

Raising Children Bilingually in Mixed Marriages:
Stories of Four Vietnamese-Caucasian Families

by

Ha Lam

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Terrence Wiley, Co-Chair
Nicholas Appleton, Co-Chair
Joseph Tobin

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the experiences of parents in mixed marriages (Vietnamese married to non-Vietnamese) raising their children in the United States. Specifically, this study focused on what factors influence parents' development of family language policies and patterns of language use. While research has been done on language policy and planning at the macro-level and there are an increasing number of studies on family language policy at the microlevel, few studies have focused on couples in mixed marriages who are heritage language speakers of the language they are trying to teach their children. This study used both surveys and interviews to gather data about parents' beliefs and attitudes towards bilingualism and the heritage language (HL), strategies parents are using to teach their children the HL, and major challenges they face in doing so. There were three main findings. First, parents without full fluency in the HL nevertheless are able to pass the HL on to their children. Second, an important factor influencing parents' family language policies and patterns of language use were parents' attitudes towards the HL—specifically, if parents felt it was important for their children to learn the HL and if parents were willing to push their children to do so. Third, proximity to a large Vietnamese community and access to Vietnamese resources (e.g., Vietnamese language school, Vietnamese church/temple, etc.) did not assure families' involvement in the Vietnamese community or use of the available Vietnamese resources. The findings of this study reveal that though language shift is occurring in these families, parents are still trying to pass on the HL to their children despite the many challenges of raising them bilingually in the U.S.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, An Lam and Nu Loi, who did not have the opportunity for higher education themselves but always pushed me to do my best in my studies. Daddy, I did it! I will be thinking of you as I walk across the stage to receive my diploma. I wish you could be here to celebrate with me and watch the boys grow up.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

RATIONALE FOR THIS STUDY

I was born in Vietnam but my family immigrated to the United States in 1979 when I was four years old. Growing up in the U.S., people would often ask me, “Where are you from?” and I would reply, “I’m Vietnamese.” However, if my parents were around and heard this, they would get mad at me and say, “No, you are not Vietnamese, you are Chinese.” I never understood why my parents insisted we were Chinese since: (a) both my parents and all of my siblings and I were born in Vietnam; (b) my siblings and I knew much more Vietnamese than we did Chinese; and (c) my parents usually spoke Vietnamese with one another and only used Chinese if they didn’t want us to understand something or if they were with their Chinese friends.

Not until I began my doctoral program did I first hear the term “ethnic Chinese born in Vietnam,” which more precisely captures my particular ethnic situation. For the first time, I finally understood why my parents insisted that we were “Chinese” and not Vietnamese because my grandparents were born in China and had immigrated to Vietnam in their teens. My mother, the oldest of 13 children, went to Chinese school in Vietnam and we lived in the Chinese part of town in Saigon—“Cholon”—literally translated as “Big market,” since ethnic Chinese Vietnamese tended to be business owners and live there. Suddenly it made sense why my paternal grandfather, while he understood and spoke some Vietnamese, was always much more comfortable reading, writing, and speaking Chinese.

But what am I? When I visited Vietnam and spoke Vietnamese, people looked at me strangely and had trouble understanding me. When I visited China, people told me that I am not Chinese because I do not speak Chinese. I have grown up predominately in the United States and English is my dominant language. However, because I have Asian features, people often comment on how good my English is.

When I was growing up, my parents always spoke Vietnamese to my siblings and me and we would respond in Vietnamese, but my siblings and I are much more comfortable speaking English with one another. My siblings and I would often translate for my parents growing up—at doctor’s visits, parent-teacher meetings, etc. I do not know where along the way it became difficult to communicate with my parents in Vietnamese.

I went to American schools and learned English while my parents worked to support us. Because they did not have the opportunity to learn English in a formal setting, my parents have limited literacy in English. My mother can read, write, and speak Chinese and Vietnamese. My father could read, write and speak Vietnamese and only speak Chinese since he did not attend Chinese school in Vietnam. Since there were few opportunities to use Vietnamese or Chinese outside the home and I realized early on that English was the language of power and achievement, I learned English quickly and excelled in school while my Vietnamese language skills stayed at the four year old level. However, even as many would tout me as a “success” story, I have always been bothered by the fact that I am not comfortable speaking Vietnamese. While I can talk with my mother about the weather and food, I do not know how to explain to her about the research I am doing and why it is important to me.

