who ask Jessica some questions, such as, what you ate for dinner; how is your schoolwork. etc. Jessica is not very willing to talk and just answers in very simple word or sentences in Chinese. "Maybe because of the poor connection of the internet, the grandparents sometimes cannot hear what Jessica says clearly, so they ask the same question several times. Jessica will become impatient with that. The communication between Jessica and grandparents is becoming less and less and she doesn't really like to talk to the grandparents." The mother also admitted that, "Jessica usually speaks English when she tells something or narrates something, so it is hard for her to speak Chinese completely in answering her grandparents' questions. I guess it will become more difficult for her to communicate with her grandparents later."

*Language management and literacy practices*

*English management and literacy practices*

The mother had been told by other Chinese parents long before her daughter's arrival that she did not need to worry about her daughter's English. In contrast, what she really needed to worry about was how to keep her Chinese. The mother followed other parents' suggestions, as she told me, "I didn't worry about her English development. It all depends on herself. When she just came here for kindergarten, the teacher said that she could follow the instructions. After the kindergarten, I enrolled her in the summer school and kids club. When she was in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade, she attended the afterschool because I had a late work schedule. So, she was immersed in the English-speaking environment all day. There was no problem to communicate in English for her since then. She has been doing great on Language Art. She was up to the level when she was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, and she passed the gifted class assessment when she was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade." Since the mother works full-time and works in a high-tech company, she doesn't have much time spent with her daughter during weekdays. The mother told me that she seldom read books in English to her daughter. Her daughter also seldom asked her questions in the homework. However, the mother did help the daughter with her homework when the daughter was in the elementary school, such as finding synonyms and make sentences.

For her daughter's English proficiency, what concerns the mother is Jessica's oral English vocabulary and daily communication, "Her oral English vocabulary for daily communication is not very abundant, and her English speaking ability is not as good as her peers. What she learned in English is more academic-oriented." As the mother recalled that they seldom watched TV program at home because they were busy when Jessica was young, and she watched few English cartoons. Jessica usually did her homework, play the piano, and play tennis

after school. The mother told me that the father spent more time with the daughter after school since 3<sup>rd</sup> grade when Jessica didn't go to the afterschool.

Jessica's father has paid special attention to her English writing. According to the mother, the father usually plans some writing projects for Jessica during the summer breaks. The father borrows tons of books on English writing and prepares PowerPoint slides to teach Jessica how to write good English essays. The father is the main editor and critics of Jessica's writing assignments, and the father usually criticizes Jessica's essays on structures and central ideas. The mother told me that the father and daughter would argue because of their different opinions on English writing.

When interviewing Jessica, she told me that she didn't have much time reading books for leisure because she has a quite lot of homework from school, as she told me, "I don't read many books except textbooks or the books required by the Language Art subject. My mother doesn't usually force or push me to read any English books either. But, she will buy me one or two English books as Christmas gift and ask me to read them." When I observed Z home, I also found many Times magazine on the dining table. Jessica told me that her mother subscribed the magazine and asked her to read them whenever she had time. I also found several books about English writing on the table. Jessica told me that she was having a reading class for SAT preparation on Saturdays. She said that she needs to improve her reading skills for the test.

### *Chinese management and literacy practices*

For maintaining and developing Chinese, the mother admitted that they didn't feel the pressure or urgency to help Jessica with her Chinese maintenance, even though she knew the importance of Chinese language, as the mother said, "We are lazy when pushing her to learn

Chinese. We know the importance of keeping Chinese, but we didn't really implement it. We tried to require Jessica to speak Chinese only one or two times, but we didn't really mean that and she just didn't take it very seriously.”

Although the mother did make some efforts to help Jessica with Chinese, she didn't really take it seriously and didn't spend much time on helping her daughter with Chinese reading and learning. She told me that she bought some Chinese books from China, such as Chinese Encyclopedia (*Tens of Thousands of Whys*) and she also borrowed some Chinese textbooks from other Chinese parents. She did read some content of the books to Jessica, but she admitted that she didn't have strong motivation to read to Jessica and Jessica didn't have much interest in listening either. The Chinese books now are hung in the shelf and collecting dust.

The mother hoped the Chinese weekend school could help Jessica's Chinese maintenance and development. Under the insistence of her mother, Jessica has been going to the weekend Chinese school for almost ten years, learning the textbook from book one to book ten. However, the mother is not very satisfied with the results of Jessica's Chinese learning in Chinese school and told me that Jessica didn't recognize many Chinese characters; the learning time in Chinese school is limited, and the textbooks fail to keep her interested. During the interview, the mother emphasized that Jessica lost interests in Chinese learning. She doesn't have interest in speaking it; she doesn't have interest in reading it; she doesn't have interest in going to the weekend Chinese school.

However, things have changed since Jessica entered the high school. The mother just started helping Jessica with Chinese learning recently when Jessica decided to prepare for Chinese AP test and Jessica was one who initiated the Chinese learning at home. The mother

said, “We asked her to drop some extracurricular activities before, she kept asking to drop Chinese. To my surprise, however, I agree her to drop Chinese this semester, but she wants to continue. I don’t expect her to take Chinese AP at all, but she told me she wanted to take Chinese AP class in Chinese school on Sundays this semester and asked me to teach her Chinese in Saturday mornings.” The Chinese learning in Saturday mornings mainly focuses on reading and grammar, including Chinese character recognition quiz online, word order arrangement in sentences, finding mistakes in sentences, and short paragraph reading comprehension. The mother prepares the learning content from the Internet as well as from the textbooks used in Chinese school. Saturday mornings are now dedicated to Chinese learning solely, and the mother said, “She (Jessica) doesn’t usually want to practice speaking Chinese with us, and I don’t know how motivated she is now. She will not learn Chinese intentionally and willingly except weekends. She just learns Chinese as a subject, and she thinks she is not the best student but not the worst one either.”

#### *Parental language attitudes and ideologies*

The language attitudes and ideologies in Z family are not directly and clearly reflected from their language daily uses and language and literacy management. It seems that there is no policy regarding the language use and management at home. The parents speak Chinese to their daughter most of the time and the daughter speaks English most of the time to her parents. Both sides live peacefully and comfortably with their respective language choice and practices.

The parents don’t implement a specific policy and just let the nature take its course. They don’t really make efforts to push their daughter to speak Chinese or to teach the daughter Chinese. Although the mother did buy some Chinese books for her daughter and read to her

daughter occasionally when the daughter was young, she didn't really take it seriously and didn't continue in later time, as she admitted that she didn't have much motivation to read to her daughter in Chinese herself either. They just follow most of the Chinese parents' step of sending children to the Chinese weekend school. The mother assumes that attending Chinese weekend school and listening to Chinese daily conversations among family members would be sufficient for Jessica to maintain her Chinese proficiency. Besides, Jessica had been living in China from birth to over five years old. The mother didn't realize Jessica's Chinese proficiency would be decreasing to such a low level, as she admitted, "We didn't teach her Chinese well when she was little, so we are gradually losing the territory."

Even after the mother realized that her daughter is not able to narrate a matter in Chinese with correct word order, vocabulary, and intonation, she didn't act and decide to change it or reinforce Chinese only policy at home. Only when she knows that her daughter is planning to take Chinese AP test did she begin to help her daughter with her Chinese learning. The contents and materials she uses to teach her daughter emphasize on passing the test, not on daily communication in Chinese.

For Jessica's English development, the parents didn't pay much attention either until she entered the junior high school. Jessica didn't read much English books and didn't watch many English cartoons when she was little. The mother told me that Jessica was busy with extracurricular activities after school, such as playing the piano, playing tennis, and swimming, so she didn't have much time to watch TV or read books for leisure. Most of her spare time after school was spent on doing the homework, playing the piano, and doing some sports. Jessica's father started to help her English writing assignments when he knew that Jessica's writing assignments always lost points since junior high school. Jessica's mother also subscribed some

English magazines for her and hoped Jessica to improve her writing skills and increase her English vocabulary through reading those magazines. She also enrolled Jessica in a reading course which helps her to develop reading skills for the tests.

Through analyzing the language management and literacy practices in Z family, it can conclude that the parents don't follow a specific language policy and they don't have strong language attitudes and ideology because they just follow the lead of the child and let the nature take its course. However, the parents did make some efforts in both Chinese and English language development of their daughter. Those efforts are all focused on preparing for the test and improving the test scores. Although the language attitudes and ideology are not very clear, they manifest through the parents' efforts on emphasizing the tests, as the mother implied, "You need to be well prepared for the test if you decide to take the Chinese AP test." It seems that preparing well for the test is the only motivation for the mother to help her daughter with Chinese learning, even though the mother has realized that the significance of maintaining Chinese for the family ties and relationship. "If she cannot speak Chinese well, the family ties will become loose. The grandchild of mine will definitely not speak Chinese." The mother further reasoned, "The reason why we didn't push her to speak and learn Chinese is because we haven't had big problems in communicating with each other so far."

For the Z family, although the parents think maintaining Chinese is important and hope their daughter to be fluent in it, they don't have strong motivation to implement Chinese practices for the daughter. Tests seem to be a tool for them to finally have the impulse to help the daughter with Chinese learning. Therefore, the language ideology is test-oriented in the Z family.

*Interview with the child*



### *Chinese language and literacy proficiency*

When interviewing Jessica, I spoke Chinese to her all the time and she can understand all my questions without any problems. I told her that she could speak either Chinese or English to me whichever language she feels comfortable with. When I asked simple questions, such as how frequent you go back to China and what books you read in your spare time, she was able to speak a complete and fluent Chinese sentence, and she would also add some English words within the sentence or switch to speak another sentence in English for further explanation. While when I asked more complex questions, such as why you attend Chinese weekend school to learn Chinese, she explained and reasoned most in English. She tried very hard to answer my questions in Chinese at the beginning, but she was not able to finish it in Chinese as what she wanted to express was getting more complex and then she switched to English. She would occasionally insert some Chinese words in those English sentences or switch to speak one short summary sentence in Chinese at the end of her answer. For example, when I asked her, “Do you think Chinese learning is waste of time?” She answered, “I don’t think it’s a waste of time to study Chinese. It’s not waste of my time. I don’t really know exactly why I keep going. 中文也挺有意思的 (Chinese is quite fun)。”

In Jessica’s speech, she did quite a lot of code-switching between Chinese and English, especially when she speaks in Chinese. She would insert some English words or phrases within the sentence, and she tends to switch and explain further in English when she doesn’t know the word in Chinese. For example, “我只有一个 (I only have one)...I only have one cousin. 我很少说全部中文(I seldom speak Chinese completely) . I don’t think I speak the complete Chinese. However, when she explains in English, she seldom inserts Chinese words or phrases within the

sentence. Jessica's Chinese proficiency is limited to simple sentences and communication and she speaks English when she tried to express complex thoughts and feelings. Her Chinese vocabulary is limited so she has a difficult time expressing herself comfortably in Chinese, just as she said, "it is that struggle when you cannot come up with the Chinese words. Talking in Chinese in China is hard and stressful." Comparing to David, Jessica's Chinese is more advanced in terms of being able to understand complex Chinese sentences and talk in simple sentences.

In terms of Chinese literacy proficiency, she was able to use *Pinyin* to type her name on her cell phone, but she was not able to write it down. She was able to identify some of the characters in the titles of four masterpieces of Chinese classic literature when I showed her the book titles, and she was able to recognize about one third of the characters in the article I showed her. Whenever she paused, I told her how to read the characters so that she could continue reading the article.

For her English proficiency, Jessica indicated that she didn't know some trivial and daily English words, such as, mucus, acne, etc. She will say those words in Chinese to her parents. Her mother also mentioned this during my interview with her. Jessica also admitted that her English grammar needed more work because the school didn't really teach much regarding English grammar. That's why she is now taking the SAT reading course during weekend. To my surprise, Jessica identified herself as a non-native English speaker. "学校不是教很多语法 (the teachers in school doesn't teach much English grammar), English reading stuff, I am not very good at it. I am not a native speaker, born here. I am just not very good at it." Jessica said.

Therefore, I evaluate Jessica as an English-dominant speaker who has limited knowledge of Chinese HL speaking and reading but has daily exposure to Chinese at home.

### *Connection to China*

When I asked about Jessica's Chinese name, she was able to tell me her Chinese name immediately with the correct pronunciation. However, when I asked which characters they were and if she could write down the name, she was not able to describe and write the characters, but she used the cell phone to spell the *Pinyin* and found the corresponding characters of her name. Her parents usually call her English name, and her relatives in China call her Chinese nickname. The emotional connection between Jessica and China is quite strong. Since Jessica was raised by her grandparents until 5 years old in China, she has a close feeling toward China. Although she feels that her limited Chinese impedes her communication in China, she still thinks China is home too. She still remembers some sceneries in China during her childhood, and she told me that the place she used to live had changed a lot when she returned back. Jessica likes Chinese food, and when she visits China, she has opportunities to enjoy many delicious dishes in different restaurants, as she said, "They have so many delicious food there. There are a lot of restaurants and hotels. We went to a lot of restaurants."

She goes back to China almost every four years with her parents, and they usually stay for four weeks. They usually travel to some places of interest for two weeks and stay with the grandparents for another two weeks. Jessica has the chance to connect what she learned in the Chinese weekend school or the videos she watched at home and what she experiences and sees in China. She visited some famous cities, such as Beijing, Xi'an, which she watched on videos and visited in person. She was excited and said when she saw the Great Wall and Terracotta, "I saw it on the video before."

Her grandparents also visited her in the U.S., and they will meet each other every two years. Besides the visits, she will web chat with her grandparents on every weekend. The grandparents usually ask routine questions, such as what did you eat for dinner? How is your schoolwork? How is your test score? The Z family however doesn't have many relatives in China, as Jessica indicated, "I only have one cousin and she calls me my nickname."

Jessica also told me that the family would watch some Chinese TV programs and TV series which are very popular in China during the dinner time. She enjoys watching the Chinese programs and she can understand the most parts of the programs. Jessica also watches the Chinese New Year TV gala every year with her parents. She asked her parents to explain the some of the laughing points she did not understand.

Therefore, Jessica's the emotional and cultural connections with China are quite strong. She has lived in China since birth till five years old and she has very close relatives in China. She likes eating Chinese dishes, watching Chinese TV programs and TV series, and visiting China.

#### Both English and Chinese as the Priority Languages FLP

Two families of five families I interviewed fall under this categories, the J Family and L Family, so I analyze these two families respectively.

##### *J Family background*

The J family is a single working parent family. The father works in a high-tech company at the management level and the mother is a stay-at-home mom. They have three sons, Kim (14 years old), Kaleb (8 years old), and Kason (2 years old). The mother came to the U.S. for her doctoral degree in biochemistry at a northern public university in 1997, and the father came to the U.S. as a spouse. The father was later admitted with graduate assistantship to a university at

another state. To reunite with her husband, the mother didn't finish her doctoral study and moved to the state where the husband was. Both parents found jobs in that state and had their first son, Kim. The maternal and fraternal grandparents came to help with the housework and child rearing respectively until Kim was 2 years old. Kim was sent to the full-day preschool from 2 to 4 years old and then was brought to China by the grandparents and lived with grandparents for half year. The mother took him to return to the U.S. and entered the kindergarten. When the second son, Kaleb was born, the mother quitted her job and became a stay-at-home mom.

*Language use and practices in English and Chinese as the priority languages family*

*Language spoken between the parents and children*

The mother was the main caregiver of the children. According to the mother, both her and her husband speak Chinese most of the time to the children, and the children speak Chinese to the parents most of the time too. Their daily conversations are not spoken in pure 100% Chinese though. They tend to insert some English words or phrases in their speech for the sake of convenience of communication because some English words or phrases are more accurate in expressing their feelings and thoughts. What's more, there is no corresponding vocabulary in Chinese to say certain words or phrases in certain subjects or in certain situations, such as *presentation, message, project, and work*.

The mother told me that their older son Kim always speaks Chinese to the family members, including to his brother, Kaleb. Even when the parents asked him to speak English sometimes, Kim still insisted speaking Chinese to them. They once asked him, “你为什么不说英语呢? (Why don't you speak English to us?)” Kim answered, “你们都说中文, 我对你们说不出来。 (I am just not able to speak English to you. You both speak Chinese).” The mother

however admitted that Kim was a very quiet child and he did not like to talk too much. When the mother asks him questions, such as, “今天学校怎么样啊”? (“How was the school today”)? His answer would be “没什么。就那样。” (Nothing. As usual). His responses are usually very simple structured Chinese sentences with plain words. He was not able to use complicated or sophisticated words to express his thoughts or narrate a thing.

#### *Language spoken with the extended family members*

According to the mother, the family goes back to China every two years. The relatives of the J family are all living in China. The mother has a younger sister and the father has five older brothers and one older sister. The grandparents came to visit every several years and Kim’s aunt and cousin also came to visit the family once. Kim speaks Chinese to all the extended family members. However, the only time Kim can talk to them is when they meet each other, and what they talk are very routine and simple daily conversations. Kim’s grandparents were visiting the family when I interviewed the mother. The mother told me that the communication between Kim and the grandparents were very simple and repetitive, such as, what do you want to eat? Kim never calls or web chats with his grandparents or other relatives. However, whenever the father calls the relatives in China, he asked Kim and Kaleb to come to the phone and greet the relatives.

Kim has a cousin whose age is similar to him, so Kim talks more with his cousin. The mother told me that Kim’s cousin once came to the U.S. during the summer vacation when Kim was nine years old. Kim’s aunt had hoped they could talk in English. However, they kept speaking Chinese with each other. It turned out that Kim improved his Chinese that summer through talking to his cousin. When Kim goes back to China, he likes to hang out with his cousin.

### *Language management and literacy practices*

#### *English management and literacy practices*

From two to three years old, Kim went to the preschool and spoke English in school. The mother read some English books to him at home and he learned to read very fast. The mother said, “I read books to him several times, and then he can read the books by himself. He is very sensitive to the language and words. He was the reading assistant in the class and helped reading books to other kids, so I am not worry about his English because he has demonstrated the ability and habit to learn it.”

Basing on the confidence towards Kim’s English learning habit and ability, the parents didn’t put much energy and emphasis on Kim’s English learning. They just helped him to reinforce the reading comprehension ability by doing some workbooks in the summer and winter breaks during his elementary school years. They did not do anything to help him with his English development after he was in junior high school. Regarding the assignments from school, the parents sometimes asked him about them, but they seldom asked and cared about his homework after Kim was ten years old. Therefore, Kim’s parents put the responsibility of Kim’s English language development mainly to the school.

#### *Chinese management and literacy practices*

The J family emphasizes the children’s Chinese language maintenance. The mother taught Kim to learn and recognize Chinese characters when Kim was two years old. The mother told me that she bought a lot of Chinese character cards from China and taught Kim to read the characters. Kim really liked to learn the characters and was able to read and recognize quite a lot Chinese characters since then. The mother also read Chinese story and cartoon books to Kim

when he was little. He was able to read the books by himself after his mother read them to him several times. The mother told me an anecdote about Kim when he was two years and two months old. A Chinese-speaking priest came to their house and spent some time with the family. When the priest took out a children's hymn and prepared to teach Kim to sing, to everyone's surprise, Kim was able to read these Chinese lyrics already.

