

Language Policy, Ideology, and Identity:  
A Qualitative Study of University-Level Chinese Heritage Language Learners

by  
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## ABSTRACT

This research investigates the experiences of Chinese heritage language learners (CHLLs) in a federally funded program of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language in the United States. Most pertinent studies on Chinese heritage language education focus on stakeholders such as teachers and parents. Instead, this study explores the agency of heritage language learners in their efforts toward heritage language maintenance.

Adopting a three-pronged conceptual framework of language planning and policy as a sociocultural process, language ideology, and language identity, this study applies an ethnographically-informed qualitative approach to understanding how CHLLs develop and exercise implicit language policies—taken-for-granted norms about language that guide their language choices and practices—their language ideologies that undergird these policies and the relationship of these informal policies to these learners' language identities.

This study suggests CHLLs participate in Chinese learning activities to reconnect to their family and culture. Their language maintenance efforts, however, do not necessarily change their language use dramatically. In CHLLs' everyday social interactions, their language choices depend on the interlocutors, locations and topics of the conversation and are impacted by the dominant language ideologies toward Chinese and English. CHLLs' Chinese language maintenance practices strengthen learners' relationship with both the language and culture. But Chinese language can be absent from learners' pursuit of their cultural heritage. Furthermore, the multilayered identities of CHLLs are constructed and negotiated in the heteroglossic and multicultural environments.

This is an endeavor in connecting the initiatives of increasing foreign language capacity at the national level with the efforts of maintaining heritage language at the individual level. This study can contribute to a holistic picture for teachers and parents to understand CHLLs' language learning experience. It also offers strategies that can benefit heritage language education.

In dedication to my parents for encouraging me to pursue my graduate study, and my  
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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

#### Background

Heritage language (HL) education has a long history in U.S. society, although the label of heritage language only became popular in recent years (Wiley, 2014a).

According to Fishman (2014), it has been more than 300 years since speakers of colonial languages first established formal HL education within the lands that later became the United States. From then on, the engagement of HL communities in preserving their languages has never stopped. In the last decade, HL education has received increasing attention from policy makers, language educators, and HL speakers.

Within U.S. society, the need to study languages other than English (LOTEs) reflects the nation's multilingual and multicultural traditions (Brecht & Walton, 1996; Wiley, 2010a). Studies show that in the last 30 years there has been a significant increase in both the number of speakers of LOTEs as well as the number of languages they speak everyday (Peyton, Ranard, & McGinnis, 2001; Shin & Kominski, 2010). The Chinese-speaking community is among this expansion. According to the 2009-2013 American Community Survey, Chinese is the second largest LOTE in the U.S., following Spanish, and its population has multiplied four times during the past three decades (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). The survey shows this population composes 0.9 percent of the total population and 4.8 percent of the population that speaks LOTEs at home.

Nevertheless, the growth in language speakers alone does not necessarily change official language policy or result in improvements in LOTE education (Wiley, 2010a). A 2008 survey by Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) indicates that in comparison to

1997 CAL surveys, fewer schools offered foreign language (FL) classes at both elementary and secondary levels (Pufahl & Rhodes, 2011). When asked about why FL programs decreased at their school, one third of the participating K-12 schools explained that No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act mandates constituted one of the major factors (Pufahl & Rhodes, 2011). NCLB's high-stakes testing and accountability requirements drove K-12 schools to focus exclusively on student achievement in math, reading, and science, leading to a decline in the interest and input in FL instruction. The same survey shows that not only the number of schools offering FL courses decreased in the last decade, but also fewer students were enrolled in FL classes at public elementary and secondary schools.

In higher education, the Modern Language Association (MLA) reports that the enrollments in LOTEs in U.S. institutions of higher education reached a new high in 2009 (Furman, Goldberg, & Lusin, 2010). In a broader chronological context, the MLA surveys finds that, excluding Latin and Ancient Greek, between 1960 and 2009, the number of modern language enrollments in higher education increased by 168 percent and a continuous growth in LOTE course enrollments had appeared since 1995. In spite of the large growth in numbers, the ratio of enrollments in modern languages per 100 total enrollments in higher education was 8.6 in 2009 while the ratio was 16.5 in 1965. The decline was partly attributed to the reduction of language requirements at colleges and universities (Furman et al., 2010).

Despite the overall decline of input in FL instruction in the American educational system, interest in Chinese language education has increased in the past 50 years. This increase is related to a growing recognition of skilled multilingual professionals as

national resources. Since World War II, the U.S. government has been continuously involved in supporting training individuals in those languages that are considered critical to national security and economic vitality (McGinnis, 2005; Ricento, 2005). Since the passage of the National Defense Education Act (P.L. 85-864) in 1958 – a law to fulfill the prevailing demand for experts in foreign language and international studies – Chinese (Mandarin) has always been on the list of critical languages. However, the reasons to have Chinese on the list have evolved over the years. During the Cold War, as a communist state the People’s Republic of China was perceived as a security concern to the U.S. (Chinese Language, n.d.). Since the economic “opening-up” policy of the late 1970s, China has received more attention due to the upswing of its economic and political status. In 2010, China rose to become the world’s largest exporter and the second-largest economy after the U.S. (Central Intelligence Agency, 2012). The economic prosperity of China made the studies of this country and its language highly relevant for the purpose of maintaining national security and competitiveness of the U.S. Therefore, when the U.S. Department of Education emphasized the need to increase foreign language capacity and proposed to establish grants under President Bush’s National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) in 2006, it provided the following comparison:

More than 200 million children in China are studying English, a compulsory subject for all Chinese primary school students. By comparison, only about 24,000 of approximately 54 million elementary and secondary school children in the United States are studying Chinese. (U.S. Department of Education, 2006, para. 2)



By considering China as a competitor, the comparison shows the rationales of federal support for FL education—as it is well put in the ancient Chinese military treatise, *The Art of War*—if you know both yourself and your enemy, you can win numerous battles without jeopardy. This is evident in numerous historical episodes, including the Soviet Union’s Sputnik I satellite launch in 1957, when the U.S. felt the need for increasing Russian studies; or the soaring of the Japanese economy in the 1980s when Americans saw the necessity to know Japanese; or the 9/11 tragedy, when Americans heard the alarm to train proficient Arabic speakers. Now it is time to learn Chinese.

Based on both international and domestic shifts, interest in learning Chinese is being aroused at the national level as well as within the Chinese heritage community (Asia Society, 2005; Carreira & Kagan, 2011). At the community level, recent Chinese immigrants engaged in maintaining their ethnic identities by means of establishing Chinese community schools in various forms such as weekend programs, after-school programs, and summer programs (Chao, 1996). According to McGinnis (2005), community effort is the major sector for Chinese heritage language (CHL) education and an estimated 150,000 students are enrolled in the heritage schools nationwide. Even though the Chinese heritage community is recognized as a crucial resource to build national Chinese language capacity, community efforts and heritage speakers are believed to be insufficient for America’s language demand (Brecht & Walton, 1996; McGinnis, 2005). The federal government has fully engaged in promoting Chinese, especially Mandarin, among U.S. citizens from all ethnic groups.

Notwithstanding the thriving popularity of Chinese language education at the national level as well as the long-standing efforts from the community to teach Mandarin

and other Chinese dialects, CHL maintenance is still a challenge for Chinese immigrants in the U.S. The HL literature finds that limited minority language learning resources result in language loss in minority communities and the transition is often completed within a few generations (Fishman, 1991; Kondo-Brown, 2006; Krashen, 1996; McCarty, Romero-Little, & Zepeda, 2006; Peyton et al., 2001; Shin, 2010; Wong Fillmore, 1991a). This is true for the Chinese community as well. CHL studies show although Chinese immigrant parents had strong attitudes toward preserving Chinese language, their children might not see the importance of learning the language and even had negative attitudes toward CHL and toward Chinese ethnic identity (Chiang, 2001; Tse, 2000; Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). Language shift among second- and third-generation Chinese immigrants is severe (Kim & Chao, 2009).

In light of these developments of Chinese language promotion and individual effort of language maintenance, this dissertation investigates the experiences of Chinese American college students as they learn Chinese as a heritage language in the U.S. With the growing interest in Chinese language study, there are more college-level Chinese language programs offered to FL learners. Many Chinese American students use this opportunity as a strategy to maintain their heritage language in school settings. The specific problem focus and the scope of the dissertation are examined in the sections that follow.

### Statement of the Problem

Scholars point out that FL policies of the United States are often developed as a reaction to national problems or crisis (Bale, 2008; Phillips, 2007; Wiley, 2010a). The federal policies in favor of Chinese language education result in a boom in Chinese

language programs, although their aim is not stated as minority language maintenance. In a discussion of the proposal of United States-Chinese Cultural Engagement Act and the development of the Advanced Placement Chinese Course and Examination, McGinnis (2005) notes that the former one, which was never passed into law, made no reference to “heritage students of Chinese as a discrete learner constituency”; and the latter assumed its target student population had “no direct connection to the target language through their families or through significant time spent in a community in which the target language is spoken” (p. 594), while heritage learners would be an important part of the program.

Nevertheless, CHLLs are taking this opportunity to maintain their heritage language. In their practices of Mandarin maintenance, CHLLs have to make decisions about which languages they choose to learn and use in and out of CHL language classroom. McCarty, Romero-Little, Warhol, & Zepeda (2011) argue these kinds of decision-making processes represent de facto language policymaking (p. 32). As stated by Shohamy (2006), language policies not only exist at the national and school levels but also at the individual and family levels; they are not only stated through official documents but also “unstated” and covertly created in everyday language practices. In their interactions with family members, teachers, and peers, HL learners interpret, negotiate, and (re)create their informal language policies through language uses and choices. This decision-making process reflects HL learners’ ideas and beliefs about language and meanwhile their ideologies of language shape their de facto language policies. In turn, this influences learners’ identity construction.

In the Editors' Foreword of the *Heritage Language Journal's* special issue on identity, Carreira (2010) notes the interrelationship between HL maintenance and identity as one of the issues requiring further exploration. The explanations of the relationship between language and identity are varied, ranging from an ideology of one-language-one-identity (Blommaert, 2006; Jaffe, 2011; Wiley, 2010b) to a deconstruction of categories of language and identity (Hornberger & Johnson, 2011). Although this study does not take an essentialist standpoint that considers the relationship between language and identity as fixed and unchangeable, these two constructs often intersect and intertwine in speakers' language use. As Fishman (1991) put it, "the destruction of a language is the destruction of a rooted identity" (p. 4). For learners who study their HLs, the maintenance of HLs may entail the revitalization of embedded identity. From this perspective, a study of language planning and policy (LPP) at the individual level provides a way to understand the relationship between language maintenance and identity.

To further understand the relationship between informal language policy-making and language identity construction at the individual level, this dissertation is designed as a qualitative study of Chinese heritage language learners (CHLLs) enrolled in a federally funded program that teaches Mandarin as a FL. The focus of this study is developed from several gaps in the CHL literature. First, many studies investigate the role of Chinese parents (or grandparents) in maintaining CHLLs' language maintenance. In addition, the literature provides a detailed description of CHLLs' motivation of learning Chinese. What is left unclear is how CHLLs as human agents make their language decisions and carry out language practices in the intersection of language and identity. Second (and related to the first point) is the fact that the connection of CHLLs' ideology about

languages to their language practice is rarely discussed in the literature. What informs CHLLs' decision making, and how do these processes regulate (in a "policy" sense) language choices and practices? Third, there is a lack of an ethnographically informed policy analysis of the relationship between this type of informal policy-making and identity construction of CHLLs.

To fill the gaps, the study adopts a qualitative approach to examine how CHLLs develop and implement their informal, tacit language policies when they engage in CHL maintenance practices. The study is interested in obtaining contextualized information on CHLLs' de facto LPP processes within complex sociolinguistic ecology(ies) (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996) that include their heritage language(s) and English. The second aspect of this study is to investigate the role of language maintenance experiences in constructing these learners' language identities.

### Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- What is the nature of CHLLs' de facto language policymaking in the context of a Chinese Flagship language learning program?
- What language ideologies do these de facto language policies reflect?
- What strategies and pedagogies do CHLLs use to (re)acquire and maintain Mandarin?
- How does participation in this Chinese-language program influence CHLLs' identification as heritage language learners?

## Overview of Conceptual Framework

To answer these research questions, I draw on a three-pronged conceptual framework developed from an analysis of the scholarly literature in two related fields (and discussed more fully in Chapter 2). The first component is based on a definition of language policy as a sociocultural process. This approach focuses on the notion of language policy as “modes of human interaction, negotiation, and production mediated by relations of power” (McCarty, 2004, p. 72). From this perspective, LPP is not confined to the top-down policy legislation, but is indeed a deeply social and cultural process in which policy constitutes and is constituted by the practices of individual agents. In other words, a sociocultural approach to language policy accentuates the agentive role of individuals and local groups in making, interpreting, and engaging in the policy process (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007). The concepts of de facto language policy-making emerge from this sociocultural understanding of LPP and the research of de facto language policies explores the “undeclared, unofficial interactions and discourses that regulate language statuses, uses, and choices, and that are transacted in everyday social practice” (McCarty et al., 2011, p. 32). In the context of a Chinese Flagship program, a Mandarin program designed for foreign speakers, this approach establishes the framework to understand how CHLLs create and implement their language decisions through everyday interaction.

The second conceptual framing is based on recent work on the role of language ideology in LPP. Originally introduced by Silverstein in 1979, language ideology or linguistic ideology is defined as “any sets of beliefs about language articulated by the users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use” (p.

193). Language ideologies are not about language per se, but rather “envision and enact links of language to group and personal identity” (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994, pp. 55-56) as well as the power relations within and across institutions that the individuals establish, preserve, accommodate, or resist (McGroarty, 2010). Through situated experience in dynamic sociolinguistic ecologies, the ideologies of speakers and their speech communities are constructed by and influence their language choices (Field & Kroskrity, 2009).

As a language minority group, the CHL community in the U.S. has been engaged in its language and cultural maintenance since the residency of Chinese immigrants on this continent. One type of engagement is CHLLs’ participation in Chinese language education provided in the U.S. formal educational system. What are CHLLs’ language ideologies? How are their ideologies constructed in their linguistic practices and in turn, how do these ideologies affect their language choices? What does the role of CHL play in learners’ identification with their heritage culture? Language ideology provides a theoretical foundation to answer these questions through examining the complex relationship between language, identities, and power relations in the process of CHLLs’ language maintenance.

The third component of my conceptual framework grows out of Gee’s (2000) “four perspectives on identity” theory. The theory introduces an analytical approach to educational issues through understanding how an individual’s identity is created, recognized, and negotiated through interaction in a given context. Gee (2000) defines identity as “being recognized as a certain ‘kind of person,’ in a given context” (p. 99). Instead of seeing identity as fixed and one dimensional, Gee’s identity theory considers

four co-existed perspectives on identity: Nature-identity, Institution-identity, Discourse-identity, and Affinity-identity. These four perspectives are intertwined with each other and present all together “as a given person acts within a given context” (Gee, 2000, p. 101). With the focus placed on the person or the group, this approach examines identity through a sociocultural lens. It is presumed that individuals’ identities are constituted in constantly changing and contesting discourses within which a struggle and negotiation of power exists; identities both shape and are impacted by these discourses (Foucault, 1977; Gee, 2000; Tollefson & Tsui, 2007).

The literature on CHLL identity issues shows that language learners hold widely varied perceptions about their ethnic and language identity due to differences in sociocultural and linguistic background (He, 2006; Shin, 2010; Tse, 2000; Wong & Xiao, 2010; Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). Gee’s identity framework enables the study of CHLLs’ language identity to capture what the label of “Chinese heritage language learner” means to these learners and how it interrelates with other social, cultural, psychological, and economic factors that influence their language decisions.

#### Overview of Research Context, Design and Methodology

This study was carried out in a college-level Mandarin program in a public university located in a major metropolitan area in the U.S. This national multi-year Mandarin program, called the Chinese Flagship program, is federally funded through the National Security Language Initiative. It is designed for FL learners who are pursuing degrees in any major offered in the host university. The program offers Chinese language and culture instruction at both basic and advanced levels. Participants of this study were



Chinese American students who were enrolled in this program and had a historical or personal connection with Chinese language(s).

Within this context, this study applied an ethnographically-informed qualitative approach, including interviewing, observation, and document analysis, to uncover CHLLs' informal language policy-making and identity construction. This approach is used not only because it offers data collection methods as a "way of looking" (i.e., a set of methods), but also because ethnography is a "way of seeing" holistically, systematically, and in situ; it provides a foundation upon which the data are analyzed and interpreted (Wolcott, 2008). As a way of looking, an ethnographic approach explores things that cannot be easily measured or counted and yet have tangible effects on people's life (Shehata, 2006). As a way of seeing, an ethnographic analysis is indeed a cultural analysis (McCarty, 2011; see also Shweder, 1996). An ethnographic inquiry emphasizes on the contextualization of cultural phenomena and the meanings made by cultural "insiders" within particular social contexts (McCarty, 2011), investigating how the system of the studied setting works and how it is maintained (Wolcott, 2008).

With this as an overarching methodological framework, I employed Seidman's (2006, 2013) three-interview model to interview six individuals on how they interpreted their language maintenance experiences and constructed their personal language policies. Ethnographic observations of these individuals were carried out to document students' everyday language practices and their interaction with others in and out of the class, as well as to put their perceptions into context. Also employed in this study was a document analysis of (1) official program documents and news reports, and (2) participants' writing samples in Mandarin.

## Dissertation Organization

The remainder of this dissertation is organized as follows: Chapter 2 reviews the literature pertaining to concepts upon which my study is developed. In addition, it gives a brief historical account of Chinese heritage language in the United States. Chapter 3 reviews the research setting and ethnographically-informed qualitative methods applied in my study. Chapter 4 presents narrative vignettes of CHLLs in the study. Chapters 5 to 8 present the findings of my thematic analysis of CHLLs' informal language policymaking and identity construction. The final chapter, Chapter 9, concludes with a summary of the findings of this study and a discussion of the implications of these findings for Chinese heritage language maintenance.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

#### Review of Chinese as a Heritage Language in the United States

##### *Chinese Immigrants and Their Community Efforts in Chinese Language Education*

The 2010 U.S. Census shows Chinese Americans (including those who reported “Chinese” and “Taiwanese” together) has become the largest Asian racial group in the United States, reaching over 4 million. This number has increased by 40 percent since the 2000 Census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Chang (cited in Wiley et al., 2008) proposes there were three major waves of Chinese immigration to the U.S. The first happened during the time of the 1849-era California gold rush. Most of the immigrants were poor peasants from Guangdong Province (Canton) who first worked as miners in California and later became the driving force behind building railroads in the American west. Cantonese classes were offered to immigrant children living in Chinatowns in large U.S. cities such as New York and San Francisco (He, 2008). Starting with the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, a series of laws were passed in the following 60 years to restrict immigration from China and to discriminate Chinese immigrants in the United States. The second wave came after the World War II partly due to the repeal of Chinese Exclusion Act and partly due to the political changes in China. The enactment of the United States Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 that relieved the restriction on immigration further contributed to the expansion of Chinese immigrants. The composition of this wave was more diverse, including but not limited to alien Chinese wives of U.S. citizens, primarily Mandarin-speaking refugee intellectuals and

professionals after 1949, as well as college and graduate students from Taiwan and Hong Kong beginning in the late 1950s (Lai, 2004).

The most recent increase started in the late 1970s. The open-door policy adopted by the Chinese government resulted in a boost of students from Mainland China who came to pursue advanced degrees mainly in the fields of science and technology and settled down after graduation (Bevis, 2013). In addition to immigrants from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and Singapore, Chinese community also includes the ethnic Chinese diaspora who came from Southeast Asia and Latin America, such as Malaysia, Philippines, Peru, and Cuba, where the local political turmoil forced them to relocate to the U.S. By the year 1990, there were about one million Indochinese refugees in the U.S. and more than 300,000 of them were ethnic Chinese speaking a variety of Chinese dialects (Zhao, 2010).

According to the 2013 American Community Survey (see Table 1), Chinese is the second largest LOTE in the U.S., following Spanish, and its speakers have multiplied four times during the past three decades (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). In 2013, this population composed almost 1 percent of the total population and 4.8 percent of the population that speaks LOTEs at home.

The 2013 Census did not identify how the survey defined the term “Chinese” as a language, but it is necessary to point out that rather than a single language, Chinese languages are composed of seven major varieties and even more subvarieties. The seven varieties are Beifang Hua, Wu, Xiang, Yue, Min, Hakka, and Gan, which are mutually unintelligible among them. As a subvariety of Beifang Hua, Mandarin, the official

Table 1  
*Chinese Spoken in the U.S. at 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2013 and Course Enrollments in Higher Education*

Characteristic	1980	1990	2000	2013	% of LOTEs in the U.S. in 2013	% change 1980-2013	LOTEs course enrollments in higher education in 2013*
Population 5 years and older	210,247,455	230,445,777	262,375,152	291,484,482	—	38.6%	—
Spoke only English at home	187,187,415	198,600,798	215,423,557	231,122,908	—	23.5%	—
Spoke a language other than English at home	23,060,040	31,844,979	46,951,595	60,361,574	100%	161.8%	—
Chinese	630,806	1,319,462	2,022,143	2,896,766	4.8%	359.2%	61,055

*Note.* \*The numbers in this column are course enrollments instead of numbers of registered students. Data obtained from ‘Language use in the United States: 2007,’ by H. B. Shin & R. A. Kominski, 2010, p. 6; ‘2009-2013 American Community Survey, B16001,’ by U.S. Census Bureau; ‘Enrollments in languages other than English in United States institutions of higher education, Fall 2013,’ by D. Goldberg, D. Looney, & N. Lusin, 2015, p. 2.

language of Mainland China, is spoken by 53.06% the Chinese mainland population (Leading Group Office, 2006).

The heterogeneous nature of Chinese languages and their speakers is also characteristic of Chinese immigrants in the United States. The 2006-2008 American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010) reports eight Chinese language categories spoken at home: In descending order by population, they are Chinese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Formosan, Fuchow, Wu, Hakka, and Gan.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the differences in the oral forms, two Chinese writing systems are used among Chinese immigrants. The simplified script is preferred by those from Mainland China and Singapore, while the traditional script by those from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and other Chinese-speaking regions (Chen, 1999; Wiley et al., 2008).

The Chinese community has been engaged in maintaining their ethnic identities and languages since the day they arrived in the land of America. According to Lai's (2004) book on Chinese Americans and Chinese schools in America, in 1874, the Chinese Educational Mission established one of the earliest Chinese schools for a group of students sent by Chinese Qing government to learn western science and technology. Both Chinese language and Confucian classics were taught in the school to ensure students would retain their Chinese heritage. The school was short-lived when the government ended the mission in 1881. Lai argues because the mission did not have

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<sup>1</sup> Because the data from this survey are a sample of the total population, it may not include all Chinese varieties spoken in the United States. The language categories are yielded based on the report of the participant speakers. As a result, these eight language categories include both varieties and subvarieties of Chinese languages.

much contact with local Chinese community, its impact was minimal on the development of community Chinese language schools.

Chao's (1996) study of Chinese language schools in the early days suggests Chinese schools were first established in Chinatowns in major U.S. cities, such as New York, San Francisco, and Chicago, under the leadership of the emissary of Chinese Qing government and the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association. In San Francisco Chinese schools, students were taught to read and write Classical Chinese and Cantonese was used as the language of instruction since the majority of their students were from Cantonese-speaking areas of China (Pan, 2002). Due to discrimination against Chinese Americans at the time, young Chinese Americans experienced both a pull to maintain their heritage and a desire to assimilate into the mainstream society. By the 1920s and 1930s, young Chinese Americans were adopting western customs and those who lived scattered among the general population were losing their heritage language and culture fast (Lai, 2004).

The second and third waves of Chinese immigrants varied in their language and demographic backgrounds and usually had a higher level of education than their predecessors. The rapid growth in population and an improving economic and social status enabled Chinese Americans to move outside of Chinatown. Consequently, new Chinese schools, often initiated by religious groups, local civic groups, and groups of parents, were established in the new areas where these immigrants settled. In pre-war era, a sufficient knowledge of Chinese was often crucial for finding a job in Chinatown. With more career opportunities in mainstream society, pressure for high achievement in English language schools increased. As a compromise, the new language initiatives

existed in various forms such as weekend programs, after-school programs, and summer programs (Chao, 1996; Lai, 2004). Different from most pre-war Chinese schools, due to the fact that Mandarin was the lingua franca among the second and third waves of immigrants, the newly established schools tended to use Mandarin as the language of instruction, while their curriculums went beyond language instruction and cultural enrichment; a variety of classes were offered in English to prepare students for academic excellence (Zhou, 2014). As Wong and Lopez (2000) put it, the functions of Chinese community schools lie not only in teaching language, but also more importantly in creating ethnic and cultural pride. It is worth noting that very few schools offered classes in other dialects, such as Hakka, Fuzhouese, or Taiwanese, in spite of a large amount of these speakers in the U.S. Lai (2004) believes a lack of economic and academic functions of these dialects resulted in this absence in the school curriculum.

In addition to economic factors, political factors also played a role in what should be taught in school. As simplified Chinese characters and Hanyu pinyin (Chinese phonetic alphabet system) were products of the communist People's Republic of China (PRC), teaching of this system did not become popular in Chinese schools until the improvement of U.S.-China relations in the 1970s (Lai, 2004). Even today schools with a strong tie to the Taiwan government teach traditional Chinese and use textbooks from Taiwan, while those strongly connected to Mainland China choose simplified Chinese and textbooks from China.

Currently, the community effort is still the major sector for CHL education in the United States. According to the 1995 survey by National Council of Associations of Chinese Language Schools (NCAACL), 82,675 students were enrolled in 634 Chinese



community schools nationwide, which was more than ten times the enrollment of English-speaking students in K-12 Chinese programs and three times of their enrollment in college-level programs (Wang, 1996). The enrollment in Chinese language schools, however, was only about one-third of the population from age five through fifteen (Lai, 2004). Dr. J. Liou, the president of NCAACL, reports that the enrollment of CHLLs was over 100,000 in 2002, but the figure dropped to 70,000 in 2009 and the number of Chinese community schools in her association decreased from more than 700 to around 500 (Liu, Musica, Koscak, Vinogradova, & López, 2011). The decline is to some extent due to a significant increase in public schools that offer Chinese programs. The next section reviews the Chinese language programs in the American educational system.

#### *Chinese Language Education in the U.S. School System*

Although historically Chinese has not been widely taught in the formal educational system, with the rise of China's economic and political status, interest in Chinese is aroused at the national level as well as within Chinese heritage community (Asia Society, 2008; Carreira & Kagan, 2011). At the national level, the rise of Chinese language programs in American school system coincided with the awareness of the importance of multilingual resources on national security during the Cold War. Consequently, there emerged a demand for federal funding to establish foreign language and international study programs at American universities (Brecht & Rivers, 2000).

Even though the Chinese heritage community is recognized as a crucial resource to build national Chinese language capacity, community efforts and heritage speakers are believed to be insufficient for America's demand (Brecht & Walton, 1996; McGinnis, 2005). Instead, under the support of federal laws that promoted FL education, such as the

Title VI of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) and the Fulbright-Hays Act, federally-funded programs were developed to teach Chinese, especially Mandarin, among U.S. citizens from all ethnic groups. For example, McGinnis (2005) discusses the proposal of United States-Chinese Cultural Engagement Act and the development of the Advanced Placement Chinese Course and Examination. The former program, which was never passed into law, made no reference to “heritage students of Chinese as a discrete learner constituency” (p. 594). The latter assumed its target student population had “no direct connection to the target language through their families or through significant time spent in a community in which the target language is spoken,” even though heritage learners might be an important part of the program (McGinnis, 2005, p. 594). That heritage speakers were not always seen as a valuable resource is also true among other ethnic minority language programs in the U.S. In Bale’s (2008) historical study of Title VI and Arabic language education, by analyzing the recruitment brochures of Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) program from 1961-1967, he finds in the early years of Title VI heritage speakers were excluded from the program through eligibility requirements. He further states a homogenous student population of “monolingual, white, native-born U.S. citizens” (p. 336) is taken as an assumption of these FL education projects.

In the post-Cold War era, an important federal investment in FL education was the National Security Education Program (NSEP), established in December 1991 by the David L. Boren National Security Education Act (NSEA), P.L. 102-183, and executed through the Department of Defense. The objective of the NSEP is to strengthen the national security by means of greater capacity and expertise in foreign languages and

cultures. To some extent, the NSEP recognizes HL speakers and learners as a multilingual force for the defensive purpose. In the solicitation and application guidelines of its Chinese K–16 Pipeline Project, it is stated that “NSEP... seeks to ensure that the rich population of Chinese heritage students is appropriately addressed” (McGinnis, 2005, p. 593).

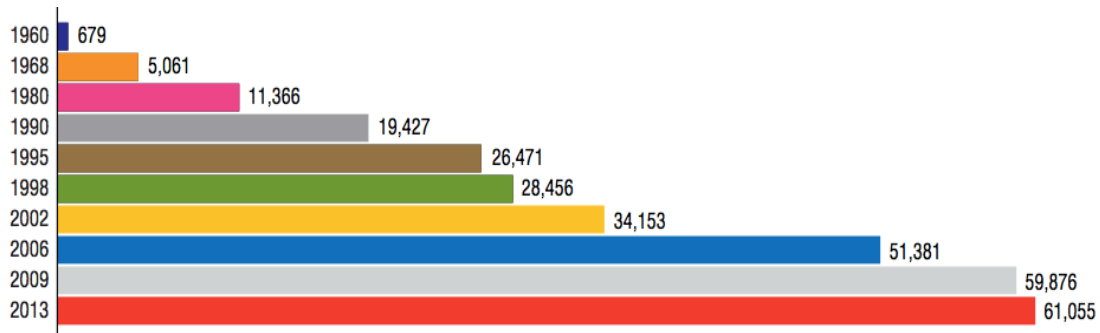
At the beginning of 2006, the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI), an inter-agency effort to “increase dramatically the number of U.S. residents learning, speaking, and teaching critically-need foreign languages,” took effect (Office of Postsecondary Education, 2008, p. 1). With goals to start FL education at an early age and to produce a large capacity of advanced-level FL speakers and professionals, NSLI created a language education pipeline and invested in FL programs from K-16 through graduate education and professional programs (see Table 2). Mandarin is offered in all the major NSLI programs, such as Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP), The Language Flagship, and STARTALK. FLAP funded 70 Chinese language programs in three states (Ohio, North Carolina, and Wisconsin) in 2006 and 2007, totaling approximately \$13 million. In 2007, 944 high school students and 427 high school teachers participated in 25 summer Chinese programs supported by the STARTALK Program. In 2008, STARTALK was expected to support 55 Chinese programs, projected to serve 1,884 students and 688 teachers nationwide (Asia Society, 2008, p. 2). Different from the courses in Chinese heritage schools, many of those programs are designed for FL learners instead of HL learners (Li & Duff, 2008).

Table 2  
Active NSLI Programs and Initiatives, by Agency and Pipeline Target

	Elementary	Middle school	High school	Undergraduate	Graduate	Workforce	Teacher and professional development
Education	Foreign Language Assistance Program	X	X				X
	Teacher-to-Teacher						X
State	Intensive Summer Language Institutes			X	X		
	Fulbright Critical Language Enhancement Awards for U.S. Students Program				X		
	Gilman Scholarship for Study Abroad			X			
Defense	NSLI-Youth (Summer Language Institutes and Abroad Programs)			X			
	Intensive Summer Language Institutes for Teachers						X
	Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program			X	X		
	Teachers of Critical Languages			X	X		X
	The Language Flagship			X	X	X	X
National Language Service Corps						X	
ODNI	STARTALK		X				X

Note. ODNI = Office of the Director of National Intelligence. From “Enhancing foreign language proficiency in the United States,” by U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, 2008, p. 4.

There are no comprehensive surveys of the Chinese language enrollments at the K-12 level (Asia Society, 2008). In public schools, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (2011) survey shows that Chinese was the eighth most taught language in both 2004-2005 and 2007-2008. In 2004-2005, Chinese enrollments were 20,292, making up 0.23 percent of FL enrollments in K-12 public schools. In 2007-2008, the number increased by 195 percent to 59,860, making up 0.67 percent of FL enrollments. The data collected by the College Board (Asia Society, 2008) suggests there were 799 Chinese programs at the K-12 level in 2008 with an increase of about 200 percent since 2004. Among those programs, 57 percent were offered in public schools and 43 percent in private schools.



*Figure 1.* Course Enrollments in Chinese in United States Institutions of Higher Education in Selected Years. From “Enrollments in languages other than English in United States institutions of higher education, Fall 2013,” by D. Goldberg, D. Looney, & N. Lusin, 2015, p. 23.

The Modern Language Association (MLA) 2013 language enrollment survey describes the enrollment profile of Chinese language instruction in higher education (see Figure 1). The MLA researchers point out their survey generally accepted the name of languages as reported by the program providers (Goldberg et al., 2015). In the case of Chinese, enrollments were reported in Chinese, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Classical Chinese, and they maintained these distinctions. Therefore, the data on Chinese

enrollments shown in Figure 1 do not include those that taught Mandarin or other Chinese dialects but did not report it as Chinese. Between 1960 and 2013, Chinese enrollments continuously increased and reached a new high in 2013. Compared to the demographics of CHL speakers in Table 1, the trend of increasing enrollments resembled the changes in Chinese immigrant population in the U.S. The enrollments increased by 650% between 1960 and 1968, and almost quadrupled between 1968 and 1990, and tripled between 1990 and 2013. The 2013 MLA survey records 866 institutions reporting enrollments in Chinese language instruction at postsecondary schools in 2013 (Goldberg et al., 2015).

Despite the rapid growth of Chinese language programs and enrollments at both K-12 and postsecondary levels in recent years, the Asia Society points out in its 2008 report some challenges facing the field:

- (1) Although Chinese language programs are sprouting up in the U.S., there is a lack of language learning systems to maintain the healthy development of language proficiency and capacity.
- (2) The shortage of qualified teachers and teacher training programs affects the sustainable growth of Chinese language education.
- (3) It is more effective to start language education at an early age, but only a small number of elementary schools offer Chinese.
- (4) The K-16 articulation is weak and as a result students may learn the language at a basic level repeatedly and cannot reach a high proficiency.

(5) Chinese language programs are concentrated in metropolitan areas. The quality of and accessibility to Chinese language instruction is limited in urban and rural areas.

#### Heritage Language, Heritage Language Learners, and Language Varieties

Although the notion of HL has existed for centuries, the use of the HL label is a recent phenomenon. Some other terms commonly used are community language, home language, and mother tongue. Defining HL is often believed to be problematic because of the complex situations involved (Wiley, 2014a). Fishman (2014) defines HLs as Indigenous, colonial, or immigrant languages in the U.S. that speakers have personal relevance to (re)connect with. The range of studies reviewed in this chapter extends beyond American society, but these studies of CHL adopt a similar definition of HL. With regard to the definition of HL learners, there are two foci in the literature of CHL: One stresses language competence, while the other emphasizes learners' ethnic or cultural tie to the language. The former perspective generally defines a HL learner as "a language student who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken and who speaks or at least understands the language and is to some degree bilingual in the home language and in English" (Valdés, 2001, p. 38). From a broader view, the latter looks at HL students as "a heterogeneous group ranging from fluent native speakers to non-speakers who may be generations removed, but who may feel culturally connected to a language" (Van Deusen-Scholl, 2003, p. 221). This study adopts the second definition of HL students.

In addition to definitions of HLs and their learners, the language variety of HLs is another issue that requires clarification. When setting up a sociolinguistic foundation for

his book, *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity: Disciplinary and Regional Perspectives*, Fishman (2010) points out language exists in the forms of different language varieties that share “socially linked human codes, as well as the attitudes, behaviors, functions, and usage conventions that typify each of them” (pp. xxiii-xxiv). Language varieties are assigned to varied functions in different domains, receive stratified levels of regulation, and represent different degrees of vitality. Fishman uses the three varieties of literacy standard, vernacular, and dialect to illustrate this difference. In the discussion of CHL education, an understanding of this difference is necessary because not only CHL education exists in a society where English (or languages other than Chinese) is dominant, but also the speakers of Chinese dialects other than standardized Chinese (i.e., Mandarin) are enrolled in CHL programs. In other words, it matters how the status and relationship of different Chinese varieties are recognized.

To define HL from a language use perspective, Wiley (2014a) cites Horvath and Vaughn’s explanation of four types of relationships between language varieties that can influence language learning: sociolectal, standard plus regional dialects, diglossia, and bilingual/multilingual. Sociolectal type indicates social or informal varieties differ from the standard language so that there may be gaps in learners’ knowledge of the standard form in spite of their mastery of informal varieties. In standard plus regional dialects situation, regional varieties are spoken at home while standard variety is taught at school. Diglossia describes a situation that varieties of a language are used for different social functions. The last one, bilingual/multilingual type, which requires more than two languages to fulfill major linguistic functions, is the most suitable to designate the Chinese community’s situation (Wiley, 2014a). In a Chinese community, English,



Mandarin Chinese, and another Chinese dialect (e.g. Cantonese) may function together to carry out personal and social duties, although not all speakers are fluent in all the languages involved.

### Language Policy and Planning

The definition of language policy and planning (LPP) dates back to Haugen's (1959) study of language standardization in which he suggests language planning is a linguistic regulation activity for the guidance of language users in a heterogeneous language community. The scope and definition of LPP have been expanded since then. As the matrix question raised by Cooper (1989), language planning focuses on studying "what actors attempt to influence what behaviors, of which people, for what ends, under what conditions, by what means, through what decision-making process, with what effect" (p. 98). Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) define language planning as an "attempt by someone to modify the linguistic behavior of some community for some reason" (p. 3). Shohamy (2006) makes a distinction between language planning and language policy. According to Shohamy, language planning refers to control and intervention while language policy refers to a set of principles regarding language behavior. Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1996) define language policy as "a broad, overarching term for decisions on rights and access to languages and on the roles and functions of particular languages and varieties of language in a given polity" (p. 434). Similarly, Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) suggest language policy is a "body of ideas, laws, regulations, rules and practices intended to achieve the planned change in the society, group or system" (p. xi).

In the recent framework proposed by Spolsky (2007), language policy is considered as "a social phenomenon, dependent on the consensual behaviors and beliefs

of individual members of a speech community” (p. 2). Spolsky adopts Fishman’s concept of language domain, a social space in which language(s) are used, to explain the relationship among participants (individuals’ social roles and relationships), location, and topic. He argues each domain has its own language policy affected by both internal and external forces and individuals make their choices based on their understanding of the language choices appropriate to the domain. Spolsky’s framework of language policy is comprised of three elements: language practices, beliefs or ideologies, and management. Language practice refers to the ecology of language in which choices of language use are selected based on the conventional rules set in a speech community. Language ideology and beliefs refer to the beliefs about language and language use (more on language ideology in the following section). Language management refers to the direct efforts to manipulate language practice.

In Spolsky’s three-component framework, policy can be official, explicit, and overt documents established by authority on a given language variety. It may also exist as implicit and de facto —the unspoken or taken-for-granted norms that an individual or a group implements in contradiction to official policies. From this perspective, Spolsky (2004) indicates an interactive relationship between language policy and power.

Although the implementation of language policy requires power, taking the breakup of the Soviet Union as an example, Spolsky points out even without the governing authority, language practices and ideologies become the forces that strengthen the status of the former imperial language. Furthermore, according to Spolsky, language policy “functions in a complex ecological relationship among a wide range of linguistic and non-linguistic elements, variables and factors” (p. 41).

Hornberger and Johnson (2007) point out LPP has different layers across nation-state, social institutions, and individuals. To elucidate local interpretation and implementation, they call for sociocultural analyses of language policy, which assume that “top-down policies are constantly negotiated throughout institutional levels and account for this negotiation by linking micro and macro discursive practices” (p. 510). McCarty (2011) states that language policy and language planning are “not...separable acts but [are] mutually constitutive, interdependent, and co-occurring sociocultural process[es]” (pp. 7-8). As a result, all forms of LPP, including status planning, corpus planning, and acquisition planning, are studied in an integrated manner from policy creation, to interpretation, to appropriation.

The core of the sociocultural approach to LPP is to understand how individual and collective language choices are made in everyday social practice, the social mechanisms that mediate those choices, and the consequences thereof. McCarty (2011) and others note that language choices do not exist in vacuum, but rather “play out within larger power regimes that structure individual agency and institutional constraints” (p. 9). Here the power relations are not only reflected in people’s language choices but also link to their language ideologies, which shape and reflect both unofficial and official language policies.

#### Language Ideologies in LPP

Shohamy (2006) argues language use highly depends on individual’s choice and creativity. As a living organism, language is dynamic and evolving through close human interaction. As a result, “a number of languages, dialects and codes are able to coexist harmoniously, creating varieties, hybrids, fusions, multi-codes and multi-modalities,

beyond fixed and marked languages” (Shohamy, 2006 p. 21). The constantly changing nature of language makes it impossible and unnecessary to prescribe “correct” and “pure” languages. Despite the creative and dynamic nature of language, human attempts to control and regulate language never cease and language becomes a symbolic tool for manipulation.