According to Fishman (1966), the typical pattern of language shift of immigrant families in the United States is three generations. The first generation tends to be dominant in the heritage language (HL) and the HL is the primary language used in the home. For the second generation, while they may continue to use the heritage language at home, once they enter school, they tend to become dominant in English and develop literacy in English. In general, the second generation tends to use the heritage language with their parents and in their ethnic communities, but English is used in all other domains—with their siblings and friends, at school and at work. By the third generation, little—if any—of the HL is passed on from the second generation to the third

generation since second-generation parents predominately speak English with their third-generation children.

If Fishman's (1966) theory of language shift holds true—that language shift usually occurs within three generations, then the second generation—*my* generation—is crucial to deciding whether or not the heritage language is maintained. So what do I need to do if I do not want the HL to be completely lost on my watch? What needs to happen to reverse or at least slow down the rate of language shift?

This is the dilemma that has motivated the topic for this dissertation. Here is my story: I am a 1.5 generation ethnic Chinese Vietnamese American married to a Caucasian, who speaks Spanish fluently, and have two children. It would make sense for us to teach our children Spanish since my husband is fluent in Spanish and I know a smattering of it. Furthermore, Spanish is a far more useful language than Vietnamese in terms of number of speakers worldwide and opportunities for advancement. However, Spanish is not my heritage language nor my husband's. It is important to me that my children be able to speak some Vietnamese because it is their heritage. But how do I teach my children Vietnamese if I have limited proficiency in Vietnamese and my husband does not speak it at all? This dissertation is a step towards answering that question.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Implications of language loss. “What is lost when a language is lost?” (Fillmore, 2000, p. 206) and why should we care? Some would argue that it does not matter that “children lose their family language as they learn English as long as it does not interfere with their educational development and success in school” (Wong Fillmore, 2000, p. 207). Some would go even so far as to assert that it is part of the learning process and becoming assimilated into American culture.

Fillmore (2000) challenges the paradigm that HL loss is necessary or inevitable when children learn English. She argues that educators need to re-evaluate their view of what counts as “school success” for immigrant children. Can educators truly say that immigrant children are “successful” if they learn English and achieve academically at the cost of losing their HL and thus, the language of communication with their parents and grandparents? Fillmore (2000) asserts that it is not enough for schools to help students learn English and make progress in school since

learning English as a second language and dealing with school successfully are just one set of problems to be faced. Hanging on to their first language as they learn English is an equally great problem. Hanging on to their sense of worth, their cultural identities, and their family connections as they become assimilated into the school and society is a tremendous problem for all immigrant children. What is at stake in becoming assimilated into the society is not only their educational development but their psychological and emotional well being as individuals as well (Cummins, 1996). (Fillmore, 2000, p. 207)

Fillmore’s (2000) case study of one Chinese family reveals the sad reality that is becoming increasingly common for many immigrant families whose children learn English at the cost of losing the family/heritage language: “There is tension in this home: The adults do not understand the children, and the children do not understand the adults. Father, Mother, and Grandmother do not feel they know the children, and they do not know what is happening in their lives” (p. 205). Other studies also document HL loss resulting in children’s inability to communicate with their parents, causing a breakdown in family communication that can lead to alienation of children from their parents and delinquency:

“My parents and I do have a communication gap, a communication problem. Not in just a sophisticated way. I can’t even hold a normal conversation with my parents. I just say my thoughts and I repeat it constantly until they understand” (Cho & Krashen, 1998, p. 33).

Change of attitudes/policies towards bilingualism. Throughout its history, the United States has had a conflicted view towards multilingualism. Some scholars (Pavlenko, 2002; Spolsky, 2011) believe that before the 1930s, many in the U.S. had positive attitudes towards bilingualism, and after the 1930s, positive attitudes towards bilingualism were “replaced with the widespread belief that it had little to contribute, and that the teaching of foreign languages in school was a bad thing, encouraging the maintenance of linguistic heritages. Bilingualism became associated with inferior intelligence and lack of patriotism” (Spolsky, 2004, p. 95). However, Wiley (1998) notes that in the late 1830s, language prejudice and religious bigotry became an issue and an attempt to end instruction in German was made but failed.