Kim likes to read Chinese books. Although he didn't read the original version of Four Great Classical Novels, he read one of them—"Romance of the Three Kingdoms" in cartoon version. The mother told me that Kim would always carry the books in his backpack when he was in elementary school. When Kim was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, he and his mother travelled in China during the summer break. The mother bought a story book "马小跳 *Xiaotiao Ma*" and read the book on their way from a northern city to a southern city on the train. The mother thought Kim would probably like this book because it told a funny story of a little boy whose age was similar to Kim. The mother suggested she read one chapter and Kim read one chapter. When the mother was reading the chapter, Kim was attracted by the plot of the story and could not wait to read the next chapter by himself. It turned out that Kim finished reading the rest of the book by himself.

The mother employed some strategies when choosing Chinese books for Kim. She chose the story books with funny characters and interesting plots, instead of the popular scientific books, such as *Tens of Thousands of Whys*, which the mother in Z family chose. She thought the story books were more fun than the scientific books for her son and believed that Kim would like them. She told me that it was easier to find this kind of Chinese story books for children of younger age, for example preschoolers and elementary school children and it was difficult to find those books for teenagers because there were not so many books available. The mother has been



monitoring Kim's Chinese reading till he was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. After 5<sup>th</sup> grade, the mother suggested some Chinese articles or books for Kim to read.

However, Kim seldom watches the Chinese TV programs. He only watched some DVD in Chinese when he was little, but after that he never watched TV in Chinese. Since the mother is busy with taking care of the children and the father is busy with his work, the parents and children seldom have time to sit down and watch TV or movies either in Chinese or English. In Kim's spare time, he likes to play video games and reading books in English.

According to the mother, Kim had attended the Chinese weekend school since he was four and half years old. Kim also loved to go to the Chinese weekend school when he was in elementary school. When the parents were run out of idea of a punishment for Kim's misbehaviors, not allowing him to go to the Chinese weekend school was an effective one. Currently, Kim is attending two different classes in the Chinese weekend school. One is the comprehensive Chinese language class and another one is Chinese geography, culture and history class. Kim is also going to have the Chinese AP class next year and take the AP test when he is in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

#### *Parental language attitudes and ideologies*

By analyzing J family's daily language use, language management as well as biliteracy practices, it is not hard to see that J family emphasizes Chinese language maintenance and development and reinforces the connections between their sons and China. The parents speak Chinese most of the time to the children; the mother teaches her son Chinese since he was little; the mother introduces and guided her son to read books in Chinese; the family goes back to China every two years; the father reinforces the connections between his sons and the relatives in

China by asking them to greet the relatives. The parents hope that learning Chinese would help transmit Chinese culture and customs to their children and help understanding and communicating between parents and children. The mother indicated that it was always a good thing to master additional language and the more skills the children can master, the better. And more importantly, when the children grow up and have the consciousness of seeking their roots, being able to communicate in Chinese is especially significant for them. Although the mother said that she didn't have very high expectations for her son's Chinese skills, she did wish that learning and developing Chinese would help her children to better communicate with the family members, relatives and friends in China and would play a positive role in their future careers and lives.

The parents consistently expressed the importance of Chinese in their daily lives with implicit and explicit ways. Kim was recently asked by his Chinese teacher in Chinese weekend school to participate in the Chinese speech contest held by the school. The father showed him a YouTube video, in which the Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg spoke Chinese the entire time when giving a speech and answering the audiences' questions. Kim was inspired by this video and prepared his speech content about why American Born Chinese (ABC) should learn Chinese.

#### *Interview with the child*

#### *Chinese language and literacy proficiency*

When I interviewed Kim, I spoke Chinese to him and he was able to answer my questions in Chinese the entire time. His Chinese pronunciation is quite authentic with a little northern accent. I think Kim's pronunciation was probably influenced by his mother because his mother comes from northern China. His answer regarding language use between him and his parents

confirmed what the mother told me. He talks about all the things in Chinese to his parents, and he inserts some English words in one sentence, such as *Yeah! No!* Sometimes, he uses English words because he does not know how to say some words in Chinese or he feels some English words are easier to say. Kim attends a magnet charter school of the school district and the school offers Chinese classes, but he doesn't take it because he thinks the class is too easy for him.

Although Kim was able to answer all my questions in Chinese, he spoke very simple or fragmented sentences and some Chinese words he used sound a little awkward. He was able to narrate a thing, but he had a difficult time explaining the reasons and expressing himself in complicated sentences. He just used 不知道 (I don't know) to answer my "why" questions. For example, when I asked him, "Do you think you are a Chinese or an American and why?" He just gave me a simple answer, 中国人吧。我也不知道 (Chinese. I don't know). When he told me that among all the cities he traveled, he liked Hangzhou city the most. I asked why, he also answered I don't know. So, the communication between me and Kim was not smooth and sufficient, even though both of us spoke Chinese and I tried my best to lead him to talk. This also confirms the mom told me that Kim was a quiet kid and usually didn't have much to express. Kim was able to understand all my questions in Chinese without any problem, but it seemed that he had a difficult time expressing his thoughts and feelings in Chinese. The mother believed that it was because of his inborn introvert characteristics.

To assess his Chinese reading ability, I wrote down the titles of Four Great Classical Novels in Chinese, Kim was able to read all the titles without any hesitation. Kim was also able to write down his name in Chinese without any problem. When I asked Kim to read the article I chose from *Qingnianwenzhai* (*Youth Digest*), Kim was able to recognize almost all the characters

and read quite fluently without much of my help. It seems that the Chinese reading experience he had when he was in elementary school is still helpful today to recognize these characters. Therefore, I assess Kim as a quite balanced bilingual whose HL reading proficiency is much better than his oral proficiency.

### *Connection to China*

The connection between Kim's family and China is quite strong, and Kim is very attached to his mother, so Kim's connection to China is quite strong too. All of the parents' relatives live in China. The mother's relatives live in northern China and the father's relatives live in southern China, so Kim has the opportunities to travel across China. Kim goes to China with the family every two years during the summer breaks. Usually, they stay in China for three to four weeks. He visits his maternal and fraternal grandparents and other relatives. During his stay in China, he likes to hang out with his cousin whose age is similar to Kim. He also enjoys travelling in different cities, and he has been to a lot of cities, such as Beijing, Tianjin, Changsha, Hangzhou, Suzhou, Shanghai, and Nanjing. Kim knows about China and he has the general knowledge about the China's geography. When I asked him about the capitals of some provinces, he was able to answer them all correctly. He also likes eating Chinese food. He was very active when looking at the menu and choosing the dishes when the family ate in the restaurants in China.

### *L Family background*

The L family has two working parents with a daughter Jasmine (17 years old). The mother works in the Navy and the father is self-employed. In L family, both parents emigrated from Taiwan to the U.S. at a relatively younger age than other parents I interviewed. The mother came

to the U.S. at age of seventeen with her parents and the father came to the U.S. at fifteen. Their first arrival state is California. According to the mother, she studied in high school for a year after arriving here and had to take the ESL class in school. As she recalled, her ESL instructor was not very good, so her English didn't improve too much during that year. She then attended a community college to study nurse major. She was so stressed when studying it because there were too many terminologies to remember, and meanwhile nurse is a job which requires carefulness and delicateness. So, she felt she was not capable of doing that job and quitted the study. After quitting the nurse study, she tried other private business. However, the mother still desired to land a stable job, so she joined in the Navy in 2009. The father is a business man and he does business between China and U.S. The L family has some relatives in the U.S., but most of the relatives live in Taiwan.

*Language use and practices in English and Chinese as the priority languages family*

*Language spoken between the parents and children*

According to the mother, she always had always been speaking Chinese to her daughter ever since she was born. The mother actually thinks that Chinese is her daughter's first language/mother tongue. The mother said, "I cannot imagine raising and disciplining my daughter in English. I just cannot express my feelings and thoughts in English." Regarding the issue of language choice between parents and the daughter, the parents are on the same page. The father also speaks Chinese most of the time to her daughter. Her daughter also always speaks Chinese most of the time to her mother and father. However, there was a period that Jasmine preferred speaking English to the parents according to the mother. After Jasmine entered the school, she would bring home a lot of English and began to speak English to the parents. The mother pretended not to understand Jasmine's English and insisted on speaking Chinese to Jasmine. If Jasmine speaks English, the mother won't respond to her. The mother then gently

required Jasmine to speak Chinese to her. After some time, Jasmine switched back to speaking Chinese to her parents with the parents' persistence. Similar to the J family, the daily conversation between the parents and daughter is not complete Chinese. They tend to use some English words in the Chinese sentences because there are no corresponding Chinese words, or the daughter doesn't know how to say certain words in Chinese or English words or expressions are more accurate and convenient to express.

#### *Language spoken between the extended family members and children*

The L family has a big extended family. Jasmine has a lot of aunts and uncles, some of whom live in the U.S. and most of whom live in Taiwan. Her grandparents live in the U.S. and also lived with the family for a while. According to the mother, in the U.S., Jasmine always speaks Chinese with the relatives and usually speaks English with the relatives' children. Jasmine speaks Mandarin Chinese all the time with all the relatives in Taiwan. There are a number of the relatives' children in Taiwan whose ages are similar to Jasmine, so Jasmine has plenty of opportunities to speak Mandarin Chinese with those children. Besides Mandarin Chinese, the relatives in Taiwan speak Taiwanese, but Jasmine doesn't understand Taiwanese, so the relatives only speak Mandarin Chinese to her.

#### *Language management and literacy practices*

##### *English management and literacy practices*

Although the mother had always been speaking Chinese with Jasmine, she also paid great attention to Jasmine's English development since she was little. When Jasmine was four years old, the family went back to Taiwan. The mother bought some English teaching and learning materials, so that she could help her daughter with English when they returned to the U.S. The mother used the English materials, including DVD, CD, textbooks, and workbooks to help

Jasmine with English phonetics and pronunciations. The English learning experience was very helpful for Jasmine's English development as well as the whole education experience, which makes her transition into the school system quite smoothly. The mother told me that Jasmine was not placed in the ESL class when she first entered the school. Her teacher didn't know that her native language was Chinese until one year later when the parents were asked to filled out some biographic forms. Jasmine always gets honor when she does the presentations and reports in school.

### *Chinese management and literacy practices*

The parents insist on speaking Chinese to Jasmine and persistently ask Jasmine to speak Chinese to them. Meanwhile, the mother makes efforts to help her daughter with Chinese development. Every time when the family went back to Taiwan, the mother bought a plenty of Chinese story books and materials for her daughter to learn Chinese. The mother often read Chinese story books to Jasmine when she was little. The mother keeps telling Jasmine the importance of learning Chinese and continues instilling the awareness of importance of Chinese to Jasmine when she gets older. The mother said, "I tried my best to create a Chinese language environment at home. My husband and I only spoke Chinese with her, no English at all. It is very important to create and provide this language environment for her. She used to go back to Taiwan before she went to the school. She doesn't go back as frequently as before after she goes to school. However, it also depends. We will reward her with a trip to Taiwan if she does a good job on schoolwork. For her, Taiwan has a lot of fun things to do. There is a student retreat, including a trip to Hong Kong and traveling across the southern Taiwan. There are also lots of relatives' children in Taiwan."

When Jasmine was nine years old, she spent almost over eight months living as well as traveling in mainland China with her father. Her father was doing business in mainland China at that time, and he brought Jasmine with him from the U.S to China. The father hired a private tutor who had a master degree to teach Jasmine reading and writing in Chinese during their stay in China. Jasmine learned to read Chinese characters with the teaching methodology called “*Direct Image*”. The mother said that the classes were very helpful for Jasmine to develop further her Chinese reading and writing proficiency. Jasmine also spent some time traveling across China with her father and she went to a number of cities.

Unlike many Chinese parents who send their children to Chinese weekend school, the mother in L family did not send her daughter to Chinese weekend school to learn Chinese because she thought that Chinese weekend school was not effective in terms of helping children maintaining and developing Chinese proficiency. The mother said, “The kids in Chinese school still speak English with each other. The school is more like a place for kids’ and parents’ socializing. If the parents don’t speak Chinese with the child at home, it is actually a waste of time going to Chinese school. I think the parents wanted to skip the responsibility of teaching Chinese themselves. On the one hand, they wanted their children to speak Chinese; while on the other hand they don’t make efforts and only send their child to the Chinese school once a week, which only gives them a placebo effect.”

The mother is now teaching Jasmine to read Bible in Chinese whenever both of them have time to sit down and spend some time together. She thinks it is an effective way to teach Jasmine to read Chinese character as well as to teach her Christianity through reading Bible with her daughter. Jasmine is now going to a private Christian school and goes to church every



Sunday, so it is easier for her to connect what she learns in school and what she read the Bible in Chinese version.

### *Parental language attitudes and ideologies*

The parental language attitudes in L family have clearly demonstrated in their language practices and language management and literacy practices. Both parents think it is important to maintain and develop their daughter's Chinese. Meanwhile, it is also important to learn English well. Both languages are equally significant in their minds. Both parents think that it is crucial to communicate with their daughter in Chinese all the time. Not only it is significant to communicate in Chinese among the family members but also is it necessary to create a Chinese environment for the children to practically use the language.

Both parents think it is natural and necessary for their daughter to be able to communicate in Chinese and for them to communicate with their daughter in Chinese. Their personal and other people's experiences helped to form their language attitudes and ideologies. The father told me about his personal experience. When he first met his niece and nephew who are born in the U.S., they didn't speak Chinese and only spoke English to him, so the father had a difficult time communicating with them and he felt distant with them. The father expressed his confusion, "How can they not speak Chinese? It is a natural thing to speak Chinese for Chinese descendants no matter where you are born in." The father had a difficult time communicating with those children not because the father cannot speak English, he just expected those children to speak Chinese to him, so that they can communicate more comfortably and closely.

Although the mother moved to an English-speaking country as a relatively young immigrant, she didn't get a chance to develop a high English proficiency. Her first arrival place

is California where there is a significant Chinese population, so she doesn't really need to know much English to get around. The mother said, "You won't learn the language of the country just because you are in that country. Systematic learning and immerse yourself into the language environment are crucial for learning a language successfully. I know some of the immigrants like me, who came to the U.S. to go to the high school. Some of them learned English very well, but they forgot Chinese. Others confined themselves in the Chinese language environment, so they didn't improve their English. So, the language environment is the key." It is because of this belief that the mother makes great efforts to create a Chinese language environment for her daughter to learn Chinese.

When I ask the mother why it is important for her daughter to learn Chinese, the mother expressed the empirical intentions. The mother keeps imbuing the idea and concept that Chinese is extremely important into her daughter's mind. She keeps telling her daughter that China is becoming more and more powerful and China has a huge population. Chinese is going to be very useful in the future and for future career. The parents told their daughter the good and bad experiences of other children and themselves. They told her that their acquaintances' child lose a very good job opportunity because s/he was not able to speak Chinese. The mother can speak three languages: English, Mandarin Chinese, and Taiwanese. Because of her multilingual skills, she gets extra benefits in the Navy and was appointed to coordinate several important events between the U.S. and China in the Navy base. The mother also told her daughter that people usually expect you to be able to speak Chinese because of your appearance and your family background. It will be embarrassing if you cannot speak your own parents' language. In addition, "it is always an advantage to know additional language and I think various languages are transferrable," the mother said.

Moreover, because of the parents' personal immigration experiences, they also realize the importance of learning English when living and working in the U.S. As the mother expressed very clearly, "Chinese is important, and English is also important. Both languages are equally significant for Jasmine."

#### *Interview with the child*

#### *Chinese language proficiency*

Jasmine is an extrovert and talkative girl. When I interviewed Jasmine, I spoke Chinese to her and she was able to understand most of my questions correctly and to answer all my questions in Chinese most of the time. Jasmine confirmed that the language she spoke to her parents is mostly and usually Chinese. She would occasionally speak some English words only when she doesn't know how to say the words in Chinese. Similar to Kim, Jasmine also occasionally inserted some words in her sentences when she was interviewed, such as, *Yeah!*

#### *Community services.*

To assess her Chinese reading ability, I asked Jasmine about her name, she told me that she had two names: a Chinese name and an English name. Her parents usually call her either in her Chinese name or English name. She was able to explain the meanings of her Chinese first name which includes two Chinese characters respectively and wrote down her Chinese name in Chinese characters without any hesitation. I wrote down the titles of Four Great Classical Novels in Chinese, Jasmine was not able to read all the titles. She recognized some of the characters in the titles, but she seems unfamiliar with the books after I helped her read all the titles. When I asked her to read the article I chose from *Qingnianwenzhai (Youth Digest)*, she was able to recognize half of the characters and I helped her finish reading the article whenever she paused.

Therefore, I evaluate Jasmine as a quite balanced bilinguals whose HL oral proficiency is better than reading proficiency.

#### *Connection to mainland China/Taiwan*

When Jasmine was little, the family went back to Taiwan every year or every other year. The family has a lot of relatives and children of the similar age with Jasmine in Taiwan, so Jasmine really likes visiting Taiwan. The longest time Jasmine stayed in Taiwan was six months when her mother was homeschooling her when she was about ten years old. At that time, the father was doing some business in mainland China, so the whole family went to mainland China and stayed there for almost a year when Jasmine was on the fifth grade. Jasmine spent a year living, traveling, and exploring in mainland China at that year with her parents. Jasmine told me that her mother brought the textbooks of the fifth grade and taught her. The father also hired a tutor to teach Jasmine Chinese language and other contents. She also learned Chinese drawing and Taekwondo when she was in mainland China. Jasmine recalled her experiences in Taiwan or mainland China fondly during the interview. The most impressive thing she told me about Taiwan was the night market and she said, “台湾很有活力, 也有很多好吃的。无论你走到哪里, 你都可以买到食物, 象路边摊。台湾我有很多亲戚, 也有很多好吃的食物。” (Taiwan is very lively and has lots of food. Wherever you go and walk to, you can buy food, like street food. I have lots of relatives there, and then lots of delicious food there.) It is obvious that she loves and enjoys the experience of living in Taiwan and mainland China. She was very willing to share and communicate with me in Chinese. The bond between Jasmine and Taiwan is pretty strong.

Jasmine didn't go back to Taiwan as frequent as before since she entered the junior high school and was getting busy with her school work. However, the mother rewards Jasmine with the retreat in Taiwan if she studies hard. There is a Christian Youth Retreat in summer every year in Taiwan, so if Jasmine did well in school, the mother rewards her with the retreat.

### Chinese as the Priority FLP

#### *A Family background*

The A family is a single-mother family with two sons (Eason, 23 years old; Adam, 19 years old). The mother came to the U.S. in May 1990 and settled down in a city of the East coast. The mother is originally from Beijing and she has a Bachelor degree received in China. She has been a full time stay-at-home mom ever since she arrived in the U.S. Her first son was born in 1992 and the second son was born in 1995. When Eason, the older son, was eleven months, the mother brought him back to China and lived there for about two years until Eason was three and half years old. When Adam, the younger son, was four years old, the mother also brought him back to China and lived there for nine months and returned to the U.S. when Adam was about to enter the kindergarten. Both sons did not go to the preschool and the mother took care of them the most of time. Eason has graduated from college and is now doing his internship in the Beijing branch of an American-based financial company. Adam is now studying in a medical college with full scholarship.