In sociocultural theories of LPP, language ideology is considered a crucial component that links social structures and language use (Woolard, 1992). Language ideologies incorporate “speakers’ sometimes-idealized evaluations and judgments of appropriate language forms and functions along with opinions about individuals and groups that follow or flout conventional expectations” and influence all of their language-related choices (McGroarty, 2010, p. 3). Shohamy (2006) argues that homogenous and monolingual ideologies are nurtured through the instrument of language within the nation-state where the notions of “us/them” and “self/other” root in the ground of the language education policies with a nationalism agenda. Monoglossic (single-language) ideologies reflect a hegemony of dominant language(s), which is achieved “when dominant groups create a consensus by convincing others to accept their language norms and usage as standard” (Wiley, 2000, p. 113), and legitimated through the ideological state apparatus (Althusser, 1989). However, the hegemonic practices are confronted with resistance from minority groups. Language minority groups may adopt an alternative language strategy that involves bilingual or multilingual patterns to maintain or even hybridize both dominant and their own languages.

The hegemony of dominant languages is seen in the differentiated status assigned to language varieties. The language ideology underlying dominant varieties, which are

often considered as standard varieties, raises the status of speakers of standard varieties and makes “those who do not speak these varieties are subjected to symbolic domination” (Tsui & Tollefson, 2007, p. 7). Wong and Xiao (2010) realize the complicated situations in CHL education and they focus their research on CHLLs from dialect backgrounds. One of their participant Cantonese-speaking college students recounted her encounter with a native Mandarin speaker who claimed he was speaking the “real” dialect. As Blommaert (2006) states, the “stratified and regimented” ideology of superior/inferior language varieties is reflected in every instance of language use. Wong and Xiao (2010) state almost all students they interviewed accepted the high esteem of Mandarin and thought their own dialects as “harsh and loud” (p. 163). Kelleher (2010) points out a negative consequence of the hegemonic ideology is the devaluation of the existing language skills of HL learners.

Studies of other language minority groups in the U.S. support the argument on linguistic hegemony among language varieties. Jo’s (2001) study on the micro-practices of language teaching and learning in Korean language classes at an American university shows the struggle between the “authentic,” “standard” Korean and the hybrid language use that Korean HL students bring into the language class. In this process, students construct their informal, mixed language expressions to cope with their frustrations of different codes carrying different language authorities (English and Korean), and these expressions reflect their continuous negotiation against “standard” Korean and “Koreanness” in and out of the class.

## Language Identity and Language Maintenance

### *Approaches to Identity*

The study of identity has a long tradition in the field of psychology. CHL researchers apply the psychological interpretation to understand identity development related to CHL maintenance (e.g., Kim & Chao, 2009; Oh & Fuligni, 2010; Tse, 2000). The shared Chinese identity reflected in CHL literature is often labeled as an ethnic identity. According to Rotheram and Phinney (1987), children of immigrants are likely to develop a sense of belonging to their ethnic group, or an ethnic identity. Phinney (1990), who has been intensely engaged in developing measures of ethnic identity, notes a majority of the ethnic identity formation models are based on Erickson's (1968) psychosocial identity theories and Marcia's (1966) application of Erickson's work to ethnic identity. Erickson (1968) believes identity attainment is achieved through significant childhood identifications with individuals in the past and incorporation in a configuration. He cites introjection, identification, and identity formation as the three steps "by which the ego grows in ever more mature interplay with the available models" (p. 159). Grounded on Erickson's conceptual framework, Marcia (1966) proposes her model of identity status that offers a description of the stages of ethnic identity formation. This popular paradigm includes four identity statuses: diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and achievement. Phinney points out different models of identity development may vary in the number of stages, but in general contains a process from preference for dominant culture, to realization of one's own ethnic minority status, to identity exploration, and finally to ethnic resolution of identity conflict and incorporation of ethnic identity, even though not all ethnic minorities experience all the steps (Phinney, 1989; Tse, 1999). This

psychosocial approach often counts the use of HL as a measurable component to understand ethnic identity (Kim & Chao, 2009).

Another perspective adopted by CHL researchers is a sociological and anthropological approach (e.g. Blackledge & Creese 2009; Shin, 2010; Weger-Guntharp, 2006; Wong & Xiao, 2010). Those who choose this approach and accept a poststructuralist argument find identity complex and contradictory instead of standardized and coherent (Block, 2006; Norton, 1997). With the focus placed on the person or the group, this approach examines identity through social lenses. Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) argue identities are “social, discursive, and narrative options offered by a particular society in a specific time and place to which individuals and groups appeal in an attempt to self-name, to self-characterize, and to claim social spaces and social prerogatives” (p. 19). It is presumed that an individual’s identities are constituted in constantly changing and contesting discourses within which a struggle and negotiation of power exists and the identities at the same time impact these discourses (Foucault, 1977; Tollefson & Tsui, 2007). The poststructuralist take on identity sees a close association between language and identity construction. Through language use, individuals continue to negotiate and refine their sense of self across time and place and build a connection to the wider world (Norton, 2010; Weedon, 1997). As stated by Tollefson and Tsui (2007), “individuals do not merely repeat culturally appropriate linguistic behavior in well-defined situations, but rather they acquire and create a range of existing, newly forming, and changing linguistic resources that they marshal for varying purposes” (p. 261).

It is worth mentioning that researchers may underline different social constructs when they discuss the relationship between language and identity. These ascribed identity

types include but are not limited to ethnic, racial, national, cultural, social, and language identities (Block, 2006). In the case of CHL study, those who focus on the boundary and relation among different cultural groups tend to explore the shared ethnic identity of the language speakers and see Chinese language(s) as an identifier of Chinese ethnic group (e.g. Shin, 2010; Weger-Guntharp, 2006; Wong & Xiao, 2010). When ethnicity is found insufficient to understand the daily situation of language use, some scholars turn to language identity to study “the relationship between one’s sense of self and different means of communication: language, a dialect or sociolect” (Block, 2006, p. 39; e.g. Dressler, 2010, a study of HL learners of German).

Wong Fillmore (1996) points out language is more than a means of communication among community members. Concepts of cultural or social identity are introduced to describe a sense of belonging to a social or cultural group reflected through language use (Mitchell & Myles, 2004; Wong Fillmore 1996). The purpose of discussion on identity categorization here is not to separate one type of identity from another, because from a poststructuralist perspective, identities are contextual and the social constructs of language, ethnicity, and identity are entangled with each other. Rather, my intention is to clarify varied labels of identities used in the CHL literature.

#### *Identity and Motivation Theories*

In the conversation of HL maintenance and identity, motivation theory is often applied to explain this relationship. Developed by Gardner and Lambert (1972), theories of motivation in the field of second language acquisition explain to what extent language learners are motivated to learn the target language. Gardner and Lambert propose two orientations of motivation: instrumental and integrative. The former underscores



utilitarian purposes to learn a language and the latter “reflect[s] a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group” (p. 132). Ushioda and Dörnyei (2009) reveal that, although implicit in the concept of integrative motivation, notions of social identification and ethnolinguistic identity are used to interpret why second language learners engage in acquiring languages of another ethnolinguistic group.

Poststructuralist criticism of this traditional motivation theory is that its inherent psychosocial notions of identity fail to fully recognize the power relation between language learner and target language speakers (Norton, 2010). Since the motivation and social contexts continuously shape and reshape each other, what is needed in the social psychological approach is a strong theory of social identity that “would integrate the learner and the learning context” (Pavlenko, 2002, p. 281). Inspired by Bourdieu’s work on cultural capital, Peirce (1995) turns to the construct of investment to understand motivation. She argues language learners view the language learning as an investment and they reorganize their identities in their imagined linguistic communities. Further, she believes these learners’ investment requires more than material return but they expect more symbolic resources and an increase in the value of their cultural capital (Norton, 2001). Both traditional motivation theory and poststructuralist interpretation of investment are applied in the CHL literature to shed light on the linkage between identity formation and Chinese learning.

### *Language Transmission and Intergenerational Issues*

Family and community are important domains to reproduce culture, and using HL at home is key to language maintenance and transmission of ethnic identity to the next generation (Cummins, 2002; Fishman, 1991; Hinton, 1999; Kouritzin, 1999; Tseng &

Fuligni, 2000; Wong Fillmore, 1991b). HL loss affects family cohesion and effective communication among first-generation immigrant parents and second-generation English-speaking children, especially in families where parents had low level of English proficiency (Cho & Krashen, 1998; Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). Moreover, lack of HL proficiency makes heritage children unable to participate in their community activities and isolates them from their culture (Hinton, 1999; Imbens-Bailey, 1996).

In general, the CHL literature reports Chinese immigrant parents share positive attitudes toward Mandarin maintenance of their children (Doyle, 1996; Kuo, 1974; Lao, 2004; Li, 2006a; Zhang, 2009). However, in spite of their positive attitudes, immigrant parents do not always endeavor to maintain the HL at home because of their concerns about their children's acquisition of the dominant language (Lao, 2004; Li, 2006b; Pan, 1995; Zhang, 2009). In Li's (2006a) ethnographic study of three Chinese-Canadian first and second graders and their families, for example, the author notes that lack of HL use at home resulted in children's imbalanced abilities and interests in Chinese and English, even though they attended Chinese weekend schools. Li contends parents' attitudes toward the pragmatic and symbolic values they ascribed to the languages influenced their support of CHL maintenance and consequently their children's language development. When parents considered HL use became barriers to social advancement or hindered their children's English development, one of the essences of legitimate membership in dominant society, they are motivated to choose English over HL at home (Li, 2006a; Tse, 2000). This explains why CHL use is not an essential element of identity among some second-generation Chinese adolescents. Instead, their identity is more directly related to values emphasized by their parents, such as high academic achievement (Chiang, 2001).

### *Institutional Efforts and Identity*

As Chinese became the second largest LOTE in the U.S. in recent years, and in light of the rise of China's economic and political status, Chinese programs offered in public schools and universities have been increasing in number (Asia Society, 2008; Carreira & Kagan, 2011). Studies that explore these Chinese programs often focus on a comparison of linguistic and motivational characteristics between CHLLs and FL learners (Li & Duff, 2008; Ming & Tao, 2008; Weger-Guntharp, 2006;). As discussed earlier, in addition to pragmatic reasons shared with non-CHLLs, CHLLs choose to study Chinese because of their cultural attachment to the language. In spite of the motivation of a culture bond, CHLLs tend to balance their HL goals with their overall educational expectations, and for this reason, some of them enroll in non-heritage track instead (Weger-Guntharp, 2006). Wang and Green (2001) suggest attitudes from peer groups and ethnic groups toward students' HLs and culture affect students' attitudes toward their HLs and culture. As evinced in Weger-Guntharp's (2006) study of CHLLs in non-heritage track, CHLLs are viewed as having an advantage over non-HL students, regardless of their actual language skills. Native-speaking teachers often have higher expectations on CHLLs despite the fact that many of them actually come from Chinese dialect-speaking families. Through these interactions with peers and teachers in the classroom, these learners' self-perceptions and motivation are (re)shaped.

Despite the growth of CHL programs in formal school system, CHL instruction takes place primarily at the community level (McGinnis, 2005). Although the major activity of HL schools is language instruction, cultural elements are included in their curriculum (Blackledge & Creese, 2009; Hu, 2006) and CHL schools are turned into

community centers to preserve ethnic language identity formation (Brittain, 2002; Li, 1995; Silver, 2003). Even with CHL schools' contribution, the role of community schools to language and cultural maintenance is limited. The amount of time assigned to Chinese culture transmission is deficient considering these schools offer classes on weekends or during the summer and they teach Chinese through grammar training and repetition (Hu, 2006). Some studies (Hu, 2006; Li, 2006a; Tse, 2000; Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009) unveil CHLLs had negative HL school experiences because they felt CHL classes were boring and took up their playtime. This made students reluctant to study Chinese or attend CHL schools. Furthermore, in CHL community schools exist contestation and negotiation in the process of Chinese culture transmission and identity construction among teachers and students. Blackledge and Creese (2009) conduct a case study of a CHL community school in UK and note students challenged the sense of belonging inculcated by their teachers. Hu (2006) reports teachers from CHL schools sometimes had to resort to English and American culture-related concepts to teach Chinese culture and language in the class.

### CHLLs and Language Development

#### *Sociolinguistic Characteristics of CHLLs*

As discussed above, the definitions of HL learners are widely debated (Wiley & Valdés, 2000). One reason for this lack of consensus is the disparate linguistic needs and abilities that HL students from varied educational socioeconomic backgrounds have (Valdés, 2001; Wang & Green, 2001). This description is especially true of CHL education, from several aspects. First, among the CHLLs, many are speakers of non-prestige varieties of Chinese or of Chinese ethnic minority languages. What makes the

situation even more complicated is the involvement of two writing systems: simplified script for Mainland China and Singapore and traditional script for Taiwan, Hong Kong, and other Chinese-speaking regions (Chen, 1999; He, 2006).

Wong and Xiao (2010) acknowledge the linguistic diversity of these learners and are interested in the identity construction of the students from dialect backgrounds. They interviewed both Mandarin and dialect speakers who were enrolled in Mandarin classes at two American universities. Adopting poststructuralist and post-colonial theories, Wong and Xiao seek to understand the identity formation of these CHLLs through the concepts of imagined community, linguistic hegemony, and language investment. They find the ability to speak Mandarin or dialects is considered by the students in this study as a unique attribute that strengthens their heritage and distinguishes them from those who are Chinese descent but do not speak the languages. In the meantime, the study suggests differential status of Mandarin and other Chinese dialects. Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe (2009) state in Chinese American communities, Mandarin enjoys a higher status in the linguistic hierarchy established in China and Chinese dialects are regarded unnecessary to maintain by their speakers.

This observation is confirmed in a survey carried out by Wiley et al. (2008) to study the language attitudes of international students and scholars at the U.S. toward maintenance of both written and spoken Mandarin and other dialects. The result indicates Mandarin is often used, highly regarded, and seen as a resource to be preserved despite high levels of multilingualism and multidialectism among the respondents. Language hegemony not only exists in mainstream society but also among minority language subgroups.

Difference in the status of language varieties is related to the difference in socioeconomic status (SES) of the speakers. CHL studies show how this SES difference affects language speakers' attitudes and behaviors toward HL maintenance. Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe (2009) studied 18 Chinese families in Philadelphia that were selected from two Chinese communities: Mandarin-speaking families with higher education and high SES and Fujianese-speaking families with little formal education and low SES. Through interviews and participation in community gatherings and weekend schools, the authors find there was a consensus among Mandarin-speaking and Fujianese-speaking parents that Mandarin was considered as a resource for children's education in terms of language skills and future career, but none of the Fujianese-speaking parents expressed the desire for their children to maintain Fujianese.

Another group of Chinese immigrants whose HL maintenance experience has not been brought enough attention to the researchers is those individuals with mixed-heritage background. Shin (2010) reveals there is much of literature on language and identity of students whose parents come from same ethnic background but little on those from mixed families. She believes what makes this group important to study is its increased difficulty to prevent language shift considering only one parent speaks the minority language. Her exploratory study interviewed 12 mixed-heritage adults from families that one of the parents is a native English speaker while the other is a first-generation immigrant who speaks a non-English language as his or her first language. The study seeks to understand how participants' self-perceived identities affect their HL learning and maintenance. It shows that growing up at the intersection of two cultures endows the interviewees with unique characteristics and experiences in terms of HL proficiency, motivation and

language attitudes. The study implies that the artificial division of different social or cultural identities becomes vague and unrealistic in the case of mixed-heritage language learners. Mixed-heritage adults share many similarities in HL experiences with non-mixed heritage immigrants, but the marginalization of their status in heritage community often results in more difficulty in connection to their heritage culture and consequently impacts HL development and maintenance.

*Motivations, Language Attitudes, and Learners' Identity Development*

CHL studies report economic, academic, and cultural factors motivate CHLLs to study their heritage language (e.g. Comanaru & Noels, 2009; Shin, 2010; Weger-Guntharp, 2006; Wong & Xiao, 2010). A quantitative study of 145 HL and non-HL students enrolled in a university-level Chinese class in Canada (Comanaru & Noels, 2009) finds the strongest reason for CHLLs, including those who identified English as their mother tongue, to learn Chinese was because Chinese ethnicity was central to their identity. In comparison to non-HL learners, HL groups felt more pressure from others and even from themselves that they ought to learn the language (p. 151). A parallel study (Weger-Guntharp, 2006) is a comparative study of HL and non-HL learners from a non-heritage track Chinese language program at an American university. The study indicates CHL students with low exposure to Chinese language have the strongest sense of investment in language learning as a means of connecting to their ethnic identity. This finding suggests the previous studies that confine HL learners to those using HL as a home language may conceal the whole picture of HL learners.

Applying to theories of imagined community and investment (Norton, 2001; Wenger, 1998), Wong and Xiao's (2010) research distinguishes the motivations of

CHLLs from dialect backgrounds from those of learners from Mandarin backgrounds. For students from Mandarin backgrounds, language acquisition can fortify identity formation through the process of building up a sense of belonging to communities that even go beyond where the language learners physically live. To understand why students from dialect backgrounds choose to learn Mandarin, Wong and Xiao turn to Fernando Ortiz's (1995) notion of transculturation that asserts culture is not transferred in a reductive fashion as described in acculturation and deculturation. They claim these students, as a marginalized group, "select, adopt, and invent from the materials of the dominant culture" (p. 165). These students use Mandarin learning as counter-strategies to maintain their dialects and the attached identities. Further, Wong and Xiao report an expansion of the identity of both dialect speakers and non-dialect speakers. Learners embrace an idea of transnational identity, which is beyond an identity of Chinese, American, or a combination of the two. These learners have expectations of both financial and symbolic returns in terms of better job opportunity in global market as well as recognition as members of "dominant" group atop the power list internationally (p.167). This observation confirms what He (2006) asserts that learning CHL means more than transferring language and culture but transforming the HL and recreating one's identity.

Language acquisition and motivation to maintain individuals' HL languages are associated with their attitudes toward language as well as toward the community and people speaking the language (Chinen & Tucker, 2005; Shin, 2010; Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). CHL studies show although Chinese immigrant parents had strong attitudes toward preserving Chinese language, their children might not see the importance



of learning the language (Chiang, 2001; Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). Children in Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe's (2009) study indicated the main reason for language shift was their negative attitudes toward HL. They did not understand their parents' perception of Chinese language as a resource. Nor did they have the same attachment to Chinese language and culture as their parents did.

Nevertheless, these negative attitudes toward HLs may change over time. Shin's (2010) study on mixed-heritage adults shows that individuals experience different stages of development in terms of identifying with HL and culture. Although some participants were loath to learn their HL at their adolescence, they grew to concern about their heritage in their adulthood. This finding verifies the previous studies by Tse (2000). In Tse's study on Asian American children, she pays special attention to ethnic minorities at the stage of Phinney's (1989) "unexamined ethnic identity," or in Tse's term, "Ethnic Ambivalence/Evasion (EAE)," when these minorities, often in their childhood and adolescence, hold negative feelings toward their ethnic groups and seek to obtain acceptance by the dominant group. The narratives in Tse's study reveal these narrators experienced an EAE period in which they felt ashamed of their Asian physical features, saw no value in their ethnic culture, and were eager to identify with dominant culture. Although negative attitudes toward ethnic identity do not necessarily lead to negative language attitudes, belittlement or aversion to ethnic identity often makes HL maintenance a burden instead of a priority.

#### *Language Use, Proficiency, and Identity*

In an effort to understand language shift in Chinese community, some CHL scholars employ ethnic or cultural identity as a variable to predict HL development. The

feelings toward learners' ethnic culture and toward dominant culture may affect their motivation to study their HL and finally have an influence on HL use and proficiency (Jia, 2008; Tse, 2000). On the other hand, literature on language and identity uncovers the use (or not use) of HL reflects speaker's identification (or lack thereof) with their cultural group (Imbens-Bailey, 1996). To explore how the linguistic experiences of heritage adolescents impact the development of their ethnic identity, Oh and Fuligni (2010) draw a distinction between language use and proficiency: Language use patterns indicate a language choice while language proficiency shows the ability to speak the language. They further argue when considering language use and proficiency as distinct variables, their influences on children's development can be examined separately. Their study suggests HL ability rather than language choice or use indicates students' connection to their heritage. It shows that HL proficiency is a significant predictor of ethnic identity in all of the models, but language use is not. However, Oh and Fuligni (2010) conclude the correlation between HL proficiency and ethnic identity cannot be considered as a causal relationship. In other words, the development of HL proficiency does not necessarily result in stronger ethnic identity or the positive ethnic identification support the maintenance of HL. In a quantitative comparative study of Chinese and Mexican adolescents, Kim and Chao (2009) discover a difference between these two ethnic groups regarding language and their ethnic identity. For second-generation Mexican adolescents, HL proficiency is key to their ethnic identity. Among Chinese, there is a dramatic language shift of second- and third-generation Chinese immigrants, but a high sense of ethnic identity can even be achieved with a low level of HL proficiency.

## Conceptual Framework

In this chapter, I have explored the status of Chinese language (mainly Mandarin) in the U.S. and then examined the concepts and theoretical framework applied in the literature of Chinese heritage language study. In the remainder of the chapter, I will review the study's conceptual framework. The conceptual framework consists of three parts: LPP as a sociocultural process, language ideology, and language identity. A diagram of the relationship among these three components is illustrated in Figure 2.

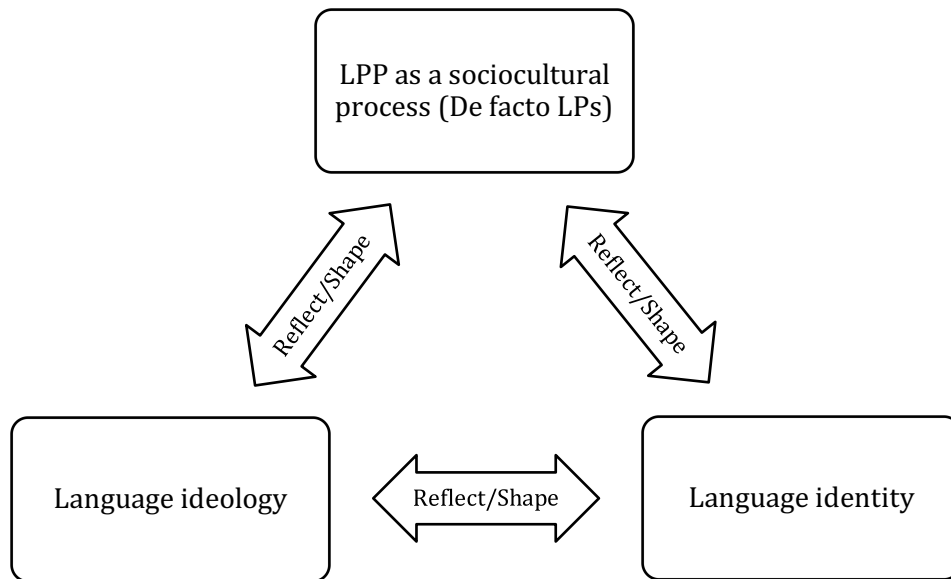


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework.

### *LPP as a Sociocultural Process*

The first component of my conceptual framework derives from the notion that LPP is a complex and agentive social and cultural process. From this perspective, language users are not considered powerless adopters of top-down policies. Rather, they create and negotiate de facto language policies through everyday social interaction. The sociocultural approach to LPP, therefore, focuses on the intersections between macro-,

meso-, and micro-level policymaking—both official and unofficial. It is interested in investigating how human agents interpret, implement, and resist language policies at intersecting levels (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; McCarty, 2011). An approach to LPP developed from the notion of language policy as a process helps to “uncover the indistinct voices, covert motivation embedded ideologies, invisible instances, or unintended consequences of LPP” and “[emphasize] local agency to potentially challenge hegemonic discourses which privilege some languages and speech communities while marginalizing others” (Hornberger & Johnson, 2011, p. 275, p. 281).

This approach to policy analysis is beneficial for the study of CHLLs in the public school setting. As discussed earlier, in spite of the burgeoning demand for Mandarin speakers, language policies promoting Mandarin education are founded on a utilitarian premise of Mandarin as a critical language for the U.S. national interests (Ricento, 2005; Wiley, 2014b). As products of the FL policies, those Mandarin programs are not designed for CHLLs. This framework was adopted to answer: What is the language ecology in which the Mandarin-language program operates? How do CHLLs construct language policies in this context? How does their implicit policymaking affect learners’ language practices?

### *Language Ideology*

The second component of my conceptual framework addresses how language ideology enacts connections among de facto language policymaking, identity formation, and power relations. Language ideologies are broadly defined as “shared bodies of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world” (Rumsey, 1990, p. 346). More specifically, these shared bodies of commonsense notions refer to “sets of beliefs

about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use” (Silverstein, 1979, p. 193). However, beliefs and attitudes about language are not about language alone. In a discussion of how the concept of language ideologies can be utilized in the study of language and discourse, Kroskrity (2004) notes five layers of the notion of language ideologies. First, the perception of language and discourse implicated in language ideologies is constructed in the interest of a specific group, and even within a seemingly homogenous social group, there are still contestable and interest-laden language ideologies. Second, language ideologies are multiple, because diversified social experience based on “the plurality of meaningful social divisions (class, gender, clan, elites, generations, and so on)” has “the potential to produce divergent perspectives expressed as indices of group membership” (p. 503). Third, not all the members of the speech communities share similar degrees of consciousness of their language beliefs, and language awareness is formed and expressed in various settings. Fourth, language ideologies mediate between language users’ sociocultural experience and their forms of talk. In other words, language beliefs emerge from speakers’ contextual social practices and influence the way the language is used. Fifth, language ideologies are “used in the creation and representation of various social and cultural identities” (p. 509).

In research on language policy, language ideology is explored in different domains, ranging from as small as individuals and families to as large as schools, nation-states, and the globalizing world. Moving away from the early understanding of language policies as neutral and solutions to language “problems”, Ricento (2000), citing Tollefson (1991), states that language planning is indeed ideological and often hegemonic. Spolsky

(2004) identifies language ideology as a component of language policy. This model of language policy is elaborated and expanded by Shohamy (2006), who scrutinizes the interrelationship among ideology and practice. In this interrelationship, language ideology creates and affects the de facto language policy through a variety of mechanisms (such as language education) and in the meantime de facto language policy resists the dominant ideology and contests for alternative ideologies (Tollefson, 2002).

The conception of language ideology situates a study of identity in a larger picture of language policy and planning. Woolard (1992) points out all these shared beliefs, or feelings, are about the nature of language, the nature and purpose of communication, and communicative behavior as an enactment of a collective order. This means, according to Tollefson (2007), how language is used in social world reflects and shapes the assumptions about individual's membership in collective identities. This point, to some extent, overlaps with my third conceptual framework on identity. Nonetheless, here I want to emphasize the hegemonic aspect of the ideology and its influence on identity. A monoglossic ideology often generates an ascriptive identity that associates a language with a people (Blommaert, 2006). Such an ideology overlooks the heterogeneity of language varieties and the complex and unpredictable relationship between language and identity. However, as further explained in the following framework, identity is constructed based on the collaboration among different sources of power and requires for alternative language ideologies.

In the context of Chinese language education in the U.S., the ideology that views Mandarin as a critical foreign language for U.S. national security and global competition co-exists with the ideology that views Mandarin as a heritage language with personal and

cultural connections. In this picture of U.S. language policy there is also the dominant ideology of English as the high-prestige, national (if not official) language. How do CHLLs position themselves in this matrix of language ideologies? How do their ideologies shape their practices of language maintenance? How do their de facto language policies fostered in social practice both reflect and shape their language ideologies? In summary, this framework enables an examination of the role of language ideology in language policy formation and implementation through social practice.

#### *Four Perspectives on Identity*

The third pillar of my conceptual framework addresses identity formation and negotiation in social practice using Gee's (2000) identity theory. Like other poststructuralist scholars who consider identity as fluid, negotiated, contextually embedded, and constructed through interaction (Hall, 1997; King & Ganuza, 2005; Wenger, 1998), Gee states people have multiple identities connected to their sociocultural existence. To understand "how identity is functioning for a specific person (child or adult) in a given context or across a set of contexts" (p. 101), he develops this four-perspective approach to identity based on the different sources of power that these aspects of identity are formed (see Table 3). Gee emphasizes that these four ways to view identity are not separate categories that are mutually exclusive. Instead, these four ways are present together and affect each other when an individual takes action within a given context.

The first perspective on identity is what Gee calls "the nature perspective" (or N-Identities). This aspect of identity is determined by the force of nature that the individual cannot control. Male or female is one example of N-identities. Gee (2000) points out

although these identities are not developed in control of society, they always gain recognition as identities through other three aspects of identity. Furthermore, “when people (and institutions) focus on them as ‘natural’ or ‘biological,’ they often do this as a way to ‘forget’ or ‘hide’ (often for ideological reasons) the institutional, social- interactional, or group work that is required to create and sustain them as identities” (p. 102).

Table 3

*Four Ways to View Identity*

	Process		Power	Source of power
1.	Nature-identity: a state	developed from	forces	in nature
2.	Institution-identity: a position	authorized by	authorities	within institutions
3.	Discourse-identity: an individual trait	recognized in	the discourse/ dialogue	of/with “rational” individual
4.	Affinity-identity: experiences	shared in	the practice	of “affinity groups”

*Note.* From “Identity as an analytic lens for research in education,” by J. P. Gee, 2000, p. 100.

Different from N-identities that develop in nature, the second perspective, “the institutional perspective (or I-Identities),” is authorized within an institution through laws, rules, traditions or principles. One’s status as a student or a teacher is such an identity. Depending on how actively or passively one fulfills his or her role, an I-Identity can be considered as either a “calling” or an “imposition” (i.e., teacher versus prisoner).



The third perspective on identity, “the discursive perspective (or D-Identities),” refers to an individual trait and gets recognized by other people through social interaction. Diligent is an example. Similar to I-Identities, D-Identities can be seen as an “ascription” or an “achievement” based on “how active or passive one is in ‘recruiting’ them, that is, in terms of how much such identities can be viewed as merely ascribed to a person versus an active achievement or accomplishment of that person” (Gee, 2000, p. 104). Gee notes that, despite the fact that I-Identities are sanctioned by authorities, institutions rely on the forces that construct D-Identities, to sustain I-Identities. In other words, once an I-Identity is underwritten, it requires “certain sorts of discourse, dialogue, and interaction happen often enough and in similar enough ways to sustain the I-Identities” (p. 105).

The final identity perspective is “the affinity perspective (or A-Identities).” A-Identities are built through participating in experiences shared by “affinity group” whose members may away from each other physically. This identity perspective focuses on distinctive social practices and the experiences that one has in these practices are considered as constitutive of who they are (Gee, 2000).

Gee (2000) indicates as an interpretive tool, this framework of identity perspectives helps to answer two crucial questions regarding identities of any type. The macro-level question is: “What institution or institutions, or which group or groups of people, work to construct and sustain a given Discourse—that is, work to ensure that a

certain combination [of a person's behavior],<sup>2</sup> at a given time and place, is recognized as coming from a certain kind of person?" (p. 111) The micro-level question is: "How, on the grounds of moment-by-moment interaction, does recognition work such that some specific combination is recognized (or not) in a certain way, or contested or negotiated over in a certain way?" (p. 111)

Furthermore, Gee (2000) uses this framework to understand identity in a sociohistorical context. He puts forth that in today's "postmodern society," people become more and more aware of how D-Identities are achieved for social, economic, and political purposes. Citing Vygotsky, Gee suggests, "people's individual minds are formed out of, and always continue to reflect, social interactions in which they engaged as they acquire their 'native' language or later academic languages in school" (p. 114).

Identity perspective theory enables a multi-dimensional study of CHLLs' language identity, places CHLLs' language identity in a context of language practices and sociocultural interaction, and builds a connection to learners' language ideologies and policy planning. I applied this theory to understand: What are the profiles of CHLLs' language identity? How do different identity perspectives work together when CHLLs construct their identity through language learning experiences in the language program? How is this identity recognized, contested, and negotiated in everyday language practices across time and place?

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<sup>2</sup> According to Gee, this combination includes certain way of combining how a person speaks, acts, uses face and body, dresses, feels, believes, values, and uses objects and tools.

## Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have reviewed the literature pertinent to language policy, language ideology, and identity as it relates to the field of Chinese heritage language study. Based on my research questions, a three-pronged conceptual framework is outlined to link the notion of de facto language policy to identity construction through the underlying language ideology. The next chapter explains how my research was designed to answer my research questions and what methods were chosen to obtain and analyze the related data.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### Overall Approach and Rationale

Before moving to the discussion of methodology and research design, I first revisit my study. Some CHL studies (Kim & Chao, 2009; Oh & Fuligni, 2010) find that although identity development plays an important role in CHL maintenance, and vice versa, language proficiency is not essential to Chinese identity, and vice versa. Many second-generation Chinese Americans identify with Chinese ethnic culture but do not speak CHLs, while some CHLLs do not feel the ethnic affirmation but study Mandarin for professional motivations. How do CHLLs make and implement their decisions about language maintenance? What is the relationship between heritage language learners' de facto language policy, their ideologies about language, and their language identity construction? My study seeks to understand this complex relationship with a focus on undergraduate CHLLs enrolled in a Mandarin language program at a large public university. The research is designed to explore the following research questions.

- What is the nature of CHLLs' de facto language policymaking in the context of a Chinese Flagship language learning program?
- What language ideologies do these de facto language policies reflect?
- What strategies and pedagogies do CHLLs use to (re)acquire and maintain Mandarin?
- How does participation in this Chinese-language program influence CHLLs' identification as heritage language learners?

To answer these questions, I applied an ethnographically-informed qualitative approach. This approach enables an understanding of people's values and beliefs that guide their actions and their understandings of their actions (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). By investigating language learners' beliefs and language practices in their own contexts, an ethnographically informed study adopts a holistic approach to capture an emic view of these learners' language policymaking-in-process, their language ideologies, and their identity construction "with all their complexity" (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 155). Within this overarching framework, this study employs Seidman's (2006, 2013) phenomenological interviewing protocol. Wolcott (2008) indicates interviewing requires one actively engages in "*asking* about what is going on" (p. 49). By recounting people's lived experience, Seidman (2006) states, how people make sense of their experience is conveyed, for "[e]very word that people use in telling their stories is a microcosm of their consciousness" (Vygotsky, 1987, cited in Seidman, 2006, p. 7).

In a study of language, identity and their inter-relationship, in-depth interviewing shows its advantages in giving access to people's life stories and putting their behavior in context (Seidman, 2006). For instance, Canagarajah (2011) interviewed diaspora participants from three Tamil communities in the U.S., asking them to discuss their sense of identity, community life, core values, and inter-community relationships. Together with questionnaires and field notes Canagarajah collected in this study, the data reveal an insider view on how a community makes choices when shared yet contested ideologies of language and identity are involved (McCarty et al., 2011).

In addition to interviewing, participant and non-participant observation was also used in this study. Shehata (2006) believes observation is the best method to unveil how

people understand their situations and social world. Ethnographic researchers see and hear what is happening through a direct involvement with the group of interest. When studying the identity formation and language maintenance of Hopi youth, Nicholas (2009) participated in cultural and ceremonial activities of the tribe to observe the “daily routines, conversations, language and rhetoric used, [and] styles of behavior (including non-verbal)” (Mason, 1996, cited in Nicholas, 2009, p. 325) carried out in the community. Besides providing the bulk of descriptive information on the people studied, participant observation also reflects the personal experience of the researcher (Wolcott, 2008). Jacob and Jordan (1993) suggest participant observation allows researchers to “develop and test hypotheses concerning cultural meanings through their direct experiences” (p. 20).

Another method applied in qualitative research was analyzing data created by others. Researchers examine documents such as macro-policy texts, local educational materials, and pedagogical documents to complement data gathered through observation, interviews, and other methods. As Canagarajah (2006) notes, an ethnographic approach relies on collecting multiple types of data via multiple means to provide a thick description of the narratives for studying language practices in context and to crosscheck the findings.

### Research Context and Participants

To answer my research questions, I employed a triangulated approach to data collection that included semi-structured interviews, observation, and document analysis. The application of various methods for data collection is to ensure the triangulation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995) that multiple data sources are compared to enhance the

validity of the study. Based on my research topic that focused on understanding what the language learning experience of heritage college students was and how the experience related to their identity construction, I sought a language program that systematically offered Mandarin education and to some extent represented a typical program designed for college students in the United States. I chose to study Chinese Flagship, a national initiative that offers Mandarin and Chinese culture instruction at the undergraduate level. This federally funded initiative supports postsecondary institutions to develop programs that teach critical languages listed in the Title VI of National Defense Education Act, such as Mandarin, Arabic, and Hindi. Its multi-year Mandarin program is designed for FL learners who are pursuing degrees in any major offered in the host university. In 2010, there were more than 400 students enrolled in the Mandarin program nationally.

The partner Chinese Flagship (CF hereafter) program in which I carried out my observation was established in 2007 in a public university located in a major metropolitan area in the U.S. As of 2010, the Chinese population made up about 0.6 percent of the area and Chinese languages were the third spoken language after English and Spanish. The program under study offered two options for its potential students to choose from. For students without Chinese language proficiency, they could apply for Level One, which provided university-level instruction of Mandarin and Chinese culture. Students with higher levels of proficiency could apply for the Advanced Level, which provided intensive language and culture instruction at both domestic and overseas universities. The program had teachers of both native and non-native Chinese speakers.

Once I identified the program, I began recruiting students who are Chinese Americans and were in or had been enrolled in this program. I reached out in two ways to

recruit potential participants. First, I contacted the director of the program to explain my study and seek for recruitment help and observation permission. The director was interested in my study but doubted my focus on identity. Like a friend of mine who taught Chinese at a weekend Chinese school, the director claimed the CHLLs did not think too much about their identity. She believed they might confront those problems when they tried to find a job after they graduated, but not now when they were still in school. She agreed to allow me to observe the program's classes if the class teachers did not refuse.

I used a combination of purposive and snowball sampling strategies to recruit participants. These strategies were employed to purposively select information-rich participants based on study objective and resources (Patton, 2002) and “[use] a small pool of initial informants to nominate other participants who meet the eligibility criteria” for the study (Morgan, 2008, p. 815). The sampling was purposive in that all participants needed to have participated in the CF program. Skimming through the Chinese class catalog, I decided to start with one class that was open for the program's students and contacted the teacher for observation permission. In that class, I recruited two students, Ann and Yvonne (all names are pseudonyms). Both of them were in their junior year in college and they were friends since high school. Yvonne had native-like spoken language proficiency with a northern Chinese accent. Ann had been in the CF program for two and half years. While she spoke fluent Chinese, Ann was still more confident in English. Ann and Yvonne introduced me to Collins and their other friends. Collins was born in China and then moved to the UK. At the age of eight, he came to the U.S. with his family.



Collins described his Chinese was at the level that he had no problem to talk about things that were not complex.

In the meanwhile, via a mutual friend who was also a Chinese-American college student but did not study Chinese language at the time, I recruited Linda, who had just finished all the courses of the program. Linda was not only proficient in spoken Chinese, but also read Chinese books and wrote for a Chinese children's magazine. Linda introduced me to two other participants: Gloria and Nichole. Gloria had finished the CF program and graduated from college. She was born in a Middle East country and moved to the U.S. at the age of three. She was a competent Chinese speaker, but she reported when she was tired her Chinese would worsen. Nichole was in her sophomore year in college and she was having her first Chinese class in the CF program at the time of this study. She was fluent conversationally but working on expanding her vocabulary. In all, I invited eight students to participate and six of them accepted. All six participants were native English speakers and at the age between 20 and 21. These six students were observed and interviewed over a period of three months (March to June 2013), to collect data on their language learning experiences and their interpretation of these experiences (see Table 6 in Chapter 4 for more details on participants' profiles). The remainder of this chapter explains the data collection procedures of different approaches.

## Data Collection Strategies

### *Interviewing*

Schutz uses the analogy of a man chopping trees to explain that in order to make sense of people's behavior, it is necessary to put their behavior in context (Seidman, 2006). In this study of CHLLs, in-depth phenomenological interviews were conducted to

gather information about the participants' views on their Mandarin study experience and its relationship to their personal language policymaking, language ideologies, and language identifications. Based on Seidman's (2006, 2013) in-depth, phenomenological interviewing approach, I carried out a series of three separate interviews with participants (see discussion of the three parts below, and Appendix A for the interview protocol). Each interview was designed as a 60 to 90-minute semi-structured interview. This three-interview model was applied to interpret the meaning of CHLLs' experiences placed in context. The interviews were taped and transcribed.

All the interview questions were designed in English. However, the interviews were conducted in either English or Mandarin at participants' choice. This decision was made for two reasons. First, for a study interested in exploring CHLLs' language practice, the answers to my research questions can be found not only in their response to my scripted interview questions or in their classroom observation, but also shown in the study process itself. The choice of using English or Mandarin reflects participants' personal language policy. In the data collection process, participants made different choices based on varied reasons. One participant chose Chinese because she felt it was not natural to speak English with another Chinese. One participant chose Chinese because she wanted to grab every chance to practice her Chinese. Another one agreed to be interviewed in Chinese in her email but the next day when we met she decided to switch to English because she believed she expressed better in English. (More discussion on this issue will be presented in Chapter 5.) The second reason is that it offered me an opportunity to get a sense of participants' Chinese proficiency if they chose Chinese. Because for some participants, this study was one of the very few occasions that they

might use Chinese outside the classroom, it was a good chance for me to observe their language use and capacity.

*First interview: Focused life history.* According to Seidman (2006), the first interview, which focuses on life history, establishes the context of the participants' experiences. The purpose of the first round of interviews was to put the participants' experience in context by understanding their life history. This interview covered issues of CHLL' language information (linguistic background, proficiency, language use outside classroom, former Mandarin learning experiences), language motivations (reasons of enrolling in Mandarin class at the university level, expectations of the Mandarin program), and family background (cultural and socioeconomic background). Participants were asked how they made their decisions and took actions with regard to Mandarin maintenance in order to have participants "reconstruct and narrate a range of constitutive events in their past...experience that place their participation in the...program in the context of their lives" (Seidman, 2006, p. 17).