Many scholars have noted language shift occurring in the U.S. (Veltman, 1981; Rumbaut, 2009). Although Fishman’s (1966) study of immigrant languages in the United States found that the majority of non-English-speaking immigrants shift towards English in two or three generations, Spolsky (2004) notes “this process was neither universal nor consistent” (p. 93). Fishman (1966) found that “Two processes—de-ethnization and Americanization on the one hand, and cultural-linguistic self-maintenance on the other—are equally ubiquitous throughout all of American history” (p. 15).

Historically, Kloss (1966) found that factors such as size, level of cultivation, or location had ambivalent results as potential causes of language loss, but found that languages that were established earliest (e.g., French) seemed to hold on the longest. Furthermore, Spolsky (2004) states “Communities that closed themselves off from social, political, religious, cultural and economic integration with the general culture—the Amish and the Hasidic Jews were the obvious cases—were successful also in maintaining their native languages” (p. 94).

Currently, there is a growing trend for middle-class parents to want their children to raise their children bilingually since many feel bilingualism (if not multilingualism) is necessary for our

increasingly diverse and globalized society. Piller (2001) has noted that bilingual parenting has joined the ranks of classical music for babies in the womb, baby signing, and swim lessons for infants as par for the course of “good parenting” for middle-class parents. Increasingly more immigrant parents are rejecting the notion that one must lose the heritage language to acquire English and assimilate to life in the U.S.

Importance of language maintenance. Crawford (2000) discusses four reasons, which advocates for language maintenance typically give for preserving linguistic diversity—three of which are based on the premise that preserving language is important for linguistic and intellectual diversity; however, he asserts:

the most effective line of argument appeals to the nation’s broader interest in social justice. We should care about preventing the extinction of languages because of the human costs to those most directly affected. ‘The destruction of a language is the destruction of a rooted identity’ (Fishman, 1991: 4) for both groups and individuals. Along with accompanying loss of culture, language loss can destroy a sense of self-worth, limiting human potential and complicating efforts to solve other problems, such as poverty, family break down, school failure, and substance abuse. (p. 63)

However, can these same arguments for why we need to help immigrant children maintain their HL apply to the 1.5 and second-generation parents who are trying to teach their children the HL? Some would argue that their situation is different—what is in jeopardy is no longer so high-stakes because the 1.5 and second-generation parents are proficient in English and have the ability to communicate with their children in English. Even though the case of 1.5 and second-generation parents wanting to teach their children the HL is not the same as first-generation immigrant parents’ situation, the loss of parents’ ability to pass on the HL is an enormous loss of language resources for individuals, communities, and the nation.

Scholars argue that helping families and communities maintain and pass on the heritage language to their children is important for various reasons. For example, linguists tout the importance of language maintenance as a value in and of itself; i.e., languages are an important resource (parallel it with the environment) (Crawford, 2000). Others give more practical reasons, such as that being bi- or multi-lingual is an economic asset (e.g., to be more competitive in world economy and more employable and marketable) due to the increasingly global world we live in and for reasons of national security, while others cite the cognitive and academic advantages of being bilingual. More recently scholars have advocated for language maintenance because it promotes family relations and closeness between family members (Tannenbaum & Berkovich, 2005).

While many studies have found a relationship between parents' attitudes towards the HL and HL maintenance, increasingly, other studies have found that positive beliefs by themselves are insufficient to assuring children will learn the HL (Wu, 200; Park, 2007; Felling, 200; Young & Tran, 1999; Mar, 1988). Furthermore, other studies have found that sending children to HL community/weekend schools is not sufficient either (Wu, 2007; Lao, 2004).