#### *Language use and practices in Chinese as the priority family*

#### *Language spoken between the parents and children*

The language spoken between the mother and children had always been Chinese ever since the children were born. Because the mother didn't work, she spent long time with two sons at home. Chinese is the language for communication at all domains of their lives. The children didn't go to the afterschool, so they were with the mother right after the school. According to the mother, she spent a lot of time chatting with the sons about their everyday life when they were in the elementary school. The mother and sons chatted and talked about everything, including the school life, their friends in school, what they liked and what they did not like, and why. The mother talked to the sons while she was doing the housework. The mother continued the chatting habit with her sons, and she spent more time chatting with the children when they were in middle school. They talked about more topics in depth, such as their school life, their study, their friends, their teachers, their feelings, views and thoughts on things. The mother spent at least two hours a day to talk with the sons during their middle school years, according to the mother's recalling. The mother said that her sons really like talking and she was talking with them all the time. The mother contributes the native level fluency of her sons' spoken Chinese to the quality talking time. As the mother recalled, the two sons spoke Chinese with each other when they were in elementary school, and they switched to speak English among themselves after they entered the middle school. However, the children kept speaking Chinese to the mother. The mother said, "Right now, the brothers speak English with each other, but they switch to Chinese when speaking to me. The language switch happens very fast and it is very natural for them. They are used to think in both English and Chinese. I think that's the extraordinary point."

Contrary to the other families I interviewed, the children speak English to the mother when they talk about daily trivial things, and the mother sometimes uses English words or

expressions, such as the names of the food, etc. However, when it comes to the important issues, the children speak Chinese with the mother.

#### *Language spoken between the extended family members and children*

The language spoken between Eason and Adam with all the relatives and friends in China is Chinese. The A family has a big extended family, including grandparents, two uncles, and two aunts, and uncles and aunts' children. The relatives of the A family are all living in Beijing China and the family pays frequent visits to China. The mother takes her sons to go back to China almost every summer break even after they enter the middle school. The grandparents helped raising Eason and Adam when they were little, so they are very close to the grandparents. Eason and Adam have two cousins whose ages are similar to them, so they like to hang out together with their cousins and the cousins' friends. Eason and Adam's uncles and aunts also like to chat with them and often take them out for dinner with other friends. Eason and Adam also travelled a lot with their uncles, aunts, and cousins when they were in China.

#### *Language management and literacy practices*

##### *English management and literacy practices*

According to the mother, her sons were in the ESL class for less than one year after they entered the school. They soon joined the mainstream class without any big language problems. The mother taught the children some English letter recognition, writing, simple grammar, and helped their homework when they were in the elementary school, but she didn't continue doing so when the children were in the middle school. She also took the children to the library and borrowed English books and videos. She sometimes read the Bible in English to the children when they were little, but she didn't do so when they grew a little older. The mother would also

let the children watch English cartoons on TV. The mother admitted that she didn't spend much time on helping her children with English. She didn't talk to her sons in English at all or teach them English pronunciation because she was afraid that her pronunciation would confuse or affect them negatively. For English development, she basically expected the school and the sons themselves to do the most of the job. The mother was never worried about the children's English language development because she thought her sons were language sensitive and very talkative. They were able to learn English very fast in the English-speaking environment.

### *Chinese management and literacy practices*

The mother had a lot of time accompanying her two sons and she spent significant time talking and chatting with her sons in Chinese ever since they were little. She sent the sons to the Chinese weekend school when they were just four years old, however Adam didn't continue to go to the Chinese weekend school in the middle school. The mother thinks that going to the Chinese weekend school is not the only way to help children maintain and development Chinese. She taught her sons Chinese character recognition and handwriting herself when they were before and in the elementary school years. She also taught them how to use Chinese dictionary to find out specific characters when they were little. The mother told me an anecdote of Adam's learning Chinese characters. When Adam was four years old, he went to the Chinese weekend school. The teacher asked the students to practice writing Chinese characters by writing a row of the same characters. Adam first wrote “字” (word) in a row, and then he wrote “学” (study) in another row. Adam got bored when writing the same character many times, so he forgot to write the three dots of “学” and only wrote one dot just like the character above “字”. Adam said, “They look like the same! Chinese is too difficult to learn!” after the mother pointed out his



mistake. The mother helped him notice the difference between these two characters by making an analogy of the character “学” with the actor’s name, “三毛” (three dots) in a Chinese movie Adam just watched. Now, the character seems not tedious any more. The mother then asked him to find out all the characters with the part “学字头” in the dictionary. It turned out that Adam found many characters with the part “学字头”, so he could not help asking, “Why there are so many characters with the part “学字头”?” The mother patiently guided Adam and told him that the parts were very useful when learning Chinese characters. Some of the parts are responsible for the meaning, and some of the parts are responsible for the pronunciation. She further asked Adam to find two parts, one of which is for meaning and another one is for pronunciation. Finally, Adam found out two parts, “雨” is for meaning, which is water related, and “曼” is for pronunciation. Adam later admitted to his mom, “Mom, the Chinese characters are really interesting!”

In addition, the mother bought many popular Chinese videos, including children’s movies, cartoons, and TV series when they went back to China. She told me that Eason and Adam liked watching these Chinese movies, cartoons, and TV series. They can understand those Chinese videos without any problems. The mother thinks that she has always been trying hard to create a Chinese-speaking environment for her sons.

The mother also teaches the sons Chinese vocabulary by talking in Chinese all the time, even when the Chinese words are complex and complicated. The children naturally picked up those Chinese vocabulary during their daily conversations. The mother said, “They are used to speak Chinese with me all the time, and they won’t bring English home. All the conversations between my sons and me are spoken in Chinese. If they don’t know some Chinese word, I will

say the word in Chinese. For example, if they say, “yogurt”, I will say “*suannai*” (酸奶). If they say “*stubborn*”, I will say “*guzhi*” (固执). They will say the words in Chinese next time. When the mother says some difficult Chinese words, they can guess the meaning of the words from the context. For example, the mother talked about the phenomenon of some Chinese young people’s life and she used the word “*shechi*” (奢侈) *luxurious* in English. When Adam was just about to ask the mother the meaning of the word, he quickly figured it out by himself, and next time when he talks about similar issues, he can use the Chinese word “奢侈”. The mother also feels surprised when Adam says complicated words in Chinese in their conversations, and Adam explained that he learned them from the conversations with the mother.

#### *Parental language attitudes and ideologies*

The A family’s language attitudes and ideologies are clearly reflected by the language practices and literacy practices. The mother believes that it is crucial to keep speaking Chinese all the time to her children. She said, “I keep telling myself that I must speak Chinese to them even if they speak English to me. I cannot imagine talking or chatting with my children in English because English is not my native language. I don’t feel comfortable speaking it with my children. I cannot express comfortably and precisely what I think and feel in English. Moreover, I think the children don’t have the patience to communicate with me with my broken English.”

When I asked the mother if she was worried about her sons English development without speaking any English at home, the mother told me that she was not concerned about their English at all. She further explained, “To the contrary, I was afraid that I would teach them wrong English pronunciations or grammar and made them confused. I have read quite a lot of books on language acquisition. My mother tongue is Chinese, not English. Chinese and English have

different pronunciations and pronunciation habits, and you have to use different organs to pronounce certain sounds. Even though I myself think my English pronunciation is correct, I may teach the children wrong pronunciation, so I don't speak English to my children at all. They will learn English from the teachers and peers in school, and I am not qualified to teach them English, especially on pronunciation.”

The mother believes that consistency and persistence is the key to help children maintain and develop Chinese. She keeps speaking Chinese with her children and she believes that communicating in Chinese with children is the most effective way to maintain and develop Chinese. She explained, “I speak Chinese to my children even though they are Americans. The process of learning a language is using the language. I don't really care how many times they write the Chinese characters.”

The mother also thinks a language as a tool, and that any language is important, which brings more opportunities later in life. She also strongly believes that mastering an additional language is an advantage as well as an important skill. Children won't get confused when learning multiple languages. She said, “Learning a language is to train your brain and to train your thinking. Adam, the younger son, can speak French, Japanese, and Russian besides English and Chinese. He reads French newspaper online every day. I also know a person who can speak seven languages. I asked him if he will mix up the languages and the answer is No.”

Moreover, the mother hopes that her children can communicate smoothly and comfortably with the people in China since she has a lot of close relatives and friends there.

*Interview with the child*

*Chinese language and literacy proficiency*

I interviewed the younger son, Adam. He is 18 years old and studying in a medical school. I spoke Chinese with him during the interview time and he understood and answered all my questions in Chinese without my clarification or explanations. His Chinese pronunciation sounds very authentic and with some Beijing accent. It is hard to believe that he was born and educated in the U.S. by listening to his Chinese pronunciation. When he answered my questions, he was very talkative and eloquent since he did not only simply answer my questions but also he was able to talk beyond the questions and explain further. He also used complicated Chinese vocabulary and complex Chinese sentence structures when he spoke. Speaking with Adam in Chinese is like speaking with a Chinese native speaker. He can speak Chinese very fluently and communicate with me comfortably.

He confirmed that the main means of learning Chinese was through talking with his mother and the relatives in China. He said, “I have a very close relationship with my mom and the relatives in my mom’s side. My mom is my best friend, and I talk about everything in my life with her. I only speak Chinese with my mom and the relatives. I am so glad that my mom insists on speaking Chinese with me, otherwise my Chinese and English won’t be as good as now. I know some other kids like me, who were born in here, but their moms speak English to them. They (the mother) may not notice their wrong pronunciations, but it affects their children’s English pronunciation, such as the sound of “*th*” in “*Thank you*”. Even though they are ABC, some of their English pronunciations are not correct. My mom only speaks Chinese with me, so I can now speak good Chinese and good English.”

To assess his Chinese literacy proficiency, I asked him to write down his name. He was able to write it down without any problem. When I wrote down the titles of Four Great Classical Novels in Chinese, Adam was able to read all the titles and told me that he watched the cartoon

version of the books, but he never read the original books because it would be too difficult for him. Adam was able to recognize almost two third of the characters in the article. Therefore, I assess Adam as a quite balance bilingual whose HL oral proficiency is much better than his reading proficiency.

### *Connection to China*

Adam goes back to China almost every year. He told me that he really liked to spend time with his grandparents, uncle, aunts, and his cousins either at home or traveling. There are a lot of interesting things to do for him when he is China. He would live in either his uncle's home or aunts' home and hang out with his cousins. All the relatives treated him very well and passionately. They would cook many delicious Chinese dishes for him, take him out for dinner, bring him out to have fun, and take him to travel. Adam recalled that he went back to China by himself when he was fourteen years old, and his aunt brought him and his cousin to travel across the Yangtze River. He chatted with other people when he was on a boat when visiting the Three Gorges, and he asked others to guess where he was from. Other people all thought he was from Beijing. He told others that he was from America, and the people were very surprised about his fluent Chinese. He was very happy because all the people around him praised his fluent and authentic Chinese and he sounds like a Beijing native, instead of a foreigner.

Like with his mother, Adam also talks about all kinds of things with his relatives in China. He has a very close relationship with all of them. What he hears, sees, and feels in China every year contribute to his understanding of China as well as his Chinese language proficiency.

Adam also told me that he always chatted with his uncles and aunts about current affairs in China. His uncle really likes to talk about Chinese political and economic topics at home with

the family members, so Adam hears a lot and he also often participates in these conversations and expresses his thoughts and opinions in Chinese by comparing the similarities and differences between China and the U.S. When Adam hangs out with his cousins, he also has opportunities to listen and chat with his cousins' friends. Through interacting with them, he learned a lot about Chinese education system, the challenges and issues the Chinese young generations are facing, and various social problems. When Adam travels with his relatives in China, he likes listening to people's conversations on the train and on the bus. and he also witnessed some sociocultural phenomenon in China.

Adam also told me that his aunt-in-law was a famous TV series director in China, and he went to the TV shooting site in Shenzhen city, which is located in the very south of China, to see how the TV series are made last summer. That was an eye-opening experience for him and he also learned some movie-making skills from it.

Table 24

Summary of Children’s Profiles

	David in W family	Jessica in Z family	Kim in J family	Jasmine in L family	Adam in A family
<b>Chinese spoken proficiency</b>	Understand simple questions; limited vocabulary; speaks with American accent	Understand complex questions; code-switch a lot; speak Chinese with American accent	Understand complex questions; speak complete sentences with northern Chinese accent	Understand complex questions; Speak complete sentences with American accent	Understand complex questions; Speak very fluent Chinese with complicated vocabulary
<b>Chinese literacy proficiency</b>	Unable to say or write his Chinese name.	Unable to write her Chinese name; Able to recognize the four titles and read the article with substantial help	Able to write his Chinese name; Able to tell all four titles and read the article with a little help	Able to write her Chinese name; Able to recognize the four titles and read the article with some help	Able to write his Chinese name; Able to recognize the four titles and read the article with some help
<b>Main caregiver before school</b>	0-11 months: grandparents 11-18 months: Cantonese-speaking nanny 18 months later: English-speaking homecare giver	0-12 months: mom 1-5 1/2 years: grandparents 12 months old later: grandparents	0-24 months: mom 2-3 years: full-day preschool 3 years old later: mom	0-6 years old: mom	0-4 years: mom 4-5 years: grandparents 5 years old later: mom
<b>Personality</b>	Reserved	Obedient	Very quiet and reserved	Outgoing	Outgoing and eloquent
<b>Age</b>	15	16	15	17	18

## *Findings for Research Question 1*

### *Language practices between the family members*

For the five Chinese immigrant families in the qualitative study, the language practices between the family members consistent with the survey data. The parents in four of the five families always speak Chinese with each other, except the W family. The parents in W family sometimes speak English with each other, as the mother said, “We speak Chinese 70% of the time and speak English 30% of the time.” The language spoken between the children and the extended family members again are always Chinese, except the W family. Because the grandparents in W family can speak English, the children speak English to the grandparents and the grandparents also sometimes speak English to their grandchildren. The language practices between the parents and children generally mix Chinese and English. Parents in Z, J, L, and A families tend to speak Chinese mostly to their children, while parents in W family speak English mostly to the children. Children in W and Z family speak English mostly to their parents, while children in J, L and A family speak Chinese mostly to their parents. Pure monolingual language practices, either pure English or pure Chinese, seldom exist in these families. The difference among these different families is which language is spoken more than another.

The interview data also reveals that the families’ language practices appear to be a continuum. The W family has the least Chinese language practices and the most English language practices, while the A family has the most Chinese language practices and the least English language practices between parents and children. Meanwhile, the interview data discovers that the language practices are also involving and changing over the time in these families, which the survey data didn’t find out. Similarly, Park (2007) also found out that



language practices in Korean immigrants' families are involving and changing over the time. The parents may speak Korean to the first child, speak English to the second child, and switch back to Korean to the third child. Differently, this study finds out that parents may change their language practices with one child over the time. For example, the W parents spoke almost all English to their sons when they were enrolled in the special language preschool program. The parents gradually increase the amount of Chinese speaking to their sons when talking about the daily trivial things. Now, the parents intentionally speak more Chinese to their sons, in hoping that their children can still pick up and learn some Chinese. The children, on the other hand, still prefer speaking English to their parents with very few Chinese words. Different from W family, the language practices between the parents and their daughter in Z family were all Chinese when the daughter first arrived in the U.S. Gradually, the daughter started to speak more and more English to her parents over the ten years and now she speaks English mostly to her parents with limited Chinese words and phrases. The change is subtle and gradual, and even the parents are unaware of it, as the mother said, "We don't feel she is speaking English to us. We are used to that. We, from time to time, speak English to her too. I didn't realize her Chinese could lose until one day I showed her a simple Chinese sentence and she didn't understand the meaning." The parents speak Chinese mostly to the child and sometimes insert some English words and phrases now. However, The parents' language practices in J, L, and A family with their children haven't changed much over the time, the only difference is that now they speak a little more English and tend to use more English words or phrases in their conversations with children, as the mother in A family said, "sometimes, it is more natural to say English, such as, *leave a message*. Chinese sometimes sounds more redundant and unnatural for certain expressions." This result correspond well with Shin's (2005) study. Shin also found out that the longer the parents live in the U.S., the

more English the parents would like to speak with their children. Therefore, as the parents live in the U.S. longer, for example, like the Z, J, L, and A parents in my study, they started to learn to accommodate English words and phrases into their Chinese and speak more English to their children. Sometimes, it is more convenient to express in English because some English words and phrases are more accurate or economic than some Chinese words and phrases, as the mother in A family stated above.

The interview data also discovers an interesting phenomenon about the language practices between parents and children. The parents choose their language spoken with their children, basing on the topics. The W family, which is English as the priority family and the A family, which is Chinese as the priority family, have completely distinctive language practices. According to the mother in W family, she chose to speak Chinese when talking about trivial things, such as “What’s for dinner?” She chose to speak English when talking about serious things, such as school life and current affairs with her children. Oppositely, the mother in A family speaks more English and use more English words when talking about trivial things, for example, the name of the food (e.g., strawberry, yogurt) and life necessities (e.g., blanket). She always speaks Chinese with her children when they talk about her sons’ school life, feelings, emotions, and thoughts.

Consistent with the survey data, children in the qualitative study always speak English with their siblings. Three out of the five families have more than one child, and children in these families prefer speaking English with their siblings. Children who don’t have siblings in other two families prefer speaking English with the peers. Even in A family, Chinese as the priority family, the two children have started to speak English with each other since they were in junior high school, according to the mother.

### *Language management*

#### *English language management*

Among the five families, only the children in the W family went to the special intervention preschool program by the parents' choice. Jessica in the Z family, Jasmine in the L family, and Adam in the A family went to the ESL pull-out class when they entered the school by school's mandatory. Kim in the J family didn't attend the ESL class.

#### *Chinese language management*

Regarding the Chinese language requirement, the interview data is not consistent with the survey data. In the survey data, only very small size of parents require the children to speak only Chinese. In the interview data, two of five families (J and L family) specifically require the children to speak only Chinese at home and one family (A family) has an unspoken Chinese only environment at home. The mother in J family admitted that Kim started to bring English home after he entered the kindergarten. The mother recalled that she would request Kim to stop speaking English at home by saying, "Could you stop speaking English to us?" The mother said that Kim switched back to speak only Chinese after a while. The mother in L family had the same experience with the mother in J family. She also clearly demanded her daughter, Jasmine, to stop speaking English at home when Jasmine brought English home from school. At first, Jasmine resisted the demand and still spoke English. Under the persistent demand of her parents, she switched back to speak Chinese at home. Other two families (W and Z family) don't have Chinese only policy at home and leave the language choice to the children, as the mother in Z family admitted, "We never force her to speak Chinese with us and we don't require her to speak only Chinese at home." Even after Jessica decided to take Chinese AP test, the parents still don't

require her to speak Chinese and Jessica still prefer speaking English to the parents, as the mother said, “We don’t know how motivated she is since she still speak English to us most of the time. She seldom practices speaking Chinese with us.”

Four of the five families sent their children to the Chinese weekend school to learn and maintain Chinese. David in W family went to the school for only one year when he was in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Adam in the A family went to the school during his elementary school years (six years). Jessica in Z family and Kim in J family went to the school from kindergarten till today (ten years). Jasmine in L family didn’t attend the Chinese weekend school at all.