*Second interview: The details of experience.* The second round of interviews enabled participants to reconstruct the details of their experience. Interviews of the second round were taken about two weeks after the first interview and focused on the detailed experience of the participants in the program. Participants were asked to recount a typical day of learning and using Mandarin. The emphasis was placed on how they made their language choices (i.e. their informal language policies) when they used their languages in different contexts. In addition, interview questions included their description of the progress and problems of their language, academic, and culture studies as well as of their interaction with classmates and teachers.

*Third interview: Reflection on meaning.* The third round of interviews was designed for the participants to reflect on the meaning of their experience. Interview questions in this round focused on eliciting information of participants' language choices, ideologies, and identification. Participants were asked to talk about (1) their ideas and beliefs about the status of Mandarin and other Chinese language varieties, (2) the role of Chinese language(s) in their life, (3) their goals related to Mandarin study, and (4) their identity as a heritage language learner. The interviews also required participants to reflect on the role of different agencies (school, family, and community) in their LPP process.

After completing my second round of interviews with most of my participants, during a debriefing with my advisor, Dr. Teresa McCarty, she suggested setting up a group interview with my participants to see how they would interact with each other outside the classroom and how they would respond to issues of Chinese language education collectively. I took her advice and conducted a 90-minute group interview with four participants who had finished two rounds of the interview. The other two participants were interviewed individually in the third round of interviews.

In addition to the formal interviews, I had continuous informal conversations with participants throughout the study. These conversations were in three forms: (1) face-to-face conversation, (2) email communication, and (3) instant messaging on Facebook. The contents of the conversations included interview scheduling, following-up questions about the formal interviews and observation, and member checking of transcripts.

#### *Participant and Non-Participant Observation*

Observation was applied to document students' daily language practices and their interaction with others in and out of the class (see Appendix A classroom observation

protocol). Along the observational continuum from passive participation to full participation, I was a peripheral participant in the classroom observation. That is, I did not initiate contacts with participants in the classroom, but “move when necessary, respond when addressed, and occasionally offer verbal contributions when they seem appropriate” (Rizzo & Corsaro, 1995, p. 393). During the classroom observation, I examined the students’ and teachers’ actual use of language. The classroom observation helped me not only to know the situations of their CHL study but also to build rapport with them. I observed three courses for the spring semester of 2013. One course was a third-year Chinese language class and one participant was in the class. The second course was Classical Chinese and two participants were in the class. The third one was a Chinese literature class, the last required course that most CF students need to take before going to overseas study and two participants were in the class.

The total time of classroom observation was around 30 hours. This part of the research was designed to help me “get at” the kinds of language choices (informal policymaking) participants exhibit in this setting. While I realize that this may create a somewhat “forced” observational context, other similar research protocols have shown that over time the “observer effect” is reduced as participants become more at ease with the observer (Monahan & Fisher, 2010; Stoddart, 1986).

After the first round of interviews, I sought participants’ permission to observe their language learning and practices in other contexts (see Appendix A Other activity observation protocol). Only one of my participants was engaging in Chinese community activities at the time. She was a teaching assistant at a local weekend Chinese heritage school and helped her mother to teach a third grade Chinese class. I observed two classes

and each class was two hours. This observation revealed how my participant used Chinese and especially taught Chinese to younger CHLLs. Despite the fact that there were no regular language activities for other participants outside the class, I walked with my participants after the observed class and initiated short conversations on various subjects and with participants' permission, I recorded their Facebook activities that were related to Chinese language study. I also observed an interview that one participant conducted for her Chinese class assignment.

#### *Documents and Writing Samples*

In addition to interview and observation data, I collected program information and news reports, participants' schoolwork and other writing samples, textbooks and reading materials, and class syllabus. Documents about the program were retrieved from the program's website to review the history, development, and design of the program. An analysis of these official documents helped to put participants' language policy and practice into a context of institutions and power relations.

Table 4

#### *Writing samples*

Type	Content	No.
	Book reviews	4
	Movie reviews	1
Schoolwork	Weekly class reports	30
	Class discussion proposals	2
	Vocabulary exercises	2
Non-school projects	Project proposal	1
	Children's magazine submissions	6

All the participants' writing samples were in Chinese. The types of writing samples are listed in Table 4. Book reviews, movie reviews and one class discussion proposal were collected from the literature class; vocabulary exercises and the other discussion proposal were from the language class; and weekly class reports were from three specialized courses offered in the study abroad section. The project proposal was one participant's application for a funding that supported summer field study in China. Journal submissions were from one participant who wrote her personal stories for a Children's magazine in China. The data was used to showcase participants' language capacity and their viewpoints on Chinese language and culture learning.

#### Data Analysis Procedures

Before discussing my data analysis methods, I briefly explain the language use in the process of data analysis and presentation. The videotaped or audiotaped interviews were transcribed in the language(s) that they were originally taken. Field notes were taken primarily in English, except for the dialogues carried out in Mandarin. At the initial step of coding, when there were recurrent Chinese key words in the data, Chinese codes were applied to prevent the erroneous interpretation of participants' statements. When writing the report, I used the original language (with translation when needed) to present the data. Since one participant, Linda, intentionally chose to use traditional Chinese in all her writings, all quotes from her writings were presented in their original form, traditional Chinese. Her interview transcripts, however, as well as quotes from other participants were all in simplified Chinese.

To analyze the data, I applied Seidman's (2006, 2013) approach of crafting narrative participant profiles, followed by both within-case and across-case thematic

analysis (Creswell, 2007). As Seidman (2006) argues, a participant's own voice "allows those words to reflect the person's consciousness" (p. 120) and a narrative profile is an effective way to "present the participant in context, to clarify his or her intentions, and to convey a sense of process and time" (p. 119). In this study, the approach of narrative profiles was used to study and display the texts on the life histories of the participants (data gathered primarily in the first round of the interviews as well as the texts of later interviews related to this topic). First, I read through the transcripts of each participant, highlighted and grouped the passages that the participants talked about their family background and previous experiences of learning and using Chinese and other language(s). Based on the marked transcripts, I crafted profiles of each participant using their own words. These profiles later developed into descriptions of participants' sociolinguistic background presented in Chapter 4.

In addition to narrative profiles, I conducted thematic analysis. There were two stages to this part of the analysis. The first stage was a within-case analysis; that is, a search for themes within each participant. Initially all chunks of data gathered through interview, observation, and related documents were read and imported into NVivo for Mac, software of qualitative data analysis and organization, to conduct coding and categorizing. In the initial coding phase, I produced start codes that were descriptive in nature and included terminology used by participants during the interview, e.g., "choosing English to save time," "成就感 (sense of achievement)," and "Chinese identity forced onto me." These start codes were tentative and did not lock in categories at the early stage of coding (Seidman, 2006). After the initial coding, I reread all the coded excerpts and sorted out those that seemed very relevant to my research questions. In this



stage, data was reduced to more manageable proportions and patterns emerged from the data. Once the data were coded and patterns were found, I had another round of close reading to see thematic connections. This same process was repeated for the cross-case analysis (stage 2 of the analysis process), as I determined themes across each case. After these two stages of analysis, I conducted another round of data reduction. I reviewed and refined the themes proposed in these two stages of analysis. At this phase, I identified four first-level themes and twelve second-level themes. Table 5 lists the final codes used for writing up the findings of the research.

#### Researcher Positioning and Ethical Considerations

I am a native speaker of Mandarin with a Beijing accent. Even though China is a multilingual/multidialectal society, I grew up in a mostly monolingual Mandarin neighborhood in Beijing. A few friends of my parents were not native Mandarin speakers and I ran into other non-native Mandarin speakers in public, but Mandarin was always the *lingua franca*. In fact, the hegemonic status of Mandarin and the privilege of Beijingers usually place the non-native Mandarin speakers into a disadvantage. I still remember when I was a high school student, once I managed to stop a conductor verbally harassing a family of non-Beijingers on a bus. The main reason I could stop the conductor was because she could recognize I was Beijinger from my accent.

While I took the high status of Beijing dialect for granted at the time, I was quite aware of the value of English when I was young. Having placed a high value on education and believed English must be useful in my future, my parents hired a tutor to teach me English when I was in the third grade, right before I started English classes in school. For the same reason, my parents suggested me to major in English in college.

Table 5

*Final sets of codes*

First level	Second level	Third level	
Language policymaking	Program policies	Program recruitment and placement	
		Language of instruction	
	CHLLs' language choices	Reflective learning	
		CHLLs' expectation	
Language ideology	Familial relationship	Passive learning	
		Based on relationship	
	Language aesthetics	Based on proficiency	
		Shame	
	Chinese in foreign language education	Bonding	
		Beauty of Chinese language	
		Emotional connection	
	Language authority and authenticity	For career opportunities	
		For national interests	
	Language transmission	Language authority and authenticity	Foreignness
Dialects being corrected			
Language transmission		Resistance to correction	
		Natural to raise Chinese baby in Chinese	
Language practice	CHLLs' linguistic characteristics	Will transmit culture	
		Can't force kids to learn	
	Language improvement	Transmission approaches	
		Advantages in learning	
		Difficulties in learning	
	Learning community	Language improvement	Vocabulary
			Reading
Identity	Identity reconstruction	Writing	
		Speaking/listening	
		Local support from peers	
	Investment in learning	Identity reconstruction	New technologies in learning
			Maintenance via teaching
Investment in learning	Identity reconstruction	Imposed-on Chinese identity	
		Exclusion	
	Investment in learning	Identity reconstruction	Inclusion
For school requirements			
Investment in learning	Identity reconstruction	For career opportunity	
		For heritage connection	
Investment in learning	Identity reconstruction	Conflicted interests	

Despite years of English study, before college I seldom had the chance to talk to a native English speaker or finished reading an English book that was not a textbook. It was in college that I began to learn the literature, history, philosophical tradition, and pop culture of English-speaking countries in English. It was also in college that I regularly interacted with dialect-speaking classmates (who spoke Mandarin as either a first language or a second language) and even complained that I did not have a “secret language” like my roommates who could speak with their parents on the phone without me understanding their conversation. However, it was my graduate study in the U.S. that showed me another perspective to look at Mandarin—a minority language. At the same time, speaking English was not a subject to study but a necessity for everyday life.

My language and culture background offered me the advantage to quickly understand the social norms or rules in the Chinese classroom and in the Chinese community in order to establish rapport with the students, their families, and teachers. From this perspective, I consider my researcher’s role as an insider. This role brought both advantages and concerns. One concern was the relationship between participants as HL speakers and me as a native speaker. HL students are sometimes labeled as imperfect language speakers by native speakers or fluent non-native speakers (Jo, 2001; Potowski, 2002; Valdés, 1997). This was a challenge not to enter the field with assumptions or judge participants’ linguistic ability during the research process. This was especially important at the beginning of establishing rapport.

Fortunately, my personal experience, to some extent, enabled me to understand HL learners’ struggle against the authenticity of language. In college, as an English major student, I was trained in my two-year phonetics course to imitate the accent of the

(British) Queen's English, upon which our department bestowed higher values. This educational experience, together with my daily life as an international student in the U.S., compelled me to be constantly conscious about my Chinese accent of English. Later I realized my attempt to completely erase my accent was doomed to failure. In the wake of my increasing exposure to heritage and Indigenous language education, I gradually learned the socially constructed nature of so-called authentic language and started to appreciate my Chinese accent. This experience not only helped me to cope with my "standard English complex," but also made me realize the importance of maintaining Chinese language and culture in an English dominant society and became the reason that I started this study.

Despite my knowledge of both languages and cultures, I am neither a HL learner nor someone growing up in the U.S. From this perspective, I consider myself as an outsider. This position allowed me not to take everything for granted but to explore more on why participants had certain behavior. For the same reasons participants might also see me as an outsider. On the one hand, it means it took time and effort to build trust between researcher and participants. On the other hand, this enabled me to ask basic questions, which otherwise might be considered silly or inappropriate.

Because of the concerns of my researcher's position, I apply a few strategies to ensure the credibility of the study. Canagarajah (2006) points out ethnographic research is inevitably shaped by the people involved in the project, such as researchers, sponsors, audience of the work, and dominant power group. Critical reflexivity helps to deal with the relativism of the ethnographically informed studies and strengthen this approach by scrutinizing the negotiated power differences between researchers and informants.

Anderson (1989) suggests critical reflexivity involves a dialectical process among (1) the research's constructs, (2) the informants' commonsense constructs, (3) the research data, (4) the researcher's ideological biases, and (5) the structural and historical forces that informed the social construction under study (pp. 254-255). In my study, multiple sources of data were collected to ensure the triangulation. Member checks with the participants on their interview transcripts were employed to confirm participants' statements, clarify unclear questions, and extend discussion of emergent issues.

Another important issue of ethical considerations is the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. An informed consent form was approved by IRB office at Arizona State University and is attached to the end of the dissertation.

#### Limitations and Delimitations

There are several limitations to my study. First, as mentioned above, in this study I interviewed and observed six students and all these participants were selected from one language program at one public university. Although this sample size enabled me to collect sufficient data according to qualitative research standards, the experiences of these students did not represent all the Chinese heritage language learners in the U.S. Second, due to logistic reasons, an observation of the overseas component of the program was not possible.

#### Chapter Summary

This chapter first explained the rationales for applying an ethnographically-informed qualitative approach to answer my research questions. Then the chapter provided the research context, sampling method, and basic information of the participants. Data collection strategies and data analysis procedures were discussed in

detail. The chapter also addressed the potential influence of researcher's positioning on the study. Finally, the chapter ended with specifying the limitations of this research. The next chapter presents participants' social and linguistic profiles in detail.

## CHAPTER 4

### PARTICIPANTS' SOCIAL AND LINGUISTIC PROFILES

In the previous chapter, I discussed the participant recruitment process. Before going into the findings, in this chapter I introduce the six participants by presenting their social and linguistic profiles, former language education, and language use before college. Although the study did not focus on the language practices prior to the CF program, in further contact with participants, it became increasingly apparent that their previous language learning experience played a crucial role in studying Chinese after the CF program. The purpose of this chapter is to put participants' language practices and ideologies in context so that their language education can be understood in a chronological sense. Table 6 lists the participants' demographic profiles. A detailed description is offered through a vignette about each of the participants. The chapter is concluded with a discussion on the similarities and differences among these participants.

Ann: "I Just Didn't Know How To Do It and I Had This Really Bad Attitude"

I met Ann in the Chinese literature class I observed. When I approached her after the class and explained my intention, she immediately agreed to participate. She smiled and told me she could imagine how hard it would be to recruit for research. Throughout the study she was very supportive and assured me that she would love to provide any help I needed. She had a soft voice and was sometimes quiet in the class, but when she started to talk it was like opening the dam: She always had something insightful to offer and did not hesitate to express her critiques on the issue in discussion. Talking with her, it was obvious to see that she had such a passion for the projects she was doing, either her research on modern China or her volunteer work in education.

Table 6  
Participant Profiles

Name	Gender	Age	Place of birth	First language(s)	Second language(s)	Grade	Major(s)	Minor(s)	Semesters in CF classes*	Study in China
Ann	F	21	USA	English, Cantonese, Mandarin	Spanish	Junior	Liberal Arts, Economics	CF	5	1 summer
Collins	M	20	China	Mandarin, English	Spanish	Junior	Science	Chinese	4	N/A
Gloria**	F	21	Middle East	Mandarin, English	Arabic, French, Korean	1 <sup>st</sup> year Master	Human Relations, Chinese	N/A	6	1 year
Linda**	F	21	USA	Mandarin, English	Spanish	Junior	Economics	Business, CF	5	1 year
Nichole	F	20	USA	Mandarin, English	Japanese, French	Sophomore	Chemistry	Dance, CF	1	N/A
Yvonne	F	21	USA	Mandarin, English	N/A	Junior	Business	Chinese	4	N/A

*Note.* \*The number of semesters that participants have taken CF classes at the time of this study  
\*\*Participants had graduated from the CF by the time of study.



Ann was born in the United States and grew up in the same state her entire life. Her mother was from northern China while her father from southern China. English, Mandarin, and Cantonese were spoken at home. When Ann was young, her parents tried to push her to speak Mandarin. She would speak Mandarin for a little bit but then could not find the right word, so she switched to English. Her parents would speak Chinese again, but she would respond in English. After several rounds of language switching, her parents lost patience and gave in. Now Ann and her parents speak English to each other and when her mother cannot understand her, which is seldom, her mother will respond in Mandarin.

It was a surprise for Ann that she was committed to learn Chinese in college, because she used to “hate learning Chinese more than anything in the world” due to the extra work and her inability to be good at it. From the age of five, Ann went to a Chinese school every weekend. Considering her family did not push her to use Chinese at home, the course progress in Chinese school was difficult for Ann.

I needed my mother to help me do the homework every single night. We would sit on my desk and trudge through the homework. And it was literally like 造词 (make a phrase). Well, I don't know any 词s that I can 造. So my mother has to do it *for* me pretty much. Or 造句 (make a sentence). Like I just didn't know how to do it and I had this really bad attitude toward it. I really hated it.

Ann remembered once she had a test in Chinese school that she could not do. She felt so embarrassed that she stuffed the test into her backpack and snuck out. Week after week she was haunted by the idea that she was not good at Chinese. Ann raised several

objections to studying Chinese but her parents just said: “You have to do it.” She was forced to go to Chinese school for eight years and finally stopped in middle school.

Cantonese was the main language used when the big extended family on her father’s side got together at weekends. Ann recalled when she was young she used to be really good at Cantonese, especially at imitating the pronunciation. Since high school she paid less attention to either the language or the family gatherings. Even when she was at the gathering, she would choose to speak in English and her family would respond in either Mandarin or English. Now she could understand Cantonese at a conversational level but never used it with her parents. Because Ann’s mother did not speak Cantonese, the rest of the family would use Mandarin with her even though they were not good at Mandarin. In retrospect, Ann believed there was always this wall of communication between her mother and the rest of her family. She observed that because of this language difference her mother just did not participate in their conversation. Learning that from her mother, Ann often felt it was never her place to speak up in some situations like in class or large groups.

In addition to English, Mandarin, and Cantonese, Ann also spoke Spanish. After three years of Spanish study in high school, Ann continued her learning in college and almost minored in Spanish before she finally heard about the CF program from a CF student who was also a heritage learner. In those three to four years, she considered her Spanish was actually better than her Chinese.

#### Collins: “Only Went to Math Classes”

Collins started taking Chinese classes in his sophomore year in college and officially joined the CF program after one semester of Chinese study. At the time I

recruited him as a participant, Collins had just dropped out of the program because it “didn’t really line up with what I want to do after I graduate.” He was hesitant to participate and afraid that he might not be that useful for my research. I reassured him that I was interested in knowing not only the stories of those who were currently in the program but also those who decided to leave; moreover, he was still taking a Chinese class that I would love to observe.

Collins was the only male student in the study and the only one born in China. When he was two, his family moved to the UK and six years later moved again to the US as his father found a job here. At home, Collins used Mandarin with his parents, but when it came to topics in which he was not conversant in Chinese, such as taxes, he would switch to English. His sister who was in elementary school spoke more English than Chinese with her parents, but Collins still talked to her in Chinese and tried to “keep it simple.” Collins went to Chinese school in both the UK and the US. His parents helped him with his homework but did not do too much additional teaching other than asking Collins to memorize ancient Chinese poems. Each week in Chinese school, Collins studied new characters, made sentences with those characters, and was tested on the characters. He remembered he used to practice characters on sheets of grid paper. He was not a big fan of memorizing characters, but he and his friends at Chinese school managed to have some fun: They drew in the textbooks and made fun of the characters. Collins told his parents that he was not interested in learning Chinese. When I asked what their response was, Collins said: “I mean, it’s standard Asian parents, you know. ‘It oughta be good for you later.’” With an increasing academic burden, he stopped taking Chinese

classes after entering high school. He kept going to Chinese school, but he “only went to math classes.”

Collins did not feel his birthplace made any difference for him, but in the focus group interview, other participants seemed sensitive to this difference. When asked how their identity was related to studying Chinese, he said “自己是中国人嘛也觉得应该了解中国发生了什么事情” (As a Chinese, one should know what is happening in China). Yvonne immediately expressed her disagreement: “不过他生在中国他不算” (But it doesn't count because he was born in China). Collins protested that he only lived there for two years, but Linda interrupted: “Nuh-uh, you're a FOB<sup>3</sup>, forever a FOB.” Later, as telling why he decided to do CF at first, Collins said: “For me partially it was originally I thought it would be nice to go back to China and see what we would've got.” Linda playfully picked up on Collins's choice of words. “Back!” She laughed, “Sorry, you just had to, you differentiated yourself.” Everyone including Collins laughed and Ann applauded Linda's “good catch.” However, Collins was not the only participant who used “go back” when talking about going to China. In fact, every participant except Linda (it may be because Linda's parents were from Taiwan) used this phrase in his or her individual interviews and both Yvonne and Ann used it in this focused group interview.

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<sup>3</sup> FOB (fresh off the boat) usually refers to people who emigrated from a foreign country, a term with pejorative connotations. Goleman (2006) notices in a Manhattan high school, there was the division between ABCs (American born Chinese) and FOBs among Chinese Americans. David Henry Hwang's 1980 play FOB is another example of portraying the conflicts between the two groups. Instead of taking the term as an insult, some Asian immigrants use it to express their cultural heritage (e.g. Eddie Huang's memoir, *Fresh off the boat*).

Yet, in Collins's case, the use of the phrase was acknowledged by others as a descriptor of his differentiated identity as a Chinese American.

Gloria: “我讲的是我们所谓的 Pidgin” (What I spoke Was What We Called Pidgin)

Gloria was the last participant I recruited. At the time, she had graduated and moved to another state to continue her education. We conducted all three interviews on Skype. Gloria's family had a complicated residency history. Her grandparents on both sides left China in the 1940s and settled in a Southeast Asian country. After her father finished his graduate study in the U.S., her parents relocated to a Middle East country where Gloria was born. At the age of three, she and her family moved to the U.S. She was homeschooled for seven years and then enrolled in an Islamic middle school. When I asked her what her first language was, she replied: “我妈说我讲的是我们所谓的 pidgin。 English, Chinese, Arabic 全都有，混在一起。(My mom said what I spoke was what we called pidgin. English, Chinese, Arabic all mixed together.)” With more exposure to English-speaking environment after middle school, her use of English greatly increased, especially with her siblings.

In her years of homeschooling, Gloria's mother taught her and her siblings all the academic subjects except for Chinese, because Chinese was her mother's second language. Instead, her grandmother was their Chinese teacher. Gloria unleashed a hearty laugh when recalling those days of Chinese learning: “我记得我七岁的时候就恨，恨，恨，好恨中文课，因为就完全看不懂，根本听不懂。” (I remember when I was seven I really hated, hated, hated, hated Chinese class, because I could not read at all, could not understand at all.) In each class, her grandmother usually taught her and her brothers a

Chinese proverb with its background story. It could take two hours for them to just read through a two-page story. After finishing the reading, they had to listen to her grandmother's explanation and dictate the whole story, although she often managed to secretly copy the text without her grandmother's notice. In addition to proverb anthology, her grandmother subscribed the youth version of a local Chinese-language newspaper to teach. Gloria remembered that if they could read aloud an article without making any mistake, the class would be over right away. With this motivation, she and her brothers created their own phonetic symbols and rashly marked on the lines as her grandmother read it the first time.

当时我奶奶没有教过我们拼音嘛，因为她好像也没学过，所以我们就编了我们家自己的拼音法按照我们自己听出来的声音。说实在的，我根本，I didn't even realize 就是4个accents，就是那个一声、二声、三声、四声。小时候不知道怎么写那个编号嘛，that signal thing，我们自己就编了一大堆。我记得当时我写的那个三声是screwed grapevine.

(At the time my grandmother did not teach us pinyin, because she did not learn it either, so we created our own pinyin according to the sounds we heard. Frankly, I didn't even realize there were four accents, i.e. first tone, second tone, third tone, fourth tone. Didn't know how to write that signal thing, so we created many on our own. I remember my third tone was drawn like a screwed grapevine.)

Using her "home-made" phonetic symbols, Gloria admitted she was actually using English to pronounce Chinese. Although she learned a lot of characters and proverbs at that time, she could not really remember as many. She depended heavily on the context to

read words. She might not remember the meaning of one character but could make a guess based on the character next to it. Moreover, she and her brother sometimes tricked their grandmother to repeatedly learn the same proverb when their grandmother asked them to pick one to learn. Perplexity, repetition, perfunctoriness, and shot in the dark. Gloria studied Chinese in this way for two to three hours a week for ten years till she joined the CF program. In contrast, she found Chinese classes in college became much easier.

Linda: “我觉得好有成就感啊” (I Felt a Strong Sense of Achievement)

Linda’s parents came from Taiwan to obtain their graduate education in the 1980s, and Linda was born in the U.S. When Linda was young, her elder cousin, who immigrated here in his teenage years, also lived in her parents’ house. Linda spoke only Chinese at home. One reason of this language choice was that her parents’ English was not very well at the time. In spite of this language policy, her parents were too busy to teach her Chinese at home—Linda called herself one of those latchkey kids who got up herself and prepared for school in the morning and returned to an empty house after school—instead, she learned Chinese at a weekend Chinese school. She studied in this Chinese school from kindergarten to the last year of her high school. Linda did not really enjoy learning Chinese in Chinese school, but different from most of her Chinese American friends who did not care and did not learn, she always thought “身为学生就必须办好学生的角色” (as a student [she] should take on that role). When other students tricked their teacher to end class earlier and peeked at their notes in tests, Linda spent time in doing homework and preparing for tests. Even with the time and energy Linda put

into the homework and tests, she did not learn a lot from Chinese school. Her vocabulary was limited and she often made basic grammatical errors.

What changed Linda's trajectory of learning Chinese was a Chinese CD album by a popular Taiwanese singer. When Linda was in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, her cousin who came from Taiwan to visit her family gave her the album as a gift. Linda just got a new iPod at the time. She imported all the songs into her iPod and listened to the album back and forth. One day, she was sitting in the kitchen and listening to one song from the album, 童话. At first she was attracted by the rhythm. "The music is great!" She thought. But when she really listened into the lyrics, she was amazed by the lyrics. She said in our first interview:

那张专辑对我影响非常大。就是从那个开始，我记得它有一个词就是：

“张开双手变成翅膀守护你”还是之类的那个词。然后觉得说，这个所有的字我完全都了解，“翅膀”，“张开”，“变成”什么，可是我没有想到说我知道的中文字可以表达，这样表达。我觉得真的很优美那种感觉。我真的很喜欢。

(That album had a great influence on me. I was since then, I remember one line of its lyrics was something like: "Stretch out my arms, turning them into wings to protect you." And I felt that I knew every word, like "wing," "stretch out," and "turn into," but I had never thought the Chinese words I knew could express [meanings] in this way. I felt it was really beautiful. I really like it very much.)

In the meantime, Taiwanese variety shows became one of Linda's favorite entertainments. Every weekend, Linda's parents watched variety shows with their friends



at home and Linda would join them. When Linda was young, she could not enjoy the show. She did not understand why the jokes were so funny that everyone else laughed so hard. After she started listening to Chinese pop music, she also spent more time watching those kinds of shows. She remembered the first time when a proverb she learned in Chinese school was used in an unexpected way by the show host and created a hilarious effect.

我觉得好好笑。那时候我就觉得好棒啊。我听得懂，我终于听得懂。我可以跟着一起笑。所以我觉得好有成就感啊。我终于达到这一点了，我可以跟我爸妈朋友一起笑，我懂了，所以我就继续去看。

(I found [the joke] so funny. At that time I felt so great. I could understand, I could finally understand. I could laugh with [them]. I felt a strong sense of achievement. I could finally do this, I could laugh with my parents and their friends, I could understand, so I kept on watching.)

From pop music to variety shows to television dramas, Linda devoured all types of Taiwanese pop culture. Whenever there was a word she could not know or a joke she could not understand, she would look into the dictionary or check online to learn. When she was in high school, Linda spent so much time to watch television dramas online that she felt guilty about “wasting time.” Linda noticed that many dramas she watched online had both English and Chinese subtitles. While the Chinese subtitles were original, the English ones were translated and added by some online volunteers. Linda found this might be an opportunity for her to learn more Chinese and make good use of her time, so she emailed this voluntary group to see if they needed any help. Then she became a member and stayed in the group till the end of high school. Every time she got an episode

or a video clip, she translated it line by line according to its original Chinese subtitle. In comparison to Chinese school classes, she learned much more Chinese this way. Through translating, she not only understood the meaning based on the context, but also grasped the meaning of specific characters and words.

Nichole: “就不喜欢去中文学校学” (Just Disliked Going to Chinese School to Learn)

Nichole was a cheerful person who had an infectious laugh and loved to give a warm hug. Though a participant of the study, she liked to know more about me and asked me questions, such as how I chose my major and what my future plan was after graduation. She was born in the U.S., but when she was young, she could only speak Chinese and did not start to learn English until she was in elementary school. She was placed in an English as a second language (ESL) class at the beginning. At first Chinese occasionally slipped out when she talked to her English-speaking friends. It took her a few years to catch up. Nichole’s mother taught her Chinese when she was little, but her parents were often too busy to teach. Instead, they gave her some children’s books to read. Nichole was sent to a Chinese school around the age of seven or eight. When I asked how she felt about the experience, she said:

我不喜欢。哎呀，我不是懒，但是我不喜欢早晨起床。我不是个懒的人，但是我真是不喜欢起床。我喜欢睡觉，从小就喜欢睡觉。So我就记住每天礼拜天我爸爸妈妈把我弄醒，然后我得去中文学校，我妈妈爸爸在那里也参加了很多俱乐部，so我上完课我呆在那里呆到2点钟，所以我那个礼拜天都没了。小时候就不喜欢这样。但是我学中文的时候，我挺喜欢，但是就不喜欢去中文学校学。

(I didn't like [the experience]. Alas, I was not lazy; it was just that I did not like to get up early. I'm not a lazy person, but I really don't like getting up [early]. I like sleeping since I was young. So I remember every Sunday my parents woke me up and I had to go to Chinese school. My parents joined some clubs there, so after my class, I had to stay there 'til 2 pm. My whole Sunday was gone. I did not like that when I was young. When I was *learning* Chinese, I liked to learn, but I just disliked *going* to Chinese school to learn.)

In the class, Nichole would pay attention. After class, however, she realized it did not matter if she finished her Chinese school homework or what grade she got in the test. She chose to put energy into learning other things in her leisure time, such as French and Japanese. At the age of ten, she finally decided she did not want to go to Chinese school any more. Her parents agreed her request quickly.

In the following ten years, Nichole did not regularly learn Chinese. Nevertheless, she still had some exposure to Chinese at home. Nichole only spoke English to her parents and her older sister, but her parents responded in Chinese. Her family had a library full of books in Chinese, although Nichole found them too hard to read. Nichole loved listening to Chinese songs. Sometimes her family got together to sing karaoke at home. When Nichole was young her parents would throw a party every month so that their Chinese friends could hang out, singing songs and enjoying Chinese food, while in such an event kids usually spoke English to each other.

At the time she started to retake Chinese class in the CF program, Nichole was placed in the third year Chinese class, although she thought her Chinese was no better than a first or second grader in China. She found no difficulty with listening but had some

problem to speak. She could barely have a conversation more than introducing her name and major.

Yvonne: “It Depends on the Parents”

The first time I met Yvonne was in the Chinese literary class designed for the CF students. Never officially enrolled in the CF program, Yvonne took almost every required non-language class of the program. Yvonne was the youngest of three sisters whose parents emigrated from China in the 1980s, and both of her sisters were CF graduates. Different from other participants’ parents, Yvonne’s family had a strict language policy on using Chinese with parents. Yvonne remembers her mother “forced” her and her sisters to speak Chinese: “She would ignore us if we spoke English to her. This has happened many, many times. So we would have to just speak Chinese to her.” This strict policy, however, did not apply to the language use among the sisters. In her childhood family videos, Yvonne saw that she used to speak Chinese to her sisters, but she could not remember since when they shifted to English. At home this switch between speaking Chinese to parents and English to sisters was “automatic,” which “doesn’t require any thought process.” This automatic switch also happened during my interactions with Yvonne. Sometimes after my observation of Ann and Yvonne’s Chinese class, I walked with them out of the building and chatted about their class or recent happenings. Walking between Ann and me, Yvonne always replied me in Chinese and turned to Ann and spoke English to her. At first I did not understand this language choice and was confused about what language to choose. I tried to accommodate them by using English, but Yvonne kept speaking Chinese to me. After my second interview with Yvonne, I started to follow the

reason behind this choice. Participants' language choice will be further analyzed in the next chapter.

Yvonne called herself a minority when it came to learning Chinese in a way that she was always enjoying learning Chinese and investing time in the study. Yvonne attributed this commitment to strict parenting of her parents. "I think a lot of it depends on the parents," she asserted. She started Chinese school at the age of four. Although her parents taught her a little Chinese before, it was after she and her sisters started Chinese school that her parents began to teach more Chinese at home and encouraged them to watch Chinese TV dramas to learn Chinese. Yvonne's parents were both volunteers in the Chinese school Yvonne studied in and Yvonne's mother was actually her Chinese teacher for the first two years. Everyday or every other day her mother set aside time to make sure that Yvonne finished her Chinese school homework, read some extra Chinese children's books, or write diaries in Chinese. She even had to write essays in Chinese during the summer break. Yvonne sighed that her mother was even stricter than her Chinese schoolteachers and it was more fun to study in Chinese school. Right before Yvonne started high school, she left Chinese school, because both her sisters had graduated from it and her mother thought it would be too much "麻烦" (trouble) to send only Yvonne every week. But by that time, Yvonne felt she had learned "enough so that I could continue learning on my own, because when I stopped going to Chinese school, that's when I started watching dramas to read subtitles. I would watch Korean dramas and read the Chinese subtitles for it to practice by reading faster, learning more words. Through that I also learned how to read the 繁体字 (traditional Chinese)."

In contrast to teaching Chinese, Yvonne's parents did not push English learning so hard before her formal schooling. The choice was made based on their belief that they were not qualified to teach because they spoke accented English and their children would not learn correct pronunciation from them. Instead of speaking English to their children, Yvonne's parents played them some American children's TV programs, such as Mister Rogers' Neighborhood and Sesame Street, and bought them English workbooks to practice grammar and spelling. Yvonne reported when she started elementary school, her language was a little behind but caught up very quickly.

#### Reviewing Previous Learning Experiences

The six narrative profiles briefly portrayed what the childhood Chinese learning experience of the six participants was like and how they viewed this experience. In the following part of this chapter, I discuss more of the participants' social and educational background as a group, as well as on the uniqueness of each participant through a comparative analysis.

The participants in this study shared similar family backgrounds. Their parents moved to the U.S. among the third wave of Chinese immigration. As one of characteristics of this wave, the immigrants during this period were mainly professionals (see Chapter 2 for a review of Chinese immigration to the U.S.). At least one of their parents received his/her graduate education in the U.S. (except for Collin's parents who earned their degrees in the U.K.).

All participants grew up in a White, or Latino-dominant neighborhood. For example, in Linda's high school, there were only about five Chinese students. Ann admitted that all of her friends were White until she was in high school. Gloria and

Nichole had a similar experience, but they noted befriending with White people exclusively was not something by choice. A few Chinese churches and two Chinese schools were the only places where these participants had the chance to regularly meet other Chinese. Without an affiliation to either group, their exposure to Chinese community was highly limited.

All participants had some Chinese learning experience in their childhood, either in Chinese school or at home. For those studying in Chinese school, all of them did not like the experience, even though some of them reported that they enjoyed the learning. They found the homework to be a burden and the grades they got not to matter in any way, especially compared to their academic achievement at school—which was one of the reasons that some of them left Chinese school before high school. In addition to what was mentioned in Nichole’s vignette, that Chinese school “threw away” her weekends, these participants sometimes had negative language attitude because Chinese was “too hard” for them to learn. The vignettes of Ann and Gloria in this chapter indicate a feeling of confusion and frustration. Ann stressed that no one could teach Chinese two hours a week. Her Chinese school covered one textbook a year and each lesson had so many new words that she could not follow the progress. Gloria never learned any Chinese phonetic system during homeschooling, so it was difficult for her to learn the accurate pronunciation of Chinese characters. In an article Linda wrote for a Chinese children’s journal, she described vividly the difficulty in this period of Chinese learning:

還有寫功課的煩惱，特別是寫作文。雖然也只要寫幾句，可是對完全不懂中文語法、詞彙量又少的初級學者而言，這可是個重大挑戰。這已不是當初輕易踏出的幾步，在這階段我們學中文的路況變的很不穩定，就好像走

在黑暗中，艱苦爬在路不平的隧道裡，雙手摸到的東西也會突然間消失，感覺自己會找不到出路，完全沒有希望。

(Another pain was the homework, especially writing essays. Although [I] only need to write a few sentences, as to a novice who had no knowledge about Chinese grammar and a small vocabulary, it was a great challenge. It was no longer the first few easy steps. In this period, the road of learning Chinese became unstable. It was like walking in the dark or crawling in the uneven tunnel. The things [I] had grasped might suddenly disappear. It seemed that I would not find a way out and was totally hopeless.)

Although the participants were to a certain extent forced to go to Chinese school by their parents, those who persisted for many years were “exceptional” among their peers. Linda and one of her best friends used to compete with each other in Chinese school-held contests when they were in the third grade. One would win a writing contest, and the other would win a reading contest. They even saw each other as their foe. However, all of a sudden, her friend did not care about Chinese or winning anymore and then switched to a relatively easier bilingual class, while Linda selected the more advanced class and later passed the Chinese AP test. The same thing happened to Yvonne’s friends. When Yvonne was in high school, all of her Chinese friends had stopped going to Chinese school and Yvonne was the only one who was still learning Chinese. Furthermore, the Chinese level of most of her Chinese friends was relatively limited, and she could hardly find someone that was able to talk about one of her favorite entertainments, the Chinese TV dramas.



These varied levels of Chinese proficiency were shared among the research participants before they started the CF program and the difference was related to the degree of their engagement as well as the effectiveness of their language education. Prior to the CF program, both Ann and Nichole had dropped Chinese for many years. They reported that their listening skills were fine but they were unable to speak Mandarin well. Both were placed in a third-year Chinese class in the CF program. Collins and Gloria had a higher speaking proficiency level at the time. They were still speaking Chinese to their family. Nevertheless, due to their limited vocabulary, they could only have fairly simple conversations in Chinese and sometimes had to resort to English. Both were placed in fourth-year Chinese class, the highest level Chinese language class in the CF program. Linda and Yvonne had the highest proficiency among the six participants. Before college, Linda and Yvonne had already been able to teach themselves Chinese through Chinese pop culture. When they took the placement test set up by the CF program, Linda and Yvonne skipped all the language classes offered by the program and started directly from the content courses, such as Chinese history and Chinese literature.

With confined access to Chinese community and a lack of Chinese proficiency of their peers, the four participants who were still using Chinese before college could speak Chinese only at home and mainly with their parents (or grandparents), or use Chinese passively through watching TV dramas and listening to pop songs. Although all participants had some Chinese reading materials at home, including children's books, newspapers, textbooks, and Chinese literature, they reported that before college they had never read a Chinese book other than textbooks or children's books.

## Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the six participants in this research and their history of Chinese education prior to college. While all the participants spoke English as a native language, they claimed their first language was Chinese and in this case their first language meant the first language(s) they learned as a child. Like many immigrant children who grew up in an English-dominant society, most of these participants experienced a decline in their Chinese language proficiency. Whether their parents insisted on the Chinese-only home language policy was a major factor in these participants' Chinese language proficiency. While weekend Chinese school was one place for these learners to speak Chinese, their Chinese language use was mainly confined to the family domain. Learning Chinese in Chinese school was not a fun experience for most of the participants as a young child, but those who stuck to it found enjoyment at last and continued their study on their own. In the next chapter, I will look into the experiences of these participants in the CF program.

## CHAPTER 5

### DE JURE AND DE FACTO LANGUAGE POLICES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CF PROGRAM

The findings in this chapter answer my first research question: What is the nature of CHLLs' de facto language policymaking in the context of a Chinese Flagship language learning (CF) program? First, a brief description is given to introduce the setting of the program. I then present findings from two aspects: (1) how CHLLs responded to the language policies set up by the program and (2) how these learners made their personal language policies in their practices inside and outside the classroom.

#### An Introduction to the Chinese Flagship Program

The CF program in this study is part of a national initiative, the Language Flagship (Flagship hereafter), to promote FL education in the United States. Flagship is federally funded through the National Security Education Program (NSEP) at the U.S. Department of Defense. Flagship consists of 27 programs at 23 partner institutions of higher education, 10 overseas collaborative programs at local universities, and three U.S. K-12 programs. Currently ten languages are offered: Arabic, Chinese, Hindi-Urdu, Korean, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, Swahili, and Turkish.<sup>4</sup> In 2011, CF programs had two K-12 programs, one overseas center, nine undergraduate programs and three Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) Pilot programs. The first Flagship grants started in 2002 to develop post-baccalaureate programs that supported language learning of graduate students, but it was not until 2006 that the focus of the program shifted to

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<sup>4</sup> From 2008 to 2010, Yoruba was offered.

undergraduate programs, when Flagship realized the results of focusing on graduate programs “would remain limited and out of reach for most American students” (Language Flagship, 2008, p. 2). By the same token, Flagship extended to K-12 programs to form a pipeline of FL education. In addition to its vertical expansion to different educational levels, Flagship also saw a horizontal increase. The total undergraduate enrollment had a substantial growth from 136 students in 2007 to 1013 in 2011. The undergraduate enrollment in the CF has enjoyed a rapid growth over the years as well. Starting with 69 students in 2007, the CF reached an enrollment of 400 undergraduates in 2010. In 2011, 372 undergraduate students were enrolled in the CF program, which had the highest enrollment among programs of all ten languages.