Research has also shown that parents play a significant role in HL maintenance (Hinton, 2001; Kondo, 1998; Park, 2007; Wu, 2007). According to Hinton (1999), "children who retained fluency or near-fluency in their native language come from homes where the heritage language was spoken as a matter of policy" (p. 15). Hakuta and Pease-Alvarez's (1994), Wu's (2007), and Lao's (2004) findings concur with Hinton's assertion of the importance of parents using the HL at home with children.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Previous research on heritage language maintenance, shift, and loss have focused on various aspects:

(a) the rate in which language shift is occurring among the various immigrant groups;

- (b) factors which seem to influence heritage language maintenance or language shift;
- (c) strategies and methods parents have tried to teach their children the HL and whether they are successful;
- (d) the effectiveness of community/weekend HL schools in helping children to maintain the HL and culture/ethnic identity;
- (e) the relationship between proficiency in the HL and ethnic identity; and
- (f) the relationship between proficiency in the HL and academic achievement.

As stated earlier, research on HL studies have focused on first-generation co-ethnic parents who share the same native/ethnic language and are trying to teach that language to their children while living in the U.S. Studies have documented the enormous difficulties that these parents face trying to raise their children bilingually and biculturally in the United States even though they both speak the ethnic language (Alba et al., 2002; Alshaboul, 2004; Ishizawa, 2004; Portes & Hao, 1998; Portes & Schauffler, 1994; Worthy & Rodriguez-Galindo, 2006; Wu, 2007). What happens to the 1.5 and second generation who marry exogamously and want to raise their children bilingually and biculturally? What strategies do they use to teach their children the ethnic language and culture? What are the family dynamics in a mixed marriage in which only one parent speaks the HL and the other parent does not? Furthermore, what special challenges do they face since the parent is a heritage speaker of the ethnic language, yet dominant in English?

THE PRESENT STUDY

This study is focused on learning about the experiences of 1.5 and second-generation parents who are trying to teach their children the HL. Specifically, this study looks at four case studies of parents in mixed marriages—namely, 1.5 and second-generation Vietnamese Americans married to non-Vietnamese, who are trying to raise their children bilingually in the HL in the United States. The 1.5 and second-generation Vietnamese American population is unique in that they have grown up predominately in the United States, “lack meaningful connections to the ‘old’

world,” and are “unlikely to consider a foreign country as a place to return to or as a point of reference” (Zhou, 1997, p. 64). The challenge of teaching their children the ethnic language and culture is further compounded because: (a) they may not be fluent in the ethnic language and (b) their spouse does not speak the ethnic language.

This study seeks to learn about parents’ experiences trying to raise their children bilingually in a mixed marriage. While important to talk about what this study seeks to do, it is important to clarify what it does not:

1. The focus of this study is not on the children—whether they become bilingual -- but on the parents as they try to raise their children bilingually.
2. This study does not seek to evaluate parents’ or children’s proficiency in English or Vietnamese.
3. The focus of this study is not to find whether discrepancies exist between what the parents self-report they are doing and what they are actually doing but to learn about parents’ experiences, beliefs, and attitudes.

It should be noted that participants in this study are an anomaly. Though many were born and raised in the United States or in Canada where English is the dominant language, they have managed to maintain their HL into adulthood, and are trying to raise their children bilingually despite the fact that only one parent speaks the HL.

The overarching research question for this study is: what are parents’ experiences in a mixed marriage (1.5 and second-generation Vietnamese American married to non-Vietnamese) trying to teach their children the heritage language (Vietnamese)? Subsequent research questions are listed below:

1. What are patterns of language use?
2. What factors influence language use?

3. What are the families' family language policies, either explicit or implicit, and how did they develop?
4. What strategies do parents use to teach their children the HL?
5. What are parents' goals and expectations regarding children's proficiency in the HL?
How do parents define "success" regarding their efforts to teach the HL?
6. What are parents' beliefs and attitudes towards the HL and culture? Specifically, why do parents want their children to learn the HL and culture?
7. How long do families stay the course to teach their children the HL? What factors affect whether or not families continue teaching their children the HL?

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Below are important terms used throughout the study. I attempt to briefly describe how other scholars have defined and used the terms and then discuss how I use them the terms for the purposes of this study.