From the interview data, it was found out that sending children to attend Chinese weekend school does not necessarily mean that the parents view Chinese as important, or they speak Chinese to their children, or they require their children to speak Chinese. For W family, English as the priority language family, English has always been the language spoken between the parents and children. Sending the children to Chinese weekend school was only decided by the father while the mother was not very supportive. The father hoped that the children would learn some Chinese only because of China’s rising economic power. In Z family, language testing as the priority family, although the child has been attending Chinese weekend school for ten years since kindergarten, the parents don’t require the child to speak Chinese or reinforce Chinese literacy practices at home. This finding echoes with Kondo (1998)’s study. One of the participants with limited HL proficiency in Kondo’s study recalled that he had been sent to Japanese heritage language school for eleven years, but the school was only a socializing place with peers for him, and his parents also spoke English to him all the time.

On the other hand, the interview data reveals that not sending children to attend Chinese weekend school does not necessarily mean that parents hold negative attitudes towards Chinese learning and maintenance. For example, the mother in L family did not send her daughter to Chinese weekend school because she did not think it was helpful for her daughter to maintain Chinese if the students in the school still spoke English with each other. She said, “I don’t think attending Chinese weekend school is effective for Chinese maintenance. I once visited the school and found out the children speak English with each other. Parents just want to skip their responsibility of teaching Chinese to their children.” The mother in A family did send her son to Chinese weekend school during his elementary school time, but she expressed similar idea with the mother in L family that attending Chinese weekend school was not the only way to maintain Chinese and parents themselves had to make efforts to help children reinforce what was learnt in school.

### *Literacy practices*

#### *English literacy practices*

Consistent with the survey data, majority of the mothers started reading English books to children before they entered the school. Four out of the five mothers, except the mother in Z family, all read English story books to the children before they went to the school. The mothers in W and J family started the children’s English literacy activities from the children’s toddler years, and the mothers in L and A family started the children’s English literacy activities around age of four and five. The English literacy activities in these four families before the children go to school mainly include letter recognition, story reading, library visits, pronunciation learning, and video/cartoon watching. After the children entered the school, all five mothers helped with

the children's homework more or less. However, comparing to other four mothers, the mother in W family makes the greatest efforts on helping her sons with English. She reads English books to her sons until 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and has been consistently helping with English assignments and projects until today. Differently, the mothers in J, L, and A family only read English stories before their children entered school and helped with homework occasionally during their children's elementary school years. The English literacy practices in the Z family is different than other four families. Before the daughter entered the school, there was no English literacy practices took place because the daughter lived in the home country till five and half years old. After the daughter entered the elementary school, the parents sometimes helped with homework. After the daughter entered the junior high school, the father paid great attention to her daughter's English essay writing. The father in Z family is the editor and commentator of her daughter's each essay assignment. He borrowed many books about English essays writing from the library and even makes PowerPoint to teach his daughter.

### *Chinese literacy practices*

Regarding the Chinese literacy activities, three out of the five mothers (J, L, and A family) started practicing them before the children attended the school. The Chinese literacy activities during this stage consist of parents' Chinese story reading, Chinese character recognition and handwriting, and Chinese cartoon watching. After the children attended the school, the Chinese literacy practices have been dramatically decreasing and the time spent on Chinese literacy practices has become very limited as the children have more schoolwork and other extracurricular activities, especially after the children enter the junior high school. In the interview data, three mothers (in J, Z, and L family) had tried their best to help the children with Chinese literacy practices even after the children went to the school.

Among the five children in my study, Kim is the only child who is able to read Chinese chapter story book when he was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Kim's mother started to teach him Chinese characters reading since he was two years old. Kim enjoyed reading Chinese cartoon books and going to Chinese weekend school. Kim's mother vividly remembered that Kim always put several Chinese cartoon books in his backpack and happily went to the school. The punishment for Kim was not going to Chinese weekend school. The mother also employed some strategies when practicing Chinese literacy activities. She purposefully chose some interesting Chinese story books which were appropriate for his age to read in order to further develop his interest in Chinese language and literature. She first introduced and read the books to Kim, and he was then attracted by the interesting plots and started to read by himself. However, Kim's mother didn't monitor his Chinese reading after he was in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Kim's mother admitted, "He somehow lost the interest in Chinese reading and learning now. He now spends his free time reading English books and playing video games, and maybe occasionally browses his old Chinese books."

The mothers in Z and L family got involved with Chinese literacy practices after their daughters went to the high school. Interestingly, it was the child in Z family who initiated the Chinese literacy activities. Jessica in Z family is the only child who decides to take Chinese AP test by her own choice among the five children in my study. Jessica wanted her mother to teach her Chinese learning, so her mother started to help with her Chinese every Saturday morning. All the Chinese literacy practices in the Z family are about passing the test, which include Chinese character recognition and paragraph or passage comprehension. Jessica's mother usually prepares some Chinese literacy materials, which are found in the Internet, for her to study. For example, the mother finds a short article or a piece of news from the Internet and let her read and

explain the meaning. Such literacy practices are not only limited to Saturday morning. According to Jessica, her mother sometimes takes out iPad and find out some Chinese written materials for her to read when they go out for dinner and are waiting for the dishes at the restaurant.

The mother in L family bought a plenty of Chinese story books and materials for her daughter to learn Chinese when they went back to Taiwan. The mother often read Chinese story books to Jasmine when she was little. The mother kept telling Jasmine the importance of learning Chinese and continued instilling the awareness of importance of Chinese to Jasmine when she got older. The mother said, “I tried my best to create a Chinese language environment at home. My husband and I only spoke Chinese with her, no English at all. It is very important to create and provide this language environment for her. She used to go back to Taiwan before she went to the school. She doesn’t go back as frequently as before after she goes to school. However, it also depends. We will reward her with a trip to Taiwan if she does a good job on schoolwork. For her, Taiwan has a lot of fun things to do. There is a student retreat, including a trip to Hong Kong and traveling across the southern Taiwan. There are also lots of relatives’ children in Taiwan.”

Now, the mother also helps Jasmine with Chinese literacy by reading the Bible in Chinese version after she enters the high school. The mother hopes that she can help Jasmine reinforce her Chinese character recognition by reading Chinese Bible together. According to the mother, she sometimes reads to her daughter, and sometimes they read together. Because of her mother’s busy working schedule, the reading time is quite limited, as the mother said, “I try to squeeze twenty minutes every day before her bed time to practice Bible reading with my daughter, but sometimes she is tired and I am tired too, so we skip reading. We should have definitely spent more time reading Chinese, otherwise she will forget what she learnt before. Actually she has forgotten a lot.”



### *Language attitudes and ideologies*

The language attitudes and ideologies of the five families in this study vary greatly and the different parental language attitudes and ideologies are reflected through their different language practices with children, their different language management for English and Chinese language development, and their biliteracy practices with the children. The W family is a typical family which puts English and assimilation as the priority and views Chinese maintenance is not important for both children and family. The mother in W family does not think that Chinese is important for her children and she sees no connection between her children and the home country. She also believes that learning additional language may confuse children and may cause the children's language development delay. She views speaking and behaving in an appropriate mainstream way as extremely important for her children. The Z family is a typical family which does not have a clear family language policy with minimal parental interference. The parents never force or require the child to speak Chinese and leave the language choice to the child. However, the family emphasizes on preparing for tests on both languages. The L and J family emphasizes the importance of English and Chinese. Both mothers view being bilingual and biliterate as an asset and advantage for their children. The mother in L family believes that learning Chinese is beneficial for her child's future study and career. The mother in J family thinks that learning Chinese is helpful for the children to communicate with the family members and she can transmit Chinese culture to her children. The mother in A family believes that children can be multilingual without any confusion. She thinks that maintaining Chinese is extremely important for both children and family and that being bilingual/multilingual and biliterate/multiliterate as a huge advantage and as an effective means to connect not only with the home country and culture but also with other countries and cultures.

## *Findings for Research Question 2*

### *Factors Which Affect Family Language Practices*

#### *The relationship between the parents/mothers and children*

In the five participating families, the parents in four families (Z, J, L, and A family) choose to speak Chinese mostly with their children. The children in three families (J, L, and A family) choose to speak Chinese mostly with their parents. According to the interview data, the families in which parents and children choose to communicate in Chinese have close family ties and parent-children relationship is intimate. This intimate relationship has been firmly established before children enter the school system. The children in J, L, and A family are more willing to adapt to the parents' language choice and preference, while children in W and Z family are more willing to insist their own language choice and preference. For example, the mothers in J, L, and A family have been the major caregivers and they have spent lot of time with their children, and the mothers have started speaking Chinese to their children since they were born. Chinese has been the language for communication between the parents and children ever since the children were little. Once the language codes have formed between the parents and children, it is difficult to break it. It is worth noticing that these three mothers were all stay-at-home moms when the children were little. The child, Kim, in J family was sent to daycare for one year, but the child, Jasmine and Adam, in L and A family was never sent to daycare. The language exposure and input for Kim, Jasmine, and Adam before entering school is Chinese mostly, but they did have different degree of English exposure, such as Kim's one-year daycare experience, Jasmine's English pronunciation learning by listening to CD, and Adam's English learning by watching cartoons in English. However, the mothers in W and Z family have full-

time jobs. The interactions and the time spent together between mothers and children are relatively less than the mothers in J, L, and A family. David in W family was mainly taken care of by other caregivers instead of the mother before going to school, such as grandparents, nanny, and family caregiver, and Jessica in Z family was taken care of by her grandparents before uniting with her mother and entering kindergarten.

This finding is well consistent with one of the findings in Luo and Wiseman (2000)'s study. In their study, it was found out that mother-child cohesiveness is a significant factor/mediator on children's Chinese proficiency, Chinese use, and children's attitude toward HL maintenance.

Therefore, I argue that the more time the mothers spend with their children when the children are little, the closer their relationship will be later. Once the close relationship has been formed by speaking in Chinese with each other and once the habit of speaking Chinese with each other has been formed before the children enter the school, it is much harder to break the language practices habit. As mothers in J and L family admitted that Kim and Jasmine did bring English home after they enter the school, they willingly switched to Chinese when the mothers requested them to speak Chinese. In A family, Adam never brings home English and always speak Chinese with his mother because the unspoken agreement has established firmly between him and his mother. The children may feel closer with their mothers if they choose to speak Chinese because they understand that Chinese is the language which their mothers are more comfortable with, like Kim in J family said, "I don't speak English to them because they always speak Chinese. It feels weird if I speak English to them!" However, in Z family, the intimate relationship between the mother and Jessica has not been formed when Jessica was little, so the mother had a difficult time requesting her daughter to speak Chinese, or the mother was not

willing to force her daughter to do anything against her daughters' willingness, such as speaking Chinese. Meanwhile, the daughter does not think that Chinese is necessarily the language spoken with her parents because their intimate relationship does not established through speaking Chinese. She might consciously or unconsciously choose English to speak with them to show the distance.

*The advice from other sources: pediatrician, language speech expert, language acquisition expert, other Chinese parents, and books on children's language development*

Parents' language practice with children may be influenced by suggestions and advice from other sources, including pediatrician, language speech expert, language acquisition expert, other Chinese parents, and books on children's language development. For example, in W family, the mother chose to speak English only to her son, David, since he was two years old after the pediatrician diagnosed that David might have language delay and the language speech therapist confirmed the delay. Either the pediatrician or the speech therapist suggested the mother only speak one language, English, to David in order to accelerate the language development. Even though the mother did some online research herself and asked for opinions of other older Chinese parents and found her son's language delay minor, she still decided to follow the pediatrician or the language speech therapist's suggestion. For the mother, the pediatrician or the language speech therapist's opinion was the authority and she had to follow carefully and strictly, as she explained, "We are obedient in terms of listening to and following the authority." In Shin (2005)'s study, she similarly found out that poor advice from professionals was one of the factors which contribute to language shift in immigrants' family. She argued that Korean parents were anxious to see their children excel academically even at very young ages and the possibility of falling behind in school was the genuine source of worry. Therefore, the parents

are extremely vulnerable to the advice of teachers and childcare professionals who presumably know what is best for the children. Some of the Korean parents in Shin's study are very similar to the parents in W family in my study.

For Z family, the mother also listens to the experience and suggestions from other Chinese parents. Long before her daughter's arrival in the U.S., other parents warned the mother about the probable loss of Chinese language once the children enter the school. They told the mother that it was not necessary to worry about their English language development because they were able to learn the language fast in school by themselves. What she really needed to worry about was her daughter's Chinese maintenance. So, the mother seldom spoke English and spoke Chinese mostly to her daughter. She hoped that speaking Chinese most of the time to her daughter could help maintain her Chinese proficiency.

For L family, the parents attended a workshop presented by a language acquisition expert in a university. The workshop explained how children acquired a language and how children were able to acquire two or more languages. As the mother stated, "the children's brain is wired to learn many languages. They will not get confused, and their brain is able to figure all that out. They will learn whatever you teach them just like sponge. Bilingual children are smarter." After the workshop, the parents further confirm their language practice with their daughter, which is only speaking Chinese with her and requiring her to speak only Chinese with them, so that they can help their daughter maintain and develop Chinese proficiency.

The mother in A family read some books and articles regarding the language acquisition and multilingual development for children. She therefore learned some knowledge about language acquisition and learning. She never spoke English to her sons because she knew that

the pronunciation organs or the position of the tongue for Chinese and English was quite different. Some English pronunciations are unique and some Chinese pronunciations are unique as well. She explained, “Even though I think I may speak the correct English, I probably teach the wrong pronunciation to my sons. English is not my mother tongue, so I am not comfortable or confident enough to speak it with my children. I am afraid to teach them something wrong.”

Therefore, the mothers in my study make the decision of language practices with their children basing on the advice and suggestions from a variety of sources, including pediatrician, language speech therapist, other Chinese parents, language acquisition expert, and books on children’s language development.

#### *Parents’ education background and English language proficiency*

Among the five families in the qualitative study, only the mother in W family was educated in the U.S. for her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees. Other mothers either didn’t get high education in the U.S. or received the high education in the U.S. at their late 20s and early 30s. The mothers in Z and J family came to the U.S. for their doctoral degrees. The mother in A family stayed at home and took care of children since she moved to the U.S. The mother in L family came to the U.S. to finish her last-year high school and attended a community college. In terms of English proficiency, the mother in W family has the highest English proficiency because she has four-year undergraduate education and two-year master study and has been working for a company which needs constantly communicate with others afterwards. The mothers in Z family and J family have good English proficiency because they were accepted and educated by the U.S. universities for graduate study. The mother in L family also has good English proficiency since she arrives here at relatively younger age comparing to other mothers

and attended one-year high school and two-year community college. The mother in A family may have the lowest English proficiency because she has been a stay-at-home mom since she came to the U.S.

Because of her relatively fluent and high English proficiency, the mother in W family may decide to choose to speak to her sons in English and her sons may intentionally speak only English to her, as she explained, “the kids are smart and they know that there is no problem to communicate with me in English. Since I came to U.S. at a relatively young age and has been in the States for years by the time kids were born, fortunate or unfortunate, I feel speaking English with kids comes naturally.”

Although the mothers in Z, J, and L family have good master of English, they still prefer speaking Chinese mostly with their children. The mothers in Z and J family took English language proficiency test, for example, TOEFL and graduate entrance exam, for example, GRE, but their oral English doesn't allow them to communicate comfortably with their children. Therefore, they chose Chinese to speak with their children. They occasionally speak English to their children for the sake of convenience, but most of the time, they speak Chinese to the children. The mother in Z family said, “I still prefer speaking Chinese to my daughter, even though she speaks English to me most of the time.” The mother in J family also expressed, “Chinese is the language I feel comfortable to communicate with my children. It is hard to imagine that I discipline them in English.” For these three mothers, Chinese is still the language to express their feelings and emotions comfortably and freely and to better communicate with their children.

The mother in A family has the lowest level of English among the five mothers. She has the Bachelor degree from China and has been a stay-at-home mom ever since she came to the

U.S. She has a certain level of English language proficiency and she has learned English in China. However, her English proficiency didn't make her feel comfortable to speak with her sons. She did not want to communicate with her sons and to educate her sons with her broken English, as she explained, "I cannot communicate deeply with my children in English. English is not my native language. I am afraid that I will teach them bad English if I speak with them in English. Meanwhile, they (the kids) do not have the patience to communicate with you with your broken English."

*Parents' personal experience and others' experience*

Parents' personal experience may also influence their language practices with their children. The mother in W family came to the U.S. for the Bachelor degree in her early 20s and she had to work part-time in McDonald's to support herself. Although her English proficiency may be outstanding among the international students, she sometimes felt stressed out and embarrassed by her incapacity to communicate smoothly with others either in the classroom or in the workplace. Because of her study experience in the U.S., she realized the importance of English language for academic success and the significance of appropriate mainstream behaviors for interactions in the U.S. She chose to speak English to her sons in hoping that she would help her children's English language development and better help her children assimilate into the mainstream society.

The mothers in Z and J family came to the U.S. for their doctoral degrees in Electronic Engineering and Biology after they finished their master's degrees and worked in China for several years. Comparing to the mother in W family, both mothers came to the U.S. at a later ages when it was at their early 30s. Meanwhile, they didn't have extensive and close contact with



English-speaking peers or colleagues during their doctoral study and in their workplaces, which did not require much oral English communication. Their English proficiency allows them to read academic books and write academic articles and to communicate in the work, and meanwhile their education background and work experience provided them with opportunities of getting a decent job in the industry in the U.S. Therefore, their experiences may tell them that speaking perfect English is not a crucial element for living and working in the U.S. successfully. It is not necessary for them to speak English with their children if they feel Chinese is more comfortable to speak with.

The mother in L family came to the U.S. for her high school diploma. Her personal experience told her that, “You have to immerse yourself to the language and learn it systematically so that you can learn it well!” Although she came to the U.S. at the age of 17, she did not get opportunities to immerse herself in the English language environment because she lived in California where a large Chinese immigrants’ population resides. She did not learn English systematically neither because she only attended ESL class for one year. When she met her relatives’ children, she was very surprised and felt uncomfortable that the children speak English to their parents and relatives and the parents speak Chinese back to the children. She did not think it is right for Chinese immigrants’ descendants to speak English with their parents and relatives. She felt that Chinese should be the common language between the children and parents and family members. Therefore, when she had her daughter, she decided to speak only Chinese with her daughter. In addition, her personal experience also told her that learning Chinese well is beneficial for her daughter’s future career. She told me an anecdote about her friend’s child. One of her Chinese friends’ son lost a very good job opportunity only because he was not able to communicate in Chinese. The employer expected him to have the required Chinese proficiency

because he is a Chinese American. Basing on these experiences of her own and others, the mother insisted that her daughter must learn Chinese well.

The mother in A family came to the U.S. at her late 20s and became a stay-at-home mom since then. She spent most of her time raising and nurturing two sons at home. She did not have many chances to speak English and contact with others, even though she lives in an English-speaking country. Although she lives in the U.S., she still has very close connections with the home country. She has a big family and her parents, brother, and sisters all live in China, so she took her sons to visit relatives and friends in China almost every summer and stayed there for at least three months every time. She also told me an anecdote. She knew a polyglot who can speak seven languages in Tsinghua University (one of the most prestigious universities in China). She asked the person if he would mix up the languages and the polyglot's answer was "No." Therefore, she firmly believes that being multilingual is possible for children, and children will not mix up different languages and will not get confused. Therefore, she insisted to speak Chinese to her children so that they can maintain and develop their Chinese.

### *Schooling*

The survey data demonstrates that after the children go to school, the percentage of English spoken increases significantly, while the percentage of Chinese spoken between parents and children decreases dramatically. Shin (2005) argued that children's motivation of speaking English at school is the initial driving force for language shift in immigrants' family, as English was brought home. If the parents do not imply speaking Chinese only requirement for children, the children will start to speak English at home.