The CF program in this study was established in a public university, Metropolitan State University (MSU, a pseudonym) in 2007. There are about 55 students currently enrolled in the program and about 10-12% of them are heritage speakers as defined in this study. The CF program is a multi-year undergraduate program with both domestic and overseas components. Students enrolled in MSU may apply to the program at any point excluding the overseas year. Depending on their language proficiency, students are placed either in a class of novice level (first- or second-year Chinese classes) or a class of advanced level (third- or fourth-year Chinese classes). After at least one year of Chinese study at the University, students in the advanced level can choose to apply for one academic year of overseas study in China. Students need to take an oral proficiency test when applying for the competitive overseas program. The study-abroad component aims to provide an immersive learning environment. During the year in China, students are paired with a native Chinese roommate and spend one semester studying in a Chinese

university and one semester finishing an internship in China. In the Chinese university, they will have classes on both Chinese language and their specialized field. Once they finish the overseas year and pass the final proficiency test, students will receive a certificate.

Different from a FL department in a university, Flagship recruits students who are currently enrolled in a university with or without a major in the target language. Students may choose to major in the target language; combine this major with a second major; or only major in a non-language discipline. The multiple pathways offered by Flagship reflect the collaborative intention of the program. First, it is a multidisciplinary attempt to combine language education and professional development. In the mission statement of the program, it is stated that its goal is to “produce graduates with dual strengths in professional-level Mandarin language proficiency and their chosen career domains” (Program document, p. 2). In other words, students are expected to achieve high level of linguistic and cultural proficiency and are able to use the language in their career. Second, the organization of the program is an embodiment of partnership among different public and private sectors. According to the website of the MSU program, the vision of Flagship is that:

The program leads the nation in designing, supporting, and implementing a new paradigm for advanced language education. Through an innovative partnership among the federal government, education, and business, The Language Flagship graduates students who will take their place among the next generation of global professionals, commanding a superior level of proficiency in languages critical to U.S. competitiveness and security.

Under this collaborative and multidisciplinary model, the federal government provides funding, institutions of higher education provide teaching resources, and Flagship graduates are provided with intensive language, cultural, and professional training to fulfill government and business needs. The win-win presumption of the program welcomes a rapid growth in enrollment because of its possible individual career opportunity and meanwhile it encourages a continuous financial support because of its potential for national competitiveness and security.

#### Responding to De Jure Language Policies in the CF program

Set up as a FL program to prepare for global workforce, the CF program provides various opportunities to enhance its students' language skills on the one hand, and employs proficiency tests to assess its students' linguistic improvement on the other hand. Because of its collaborative model, the CF program depends on the resources offered in the collaborative university for its curriculum design. This section presents the findings on the CHLLs' responses to de jure language policies set by the CF program. It looks into how the students negotiated different situations and conducted their studies as they faced the opportunities, requirements, and restrictions of the CF program.

#### *Initiating a Revisit to Heritage Language*

Participants in the present study reported different reasons that they decided to reacquire their heritage language in the CF program. Some CHLLs did not want to lose their Chinese skills after they graduated from high school and left weekend Chinese school, so they looked for resources to learn Chinese when they entered the college. As Linda was applying for college, she thought she should learn Chinese in college, so when she paid a campus visit to MSU, she went to meet a professor from the Chinese

Department. At the time, the program just sent their first cohort to China and they were eager to recruit more students. The professor told Linda that she seemed like a “perfect candidate” and she should talk to the CF director. After Linda talked with both the director and a CF teacher, she decided this was the college she should go because of the CF program.

A passion for language study was another reason the CHLLs entered the CF program. Although Nichole had lost a lot of Chinese skills at the time she entered college, learning as many languages as possible was one of her dreams. She learned Japanese and French in high school and hoped to study linguistics in college. However, her parents believed that “学好数理化，走遍天下都不怕 (Being good at math and science brings you anywhere),” so they did not allow Nichole to major in linguistics. Studying in the CF program became an alternative for Nichole to fulfill her dream of learning different languages.

Most participants were attracted to the program by its financial support. Originally, Gloria took a lower-level Chinese conversation course to waive the college language requirement. In the first day of that class, the CF program director was in the room. After Gloria and other students introduced themselves, the director asked two or three of them to take her class instead, because according to the director, they spoke too fast and would give other students pressure. Later, Gloria learned about the CF program from the director. When she knew the program would provide an opportunity to take a free trip to China, she decided to apply.

The presumption of future career opportunity was also appealing to the CHLLs. Ann, Collins, Nichole, and Yvonne were all introduced to the CF program by former or

current CF students. Having learned about the program, Ann was convinced that it was a “legitimate” program that would bring her to “a professional level of Chinese.” Collins started the program because at the time he thought it would be useful if he would go work in China in the future.

*Enjoying the Immersive Chinese-Speaking Environment*

Table 7 shows the Chinese courses taken by research participants in the CF program at MSU. All the language classes (e.g. third- and fourth- year Chinese) were taught in Chinese and the textbooks were in Chinese and designed for FL learners. The content and literary courses were in Chinese, English, or both and so were the textbooks. In Chinese language classes, the teacher often encouraged students to only speak Chinese. Ann and Collins remembered that one of their teachers was very strict about the Chinese-only policy in class. If someone continuously broke the rule, the teacher would give her or him extra homework or take off part of the participation points. Ann explained when such an incident happened it was not like a big punishment. Instead,

That’s always funny and it wasn’t a lot of extra homework. And I think [the teacher] understood, I mean, it wasn’t like it was on purpose. I think a lot of it was just nervous habit and also kinda be embarrassment just not being able to [use Chinese].

The Chinese-only rule in class seemed not a problem for the research participants. All of them reported they used only Chinese with their teachers. During group discussions, however, when their classmates spoke English, they might switch too. During an observation of Nichole’s third-year Chinese language class, the teacher asked students to discuss their recreational activities in groups. As the teacher passed by Nichole’s group,



he caught them speaking English. The group burst into laughter when they found out the teacher stood behind them and overheard their conversation. Nichole apologized to the teacher: “对不起，我没有说中文。” (I’m sorry that I didn’t speak Chinese.) The whole group switched to Chinese and tried to figure out how to discuss sports in Chinese.

Table 7

*Chinese Courses*

Course	Type	Unit (hours)	Length (semesters)	Required/ Selective	Language of instruction
3 <sup>rd</sup> year Chinese*	Language class	5	2	Required	Chinese
4 <sup>th</sup> year Chinese	Language class	3	2	Required	Chinese
Chinese writing practice	Language class	1	1	Required	Chinese
Classical Chinese*	Literary class	3	2	Required	English and Chinese
Chinese literature*	Literary class	3	2	Required	Chinese
Chinese history	Content course	3	1	Required	Chinese
Chinese linguistics	Content course	3	1	Required	English**
Chinese religion	Content course	3	1	Selective	English
Chinese medicine	Content course	3	1	Selective	English
Chinese American	Content course	3	1	Selective	Chinese and English

*Note.* \*Observed classes. \*\* Chinese was used among the first cohort.

Although students were encouraged to speak Chinese, teachers sometimes resorted to English to facilitate their teaching in the dominantly Chinese-medium classes. In Nichole’s third-year language class, the teacher switched to English when he taught the sentence structure of subjective-verb-objective. In addition, to make the test easier for

the students, part of the final exam of this class was in English. For instance, the questions for reading comprehension were true or false questions written in English; students could choose either English or Chinese to explain the meanings of given idioms. Collins reported in his Chinese history class, when they were taking a test, the teacher would first read through the test in Chinese and then read some of the questions in English if they were complex and had many new characters.

For similar reasons, many literary and content courses were taught in English. Many of those classes were designed by the Chinese Department at MSU for FL learners with a lower level Chinese proficiency. For instance, Classical Chinese was also offered to Japanese and Korean majors to whom a Chinese language class was not a prerequisite. The textbook of Classical Chinese was in Chinese. In each class, students were asked to read out and then translate a passage of the text into English with the teacher's help. In the Classical Chinese class I observed, many students did not speak fluent Chinese and their pronunciation was sometimes unintelligible, but since it was not the emphasis of the class, the teacher did not spend too much time in correction. Reading out the passage was the only part that students were required to speak Chinese in class. Teaching and discussions were all carried out in English except that the teacher occasionally used Chinese to explain the meaning of a word. For the Chinese religion class, the whole course was to learn the well-known philosophical work, *Tao Te Ching* by Laozi. Students did not need to know Chinese at all and they read the book and its interpretations all in English.

When asked how the choice of language of instruction affected their learning, study participants stated they could understand whether the teacher spoke Chinese or

English. Nevertheless, Linda said if the teacher used Chinese, she would learn more words, especially some special terms. For example, in a Chinese literature class, she picked up the word 比喻 (metaphor) when the teacher used it. As it will be discussed later in Chapter 7, these students usually did not like to memorize vocabulary, so if teachers used more Chinese language in class the students would receive more exposure to new words.

In addition to learning new vocabulary, some students expressed their preference for using Chinese to explain the meaning of Chinese words and the underlying cultural and philosophical concepts. Nichole reported she liked her teacher to describe a new word in Chinese because she felt there was no proper English definition for some Chinese characters and students were able to use more Chinese in this way. Linda suggested students would have a better understanding of the text if Classical Chinese were taught in Chinese. In my observation of the Classical Chinese class Ann and Collins were in, the teacher also acknowledged the difficulty to translate some characters or phrases into grammatically correct English without losing some meaning. Although the religion class was taught in English, because at the time Linda was enrolled in a CF writing practice class, which was usually bound with a content course, she was required to write her papers of the religion class in Chinese. To finish her writing class requirements, Linda turned to the original Chinese version of *Tao Te Ching* and read different interpretations in both Chinese and English. She believed it would save her time from going back and forth between languages if the class were taught in Chinese. Moreover, by comparing the original text and the interpretations written by Americans, Linda felt the American

interpretations were not often faithful to the text but rather resonated with the beliefs valued by Americans.

Other students also enjoyed the immersive Chinese learning environment. Collins affirmed when the teacher used more Chinese, he felt more immersed in the language and it made it easier for him to think, talk, and write in Chinese. Gloria reported she was not used to lecturing in Chinese before entering the CF program, but she reaped the benefits of Chinese-medium classes soon. Those classes taken in the CF program at MSU prepared her linguistically for the classes she later took in China. After an adequate preparation, she even considered the classes taken in China were easier than those taken in the U.S.

Even though these students favored the immersive learning environment, some found certain courses much more difficult when they were taught in Chinese. Gloria remembered her Chinese linguistics class was the hardest class of all her CF classes. She recalled:

比如讲韵尾啊，韵母啊，讲很专业的话，我根本都不会。而且她给我们那个课本是用中文写的，然后用中文讲linguistics。我连英语都不会linguistics，用中文讲更烦 (laughs) 更复杂。可是当时就是每一周大概要读40、50几页linguistics。其实40几页50几页也还行啦，可是讲linguistics的话，这么专业的一个题目就比较难。我当时的中文水平也特别糟糕，所以当时就花好长时间，大概2、3个小时，然后就提前先预备好，可是还是大多数不一定会念得懂。

(For example, [when the teacher] talked about syllable coda, final, those very specialized [terms], I knew nothing at all. And her textbook was in Chinese and [she] taught linguistics in Chinese. I didn't even know linguistics in English and using Chinese to teach was more vexing (laugh) and complicated. But at the time [we] needed to read 40 to 50 pages of linguistics each week. In fact, it was fine [to read] 40 to 50 pages, but it was quite difficult for such a specialized topic like linguistics. My Chinese was very bad back then, so [I] spent a lot of time, about 2 or 3 hours, in preparing for the class, but [I] might still not understand most of it.)

Gloria's Chinese might not be so bad as she claimed. The class must have been very difficult to other students in her cohort as well, because the CF program later changed the language of instruction of the class and no Chinese prerequisites were even required. Fortunately for Gloria, the teacher gave clear instructions and would slow down if students did not understand.

The pace of another content course, Chinese history, however, seemed not so suitable—at least to Ann. Hence, Ann believed it was not a good idea to teach the class in Chinese. Her class covered Chinese history from the first dynasty to the last in one semester. Ann elaborated how teaching in Chinese was not helpful:

First of all, ...you can't teach that much history in a semester for a country like China with such a rich cultural history. And second of all, the whole time she was speaking in Chinese. It took me a couple of weeks to get used to her accent. And then it took me a long time to even just comprehend what she was saying.

Considering the Chinese listening and reading abilities of the study participants, either English or Chinese was fine for them as the language of instruction. Some factors

such as the course content, the pace, and the language variety used by the teacher might incline students toward English as the language of instruction. In spite of those concerns, these students appreciated the Chinese-speaking environment offered in the CF program. Linda said after she graduated from the CF program, she did not take any more Chinese classes due to the schedule conflicts. She almost had no chance to speak Chinese now except for basic conversations with her parents and she felt her Chinese was declining.

### *Making Chinese Study Relevant*

In the design of its teaching modules, Flagship underscores the importance of a content-based model to train a wide range of workforce with high-level language proficiency. In the 2010 Language Flagship annual report, it is said what makes Flagship different is its content-based approach that “[p]rovides language learning opportunities for students of all majors to master the language of their specific disciplines or fields” (p. 2). For CHLLs in this study, building up vocabulary outside home domain was one of their tasks. As Ann mentioned, “my language abilities are very much confined to the home.” Through the program’s content-based approach, the students had a chance to expand their vocabulary beyond the limited topics covered at home.

What is more important was that some students reported the content-based approach made learning Chinese exceed the limit of a simple language class. When I asked Ann to describe her experience in a linguistics class she took, she thought a while but could not recall what she had learned specifically. Instead she said:

I liked that class. I don’t know, it seems like it would be very boring syntax and grammar functions and things like that, but it’s so tied to the history of the language and also the fluidity of the language and the development of the

language and also a lot of comparisons between Chinese and English as a language. ... I think as a literature major, maybe I was just very interested in the way that language shapes the way that we think. It just seemed very relevant, everything that we were learning and trying to understand. I don't really know how to describe it, but I just thought it was fascinating I guess.

This quote suggests what made Ann enjoy the class was that she found the connection between this class and her literature major. Although it was a class of linguistics, for Ann, the course covered more than just rules of a language. It brought Ann to see the ecology of languages in which languages formed, evolved and interacted with each other. Moreover, it reminded Ann of the role of language in influencing its speakers. Ann gave an example of how she connected the theory she learned in her literature major with this linguistics class.

[Teacher] would encourage us to think possible exceptions to the [copula] rule and really the whole point of it was that there is no way that you can systematically describe or categorize a language... and a lot of the work that we did was deconstructing these boundaries and these labels that we had got in these words. That was appealing to me because my freshman year I had taken a social theory course and a lot of the work that was done in the poststructuralist and structuralist movement of the social theory comes directly from linguistics with de Saussure. Then you deconstruct the language and you deconstruct meaning and then you move on and you deconstruct the text and then you deconstruct concepts, like gender and race. That was fascinating to me when I was a freshman and it still is. And I loved that. I did feel like during that class I was able to combine a

lot, the different threads that I have been pursuing in my academic education and kinda see how they fit together and how they're connected.

The practice of breaking down the rules of language allowed Ann to revisit her earlier training in poststructuralism. The linguistics course served to expand her knowledge in the topic she was interested in. In this way, Chinese study was no longer just learning a language, but became part of their overall academic pursuit. In addition, the poststructuralist approach to understanding language and other social constructs enabled Ann to see languages and identities beyond the fixed boundaries and apply this approach to her own identification and language use. This point will be further discussed in the language ideology (Chapter 6) and identity formation (Chapter 8) chapters.

Nevertheless, making Chinese study relevant to the students' academic and future career pursuit was not always achievable. The CF program at MSU was unable to develop substantive collaboration among different disciplines to teach students their specific fields in the target language. The content of courses was limited to language classes, literary classes that focused on literature, classical or modern, and other content courses available from the Chinese department at MSU (see Table 7). Even with exposure to Chinese literature in the CF program, when asked how the language training might help their career development, Yvonne critiqued: “可是我们学的这些中文都是很口语化的，没有特别，like specific to a certain major。要是让我说经济的一些词，我可能什么都不会。” (But the Chinese we learned is very conversational, not like specific to a certain major. If I were asked to say some terms in economics, I might know nothing.)



While it was difficult for the MSU to develop specialized classes for CF students, the CHLLs found the study abroad section provided them an opportunity to use Chinese in their academic fields. According to the program requirements, all students needed to take not only language classes but also classes of their major. Despite her criticism of the study abroad experience, in one entry of her weekly report, Linda wrote:

禮拜一晚上的文化產業是我最感興趣的課。雖然[老師]講話不是很積極可是他講的內容十分有趣。他前兩個禮拜為我們解釋文化商品和文化產業包括那些東西。我沒想到有些最基本的東西都算文化產品，只要在內(sic)國製造的東西都屬於文化產品。...上他課的時候才覺得真的有學到東西。

(The cultural industry [class] on Monday nights is the class I am most interested in. Although [the teacher] does not talk a lot but his content is very interesting. In the past two weeks, he explained what cultural products and cultural industry referred to. I did not realize some basic things were cultural products. The things made in a country are all its cultural products. ... I really learned something from his class.)

Majoring in economics, Linda audited several classes offered by the business school at the Chinese university before she decided to take the cultural industry class. In her weekly reports of her economics classes, she often summarized the key points of the class, pointed out the new things she learned, and gave her critiques. These reports reflected what Flagship expected its students to obtain from their training: “to master the language of their specific disciplines or fields” (Language Flagship, 2010, p. 2). The vocabulary used in these reports went beyond the basic and conversational expressions

and many economics terms were applied, such as 文化产业 (cultural industry), 链式反应 (chain reaction), 劣等品 (inferior good), 关联效应 (linkage effect), 离岸外包 (offshoring), and 贸易壁垒 (trade barrier). What Linda acquired through the class was more than knowing dozens of economics terms in Chinese—it offered her a new perspective to understand her prior knowledge. In her interview, she further talked about the things she learned from the class:

文化产业那时候就比较特别，就是他们会讲到中国文化如何保持保留，然后把它怎么做成发展成一个产业。然后他们也有讨论说美国的文化产业是怎么做的。我其实也没有想过我们有多少的文化产业。我就发觉像好莱坞电影啊这种东西，美国做的非常成功的这种文化产业，也包括像我们的社区服务，我们这个一种文化的，已经算一种文化产业。

(The cultural industry [class] was special. They talked about how to maintain Chinese culture and how to develop it into an industry. And they also discussed about how American cultural industry was developed. I had never thought about how much cultural industry we had. I realized Hollywood movies were a very successful American cultural industry, and our culture of community service was also a kind of cultural industry.)

Like Ann livened up her Chinese linguistics class with connecting it to the social and linguistic theories she knew, Linda reflected on her knowledge about American culture and applied the new learning to analyze the previously observed phenomenon. A foreign experience turned into a familiar situation via a comparative lens.

Not every class in China, however, resulted in meaningful learning for Linda. Linda realized the differences between Chinese and American teaching styles affected her learning. In an entry of her weekly reports for the international economy class, she wrote about her confusion on preparing in-class presentation:

在美國，老師會很清楚的(sic)表明他的要求並且寫出一個教學大綱。在中國，上課的時候都要隨著老師的，很隨便。長期處在美國的教育環境之下，我已經習慣了美國的方式而面對著相差這麼大的中國教育[方式]，我感到不舒服。

(In the U.S., teacher will lay down his requirements and write a course syllabus. In China, the class is up to the teacher, very arbitrary. Growing up in the American educational environment, I have been used to the American style and feel uncomfortable about the contrasting Chinese educational [style].)

After all, the specialized courses offered in the Chinese university were not specifically designed for American students. Facing the confusion about teacher's requirements and questions about the content, Linda emailed the teacher, stopped by his office and hoped to set up a time to discuss about all her concerns. To Linda's disappointment, the teacher did not reply her emails. She could hardly find a chance to interact with him after class. Even when Linda told the teacher she would miss one week's class and hoped to have a makeup session, the teacher told her it was unnecessary.

Whether the teaching approach suited Linda or not, Linda was able to take classes in her field. For Gloria, the classes she took were not so related to her major. Gloria wanted to take some courses on intercultural communication. When the CF program

coordinator at MSU communicated with the coordinator in China, Gloria's intention was not clearly passed on and she was placed in the school of journalism. Gloria did not want to get them into trouble so she said nothing. She ended up taking courses on media studies. She found the classes interesting, but they were remotely related to her major.

A quick review of the domestic and overseas classes taken by participants indicates on the one hand the CHLLs took advantage of the content-based instruction to have a meaningful learning that was no longer confined to knowing more words and correct grammar, but brought out students' reflection on how the content they learned in Chinese or about Chinese language could build onto the knowledge base they had developed before entering the program; on the other hand the diverse disciplines of the CF students made it a challenge for the program to accommodate students' needs. The participants' stories show that the students had to make the best of it on their own.

*Conflicts Between Results-Based Design, Local Program Implementation, and CHLLs' Expectations*

Flagship put the professional-level proficiency of its students as an emphasis of its training. It claimed to be a results- and standards-based program that “[t]eaches languages at a level of intensity that ensures achieving professional proficiency by the end of the program” and “[h]olds teachers and students accountable for progress and requires proficiency testing for all graduates” (Language Flagship, 2010, p. 2). The CF program at MSU used two kinds of proficiency tests to evaluate its students' proficiency: Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK, Chinese Proficiency Test) and Mandarin Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). The former is a standardized Chinese proficiency exam administered by Hanban, a non-governmental organization affiliated with the Ministry of Education of

China. The test is designed with different difficulty levels for non-native speakers including foreign learners and domestic ethnic minorities. Administered in simplified Chinese, the written test used to consist of listening, grammar, reading and writing segments. The written test format has been changed to three segments of listening, reading, and writing since 2012 and the ranking has six levels now instead of the original 11 levels. Although the HSK also has an oral test now, the CF students are only asked to take the OPI. The Mandarin OPI is a live 20-30-minute phone interview administered through the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The ranking of OPI has four major levels: Superior, Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice; except for Superior level, all other three levels include three sub-levels respectively and there are 10 levels in total.

The CF students needed to take both HSK and OPI tests prior to studying in China as well as after finishing the overseas study in order to monitor their progress. They had to at least reach the Advanced level to be accepted to the overseas study and the Flagship's goal was to train them to achieve the Superior level (professional-level proficiency) by the end of the overseas study. To prepare students for the tests and overseas experience, the CF program at MSU offered a yearlong preparation course. The course description posted on the MSU website said the course was to improve learners' reading, speaking, listening, and writing skills to a professional-level literacy. The course objective stated in the class syllabus indicated the class was rather literature-oriented and aimed at improving students' reading skills through an extensive reading of modern Chinese literature.

During the time of my observation, except for some grammatical tips and oral presentations, the teacher spent more than fifty percent of the time in lecturing the interpretations of the assigned novels or articles. Ann, who was in the class, found the mismatch between the original objective of the course and the actual practices rather frustrating. She pointed out in an interview:

This is supposed to be the preparation class. We're all pretty frustrated with this class. It's supposed to be the preparation class to take us to [the overseas center]. ...It's the last class of Chinese most people take and it's only for Flagship students... So when we take things like the OPI, we're really, it's really very difficult because we don't have any chance to practice on that class.

Although Ann had a Chinese language background, aced both third-year and fourth-year Chinese classes, and received intensive language training in China for a summer, she still felt a further training in sentence structures and vocabulary use was necessary for this last class of Chinese. The following quote shows that the alleged preparation class offered to CF students did not meet Ann's language learning needs.

It's because the focus of [the Chinese literature] class is very different, but I think at the level we are in, we still need that kind of language structure help, but I don't feel like we get that at all in class. Literature class is important, but then, you know, when I write essays, it's hard for me to try to fit with thoughts that I have into Chinese sentences. And that's what I think I was much better at that when I was in [the fourth-year Chinese] class, because I have been used to think in that way.

However, since the preparation course was a required class, Ann had no other choice but continued enrolling in the class. She expressed her frustration over the situation:

[The Chinese literature class] has become a burden to me, one of those things I just have to do that I count *down* the days that I'm done with it and then I'll just be done with it. And I won't have any good memories of it and I won't think it's useful to me at all. Honestly, I still am, and you can tell, very angry that I wasted this much time.

With such an attitude toward the class, Ann chose only to put a minimal effort into the class. She stated:

I'm not gonna do this [homework] once in a while. That's OK with me. I'll take whatever grade you give me. You're the teacher. You have the say for that. I *choose*, you know, I choose if I want to get an A in this class and B in this class, or B in this class and A in this class.

Unfortunately, this brought a negative impact on her attitude toward the Chinese learning as well. In her second and third interviews, she indicated she had changed her original plan on creative writing about her parents and their life in China.<sup>5</sup> Instead, she shifted her focus on to a project that aligned with the knowledge she learned in her English literature major.

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<sup>5</sup> I talked with Ann after the study and learned that after this class she went to China in the summer again for the follow-up project she originally did with a scholarship one year ago. She regained her interest in Chinese language and culture after the trip.

Now I discuss other classes taken by the research participants and the relationship of these classes to the proficiency gauge used by the Flagship program. As mentioned in the background of the CF program, the CF program was a partnership between the federal government and a higher education institute, which meant most of the available classes were offered through the Departments of Chinese or Asian Studies of the host university. In other words, the courses may or may not line up with the proficiency priority of the Flagship. As shown in Table 7, only two classes were designed specifically for the CF students: Chinese writing practice and Chinese literature. All other classes attracted students all over the university. This resulted in a varied language proficiency of the student body. The English-medium instruction was usually used to compensate the difference.

Take the Classical Chinese class as an example. Although the class was taught in English, the texts used in the class were in unpunctuated traditional Chinese. According to a teacher from the Department of Chinese, there were only a handful of Chinese departments in American universities used unpunctuated texts in class. This practice further increased the difficulty of the teaching and learning of a language that was normally not used in daily conversation. Yvonne stated the meaning of the words were so hard that she felt like learning a foreign language and she had to put more effort in it. Ann suggested learning Classical Chinese helped her with modern Chinese, but it was like learning another language and she had to learn double the vocabulary that she usually learned in a week. In addition, Linda reported in her class, the teacher particularly required their English translation should rather conform to the original Chinese text than to the proper English grammar. As someone who had a two-year Chinese to English TV



drama translation experience, Linda often cringed at her English translation of the Classical Chinese text. Nonetheless, to score a better grade, she had to do her assignment according to teacher's requirements.

Among the research participants, only Gloria and Linda had finished the full-year overseas study and taken two rounds of proficiency tests by the time of the study. Both of them scored in the Advanced High range (one level lower than the targeted Superior level) in the Mandarin OPI test by the end of the overseas study. As to the HSK test, Gloria was tested under the old system and reached Level Eight (the highest level of the Elementary/Intermediate test), while Linda took the new test and passed the highest level, Level Six. When they were asked how they felt about the tests, both of them claimed that while the HSK test was not too difficult for them, they found the topics discussed in the OPI test caught them off guard. During the OPI test, the test rater usually started with easy questions for the test takers to warm up. Based on interviewees' language capacity, the rater would increase the difficulty of questions and topics. Gloria claimed sometimes their questions became too specialized to answer. In one of Gloria's OPI test, she was asked about her thoughts on the effect of green movement on carcinogens in China. Gloria admitted that she could not even talk about this topic in English let alone in Chinese. When I asked if she encountered the topics with such a difficulty in class, Gloria told me in class they were encouraged to choose the topics based on their own interest. As a communication major, her interests lay in Chinese history and culture. Although many different topics were covered in the CF classes, the potential topics that could be discussed in the test were even broader so it was impossible for her to prepare for the test. Linda expressed a similar complaint about the extensive coverage of the topics. Majoring

in economics, Linda found herself more articulate in the field of China's economy than the social impact of genetically modified food, a topic discussed in one of her OPI tests. She was upset that the ranking of her second OPI test remained the same, because she felt an improvement in speaking after one year of study and internship in China.

Notwithstanding her dissatisfaction, Linda felt her unimproved test result was more of a problem for the CF program than for her. She indicated that as long as she finished the test, the result would not affect her graduation from the program. In comparison, she said in an interview: “他们[领航项目]希望统计数字看起来大家进步很好啊, 所以它以后可以招人来啊。那我的成绩...从平均数字来看根本就是没变的。”(They [the Flagship] hope the statistics show everyone has an improvement so that it will help the recruitment. But the average of my scores is unchanged.) Linda's speculation had some reasonable grounds. In 2011, four out of 11 CF students achieved the Superior level in the OPI test, the targeted level set by the Flagship, and in 2013, 15 out of 42 CF students achieved this level, both of which were lower than the average rate of Superior-level achievers of the overall Flagship programs (44% in 2011 and 48% in 2013) (Language Flagship, 2011 & 2014).

The intention to improve students' proficiency became one of the reasons that the CF program was going to open a new Chinese overseas center in 2014. In one of the observed Chinese literature classes, the teacher told students who were going to apply for the full-year overseas study that in a recent CF staff meeting, she was informed the new center would reduce the internship to part-time and focus more on academic and language study. After the teacher released this news, it was like throwing a rock into quiet water. Students immediately shot a series of questions at the teacher. Ann was one

of these students. One of Ann's motivations to participate in the CF program was to know more about modern life in China. What she concerned was whether she would have time and opportunity to go outside of the classroom and experience different aspects of China. A full-time internship (six months) would give her a better chance to find a job that was aligned with her interests and passion. She was eager to know if she was allowed to choose the overseas center she wanted. Facing students' concerns, the teacher could not give a definite answer because everything was not finalized. What she knew was although students might choose to apply for either the new center or the original one with full-time internship, the final decision was made by the program staff who would evaluate students' language abilities to anticipate if they might reach the Superior level by the end of the overseas section. This change strengthened the impact of the OPI test that not only determined whether the students were qualified to apply for the overseas study but also influenced what type of the overseas experience they might have. Ann told me if she could not go to the original center, she might search for other overseas study opportunities that lined up with her goals.

This section presented the differences between the standards of the Flagship, the objectives of the courses, and the expectations of the students. The purposes of the CF program demanded the CF students graduated with high proficiency in Chinese. The standardized language tests were required to assess students' progress. Since many courses were offered by the Chinese Department at the host university, these courses were not designed based on the criteria held by the CF program. For some students, the inconsistency between what they were taught and how they were evaluated brought unnecessary frustration and discouraged their learning.

### *Unfulfilled with Passive Learning*

Previous sections discussed the classes offered in the CF program. It is worth noting that since the choices of Chinese classes were limited, the students often made their selection not based on interest but on the program requirement and class availability. Linda recalled the program director used to recommend what classes she should take each semester and she took the classes accordingly. She concluded: “其实就是规定要什么我就去做了什么。没有要的就也没做。” (In fact it's like what it was required to do and I just did it. If not required, I did not do.)

In my observation of the Chinese literature class, students often quietly listened to teacher's lecturing. In one lesson, the teacher taught a chapter of a Chinese novella:

Teacher Liu played the PowerPoint slides of *The True Story of Ah Q* to the class. Students looked at the projection screen silently. Teacher Liu leaned on the teacher's desk and started to review the chapters they had covered in previous classes. The slides showed a summary of the plot, the structure of the novel, and illustrations of the main characters. Students listened to the teacher and watched at the slides, but no one took notes. After about 20 minutes of review, Teacher Liu moved on to the new chapter. She asked students to turn to the page 52 of the book and asked one student after another to read the text. Teacher Liu corrected the students when they mispronounced a character. Students slowed down when they came to a character they did not know and the teacher would tell them how to read it. Both Yvonne and Ann looked sleepy while listening to other students' reading and waiting for their turn. Yvonne rested her head on her hands with her eyes half-closed. Ann bobbed her head occasionally. After one round of the text

reading, Teacher Liu read the text herself. In the course of reading, she picked out some difficult characters or phrases such as 寄存, 不以为然 to explain their meanings. She did not stop to ask if students had any questions. At the same time, students showed no intention to interrupt.

When Teacher Liu reached to the text talking about nepotism, she told a story of her recent encounter with a friend as an example of nepotism. One student giggled but others blankly looked at the teacher. The teacher continued to read the text. Ann wrote down some notes on the textbook as the teacher talked about the historical background that the book was based on. Teacher Liu asked a question about the content of the story. No one replied immediately. The teacher repeated the question and asked the students if they were able to answer it. After around half a minute, Yvonne broke the silence and gave her answer. Teacher Liu repeated Yvonne's answer and continues to read the text. (Field notes, March 6, 2013)

The lack of interaction between teacher and students or among students was typical in this observed course. When I asked the participants how they thought about the class, Yvonne said there were many times that she was the only one who replied the teacher's questions and sometimes she would wait to make sure no other students would answer. Yvonne believed the difficulty of the texts they were reading might be one reason of the inactivity of her classmates. For example, some texts were in traditional characters and some used a vocabulary of Chinese dialects that were new to the students. Moreover, the level of Chinese spoken by the teacher was higher than that used in the language courses. Linda, who took this literature class earlier, thought that was why her

classmates appeared inactive: “我觉得大部分人是真的要用心在那边听中文，真的很费脑力，所以他们有时候过了差不多5到10分钟就呆在那就听着老师在台上[讲]。” (I think most people had to listen with great effort [to understand] the Chinese, which was really painstaking, so after 5 to 10 minutes they just blankly listened to teacher talking.)

Difficulty of the class was not the only reason of inactivity reported by the participants. Students also critiqued the way of teaching and the relationship between teaching and learning in class. Different from the language classes that focused on building up vocabulary and learning sentence structures, the literature class spent more time on reading comprehension. While the students confirmed they enjoyed the reading, they did not feel much room was left for them to contribute to the class. Ann admitted sometimes she was not very attentive in the class and she explained why she was not responsive in class:

I don't respond well to the way that [the teacher] stands and talks to us and uses a tone of voice that seems like she is making the assumption that she knows and we don't, and that she's passing knowledge to us, that it's one directional. ... [The class] is completely passive. You just kinda sit there and you listen. Or if you're asked to do something then you do something.

Yvonne, who was in the same class with Ann, expressed resistance to the inculcation of “knowledge” and disputed the validity of the learning experience:

I don't know if [the teacher] realizes this or not, but I feel like it would be better if more students said what they thought as opposed to she telling us what to think.

Because if she's just telling us what to think, I don't feel we're really learning anything in a way.

For the same reason, students felt discontented regarding the homework and tests of some of their Chinese classes. When talking about her experience in the Classical Chinese class, Yvonne said:

I feel like the main thing I had against [the Classical Chinese teacher] was that for her test. ...It's basically a passage and we memorize everything that she tells us what it means. We memorize it and we have to write it out on the test. I feel like that's not learning! That's just memorizing! So no actual thought involved with it.

Linda claimed other students in her Chinese literature class more or less struggled with the class, but she found the class easy. She was happy about the easiness of the class. However, at the same time, she agreed the class did not involve much thought.

[刘老师] 的课，英文标准的busy work。我并不觉得她的课程难，一点都不难。我最喜欢做她的功课，因为只是不用用大脑在想。我很喜欢她的功课，因为我做完的时候就很有成就感，因为我完成了功课，可是其实我真的有没有用到什么脑筋还是什么很有成就感的成就感，没有，完全没有。  
([Teacher Liu's] class, typical busy work. I don't feel her class is difficult, not difficult at all. I like to do her homework, just because [I] don't need to think with my brain. I like her homework very much, because I feel a sense of accomplishment when I finish it, for I have done the homework, but I do not really use my brain, or have a sense of accomplishment of real achievement, no, absolutely not.)

Although not every Chinese class was taught with an approach of memorization or instillation, participants' comments on their Chinese classes indicated they were unfulfilled with this experience when their learning was confined to teacher transmitting knowledge to them. These critiques were not mere complaints but indicated students' agentive role in language acquisition. Students expressed their desire to be challenged in their Chinese class as they did in the courses of their other major(s). Ann voiced her strong objection to receiving the "dumbed down" version of the Chinese education.

I think in general what I've been noticing, especially in the past maybe a month or so, is that these lesson plans or the way that Chinese is taught would be according to your Chinese level, so maybe I have the Chinese level of a 7th grader, but it doesn't mean I have the intelligence of a 7th grader. I'm a 20-year-old college student, but so many times I feel like the kind of worksheets that they give or the kind of topics that they bring up, even though I know the main idea is to learn the language, but to give us like this article that's so obviously simplified, and like if you're trying to talk about a serious issue, but it's something that you would find in a 6th grader's workbook or something. That's insulting to my intelligence. I hate that! I hate being talked to like I'm 12. I hate, I mean, I just think that there're needs to be this realization.

This quote suggests for these CHLLs, learning Chinese was not just a study of the language skills. The students desired the content was taught according to their intellectual abilities. They asked for in-depth discussion instead of a cursory glance.

Those participants who had a higher level of Chinese proficiency found the curriculum sometimes could not give them what they needed to further improve their



language. Linda pointed out: “It’s much easier to go from like ‘you know nothing and then let’s go step by step, let me hold your hand,’ than ‘Oh, no, where are you? We’re trying to find you, and then trying filling the gaps.’” As a result, Linda felt sometimes she did not learn from the class as much as her non-heritage classmates did. Moreover, since these learners were not often challenged by the classes and their assignments, they did not need to put in too much effort to receive a good grade. For Yvonne, this was a problem.

我觉得可能给这些heritage speaker一点打击也会是好事，因为让我们意识到自己的中文其实不怎么好，让我们看到我们还有很多可以进步的。这可能是好事。

(I think it may be a good thing to goad these heritage speakers, because it will let us realize our Chinese is not very good and let us see we can still improve. This may be a good thing.)

When these students were not given room to exert their agentive role in learning in the class, some of them chose just to “put the necessary but don’t go beyond,” as Yvonne put it, while others struggled and were discouraged which resulted in shifting their focus and giving even less efforts. For example, Collins reported although they had a textbook in his Chinese history class, he never used it. Instead, he only read through teacher’s PowerPoint to prepare for quizzes and exams, because this was all he needed to do to pass the class. It is worth to mention that for some participants, Chinese class was only one domain to maintain their language. Despite the limited input in class, some of them actively practiced Chinese outside the classroom, which will be discussed in Chapter 7.

## De Facto Language Policymaking of CHLLs

Previous sections have set out the learning environment in the CF program and how students made use of the resources to learn Chinese. As the students utilized the program to maintain their heritage language, their language practices were deployed in different social contexts. This section will discuss how these CHLLs made their language choices in those contexts. At the step of writing proposals, I envisioned these CHLLs would be more comfortable speaking English with me. This assumption was partly based on my experience with some second-generation Chinese American youth who did not take Chinese classes in college and tended to speak English to their parents and to each other. Even when Chinese was used, their limited proficiency often resulted in the conversation switching back to English. For this reason, as I first approached three of my participants, I introduced myself to them in English. However, they all replied in Chinese: “我们可以讲中文。(We could speak Chinese.)” Then we switched to Chinese.

### *Relationship Building and Language Use*

Because of this experience, in the later contact with these and other participants, I used Chinese with them. As mentioned in Chapter 4, during the process of data collection, when I walked and chatted with Ann and Yvonne after my classroom observation, Yvonne always spoke Chinese to me but switched to English as she turned to Ann. Noticing Yvonne’s shift, I started to use English as well, but Yvonne kept speaking Chinese to me. To understand their choices of languages, in the interview with her and others, I asked what languages they used in different occasions and with different people. All participants reported they spoke mostly Chinese in class when the class was taught in Chinese. After class, they usually used English with their classmates unless they

did Chinese homework together. But even when they were studying Chinese, the use of Chinese was brief, such as asking what a word or sentence meant or how to write something in Chinese.

It was a different story when it came to their Chinese teachers who were ethnic Chinese. All of them reported they almost only spoke Chinese with their teachers during class and in private. Spolsky (2007, 2009) borrows Joshua Fishman's concept of domain and suggests each domain, characterized by its participants, location, and topic, has its own language policy. He further explains it is participants' social roles and relationships that represent them in a domain. Similarly, it is "the social meaning and interpretation of the location that is most pertinent to language choice" (Spolsky, 2009, p. 3) In this case, as students, these CHLLs had to follow the language use rule of the classroom to speak Chinese with teachers and classmates, but after class, the change of location made them no longer need to keep the norms of using Chinese with each other. With their Chinese teachers, however, the physical change of location did not affect the teacher-student relationship, which influenced CHLLs' language choices.

When asked how they made their language choices, the answers of the students indicated their decisions reflected their relationship with others in different domains. Most students chose to speak English with their Chinese American friends because they were first introduced to each other in English. Using Chinese with them would be "strange," "假惺惺 (insincere)," "在非正常情况下 (under unnatural conditions)." In contrast, some of them chose to only speak Chinese to non-American-born Chinese because they felt "weird," "不对劲 (wrong)" not to do so. Yvonne explained her Chinese-only family language policy made her develop a habit of only speaking Chinese

to Chinese elders. In the Chinese school that Yvonne worked as a teaching assistant, she followed the same language choice with Chinese teachers because a lot of those teachers used to teach her and were longtime family friends. On the one hand, the CHLLs' feelings attached to using certain language with certain people to some extent reflected an ideology of one-language-one-people—what feels “normal” is to speak with those born in China in Chinese, with those born or grown up in U.S. in English.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, Spolsky (2009) explained this kind of language choice as the inertia condition: “[O]nce we start speaking to someone in a certain language, it is easier and more natural to continue using the same language, and it may be uncomfortable to switch” (p. 15). In other words, once a relationship is established in one language, it becomes difficult to change the language (Cunningham-Andersson, 1999). Linda remembered an uncomfortable attempt to switch to Chinese with her Chinese American roommate and longtime friend.