First generation. The first of a generation to become a citizen in a new country.
(<http://www.google.com/dictionary?langpair=en%7Cen&q=first+generation&hl=en&aq=f>)

1.5 and second generation. Usage of the terms 1.5 generation and second generation has not been consistent in the research literature. The 1.5 generation "is sometimes broken down into two distinct cohorts: children between 6 and 13 years of age as 1.5-generation children and those arriving between as adolescents (aged 13 to 17) who are similar to first generation children" (Zhou, 1997, p. 65). Second generation generally refers to children of immigrants born in the U.S. However, "the second generation is sometimes broadened to include foreign-born children arriving at pre-school age (0-4 years)" (Zhou, 1997, p. 65). For the purposes of this study, I define (a) first generation as those born outside of the U.S. and arriving to the U.S. as adults or late teens; (b) 1.5 generation as children who are foreign-born but immigrated to the U.S. at a young age; and (c) second generation as children born in the U.S.

Third generation. Born in the US of native-born parents.

(<http://pewforum.org/surveys/hispanic/glossary/>)

Mixed marriage. Throughout my search for studies related to my topic of mixed marriage and language use, I have found there is not a consistent label to refer to these families. Some of the studies have used the term “interlingual family” (Yamamoto, 2001), while others use “intermarriage” (Alba et al, 2002) and “linguistic intermarriage” (Jackson, 2009). I choose to use the term “mixed marriage” to include all of these terms and define it simply as a marriage in which the partners do not share the same native language. For the purposes of this study, I do not focus on race or culture but rather on language. Thus, I do not use the term “interracial families” (Luke & Luke, 1998), “mixed-race marriage,” or “cross-cultural marriage” although I acknowledge that race and culture are factors since one spouse is of Vietnamese origin and the other spouse is Caucasian.

Heritage language. Heritage language is also referred to by various names: “mother tongue” (Stevens, 1985), “ethnic language” (Okita, 2002), “minority language” (Ishizawa, 2004), “ancestral language” (Eamer, 2008), and “community language” (Wiley, 2005). I agree with other scholars such as Wiley (2001) that the term “heritage language” should not be used as a “one-size-fits-all” term. However, due to space limitations, I will not discuss the complexities of how the use of the term “heritage language” in the United States refers to immigrant languages, indigenous languages, and colonial languages is problematic (for a fuller discussion of this, see Wiley, 2001, p. 29-36). For the purposes of this study, I define heritage language as “the language with which an individual has historical and personal connections” (Park, 2007).

Language maintenance. “...a situation in which a speaker, a group of speakers, or a speech community continue to use their language in some or all spheres of life despite competition with the dominant or majority language to become the main/sole language in these spheres” (Pauwels, 2005)

http://www.blackwellreference.com/public/tocnode?id=g9781405138093_chunk_g978140513809

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Language shift. Some scholars have defined language shift as “the change from the habitual use of one language to that of another” (Weinreich, 1952 as cited in Kouritzin, 1997, p.14), either by a language community or an individual. Pauwels (2005) defines language shift as “...the change (gradual or not) by a speaker, a group of speakers, and/or a speech community from the dominant use of one language in almost all spheres of life to the dominant use of another language in almost all spheres of life.”

Language loss. Language loss occurs “when [a]...minority group member cannot do the things with the minority language that he [sic] used to be able to do....Some of the proficiency he [sic] used to have is no longer accessible” (Fase, Jaspaert & Koon, 1992, p. 8 as cited in Kouritzin, 1997, p.14).

Bilingual. Shin (2005) defines a bilingual as not being “two monolinguals in one person, a bilingual is rarely equally or completely fluent in the two languages. This is because the bilingual speaker uses his/her two languages for different purposes in different circumstances. Rather than using the monolingual as a yardstick against which a bilingual’s proficiency in each language is measured and judged to fall short, one needs to consider a bilingual as a fully competent speaker who has developed adequate competences in the two languages for his or her particular communicative needs” (p. 39).

SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to:

- (1) introduce why the topics of language shift and language maintenance are important;
- (2) give an overview of what research on heritage language shift and maintenance has focused on;
- (3) state the research questions and parameters for this study; and
- (4) define key terminology pertinent to the present work.