Consistent with the survey data, the interview data discovers that schooling has an influential role on language practices between parents and children. The children in Z, J, and L family brought home some English after they entered the kindergarten. Jessica in Z family started to increase the amount of English speaking since kindergarten at home, and now she speaks English mostly to her parents. The parents in Z family never required Jessica to speak Chinese with them and left the language choice to the child. Kim in J family and Jasmine in L family also brought English to home and started to speak English at home after entering kindergarten. The parents, especially the mothers, in both families firmly demand them to stop speaking English at home. After the parents' persistent and continuous demand and request, Kim and Jasmine switched back to speak Chinese at home after a while.

### *Factors Which Affect Family Biliteracy Practices*

#### *Academic success in school*

All of the children in the qualitative study attend schools in the U.S., and two of them were educated in English language as early as preschool time, such as David and Kim. Two of them were educated in English language from kindergarten, such as Jessica and Adam. Only Jasmine went to school from Grade 1. All the mothers in my study emphasized on their children's English language development by reading stories and books or playing educational CDs, TV cartoons to the children since the children were toddlers and helping with their homework and extracurricular projects since the children entered the school. All the parents hope that their children success and excel in the school, so it is not surprising that they put emphasis on their children's English development, especially the mother in W family and the father in Z family. The mother in W family started reading English books to her sons since they were

toddlers until 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and she has been constantly helping them with English homework and extracurricular projects till today.

The father in Z family had been helping his daughter with English writing since she entered the junior high school. According to Jessica, she did not like writing in English and always lost points because of the format and grammar errors. His father edited and criticized Jessica's each English writing assignment. Every summer he prepared the PowerPoint slides to teach Jessica English writing. He also borrowed many books on English writing from the library and asked her to read. The mother subscribed a number of English magazines for Jessica to read in order to help her improve reading and writing skills. Jessica was also enrolled in the weekend English reading class to improve the skills and scores in English reading.

In order to lay a foundation of English language development and make the transition from home to school smoother, the mothers in L, J, and A family introduced English to their children and helped them learn English before their children entered the schools. The mother in L family bought English educational CDs for her daughter to learn English pronunciation and read English stories to her daughter sometimes. While the mothers in J and A family sometimes read English stories to their sons before they entered the school. Similarly, the mothers in L, J, and A family seldom involved with English language after their children went to the school, especially since the children were in the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

### *Tests*

Parents' literacy practices with children may also be affected by tests which the children are going to take since the Chinese parents tend to put great emphasis on tests and scores. The mothers in Z family did not teach her daughter Chinese at home until her daughter decided to

take Chinese AP test. The test is the only motivation for the mother to help her daughter with Chinese learning and ever since then she intentionally provides more Chinese input for her daughter. She made her daughter watch more Chinese TV shows and series during their dinner time and free time, and she took her daughter back to visit China during the Spring break. Currently, they spare every Saturday morning to study Chinese at home. The mother finds some Chinese materials online, such as short stories, some paragraphs, and news for her daughter to read so that she can improve her ability of reading Chinese characters and comprehend the written Chinese. The daughter also does some online quizzes about Chinese character recognition. The mother checks if the daughter can understand those written materials correctly and if she can recognize those Chinese characters.

### *Religion practice*

All the parents and children in my study go to Chinese church regularly. However, the parents and children manifest different language preference patterns and socializing circles. The parents always attend Chinese-speaking fellowships while the children always attend English-speaking youth fellowships; the parents always speak Chinese with other Chinese people, but the children always speak English among themselves and usually speak English to other Chinese adults in the church; the parents usually read the Bible in Chinese while the children always read the Bible in English.

Among all five mothers, only the mother in L family now teaches and reads Bible to her daughter in the Chinese version and the mother hopes that her daughter can learn to read in Chinese as well as learn the Bible at the same time. However, the mother admitted that she did not have much time reading Chinese Bible every day to her daughter since the daughter's school

coursework was getting heavier and more extracurricular activities were taking much of her time. The mother squeezes short time before bed to read Chinese Bible and whenever both of them have time together. The daughter hopes that she is able to spread the Bible to Chinese-speaking population, as she said when I asked her why learning Chinese, “可以向说中文的人传福音啊!” (“I can distribute the Bible to more Chinese!”)

#### *Resources available for the parents and children*

The language learning resources and facilities may also affect parents' language management and biliteracy practices. Lack of Chinese language resources in the U.S. largely limits the Chinese literacy activities in the Chinese immigrants' families. There are only few Chinese language resources and facilities available for Chinese parents and children. The most common and immediate available Chinese learning resource and facility for children is the Chinese weekend school and the textbooks used in the school. Four of the five families in my study sent their children to the school to learn Chinese. Two of the children, Kim and Jessica, have been attending the Chinese weekend school for ten years. In order to help children maintain and develop Chinese, most of the parents have to buy Chinese materials, such as character cards, posters, books, CDs and DVDs from the home country. In my study, four of the five mothers bought Chinese language materials from mainland China or Taiwan to bring them back to the U.S., Or whenever grandparents visited the U.S., they would bring some Chinese books to their grandchildren. The mother in A family said, “I bought many Chinese story books and DVDs to bring back every year when I went back to China.” The mothers in Z, J, and L family also did the same thing, although they did not go back to the home country as frequently as the mother in A

family. The mother in J family said, “The grandparents brought some Chinese story books to the children when they visited us.”

However, buying Chinese books for the children may be only limited to the preschool and elementary school years. As the children enter in the junior high school, the parents seldom buy books in Chinese. One of the reasons is that there are few Chinese books which are interesting enough and appropriate for middle and high school students who were born in the U.S., as the mother in J family said, “I cannot find any Chinese books suitable for Kim. There are so few books for children of his age because everyone in China focuses on academic study. Parents won’t allow their children to read such “useless” or “leisure” books, so very few books are written for teenagers and youth.” Another reason may result in the children’s incapacity of Chinese character recognition. Although the children in L and A family learned some Chinese characters during elementary school years, they didn’t continue learning them later as their school work was getting heavier and extracurricular activities were getting busier. Their mastery of the number of Chinese characters is not sufficient enough for them to read chapter books, as the mother in L family said, “Jasmine loves reading, but she does not like reading Chinese books because it is too difficult for her.” Similarly, the mother in A family also stated, “For reading, they definitely like reading English books. They seldom read Chinese books, and they never look for Chinese books to read.”

Nowadays, Chinese language online resources have become more available. However, these online resources were hard to find ten years ago when the children in my study were little. The mother in Z family explained, “I did not know there are so many Chinese resources online today until I did some research recently when I had to find some contents to teach my daughter. When Jessica was little, there were not so many things available online.”

Although online purchase is popular nowadays, none of the mothers in my study have bought Chinese books, audio or video materials online. The reasons for that may result from two factors. It is hard to tell if the materials are suitable or interesting for their children. The mother in J family said, “I do not know the actual content of the books when I browse the books online, so I do not know if Kim will like it or not. I still prefer buying the books in person, and I can actually take a look of the content and decide whether to buy or not.” Another reason may be the inconvenience of online shopping and cost of the international shipping fee. The mother in Z family told me, “I never buy books from DangDang (one of biggest online book selling website in China). I just feel it is too troublesome to buy from there. You have to wait a long time and pay expensive shipping fee. I will wait till I go back to China and buy some books.”

Comparing to the scarcity of Chinese language materials in the U.S., English language materials are abundant and easy to get. All five mothers were able to provide English books for their children since toddler years, as the mother in A family said, “I checked out some books, English of course, from the library for my sons.” The mother in J family said, “Kim will check out a pile of books from the library when he has free time.” The mother in Z family subscribed a few English magazines, such as, Time, Fortune, and the father borrowed a number of books on English essay writing from the library for her daughter to read.

#### *Children’s loss of interest in Chinese reading/learning*

As the previous studies (e.g. Zhang (2008)) discovered that as the children’s age increase, their interest in Chinese learning usually decrease, the interview data in my study also found the similar result. The mother in J family explained when being asked why Kim does not read Chinese books as before, “Kim lost the interest of learning Chinese somehow recently. He has



seldom read Chinese books and has been lazy on doing Chinese homework. He somehow lost his original interest in Chinese when entering teenager. I can feel the rebellion.” Although Kim is still attending Chinese weekend school, he is not exciting about going to the class anymore, as he said, “I do not like the Chinese class. It is a little bit boring, and we did not really learn anything.” Loss of interest was also mentioned by the mother and daughter in Z family. The mother said, “Jessica does not have interest in Chinese learning. She wanted to quit Chinese class when I asked her to drop some extracurricular classes.” Jessica also expressed that she was not very interested in learning Chinese, “I felt the Chinese class interesting when I was little since they had all kinds of activities to keep us engaged, but the class is not interesting now.”

Because of the lack or loss of interest in Chinese learning and reading for children after they enter junior high school, the parents have a more difficult time asking the children to read in Chinese and require them to spend more time on Chinese learning. All five children in the study always read books in English. Kim used to read books in Chinese and now switches to read books in English only.

#### *The difficult degree of developing Chinese literacy*

The fact that the children in my study all complained about the difficulty of learning Chinese, especially recognizing and writing Chinese characters, may suggest that its different writing system is one of the factors in preventing the children from learning the language and developing literacy. It may also be one of the factors which make the children lose interests in learning the language. Comparing to English alphabet writing, Chinese characters writing is much more difficult and more time-consuming. David in W family complained that learning Chinese was a tedious, boring, and difficult task. He told me, “I only remember that we watched a cartoon in the Chinese class, and that is the only fun thing we did in the class. I did not like

writing Chinese characters because my hands got hurt.” Adam in A family also complained about writing Chinese characters, which was the homework from the Chinese weekend school. He said, “It is silly to write the same characters twenty times. Many characters look so similar and they are hard to remember.” Adam’s mother also told me that Adam did not like writing Chinese characters and once said that Chinese characters should be abandoned when he got frustrated in writing the characters. Kim’s mother also said that the Chinese characters Kim wrote was not good at all. Jessica in Z family said that they used and typed in *Pinyin*, which is the roman alphabetical and sound representations of the characters, when they did the homework on computer, and they are now seldom writing Chinese characters by hands.

The distinct features of the Chinese language and writing system have differences in how reading and writing works in Chinese compared to English. For learning to read an alphabetic writing system such as English, early emphasis is usually placed on phonological processing skills. In contrast, early Chinese reading emphasizes the importance of a fully specified orthographic processing prior to the activation of phonological and meaning information in reading Chinese (Wang et al., 2005). Wang and her colleagues also conclude that though there are certain levels of phonological transfer, because of the distinct writing systems, it is difficult for children to transfer orthographic skills from Chinese to English or vice versa. Therefore, for the Chinese immigrants’ children to develop biliteracy, they need to master the language-specific orthographic skills in learning to read and write in the two languages in addition to acquiring the spoken forms of the languages. Since the Chinese orthographic system is independent from its linguistic representation of speech, the *Pinyin* system, it may further create difficulty in the children’s Chinese learning.

*Individual difference: Children's personality and learning habits*

Individual difference may play a role in affecting children's HL maintenance and biliteracy development. Children who are extrovert are more likely to develop HL speaking ability successfully, and children who are introvert are more likely to develop HL reading and writing ability. The children in the qualitative study demonstrated this pattern.

Jasmine in L family and Adam in A family are quite extrovert and talkative. Both of them speak Chinese more fluently than other three children in the study. Nevertheless, their reading and writing ability in Chinese is not as good as their speaking ability and is not better than Kim in J family. Differently, Kim is a quiet boy and does not like to speak a lot. He enjoys reading much more than speaking. He starts to recognize Chinese character at the age of two years old, and he is able to recognize substantial number of Chinese characters and read Chinese books on his own. According to Kim's mother, Kim was very sensitive to the written forms, such as letters, words, and characters. Kim's mother used Chinese character cards to teach him some characters when he was only two years old. He was able to recognize and read Chinese characters on the cards, and Kim was also able to recognize and read English letters and simple story books then. Kim's brother, however, was not interested in character recognizing and reading. The mother said, "Every child is different. I planned to teach the younger one the same way I taught Kim, but the cards, pictures, and books I used for Kim was not useful for Kim's brother. He was not interested in reading them at all."

*Factors Which Affect Family Language Management and Language Attitudes and Ideologies*

*The family connections with the home country*

One of the most significant factors which may affect parents' language attitudes and ideologies is the family connections with the home country. How they see and understand the relationship between their family with the home country, to large extent, influence how they perceive the importance of home language and culture. Consequently, the children's attitudes towards home language and culture will also be influenced by family connections with the home country. Comparing the W family with A family, they have totally opposite relationships with the home country and completely different family situations, therefore the parents' language attitudes and ideologies are distinctively different. The mother in W family has never gone back to China since she came to the U.S., and the father only went to China a couple of short times for business trips. Therefore, their sons have never been to China. The connection between W family and the home country is very weak. The home country, for the parents, is a country which they were born in and once lived in, and for the children, is only a geographic name and feels very unfamiliar for them. The mother in W family said, "There is no difference for us to go back to China from visiting other countries. We do not have any relatives or friends in China, so we need to stay in hotel in China and we are just travelers in China. I do hope to go back to visit sometime in the future, but the boys are not willing to. They are afraid of getting lost." David in W family also expressed the similar ideas with his mother and felt negative about the home country, "It is dark and crowded. Your nose will get black after a while. I do not like traveling that far."

In contrast, the mother in A family takes her children to go back to China almost every year. The home country is still considered as home for her even she lives and spends more time in the U.S. For her children, the home country is a familiar place where they spent lots of time and had fun. The connection between A family and the home country is very close and strong.

All of her relatives are living in China and their relationship is also very close. The grandparents helped raising two grandsons in China. The mother in A family said, “I have very close relationship with all my relatives. I go back to take care of my parents and visit my brothers and sisters every summer break. I definitely wish my kids can communicate with them without any problem.”

Although four of the five families in my study have been keeping the connections with the home country, the extent and degree of the connections are different. The differences include the frequency of home country visits, the length of stay in the home country of every visit, the number of the relatives and friends, the closeness of the relationship with the relatives and friends, any Chinese-speaking peers for the children in the home country. The Z, J, and L family have moderate connection with the home country, which is not as weak as the W family but not as strong as the A family. The parents in the Z, J, and L family take their children to go back to the home country every two or three years. Time of the visits for Z family is the shortest, two or three weeks. J family usually stays for one or two months, and L family usually stays for two months. Time of the visits for A family is the longest, the whole summer break--three months.

Similarly, the children in these four families all have quite long living experiences in the home country. Jessica in Z family has been living in China with grandparents till five and half years old; Kim in J family lived in China for half year when he was three years old; Jasmine in L family spent almost a year in mainland China when she was nine years old; Adam in A family lived in China for nine months when he was four years old. Among the four families, the J, L and A family all have big extended family in the home country, but differently, the relationships between the A and L family and relatives are closer, especially the relationship between the children and relatives. Adam and Jasmine have many opportunities to talk and hang out with the

relatives of their ages during their visits. Particularly, Adam lived with his relatives and he had opportunities to communicate with them in Chinese on a daily basis, such as chatting, eating, shopping, and traveling. He had a lot of people to communicate in Chinese, including grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins as well as the cousins' friends. However, Kim and Jessica didn't spend much time with the relatives and they still talk and stay with their parents during their stay in China.

*Visions on the family and children's future as well as expectations on children*

Parents' visions and expectations on the children as well as their visions on their own future affect their language attitudes and ideologies. For the W family, the mother sees that the children's future will probably have little to do with the home country and she does not have expectations for her sons' home language reversal. The mother also views herself as a native and doesn't have any strong desire to go back to the home country in the near future. She said, "I do not think it is necessary for them to learn Chinese unless their future jobs are related to China, or they are going to do business with Chinese, or they want to learn it themselves someday.

Comparing to visit China, we and the boys prefer visiting Europe and Hawaii." The mother in the W family visions her children's future will be in the U.S. and only get along with English-speaking population, so she puts much emphasis on her children's English language development in order to ensure their academic and career success in the U.S.. For the Z family, the mother visions her daughter's future life will be in the U.S., but will be still related to Chinese to some extent because the parents feel more comfortable speaking Chinese with their daughter and socializing in the Chinese-speaking community. Although the mother does not have very high expectations on her daughter's Chinese language, especially on reading and writing, she still hope that her daughter can maintain listening and speaking proficiency so that

they can communicate without big problems. The mother also expressed her concerns about future, “I do not have problem communicating with my daughter now, but I am not sure about the future. My grandchild will definitely speak English if my daughter’s future husband speaks only English unless she finds a Chinese-speaking husband. The family tie will loosen if we do not speak the same language.”

For the J, L, and A family, all three mothers vision their children’s future is going to involve with Chinese-speaking community and population, although their future life will be mainly in the U.S. The mother in the J family said, “I hope his Chinese would help him with his future study and life in the future. It is always beneficial to know additional language. What’s more, I do not want to have any communication barriers with my children, so learning Chinese will definitely help with the communication among the family members and also with the inheritance of Chinese culture.” The mother in L family foresaw high probability of her daughter’s future with China and Chinese, as she stated, “It is always an advantage to know more languages for her future. My daughter will probably learn accounting as her major in college and help her dad with the family business. There are more business opportunities in China, so it is important for her to learn the language and being able to communicate in Chinese.” The mother in the A family also expressed the similar thoughts with the both mothers in the J and L family. She said, “I do not hope there are any communicate problems between my children and my relatives in China because we are very close. It is always an advantage to speak multiple languages. I will often go back to China, and so will they. They love going back to China because they are treated very well by the relatives and friends and have lots of fun there. Besides, my older son is now doing his internship in the Chinese branch of the World Bank in Beijing. He has been doing very well and it is highly possible that he will stay and work in China.”

### *Parents' personal experiences*

As I argued in the previous section, parents' personal experiences may affect their language practices with the children. Parents' personal experiences may also affect their language attitudes and ideologies at the same time and more directly. The components of personal experiences may include the age of arrival, education background, family background, and social network. For the age of arrival, among the five mothers, the mother in the L family arrived in the U.S. the earliest (17 years old). The mother in the W family arrived in the U.S. when she was 20 years old. The other three mothers in Z, J, and A family all came to the U.S. when they were middle 20s to early 30s. In terms of education background, the Z mother has the highest education degree--doctoral degree. The L mother didn't finish two-year community college and has high school diploma. The A mother did not accept higher education in the U.S., and she has her Bachelor degree from China. The mothers in W and J family received master's degree in the U.S. Differently, the mother in W family obtained her Bachelor degree in the U.S. too, while the mother in J family obtained the Bachelor degree in China and worked for two years before coming to the U.S. Among the five mothers, the mother in L family started her academic study in the U.S. from high school and the mother in W family started from college. Both of them went through the struggles of learning English to finish their study as well as to communicate with others. Therefore, both of them realized the crucial roles of English for their children's future academic and career success and social life and both of them intentionally helped with their children's English language development since they were little. The mother in L family helped with her daughter's English pronunciation by letting her listen to educational CDs and watch cartoons in English. The mother in W family started to speak English with her elder son since he was two years old and speak English with her younger son since he was born. She read English books to her sons from toddler times until they were in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. She has



been constantly helping with their English homework, assignments, and projects until today. What's different between these two mother lies in two aspects: that mother in W family has been always involving with her children's English language development, but the mother in L family has only involved before her daughter entered the school; the W mother's language practices with the children is mostly English, while the L mother's language practices is mostly Chinese. the L mother not only wish that her daughter learn English well but also learn Chinese well, as she said, "English is important, and Chinese is also equally important (for my daughter). Both languages need to be learned well!"