连我跟她在那时候说宿舍里面9点之后要讲中文，[都觉得]好奇怪，真的身体就好像痒痒不对...我们[就]有一次，只发生一天的时间。

(Even when she and I decided to speak Chinese in the dorm after 9 o'clock, [it felt] really weird, like the body was itchy and not right ... We [tried only] once, only one day.)

That relationship is built up through language practices helps to explain even when these CHLLs had an improvement in Chinese proficiency after the CF program, their language use outside the classroom was not necessarily changed, except for the

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<sup>6</sup> This point will be further discussed in Chapter 6 on language ideology.

situations that they built up new relationship through Chinese. Nichole reported after she started the CF program, she took the initiative to talk Chinese to international Chinese students in her class and they would help each other with their questions about the class. Similarly, refusing to use a language is a choice to avoid establishing a relationship. Linda said in one of her major classes, there were several Chinese students sitting behind her and she could sometimes overhear their conversations. She pretended she did not understand them. Once, she heard these students misunderstood teacher's explanation of a concept, but she said nothing. Linda added if she was asked she would help, but she would not initiate it. She explained this choice was due to her previous experience with a former Chinese classmate.

他是有帮我改一下中文作业啦，就语法啊什么之类的，可是最后是变成说，我在帮他写他英文作文。我再也不要干这种事了。我干过一次，我再也不做了。所以我是有点远离，因为我怕说我又会成为[被要求]“你帮我写功课好不好，拜托”的一个人。

(He did help me with my Chinese homework, like grammar, but at last it turned out that I was writing English essays for him. I won't do that any more. I've done once; I won't do it again. So I got away, because I am afraid I will again become a person that [is asked to] "help me with my homework, please.")

In an article on language choice in parent-child communication, Pavlenko (2004) notes although the prevailing advice given to bilingual parents is to decide the home language before the child is born in order to establish a relationship in that language, the mothers in her study could not follow their original language choice to establish a

relationship with their child in their second language. Consequently, Pavlenko argues to understand the language choice from a perspective of emotions. Heritage learners' emotional connection to a language is usually discussed in terms of language ideology, which will be elaborated in Chapter 6. Here the focus is put on how the factor of emotions affected students' language use. In spite of the "inertia condition" adopted by the CHLLs, Yvonne occasionally resorted to Chinese as she talked to her Chinese American friends.

Sometimes when I'm making fun of [my friend], I'll speak in Chinese. ... I just feel like it's much easier in Chinese to 撒娇 (sweet talk). When I need to 撒娇 (sweet talk), I use Chinese.

Considering Yvonne was growing up in a Chinese-only household, the affective resources for her were more likely to be provided by her parents in Chinese. The Chinese terms of endearment, therefore, "linked to autobiographic memories, appear to elicit higher levels of positive arousal and mental imagery, perceived by the speakers as the feelings of tenderness, intimacy, sincerity, spontaneity and 'wholesomeness'" (Pavlenko, 2004, p. 192). As a result, it is not surprising that to express her emotion of endearment, Yvonne chose Chinese instead of English, even though when she was asked which language she preferred to be interviewed in for this study, she claimed she could better express herself in English.

Yvonne's choice of Chinese for endearment was also related to which topic was under discussion, the third component in Fishman's notion of domain. Spolsky (2009) points out this component not only includes what is appropriate to talk about in a certain domain, but also indicates communicative function, i.e., what is the reason for speaking

or writing (p. 3). In Yvonne's case, to express affection in a personal and informal situation, Yvonne chose Chinese, whereas she chose to speak English when it came to a more formal situation, for instance, being interviewed and recorded for a CHLL study by a Chinese researcher who spoke English as a second language. Another example of the relationship between topic and language choice is the CHLLs' use of "kitchen Chinese." Yvonne reported she had never "really had a full up Chinese conversation" with her Chinese American roommate, but if they were in the kitchen, she would use some simple Chinese phrases, such as "把刀递给我吧" (pass me the knife), "吃吗?" ([do you want to eat it?]).

### *Proficiency and Language Use*

One of the reasons that some participants chose English over Chinese in conversations with their parents and Chinese American friends was related to their and their friends' Chinese language proficiency. Ann reported that after learning Chinese again in college, she tried to use more Chinese at home. Her plan was not smoothly followed through as she would lose patience and switch back to English when she could not come up with the right Chinese words. While CHLLs' actual vocabulary capacity sets a limit for their language choice, recognition of inadequacy in one's linguistic proficiency complicates the issue of language policy making (Spolsky, 2009). In the interviews, participants were asked to define proficiency, evaluate their own proficiency, and reflect on the program's and the teachers' definitions on proficiency. For the CHLLs, proficiency meant many different things, for example, writing versus speaking proficiency, and academic or professional versus daily communication proficiency. Most participants defined a proficient speaker as someone who could communicate with

Chinese people with ease but did not have to be able to talk about highly specialized topics or read official Chinese documents. Based on this criterion, they considered themselves as a proficient speaker.

With regard to the program's and the teachers' definitions, the CHLLs believed those definitions were different from those of the learners. Gloria said:

我想Flagship的话，可能他们会用OPI的那种的或者HSK那种level这样去做定义。可是我觉得在这一方面，就是因为我作为一个学生嘛，然后中文不是我母语这种背景，对我们来说，我的感想不一样嘛。他们作为老师作为教授，就是中文是他母语的话，对他们来说，他们的那种定义会不一样的。

(I think the Flagship, they will probably define [the proficiency] with the level used by OPI or HSK. But I think in terms of this subject, as a student whose mother tongue is not Chinese, for us, I feel differently. For those teachers and professors whose mother tongue is Chinese, their definition is different.)

This research did not collect formal interview data from teachers, but the data from observation and student interviews confirmed a discrepancy of expectations mentioned by Gloria. Collins pointed out teachers evaluated the “official skills,” such as “incorporate mannerism of speech similar to natives,” “express themselves without grammatical errors.” An informal conversation with a CF teacher about a FL learner in the observed class supported Collin's reflection. The teacher strongly criticized the learner's Chinese speech mannerism and tone, which mimicked a Chinese-speaking Canadian TV personality in China. She was disappointed the learner did not follow her



corrective efforts. Linda reported during her one-on-one tutoring with this teacher, the teacher often made corrections of her Taiwanese accent, although Linda covertly doubted about the necessity of the correction. These incidents suggest that teacher's expectations and requirements were associated with language standardization and standardized language assessment. An ideology that prefers standardized language to dialects treats language variants as a problem requiring correction, whether the variants are non-native or vernacular.

Sometimes learning and speaking Chinese became a reminder of the CHLLs' inadequacy in the language, which discouraged them from further using Chinese. In class, some CHLLs were afraid to make mistakes and did not speak, especially when they felt embarrassed that as heritage learners they had to learn Chinese as a foreign language. Linda reported one of her friends quit the CF program because he could not overcome the pressure that "he should be better because he is Chinese." All participants admitted at the beginning of their CF study that they were worried their Chinese would not be good enough and some of them turned to their parents or grandparents to double-check their homework. In the group interview, Ann recalled that Yvonne felt so intimidated when the latter started her first Chinese class:

[Yvonne] was so worried that she was not gonna know anything. I told her that she was gonna be better than all of us and she didn't believe me. She took one of my [Chinese] textbook and she was like "Do you know all of these words? There are six words here I don't know!" I was like: "God, Yvonne!"

Yvonne, who also attended the group interview, acknowledged her fear and attributed it to her skipping directly to a higher level Chinese class. Her fears were alleviated after a while when she found the class was not so heavily writing-laden as she expected.

A confirmation of insufficiency also came from the CHLLs' everyday interaction with native Chinese speakers, which resulted in their lack of confidence in their Chinese. Even though Ann occasionally spoke Chinese with her mother now, she was reluctant to use Chinese with her father because of the fear of being corrected. Ann said: "Of course I'm going to make mistakes and of course he'll correct me in the interest of helping me learn Chinese." Even though she understood it was good for her learning, she did not want to "feel like in school" when she was hanging out with her parents. Furthermore, CHLLs' language choice needed to be understood in the context of the power dynamics among the speakers. Ann continued her reasoning of English as the language of choice with her father:

Also speaking to him in Chinese always puts me at a disadvantage if we get into an argument, 'cause I can't express myself in Chinese the same that I could in English. The minute that we start speaking Chinese and we have an argument, then it's like he has 62 years of Chinese speaking language and I have the Chinese language ability of a 7<sup>th</sup> grader, so all of a sudden, he only has to argue against a 7<sup>th</sup> grader. I'm not gonna do that. So we speak English because it's more even playing field.

This quote illustrates how language served as a medium for the negotiation of power at home. In Ann's interaction with her father, Ann's implicit policy of choosing English over Chinese elevated English as her language of power. It is important to note while this

policy was made at the private domain, the policymaking process resided in the broader social context in which the predominant language ideology granted English a higher status than HLs.

### Bilingualism in Practice

This section reviewed how the CHLLs made their language choices in and outside of the CF program. The findings indicate the language use of the CHLLs was dynamic and their choice was often based on the relationship they had with the interlocutor, the place the conversation took place, the topic under discussion, and speakers' language proficiency.

Finally, allow me to reiterate: There was nothing short of complexity in the CHLLs' language use, even when they were not very confident about their Chinese abilities because of the evaluation from native Chinese speakers and the assessment of standardized proficiency tests. Code switching did not necessarily mean lack of proficiency in one language. On the contrary, the CHLLs sometimes intentionally alternated between languages to express their understanding of the nature of language. The following excerpt from a Facebook conversation between Gloria and her non-Chinese-heritage friend suggests Gloria made her language choices based on the language ideology she held.

Friend (F): I'm blaming this on you. Tonight I'm at a networking event, and I basically am talking in Gloria-speak the entire night, because it's Shanghai and like 1/3 of the people are English speakers and the other 2/3 are native Chinese speakers. I'm not sure I managed a whole sentence without using some English +

Chinese combination. This is what you've done to me. It has become this normal thing in my head now to not speak one language at a time.

Gloria (G): Language? What is that? I advocate transitioning the world into pidgin languages. everwharrrr [sic].

F: It would really be more fun if every sentence was a crazy mish-mash.

G: [I] agree on mashed up sentences. They're too fun to pass up.

Growing up with learning and speaking English, Chinese and Arabic, Gloria practiced “not speaking one language at a time” in her daily language use at home. The lines between different languages became blurry. Exposure to English-only environment after entering high school made this multilingual practice more difficult to maintain.

However, when Gloria had the chance to communicate with other bilingual speakers, she was not hesitant to put on her “talking in Gloria-speak.” Throughout our interviews and as shown in many of her quotes, Gloria was quite flexible with switching between English and Chinese no matter which language the conversation started in. The conversation between Gloria and her friend shows Gloria did not see language switching and mixing as deficiency and limitation, but rather it was a choice she made to take advantage of her multilingualism and enjoy the fun of creatively using more than one language to express her ideas and emotions.

### Chapter Summary

This chapter demonstrated language policy-making in the context of the CF program was multilayered. As the students responded to the program's rules and regulations, they produced their own norms of language use inside and outside of the classroom. The findings were presented in two parts. The first part of the chapter

identified de jure policies adopted by the program and showed how the students negotiated various language-learning environments, constraints, and possibilities. The chapter presented the findings regarding the reasons the CHLLs chose to study in the CF program; how they took advantage of the immersive language learning experience and how their learning was restricted in the program. The CHLLs in the CF program had to follow the procedures set up by the program to complete the program. As a result, the CHLLs did not have much leeway to make changes in the way Chinese was taught in class. What they could take charge of was how they made sense of this learning experience. By connecting the preexisting knowledge to what was learned in the Chinese classes, the learners were provoked to engage more in the learning. Meanwhile, the learners were discouraged to learn or only made basic effort when the class did not fulfill their needs and became a burden. The second part of the chapter examined the de facto policymaking process of the CHLLs. The findings presented that the students created their implicit language policies through their interaction with others in different domains. Depending on whom they were talking to, where they were talking at, and what they were talking about, the students chose what language(s) they should use. Although their language proficiency was also a factor in their language choice, switching between two languages also reflected students' beliefs about the nature and functions of language. In other words, speaker's language ideology plays a role in one's language policymaking. The next chapter will discuss this role of language ideology in the context of CHLLs' language maintenance practice.

## CHAPTER 6

### LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES OF CHLLS

The previous chapter answered my first research question on the de facto language policymaking process of the CHLLs. This chapter turns to discussing the language ideologies reflected in these de facto language policies. The findings revolve around the CHLLs' perceptions of the role of Chinese language in their daily life, and focus on (1) what sets of beliefs about the Chinese language the CHLLs brought into the class and (2) how the language ideologies adopted in the CF program and prevalent in the U.S. society affected the CHLLs' language study.

#### Chinese Language and Familial Relationships

When the participants were asked what the role of Chinese language played in their life, many of them emphasized the emotional connection and relationship building through their language use and learning. The participants reported one of the primary reasons why their parents sent them to weekend Chinese school was to learn the language so that they could communicate with their Chinese-speaking grandparents and other relatives. While all of the participants were taught Chinese in Chinese school or at home, not all of them stuck to this practice as they grew up. Those who drifted away from Chinese learning and using when they were young expressed a feeling of shame for inadequacy in Chinese. Even with her improvement in Chinese speaking, Nichole still felt embarrassed when she talked with her relatives in China.

Nichole (N): 有时候我跟[亲戚]说我有丢脸。现在[我觉得]丢脸,但是以前没有那么丢脸。现在丢脸,因为我已经20多岁了,但是描写一些想说的

事情困难，对我有点困难。小时候他们觉着我很可爱，现在嘛没有那么可爱了。

Interviewer (I): 怎么会?

N: 就是因为我可以，我用英文可以讨论像政府的事情，可以讨论像污染的事情，但是用中文就不行...[我说话]有一点像个小孩，但是我不是个小孩。

(N: Sometimes I told [my relatives] I felt losing face. Now [I feel] losing face, but not so losing-face before. It's losing face now because I am over 20 years old, but it is difficult for me to describe some things. When I was young, they thought I was cute, but not so cute now.

I: How come?

N: Like because I can, I can talk about issues like government, pollution in English, but I can't in Chinese... [I talk] somewhat like a kid, but I'm not a kid.)

Nichole used “丢脸,” the origin of the loan English phrase “lose face” to express her embarrassment at her limited Chinese skills. Her expression of shame echoed the studies of Native American youth who were linguistically insecure about their ability in their Native language (Lee, 2013; McCarty & Zepeda, 2010). The shame was not a shame of the language but came from the inability to speak Chinese in accordance with her age.

Chapter 5 discussed how the sense of inadequacy impacted the language choice of the CHLLs. This example shows how lack of ability impacted their feelings of belonging and closeness to their family and community. Ann found her resistance to weekend Chinese school not only resulted in her language attrition but also alienated her from her family.

I think it must have hurt [my parents] very much when I was younger and I really pulled away from [learning Chinese and Chinese culture]. Because it is who they are. It's where they come from.

She later added:

I wanted to have conversations with my relatives without having to resort to hand signals and awkward silences because my Chinese wasn't good enough. I wanted to feel a stronger sense of belonging in my own family. I didn't want to be mute at the dinner table, partially understanding their stories, but unable to share my own.

Ann's statement underscores the importance of Chinese linguistic competence for both Ann and her family. Ann's limited language skills were like a wall that silenced Ann's voice from participating in substantial conversations with the Chinese-only speakers in her family and obstructed her to understand the culture that her parents grew up in. Ann reported the frustration caused by the miscommunication was a stimulus to continue her Chinese study in college.

Since most of the CHLLs' family in this study still has strong connection to their relatives in China who do not speak English, Chinese is the only language that the CHLLs can communicate with their relatives. Linda's following description of her visit to her grandparents' home in Taiwan demonstrates that knowing Chinese not only helps to build up a good intergenerational relationship but also induces a sense of achievement.

我爷爷很开心，因为我讲中文时我都是这样“哇！”(Linda 做出兴奋的表情)

我们家庭就比较安静，所以我爷爷看到我都会一直笑，一直笑，然后都觉得说“哈哈，你看这个小丑来了！哈哈。”所以我爸觉得这方面很好，因



为我每次回去[台湾],我爷爷都会很开心。所以我爸在这方面,学中文他觉得我这边很成功啦这方面。

(My grandpa is very happy because when I speak Chinese I am like “Wow!”  
(Linda made a face of excitement) Our family is somewhat quiet, so when my grandpa sees me he will keep laughing and say, “Ha-ha, look, the clown is here! Ha-ha.” So my father thinks this is good, because every time I go back [to Taiwan], my grandpa will be very happy. So my father thinks I am very successful in terms of learning Chinese.)

This quote shows the dynamic among Linda, her father, and her grandfather, as she talked Chinese at home. While speaking Chinese brought about joy to her grandfather and a sense of satisfaction to her father, it also gave Linda a sense of fulfillment. Linda’s story about watching a Chinese-language variety show with her parents highlights what knowing Chinese means to the CHLLs.

我那时候好像在中文学校刚学到的成语。[节目主持人]把它用了,反应就是不同,不搭嘎的意思。我就觉得好好笑。那时候我就觉得好棒啊,我听得懂,我终于听得懂,我可以跟着一起笑。那所以我觉得好有成就感啊!我终于达到这一点了!我可以跟我爸妈朋友一起笑。

(At that time I just learned an idiom in Chinese school. [The show host] used it in an unusual way. I found it so funny. At that time, I felt so great; I could understand, I could finally understand. I could laugh with [them]. I felt a strong sense of achievement! I could finally do this! I could laugh with my parents and their friends.)

Even though it seemed as small as understanding a pun, being able to enjoy the fun and laugh with her parents became so rewarding for Linda. It brought Linda closer to her parents.

Watching Chinese-language TV shows with parents is one of the experiences many CHLLs shared. Yvonne recalled when she watched historical dramas with her parents, she would ask her parents questions and her parents would tell her what happened to themselves, their parents and friends at that time period. Yvonne believed watching these Chinese dramas with her parents helped her get more knowledge of the modern Chinese history and what her parents' generation had lived through.

Whether it was watching TV shows with parents or informal conversations with relatives, the linguistic practices provided the CHLLs a better knowledge of the cultural connotations embedded in the language and fostered a feeling of closeness as the language was used. In turn, the feelings attached to the Chinese language affected the CHLLs' language choice. Both Linda and Yvonne stated they preferred to speak Chinese with people from China because it was more “亲切 (intimate).” As mentioned in Chapter 5, the CHLLs used Chinese to express affection and endearment. Moreover, most of the participants reported they also used Chinese as a secret language with their Chinese-speaking parents and friends.

This section has reported that the CHLLs viewed learning and speaking Chinese as a way to strengthen the intergenerational bond and even bring happiness to the family. As Nichole commented in one of her interviews, language “could connect people, but it could also separate people.” Lack of the language ability sometimes leads to a feeling of guilt and regret, because it hinders the CHLLs to understand their family members both

linguistically and culturally. Learning Chinese became a way for these students to rekindle the connection to their family and the culture their family came from. However, it is important to point out that although knowing Chinese facilitates the CHLLs to (re)connect to their Chinese heritage, Chinese is not the only language used for them to learn about China or to build up their own identity. For example, Collins claimed in his interviews that he was interested in keeping track of what happened in China currently, but he often resorted to English websites, including those with English-translated Chinese news and those originally written in English. There will be more discussion on the relation between language and cultural transmission later in this chapter and on the identity construction of the CHLLs in Chapter 8.

#### Language Aesthetics

Previous studies on immigrant and Indigenous communities suggest the heritage and Indigenous language speakers value their language for aesthetic reasons (Hornberger, 1988; King, 2000). The CHLLs in this study expressed similar appreciation for the beauty of the Chinese language. Ann found its beauty when she wrote Chinese characters.

I like writing because reading it is very different from writing it. When you write it you have to really be aware of every stroke. I think I can see the beauty of it more too. I like writing 繁体字 (traditional Chinese). I like how complicated it is. I like how balanced it is.

Ann showed me the notebook of her Classical Chinese class. On the left side of a page were neatly written the new vocabulary of each lesson in traditional Chinese and on the right side were the pinyin and definitions of these words. She acknowledged that she

might not always read the textbook, but she made sure to practice writing the newly learned Chinese characters because of the enjoyment she had from writing the characters stroke by stroke.

Nichole expressed her recognition of the Chinese language's beauty through an analogy between writing an essay and drawing a picture: “我觉着语言有时候就像画一个很好的画。每一个句子是个brush stroke，但是你写完了那个作文，就是一个美丽的画。” (I think sometimes language is like a well-painted picture. Each sentence is a brush stroke. When you finish the essay, it becomes a beautiful picture.) This analogy represents Linda's early experience with Chinese pop music. As she diverted her attention from the rhythm and read into the lyrics of the Chinese songs she was listening to, Linda was amazed by how the words she knew could be woven together to articulate the rich subtleties of emotions. Linda believed that it was the beauty of the language that nurtured a sentimental attachment to the Chinese language and encouraged her to continue the pursuit of Chinese study.

The CHLLs' passion for Chinese language exceeded a pure aesthetic admiration of the language. In the process of studying Chinese, the CHLLs also learned the history and culture behind the language. In one of the interviews with Nichole, she talked about the nuances she acquired from learning the structure of Chinese characters.

Like the word “卖”和“买”, you know, to sell is to 卖 and on that word you have the little cross on the top. My mom was telling me about how that was a cultural thing because when they used to sell people in China, they put like a little stick in

their hair. I just thought that was SO cool! I was fired up about the languages and the culture!

This quote suggests that for the CHLLs, learning a character was more than memorizing strokes and stroke orders. It opened a door for these students to learn the histories and stories of Chinese people.

Gloria saw the richness of Chinese language as she compared the Classic Chinese literature and English literature.

我觉得英文is very rigid sometimes。你知道Shakespeare他写的那个诗大多数是他自己编出来的字。原本就没有那个字。To me that means so much, because it's like if you have a language that doesn't have these words, then how much flexibility do you have to create beautiful poetry or beautiful prose or anything like that? So 对我来说, 中文就 it's really a beautiful language, and I think for me it's rich, full of historical culture and all these things and when you read stuff like 红楼梦 or you read stuff like 三国演义, all those things, it's so much, so much knowledge and things that everybody I feel like has to learn but they can't because they don't read Chinese! I think it's so sad.

(I think English is very rigid sometimes. You know, Shakespeare made up many words in his poems. Those words did not exist originally. To me that means so much, because it's like if you have a language that doesn't have these words, then how much flexibility do you have to create beautiful poetry or beautiful prose or anything like that? So to me, Chinese, it's really a beautiful language, and I think for me it's rich, full of historical culture and all these things and when you read

stuff like *Dream of the Red Chamber* or you read stuff like *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, all those things, it's so much, so much knowledge and things that everybody I feel like has to learn but they can't because they don't read Chinese! I think it's so sad.)

While it is arguable whether Chinese language is more flexible than English, Gloria's comment demonstrates her high opinion of Chinese language in comparison with English, the dominant language of the American society. Gloria granted the Chinese language a superior status in terms of its artistic value displayed through Chinese literature. This language pride that Gloria held was connected to her passion towards the Chinese classics, a legacy that she believed was not limited to people with Chinese heritage but for everybody who could read Chinese—therefore, not knowing Chinese became a loss.

King (2000) suggests language provides an emotional link to the past. The following quote from Gloria presents a sense of continuity with the past achieved through using Chinese language.

我小时候学像很多不同的诗，就像唐朝那时候那些诗。小时候念的时候就不觉得怎么样。就会看我奶奶一边念，一边哭，然后就“Pssh, what?! What's going on?”可是后来长大了以后，就像念木兰辞或者其他的像这种的诗，感觉说它里面的那个含义真的很深，就有好几层的layers of meanings。自己念就会感觉到当时的人所经历的东西。

(When I was young I learned many poems, like poems written during the Tang dynasty. When I read them as a child I did not feel much. [I] saw my grandma

crying while reading, and [I was like] “Pssh, what?! What’s going on?” But after I grew up, [when I] read poems like *Ballad of Mulan*, I felt they had really deep meanings, they had many layers of meanings. I could feel the things that people at the time experienced.)

Gloria’s account shows the emotional link was built up through years of Chinese learning and using. Moreover, this link is not only about connecting to the ancestors; in Gloria’s case, it is also about understanding her own grandma and what made her cry when reading those poems. Sharing the language made this link possible.

Tsui and Tollefson (2007) state “[l]anguage is not a purely technical tool; it is a cultural artifact created within specific sociocultural and historical contexts, and thus carries the characteristics of these contexts” (p. 2) Whether the connection to Chinese language was rooted in establishing a closer relationship with family members or in retrieving a linkage to ancestors, learning Chinese reflected the CHLLs’ desire to understand their heritage in its sociolinguistic contexts. It is this desire that urged some CHLLs to choose Chinese over English as they studied Chinese history and literature. For example, both Linda and Yvonne believed Classical Chinese course should be taught in Chinese. They felt “a lot of meaning can’t be translated into English.” Moreover, when the text was taught in English, sometimes it was interpreted out of its sociocultural context and understood with modern American worldviews and attitudes. Another example of the relationship between language learning and development of cultural understanding is Yvonne’s interpretation of the concept of “老乡” (fellow townspeople). Among the many articles and books she learned in the Chinese literature class, Yvonne thought one article about a mailman was particularly relatable because it represented how

the concept of “老乡” played out in Chinese culture. There is a saying in Chinese that “老乡见老乡，两眼泪汪汪” (When a townie encounters a fellow townie, eyes are filled with tears). An implication of this saying is that as people from the same hometown meet each other in a foreign place, there is an automatic, family-like bond between the two because of their origin. Realizing an absence of such a word in English and such a concept in American culture, Yvonne found the word “老乡” was very close to describe her relationship with her Chinese American friends. While the original meaning of “老乡” emphasized people sharing the same hometown, Yvonne added the shared cultural origin and influence to the word to apply to her case.

#### Chinese as a Foreign Language

In his influential article, “Orientations in Language Planning,” Richard Ruiz (1984) outlines three approaches to the disposition toward the role of language in society: language-as-problem, language-as-right, and language-as-resource. In this framework, a language-as-resource orientation stresses the benefits of language diversity and therefore is often adopted in the discourse of promoting multilingualism and non-English language education in the U.S. While the language-as-resource model is a good starting point for promoting heritage language education, as Ricento (2005) pointed out in his article, “Problems with the ‘language-as-resource’ discourse in the promotion of heritage languages in the U.S.A.,” the model is not without concerns. Through reviewing the language policy planning history in the U.S. and analyzing the texts used in the heritage language movement, Ricento argues language-as-resource is often tied to the state-driven agendas that prioritize the U.S. military and economic interests. While this metaphor



“does not ascribe lower status to heritage languages, it does little in terms of recognition of intrinsic non-quantifiable resources associated with languages, including psychological, cultural, affiliational, aesthetic, and historical aspects, among others” (Ricento, 2005, p. 362).

Ricento’s argument is quite relevant to the discussion of the Chinese language status in the U.S. As a language defined as critical to the economic competitiveness and national security, Chinese has become a language in need, which results in the promotion of Chinese language education in the U.S. At the establishment of Language Flagship, fulfilling the national security demand was clearly underlined in the purpose of the program. Its 2010 annual report states:

The Language Flagship, an initiative of the National Security Education Program, aims to produce U.S. citizens for the broader U.S. national security and foreign affairs workforce that are linguistically and culturally competent in world regions, languages, and skills who are critical to the success of the United States. The Language Flagship strives to graduate students that will become future contributors to and employees of the Department of Defense and the broader national security community. (p. 1)

The above excerpt indicates contributing to the economic, political, and military success of the U.S. should be the mission of training multilingual personnel. This position on language considers language as an instrument to serve national interests and provide individual benefits through employment opportunities.

The ideology of language as instrument underlying the CF program was acknowledged by the CHLLs in this study. As most of the CHLLs in this study started the

CF program, they saw the increasing importance of China and were attracted to the notion that learning Chinese might burst their career development. Collins observed an expansion of Chinese language education in the U.S. schools and a demand for Chinese speakers in government.

My [high] school started offering Chinese as well and then a lot of the government positions are looking for Chinese, like the ROTC program with Flagship, and then also I think if you want to work with United Nations or some other groups, they want to see foreign language as well.

Linda originally saw the potential of speaking Chinese for her future career considering she majored in economics and business.

就觉得学中文起来，有可能以后我做生意的话，会非常有好处，就会对我很好。

[I] felt learning Chinese might be, if I would do business in the future, very beneficial, would be very good for me.

Nichole recognized the crucial role that China played in the global economy and knowing Chinese might mean exposing herself to a bigger job market.

I personally think that Chinese is very important worldwide and in America. I think that because the world is becoming more global and economy's becoming more global, China is just starting to expand a lot, so a lot of small businesses, a lot of places for expanding can happen in China. So learning Chinese is good if you want to do like nonprofit or business or anything that has to do with a global economy.

Although Ann did not learn Chinese to find a job per se, she used to envision knowing Chinese would help her participate in bridging the differences between the United States and China.

I felt like there's this miscommunication between these two countries, not just between official relationship but also just ordinary citizens, but it seemed to me not just in my life, but in everybody's life the relationship between the U.S. and China, or China and the West, is going to be more and more important. And I wanna be part of that. I want to be part of building a better relationship and understanding between these two countries. I thought that I could come from a unique perspective to do that, being a child of Chinese immigrants.

From this language-as-resource perspective, participants' perceptions of Chinese language and its bilingual speakers were aligned with the vision of the Language Flagship program in terms of the role of Chinese language in global economy and international relationship.

In spite of the growth of Chinese language education in the U.S., in their daily practice, the CHLLs did not feel much impact of this growth on Chinese Americans either at a community level or at an individual level. At the community level, all of the CHLLs agreed that promotion of non-English language education was beneficial. For instance, Nichole considered the issue from a cultural awareness perspective.

I guess in the American society, it's, like I said, any second language is really important, because the world is becoming more global and learning a language can help you understand a different culture and then you can kind of, like represent or create awareness or understanding of other cultures. So it's important

to learn a second language, because on a societal level, then you're creating awareness of a different culture when you share your language skills.

However, their experiences suggested a real impact on the Chinese Americans as a community was yet to come. Ann pointed out the development of Chinese language education was still limited to a small circle.

I think it's really early to start seeing any real effects like any kind of social consciousness or collective ideas about Asian Americans or China in general. I think like the Chinese language movement has only been going for a few years and it's mainly in like colleges or high schools, so most people in the generation above us and the generation of us don't have a lot of interaction. Like the fact that a lot of people right now in America are learning Chinese doesn't really affect their lives or their beliefs.

Ann further took the example of Spanish education to criticize the limitation of non-English language education in the U.S.

I think like Spanish, we've been learning Spanish in this country for years and years but I don't think that actually means that as a country we understand Spanish culture any better or we're able to communicate better with people from Latin America or Mexico or any of that. I think the way that is taught in this country is at a very superficial level, two years in high school. That's it.

Here Ann raised the same issue mentioned by Ricento (2005): How can the promotion of non-English language education move beyond the range of academics and affect the societal attitudes towards the non-English languages? When non-English language education is confined to the required language credits in school, speaking a non-English

language will remain foreign and non-standard for the American society and the discussion of multilingualism stays in the clique of scholars.

Regarding to the societal attitudes towards non-English languages and the status of Chinese in the U.S., Gloria made her observation.

I still think that most Americans, 大多数还是觉得 (most people feel) it's like a second language. This is not how I feel, but I feel like society treats Chinese still as a *foreign* language. It's still listed as a foreign language. In that perception I think it's heavily associated with China and because a lot of people feel certain way towards China, they feel that same way with Chinese, which is the language of use. So I still think a lot of people see Chinese as a very foreign language and almost exotic. Like whenever I hear people talk about it, especially like ambassadors or even Obama, he'll talk about Chinese like some, you know, this exotic language, whereas if you hear somebody talks about French or German—sometimes German, or like Spanish or something and they say “Oh, I'm taking French or Spanish,” you think it's very natural that is something that's supposed to occur. When someone says, “I'm taking Chinese,” it sounds like “Oh, I'm so exotic” kinda thing.

The above quote brings up the point that even though there has been a significant increase of Chinese population in the U.S., as many other non-English languages, Chinese language is still considered “foreign and almost exotic” as opposed to a community language spoken by the citizens of the state. Ricento (2005) argues throughout the U.S. history, the American identity “has privileged certain groups (white/European), religions (Protestantism), and languages (English and, to a lesser

degree, European languages) over all others” (p. 350). Consequently, within the nation-state that views languages as nationality markers, it leaves no room for languages like Chinese to be part of the “true” American.

The following quote from Gloria discusses such a prescribed linkage between language and identity.

I think a lot of Americans, and I think it depends a lot of time on the way we talk. Since I don't have a Chinese accent when I speak English, a lot of my friends assume, and this is the question I get a lot. It's always: If China and America were to go to war, whose sides would you be on? I'm like “What?!” They assume if they ask you that question, you would say America, because I'm American. And that's what they assume given that your English is perfect. And that's the funny thing because they always associate the ways you speak English and if you don't speak English well, they're gonna assume you're from the other country and you're gonna stand up for them or whatever and they kinda see it, it's almost black and white, you're either this or you're either that.

“You are what you speak” is the logic behind the assumption of loyalty and language. When one's physical appearance does not fall into the narrow spectrum of “authentic American,” speaking English, the dominant, de facto national language, without an accent is required as a compensation for inclusion in the category of “us.”

In addition, the above quote implies a hostile attitude toward China as a response to the competitive Sino-American relationship and a political ideology that demonizes the Chinese government. As Gloria talked about her understanding of Chinese as a critical

language in the U.S., she discussed the role of Chinese language education played in the discourse of Sino-American relation.

This idea of the critical language comes from like the [U.S.] State Department, so they'll have these programs to send people to [China], like Flagship, so in a sense it's like politically it's important that we learn Chinese. That's what they mean when they say it's a critical language. In a way that says things to people to believe that China is an enemy and then they'll see it as a way like "Oh, I have to learn the enemy's language" kinda thing.

This quote points out the term of critical language carries a connotation of threat and learning a critical language becomes part of a defensive mechanism for the state. From this perspective, promoting minority languages as resource, as Ricento (2005) puts forward, does not emphasize on advancing linguistic diversity but on securing the state's economic and military interests.

Within this language-as-resource paradigm that highlights the strategic function of language education, it is unsurprising that at the individual level, the CHLLs did not see the spread of Chinese language education had much impact on them. Most participants agreed that speaking Chinese did not necessarily open more job opportunities for them. Linda pointed out Chinese proficiency might be something good to put on their resume, but

公司看一看就说：哦，她有努力用功学这个语言。可是并不代表说那个公司用到那个语言。

(A company would look [at the resume] and say: Oh, she put efforts in learning the language. But it does not mean the company will use that language.)

Although Chinese learning, as discussed earlier in this chapter, meant much more than career development for these CHLLs, the influence that the prevailing ideology of language as instrument has on these students' language learning choice should not be neglected. While the parents of these CHLLs used to support their children to learn Chinese by sending them to Chinese school, when these students decided to learn Chinese in college, some of the parents expressed mixed feelings about their children's decision. Linda told me that her mother was surprised why she put so many efforts into learning Chinese.

我妈就觉得我很奇怪为什么会喜欢学中文。她就说：你为什么会对这个这么有兴趣？然后有时候我妈很怕，因为我现在走的路线。就领航项目回来之后，我妈就觉得说我是要去学中文的这一行，这一条路。那我学的是经济系啊，虽然也是可以一起用，可是没有太大的关系。所以我妈就说：你现在到底是走哪一条路？你是想要做中文还是你想要做商？

(My mom feels it strange that I like to learn Chinese. She said: Why are you so interested in this? And sometimes my mother feels scared because of the path I'm taking now. After [I] came back from the Flagship program, my mom felt I would go into a profession of Chinese language, that path. My major is economics. Although they can be used together, they are not greatly related. So my mother said: Which path are you taking after all? Do you want to do Chinese or do business?)

When a non-dominant language is treated as merely an instrument, efforts put in learning the language can only be justified if speaking the language can serve the function of



generating quantifiable benefits, such as job opportunities. This is not to say Linda's mother did not care about other benefits of speaking Chinese. It is to show because of the hegemonic ideologies that place the value of minority languages on the state-driven interests instead of the interests of the communities of linguistic minority, even within the Chinese community, the non-quantifiable benefits are sometimes considered not enough to continue Chinese language education after the learners grasp the basics and are able to have some verbal communication in Chinese. This explains the contradictions that even though most Chinese parents held positive attitudes towards Chinese language, in practice many of them did not put many efforts into teaching the language (Li, 2006b).

As the findings presented in this section suggest, even though Chinese language education has gained currency in the language-as-resource discourse, the status of Chinese as a foreign language stays unchanged in the U.S. In other words, Chinese language is largely viewed as a language spoken elsewhere. For this reason, when Nichole recalled that when she told her parents about her plan to study Chinese in college, this was her father's response:

[我爸爸]觉得我去中国去学[中文]就行了, 不用在这里学, 浪费我的学分。

([My dad] thought I could learn [Chinese] in China, no need to learn it here to waste my academic credits.)

By the same token, when it comes to the discussion of Chinese language use in public domains, as examples shown in this section, it is usually associated with communication with people in China instead of the Chinese communities in the U.S.

Labeled as a language spoken elsewhere, the non-English languages like Chinese need to prove their worth to receive their opportunities for promotion. In 2012, the public

schools in Bibb County, GA, decided to make Chinese education mandatory pre-K through 12th grade. Despite the fact that the Spanish-speaking population dramatically increased in Georgia, for most of the elementary kids, Chinese would be the only foreign language offered. When asked why Spanish was not chosen, the superintendent Romain Dallemand replied:

My wife is a Latina, and so I fully understand. ...But it is important for communities to educate our children for their future, not our past. (Ragusea, 2012)

While in this superintendent's opinion, Chinese was "a language of the future," would it become "a language of our past" one day? In the group interview, Linda had her doubt about the spread of Chinese language education in the U.S.

I think it's the fad. It's the fad to temporary like "Oh, everyone's learning Chinese," but I don't know how long it will last.

Later she added:

不知道它会不会一直流行，就要看中国未来表现吧。(Don't know if it will be always popular, depends on the future performance of China.)

In short, with underlying ideologies that exclude non-English languages from "Americanness" and restrict the promotion of those languages to the purposes of state interests, "[a]lthough there can be some enhancement of minority language status as a secondary effect of promoting them in education to benefit national strategic needs in the military, law enforcement, and trade, the overall effect is likely to be very truncated and have only short-term benefits" (Ricento, 2005, p. 362).

## Language Authority and Authenticity

Chapter 4 introduced the linguistic profiles of the participants. The different linguistic backgrounds of the CHLLs were not considered equal in the classroom or in the Chinese community. Yvonne's parents both came from northern China and spoke Mandarin, but her father has a strong northern accent while her mother speaks Beijing dialect. When Yvonne was younger, she picked up some of her father's accent. Yvonne recalled her grandmother on her mother's side used to say she sounded like a “老外 (foreigner)” because of the accent. After Yvonne started weekend Chinese school, her mother became much stricter about her pronunciation at home and would correct her multiple times each day.

While an accent due to Chinese regional dialects was considered foreign in Yvonne's case, an accent influenced by English was undesirable either. Linda told me what made her proud was when she talked with native Chinese speakers, they would not immediately recognize her as an “ABC,” because her pronunciation “没有那么重的ABC腔调 (did not have a strong ABC accent).” Linda kept watching Chinese TV shows, especially shows made in Taiwan, to ensure her pronunciation was “标准 (standard).”

A strong preference for Standard Mandarin variety was widely adopted in the CF program. In the Chinese-medium language and literature classes, teachers would correct students' pronunciation when students were asked to read excerpts from the text. After class and in the weekly one-hour tutoring time, the CF-assigned tutor would spend most part of the time on pronunciation correction. Comparing to their non-heritage classmates, the CHLLs reported they did not have much trouble with their pronunciation.

Nevertheless, some dialects spoken by the CHLLs at home were considered as a problem in class. Linda, whose parents were originally from Taiwan, said her Taiwanese dialect was often a target of correction by her Chinese teachers who came from Mainland China. She recalled one of her teachers kept correcting her pronunciation.

她 [刘老师] 对我发音，呵呵，她希望我发音比较标准，不要像台湾人一样。我记得有一阵子她一直在想要修正我。

She [Teacher Liu] considered my pronunciation, ha-ha, she hoped my pronunciation was more standard, not sounded like Taiwanese. I remember for a while she kept trying to correct me.

This quote reflects a standard language ideology adopted by the CF teacher. Lippi-Green (1997) defines standard language ideology as “a bias toward an abstract, idealized homogenous spoken language, which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions and which names as its model the written language, but which is drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper middle class” (p. 64). Linda’s account suggests in the practice of the CF program, Taiwanese Mandarin was considered as a “less adequate” variety that need to be remedied.

Table 8

*Examples of Differences between Taiwanese Mandarin and Standard Mandarin*

Words	Pinyin of Standard Mandarin (Putonghua)	Pinyin of Taiwanese Mandarin	Meaning
企业	qǐ yè	qì yè	Business; enterprise
法国	fǎ guó	fà guó	France
垃圾	lā jī	lè sè	Trash

Linda exemplified some words that her Taiwanese Mandarin variant was different from the Standard Mandarin (Putonghua) taught in class (See Table 8). Linda explained although the variations of some pronunciations were widely accepted, such as the two different pronunciations of 垃圾, some were not. When Linda and Teacher Liu had their one-on-one reading session, her pronunciation of 企业 was repeatedly corrected. Despite teachers' reinforcement, Linda did not think her "Taiwanese accent" was a problem.

当然我能理解像那种刚开始学的那些人，如果那个音不对的话，那真的不知道你在讲什么。那可是我觉得这台湾腔有点相当于方言吧，虽然也不是，可是大家也都听得懂，也没有说听不懂我讲的什么话，也不会有什么误会。因为我觉得我基本上的发音都算标准的，只是有些地方有可能离普通话，就是标准的北京话有点距离，可是也还好啊，都听得懂啊。我没有什么问题啊。所以我个人觉得不用改。那当然我如果想要去当中央电视台的主播，那当然就有问题啦，可是我又不是要去当主播，所以随便啦。所以我对那方面是无所谓。

(Of course I can understand for those who just start the learning, if their pronunciation was wrong, it would be hard to understand what they were saying. I think the Taiwanese accent is like a dialect, maybe it's not, but everyone can understand it, no one doesn't understand what I'm saying, no misunderstanding. Because I think on the whole, my pronunciation is standard, maybe still has some gap to Putonghua, the standard Beijing dialect, but it is OK, it's comprehensible. I don't have any problem. So personally I think there's no need to change. Of

course if I were to be an anchorwoman of Chinese Central Television, that would be a problem, but I am not, so it doesn't matter. I don't care about that.)

In this quote, Linda first accepted there was the need for pronunciation correction for beginners, but she made a distinction between regional dialect and foreign accent. While Linda considered her pronunciation had not reached the “ultimate” Standard Mandarin used in the formal domains in China, such as on the state media, she emphasized the communicative function of language in daily use. Since she could be understood, there was no need to change her Taiwanese Mandarin accent.

Nevertheless, given the high status of the Standard Mandarin in the CF program, Linda was subjected to taking up the Standard Mandarin pronunciation. For example, using or not using retroflex consonants (e.g., zh, ch, sh) is a big difference between Standard Mandarin and Taiwanese Mandarin. Linda told me how she was asked to rectify her retroflex consonants.

就像我朗读念诗(shī)的时候，因为我很喜欢说念诗(sī)的时候，[应该说]念诗(shī)的时候，[刘老师]就说：“你这卷舌音要比较重一点。”然后我每次都觉得说我的舌头好忙啊。我就记得她说：“这个音不标准。这也不标准。”这时候她就会圈出这些字。然后她就叫我再回家录音。我每次播放录音给自己听我就觉得好变态啊！别扭！

Like when I recited a poem (shī), because I like to say “recite a poem (sī),” [should say] “recite a poem (shī), [Teacher Liu] would say: “Your retroflex consonants should be stronger.” Every time I felt my tongue was so busy. I remember she said: “This pronunciation is not standard. This one is not standard

either.” Then she would circle these characters. Then she would ask me to record [my reading] at home. Every time I played my recordings to myself I felt so absurd! So awkward!

When Standard Mandarin was given the status of language authority, Linda’s dialect usage was illegitimated by her teacher. What Linda believed standard and normal in the language variation used at home was labeled as non-standard and incorrect in school. Linda expressed her reluctance to change her pronunciation and doing so made her feel uncomfortable and unnatural. She concluded the corrective practice “应该是有稍稍一点影响吧，可是最终应该是去除不了台湾的这个腔调。(should have some impact, but it could not remove the Taiwanese accent at last.)”

Ironically, the aim of standard pronunciation that Linda believed was out of her reach was not even achieved by the teacher who reinforced the pronunciation correction. From my classroom observations, in fact, Teacher Liu herself sometimes confused the retroflex consonants (e.g., zh, ch, sh) with alveolar consonants (e.g. z, c, s) in class, which was common among people from southern China. Teacher Liu’s persistence of pronunciation correction in spite of her own accent is analogous to the ELT teachers’ idealized notion of their own spoken language discussed in Tollefson’s (2007) study. Tollefson points out the deletion of the auxiliary *have*, for example, is typical in the informal speech of many speakers of Standard English. Yet most ELT teachers insist their students produce the full or contracted form, although many of the teachers themselves no longer produce the form in many contexts. As an imagined, idealized construct, the Standard Mandarin variety is set as the sole standard in school in which the illusion of a

uniform target language is imposed and strengthened (Tollefson, 2007). However, Linda's story suggests the imposed ideology was not accepted without resistance.

It is worth noting that the language variety used in class does not always hold a higher status than the one used by students at home. When this situation happens, students gain more flexibility in deciding what language variety to use in class. All the Chinese-medium classes in the CF program use simplified Chinese characters. Students are only required to write simplified Chinese characters. Because of Linda's family background, she had been studying and using traditional Chinese since weekend Chinese school. When Linda started the CF program, she was not accustomed the simplified writing system and did not know many characters in their simplified counterparts. She gradually learned more and more simplified characters, but she persisted in writing in traditional Chinese. Her teachers asked why Linda did not use simplified Chinese. Linda told them she was more familiar with traditional Chinese and she did not want to mix up the two systems so she insisted on using the traditional form. Her teachers allowed Linda to keep writing in traditional Chinese.

When Linda studied in China, some of her teachers did not know traditional Chinese, so Linda had to submit her homework in simplified Chinese. Nevertheless, she still wrote in traditional Chinese.

我打字的时候我一定都会用繁体字，因为我看着比较顺。我知道转换成简体字有些字简体就把它统统都放成到一个字里面。就是像面包的“面”，你们是跟脸的“面”是一样，我们不是，我们是分两个字。所以我就喜欢有一个繁体字版本。我就觉得，我这是最原始中文那种感觉。如果我要真



的再交简体报告，我就control A把它copy进去，然后进Google把它转换成简体字。

(When I type, I must use traditional Chinese, because it's smoother for me. I know when some characters were simplified, they were put together into one character. Like the “面” in bread, yours is the same as the “面” in face, but ours is different; we have two characters. So I like to have a version in traditional Chinese. I feel mine has the feeling of the most original Chinese. If I need to hand in a report in simplified Chinese, I will use “Control A” to copy it into Google and convert it into simplified Chinese.)

While Linda told her teachers the reason why she used traditional Chinese was that she was not familiar with the simplified system, the above quote suggests the ideological reason behind her choice: Traditional Chinese was viewed as “the most original Chinese.”

Although simplified Chinese is currently used in Mainland China, its invention and promotion started as late as in the 1950s. The debate on the supremacy between the traditional and simplified Chinese systems is still an ongoing debate among Chinese character users in Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, and oversea Chinese-speaking communities imbued with political ideology and social identity (Kwan-Terry & Luke, 1997; Zhou, 2008). An attitude survey of Chinese immigrants and international students in the U.S. in Wiley et al. (2008) suggests respondents with Taiwan or Hong Kong origin showed a strong loyalty to the traditional Chinese system. Growing up in a Taiwanese American household, Linda's comment above reflects some of the arguments that traditional writing system proponents hold, one of which is that the simplified

Chinese has merged many characters into one and caused ambiguity (Fei & Xu, 2005). Viewing traditional Chinese as a more authentic writing system encouraged Linda to insist on using it in and out of class. Even though the CF teachers with Mainland China origin might not agree traditional Chinese was a better writing system, the competing status of traditional Chinese in the overseas Chinese community validated its use in school. As a result, different from Linda's speaking variant, her use of traditional Chinese was not prone to correction.

#### Language Maintenance and Transmission

Many studies on intergenerational language transmission focus on the attitudes and practices of the native Chinese-speaking parents (e.g., Li, 2006b; Wang, 2004; Zhang, 2009). Instead, this study explored the Chinese learners' perspectives of this issue and how their perceptions were related to these learners' language use. When the CHLLs were asked whether they would teach Chinese language to their offspring, their answers were anything but simple. Despite the fact that none of the participants had children yet, the CHLLs had discussed about this question with each other. Yvonne said:

I've talked to Ann about that, I've talked to Pam about that, I've talked to other Chinese people about that, like what language are you going to speak to your children. I don't know, because for me if I see a Chinese baby, it's very natural for me to speak in Chinese.

Some CHLLs agreed with Yvonne that they would raise their children in Chinese. For example, Linda stated:

不管我最后是跟美国人白人还是什么少数民族的人，还是一定要讲中文。

(No matter if I marry Americans, White people or minorities, [my children] must speak Chinese.)

In contrast to Linda's positive answer, some participants believed it was more important to transmit the culture than the language. Collins said:

我觉得最起码的是要尊重自己的文化嘛，可是说学不学这语言那就要看[个人]。

(I think one should at least respect one's culture, but whether to learn the language or not depends on [the person].)

Collins's remarks on cultural transmission suggest he distinguished knowing one's culture from speaking its language. For Collins, language was not considered the essential element of one's heritage identity. Collins's belief was also reflected in his everyday cultural practices. In his interviews, Collins said he watched Chinese TV shows with English subtitles, read English blogs of the American expatriates living in China and visited websites that translated Chinese news and the attached Chinese Internet users' comments into English. Through these activities, Collins believed he was able to keep track of "what happened in China," "what Chinese culture is like," and "why it is different from people in the West." In the search of the meaning of his heritage culture and identity, Collins did not feel using English made any difference except that it saved him time because he read faster in English. While Collins chose English over Chinese based on convenience, it also shows the relationship between language and identity is never straightforward but depends on the individuals.

Going back to the discussion of language transmission. While most of the participants said they would like to teach their children Chinese, some of them thought

whether they would raise their children in Chinese could depend on many issues. Those who were unsure about the language transmission listed the following reasons might affect their choice.

- (1) Self and spouse's Chinese language capacity: e.g., Ann believed her Chinese level was not good enough to teach her future kids;
- (2) Time availability: Nichole speculated if her future job was demanding, she could only put her children in Chinese school to learn the language;
- (3) Location of the residence: Collins pointed out whether there were available Chinese schools nearby would also be a concern;
- (4) Children's interest: In the end, children's own decision needs to be considered. As Nichole put it, "If they don't like Chinese school, I can't do anything about that."

From this list, we see that on the one hand, Chinese school was considered as the resource of Chinese maintenance if these future parents could not commit to or were unable to teach Chinese themselves; on the other hand, if their children did not want to learn Chinese, they would not force their children to learn. This attitude was very likely attributed to the unpleasant Chinese school experience that some of the CHLLs had before (See Chapter 4).

Similar to the three participants who were uncertain about intergenerational language transmission, the other three also had concerns over the Chinese school. When they were asked how they would teach their children Chinese, Yvonne and Linda planned on both Chinese school and teaching at home. However, Linda stressed:

我不会让我孩子再经历那么痛苦的一个中文学校。...要看中文学校是谁办的，办得怎么样。

(I will not let my kids experience such a painful Chinese school. ...Depends on who runs the Chinese school, how it is run.)

Although Gloria never went to Chinese school when she was young, she did not plan to send her future kids to one either.

不是很想把他们带去中文学校，因为我知道就是那种经验很多时候就会让ABC就感觉好像特别恨中文，从这种经验开始的。

(Do not want to send them to Chinese school, because I know that experience, at many times, made ABCs seemingly hate Chinese very much, it was from this experience.)

Instead, Gloria wanted to teach Chinese at home.

我觉得最自然的[学中文方式]就直接谈话嘛。听力这方面是最重要的。你先听得懂话。我记得我小时候先开始学中文的时候是看连续剧看出来的，然后就听我爸妈讲话。反正我也很喜欢看连续剧anyways，所以就一边看连续剧，然后让他们一起看。...我觉得从家里开始教，然后就弄得比较好玩一些，然后不是那种很正式的那种课那种format就比较好。

(I think the most natural [way of learning Chinese] is direct conversation.

Listening is the most important. You need to understand first. I remember when I was young I started learning by watching TV series, and then listening to my parents talking. I love to watch TV series anyways, so watching TV series, and let

them watch together. ...I think starting with teaching at home, and making it interesting, and classes with informal format are better.)

The above shows that Gloria reflected on what interested her to project her plan to teach Chinese to her children. In addition, she emphasized the importance of raising in Chinese instead of teaching in class.

Finally, in spite of the intention of language transmission, the CHLLs said they would not have a high expectation of their children's language proficiency. Linda claimed:

可是我觉得我虽然希望孩子讲中文，我并不会特别希望说他们一定要达到一个程度。能交流，简单对话，我觉得就已经可以了。没有说什么具体特别，11岁之前给我写出一本书，不可能，不会有这种要求。

(But I think although I hope my kids speak Chinese, I don't particularly hope they must reach certain level. Can communicate, simple conversation, I think that's enough. No specific, like writing a book by the age of 11, no way, won't have that requirement.)

Considering that many Chinese families usually set high academic standards for children (which will be discussed in Chapter 8), Linda's comment to some extent resonates with Gloria's vision of "classes with informal format" in the way that the language study should not be like a subject at school that the kids ace. Language maintenance should never become a burden.

### Chapter Summary

This chapter has examined the language ideologies the CHLLs held and the impact of these ideologies on the linguistic practices of these learners. The findings

suggest that Chinese language was valued by the CHLLs as an intimate language used to bond with their instant and extended family, for its linguistic beauty, and for its function as an emotional link to their ancestors. Although for some of these CHLLs, learning the language did not fulfill their original plan of connecting their linguistic asset with their career, they appreciated the chance to maintain their Chinese language in college.

The CHLLs' appreciation of Chinese language education was more than self-development at the individual level. They also recognized the importance of non-English education at a societal level. Nichole stated the power of language in shaping the ways of thinking:

好多人我觉着没有发现语言的力量。因为我们每天用英文，没有人想很多这个语言会干什么，语言可以把你的想法变成这样。像人家说hello，你们说你好， guten tag, hola, bonjour, ko'nichiwa. It's all different. 然后每一个有不同的 body language that goes with it too. Ah, that's really cool.

(I think many people do not realize the power of language. Because we use English everyday, no one thinks much about what the language can do, that language can change your thoughts. Like some people say hello, you say 你好, guten tag, hola, bonjour, ko'nichiwa. It's all different. Then every language has a different body language that goes with it too. Ah, that's really cool.)

Gloria pointed out the danger of monolingualism of a society:

我觉得很多时候[美国人] (I feel sometimes [Americans]) take for granted that they go anywhere in the world, someone's gonna speak their language so they don't make that effort. And then in another sense, it makes you feel like you're

superior to other people because everyone has to learn your language and you don't have to learn theirs. And I think that's very dangerous as a society.

Ann further discussed the necessity of the linguistic and cultural diversity:

To just be around people that are like you, that think like you, that come from similar places as you, but also (pause) like if you only know one way of thinking and one way of being, you're missing out on so much of the beauty of the world. Like I really think that's where, it comes from our differences, like not only our differences as people, but the million different variations of flowers there are, or honeybees, or you know, the way the sky changes every single day. I think that's what's so beautiful about life and also about different cultures too and different languages and that's if even languages are dead or cultures have very few people left we tried so hard to preserve them. There might not be any utility in it—there probably is, but it's just the beauty of having so many different ways of living. I think that's awesome.

These excerpts articulated the values the CHLLs saw of languages and of a multilingual and multicultural society, which transcended the tangible benefits and returns and presented the reality of diverse ways of existence. It was for this reason that the CHLLs in this study believed learning Chinese was “really cool” and “awesome” endeavor.



CHAPTER 7  
STRATEGIES AND PEDAGOGIES TO (RE)ACQUIRE AND MAINTAIN  
MANDARIN

This chapter presents findings for my third research question: What strategies and pedagogies do CHLLs use to (re)acquire and maintain Mandarin? The information presented here was collected through interviews, observations, and writing sample collection. Findings in this section first look at how the CHLLs assessed their advantages and difficulties in Chinese learning, then discuss what strategies the students applied to (re)acquire Chinese and overcome the difficulties they had, and finally reveal how these students built up a community beyond the Chinese classroom to continue their language learning and maintenance.

*Advantages and Difficulties in Chinese Study*

The findings for my first research question mentioned that many participants experienced initial anxiousness when they reacquired their Chinese in college. These CHLLs, however, persisted with their studies in spite of this difficulty. To their surprise, after a short period of insecurity and confusion, they retrieved their knowledge of the language and caught up with the class. Ann recalled that:

When I started I was placed in [third-year Chinese class] and I was so afraid I wanted to move down into second-year even though in like two months it became very obvious that I was at a much higher level than they were at the time, but at the beginning I felt like I couldn't look at any of the words, I couldn't understand. It was so foreign to me. And I think like Collins, when he came into my [fourth-year Chinese] class, I remember he had some problems too with recognizing very

simple words. So it took like maybe a month or so, but then it also became very obvious Collins was at the very top of the class, better than me.

These students attributed their fast improvement to their heritage language background. Nichole stated that learning Chinese was like “revisiting something that we used to do.” It reminded her of her weekend Chinese school experience as well as the knowledge she learned there. Collins said as his non-heritage classmates had trouble to understand some Chinese idioms, he had been not only familiar with those words but also learned the background stories behind these idioms either in Chinese school or from the story books his parents read to him when he was young.

The cultural content of the texts they used in class were another aspect that some CHLLs found easier to understand in comparison to their non-heritage peers. Yvonne realized the difference when the teacher brought Chinese cultural elements into the class.

As non-ABCs or just Americans, they didn't have the Chinese parents to teach them about it. They didn't have the stories of their parents' life to understand more about what we're reading. ... I had more of a cultural understanding because I feel like that book itself wasn't just literature, it was more understanding the time period and like the Chinese 思想 (thoughts) and everything.

With these advantages, Yvonne could focus more of her time on learning new vocabulary and gaining a deeper understanding of the text.

Most participants believed their speaking, especially their pronunciation, was obviously better than their non-heritage classmates. Ann remembered in one of her third-year Chinese class, the teacher asked students to say the word “美国” (America) one by

one, because many of them mispronounced the tones of each character. They spent a long time on this word so that everyone could pronounce it correctly. Ann felt for many CHLLs it would be a waste of time. Most of the participants reported when they were young, they were exposed to Chinese multimedia materials at home, including TV programs, movies, and music. Linda said always having some Chinese-speaking programs playing at home helped her learn the correct pronunciation and not to have a foreign accent.

Their heritage language background also offered CHLLs some knowledge of Chinese linguistic rules. In one of the observed class, Collins was asked to read an excerpt of the text. When he got to the character “割” he did not know the character and mistakenly pronounced it as “害.” The teacher was surprised by Collins’s mistake and explained to the class that there is a general rule: When you don’t know how to read a character, read the radical of the character, because Chinese characters are often composed of phonetic and semantic radicals. Misconceiving “害” as a phonetic radical in “割,” Collins read “割” as “害.” Then the teacher added: “That is very very Chinese. Good!” Collins later told me that being familiar with the language, it was easier for him and his CHLL friends to understand and use these language techniques. Even though these CHLLs sometimes could correctly apply the linguistic rules, they usually did it unconsciously. Ann explained how she used these rules in her language use.

...I mean there are rules in every language. So where originally it had just come from speaking with my parents and listening to it, and it was just amorphous, you

know, what I wrote came out of my mouth. If it sounded right in my mouth, then it was probably right.

While the “intuitive” sense of language could help CHLLs speak and write more like a native speaker, it might not always bring an improvement in Chinese learning. Gloria admitted sometimes she still depended on the context to read characters. She might not know a specific character, but seeing a known character or hearing the sound of a known character next to the unknown character, she could guess what the other character was. When learning Chinese, using this method indeed increased CHLLs’ reading pace, but they missed the motivation to memorize new characters. As a result, many participants considered limited vocabulary as one of their weaknesses. Linda said if she was not given a new vocabulary list, she would not spend extra time in studying characters, because she had no problem finishing her homework without learning the meaning or the strokes of every specific character. It was at the time of the class tests that she realized she missed learning some new words.

In addition, the issue of limited vocabulary was also related to the difference between everyday and academic linguistic registers and proficiencies. As mentioned in Chapter 5, the placement of these CHLLs was mostly based on a short interview with the CF program teacher in Chinese. Due to their proficiency in spoken language, all these learners were placed in the medium to advanced level classes. While it saved some CHLLs from repeating the basics, what was neglected was the fact that the linguistic repertoire that the students brought to the class might be different from what the CF program required. Without studying in novice to intermediate level classes, these CHLLs

missed the chance to build up their vocabulary in the academic domain. Gloria explained her difficulty in vocabulary:

我上本科第一年的时候就开始上中文课，就发现我很多字，比如说“经济”这个词，还有“国际关系”，可能这些最基本的，在大学一定要听懂的词汇根本都不会。因为我小时候学的就是成语呀，历史方面这些东西，然后就是在厨房那种的词都会，可是比如说讲到像经济这些东西，我什么都听不懂。我发现我跟我那些同学在这边就有分。他们都会这些词，因为他们上过中文一年级，然后在大学学的嘛，这些词汇都必须要去背下来。可是我从小到大都没有经验过这种。妈妈，奶奶，爸爸在家里讲中文的时候都不会讲到这一题目。

...像当时我上陈老师的课，一讲到经济方面啊，国际化啊这些东西，我根本就吸收不下来，太快了，就太多那个information根本都吸收不进去。

(I started to take Chinese class when I was in my freshman year of college and I found I did not know many most basic words that should be understood in college, such as “economy” and “international relationship.” Because when I was young, I learned things like Chinese idioms and history, and knew words related to kitchen, but I knew nothing when it came to economy. I realized the difference between my classmates and me in this aspect. They all knew these words because they took first-year Chinese in college, and this vocabulary is required. But I did not have such an experience growing up. My mother, grandma, and father did not talk about this topic in Chinese at home.

...Like when I took Teacher Chen's class, when it came to things like economy, globalization, I could not absorb it at all, too fast, simply too much information to absorb.)

Having most of Chinese language knowledge in the informal home domain, Gloria believed the CHLLs should be reminded of the problem of their confined vocabulary to let them be aware of what vocabulary they were missing so that they could work on it. On the contrary, from her observation of her sister and other CHLLs, Gloria noticed many of them just took the vocabulary for granted and skipped the step of studying vocabulary. In comparison, Gloria said she paid special attention to the key words when she was preparing a presentation or reading a text. Once she identified the key words she would memorize them and eventually these words became part of her vocabulary. Another tip she used to study vocabulary was to learn words in clusters:

For example, you're learning about emperors. Then you have to learn special words about emperor's 过世 versus 去世 versus 逝世, all these things, if you don't pick up these things, the key words, you're missing out, and you're missing the entire lesson.

Gloria concluded that studying vocabulary was crucial. While it took time to go over new words it eventually became natural to her.

Another element in Gloria's story demonstrated that, even when the heritage background provided CHLLs with learning resources, there was a gap between what students learned at home and what was offered in school. At the beginning of her Chinese study in college, the first time Gloria was asked to write an essay with the new vocabulary learned in class, she turned to her grandmother to revise her essay. After her

grandmother read the given vocabulary, she pointed at a word and claimed it was not a real word. Gloria showed her grandmother where the word was used in the textbook and how it was used by her teacher, but her grandmother still denied the existence of the word because she never learned such a word when she was in school. Despite her disapproval of the vocabulary list, Gloria's grandmother helped revise Gloria's essay. What surprised Gloria was that in her teacher's feedback, the teacher pointed out some changes her grandmother made on her essay were wrong. Gloria found it ironic that what she thought should give her an edge over her classmates placed her at a disadvantage. After this incident, Gloria never went to her grandmother for writing help again.

The experience of both Linda and Yvonne echoed Gloria's story. Similar to Gloria, Linda also asked her parents to help her with her Chinese homework at the beginning of her study in college, but with Linda's improvement in Chinese, especially when Linda started to write longer and more complicated essays, she realized her parents could not identify her grammatical errors, because they had not written any formal Chinese essays for a long time. Yvonne told me during her visit to China, based on her accent most Chinese people were unable to tell that she was not from China, but she was told some terms that she learned from her parents were outdated and she did not understand many popular phrases in China at the time. All these elder members of the participants' family had not lived in China for over 20 years. Without either a domain to practice their formal spoken and written Chinese or a domain to immerse in contemporary Chinese culture, the knowledge of Chinese language held by these first generation immigrants could not catch up with either the academic demands of their children's Chinese class or the current language use in Chinese society. Consequently,

these CHLLs, especially those with high proficiency, had to resort to other resources to keep their Chinese up-to-date.

One problem in Chinese learning mentioned by every participant was writing, which Nichole called her “weakest link.” Linda, who used to study diligently in weekend Chinese school, recalled her unlovely experience of writing at the time:

我记得以前要写文章的时候，哇，是那么痛苦的一件事啊！只要3、4句话，那真的是啊，不知道是在折磨人还是怎么样。那4句真的写起来很困难。

(I remember when I used to write an essay, wow, what a painful thing it was!

Only three or four sentences, that was really, I don't know if it was torture or what. It was really difficult to write those four sentences.)

After starting the CF program, Linda found her writing improved greatly with weekly practice in and after class. However, like other CHLLs in this study, her writing was often considered “太口语” (too colloquial) by her teachers. At first Linda was not quite sure how her writing was “太口语.” In her writing class, she got the chance to read other students' essays and she realized the difference between her writing and that of her non-heritage classmates. Her classmates' writings were much more formal than hers. Even though her grammar was correct, her writings were very conversational as if she was chatting with a friend.

While writing was one subject that CHLLs struggled with and could not receive enough help from their parents, Classical Chinese was a class that these CHLLs could not benefit much from their heritage background and had to put in more time. When Ann



started the CF program, she was happy that she might finally read classical Chinese literature, such as Confucius texts and *Dream of the Red Chamber*, in its original language. She did not realize the language used in that literature was different from modern Chinese until she started to take the Classical Chinese class. The Classical Chinese class was one of the required classes for all CF students. It was three-credit and lasted two semesters. Ann felt like all of a sudden she signed up for learning two languages and the vocabulary she had to learn each week was doubled. Ann's feeling of foreignness towards Classical Chinese first had to do with the fact that the texts they learned were in traditional Chinese characters, which meant they were learning not only more vocabulary but also two writing systems. For those whose parents came from Mainland China or Singapore where simplified Chinese was officially used, it became a challenge. Second, as Yvonne explained in her interview, even though CHLLs recognized the word, the meaning of the word in Classical Chinese texts could have completely changed. Yvonne said it sometimes took her around an hour or two to review the lesson before each class.

In addition, none of their parents taught or used Classical Chinese at home. One time Collins told his parents he was learning Classical Chinese, and his father said: "Oh, you know, last time we used that was in college. In 高考 (college entrance examination) we had this section we had to translate from Classical Chinese." For modern Chinese, even without the help from home, CHLLs still could employ many other resources that aided their study and kept their interests. For Classical Chinese, however, since it was not taught or used outside of the classroom, the CHLLs reported they had to rely solely on rote memorization to learn.

This section has addressed how the heritage background of the CHLLs helped them to learn Chinese. These learners' exposure to Chinese language at home through conversational communication with parents as well as multimedia language resources provided both linguistic and cultural bases for them to get familiar with Chinese and built up a "sense of language" to correctly use Chinese and grasp the connotations carried by the words. However, this section also shows the CHLLs' preexisting knowledge of Chinese sometimes impeded their learning because these learners found they could get by without putting in more efforts. Moreover, due to the informal and colloquial nature of their language use at home, the CHLLs encountered difficulties in adjusting to the formal and academic language used in school. By the same token, the help that the CHLLs could get from their native Chinese-speaking parents for language study was sometimes limited.

#### Language Improvement in the CF Program

The Chinese proficiency levels varied among the CHLLs in this study. While they shared some advantages and weaknesses in learning, their different levels of language capacity required them to invest time in their individual needs to further improve their Chinese. Nevertheless, all the students noted that learning Chinese in the CF program was a start to bring their Chinese up to a higher level. Before college, although some of them still spoke Chinese at home, attended Chinese school, and picked up Chinese words through watching Chinese TV, most of them did not devote much time to learn the language. When being asked how the CF program helped with her Chinese, Gloria said if it was not the CF program she did not know how she would learn Chinese “到那种深度 (in such depth).” Linda's answer explained the “深度 (depth)” that Gloria talked about:

我到了大学才正式上了中文课，因为中文学校真的就算混，真的学到的中文是零。所以我到了这边才开始真是在学中文，就是学写作啊什么之类的，就是念东西这样，读书这样。

(It was in college that I started to really learn Chinese, because I just muddled along in Chinese school, what I learned there was nothing. So I started to really learn Chinese after I got here, that is, to learn writing, to read things, to read books.)

Learning and using Chinese in class helped students quickly retrieve what they had learned when they were young, but what is more important is that they received a training to use Chinese in areas other than the daily language routines they used at home. Gloria said her use of Chinese used to be limited to the “kitchen language,” and occasionally her parents told her Chinese history stories. The CF program provided her with an environment in which for the first time she learned Chinese economy and politics in Chinese. Moreover, she started to take lecture notes in Chinese. She still kept this practice after graduating from the program.

Not only did the CF program offer a systematic learning experience, it opened up new opportunities for the CHLLs to expand their Chinese-speaking environment. Gloria acknowledged the biggest help she got from the CF program was that “it provide[d] for that background that I don’t have.” In the U.S., especially in the state in which she grew up, Gloria felt there was no language and culture environment for her to maintain her Chinese language. In the process of her Chinese study, Ann had a similar experience. After her first year of Chinese study in college, Ann was not satisfied with the progress of her language learning. Her frustration had much to do with the situation that she learned

Chinese in class one to two hours a day and then went back to English-speaking surroundings the rest of the day. She believed she needed an immersive environment to “turn [her Chinese] up a notch.” She learned about a summer Chinese program in China through the CF program, so she applied. In the intensive summer program, Ann received what she was looking for: a place to learn and use Chinese nonstop. Ann recalled, by the end of the program

...where we had our final 口试 (oral exam) and I got a 99%. I was thrilled at it, because I remember we had a discussion about something that had to do with culture. I was really passionate about what I was saying. It was the first time that I felt like I could speak in Chinese and be passionate and convey what I want to say. That was just, I had always felt like there’s something and there always will be when you’re learning another language but I felt confident in what I was saying and that was the first time. So I think that would be like one of the shining stars in my Chinese language learning history.

This positive learning experience not only provided Ann with an opportunity to be immersed in Chinese study and learning, but also gave her a sense of achievement that she did not experience before in the weekend Chinese school. For the first time speaking Chinese was not something to acknowledge her incompetence, but something to enjoy and have meaningful communication in. This experience encouraged Ann to continue learning Chinese in the CF program when she came back to the U.S.

The first part of this section explained how the CF program generally helped the CHLLs’ language learning and maintenance. The remainder of the section will focus on the strategies that the students used to improve their language abilities.

As mentioned earlier, in spite of their relatively high proficiency in spoken Chinese, the CHLLs' vocabulary was limited. The modern Chinese language classes offered lessons on different aspects of the modern life in China and introduced the students to various sets of vocabulary. Even though there are many differences in vocabulary and grammar between modern Chinese and Classical Chinese, the Classical Chinese classes enabled the students to receive a better understanding of individual characters and words. When talking about how the Classical Chinese benefited her daily Chinese use, Yvonne pointed out:

So when I would talk everyday Chinese, it might strike me all of a sudden like “Oh, this is what 已 means or 之 means” and I would understand it better. Before I would just know if I say this, this is what it means, but after taken [the Classical Chinese class], I really knew what the word means.

Although the CF classes offered students the opportunity to learn a variety of vocabulary, due to their language background, it was easier for the CHLLs to “guess” the meaning of a word based on the context, which led to their neglect of vocabulary study. Moreover, some of the participants reported they often learned the vocabulary just for the tests. Ann explained how she learned new vocabulary: She copied the vocabulary list into her notebook on the one side and the pinyin and definition on the other side. To avoid the complexity, she only focused on the meaning of the word that was used in the text. She often studied the vocabulary right before a quiz or an exam to cultivate short-term memory. Ann admitted that whether she was able to do well in quizzes all depended on “the luck of the draw.” If she did not have any class right before the Chinese class, she

would have enough time to study the vocabulary. Otherwise, she had to go with whatever she had learned within the short period of the time.

The students' speaking and listening abilities were improved through their training in the Chinese-medium language and literature classes. In addition to having the lecture in Chinese, these students were occasionally asked to give a presentation or break up into group discussions. Students reported they enjoyed a steep increase in their speaking and listening skills in the overseas section of the program or other overseas summer programs collaborated with the CF program. For example, Ann was satisfied that by the end of her summer program she was "able to talk about the American education system and not stumble all the time," and "to just keep going to say what I want to say somewhat concisely and to some depth." However, they felt frustrated to find their Chinese began to decline when they came back to the dominant English-speaking environment. In comparison to their Chinese use experience in China, these students agreed that they needed more time to practice speaking in their domestic classes. Ann said she worried about the OPI, an oral exam required by the end of the CF program, because the Chinese classes she was taking were the only place she could practice her Chinese but those classes did not offer many opportunities for speaking practice and most of the time the students just sat there and listened to teacher's lecturing.

While writing was the most difficult part for the CHLLs, their progress in writing was the greatest. The improvement in writing started with learning the correct way to write a character. Chinese characters are constructed with strokes. Over the millennia a

set of generally agreed rules have been developed and taught to Chinese learners.<sup>7</sup> Gloria reported before the CF program she did not think about the stroke order when writing a character. One time during her writing-tutoring hour, Gloria wrote the character “重.” She wrote down all horizontal strokes first and then added all vertical strokes. Her tutor noticed this mistake immediately and taught Gloria the correct order (see Figure 3). Since then Gloria started to pay attention to the stroke order when she was learning a Chinese character.

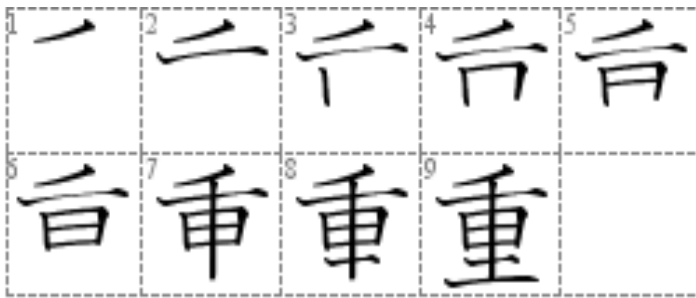


Figure 3. Stroke Order of the Character “重.”

How to compose a sentence used to be a challenge for many of these CHLLs when they were in weekend Chinese school. Ann recounted how the Classical Chinese class helped her to learn the foundation of sentence structure:

It helps me a lot in the Classical Chinese being able to know what a stative verb is and how that is an adjective and what a 虚词 is. It made it clear in my mind.

<sup>7</sup> According to the 1997 *Modern Chinese Commonly Used Character Stroke Order Standard* published by State Language Commission and General Administration of Press and Publication of the Peoples’ Republic of China, character stroke order follows these basic principles: 1) from top to bottom, 2) from left to right, 3) horizontal before vertical, 4) diagonals right-to-left before diagonals left-to-right, 5) outside before inside, 6) inside before outside, 7) inside before bottom enclosures, 8) center before outside in vertically symmetrical characters, 9) character-spanning strokes last, 10) left vertical before enclosing, 11) top or upper-left dots first, 12) inside or upper-right dots last. Minor variations exist between the countries and regions of PRC, ROC, Hong Kong, and Japan.

Because I remember when we learned English in elementary school, we did a lot of sentence diagramming, so really being able to pick a part of a sentence and knowing exactly how this part connects to this part. ...So I think it made it easier for me to learn and to read and to understand. But with Chinese, it's really, I never went through any of that. And I think it's because they had always been saying: Oh, there's no grammar in Chinese. That's not true. I mean there are rules in every language. So where originally it had just come from speaking with my parents and listening to it, and it was just kinda amorphous. You know, what I wrote came out of my mouth. If it sounded right in my mouth, it sounded right, then it was probably right. But now I finally had a structure to think of the words I was putting down on the paper. Especially when I was trying to write more complicated sentences, knowing that helped.

The improvement in Chinese writing was a result of regular practice in Chinese classes. In those Chinese classes that were taught in Chinese, the CHLLs wrote essays in Chinese. In language classes, students needed to write essays that were related to the topic of each textbook lesson. For example, one of Nichole's lessons was about marriage, so she was asked to write a personal ad. Each essay was around 300 words. In content classes, such as Chinese history and Chinese literature, students were required to write longer essays, such as book reviews and movie reviews. Linda found the constant, progressive writing practice helped her to overcome the difficulty of writing. Her writing-training class (which was not a separate class but attached to a content course) required her to write a number of essays with a gradual increase in length, i.e., starting from 500



words, every next essay was suppose to be a couple of hundred words longer. Linda recalled:

我就记得因为那样我写作方面有一点进步，因为它就是规定一定要往上升。不然根本我还是写两句话的那个。我以前都是写两句话。写作是我以前最困难，最讨厌的一件事。可是那门课应该是第一次就是开始认真写作。

(I remember because of that, my writing had some improvement, because it required to [write] more and more. Otherwise, I would still write just several sentences. I used to write just several sentences. Writing used to be the most difficult, most annoying thing. But that class was the first time [I] started to write seriously.)

As mentioned in the previous section, the writing of these learners was considered as “too colloquial.” To make her writing more formal, Linda forced herself to read Chinese newspaper and books. With her efforts, Linda had a better knowledge of writing formally, although she felt she had not achieved her teacher’s standards of formal written language. The collected writing samples from Linda showed that the language used in her class reports was still conversational to some extent, but her children’s magazine submissions were filled with Chinese idioms and different figures of speech. Due to the focus of this dissertation, I will not go into a linguistic analysis of CHLLs’ language use. The following excerpt from Linda’s magazine submission is quoted to exemplify Linda’s better control of formal writing. In her article about growing up, she wrote:

也許是羨慕“大人”的權利、他們的穩重，才會這麼確切的回答年齡的問題，希望在發問者的眼中我們也很成熟。在那時期，能享受“大人”的優勢，是個多麼重大、稀奇的一件事，就像闖進伊甸園，觀賞樹上掛的禁果；可是不到雙位數的年齡，我們怎麼可能被認為是“大人”呢？我們僅僅看到禁果的亮麗、鮮豔外表，想像果肉的甜美。

([We] seemed to admire the power and steadiness of the “grown-ups,” so we answered the question of our age so specifically, and hoped we looked mature in the eyes of the inquirer. At that period of time, it was such an important, rare thing to enjoy the advantages of being a “grown-up.” It was like to break into Eden and behold the forbidden fruit on the tree; however, how could we be considered as “grown-ups” without our age reaching two-digit numbers? We could only see the bright, colorful appearance of the forbidden fruit and imagine the lusciousness of the flesh.)

This section has discussed the CHLLs’ improvement in vocabulary, speaking, listening, and writing skills in the CF program. These students took advantage of the in-depth Chinese training provided by the program to find the gaps in their knowledge and skills and overcome their weaknesses. How much the students could learn depended on not only what the program could offer but also more importantly how much effort the students chose to put into the study. The findings also show because of the dominant status of English in the U.S., some students heavily relied on the Chinese classes to maintain their Chinese. Once they left an immersive language use environment, such as the summer program in China, their Chinese suffered a gradual decline.

## Building a Learning Community

Participants in the study reported they did not have many opportunities to use as much Chinese as English outside of their Chinese language class even after entering the CF program, but these students made good use of the various forms of Chinese language resources around them to beat the odds and build up an environment that helped them to learn, practice and maintain their Chinese. Before the program, two of the participants spoke only Chinese with their parents, two of them frequently spoke Chinese with their parents, and two of them occasionally used Chinese. Whatever the frequency and topics they used Chinese before the program, all participants suggested they had used more Chinese with their parents after starting the program. Nichole who used to speak mostly English claimed that with her improvement in Chinese, she had built up a bigger vocabulary so that she could describe more things in Chinese. To practice what she had learned, she tried her best to only speak Chinese with her parents. When she talked to her parents over the phone, she would tell them in Chinese what she did today, what she ate for lunch, and how the school was going. From time to time she might not find the correct words to say, then she switched to English and occasionally she would ask her mother how to say a word in Chinese and continue their conversation in Chinese. After she spoke more Chinese with her parents, she noticed her mother started to choose more advanced vocabulary and from these conversations she learned even more words.

For those who had a higher proficiency in Chinese and frequently used Chinese with their parents, because of the CF program, the topics of their conversations went beyond the everyday conversation to enhance these learners' language ability. For instance, the study in the CF program challenged Yvonne to write in formal language. To

make sure her writing was not too colloquial, Yvonne sometimes asked her parents to look over her final paper for her Chinese class. She even occasionally called her mother to ask how to use a particular word.

While using Chinese with siblings was uncommon among these CHLLs, studying Chinese in the CF program became a shared experience among some participants and their siblings. Even though it happened not very often, they talked with their siblings (mostly in English) about how to study Chinese and how they felt about the program. Amy, Gloria's younger sister entered the CF program a few years after Gloria. Sometimes when Amy had difficulty in writing an essay for her Chinese homework, she came to Gloria for help. Gloria would think of a topic first and ask Amy to write it on her own, but what interested Gloria did not often appeal to her sister who then gave up on the topic and walked away, but Amy still sought Gloria's aid after she finished the writing. Gloria would check the grammar and make basic edits and give it back to her sister.

Rosa, Yvonne's older sister had graduated from the CF program before Yvonne started to learn Chinese in college. When Yvonne hesitated about if she should enroll in the CF program, she consulted her sister. Rosa just returned from the CF one-year study and internship in China at the time. She told Yvonne she took the program to have the overseas working experience and to know China better, but her expectations were unsatisfied: She did not like the teaching style of some teachers in the Chinese university; many of the students in China did not actually do their homework; her one-semester internship did not have a lot to do with her field of study. Rosa's experience further discouraged Yvonne who had already worried the one year in China would delay her

graduation. Yvonne finally decided not to join the CF program but only took its Chinese classes to maintain her Chinese.