The mother's in Z family personal experiences tend to orient her to pay great attention to the tests and test scores because she got admitted for the doctoral program and successfully finished the doctoral study by taking and successfully passing various tests. What she and her husband do for helping the daughter in both English and Chinese mainly focus on reading and writing parts and improving the test-taking skills.

Regarding the family background, among all five families, only the grandmother was educated in English and the grandparents in the W family can communicate in English. Therefore, the W family has a strong English orientation. The mother has the earliest contact with English among the five mothers. Although the grandparents in L family immigrated to the U.S., they are not able to communicate in English. They have been living in the Chinese community in California since they arrived in the U.S. The grandparents in other three families all live in China and they only speak Chinese. The grandparents in the Z and J family will visit the family every two or three years. The grandparents in the A family have never been to the U.S. According to the A mother, the grandparents were very strict with Chinese handwriting. The A mother said, "My parents trained me with very high standards of Chinese character

handwriting, so my handwriting is very good.” Therefore, the A family has a strong orientation in Chinese.

In terms of social network, the mother in W family finished her Bachelor and Master degree in the U.S., and she made quite a lot of American and international friends during that time. Now she has both English-speaking colleagues and friends and Chinese-speaking friends because she works in a government office and has lots of opportunities to communicate with English-speaking colleagues and meanwhile she goes to Chinese church every weekend.

Although the mother in L family came to the U.S. earlier than W mother, she did not communicate with the peers a lot because she felt overwhelmed by her incapacity of English language and the pressure of the academic study, as she told me, “I did not have many friends in school. I only have one white friend when I was in the community college.” Similarly, the mothers in J and A family have been mostly remaining in the Chinese circle since they are stay-at-home mothers for quite a long time.

The three factors argued above: Family connections with the home country, visions on family and children as well as expectations for children, and parents’ personal experiences combine together to form and shape the immigrants’ family identity. For example, the A family has a strong home country identity. It has very strong family connections with the home country, and its visions on family and children are in both host and home country. In addition, the parents have positive experiences of being bilingual. While, the W family has a weak home country identity, but a strong host country identity instead. It does not have any family connections with the home country, and its visions on family and children are only in the host country. Meanwhile, the parents’ experiences reinforce the importance of English. Thus, family identity as a whole affect the parents’ language attitudes and ideologies.

### *Parents' self-education and the knowledge of language acquisition*

Like many immigrant parents who are concerned about their children's home language and societal language development, the mothers in my study also demonstrated their concerns by actively educating themselves on this topic either by reading relevant books, articles, or seeking for advice and suggestions from language education experts. The mother in A family has read quite a lot of books on children's bilingual development and language acquisition. She told me, "I have read many books on this topic, and I know that children can learn as many as languages they are exposed to. They will not get confused. Bilingual children may need longer time to speak the languages than monolingual children, but once they start to speak, they can speak two languages..... Different languages have different and unique pronunciations. Some Chinese pronunciations cannot be found in English, and some English pronunciations cannot be found in Chinese either. I won't speak English to my children because I worry that I may teach them the wrong English pronunciation, even though I think I may speak with the correct English pronunciation." The parents in the L family attended a workshop given by a language acquisition expert in a university. The workshop addressed the concerns of parents' raising bilingual children. The mother said, "We attended a workshop and wanted to know children's brain and their language development. The expert said that children's brain is wired to acquire multiple languages before a certain age. They will not get confused, and their brain will figure out different structures and pronunciations of different languages. The children learn the languages like a sponge, and they will learn anything you provide to them."

After the self-education and getting more information about children's language development, the mothers in L and A firmly believe that their children can become Chinese-English bilingual or even multilingual. It turns out that Adam in A family can speak English,

Chinese, French, Russian, and Japanese. Jasmine in L family can speak English, Chinese, and French. Therefore, parents' beliefs may influence their expectations towards children, and hence influence children's language development. If the parents believe that being bilingual or multilingual is possible for children, the parents will probably have higher expectations for children's language acquisition and learning. The parents' high expectations will drive and facilitate children to acquire and learn languages and to be bilingual/multilingual.

The mother in W family also wanted to make an informed decision after David was assessed as language delay at age of two. She read some online articles about children's bilingual development and consulted with other older Chinese parents, and came to the conclusion that David's language delay was very minor. However the mother still decided to follow the pediatrician's and language speech therapist's suggestion to stick to one language--English first. Deep in her mind, she thinks that it is confusing for children to learn two languages simultaneously and the process of learning two languages is much longer than learning only one language. The mothers in Z and J family have not read any books or articles about this topic, but they did discuss this topic with other parents and learned from other parents' experiences, as the mother in Z family said, "Others told me that you do not need to worry about your daughter's English. It is her Chinese maintenance that you probably need to pay more attention to."

*Social environment, including mainstream and heritage school, immigrant community, and peers.*

Lack of supportive social environment for children's bilingual development is one of the most influential factors which prevent the children from maintaining and developing the HL and biliteracy. The current linguistic atmosphere in most parts of the U.S. is still English dominant and the language ideology is still English only. Although English is not only the language spoken

and it is not the official language in the U.S., it is the most powerful language in the U.S., especially in the field of education and business. The ‘English-only’ policy enforced in the mainstream school may have contributed to both Chinese immigrant parents and their children’s negative perceptions of the Chinese language and the meaning of being Chinese. As the survey result suggests, almost half (49%) of the parent respondents think that English is the official language in the U.S. and that English should be the only language used in the public places, such as school. Twenty-eight percent of the participants are unsure about it and only 23% of the participants doubt about it. There are also more than half (55%) of the participants feel the social pressure which makes their children speak more English. Thirty-four percent of them are not certain about it and only 11% of them disagree. Consistent with the survey data, the interview data also discover that social pressure and English-only ideology may impact the parents and children. When she explained the reason why she decided to speak English to her son, the mother in W family said, “We hope that our children can speak the language without any problem when they enter the school and can behave appropriately when they interact with others. Home language is difficult to preserve because after one or two generations, it will lose anyway.” David, the child, in W family, also indicated English-only ideology when explaining why he only speaks English, “Everyone in school speaks English. I guess it is OK to not to speak home language. My Hispanic classmates cannot speak Spanish neither.”

Even in immigrant community, Chinese community in this study, for example, in Chinese weekend schools, according to my observations, English is still the language spoken among the children inside and outside of the classroom and there is no specific language policy which reinforces Chinese use among the children in the Chinese weekend school classrooms. Moreover, English is also the dominant language in Chinese church for the children. The books,

videos, and CDs related to the Bible study are all in English, and the fellowships held for the children and youth every Friday night and Sunday morning is spoken and taught in English. Therefore, English has penetrated into every corner of the Chinese immigrant children's life. Family domain has become the last and only environment for the Chinese HL survival. If the parents don't provide a Chinese language environment at home and demonstrate a positive perceptions towards Chinese language maintenance, the children will probably turn their backs to the language, culture, and being a Chinese.

Peers influence and pressure is another factor which affect children's attitudes towards HL maintenance and biliteracy development. As the survey suggested, most of the children in Chinese immigrant families speak English to each other when they hang out together, which is also confirmed by the interview data. Additionally, the interview data with the children found out that the children and adolescents usually communicate in the following topics: video games, books, movies, TV dramas, extracurricular activities, and school activities. Boys often talk about the video games they like to play and girls often talk about the TV dramas they enjoy watching. None of their favorite video games or TV dramas are in Chinese.

In summary, there are four facets of factors found in this study which affect Chinese immigrants' FLP and literacy practices, which consist of family-related factors, social factors, linguistics factors, and individual factors. Family-related factors include the relationship between the parents/mothers and children, parents' education background and English language proficiency, parents' self-education and knowledge of language acquisition, and family identity (parents' personal experience, family connections with the home country, parents' visions on the family and children's future as well as expectations on children), Social factors include schooling, advice from pediatricians, language speech expert, and language acquisition expert,

other Chinese parents, and books on children's language development, aspiration/pressure of academic success in school, emphasis on tests/scores, resources available for the parents and children, and social environment (mainstream and heritage language school, immigrant community, and peer influence and pressure). Linguistic factors include the difficult degree of developing HL literacy and linguistic distance between English and HL. Individual factors consist of religion practices, children's loss of interest in Chinese reading/learning, and children's personality and learning habits.

### *Findings for Research Question 3*

#### *Strategies for maintaining Chinese HL*

Three out of the five families (J, L, and A families) in the qualitative study made efforts and utilize strategies to help the children maintain and develop Chinese language proficiency. To help their children preserve Chinese language, the mothers tried their best to create and provide a Chinese language environment at home and beyond, and they help maximize children's Chinese language input and output by insisting on speaking Chinese only policy for children, making meaningful and in-depth conversations with children, paying frequent home country visit and staying extended time in the home country, and helping children connect with Chinese-speaking people.

#### *Insisting on speaking Chinese only policy for children*

To maintain and develop Chinese language proficiency, it is necessary for parents to continue speaking Chinese to the children, but more importantly, it is crucial that children are willing to speak and communicate with their parents in Chinese even after the children go to school. The parents, especially the mothers, in J, L, and A families insist on speaking Chinese

only policy at home for their children. The mothers are the main caregivers in these three families, and they spoke Chinese all the time with their children ever since the children were born. Chinese has always been the language spoken between the mothers and children. Although schooling did change the children's language practices at home for a while at the beginning phase of schooling, the mothers tried their best to help the children switch back to speaking Chinese. For example, Kim in J family and Jasmine in L family started to bring English home after they entered the kindergarten. They started to practice speaking English with their mothers, but their mothers still spoke Chinese to them and meanwhile requested them to stop speaking English and to speak Chinese to them. The mother in L family even pretended that she did not understand English and did not respond Jasmine when Jasmine spoke English, as the mother said, "I did not respond her when she spoke English to me. I told her that I did not understand English very well. I insisted her to speak Chinese to me. After a while, she understood my goodwill." Although both children did not stop speaking English immediately after their mothers' request, they switch back to speaking Chinese under the mothers' persistent demand after a while, as the mother in J family said, "Kim did not go too far in terms of speaking English to us. He started to speak Chinese to us again after a period of time."

*Making meaningful and in-depth conversations in Chinese with children*

Speaking Chinese only at home for children is necessary and important for maintaining Chinese language proficiency. However, it does not guarantee high fluency or native-like fluency of Chinese. To achieve this goal, the parents need to make meaningful and in-depth conversations in Chinese constantly with children.



In the interview data, only one (Adam in A family) out of the five children in the qualitative study achieved native-like level fluency of spoken Chinese and Chinese was the language for communication at all domains of their lives. Adam spent lots of time with the mother even after he entered the school. He did not go to the afterschool, so he was with the mother right after the school. According to the mother, she spent a lot of time chatting with Adam and his brother about their everyday life when they were in the elementary school. The mother and sons talked about everything, including the school life, their friends in school, what they liked and what they did not like, and why. The mother talked to the sons while she was doing the housework. The mother had continued the chatting habit with her sons, and she spent even more time chatting with the children when they were in middle school. They talked about more topics in depth, such as their school life, their study, their friends, their teachers, their feelings, emotions, views and thoughts on things. The mother spent at least two hours a day to talk with the sons during their middle school years. The mother said that her sons really liked talking and she was talking with them all the time. The mother contributed the native-level fluency of her sons' spoken Chinese to the quality talking time in Chinese. It is worth noticing that the mother always spoke the corresponding Chinese words when her son spoke English words. For example, if her son said, “*yogurt*”, the mother would say “*suannai*” (酸奶). If her son said “*stubborn*”, she would say “*guzhi*” (固执). Consequently, her son was able to say the words in Chinese next time. Moreover, the mother used sophisticated Chinese words to communicate with her son. When the mother said some difficult Chinese words, the son could guess the meaning of the words from the context. For example, the mother talked about the phenomenon of some Chinese young people's life and she used the word “*shechi*” (奢侈) *luxurious* in English. When Adam was just about to ask the mother the meaning of the word, he

quickly figured it out by himself, and next time when he talked about similar issues, he was able to use the Chinese word “奢侈”. The mother was also surprised when Adam said sophisticated words in Chinese in their conversations, and Adam explained that he learned them from the conversations with his mother.

This finding is well consistent with the finding in Kondo’s (1998) study. Kondo found out that Japanese mothers play a critical role in second-generation children’s Japanese heritage language maintenance, especially in oral skills. My study also found out that Chinese mothers play a crucial role in children’s Chinese HL maintenance, especially in oral and reading ability.

*Paying frequent visit to home country and staying extended time in home country*

Four (Z, J, L, and A family) out of five participating families visited the home country, except the W family. However, the frequency of home country visit and length of visit varies for these four families. The Z family visited the home country every 3 to 4 years and stayed for about 2-3 weeks every time, as the mother in Z family said, “The connection has never been stopped between us and China. We went back twice since my daughter united with us and her grandparents also visited us twice. We wish we could stay longer, but my annual vacation time is only about 2-3 weeks.” The J family went back to the home country every 2 to 3 years and usually stayed for about one month. The L family visited the home country almost every year when the child was in elementary school and stayed for two months, while every 2 to 3 years when the child entered the junior high school and stayed for about one month, as the mother said, “She (the daughter) used to go back to Taiwan every year before she went to the school. She does not go back as frequently as before after she goes to school. However, it also depends. We will reward her with a trip to Taiwan if she does a good job on schoolwork. For her, Taiwan has

a lot of fun things to do. There is a student retreat, including a trip to Hong Kong and traveling across the southern Taiwan. There are also lots of relatives' children in Taiwan." The A family has the highest frequency of visit and longest stay in home country among the four families. The mother and children went back every year and spent the whole summer break in the home country, as the mother said, "The only year we did not go back was 2003 when SARS disease was serious in China. The children usually spent the whole summer break in China and had lots of fun with my relatives and friends."

### *Helping children connect with Chinese-speaking people/peers*

Paying frequent visit to home country and staying for extended time there is important for children to experience the close connection between themselves and the home country as well as to maximize the meaningful Chinese input for them. However, it is even more important that parents can help children connect with other Chinese-speaking people, especially Chinese-speaking peers in home country. To make their home country visit more meaningful and attractive, it is not sufficient enough for children to communicate only with their parents, children need to communicate with other Chinese-speaking people, such as relatives, friends, and peers.

Although Jessica in Z family and Kim in J family did go back to China, they usually stayed with their parents and did not spend much time immersing themselves into the language environment and communicating with others other than their parents, as Jessica told me, "I stayed with my parents all the time when going out. I did not talk with other people very often." Kim's mother also said, "Kim usually spends time with us when we go back." Differently, Jasmine in L family and Adam in A family had a plenty of chances to communicate with people

other than their parents, such as relatives, relatives' children, friends, and even with strangers. Jasmine told me, "I usually hang out with my cousins when I went back. I have lots of relatives and their children are almost the same age with me. My mother asked me to spend more time with them and she did not really stay with me when I was back. She spent more time with my uncles and aunts." Similarly, Adam spent more time with others than with his mother when he was in China. He told me that he really liked to spend time with his grandparents, uncle, aunts, and his cousins either at home or traveling. There were a lot of interesting things to do for him when he was in China. He lived in either his uncle's home or aunts' home and hang out with his cousins. All the relatives treated him very well and passionately. They would cook many delicious Chinese dishes for him, take him out for dinner, bring him out to have fun, and bring him to travel. Adam recalled that he went back to China by himself when he was fourteen years old, and his aunt took him and his cousin to travel across the Yangtze River. He chatted with other people when he was on a boat when visiting the Three Gorges, and he asked others to guess where he was from. Other people all thought he was from Beijing. He told others that he was from America, and the people were very surprised about his fluent Chinese with Beijing accent. He was very happy because all the people around him praised his fluent and authentic Chinese and he sounds like a Beijing native, instead of an American. Adam also talks about all kinds of things with his relatives in China. He has a very close relationship with all of them. What he hears, sees, and feels in China every year contributed to his understanding of China as well as to his Chinese language proficiency.

Adam also told me that he always chatted with his uncles and aunts about current affairs in China. His uncle really liked to talk about Chinese political and economic topics at home with the family members, so Adam heard a lot and he also often participated in these conversations

and expressed his thoughts and opinions in Chinese by comparing the similarities and differences between China and the U.S. When Adam hung out with his cousins, he also had opportunities to listen to and chat with his cousins' friends. Through contacting them, he learned a lot about Chinese education system, the challenges and issues the Chinese young generations were facing, as well as various social problems in China. When Adam travelled with his relatives in China, he liked listening to people's conversations on the train, on the bus and he also witnessed some sociocultural phenomenon in China.

Adam also told me that his aunt-in-law was a famous TV series director in China, and he went to the TV shooting site in Shenzhen city, which is located in the very south of China, to see how the TV series are made last summer. That was an eye-opening experience for him and he also learned some shooting skills from it.

#### *Strategies for helping children's English literacy development*

All five mothers in the qualitative study put emphasis on their children's English literacy development. They employed different strategies to help children develop and improve English literacy in different stages. When the children were little and before the children entered the school, English story book reading was the main strategy. Four (W, J, L, and A family) out of the five mothers read English books to the children since toddler time. This early reading practice helped children lay a foundation of English literacy ability which can be further developed later in school. The mother in J family said, "I started reading English books to Kim since he was two years old. He was the reading assistant in the preschool classroom. I am not worried about his English at all since he has demonstrated his English reading ability aa such an early age."

Besides book reading, the mothers also employed other means and strategies to help children learn English before schooling, such as letter recognition and writing, cartoon watching, pronunciation and phonetics learning, and library visit. For example, the mother in L family bought her daughter English learning materials which was designed for children of English as Second Language (ESL) from home country, including DVD, CD, textbooks, and workbooks to help Jasmine with English phonetics and pronunciations when Jasmine was four years old. The English learning experience was very helpful for Jasmine's English development as well as the whole education experience, which made her transition into the mainstream school system quite smoothly.

Although with minimal parents' intervention, the mother in A family did help her child English learning. She helped with English letter recognition and writing and took the children to the library for story time and check out English books and videos. She also let her children watch a number of English cartoon programs on TV. The mother admitted that she did not spend much time on helping her children with English. She did not talk to her sons in English at all or teach them English pronunciation because she was afraid that her pronunciation would confuse and affect them negatively. For English development, she basically expected the school and the children themselves to do the most of the job. The mother was never worried about the children's English language development because she thought her sons were language sensitive and very talkative. They were able to learn English very fast in the English-speaking environment.

For mothers in J, L, and A family, they similarly did not involve much with children's English learning and literacy development after they entered the school. They just did the minimal job, such as helping with the homework. As the children entered 4<sup>th</sup> grade, they seldom helped with homework.

### *Strategies for helping children's Chinese literacy development*

The mothers in J, L, and A family not only help their children's English literacy development, they also paid great attention on their children's Chinese literacy development. Strategies utilized for helping Chinese literacy development consist of Chinese character recognition and writing, choosing age-appropriate Chinese books and interesting learning materials, helping use Chinese dictionary, and hiring private and certified Chinese tutor. These literacy strategies and practices have laid a solid foundation for children's future literacy development and helped children develop latent literacy of Chinese HL.