The stories of Gloria and Yvonne show the additional family support for the CHLLs' Chinese study in spite of the fact that Chinese language was not the main language used among the siblings. However, not every student had a sister or brother who had studied or was studying in the same program. Even for those who had siblings in the same program, they and their siblings would graduate from the program and even move to different cities, and their help might become unavailable. Hence, a learning community was also built up outside of the family domain.

Studying in the CF program gave the CHLLs an opportunity to know other Chinese learners with whom they could do homework together and study for tests together. The following excerpts from an observation entry of Ann and Collin's Classical Chinese class demonstrated how the CHLLs helped each other in class.

The teacher read a sentence of the text and explained the meaning of the characters in the sentence. Ann did not catch up with what the teacher just said. She turned to Collins, pointed at one of those characters on her textbook sheet and asked quietly: "What's this?" Collins took a look and said: "Wei, Wei Yuan Hui (committee)." He first pronounced the character and then gave an example of how the character was used a word in modern Chinese. Ann asked again: "Is this Wei the same Wei in Zhou Wei (surroundings)?" Collins shook his head: "I think it's a different Wei."

...Teacher asked Collins to translate one sentence into English. He mistakenly translated Yue (monthly) to yearly. Ann said in a low voice that only people at

this table could hear her: “Monthly. Monthly.” Collins heard her correction and quickly corrected himself: “Monthly.”

This is one of the examples that students often turned to their peers first for immediate help. This practice of “learning together” became the first step for them to continue their learning outside the classroom.

The Chinese learning/speaking community was not restricted to the CHLLs’ classmates and their CHLL friends. Some of the CHLLs reached out to the Chinese international students at their university to build up a relationship. Nichole told me before the CF program she almost spoke only English, but now she would initiate a conversation with people from China in Chinese. In her major class, there were many students from China. Nichole would speak Chinese with them and they would help each other with their questions about the class. She sometimes hanged out with her Chinese friends after class and talked about their daily life. Whenever she met someone from China, she took it as an opportunity to practice her Chinese. For the same reason, she chose Chinese over English in all the meetings we had for this study.

#### *Using Electronic Technology to Learn Chinese*

In a society with prevailing monolingual ideology and language policies such as those in the U.S., using a minority language like Chinese in domains outside of the family is unusual. Face-to-face communication in Chinese was not always available for the CHLLs. As a result, the CHLLs resorted to the Internet to build a virtual community to make exchanges in Chinese or talk about Chinese language and culture. When Yvonne had to leave home for an internship for three months in 2012, she had no one to speak Chinese to. Seeing her older sister’s language decline after seven years away from home,

Yvonne was afraid her Chinese level would decrease too if she did not speak Chinese for three months. To prevent the potential decline, she made a Chinese-only deal with a friend who was also away from home for an internship. For a month, Yvonne would Skype her friend daily for 20 to 30 minutes to talk about their life in Chinese. Using the telecommunications technology, Yvonne was able to reach to other Chinese speakers even with the physical isolation.

At the beginning of the study, I asked every participant if they participated in any Chinese-related activities that I could observe. Linda told me she did not take Chinese class anymore and could not think of any activities that she engaged using Chinese other than speaking Chinese with her parents. As her Facebook friend, one day I noticed she shared a Chinese music video on her Facebook with one of her Chinese-American friends and in their following interaction Linda implied this friend should learn more Chinese to understand the lyrics of the song. This caught my attention and from then on I started to follow her Facebook regularly to see if this kind of activity was frequent. On her Facebook she often shared Chinese music videos and discussed about Taiwanese TV dramas with Gloria. I asked for permissions from both and included these Facebook entries as part of my data. There are three characteristics of the online interactions between Gloria, Linda, and their friends. First, their interactions were not bound by the limitation of time and space. The non-real-time communication technology applied by the social media such as Facebook enabled the CHLLs to make a post and respond to other's posts wherever and whenever they had access to Internet. Considering the wide dispersion of the Chinese communities throughout the nation and the high mobility of the CHLLs after graduation, social media offered a platform for them to keep in touch with

their Chinese-speaking friends. Gloria, who had graduated from college and moved away at the time of the study, still regularly used Facebook to talk with Linda about their common interest, Chinese pop culture. Sometimes Gloria and Linda would post a couple of messages each day on each other's Facebook wall.

Second, not only time and place were unlimited, also the conversation was usually open to any of their Facebook friends, which further expanded the range of the online language learning and speaking community. In one of Gloria's posts, she shared a website to convert between Chinese and English numeral systems:

Despite years of learning Chinese and living in China on and off, the one thing I have still not mastered (or even basically conceptualized) is the Chinese number system.

On a daily basis, I struggle to convert my 2.64 millions, 354,000 or 15 billions into 千、万、亿 and the overlappings (sic) they make. It's always a struggle counting the 0s, making sure they line up, then promptly questioning myself as to whether 1千万 is actually 7 zeroes or ... 8? Because does the 千 retain all its 3 zeroes? Or do part of them get eaten up by the 万? Or, whether 千万 is actually a legit number (since its used more commonly as a co-term for "never" or "forever"), and whether it is in fact grammatically an 亿.

But today, I struggle no more. No, TODAY, I have found myself anew. TODAY, I have confidence. For I have discovered, I have illuminated, I have found the path to light.

That path, my friends, is this: <http://www.chinesetools.eu/tools/chinesenumbers/>



Gloria's humorous, provocative statement inspired her cousin, friends, former Chinese classmates, and former Chinese tutor to engage in this discussion and share their experience not only with these two systems but with the numeral systems between other languages as well.

Third, the content of their exchanges was causal and personal, and the languages used in these exchanges often shifted or mixed to fit the content of their conversations. In a Facebook post between Gloria and Linda, it began with Gloria telling Linda a new class offered in her graduate school and then it changed into two simultaneous conversations of a Korean TV drama and the class. When Gloria was asked why she did not take the new class, she said it was an easy class and she did not want to get bored with it. Linda then started a Chinese entry to tease Gloria being a good student and at the same time continued their TV conversation in English. Their conversation was presented here to display their flexible use of Chinese. The in-between English conversation on the TV drama was omitted to avoid confusion for the readers.

Linda (L): 葛丽雅啊，你是個好學生。我得向你學習。

Gloria (G): i totally read that in 刘老师's voice

G: also, your praise makes me emotional

L: You best be crying right now.

G: I am 泪流满面ing

L: 感動ing

G: not 感动ed?

L: 唉～所以我才要向你學習啊，師傅

G: 我不配做你师傅 是我应该向你学习啊 尊贵的林佳

L: 騙誰啊? 你可是一個我該尊敬的前輩。

G: 你是我的台湾娱乐方面的前辈/师傅

L: 如是如此, 我也只是你的台灣娛樂方面的前輩/師傅。你可是我人生其方面的師傅

G: 千万不能这么说 小女做不上贵人的师傅 各个方面不如贵人~

L: 我的中文程度不能與你相比, 已無法適當地回復你。師傅啊~請多多指教

G: honestly, I'm kinda struggling to transition to fanciful Chinese. 林佳 你才是中文高手

L How much do I love that you call it fanciful Chinese? WAY TOO MUCH. 您願意收我為徒弟嗎?

G: I conclude our attempts to sound graceful in Chinese with this: 三人行必有我师.

L: HOT DAMN. Whipping out the Confucius.

(L: Gloria, you're a good student. I should learn from you.

G: i totally read that in Teacher Liu's voice

G: also, your praise makes me emotional

L: You best be crying right now.

G: I am crying

L: [I'm] moving

G: not moved?

L: Alas ~ that's why I should learn from you, master

G: I do not deserve being your master. I should learn from you, the honorable  
Linda

L: Are you kidding? You are a venerable senior to me.

G: You are my senior/master in the field of Taiwanese entertainment

L: Even so, I'm just senior/master in the field of Taiwanese entertainment, but  
you're the master in other aspects of my life

G: Don't say that. Your humble maid can't be the master of Your Highness, not  
as good as Your Highness~

L: My Chinese can't be compared to you. I can't reply you properly. My master~  
please enlighten me.

G: honestly, I'm kinda struggling to transition to fanciful Chinese. Linda, you are  
the Chinese expert.

L: How much do I love that you call it fanciful Chinese? WAY TOO MUCH.  
Would you accept me as your student?

G: I conclude our attempts to sound graceful in Chinese with this: In a group of  
three people, there is always something I can learn from.

L: HOT DAMN. Whipping out the Confucius.)

The conversation between Linda and Gloria shows their dynamic use of Chinese: (1)  
They seamlessly switched between Chinese and English within and between sentences;  
(2) They applied English morphological grammar to Chinese words (感动ing and 感动  
ed); (3) When Chinese was used, Gloria wrote in simplified Chinese while Linda used

traditional Chinese; (4) The honorific and humble expressions were humorously adopted (师傅, 前辈 and 小女). Androutsopoulos's (2007) study of language choices on a German-based diasporic web forum suggests playfulness is the most obvious feature of home language use. Forum participants chose their home language to imply their statement was not serious but playful. In this exchange between Linda and Gloria, Linda switched to Chinese as she teased Gloria for being a good student who did not choose an easy class. This switch started their playful conversation in Chinese in which they praised each other highly. In sum, the convenient, widespread, informal nature of social media helped the CHLLs have a larger community to talk about what interested them in Chinese or about Chinese language and culture at a time they chose.

During their childhood, these students mainly depended on the Chinese audio and video products sent by their relatives from China/Taiwan to learn Chinese pop culture. Thanks to the popularity of Internet use and the increase of multimedia online resources in Chinese, CHLLs had direct access to various forms of Chinese language materials. In addition to active online communities such as Facebook, Weibo (Chinese Twitter) and QQ (Chinese instant messaging), the CHLLs engaged in using other electronic technologies, such as websites, television, and smart phone, to learn and maintain Chinese. In previous sections, it has mentioned many CHLLs watched Chinese TV shows and dramas at their leisure time. In fact, some of these students were interested in learning Chinese because it would enable them to better understand Chinese TV dramas. Before college, Gloria used to watch TV dramas based on her interests. Since she started learning Chinese in college, she forced herself to watch more Chinese TV and movies. Yvonne often watched one episode of a Chinese TV drama on her phone while she

worked out at gym. Moreover, she would pay special attention to the subtitles<sup>8</sup> when watching the show. Her mother advised her to listen not to look at the words, but Yvonne insisted on reading the subtitles because she believed she had no difficulty to understand what they said, but looking at the subtitles while listening could help her to know how a character was written, which was a great way for her to expand her vocabulary in written form.

Another exposure to Chinese-medium materials was Chinese websites. Some CHLLs reported they regularly surfed on Chinese websites. Yvonne used the Chinese search engine to follow the news of her favorite Chinese shows and TV stars. Gloria was interested in the social and economic issues of China. To get the latest information about these issues, she visited the Chinese edition of BBC and New York Times websites regularly and occasionally visited a Chinese financial news website, Cai Jing. Websites that offer language-learning resources are also a tool for the CHLLs to study Chinese. Nichole admitted at the beginning of her Chinese study in college, it was too difficult for her to write a short essay so she sometimes had to rely on Google Translate to write. She typed an English sentence that she wanted to write on Google Translate and then copied and pasted its Chinese translation into her essay. After a semester of Chinese study, she felt more at ease to write and only needed to use Google Translate to look up words instead of translating a whole sentence.

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<sup>8</sup> Most of Chinese TV shows are required to have subtitles to aid comprehension for people with hearing impairment as well as for those who are unfamiliar with Mandarin or the dialect used in the program.

Besides translation help, these CHLLs used Chinese language websites to do research for their school assignments. In preparation for his Chinese class presentation, Collins would go on Wikipedia or Baidu, a Chinese search engine, to look up the Chinese idiom he needed to present and learn the background story of the idiom. Nichole recalled once the CF program held a Chinese New Year party and every Chinese class was required to perform something in Chinese. She was assigned to act as a talent show host. To know how a Chinese show host usually spoke, Nichole went on a Chinese video-sharing website to watch a Chinese talent show. She wrote down what the hosts said and imitated their expressions and manners in her performance.

Both the interview and observation data show it is common among the CHLLs to learn Chinese characters with their smart phone. When the students saw certain unknown character in class, they would take out their smart phone and quickly check its pronunciation with the dictionary application software installed on their phone. Nichole told me how a mobile application software saved her so much trouble in learning new characters:

我一开始读课文特别困难。Oh, I was horrible, 因为那些字儿我都不认。好多我同学在他们的iPhone上download Pleco, 所以他们不用知道拼音, 他们可以把那个字儿用手写, 然后它那个字就会上来可以选。我没有iPhone, 没有这个app, 所以我得用我中文的辞典找它那个偏旁, 然后找那个字儿, 所以特别复杂, 用很多时间。所以我一开始学的时候就是读课文, 但是就是使那么多力气, 那么多时间读。所以最后我会问我的妈妈和爸爸, 他们能不能坐在我旁边读一下。所以这是我一开始这么读, 但是最后因为我还有其

他的课，没有那么多时间，所以最后我妈妈给我买了个iPhone，然后我也download了Pleco。

(At the beginning it was very difficult for me to read texts. Oh, I was horrible, because I did not know those words. Many of my classmates download Pleco on their iPhone, so they do not need to know the pinyin [of the word], they can write down the character [on the phone] and that character will appear. I did not have iPhone, did not have this app, so I had to use Chinese dictionary and use its radical to find that character, so it was very difficult and took a lot of time. When I started to learn [Chinese], I just read the textbook, but it took so much energy and time to read. So at last I would ask my mother and father if they could sit beside me and read [for me]. That's how I read at the beginning, but because I also had other classes, did not have a lot of time, so finally my mother bought me an iPhone and I downloaded Pleco.)

In short, with the assistance of a variety of electronic technologies, studying Chinese continued outside of the classroom and using Chinese went beyond the domains of family and school. As Cunliffe (2007) suggests,

The real potential of the Internet lies not in the replication of traditional media and the formation of passive communities of minority language media consumers, but in the formation of active communities of collaborative minority language producers. These active communities provide not only the opportunity for people to produce material in their minority language, but also to engage with their community online” (p. 137).

In a virtual community that transcended the limitations of geographic borders, the CHLLs were connected to Chinese speakers around the world. In this community, the CHLLs not only passively received information that passed onto them, but also chose to explore the topics that interested them and actively participated in co-creating knowledge, and building up a language learning and using environment among themselves.

### *Maintaining Chinese via Teaching*

As mentioned earlier, except for Chinese classes and home, there were not many places the CHLLs could use Chinese. Nevertheless, with the growth of weekend Chinese schools in the U.S., the CHLLs found another domain that they might put their language ability into use. Some of the CHLLs in this study chose to work as teaching assistants after entering college to maintain their heritage language. They assisted teachers to collect and grade homework and quizzes. Out of the three CHLLs who had the teaching experience, Yvonne was the only one who was still a teaching assistant at the time of the study. I had the chance to observe two of Yvonne's classes in which she assisted her mother, who was a teacher of the school, to go around and help with students' questions. Persevering with her home language policy, Yvonne used mostly Chinese with her students. When her students asked her questions in English, Yvonne replied in Chinese: “说中文 (speak Chinese),” or “用中文问 (ask in Chinese),” the same strategy that her mother used in class as well as at home. Although persisting in speaking Chinese did not always result in students doing the same, Yvonne kept this practice to encourage Chinese use.

The tasks that these teaching assistants were given might be small, but those who had this teaching experience pointed out their teaching practice propelled them to think



more about how Chinese should be taught. Gloria believed although there were some teacher development resources for weekend Chinese schools, they might not suit the CHLLs. After attending several workshops that were to introduce the language teaching methods used in schools in Taiwan, Gloria found while those teaching methods seemed fun, they were designed for native Chinese speakers instead of the CHLLs and the dynamic between the CHLLs, their parents, and weekend school teachers was quite different from that in Taiwan where students, their parents and teachers were held accountable for the students' performance in Chinese study.

In comparison to other participants, Yvonne had a longer experience in teaching Chinese, which gave her an opportunity to put her ideas of teaching into practice. Since she entered college, Yvonne had been assisting her mother in the same Chinese school she used to go to. In addition to grading homework and quizzes, Yvonne prepared every class together with her mother. Not completely satisfied with her former Chinese school experience, Yvonne emphasized the importance of keeping the children interested in her teaching:

I feel like many Chinese teachers really stress strict memorization through repetition, but kids don't necessarily enjoy learning like that. If they have fun and truly understand the point, then they might have an easier time remembering. Most of my ideas have to do with games that the students play in class.

In particular, Yvonne integrated her own experience as a CHLL into her teaching:

My mom comes up with general points that she wants to cover each class, and I help her think of how to best introduce those concepts or ideas. Sometimes we'll incorporate activities that I did in English school, other times I'll adapt an idea

from a television show. Most of my ideas are meant to introduce something in a different way. I think like an American, so I'll remember my own mistakes and make sure that we cover those common mistakes with the students. For example, when teaching “量词”, I'll make sure to talk about “一条裤子”, since it's not a direct translation of “a pair of pants.”

Reflecting on the mistakes they used to make when learning Chinese, the CHLLs found they were at advantage of knowing what the younger CHLLs needed in the learning. Linda emphasized they not only knew the youngsters' language problems, but also understand their attitudes toward Chinese study and Chinese school. If given the chance, both Linda and Yvonne would like to teach a class on their own and put their ideas of teaching into practice.

### Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the CHLLs' strategies and pedagogies for studying Chinese. The findings show the CHLLs came in the Chinese class with a specific set of language knowledge and needs. Although the heritage language background prepared these learners to reacquire Chinese quickly in their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, there were gaps in their language knowledge that required recognition by both the students and the teachers. Considering the time limitation of the Chinese classes, the language practice opportunity offered in class was often insufficient. While the intensive overseas programs stimulated a dramatic improvement in language learning, the effect was not lasting due to the short term of the program. Nevertheless, many CHLLs creatively employed various electronic technologies to expand the opportunities to learn and use Chinese. It is worth noting that “language learner” was not the only role of these

CHLLs. Some of them were also a “language teacher” who could apply their own learning experience to teach Chinese to those who shared a similar linguistic and cultural background.

## CHAPTER 8

### IDENTITY (RE)CONSTRUCTION AND NEGOTIATION OF THE CHLLS

Gee (2000) defines the construct of identity as “being recognized as a certain ‘kind of person,’ in a given context” (p. 99). In other words, one’s identity can “change from moment to moment in the interaction, can change from context to context,” and “can be ambiguous or unstable” (Gee, 2000, p. 99). As an ethnic minority in the United States, what “kind of person” they are in terms of their Chinese-American identity is one of the questions the CHLLs often ask themselves growing up. Using Gee’s framework of identity, this chapter addresses my final research question: How does participation in the CF program influence CHLLs’ identification as heritage language learners?

#### Identity Concerns: Positioning the Self

Gee (2000) proposes a four-way model to view identity. This model looks at how the identity is built from the four perspectives of nature, institution, discourse, and affinity. This section will examine how the four perspectives of identity interrelate with each other as the CHLLs’ identity is formed, developed, and sustained.

When I asked Linda how she defined her identity in an email, she replied:

你可問到重點了。這其實是我跟其他ABC朋友經常討論、煩惱的問題。一方面我們是標準的美國人，在這出生長大，持有美國國籍，最熟悉的是美國文化。可是同時我們也感受到我們並不是百分百的美國人。因家庭環境，我們受到大量中國思想的影響，道德觀、價值觀在某些地方偏向於傳統中國人。

(You have asked the key question. This is actually a problem that my ABC friends and I often discuss and are troubled by. On the one hand we are standard Americans, born and raised here, holding American citizenship, and most familiar with American culture. But at the meantime we also feel that we are not 100 percent Americans. Due to our family background, we have received a large amount of influence from Chinese thoughts, and some of our ethics and values incline towards those of traditional Chinese people.)

This quote suggests while Linda and her Chinese-American friends identified themselves as “standard” Americans, being legally recognized as American and surrounded by American culture could not cross out the differences based on their family background. They were aware that the “non-standard” elements of their identities, which often considered not part of the “authentic” American identity, made them “not 100 percent Americans.” The ambiguity of their identity resulted in the CHLLs’ confusion on the relationship between their American identity defined in the mainstream and their Chinese heritage.

As studies on immigrant children have shown, the confusion growing up as children of immigrants sometimes triggered negative feelings toward their heritage, which included their heritage language (Phinney, 1989; Shin, 2010; Tse, 2000). Ann recalled such feelings as a child.

When I was younger, I didn’t want to be Chinese. I wanted nothing to do with it. I wanted to go to a birthday party instead of going to Chinese school. I didn’t wanna be different from everybody else.

This quote suggests young Ann was longing to blend in with her peers, but she believed her Chinese background was at odds with her desire. These feelings led to her resistance to her Chinese heritage and negatively impact her attitudes toward learning the Chinese language, a marker of Chinese identity. Ann's alienation to her heritage identity at her adolescence did not bring solution to her identification of who she was. Instead, she always felt "there's this cognitive dissonance when you look Chinese and your parents are Chinese and people see you as Chinese, but your cultural attitudes and your views and things are mostly American." To the adolescent Ann, her Chinese identity was mostly a natural identity that was defined by her appearance and origin. Viewing from this perspective, this identity was at odds with her American identity, the identity she actually felt affiliated with. This dissonance was mediated during her study of Chinese language in college. Ann stated:

For me the study of Chinese had a lot to do with my identity and my heritage. I think I owe a lot to that culture as far as who I am and who my parents are and where I come from. And I think it has helped me ground myself in a sense of I'm a Chinese person. ...And that's why I continue to go back to China each summer and that's why I want to continue studying not just the language but the culture and the literature and the philosophy, all of it. I think it's more of a personal journey for me than anything else.

Linda agreed about the role of learning Chinese in buttressing her understanding of herself as an ethnic minority in society.

When everyone's so diverse here when you don't have a group to identify with, it's a little bit harder in terms of what you belong to. When you do have

something, you can say, “Yes, I belong to this group.” I maybe know this culture a little more and know this language a little bit more. I feel like at least personally that I have more of an identity in this society, in this community than that just run-of-the-mill girl.

The above quote highlights Linda’s desire to find a place to feel belonging to. For Linda, knowing Chinese was considered as an identifier when she claimed her Chinese identity, so that it was not only she looked Chinese, but also she actually could speak the language that Chinese people speak and could understand their culture.

Not every participant in this study joined the CF program to strengthen their Chinese identity. Moreover, some CHLLs in this study did not think the CF program directly shaped or intended to shape their identity as a heritage language learner. Nevertheless, they reported the CF program provided an opportunity for them to have rich cultural and linguistic experiences. Building around these practices, they developed a stronger relationship with their heritage and (re)constructed their Chinese identity. In the following sections, I will discuss these findings from two perspectives. First, the linguistic experiences of the CHLLs helped to ground themselves through understanding the cultural knowledge and experience shared with their Chinese peers. Second, the linguistic experiences of the CHLLs helped to ground themselves through recognizing the fluidity and complexity of their heritage identity.

#### *Understanding Cultural Knowledge and Experience*

Research participants acknowledged learning and using Chinese encouraged them to better understand the Chinese culture that heavily influenced their upbringings. When they were asked to specify the influence, many of them identified the emphasized value

on academic achievements as one salient component of Chinese culture that impacted them growing up. For instance, Ann pointed out her family had very high expectation of her academic achievements. In her parents' eyes, getting a 97 percent on the test was not good enough if everyone else had a 98. Ann found this requirement of being better than others was quite different from what was taught at school, which focused on being "your best." Because of this kind of discords, Ann reported she always felt confused, "when you go home you're expected to be one thing and certain things are praised and certain things are criticized. And then you go to school, ...they're telling you something different." Furthermore, living in a community with limited exposure to other Chinese families made it even more difficult for Ann to digest the different values prioritized in the two different contexts. Participation in the CF program gave Ann access to interacting with students in China whose parents defined the value of education with a similar approach of Ann's parents. The summer Chinese language program in China acquainted Ann with the teachers who were only a few years older than her. Even though growing up in different countries, Ann saw similarities in their experiences and the values appreciated by their families, such as the importance of education and respect for elders. The interactions with Chinese peers helped Ann put her own experience into perspective and a tie with Chinese community was developed through the shared practices.

As mentioned earlier this section, Linda underwent confusion with regard to her identity. After learning Chinese in college, Linda started to read books in Chinese. Her eagerness to explore the identity issues prompted her to read a Chinese book about the correspondences between a Taiwanese mother and her German-born son. In their letters, the mother and the son discuss about their self-identification and their interpretations of



culture differences. Linda was so excited about the similarities between her and the son's feelings that she asked her mother to read the book in hopes that she and her mother could also have a conversation on the gap between the two generations caused by their cultural differences.

Instead of understanding cultural knowledge through shared experiences with Chinese peers in the process of language practices, Nichole made sense of her identity as a CHLL from the lessons she learned in the CF program.

Through learning Chinese I've understood a lot the culture things I grew up with, because like in elementary school, my parents would always say you have to do really really well on your homework, like math and science, make sure you get straight As in everything, whereas my American friends their parents were lot more relaxed on that. But I kinda from learning the Chinese language, like Chinese people put a lot of value into scholars. You know there is this term in Chinese, it's like 轻商重文 which is "value scholar education and not value business." So it's really interesting 'cause in America it's very business-oriented. That's like by learning Chinese it made me understand why my parents put so much value into certain things and that's really carried into my adult life too.

Like other participants in this study, Nichole was instilled with the high value on education and considered it as part of her Chinese heritage and identity, but this practice of Chinese identity was not chosen by herself but rather an ascribed identity. The cultural components taught in class helped Nichole to understand the historical root of this value on education. Through the practices of learning Chinese, Nichole was able to reevaluate the identity that used to be imposed on her. She shared:

I mean you're learning a language and you're becoming better out it and then once you learn that language, you'll understand the culture and I think once you understand the culture, you understand yourself better. ...once [heritage speakers] understand who they are and their language and where they came from, it makes them appreciate like what their parents did and the way that they grew up.

Together, Ann, Linda and Nichole's stories show evidence that these CHLLs reevaluated and reconstructed their identity as a heritage language speaker in the process of the language learning. Initially, these young adults construed their Chinese identity as an ascribed identity that they passively accepted. It was through their active engagement in their linguistic practices they acquired an affinity-identity, which emphasizes on the process of participation in a set of specific endeavors (Gee, 2000). The experiences that the CHLLs had in and out of class provided a ground on which they understood their heritage and interpreted their heritage identity in context. As Gloria concluded,

Chinese learning for me was really important to kind of go back and understand what it was that I was calling myself and how much of what I would say was actually true and if I actually knew about my culture.

#### *Recognizing the Fluidity and Complexity of Identity*

When these CHLLs claimed their heritage, they were not always greeted with acceptance. Confusion and denial sometimes were the responses that these learners received as they negotiated their Chinese identity in interactions. Who they perceived they were was in many cases different from whom the others labeled them as. In both sets of Chinese and American society, the CHLLs had experienced a boundary that ruptured

the coherence of their Chinese and American identities. Gloria and Linda discussed about the tension caused by the binary perceptions on identities in one of their Facebook posts.

Linda: I don't know if you get this as often, but I feel like it happens in three places for me: China, Taiwan, and the US. It's almost as if I/we don't fit into their preconceived notions of nationality, ethnicity, and identity (e.g. You're effectively identified as wherever your father's grandpa is despite the YEARS you've spent elsewhere).

Gloria: [Y]ou're exactly right—not only have we been boxed by both (+) sets into an established cultural “identity”, but we are also denied that very same identity, because innately they cannot perfectly claim that we are one or another exclusively.

With the development of technology, it became possible for the children of immigrants to physically or virtually live in both places. The cross-boundary existence of people like Linda and Gloria challenged the traditional notions of identity that considered American and Chinese identities were mutually exclusive. The above exchanges between Linda and Gloria suggest that in the old paradigm of nationality, ethnicity, and identity, they felt out of place due to the rigidity of how they were defined as (or not as) Chinese or American across contexts.

Moreover, Linda was aware that “because you don't fit into the conceptualizations, you cannot have a legitimate opinion” about either culture. The following story of Ann demonstrated Linda's claim that the authenticity of their standpoints was questioned because of the “ambiguity” of their identities. In her literature major study, Ann was inspired to write stories about her family and their life in China.

With the Chinese language she learned in the CF program, Ann felt “everything [had] sort of been culminating up” and decided to start the project by doing an independent study on the modern life in China. She went to China and talked to some relatives and family friends to learn their stories and understand what meant to be Chinese. She recalled in one of her conversations with her grandaunt from her father’s side, she and her grandaunt had an argument.

I was asking her questions and then she sort of, I think we may be arguing at the time. She was saying like “you’ll never understand China the way that I understand China,” like “you’re interested in China the way you’re interested in piano, the way you’re interested in any other things you’ll study.” I think for her that’s really what it was, like how can this 18-, 19-year-old girl spend her entire life in America, come to China, and think that she knows what it means to be Chinese. You know, that’s almost insulting.

For Ann’s grandaunt, while someone could learn the knowledge about China and Chinese people, the Chinese identity had its nation-state boundary and could hardly be acquired through “come-and-learn” practices. Ann was discouraged by her grandaunt’s disapproval.

I was really insulted by the fact that she told me that I could never understand, I wasn’t that kind of Chinese person, but she was right, because I’ll never understand what it’s like to grow up in China, to live that, of course not. I’ll never understand what it’s like to grow up in American not being a Chinese person. I can only understand my perspective and even that I don’t understand completely (chuckle), but uh, that was really a hard lesson for me to learn, ‘cause I wanted so

hard to, you know, I wanted to say “look I studied Chinese! I’m trying!” like “I’m here!” you know, “let me into your group!” you know, like “claim me as one of your own,” ‘cause that’s what I really want to be. But that’s never going to happen. To some extent I’ll always be an outsider and that’s OK (chuckle).

In this excerpt, Ann expressed her desire to be recognized as one of “her grandaunt’s kind of Chinese.” She admitted she had not “accomplished” this identity, but participation in learning Chinese and Chinese culture was her way to gain access to what Ann saw as an “affinity group” of Chinese identity, an identity that could be achieved through sharing similar experiences (Gee, 2000). In spite of Ann’s efforts and eagerness to belong, as Gee (2000) suggests, receiving recognition of an identity depends on how other people define the nature of this identity, such as whether it is considered as a fixed internal state or a set of endeavors. While denial of the identity by her grandaunt was disappointing, the above quote also shows Ann accepted her “outsider” status and meanwhile acknowledged that the Chinese identity was not singular. Her conversations with different people in China helped Ann to see that “there’s no such thing as a typical Chinese person. ...It’s changing everyday.” For Ann, although her experiences of being Chinese were different from those of people in China or her parents—from that perspective she accepted she was an outsider, being Chinese could not be cut off from her.

As these CHLLs’ identities could not be confined to a single category, their language uses also went beyond the established boundary. These CHLLs reported they were often questioned with their origin when they spoke Chinese. What Gee (2000) calls the discursive perspective of an identity, which stresses on the construction and negotiation of identity in discursive process, is clearly shown in Linda’s experience.

Linda said when she talked to people from Mainland China, they thought she came from Taiwan because of her Taiwanese accent. However, for the ears of Taiwanese interlocutors, her accent was considered not strong enough to be native Taiwanese, so she was sometimes asked if she came from Mainland China. Linda was proud that her Chinese did not have a foreign accent. In the meantime, however, sometimes she was not happy that she was pre-labeled by her accent (or lack of an accent). In one of her media classes in China, when Linda discussed with her teacher about the topic for her final project, the teacher suggested she watch a Chinese spy drama set during the Chinese Civil War and write about China-Taiwan relations, although she neither knew much about the topic nor was interested in the topic or the TV show. In one of her weekly reports for the CF classes in China, Linda recorded another incident related to her identity and language use. In one of her economics class in China, Linda presented in front of the class and then the teacher gave his comments. After his comments, out of nowhere, the teacher asked her if she was Taiwanese. Although Linda kept smiling and did not say anything in class, she expressed her “强烈的反感 (strong resentment)” in her weekly report.

難道[我是不是台灣人]比解釋我的疑問還重要嗎？況且我和其他領航項目的同學註冊課時，[我]就已說明自己是美國土生土長的華裔。難道在僅有十五個學生的課堂上，你記不清學生嗎？

(Is [whether I'm Taiwanese] more important than my questions? Moreover, when other CF students and I registered for the class, [I] have explained I am Chinese

American born and raised in the US. In a class with only 15 students, can't you remember your students?)

This incident suggests that even though Linda identified herself as Chinese American and was Chinese American in paper, her identity was recognized, as Gee (2000) suggests, through the discourse with other people. For Linda's teacher, Linda's Taiwanese accent was associated with a Taiwanese identity. For Linda, however, her accent was part of her unique bicultural identities: "an American with strong Chinese influence."

Gloria's story further demonstrates how the identities are negotiated and contested in the process of linguistic practices as well as the complex nature of language use and identity issues in different contexts. Having grown up in a White-dominant community and gone to an Arabic-dominant private high school, Gloria used to find the only way she could explain her differences was her Chinese identity. Studying Chinese as a child with her grandmother was not confined to just learning the language or the history of China. Gloria felt it fostered a "pride identity" of being Chinese. Moreover, seeing her Arabic friends speaking Arabic to their parents, Gloria felt the importance of learning and speaking Chinese as a way to connect to her family and to identify herself as a Chinese. In the first year of the CF program, Gloria gradually realized that the China learned in school was quite different from the one told by her grandmother. She had never been taught about the economic aspect of China, let alone learning it in Chinese. While learning a whole new set of vocabulary was challenging, what surprised her most was still what a different China she was exposed to in the classes. This realization became even stronger during the study-abroad year in China.

我去南京的第一天就特别惊讶，（大笑）感觉完全被 culture shock 了。奶奶教的，比如像我们吃饭的时候，大家要先坐好才能去请奶奶来吃晚饭嘛，然后就是给奶奶端茶啊，非常有一个规矩的这种想法。我奶奶就是说笑不露齿啊，或者各种不同的这种mannerisms。（微笑）所以我就以为中国人就这样子，大多数人就这样子，就很有那种文化性的，you know, demure, very calm-minded people。结果（大笑）第一天去就 no, not the case, not the case! （大笑）就很惊讶。就好像我认识的中国跟我脑子里的中国完全不一样。

(I was so surprised the first day in Nanjing, (laugh) felt the total culture shock. What grandma taught, like when we eat, everyone need to be seated before requesting grandma to come eat dinner, or like bringing tea to grandma, was about having rules. My grandma [taught] all kinds of mannerisms such as smiling without showing teeth. (smile) So I thought Chinese people, most Chinese people were, culturally, you know, demure, very calm-minded people. But (laugh) the first day there [I learned] no, not the case, not the case! (laugh) Very surprised. It seems like the China I learned was totally different from the China in my mind.)

Gloria's developing understanding of China was not only about expanding her knowledge of Chinese culture, but also modifying her own identification of being Chinese. Gloria recalled before going to China she was more conscious about her Chinese and Islamic identities. Her identity of being American was almost implicit to her. However, her perception of her identities changed during the one-year stay in China. The initial novelty of China soon wore off after the first month. Following was a feeling of uneasiness that



Gloria could not explain. As a result, when her relatives in China asked what she identified with, she answered:

我就说：我是美国人，或者说我是美国华裔。他们就说：你不是，你是中国人。然后，哇，我为什么是中国人？我讲得中文这么差，怎么是中国人？哈哈。Anyway，所以我后来离开中国的时候，我就 establish myself 就是说 Chinese American。It took a long time. 哈哈。

(I said: I'm American, or to say I'm Chinese American. They said: You are not. You're Chinese. And, wow, why am I Chinese? My Chinese is so bad. How can I be Chinese? Haha. Anyway, so at the time I left China, I established myself as Chinese American. It took a long time. Haha.)

Gloria's reply demonstrates her awareness of the need to re-establish her self-identification. This reaction was similar to Kanno's (2000) study on bilingual children of Japanese expatriates who returned Japan from Canada. In the study, Kanno finds when those children were in Canada, they resorted to Japanese to preserve their ethnic identity, but when they went back to Japan, their Japanese proficiency surprisingly limited their access to the "mainstream" and they instead used English to assert their uniqueness. In Gloria's case, as presented earlier this section, in the American context, speaking Chinese language was part of her claim of being Chinese. When she received more exposure to Chinese people and culture during her visit in China, she recognized her former identification as Chinese was not enough to define herself. Therefore, as she was questioned about her identification, Gloria pinpointed the Chinese proficiency as a key

index of Chinese identity: Her level of proficiency could not make her as “Chinese” as her relatives in China. Instead, her American identity became more salient.

### Investment in Learning Chinese

The previous section has discussed how their language practices in the CF program impacted the CHLLs’ evaluation and negotiation of their identity of being Chinese. This part will put their CHLL identity into a bigger picture and examine the role of learning Chinese from an investment perspective, especially in the context of the relationship between their CHLL identity and other related aspects of their identity. Pavlenko (2002) states individual investments in language learning and social contexts shape and reshape each other continuously. Furthermore, learners’ investment is connected to their identities. Norton Peirce (1995) points out language learners have a complex identity and multiple desires and they invest in learning a language to “acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources” (p. 17).

As mentioned in Chapter 5, the potential career opportunities suggested in the CF promotional materials were one of the selling points of the program that attracted the CHLLs. When Linda was in her first year of the CF program, she pictured herself doing business in the future. Considering the growth of Chinese economy, she hoped that the program would be beneficial for her future career. Nichole believed as a government supported organization, the program might help her to find a job in government. Ann simply thought she should not waste her linguistic background and knowing Chinese would be “a huge asset” for her if she went into studying economics. As future job hunters, the study participants recognized the ideology that favored Chinese as a resource in the global market, which encouraged them to invest in learning Chinese. Even though

these learners did not settle their mind on their future career at the time, as Ann said, they would like to leave their options open, especially when their heritage background gave them advantage in pursuing this investment.

Preparing a global workforce motivated the government to invest in the CF program and intrigued some students to join, but for the research participants it was actually the available financial aid that directly drew them in. Many students were interested in the overseas segment of the program, which can be a full-year program and/or an intensive summer program, because the program offers various scholarship opportunities to cover the expense of the overseas study. Except for Yvonne who did not officially join the program, to a large extent, the other five participants chose the CF initially for a free trip to China. Ann said that at the beginning it was not like she was going to learn Chinese so that she could get a job, but “it was just ‘I’m gonna learn Chinese so that I can have someone paying me to go to China’.”

While students entered the program with some initial incentives, what impelled them to continue learning in the program was changing after engaging in the Chinese study. At the beginning, some students valued the potential economic returns of the program, especially as it was one of the rationales that their parents used to persuade them to keep on studying Chinese when they were young. When they had more exposure to China and Chinese job market through the program, however, they started to doubt about their original expectations. In the focus group interview, when they were asked how learning Chinese might benefit them. Linda said although China was having a dramatic growth economically and politically, its language education improved as well, so there was no need for the Chinese firms to pay foreigners a high salary when they

could find Chinese people who could speak fluent English. Yvonne added that there were so many people who could speak Chinese in the U.S. but so few American companies who needed this qualification. Furthermore, she felt that most of Chinese Americans of her generation studied either business, or medicine, or engineering, so they mainly competed with each other. Knowing Chinese might be a good thing to add to their resume, but it would not be such an advantage.

Even though the hope for economic benefits became vague, the research participants did not consider their investment in learning Chinese a waste of time. Their interest in learning resorted to Chinese language and culture as their heritage. Linda admitted that she continued her study owing to her affection for Chinese language. For Gloria, it was after a year of Chinese language and culture study that she realized the China she knew from her grandmother was totally different from the China today. She was fascinated by these differences and eager to learn more about current China and its culture. Ann also experienced a growth in terms of motivations. Before she started the program, she knew it would be a good experience, but what surprised her was that it turned into a very personal thing. She noticed the change started after a summer of language study she spent in China:

Once I went to China and once I continue studying the language, I think it became much more personal for me, had a lot to do with me being a Chinese person trying to have conversations with my relatives and read the literature that has shaped this culture and my parents' and their parents' and my own ways of thinking. So I think the rationale for my studying Chinese has really evolved for the past couple of years.

With this renewed motivation, Ann spent another summer in China doing an independent project in which she listened to the stories of her relatives, family friends, and even strangers to understand what it meant to be Chinese today. By the end of the data collection, she was planning for another summer trip to China to study Chinese educational system and teach classes in rural schools.

Gee (2000) suggests as researchers use identity as an analytic tool to understand social issues, identity can be viewed from multiple perspectives. Applying Gee's framework to see the CHLLs' identity, it shows that when these learners took Chinese classes in school, they were not only heritage language learners who engaged in these linguistic practices to reclaim their affinity-identity of being ethnically Chinese; they were also students enrolled in college classes, an institution-identity that made them subjected to the institutional rules, i.e., the university and program's requirements for graduation. In Gloria's case, the institutional requirements had a positive impact on her pursuit of Chinese study. Originally, she took Chinese classes to earn the required language credits. Learning Chinese in the CF program, however, was not always consistent with learners' institution-identity as a student. When such a situation happened, the CHLLs had to make compromises to fulfill the institutional requirements. Nichole found her non-Chinese major was so demanding that she chose only to focus on getting her class done but not to participate in other CF-organized activities. For the same reason, although Linda was unhappy with her language attrition after she finished the CF program, she did not continue to take extra Chinese classes due to a schedule conflict with her major.