#### *Chinese character recognizing and writing*

Learning to recognize Chinese characters is the fundamental step in building and developing Chinese literacy skills and ability. Mothers in J, L, and A family started to teach their children to recognize Chinese character long before schooling by different means, such as showing and reading the character cards and character posters, reading Chinese story books, and learning to write characters. The mother in J family, especially, started to teach her son when he was only two years old. The mother told me that she bought a lot of Chinese character cards and posters from China and taught Kim to read the characters. Kim really liked to learn the characters and was able to read and recognize quite a lot Chinese characters since then. The mother also read Chinese story and cartoon books to Kim when he was little. He was able to read the books by himself after his mother read them to him several times. All three mothers taught their children to recognize Chinese characters by reading story books to them. However, it is not enough by only reading characters, and it is necessary for children to practice writing the Chinese characters they learned and saw in the cards and books so that these characters can be reinforced in their minds. Kim, Jasmine, and Adam all had experiences in writing Chinese

characters before they entered the school. Their mothers continued teaching them to write Chinese characters during their elementary school years. Meanwhile, Kim and Adam attended Chinese weekend school and the homework from the school usually required them to practice writing the characters. However, the character writing was not a fun experience for these children. Kim's mother described Kim's character writing as scribbles. Adam's mother said that Adam wrote some Chinese characters as English words. For example, he wrote the character “口” (mouth), like the letter “D”.

### *Choosing age-appropriate Chinese books and interesting learning materials*

It is crucial to choose age-appropriate Chinese books for children in order to attract them to become interested in learning and reading Chinese. Many Chinese parents did buy Chinese books for their children when they went back to China, like the mother in Z family. However, the books were not interesting or relevant enough to keep their children engaged. For example, the mother in Z family bought a series of books which are scientific knowledge-based. She admitted, “I bought the books, like *Tens of Thousands of Whys*, for my daughter, but I did not have the motivation to read to her and she was not interested in listening either. The books have been on the shelf collecting dust ever since I bought them. I should have chosen other more interesting books for her, but I did not know that then.”

Differently, to arouse the children's interest towards reading Chinese books, the mother in J family employed some strategies when choosing Chinese books for Kim. She chose the story books with funny characters and interesting plots, instead of the popular scientific knowledge books, such as *Tens of Thousands of Whys*, which many parents would choose for their children, such as the mother in Z family. The mother thought the story books were more fun than the



scientific books for her son and believed that Kim would like to read them. According to his mother, Kim liked to read Chinese books when he was in elementary school. Although he did not read the original version of Four Great Classical Novels, he read one of them—“Romance of the Three Kingdoms” in cartoon version. The mother told me that Kim would always carry the books in his backpack when he was in elementary school. However, she told me that it was easier to find this kind of Chinese story books for children of younger age, for example preschoolers and elementary school children and it was difficult to find those books for teenagers because there were not so many books available. The mother has been monitoring Kim’s Chinese reading till he was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. After 5<sup>th</sup> grade, the mother would suggest some Chinese articles or books for Kim to read.

Different from the mother in J family, the mother in A family tried her best to develop Adam’s interest towards Chinese by buying videos of children’s cartoons and movies from home country.

#### *Using Chinese dictionary*

The mother in A family taught her sons how to use Chinese dictionary to find out specific characters when they were little. The mother told me an anecdote of Adam’s learning Chinese characters. When Adam was four years old, he went to the Chinese weekend school. The teacher asked the students to practice writing Chinese characters by writing a row of the same characters. Adam first wrote “字” (word) in a row, and then he wrote “学” (study) in another row. Adam got bored when writing the same character many times, so he forgot to write the three dots of “学” and only wrote one dot just like the character above “字”. Adam said, “They look like the same! Chinese is too difficult to learn!” after the mother pointed out his mistake. The mother helped

him notice the difference between these two characters by making an analogy of the character “学” with the actor’s name, “三毛” (three dots) in a Chinese movie Adam just watched. Now, the character seems not tedious any more. The mother then asked him to find out all the characters with the part “学字头” in the dictionary. It turned out that Adam found many characters with the part “学字头”, so he couldn’t help asking, “Why there are so many characters with the part “学字头”? The mother patiently guided Adam and told him that the parts were very useful when learning Chinese characters. Some of the parts are responsible for the meaning, and some of the parts are responsible for the pronunciation. She further asked Adam to find two parts, one of which is for meaning and another one is for pronunciation. Finally, Adam found out two parts, “雨” is for meaning, which is water related, and “曼” is for pronunciation. Adam later admitted to his mother, “Mom, the Chinese characters are really interesting!”

#### *Hiring private and certified Chinese tutor*

Besides teaching Chinese by herself, the mother in L family also sent her daughter to travel to mainland China for an extended time when Jasmine was nine years old. Jasmine spent almost over eight months living and traveling in mainland China with her father when her father was doing business in mainland China at that time. According to the mother, they decided to help Jasmine learn more Chinese characters, so the father hired a private tutor who had a master degree in Chinese education to teach Jasmine reading and writing in Chinese during their stay in China. Jasmine learned to read Chinese characters with the teaching methodology called “*Direct Image*”. The mother said that the class was very helpful for Jasmine to develop further her Chinese reading and writing proficiency. Jasmine also spent some time traveling across China with her father and she visited a number of cities.

## Chapter 5

### Implications/Conclusions

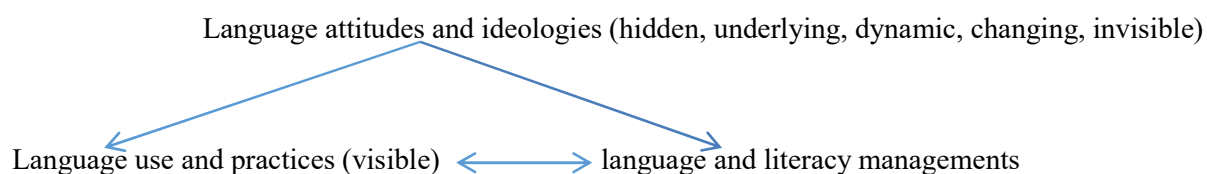
#### *The Relationship between Language Practices, Language Management and Literacy Practices, and Language Attitudes and Ideologies*

The previous literature, such as Lao (2004), Shin (2005), Zhang (2008), finds the discrepancy between parents' language attitudes and ideologies and their language use and practices: although parents think it is important to maintain and develop heritage language, it is more important for their children to learn English first and better. However, in my study I found that parents' language attitudes and ideologies are cohesive with their language practices, language management, and biliteracy practices. For example, the parents in the W family prioritize the English language, choose to speak English only with their children, and put much emphasis on English literacy development because they think English is far more important than Chinese for their children. The mothers in A and J family choose to speak Chinese only with the children and put much emphasis on Chinese literacy development because they think maintaining and developing Chinese is very important for both the family and children. The parents in L family make great efforts to help her daughter with both English and Chinese, and speak only Chinese with daughter because they think both languages are equally important for the family and children.

Therefore, for the family language policy of Chinese immigrant parents, I argue that parental language attitudes and ideologies determine parents' language practices with children as well as language management and biliteracy practices and efforts. Parents' language practices and language and literacy management are closely related to each other, but the two components are not necessarily consistent with each other. Parents who speak English only with the children

also try to manage their Chinese language development, for example sending the children to the Chinese weekend school and helping with the Chinese homework, like the W family in my study. Parents who speak Chinese mostly or only with the children also involve with English literacy practices, for example, reading English books to the children, helping with English homework, or exposing the children to the media in English, like the L, J, and A family in my study. I employed a figure below to describe the relationship among these three components in family language policy.

Figure three: The relationship among three components in FLP



The reason why the previous literature finds the discrepancy between the parental language attitudes and language practices may result from the fact that the parents' underlying and true attitudes and ideologies are not discovered and revealed thoroughly. I argue that it is simply not right or legitimate for parents to say that my children's heritage language is not important. It is definitely important, but the key question is "How important is the heritage language, comparing to English, for my children as well as for my family?" Therefore, the true language attitudes and ideologies of the parents may include that English is more important than the heritage language--Chinese for their children; Children will get confused when two or more languages are exposed to them and they are not able to learn two languages simultaneously and easily; They hope their children to mingle well with other English-speaking children starting from preschool and kindergarten; They are eager to see their children excel in the classroom and

allow short amount of time of developing two languages. The priority for these parents is their children's academic success in American society; therefore, they put English learning as a priority. When their children gradually lose or are becoming unwilling to speak the HL, it is always too late to force the children to switch to the HL because children have become comfortable with speaking and thinking in English language. They have formed the English speaking habit with the parents and they know that the parents can understand them, so it is not necessary for them to speak Chinese. However, when children are used to think in two languages when they are young, for example, the children are aware that they should speak English with English-speaking people, such as teachers, peers, and they speak Chinese with Chinese-speaking people, such as parents, relatives. Once the habit and awareness is formed, they know with whom and what language they should speak. They are able to switch the thinking mode between English and Chinese easily and effortlessly, like Adam in A family, as his mother said, "He is able to switch between English and Chinese without any problem because he is used to think in these two different languages. That's something extraordinary."

*The Relationship between FLP, literacy practices and HL maintenance, biliteracy development*

The result of this study reveal that FLP is closely related to HL maintenance and literacy practices is closely related to children's biliteracy development. For example, the W family implemented English as the priority language by speaking English mostly to the children and practicing English literacy activities with children, so the children in W family only developed English language and literacy proficiency and became English monolingual. David in W family was able to understand Chinese but was not able to speak and express in Chinese. The Z family did not implement any specific FLP and allowed the child to make language choice freely. The literacy practices took place in the family were related to passing tests. Therefore, Jessica in Z

family became used to speaking English most of the time and viewed learning Chinese as learning a subject. She was able to communicate in Chinese, but not very smoothly and comfortably, and her Chinese literacy ability was also limited.

Differently, the J and L family implemented both English and Chinese as priority languages. Although the parents only spoke Chinese to the children and required children to speak only Chinese to them and practiced Chinese literacy activities mostly, they still helped children with English literacy development before the children entered the school and during the first couple of years of the elementary school. Therefore, the children in J and L family turned out to become English-Chinese bilingual and biliterate. Jasmine in L family was able to communicate in Chinese smoothly and comfortably and was able to read a number of Chinese characters. Her English was good too since she always received honors when she gave presentations and reports. Kim in J family was also able to communicate in Chinese and was able to read Chinese chapter book when he was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. He has attended a gifted program since kindergarten and now is attending a magnet junior high school.

For A family, the Chinese as the priority language family, Chinese has always been the language spoken between mother and children and Chinese literacy development has been emphasized greatly, and mother's involvement in English literacy development was minimal. The children in A family, therefore, developed a native-like fluency of Chinese spoken ability and a certain level of Chinese literacy ability. He was identified as talented by his elementary school teacher. Now, he is attending a medical school.

Table 25 demonstrates the relationship between different FLPs and outcomes of children's language development and proficiency in the participating families.

Table 25

The Relationship between Different FLPs and Outcomes of Children’s Language Development

Different FLPs	English as the priority FLP	Testing as the priority FLP	Both English and Chinese as the priority FLP	Chinese as the priority FLP
Outcomes of children’s language development	English monolingual	English-dominant with limited proficiency in Chinese HL	Quite balanced English-Chinese bilingual	Quite balanced English-Chinese bilingual

*The role of home support for HL maintenance and biliteracy development*

The results of this study support Fishman’s (1991) argument that home plays a crucial role in HL maintenance and literacy development. Without strong family support and commitment, efforts for language maintenance in other domains may serve only as symbols. For example, David and Jessica in my study provides evidence for Fishman’s argument because David went to HL weekend school for a year and Jessica went to the HL weekend school for ten year, but their home language and literacy environment is still English-dominant and their HL proficiency is still rudimentary and limited. Therefore, if the immigrant parents’ goal for their children is to become bilingual and biliterate in a monolingual-dominant country, home domain must be an environment where the HL should be always used for both parents and children, and

immigrant parents should take the responsibilities of protecting and teaching the HL to their children.

Moreover, home plays an important role in fighting against the influence of social pressure and power in order to preserve HL. Schooling does have a significant influence on language practices between parents and children since the habit and motivation of speaking English for children at school naturally make them want to practice speaking English with the parents at home. If the parents allow children to speak English to them, English will gradually penetrate into the home milieu and gradually erode Chinese HL environment at home. Thus, home becomes vulnerable for schooling influence. However, if the parents insist their children to speak Chinese to them, English will not take the place of Chinese at home. Hence, home becomes a protected environment for continued Chinese language maintenance and development. Therefore, I argue when English penetrates into home environment, the HL maintenance will become extremely vulnerable. When parents think it is appropriate for children to speak English with them, their children will switch to speak English, and gradually and eventually lose the HL. When they realize that their children are no long willing to or unable to speak the HL with them, it is usually too late to switch back.

Home literacy environment and literacy practices also lay a foundation and help develop latent literacy for children further develop English as well as HL literacy later. This latent literacy is usually developed before children enter school. Four out the five mothers practiced literacy activities since their children's toddler time. The mother in W family read English story books to her son when he was two years old. The mother in A family read Chinese story books to her son when he was little. The mothers in J and L family read story books in both English and Chinese to their children when they were little. These reading practices usually take place from



toddler time to the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. For example, the mother in W family read English story books to her son from toddler time to the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and the mothers in J and L family read Chinese story books to their children also from toddler time to the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

However, the influence and role of home support seems to decrease as the children's ages increase regarding to HL literacy development, especially after the children enter the junior high school. Previous studies, such as Tse (2000) and Kondo (1998), found out that HL speakers who are quite balanced bilinguals all went through a period of resisting learning HL and losing interest in learning HL sometime in their junior high or high school years, and picked up the interest and continue HL learning in high school or college. My study also found the similar patterns. Jessica in Z family always wanted to quit Chinese weekend class during her junior high school years and was forced to attend the class by her mother, but to her mother's surprise, she actively decided to continue learning after she entered the high school and she also decided to take Chinese AP test. Kim in J family is experiencing the stage of losing interest in Chinese learning. According to his mother, he was no longer interested in reading Chinese books or attending Chinese weekend school, which Kim used to enjoy doing when he was in elementary school. Adam in A family also went through a period of losing interest in learning Chinese. He quitted Chinese weekend school after he entered the junior high school because he did not like writing Chinese characters, which was the major learning content in the school.

#### *The role of HL weekend school for HL maintenance*

Due to some factors, such as their busy work schedule, taking care of little ones, and pressure and stress of surviving the host country, some parents may hope that Chinese HL weekend school can help their children's HL maintenance and development for their sake. For

example, the mother in Z family has sent her daughter to Chinese HL weekend school for ten years and hoped her daughter could continue learning Chinese there. However, the result of attending HL weekend school is not ideal since the daughter does not speak Chinese with parents and has very limited Chinese literacy proficiency. Similar result is also found out in Kondo's (1998) study. Two Japanese HL speakers were sent to HL weekend school for years, but their Japanese was still rudimentary because their mothers spoke English mostly to them. As the two Japanese HL speakers recalled that HL weekend school was just a socializing place for them with their peers and they still spoke English in school.

Therefore, I argue that attending Chinese weekend school alone is not sufficient for children to maintain and develop Chinese HL proficiency due to a number of reasons, including limited instruction time (two hours per week) and lack of home reinforcement. Children who do not attend the Chinese weekend school at all or attend the school for a short period of time may still have high Chinese proficiency if the parents reinforce and insist Chinese only policy at home, such as Jasmine in L family and Adam in A family. Children who do attend the Chinese weekend school for a long time may still have limited Chinese proficiency, such as Jessica in Z family. David in W family was sent to the Chinese weekend school for a year even though the parents spoke English mostly with him and prioritize English. Thus, either attending Chinese weekend school or not, or how long the children attend the school is not the key to maintain and develop Chinese, and is not the key to examine the parents' language attitudes and ideologies either. The key to maintain and develop Chinese is to speak, learn, and reinforce Chinese at home. The key to reveal the parents' language attitudes and ideologies is to examine the parents' actual language and literacy practices with their children at home.

## Conclusion

This study demonstrates Chinese immigrants' FLP and biliteracy practices, and it analyzes the factors which may influence FLP and home literacy practices. The survey study shows that language practices between parents and children are English and Chinese mixture, and parents usually speak Chinese mostly to children and children reply in English mostly. The second child in the family usually has less Chinese exposure and thus has more limited Chinese proficiency than the first child since the first child bring English home and parents tend to speak more English with the second child. English is the language spoken among the siblings and with other children. The survey also demonstrates that parents and children have different language preference for media and entertainments. Parents' language preference manifests an English-Chinese bilingual trend, while children's preference manifests an English monolingual trend. The survey indicates that parent's language ideologies are largely influenced by "English-only" ideology and social environment and it also shows the distinctive degree of perceived importance of English and Chinese for their children. Meanwhile, the survey study reveals the loose parental language requirement of speaking Chinese only for the children and it discovers a sharp contrast of English and Chinese literacy practices in Chinese immigrant's families. Only very few parents require their children to speak Chinese only at home. The frequency of English literacy practices is far more often than Chinese literacy practices and parents invest much more on English literacy materials and activities.

A multitude of factors from different sources shape the FLP and literacy practices. These factors lie in four facets, including family-related factors, social factors, linguistics factors, and individual factors. Family-related factors include the relationship between the parents/mothers and children, parents' education background and English language proficiency, parents' self-

education and knowledge of language acquisition, and family identity (parents' personal experience, family connections with the home country, parents' visions on the family and children's future as well as expectations on children), Social factors include schooling, advice from pediatricians, language speech expert, and language acquisition expert, other parents, and books on children's language development, aspiration/pressure of academic success in school, emphasis on tests/scores, resources available for the parents and children, and social environment (mainstream and heritage language school, immigrant community, and peer influence and pressure). Linguistic factors include the difficult degree of developing HL literacy and linguistic distance between English and HL. Individual factors consist of religion practices, children's loss of interest in HL reading/learning, and children's personality and learning habits. All these factors mentioned above influence the immigrants' FLP and biliteracy practices. As I argued before, parental language attitudes and ideologies may determine family language practices, language management and literacy practices. Moreover, FLP and family biliteracy practices may influence the outcome of HL maintenance and biliteracy development.

In order to help children maintain HL and develop biliteracy of English and Chinese HL, some strategies employed by Chinese immigrant parents were found in this study. The mothers in my study helped their children with English literacy development by starting to read English story books at children's very young age, which was as young as two years old. In addition, the mothers helped the children with some basis of English literacy skills, such as letter recognizing and writing. The mothers also made use of English learning materials for ELLs which were bought from home country, such as CD, DVD, and textbooks to teach the children English pronunciation and phonetics. Last but not the least, the mothers made advantage of English environment and expose their children to English language by letting them watch English

cartoons, children's movies, and visiting local libraries. Meanwhile, the mothers helped their children with Chinese HL maintenance and literacy development by employing a wide variety of strategies, including insisting on speaking Chinese only policy for children, making meaningful and in-depth conversations in Chinese with children, paying frequent visit to home country and staying extended time in home country, helping children connect with Chinese-speaking people/peers, Chinese character recognizing and writing, choosing age-appropriate Chinese books and interesting learning materials, using Chinese dictionary, and hiring private and certified Chinese tutor.