Norton (2001) extends Wenger's (1998) view on the relationship between learners' identity and imagination and puts forward that learners' current learning is associated with their future affiliations. The learners' investment, therefore, has to be understood within this context. As the CHLLs positioned themselves as future employees, when conflicted interests occurred between language learning practices and career goals and expectations, the learners balanced between these interests to make decisions on how much they would invest in learning Chinese and what their learning trajectory should be like. At the beginning, Collins chose the CF for the internship experience in China. This once considered valuable opportunity later became his reason to drop out from the program when he realized that a year in China would result in inconvenience in the graduate school application process. While for other participants the free trip was an incentive, Yvonne was not enthusiastic about it and did not see it as necessary to "further my Chinese identity and my Chinese learning." In contrary, it was a reason she chose not to enroll herself in the CF. She claimed: "While the one year that I would be in China I wouldn't be able to take the classes that I need for my other majors, and I would be a year behind in graduating. I don't wanna do that." In a conversation with Yvonne and her mother about the CF program, her mother expressed her disappointment that Yvonne let go this good study abroad opportunity and suggested Yvonne could catch up her missing year by making good use of her time. Despite her mother's encouragement, with a set goal of graduating on time, Yvonne saw enrollment in the CF program at odds with her overall career pursuit and changed from being a Chinese major to a Chinese minor. Ann articulated the contesting factors that influenced her investment in learning Chinese.

As we get older and as we get closer to graduation and closer to doing what we want to be doing for the rest of our lives or almost or at least just the next stage of our lives, it makes sense to put more of your energy there and less of it elsewhere. ...we're really thankful that we learned Chinese because it is part of who we are, but it's not going to be the main focus of our careers or our lives. And so I think both of [Collins and me] realize that and have been OK with putting that to the side and really focusing on other things.

This section has taken a look at the many reasons why CHLLs took Chinese classes and participated in the CF program: They might learn for language credits, for career development, for the love of the language, or for more knowledge about their roots. The stories of these CHLLs' investment in Chinese learning suggest based on their learning experience, their motivations intertwined with each other and evolved over time, which in turn influenced what kind of a learning experience they had. By examining the reasons that these learners chose to participate (or not to participate) in the CF program, we see their multifaceted identity in the process of language maintenance. Furthermore, no matter what motivated the CHLLs to learn Chinese, these learners' consciousness of *their* role in language maintenance distinguished their Chinese study in college from their previous Chinese school experience. As Nichole asserted when asked what brought her back to Chinese study:

What made me change is just I personally became curious and *I* wanted to learn Chinese. It wasn't so much like someone was trying to force me to learn Chinese. It was more I had a genuine interest in it.

With this genuine interest, the learners made their own choices that shaped their learning experience and this decision-making process was a dynamic interplay between the social context and the multiple perspectives of their identity.

### Chapter Summary

This chapter has looked into the CHLLs' identity development and negotiation as they engaged in language learning practices. The findings suggest that with the resources provided in the CF program, the learners received the opportunities to have more exposure to cultural knowledge and to people who shared the same heritage. Such experience enabled these students to reconnect with their community and understand their heritage identity in context. In the meantime, the fluid and complex nature of the CHLLs' identity was presented when these students encountered misunderstanding, confusion, and even rejection from others in the process of exploring the meaning of their identity. Finally, as Chinese language learning played a crucial role for the CHLLs' identity construction, their heritage identity sometimes conflicted with their other identities. As a result, the CHLLs' language choices need to be understood in the context of their contesting identities. In other words, although this chapter and previous chapters have shown their ethnic identity was one of the major reasons why these CHLLs continued their Chinese language education, their Chinese identity should not make learning Chinese an obligation for these students. Instead, whether to learn Chinese and how much effort to put into the study was a decision that these students reached through balancing between the importance of their heritage language and the demands of their various responsibilities, such as being an outstanding student and being competitive in the future job market.



## CHAPTER 9

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

#### Summary of Findings

The previous four chapters presented the findings of my dissertation research in light of this study's research questions:

- What is the nature of CHLLs' de facto language policymaking in the context of a Chinese Flagship language learning program? (Chapter 5)
- What language ideologies do these de facto language policies reflect? (Chapter 6)
- What strategies and pedagogies do CHLLs use to (re)acquire and maintain Mandarin? (Chapter 7)
- How does participation in this Chinese-language program influence CHLLs' identification as heritage language learners? (Chapter 8)

Chapter 5 explored the multilayered language policies in the context of the CF program and answered the first research question on the nature of CHLLs' language policymaking from two perspectives: (1) CHLLs' responses to the language policies set up by the program and (2) CHLLs' language policymaking process. The CF program was designed as part of the FL education pipeline to contribute to the growth of bilingual/multilingual professionals needed for the national security and economic competitiveness. To fulfill its purpose, the CF program set up an immersive Chinese-speaking environment in which learners could practice their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The overseas section of the program particularly helped the students to dramatically improve both of their linguistic and cultural competence. In spite of their improvement, CHLLs found their learning was limited to some extent. For instance, the wide range of language

proficiency of the students made it difficult for the program to address the specific needs of the students. The assessment of learners' proficiency was not necessarily in line with their language training. While these limitations sometimes discouraged CHLLs to fully engage in learning, what encouraged these students to learn was when they could connect what they learned in Chinese classes to their preexisting knowledge and apply this training to augment their knowledge in the field of their major.

CHLLs' language practices were not only responses to the policies that the CF program and their teachers set up to regulate the teaching, but also a policymaking process in which the learners developed implicit mechanisms of language use as they interacted with their teachers, friends, and family. While CHLLs often chose Chinese over English with bilinguals whose first language was Chinese and chose English over Chinese with those whose first language was English, their language choices were influenced by various factors, such as the relationship with the interlocutors, the locations of the conversation, the topics under discussion, and the proficiency of the speakers. These factors intertwined with each other in CHLLs' everyday social interaction. As a result, these learners might speak with a native Chinese speaker in Chinese in informal situations, but prefer English with the same person in formal situations; they might predominantly use English with each other, but switch to Chinese to express affection and intimacy. CHLLs' de facto language policies were also affected by their language ideologies, which was discussed in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6 addressed the second research question through examining the contesting language ideologies in the context of the CF program and their influences on CHLLs' language choices. Although more than half of the participants did not have a

happy experience with learning Chinese as they grew up, all the participants held positive attitudes towards Chinese after they started Chinese study in college. From an aesthetic perspective, these CHLLs enjoyed learning Chinese and all the cultural and historical elements embedded in the language. For them, learning Chinese was more than studying grammars and vocabulary. It was building a bridge to the past: a culture that their parents came from and a heritage that these learners tried to preserve. As these CHLLs spoke Chinese with parents and other family members, they enjoyed a feeling of belonging to their community. The intergenerational connection was reinforced during this process. Moreover, in the process of their language maintenance practices, CHLLs attached an emotion of intimacy to the Chinese language and resorted to Chinese to express affection and build up new relationship. In addition to the emotional, psychological, and intellectual values of the Chinese language, most of these CHLLs anticipated some career benefits at the beginning of entering the CF program. With more exposure to Chinese language education, China, and Chinese people, some of the CHLLs started to have doubts about their original expectations. They realized that speaking Chinese did not mean they were experts in the language or their future jobs would require this language skill. With impact of the ideology that positioned minority language education as a national strategic investment, the necessity of continuing the Chinese study was questioned by some of the CHLLs' parents when the benefits of learning Chinese were not quantifiable in the learners' development.

Chapter 6 also presented the different statuses that different Chinese varieties held among CHLLs as well as by the CF program. The standard variety of both the written and spoken forms of the language was promoted in the program and the students'

language use in class was subjected to the program's regulation. Nevertheless, CHLLs tried to find some leeway to make their own language choices based on their beliefs on the status of the languages/dialects. As valuable as the Chinese language was to CHLLs, when it came to the intergenerational language transmission, these students had their concerns about how they could pass on their linguistic heritage. From their own experiences, they had drawn some tips on what could facilitate the learning as well as anticipated the barriers that could prevent the transmission.

To answer the third research question, Chapter 7 introduced the advantages and difficulties that CHLLs had in their Chinese learning as well as the strategies and pedagogies that CHLLs applied to maintain their heritage language. The intensive language training in the CF program provided CHLLs with an environment to use Chinese, improve their language skills, and fill their knowledge gaps. These learners achieved progress in speaking, listening, and writing abilities. The heritage language background of CHLLs benefited their language learning in pronunciation, grammatical rules, and cultural connotation. However, their linguistic knowledge was usually not learned systematically. Instead, many of the learners learned the language by listening to and speaking with their parents, which resulted in many gaps in their language knowledge, especially in the domains of formal and academic use of Chinese. Furthermore, their background knowledge could also result in CHLLs' disadvantages in learning, because these learners could rely on their intuitive knowledge of the Chinese language and missed the opportunities to gain solid growth in their Chinese skills. In addition to their learning in class, the CHLLs built a learning community with their siblings, classmates, other CHLLs, and native Chinese speakers. The flexibility of new

technologies such as websites, social media, and mobile application software allowed the students to initiate and engage in a virtual environment of language learning and using with more freedom. CHLLs also participated in community activities in the form of volunteering in local weekend Chinese schools. From this experience, these learners practiced their language skills through speaking Chinese with teachers and students and assisting in curriculum preparation and homework assignments. While the Chinese school assistantship helped CHLLs to review their language knowledge, it also reminded them to reflect on their own language learning experience and provoked them to reevaluate the approaches to Chinese teaching.

Chapter 8 presented the findings of the last research question on the relationship between CHLLs' language practices and identity construction. In this chapter, this relationship was unfolded from two aspects: (1) how CHLLs developed a stronger relationship with their heritage and reimagined their Chinese identity in the process of language learning and (2) how the different perspectives of identity affected CHLLs' language study. Growing up at the intersection of two (and more) cultures and languages, CHLLs often questioned their identification. As they entered college and were able to choose to learn what interested them, they sought chances to learn their heritage language to reclaim their heritage identity. Even though the CF program was a FL program and consequently did not offer classes designed specifically for heritage language learners, in the process of learning Chinese, CHLLs linked the cultural elements embedded in the classes with what they had learned at home to make sense of what it meant to be Chinese. However, what the learners identified themselves as was not always in agreement with the labels that others attached to them. In the resistance and negotiation of their

prescribed identities, CHLLs transcended the limits of bounded identity categories and embraced their transnational and intercultural existence. From an investment perspective, the chapter also demonstrated that the reasons that the CHLLs chose to continue their Chinese study were not static. Their motivations and learning experience kept reshaping each other in the process. Moreover, as much as these learners appreciated the opportunity to maintain their heritage language, other values and priorities complicated their choice. This section has summarized the findings of each research question. Based on those findings, I will explain the significance of the study by addressing its implications for HL education from two perspectives: a language learner perspective and a policy planning perspective. Finally, I will revisit my theoretical framework and discuss how the three theoretical components are integrated together to answer my research questions.

### Understanding Heritage Language Learners

Based on the findings of CHLLs' heritage language maintenance practices inside and outside classroom, this section will discuss their implications for HL education from three aspects: (1) Who CHLLs are; (2) What languages they use; and (3) How they use these languages.

#### *Who are CHLLs?*

Wiley (2014a) points out the importance of identifying HLLs in order to “shape the status of the learners and the languages they are learning” (p. 35). The question of who HLLs are is related to pedagogical purposes and language revitalization practices. The definitions of HLLs usually focus on learners' language competence and/or ethnic or cultural ties to the language. From CHLLs' perspective, this study examined how these

learners defined their ethnolinguistic identity and the role of Chinese in their life. The findings suggest these CHLLs considered Chinese language to be an important identifier of their Chinese identity. As minorities in American society, these learners believed learning Chinese helped them to understand their differences and to rekindle connections to their heritage. In other words, this reflects the importance of the ethnolinguistic affiliation aspect of the CHLL definition. No matter what proficiency level their Chinese was at, their desire to maintain their heritage language was the same. Moreover, although the CF Chinese classes were designed for FL learners, CHLLs reported learning Chinese strengthened their personal and emotional connections with the language and their heritage culture. In addition to the affiliation aspect of the definition, learners' language competence is also crucial in the discussion of identifying CHLL. Without looking into the linguistic characteristics of CHLLs, the label of HLL can become a burden for these learners. As the research participants reported, in their Chinese language classroom, these learners more or less felt the pressure from their teachers, peers, and themselves: Because of their heritage background, they were supposed to do better in class.

When educators and program administrators develop a curriculum for HL programs, they need to keep the question of who HL learners are in mind. Literature on HL education has shown that in some cases HL programs are designed based on a pedagogical model for native speakers. For example, the *hoshuukoo* model, a community-based immersion program supported by the Japanese government, teaches Japanese using the curriculum and textbooks approved by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (Chinen, Douglas, & Kataoka, 2013). Although this model offers the intensive pedagogical support that HL schools

desire (Kondo-Brown, 2010), such an arrangement may be inappropriate for HL learners. Oguro and Moloney's (2012) study on Japanese HL learners in Australia indicates a negative effect of placing these learners in courses designed for native speakers. Both teachers and students reported that learners felt misplaced and struggled linguistically and culturally and in some cases learners withdrew from the language program.

Furthermore, Blackledge and Creese (2009) suggest HL schools sometimes become sites to nurture an affiliation to the home country of HL learners' parents, but at times these presupposed "homeland" identities are challenged by the HL learners. Therefore, it is significant to understand who CHLLs are, because it is what the CHLLs have been experiencing daily in the process of their language maintenance. The previous chapter has shown while the research participants identified with the CHLL label, their understanding of their ethnolinguistic identity evolved in their linguistic interactions in the sociolinguistic contexts of U.S., China, and Taiwan. The stories of these learners suggest the identity of CHLL was challenged as these learners were scrutinized during their language practices and they were often facing questions from both Chinese- and English-speaking communities: Why did they learn Chinese language? Was the language they spoke the "correct" Chinese language? Were they legitimate to claim the ownership of Chinese culture and language? CHLLs were placed as insiders in one sociolinguistic context, but outsiders in another. Nevertheless, they did not just passively accept the labels put on them. Through making their personal language policies and expanding their language learning and using community, these learners contested the identities that they were positioned and developed a transcultural identity. Negotiations for inclusion and exclusion suggest the answer to the question of who CHLLs are is not static and



prescriptive. Instead, the CHLL identity is constructed in the social practice of language learning and remains a site of struggle (Norton, 2000).

### *What Languages Do CHLLs Use?*

Addressing HLLs' unique needs is very challenging for college-level language programs mainly aimed at FL learners. Understanding the language characteristics of CHLLs is a start to identify what their unique needs are. Findings of this study confirmed Valdés's (2001) statements that HLLs may seem superior in some aspects, such as conversations on everyday topics and uses of internalized grammatical rules, but limited in other aspects, such as in writing and in using a meta-language to talk about specialized topics. When making a class placement decision, teachers need to balance the strengths and limitations of CHLLs' language skills. As shown in this study, in the upper-level courses of the college Chinese language program, the limitations of CHLLs' skills in writing and advanced vocabulary were more obvious in comparison to their non-heritage peers. Some CHLLs, especially those speaking Chinese at home, had high speaking proficiency and were consequently placed directly in upper-level courses, but they found a difficult time to follow the specialized-content course or to use the high registers of the Chinese language in their writing. The learners reported they were not clearly taught how to write formally, although their writings were often considered too colloquial. Pedagogical methods of teaching writing to CHLLs are needed to help them improve their writing abilities.

Based on learners' experiences in this study, here are some specific suggestions to improve CHLLs' language skills in the formal, academic domain. First, instruction in Chinese helps to expand CHLLs' range of registers of the Chinese language. Despite of

their relatively high proficiency in spoken Chinese, for many CHLLs, their Chinese classes were the first context (or only context) in which they were exposed to what Valdés (2001) calls high-level and midlevel varieties of heritage language. Even though it was sometimes difficult for some students to learn specialized courses, such as linguistics, in Chinese, these students acknowledged with clear instruction and appropriate pace, learning in Chinese was more beneficial. Second, the importance of vocabulary study needs to be emphasized. While the course-required readings offered a vocabulary for the topic under discussion, students did not always have to do those readings to prepare for the class or to do their homework. Even when they did finish the readings, they might still not learn the new words because they often did not need to apprehend those words to understand the readings. As mentioned by the research participants, CHLLs need to be reminded to pay attention to vocabulary study. For those learners who skipped the lower-level language classes, it will be helpful to receive a college-level Chinese vocabulary list developed based on the textbooks used in those classes. Third, progressive writing training helps to conquer the fear of writing. Some CHLLs entered the Chinese language program with a specific goal to improve their writing skills. In the CF program at the MSU, the writing class was attached to a content course of students' choice. Throughout the semester, the facilitator of the writing class worked with the individual student to discuss about what to write based on the topics taught in the content course and increase the length of the essay according to student's progress. This model enabled gradual but constant writing practices for students.

As the Chinese language varieties used at home may be different from Standard Mandarin (Putonghua) and simplified writing system taught in most Chinese language

programs in college, what status should these language varieties hold in classroom? Should these varieties be considered acceptable or problematic? When their home language variety is prone to correction in school, how does it affect CHLLs to maintain their heritage language? This study has shown as CHLLs acquired the standard variety in school, their non-standard varieties were often corrected by their teachers. While adopting the standard variety in class, some students reported their resistance because they believed the correction was not natural or necessary. They put on the standard variety for the class but changed back to their original accents in casual occasions. This study did not find the correction directly hindered CHLLs' language maintenance, but students considered there were other more important issues of their language learning that they could focus on.

#### *How Do CHLLs Use Chinese?*

From learning how CHLLs use the language, we can see what may encourage the learners to maintain Chinese and how it may be adopted in classroom. Findings of this study have shown although there were limited situations and contexts outside of classroom that CHLLs could learn and use Chinese, the language use of CHLLs was vibrant with complex styles and fluid code-switching, and their language choices were complicated by the interlocutors, locations, and topics of the conversations.

Most research participants reported Chinese pop culture, such as Chinese pop music, TV shows, and movies, was a resource to practice their listening and learn new vocabulary. For some learners, being able to watch shows in Chinese even became a motivation to learn Chinese. Watching Chinese shows with parents was not only what many of these students practiced in their language maintenance, but also how they

planned to teach their children. This pop culture element was also adopted in some classes of the CF program. For example, in one literature class, students were required to watch two movies and write reviews. However, this study also suggested not all learners were interested in Chinese pop culture. While some students enjoyed listening to popular songs, watching hit shows in Chinese and sharing them with friends, others considered them confusing and instead found their interest in classical Chinese literature and Chinese history.

With regard to what content to offer in class, this study showed students found it more beneficial when they could integrate what they learned in Chinese class into their overall knowledge base and career development. For the same reason, when students' language proficiency reached a higher level, students felt more challenged and engaged when the contents of their class readings, discussions and assignments were designed in accordance with their intellectual level, instead of harshly simplified and truncated to accommodate their language level.

Language maintenance cannot be completed in classroom. The community efforts are still the mainstay of the heritage language education and in this research we see the community was not restricted to the local Chinese community. For some CHLLs in this study, after they left weekend Chinese school, they felt estranged from their local community. However, studying in the CF program enabled them to connect to other CHLLs, native Chinese speakers, and non-heritage learners. Together, they developed a multilingual community that crossed the boundary of time and space. This organically formed community might not purposely devote to heritage language maintenance, but it offered a casual and intimate environment for these learners to use Chinese without

feeling pushed or judged. Establishing and engaging in such a language network helped to extend language learning outside of classroom and led to a sustainable approach to language maintenance. A growing literature on language community(ies) suggests FL learners interact with their peers and acquire language and content knowledge from each other in diverse contexts (Devos, 2016) and learners feel more comfortable during peer interactions (Philp, Adams, & Iwashita, 2014; Sato & Ballinger, 2016). Moreover, recent studies shed light on how informal FL learning takes place in online spaces through self-organized language learning communities (Benson, 2011; Gao, 2007). Future research may continue to investigate how learning communities are formed and affect language maintenance among HL learners.

#### Chinese Language Education as Foreign Language Policy

Although this research focuses on exploring the process of individual policy making and identity construction, this process does not happen out of the context of the overall language policy toward Chinese in the U.S. Findings in the language ideology chapter have shown an examination of Chinese heritage language education cannot be separated from understanding the status of Chinese language as a foreign language in American society, even though the majority HL education efforts exist at the community level (McGinnis, 2005). This section presents the implications for heritage language education from a policy planning perspective by examining whose language Chinese is (or what kind of language Chinese is) and why Chinese language education is promoted in the context of the CF program.

In recent years, various federally funded non-English language programs were established, which mirrored the recognition of the skilled multilingual professionals as

national resources. However, how did this development benefit the minority language groups in this nation? Previous studies suggested the U.S. FL policies were often developed as a reaction to national problems or crisis (Bale, 2008; Phillips, 2007; Wiley, 2010a). A lack of multilingual capacity was considered to put U.S. at a disadvantageous position from a utilitarian viewpoint. With such a strategic goal in mind, the federal language policies require a language instruction that assures high proficiency of the target language in short time on the one hand, and they foster piecemeal initiatives with a shifting focus in accordance with changes of foreign policies on the other hand (Blake & Kramsch, 2007). In the process of FL promotion, however, there has been no coherent policy related to heritage languages even though the LOTE speakers have rapidly increased in recent decades (McGinnis, 2005). Facing the reality of large population of LOTE speakers, people view this situation as a threat, or a resource for pragmatic policies, or a justification for human right claims (Wiley, 2010a).

Through different lenses of language ideology, Chinese language is seen to have different “faces.” It has been labeled as an exotic foreign language, a language of one’s past, a community language, a language of economic opportunity, or even an enemy’s language. These different language ideologies affect what language policy is adopted, who the target students are, and how the language is taught in school. Bale’s (2008) study of Arabic language programs in the U.S. suggests following the tradition that FL education was intended for monolingual English speakers, the access to programs under Title VI of the National Defense Education Act of 1958 was limited for heritage Arabic speakers. As a product of the National Security Education Act of 1991, the Language Flagship (LF) shares a similar funding source. The programs offered in the LF also aim at

monolingual English speakers. While there was no restriction on heritage learners' enrollment, findings of this research suggested the CF program did not take its students of heritage speakers into consideration when designing its curriculum. Even though many of the teachers and one third of its students were from the Chinese community in the U.S., studies on Chinese immigrants were almost absent from the program's curriculum. Moreover, because CHLLs were not the target student body, as it was shown in previous chapters, the program seemed underprepared to address some special needs of CHLLs (especially those with higher Chinese proficiency), such as expanding students' range of Chinese language and acknowledging different language varieties used by these students.

With the resource-oriented viewpoint toward non-English languages, language programs receiving federal financial support are heavily dependent on the status of a language for the nation's economic competitiveness and national security. All the languages provided in the LF are critical languages listed in the National Security Education Program and are considered "too complex and difficult to learn for most English-speakers," which "resulted in too few speakers of these languages" in the U.S. (Language Flagship, 2013, para 1). From the beginning of its establishment, the LF has had a clear mission to graduate students with professional language skills to serve the state's interests. In order to fulfill this goal, the program adopted various kinds and multiple rounds of standardized tests to assess the achievements of its students. Chapter 5 showed that not only the tests did not always reflect students' language improvement, but also the accountability requirements (to ensure better scores in assessment tests) from the funding organization had negative impacts on the students' learning experience. Chapters 5 and 6 suggested while higher scores might boost CHLLs' confidence in their language

abilities, they did not matter very much overall to these students. There were many reasons for the learners to study Chinese and increasing their language proficiency was not their sole goal. Moreover, an emphasis on assessment results could sacrifice other aspects of learning a language, such as to better understand its native speakers and to further explore the content of learners' interests, and consequently discourage learners from continuing their learning.

### Theoretical Implications

I adopted a three-pronged conceptual framework of language policy, language ideology, and identity formation to address my research questions. As I laid out my conceptual framework, I raised a set of sub-questions that each component of the framework was about to answer. These questions will be further discussed here. Further, although each chapter presented my findings on one research question with a focus on one component of the framework, throughout the research data presented here, there was an obvious interrelationship among the three components in the process of heritage language maintenance practices. This section will pinpoint the intertwined impact of these three components. With regard to the language planning and policy (LPP) component, the sub-questions were: What is the language ecology in which the Mandarin-language program operates? How do CHLLs construct language policies in this context? How does their implicit policymaking affect learners' language practices?

This study adopted a sociocultural approach to LPP that considers LPP as a process in which “people themselves actively create, contest, and mediate LPP at multiple levels” (Hornberger & Johnson, 2011, p. 285). In this multilayered LPP process, the individual agents are believed to not just implement the policies imposed upon them



but they develop their own policies in everyday interaction. This practice challenges the traditional top-down LPP and encourages rethinking what a de facto language policy means. At the macro level, various Chinese language programs were funded as a response to the FL policy of increasing multilingual professionals to ensure national security. As a product of this language promotion policy, the LF program employed standardized testing to hold teachers and students accountable for students' progress. An examination of the MSU CF program suggested this local implementation did not always fulfill the intention of the policy, as the curriculum of many courses was developed by the Chinese department of the host university, which did not share the same mission with the LF program.

What was more interesting was how the CHLLs in this study took advantage of this language education opportunity and made it a heritage maintenance experience for themselves. This research showed many CHLLs originally chose the CF program to increase their competitiveness economically. While this motivation to learn Chinese was in accordance with the intention of the program, the learners' motivation was never singular or unchanged. Moreover, their policymaking did not stop at making the choice of joining the CF program. Throughout their language learning practices, the CHLLs negotiated what language or language variety to use with whom inside and outside of classroom. The findings suggested in the classroom, the learners did not just passively follow the prescribed policies. In fact, the language policies adopted by the teacher were sometimes modified when students carried out their personal language policies. For example, even when simplified Chinese was the official language in many language

classes, some students used traditional Chinese in their writings or resorted to English as they talked to each other.

While this study showed in certain domains CHLLs tended to choose one language or language variety over another, their language choices were affected by various factors simultaneously, which made their choices sometimes seem contradictory. Their level of proficiency in Chinese was one factor that limited their use of Chinese, but sometimes it was the lack of confidence in their language abilities that made them choose English, either because they were afraid to be corrected by native speakers or they were expected to be better than non-heritage learners. When the choices of these CHLLs were examined in everyday social interactions, it showed the process that the learners constructed their language policies was a process in which they established (or avoided to establish) a relationship with other people, expressed the uniqueness of self, and claimed ownership of a culture. In the heteroglossic sociolinguistic environments these CHLLs lived, “languages are not compartmentalized in a diglossic situation, but rather they overlap, intersect, and interconnect” in a fusion of languages, dialects, and semiotic systems, in which CHLLs carried out their hybrid communicative practices for different purposes (García, Bartlett, & Kleifgen, 2007, p. 217).

The policymaking process was closely related to speakers’ language attitudes and ideologies. To understand the language attitudes and ideologies that CHLLs held, I put forward the following questions: How do CHLLs position themselves in the matrix of conflicting language ideologies? How do their ideologies shape their practices of language maintenance? How do their de facto language policies fostered in social practice both reflect and shape their language ideologies?

All CHLLs in this study reported a positive attitude towards Chinese language, but their ideas on what the functions of Chinese were in their lives varied and changed in their practices of language maintenance. Chinese language was endearing to these CHLLs as it was a key for them to connect to their family members who grew up in a culture different from their own. They also appreciated that speaking Chinese offered them another way of thinking and being, and sometimes a language to describe their being. Despite the important values CHLLs placed on Chinese, in practice, English was often the language of choice in most contexts and especially in the formal domains. While most CHLLs felt more confident about their English abilities, their choice of English was not always because of the relatively lower level of their Chinese proficiency. CHLLs accepted English as the *lingua franca* and the official language and felt OK to limit Chinese use in private domains. These feelings reflected the dominant language ideologies that favored English and placed minority languages as either foreign or language of the past.

Despite the minority language status of Chinese in the U.S., CHLLs recognized the rising status of Chinese around the world. China's economic and political rise and ideological difference earned Chinese language a place in the critical language list identified by the U.S. government. Similarly, the belief that learning Chinese could bring potential economic gains encouraged some CHLLs to enroll in the CF program. However, when language education was only considered important to a country for its foreign affairs, its fruit was supposed to produce in foreign soil. In other words, it was not expected to benefit the domestic communities—even though such a result could be a side effect (Ricento, 2005). This was how CHLLs felt about their Chinese education in terms

of its economic returns after they continued their study in the CF program and received more knowledge about China and Chinese language used outside the private domains. If they did not plan to do business with China or work in China, there were few opportunities for them to use their Chinese skills in their career. When the plan to bring Chinese language into professional arena was difficult to fulfill, some CHLLs changed their language maintenance practices by leaving the program or reducing their input into the class. This situation suggested both the official Chinese promotion policy and the personal language maintenance policy were trumped by the dominant language ideology. The rhetoric that promoted Chinese education in the U.S. did not change much about the status of Chinese being mainly a home language in CHLLs' everyday social interactions. Although this did not mean CHLLs stopped their language maintenance practices altogether, as it was shown in the findings, the use of Chinese of CHLLs retreated back to private sectors and maintaining Chinese was mainly for emotional connections to the language.

The final pillar of my conceptual framework was identity (re)construction in social practice. My sub-questions included: What are the profiles of CHLLs' language identity? How do different identity perspectives work together when CHLLs construct their identity through language learning experiences in the language program? How is this identity recognized, contested, and negotiated in everyday language practices across time and place?

In He's (2006) discussion of the role of identity in CHLLs' heritage language development, she suggests HL learners bring with themselves "a set of ambiguities and complications" (p. 2). This description accurately represents the language identities of the

CHLLs in this study. Speaking two or more languages and language varieties, CHLLs navigated within different language communities and negotiated their identities related to these languages and power relations thereof. For these learners, Chinese language was one of the symbols of their cultural heritage. As ethnic minorities in a multicultural society like the U.S., CHLLs were well aware of the difference derived from their ethnic background. Whether interpret this difference as positive or negative affected not only their willingness to embrace their ethnic identity but also their relationship with its associated language, Chinese. When CHLLs sought for inclusion into their local ethnic community or their speech community globally, sustaining the knowledge of Chinese empowered them as it was a demonstration of their association with their community and distinguished themselves from the mainstream American culture. Further, in their language maintenance practices, CHLLs had a better understanding of the cultural knowledge. At the meantime, CHLLs' self-positioning was a discursive process in which inclusion in and exclusion from a group were achieved and recognized in their everyday social interactions. This means CHLLs' identity was not a possession but negotiated and redefined as they used Chinese in the Chinese-speaking communities. The findings showed in the contact with native Chinese speakers, the identity of CHLLs was questioned, which was in connection with how the language community members defined the nature of identity, what language varieties CHLLs spoke, and what language ideologies were held within the community.

Despite the “intimate and mutually constitutive relation” between language and identity (Belz, 2002, p. 16), Chinese language could be absent from the components of a Chinese identity. Some CHLLs used English to keep their connection to their heritage

culture, especially when they had limited time or language proficiency to receive heritage culture-related information in Chinese. English was not only a language of convenience, but also a language of power for CHLLs. Speaking English without a foreign accent made it easier for CHLLs to be accepted as Americans and as a result their Chinese language abilities were viewed more as a resource than an obstacle to social advancement, an attitude held by some immigrant families (see Li, 2006b), or a threat to American identity, an ideology behind various federal policies on non-English languages throughout American history (see Wiley, 2010b). In addition to the prestigious status of English in public space, for CHLLs whose home language was dominantly English, speaking English with their parents who spoke English as a second language was a way to strengthen CHLLs' position in family dynamics.

CHLLs' transcultural background and bilingual abilities provided both challenges and opportunities for them to construct their identities in social interactions. Both English and Chinese were resources for CHLLs to claim their ownership of their heritage identities and to integrate their multilayered identities in a multicultural and multilingual environment. At the same time, the ideological and discursive frame of one nation-one language concept in everyday discourse (King, 2013) tended to illegitimate the CHLLs' cross-boundary existence. As a result, CHLLs' language identity was a process with constant negotiation in which CHLLs employed their agency through their language policymaking based on the language ideologies they held towards both dominant and heritage languages.

This dissertation has explored how language policies and identities are (re)created in heritage language learners' language maintenance practices. While “mechanisms of

ideological control exercised through language policy have been examined extensively at a global level” (Shohamy, 2006, p. 90), an examination of the day-to-day interaction offers a close picture on how language ideologies impact speakers’ de facto language policies and language practices. This dissertation has demonstrated CHLLs to be active stakeholders in heritage language and culture maintenance. It has shown the impressive improvement of learners’ language abilities as a result of both the long-lasting engagement of the students and the intensive training in formal school system. What is crucial for a sustainable language growth is a community in which CHLLs can continue their language learning and using. CHLLs need to be a committed agent of this community, but they should not be the only force to build this community. Stories of CHLLs in this research have illustrated the ups and downs of their language maintenance practices due to various challenges that may affect their current study or future development. They need support to conquer these challenges. But first and foremost, their language maintenance efforts need to be recognized by university language programs that may not acknowledge the special needs of these students and by parents who may believe their children’s Chinese education ends after they leave weekend Chinese school. One participant described her Chinese learning experience used to be like “走在黑暗中，艱苦爬在路不平的隧道裡，雙手摸到的東西也會突然間消失，感覺自己會找不到出路，完全沒有希望” (walking in the dark or crawling in the uneven tunnel. The things [I] had grasped might suddenly disappear. It seemed that I would not find a way out and was totally hopeless). Only with the collective support from educators, parents, and other community members, may we work together to find the light to brighten the journey of heritage language preservation.

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APPENDIX A  
RESEARCH PROTOCOL

## Interview Protocols

### *Part I: Focused Life History*

Let's talk about general information of you and your family.

#### Home

1. Age? Grade in school? Major in school?
2. Where born and grew up?
3. Tell me about your family
  - What are your parents? Where were your parents from? When did they arrive in the US? What was their educational background?
  - Brothers or sisters?
  - Any other family members?
  - How would you describe your relationships with these family members? (What types of things do you do with this family member? What are the good parts of the relationship? Example)
4. What was the first language you learned?
5. What languages were spoken in your family? Explain
  - Who spoke what languages to whom; how the other would reply; what types of things did you do when this language (Chinese/English/dialect) was used
6. What were the rules, if any, in your family about language use? Explain
  - How did you know about these rules? Who made them? How were they enforced?
  - Tell me about the last time you didn't follow your language rules (What did your parents say? What kept you from following these rules)
7. How did you learn Chinese/dialect at home before college?
  - Who taught you?
  - What types of Chinese/dialect language materials were you exposed to?
  - What degree of proficiency did you reach? (Reading, listening, speaking, writing)
  - How did you like this language learning experience?(If didn't learn Chinese in this period, then ask:
  - What kept you from learning Chinese?
  - What would you change in your home to make it easier for you to learn Chinese?)

#### Community

8. Did you attend weekend Chinese school?
  - If yes, tell me about your weekend Chinese school.  
How long had you been there? What made you leave the school?  
What types of Chinese/dialect language materials were you exposed to?  
What did you like most about it? Why did you like this? And least? Why?  
What were the teachers like in the weekend school? What made you think that? Give me an example.

What degree of proficiency did you reach? (Reading, listening, speaking, writing)

What are your parents' attitudes toward your language education at Chinese school?

- If no, what kept you from going to weekend school?
9. What activities did you participate? If no, what kept you from attending community events?
  10. If Chinese school intern, what kind of job did you do? What language used with students, with teachers? What made you choose this job? What made you leave this job?
  11. Did you go to China/Taiwan during this period? If so, tell me about this experience.
    - What language(s) did you use during the visit?
    - Others' reaction to your using Chinese
    - What did you like most about it? Why did you like this? And least? Why?

#### Friends

12. Who were your friends and how did you know them? think of the 2-3 that you spend the most time with.
13. What did you like to do together? Language used?
14. Talk about Chinese language study or Chinese culture with your friend?

#### School

15. Tell me about your school experience in general.
16. Ever use Chinese at school?
  - What happened at school if using Chinese?
  - Reaction from teachers? Classmates?
  - If never used Chinese, did you feel there were rules on language use at school? How did you know about the rules? How were the rules enforced?
17. What other language(s) did you learn during this period?
  - What made you choose this language?
  - On what occasions you used this language? Reactions from others when you use this language outside the language class?
18. Let's talk about your decision on being in CF
  - How long at Chinese Flagship Program?
  - How did you decide on enrolling in this program?
  - How did Flagship program recruit you in this program?
  - What goals did you have for studying in this program?
19. Any other issues you want to talk about?

### *Part II: Details of Experience*

Please tell me about your Mandarin study experience in and out of Flagship Program —

### About Chinese class

1. Tell me what a typical day of your school day is like (from woke up to went to bed).
2. What Chinese language classes have you taken? How did you choose these classes?
3. Describe your last Chinese class. (What did you learn? What textbook materials did you use? What activities did you have?)
4. Describe the student make-up of your class?
5. What languages do teachers use in class? Example. How does it affect your study of Chinese?
6. What languages do you use in class? In what situations do you choose to use? (What topic did you talk about? Who did you talk to? What did you feel when you choose to use Mandarin?)
7. How do other students use languages in class? How do you feel about it?
8. What are your interactions with other classmates like? With teachers?
9. Are there times when you're more aware of your Chinese ethnicity in your Chinese class? Tell me about the last time you felt this way.
10. Describe how you learn Chinese after entering Flagship program? (How do you do your homework? How do you prepare for the new class? for the test?)
11. Describe how a proficient Chinese speaker should be like. If I ask your Chinese teacher this question what would your teacher say?
12. Do you see yourself as a proficient speaker? (What are your grades like?)

### About the program

13. What do you like most about Flagship program? Why? What do you like least? Why? (What would you change if you could change anything)
14. What are your teachers like in Flagship program? What makes you think like that? Example.
15. What sorts of cultural components are you exposed to in the program? How do you feel about these cultural contents? Do you feel your family and cultural backgrounds help you understand these contents? Example.
16. What sorts of professional or academic partnerships are you exposed to in this program for continuing with Chinese learning/using after your graduation?

### Outside Chinese class

17. Was there a change of your language use pattern since you started this program? If so, how did it changed?
18. Describe the last time you initiated speaking Mandarin at home? (What topic did you talk about? Who did you talk to? What did you feel when you choose to use Mandarin?)
19. Do you talk about Chinese learning with your family after starting the program? Any support from your family?
  - If yes, tell me about a recent conversation you had: How did it come up? What did they say? How did you respond? (Get example of actual conversation)

- If no. What do you think about that? Are there things you wish you did talk about? Explain.
20. Do your parents know your Chinese teacher? Do they communicate with your teachers? What do they talk about?
  21. Describe the last time you used Mandarin outside the classroom or home? (What topic did you talk about? Who did you talk to? What did you feel when you choose to use Chinese?)
  22. Is there any support for your Chinese study from outside the family? How did you find the resource?
  23. Other comments about Chinese language and culture learning?

### *Part III: Reflections on Meaning*

Given what you have said about Mandarin study experience, what does it mean to you as a Mandarin language learner?

1. What is the current status of Mandarin? If any, the status of other Chinese language varieties you speak?
2. What are your feelings about this status?
3. What do you see as the benefits of learning Mandarin? (At the individual level, or for yourself? At community level? At the societal level?)
4. What role of Mandarin (and other dialects you speak) plays in your life?
5. What do you want to accomplish through study of Mandarin?
6. In what ways, if any, do you consider your study of Mandarin in relation to your identity as a Chinese heritage language learner?
7. How do you benefit from the ASU Flagship program?
8. What are the strengths of Mandarin study at the Flagship program? What are the weaknesses?
9. How successful is the Flagship program in meeting the goals you identified earlier?
10. Outside this program, what did you do to meet your goals?
11. What did your family or community do to help you meet these goals?
12. Will you teach your children Chinese? How will you teach?
13. Other comments about Chinese language and culture learning?

## Observation Protocols

### *Classroom Observation Protocol*

#### Content

- What is the teacher doing with regard to language content? What language(s) does the teacher use to teach?
- What is the teacher doing with regard to culture content? What language(s) does the teacher use to teach?

#### Participation

- What are all of the things students are asked to do during the class (e.g., observing, being observed, feedback, leading discussion, reviewing student work, etc.)?
- What do students talk about?
- Who talks? What language(s) do students use when talk?

#### Interaction

- What is the atmosphere in the class?
- How does teacher behave toward students (especially participants)?
- How do students (especially participants) behave toward other students?
- How do students (especially participants) behave toward the teacher?
- Describe relationships between the teacher and students, and among students.

#### Context

- What is the size of the classroom?
- What are student characteristics (e.g., demographics)?
- What resources are available for the class?
- What is the arrangement of the physical space and materials?
- How this arrangement shapes class activities and students' participation in them?

### *Other Activity Observation Protocol*

#### Context

- What is the activity?
- What organization arranges this activity?
- What are characteristics of people (e.g., age) who attend this activity?
- What is the arrangement of the physical space and materials?

#### Participation

- What is the role of the research participants (RPs) in this activity?
- What do RPs do in this activity?
- What languages are used? Are they the same as what RPs use?

### Interaction

- What is the atmosphere in the activity?
- How do RPs behave toward other people in this activity?
- Describe relationships between RPs and other people?



APPENDIX B  
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

**To:** Teresa Mccarty  
ED 144E

**From:** Mark Roosa, Chair  
Soc Beh IRB

**Date:** 02/08/2013

**Committee Action:** **Exemption Granted**

**IRB Action Date:** 02/08/2013

**IRB Protocol #:** 1302008770

**Study Title:** Language Policy, Ideology, And Identity: A Qualitative Study Of University-Level  
Chinese Heritage Language Learners

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(1) (2) .

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.