Immigrant parents, however, are extremely vulnerable for social influence and pressure and anxious to witness their children's upward mobility. They are eager to see their children excel in mainstream society and easily forget and give up their own advantages and right of speaking and maintaining HL. Shin (2005) argues that English proficiency is closely related to the children's academic success in the U.S., and further it is closely associated with the children's social assimilation and success in the mainstream society, but the HL does not have the same priority and privilege as English for the immigrant parents. Similarly, this study also reveals that Chinese immigrant parents invest more time and energy involving with the children's English literacy development, although they view both languages are important for their children. The importance of learning Chinese, especially reading and writing in Chinese, has dramatically decreased, comparing to the importance of learning English reading and writing because English is the key to participating in mainstream American society and their children's fluent command of English is a top priority. Chinese learning, thus, can be held or given up.

However, the result of this study indicates that Chinese does not need to sacrifice in order to better learn English and better participate in the classroom, and it releases one of the major

concerns that many immigrant parents may have. Learning HL will not interfere with English learning for children. To the contrary, it may help children's cognitive development, and thus accelerate English language and literacy development in the long run. The three children, Kim, Jasmine, and Adam, in my study are academically successful and excel in their classrooms, although their parents have been speaking Chinese to them since their birth and taught Chinese reading and writing to them since they were toddlers. Therefore, learning HL is not a hindrance, but a facilitator instead.

Admittedly, immigrant parents face a number of challenges when helping children preserve HL in an English-dominant society. Let the negative social influence and pressure alone, immigrant parents themselves have to deal with the busy work, taking care of the younger ones, and the stress and pressure of surviving the mainstream society. They may not have much time and energy spending with their children and teaching their children HL. In addition, they may feel embarrassed and anxious when their children go through a phase of silence after the children first enter the school. As Shin's (2005) study discovers that immigrant parents are not only worried about their children's English language development but also concerned about their children's psychological well-beings and personality development because of children's lack of communication ability in English. Park (2007) also finds out that immigrant parents are embarrassed by their children's silence when others greet their children, especially when comparing their own children's silence and shyness with other English-speaking children's appropriate responses and behaviors. The mother in J family in my study also expressed her concern that she was once worried that not being able to communicate in English in the classroom may lower her child's self-esteem. The mother in A family similarly indicated that her

son was not willing to speak out in English for a quite long period of time until he felt completely comfortable in speaking the language.

Therefore, both immigrant parents and children usually have to go through a transitional and even struggling phase when the children first enter the school system. This is also a phase when HL maintenance becomes vulnerable to social pressure and influence, as my study shows that schooling has an influential role in language practices and literacy practices between parents and children at home. Some immigrant parents start to speak more English and less Chinese with their children and focus on helping children develop English literacy development. In order to protect HL and ensure its continued development, the immigrant parents have to learn to be patient with their children's temporary silence in English and be persistent and faithful in insisting speaking and teaching HL to their children.

As Fishman (1966) argued that home should be a protected environment for HL and HL should always be used at home in order to preserve HL. Efforts made at other domains may only serve as a symbol if HL is not used and reinforced at home. Similarly, Wiley and Valdés (2001) argue that immigrant parents should be responsible for teaching HL to their children. According to my study, sending children to Chinese weekend school is a common practice for Chinese immigrant parents who hope their children can develop Chinese literacy. However, the role of Chinese weekend school on developing Chinese literacy is quite limited due to the limited instruction time. Previous studies have suggested that children need certain amount of formal instruction time of literacy activities in order to become literate in that language. To become literate in Chinese, more formal instruction time is needed since its orthographic feature of the written form. Children need to learn and memorize the individual characters which are separate from its sound system. Two hours per week in Chinese weekend school is far from enough for

children to maintain and develop Chinese literacy. Therefore, parents have to make efforts on their own to help children become literate in Chinese. Specifically, parents need to engage children in literacy related activities in Chinese in the home milieu. The activities can include reading interesting and age-appropriate books in Chinese to children, teaching Chinese characters recognizing and writing, introducing music, cartoons, TV programs, games, and movies in Chinese to children, helping children better connect with the home country through frequent visits and extended stay, and frequent and meaningful communication with Chinese speakers, especially with parents and Chinese-speaking peers. Nowadays, more Chinese learning resources for young children and adolescents are available online. Parents should also make use of such resources to help children develop continuous interest in Chinese learning.

HL maintenance and development will not take place naturally and automatically, and the immigrant parents have to fight for it because the influence of English as a dominant language in the society is so strong and powerful. HL maintenance and development and becoming bilingual and biliterate in the U.S. is a really challenging task since it is like swimming against the mainstream current under the present sociopolitical climate. Therefore, children's consistent and continued use and learning of the HL at home is critical for its maintenance and achieving a balance in their abilities and interests in the two languages. The parents need not only to promote HL use but also to employ a variety of strategies to ensure the children's continued development in reading and writing their HL at home. Furthermore, to achieve biliteracy of both English and Chinese, immigrant parents need to make great efforts to not only constantly help children with Chinese learning but also assist children with English language and literacy development before the children enter school. The parents' guidance and assistance with English language and literacy development are the important first step for the children's smooth transition into the



school system since the English literacy skills and knowledge developed and learned at home before schooling can lay a foundation and be further developed by the formal instruction at school.

In fact, immigrant parents, as a valuable source of HL exposure/input have incomparable advantages in helping children develop bilingual and biliterate ability, which is an invaluable asset and treasure the parents are able to provide for their children. One of the bilinguals in Kondo's (1998) study said, "The most valuable thing that my mother did for me is insisting speaking Japanese to me and required me to speak Japanese only at home." Adam in A family in my study also proudly said, "I give all the credits to my mother for my fluent Chinese. I am really thankful for her!" Furthermore, what the parents can do in helping develop children's bilingualism and biliteracy is not only restricted in the home milieu but also can be expanded beyond the home environment and provide HL related resources as much as possible.

Understanding FLP and biliteracy practices at immigrant children's homes are crucial for HL researchers and language educators because home environment lays a foundation for HL maintenance and biliteracy development. School teachers, including mainstream teachers and HL weekend school teachers, often do not have the knowledge base about the children's culturally specific ways of learning outside of school. The mainstream teachers need to empower immigrant parents and children by encouraging their continued language and literacy practices in HL at home and celebrating the value of speaking languages other than English in the classroom. They need to equip themselves with more teaching skills and strategies when children's primary language is not English in their classroom. In addition, they need to provide informed and constructive suggestions and assistance to immigrant parents when the parents have concerns about their children's English language development and personality development. They can

provide helpful teaching resources for helping immigrants' children and young ELLs for parents to refer to. Meanwhile, HL weekend school teachers need to know the parents' expectations toward the children' HL learning and let them know that limited instruction time in the classroom is not sufficient enough for the children to achieve high level of HL literacy if that is the learning goal. HL weekend school teachers should involve parents in the classroom activities and emphasize that parents' involvement and reinforcement at home is crucial for HL maintenance and development.

It is also critical for immigrant parents themselves to be aware of their FLP and biliteracy practices at home as well as the factors which may influence their FLP and literacy practices. It is significant for them to realize the irreplaceable role they play in supporting their children's HL maintenance and biliteracy development. I, therefore, conclude that if the parents' expectation and goal for their children is to become bilingual and biliterate in an English-dominant environment, they have to make great and continuous efforts and equip themselves with persistence and perseverance to fight for HL survival and blossom. They need not only to promote continued and constant HL use at home but also to employ various resources, opportunities, and strategies to allow the children's continuous development in reading and writing the HL at home and beyond the home milieu. Besides their own efforts, they also need to seek assistance and guidance from other sources. They need to cooperate closely with mainstream teachers and HL weekend teachers in order to help the children develop bilingual and biliterate ability successfully. To raise and nurture bilingual and biliterate children is never an easy task, and it requires the cooperation of parents, schools, institutions, and the society. However, it is a worthwhile journey and course because bilingual and biliterate ability is a scarce asset and talent which will be extremely valuable for children's future competitiveness in the

globe. This study provides language educators and policy makers with a better understanding of immigrant families' language use, immigrant parents' attitudes and ideologies, and literacy practices so that they can make well-informed instructional decisions and policy decisions. I believe this study is going to contribute the course of HL maintenance and biliteracy development for immigrants' children.

## APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

A survey questionnaire for Chinese immigrants' family language policy

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email/phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Your personal information and any information you provide in the questionnaire will keep confidential and will be only used for the purpose of the doctoral dissertation research.

Instructions: Please answer the questions as carefully and as correctly as possible. If you are not sure how to answer, please ask for help. You can also write in the margin if you want to clarify your answer.

Part one: Please circle the answers that most accurately describe your family language use and environment.

Scale:

- A. English always**
- B. mostly English**
- C. English and Chinese about equally**
- D. Mostly Mandarin Chinese/dialect**
- E. Mandarin Chinese/dialect always**

1. In what language do you speak to your spouse? A. B. C. D. E.
2. In what language do you communicate with your first child now? A. B. C. D. E.
3. In what language did you communicate with your first child before school? A. B. C. D. E.
4. In what language do you communicate with your second child now? (If you only have one child, please go to No. 8) A. B. C. D. E.
5. In what language did you communicate with your second child before school? A. B. C. D. E.
6. In what language do your children communicate with each other at home? If you have one child, what language does your child communicate with other Chinese families' children? A. B. C. D. E.
7. In what language is the TV programs which you usually watch at home?  
A. B. C. D. E.
8. In what language is the TV programs which your children usually watch at home?  
A. B. C. D. E.
9. In what language are the book, newspapers, and magazines that you like to read?  
A. B. C. D. E.

10. In what language are the books, newspapers, and magazines that your children like to read?

A. B. C. D. E.

11. In what language is the music which you like to listen at home? A. B. C. D. E.

12. In what language is the music which your children like to listen? A. B. C. D. E.

13. In what language are the movies and recreational programs which you like to watch?

A. B. C. D. E.

14. In what language are the movies and recreational programs which your children like to watch?

A. B. C. D. E.

15. In what language are the webpages you usually browse? A. B. C. D. E.

16. In what language are the webpages your children usually browse? A. B. C. D. E.

17. In what language do you communicate in your social network?

A. B. C. D. E.

18. In what language do your children speak in their social network?

A. B. C. D. E.

Part Two: Please circle the answer on a scale of 1 to 5.

Scale

**1: Strongly disagree**

**2: Disagree**

**3: Neutral**

**4: Agree**

**5: Strongly agree**

**Disagree.....agree**

1. English should be the only language spoken in the public, such as in the school. 1 2 3 4 5

2. Chinese is becoming more important, and it will become the future global language. 1 2 3 4 5

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. Learning Chinese and English well is equally important for my children.                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. The family influence is one of the most important factors for children's language development. |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Children are able to learn to speak in both Chinese and English simultaneously.                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Children are able to learn to read and write in Chinese and English simultaneously.            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. It is very important to speak fluent Chinese for my children.                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. It is very important to speak fluent English for my children.                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. It is very important to read and write in Chinese for my children.                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. It is very important to read and write in English for my children.                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Learning Chinese is helpful to learn Chinese culture.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Learning Chinese is helpful to connect with the relatives in the origin country.              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Learning Chinese is helpful to form the children's identity.                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Learning Chinese is beneficial for children's future study.                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. Learning Chinese is beneficial for children's future work.                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. The school your children go to should provide Chinese language classes.                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. Your children can only learn English faster and better in English only classroom.             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. Chinese learning will interfere with English learning.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. It is NOT necessary for your children to master Chinese if they live and work in the U.S.     |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. You feel that the social pressures in the U.S. make your children speak more English.         |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Part Three: Please circle the answers that apply to your family.

1. You require your children to speak \_\_\_\_\_ at home.  
A. Only English   B. Mostly English   C. either English or Chinese   D. Mostly Chinese   E. Only Chinese
2. With whom your children speak Chinese the most?  
A. With children from other Chinese families   B. with siblings   C. with relatives in the origin country  
D. with you/your spouse   E. with grandparents
3. How long do your children spend on Chinese learning at home besides attending the Chinese school?  
A. Seldom   B. half an hour a week   C. one hour a week   D. two hours a week   E. more than 2 hours a week
4. How often do your children go back to mainland China/Taiwan?  
A. Seldom   B. once every 3-4 years   C. once 2-3 years   D. once a year   E. twice a year

5. How long do your children usually stay back in mainland China/Taiwan?

- A. 1-2 weeks    B. about a month    C. 1-2 months    D. 2-3 months    E. more than 3 months

6. At what age did you or your spouse read books to your children?

- English: A. Never    B. 1-2    C. 2-3    D. 3-4    E. after 4

- Chinese: A. Never    B. 1-2    C. 2-3    D. 3-4    E. after 4

7. How often did you read books to your children?

- English: A. never    B. once/twice a month    C. once/twice a week    D. three/four times a week    E. everyday

- Chinese: A. never    B. once/twice a month    C. once/twice a week    D. three/four times a week    E. everyday

8. Will your children read books independently at home?

- English: A. never    B. once/twice a month    C. once/twice a week    D. three/four times a week    E. everyday

- Chinese: A. never    B. once/twice a month    C. once/twice a week    D. three/four times a week    E. everyday

9. How many books do your children have?

- English: A. less than 10    B. 10-20    C. 20-30    D. 30-40    E. more than 40

- Chinese: A. less than 10    B. 10-20    C. 20-30    D. 30-40    E. more than 40

10. How long do your children watch TV or other media on a daily basis?

- English: A. <30 minutes    B. 30 minutes to one hour    C. 1-1.5hours    D. 1.5-2 hours    E. > 2 hours

- Chinese: A. <30 minutes    B. 30 minutes to one hour    C. 1-1.5hours    D. 1.5-2 hours    E. > 2 hours

11. What books, DVD, or games will you buy for your children?

- English: A. never    B. once/twice a year    C. once/twice half year    D. once every 2-3 months    E. once every 1-2 months

- Chinese: A. never    B. once/twice a year    C. once/twice half year    D. once every 2-3 months    E. once every 1-2 months

Part Four: Please circle the answers about your family background information.

1. Your native language is: A. English    B. Mandarin Chinese    C. dialect

2. Your spouse's native language is: A. English    B. Mandarin Chinese    C. dialect

3. Your gender: A. Female    B. Male

4. At what age did you come to the US?

- A. 10-15    B. 15-20    C. 20-25    D. 25-30    E. 30 and above

5. How long have you been living in the US?

- A. >20 years    B. 15-20 years    C. 10-15 years    D. 5-10 years    E. <5 years

6. Your occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ Your spouse's occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Your highest education level:



- A. High school    B. college/Bachelor    C. Master    D. Doctoral    E. Post-doctoral
8. Your spouse's highest education level:  
A. High school    B. college/Bachelor    C. Master    D. Doctoral    E. Post-doctoral
9. You are: A. American    B. Chinese American    C. both American and Chinese    D. Chinese
10. Your children are: A. American    B. Chinese American    C. both American and Chinese    D. Chinese

## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR PARENTS

1. When did you come to the States?
2. Could you briefly tell me your educational or professional experience after you arrive?
3. Do you go back to mainland China or Taiwan often after coming to the US? If so, why?
4. When did you have your child? What language did you use to talk to your child when s/he is a baby?
5. What language do you use to talk with your child now?
6. What language do you think is your child's native language? Were you worried about their learning of English?
7. Do you have any rules in the family to make them speak certain languages? Or do you give incentives when they speak Chinese?
8. Do you tell your child to speak Chinese only at home? Or do you let them choose the language they want to use at home?
9. Did you teach your child Chinese reading and writing? If so, how do you teach your child to read or write? Tell me some stories about what you did together.
10. What do you do to support your child's development in English and Chinese?
11. What difficulties have you had in teaching English or Chinese to your child?
12. What kind of support do you need to teach English or Chinese to your child?
13. Do you think American schools are meeting your child's needs? What kind of assistance did you give to your child when they first went to school or when they were not fluent in English?
14. Is your child attending Sunday Chinese School? How is s/he learning Chinese now?
15. Is there any period when your child refused to learn Chinese? How did you resolve the problem?
16. What is the most important factor to help maintain your child's Chinese proficiency?
17. In your opinion, how important are English and Chinese in your child's success in school and in American society?
18. How important is it for you to have your child be proficient in Chinese?
19. Please tell me your vision or expectations for your child's future, education, and career.

## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR CHILDREN

(Before interviewing, I will ask which language the child prefer to be interviewed)

1. What's your name? How old are you? Which grade are you in now? Can you write down your Chinese name?
2. What name are you called by your parents? By your relative? By your friends? Do you like the ways being called? Why or why not?
3. What language do you speak with your parents at home? With your relatives?
4. What language do you prefer to speak at home? What language do you prefer to speak in the public?
5. What language do you speak with your parents at public places, such as supermarket, restaurant, etc.?
6. What language do you speak at school? Who do you hang out with most at school? Who do you hang out with most outside of school?
7. Do you have Chinese-speaking friends at school?
8. How much do you know about China? Where do you get the information?
9. Do you remember how you learned Chinese when you were little? Did your mom teach you to learn Chinese? Did she teach you to read Chinese characters and write characters? What about now?
10. Do you like learning Chinese? Can you tell me some interesting stories about learning Chinese?
11. Do your parents want you to speak Chinese at home, or English at home? Why? What do you think about it?
12. Is there a rule "speak only Chinese at home" in your family? What do you think about it?
13. Can you describe your relationship with your parents? Do you talk to your parents often? Why or why not?
14. Do you talk to your grandparents often?
15. What is your favorite Chinese dish? Do you watch Chinese TV program or movies?
16. What books do you like to read? Do you like to read in English or Chinese? Do you have any favorite Chinese books?
17. How do you spend your summer vacation?
18. Do you go back to mainland China or Taiwan? How do you like it? Do you have any relatives and friends in mainland China or Taiwan?
19. Do you think it is important for you to learn Chinese?

APPENDIX D: THE TITLES OF FOUR GREAT CLASSICAL NOVELS IN CHINESE

红楼梦

三国演义

水浒传

西游记

### 幸福，从心开始

上重点高中、进名牌大学、出国、进一流企业或做公务员。这是这个社会给我们框定的最完美的成长方式。

在父母看来，沿着这条康庄大道成长的的儿女最给自己争面子，在他人看来，这样的娃最有前途。而社会似乎也是最认可这样的人才。

但是每当和这些“完美”人才聊天时，他们的口中总是闪烁着房、车、收入、地位等等。我们能听出他们内心的不安全感，能感受到他们的幸福围绕着这些物质在打转。归纳起来，他们幸福的标准就是：有车有房，有大笔积蓄，有个漂亮老婆，再生娃，然后再让娃上重点高中.....



INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

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DATE: May 16, 2014

TO: Qiong Xia

FROM: University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [551522-1] Heritage Language Maintenance and Biliteracy Development for Immigrants' Children: A Study of Chinese Immigrant Parents' Family Language Policy

REFERENCE #:

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: May 16, 2014

EXPIRATION DATE: May 15, 2015

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 6 & 7

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure which are found on the IRBNet Forms and Templates Page.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others (UPIRSOs) and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

This project has been determined to be a Minimal Risk project. Based on the risks, this project requires

continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of May 15, 2015.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Office at 301-405-4212 or [irb@umd.edu](mailto:irb@umd.edu). Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB's records.

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