The next chapter reviews literature that informs the present study. Chapter 3 provides a detailed account of the methodology used for this study. Chapter 4 discusses the findings of this study. Chapter 5 summarizes the key findings of this study and discusses the contributions, implications, and limitations of this work.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This literature review will focus on two main areas of research: (1) language policy and planning—and within this area focus specifically on family language policy to provide the theoretical framework; and (2) “family language dynamics,” a term borrowed from Felling (2006, p. 23). This is not a specific area of research but rather a collection of studies that focus on “outside-family forces” (Lambert & Taylor, 1996, p. 480) and “inside-family dynamics” to examine patterns of language maintenance and language shift.

LANGUAGE POLICY & PLANNING

The concepts of language policy and language planning are closely connected. In essence, the study of language policy and planning (LPP) can be summed up by asking the question: “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*?” (Cooper, 1989, p. 98 as cited in Felling, 2006, p. 11).

Spolsky (2004) differentiates between policy and practices. Spolsky proposes a framework for studying LPP and identifies three key components of language policy:

- (a) Language ideology: Everyone has certain beliefs about language and these beliefs affect what they do with language whether they choose to establish a language policy or to shift. These practices reinforce reinforce people’s beliefs;
- (b) Language practice: What people do with language;
- (c) Language management: The specific acts to manage and manipulate language behavior.

Traditionally, LPP has been examined at the macro-level in institutions (such as language of schools, churches, etc.) and governments (such as language of constitutions, and legislatures, etc.) versus the micro-level. However, some scholars assert the need for more studies at the microlevel since LPP at the macrolevel influences the microlevel and LPP at the microlevel influences the macrolevel (Fishman, 1991; Luykx, 2003; Spolsky, 2004). King and Logan-Terry (2008) note:

Nearly all work on language policy, both theoretical and empirical, has focused on language policy and planning efforts in institutional contexts such as the state, the school, or the workplace (e.g., Palozzi, 2006; Ricento, 2006; Robinson et al., 2006; Wiley & Wright, 2004). With few exceptions (e.g., Piller, 2001; Okita, 2001), very little attention has been paid to language policy within the intimate context of the home. Yet family language policy is an important area of investigation as not only does it set the framework for child-caretaker interactions and ultimately, child language development (De Houwer, 1999), but it also provides a direct window into parental language ideologies, thus reflecting broader societal attitudes and ideologies about both language and parenting. (p. 6)

Cooper (1989) was one of the first to talk about the need to expand LPP into smaller domains since “the same processes which operate in macrolevel operate in microlevel planning” (p. 37-38 as cited in Felling, 2006, p. 11). Increasingly, there has been a growing interest in studying LPP on a smaller scale such as the family unit because families play a crucial role in language maintenance and shift. Fishman (1991) argues that the language used in the home is the crucial factor in predicting whether a HL will be maintained across generations. Fishman further states that it is not possible to reverse language shift at the societal level “if it is not accomplished at the intimate family and local community levels” (p. 4). Hakuta & D’Andrea, 1992 and Hakuta & Pease-Alvarez, 1994 have also found this to be true. Spolsky (2004) further asserts the importance of studying family language policy:

the family is an important domain in which to study language policy, both to understand how external pressures are reflected in it and because of the critical relevance to decisions inside the family concerning the language or languages with which children should grow up. A decision to transmit or not to transmit the heritage language is a major influence in language shift or maintenance. (pp. 45-46)

“Family language policy” (FLP) is a relatively new term (Luykx, 2003; Spolsky, 2004; King & Fogle, 2006). King and Fogle (2006a) define “family language policies” as overt (Schiffman, 1996), explicit (Shohamy, 2006) decisions about how language is allocated within family communication” (p. 696). However, Spolsky (2004) notes that in many families, there is “no explicit language management but simply choices based on practice and ideology. Occasionally, however, there are clear cases of language management” (p. 43). Curdt-Christensen (2009) defines family language planning as “a deliberate attempt at practicing a particular language use pattern and particular literacy practices within home domains and among family members” and argues that FLP “is shaped by what the family believes will strengthen the family’s social standing and best serve and support the family members’ goals in life” (p. 352). She further argues that “Competing with mainstream ideologies, children’s popular culture and peer influence on children’s social values, resisting mainstream imposition, fighting for economic survival and struggling for legal status are the challenges that immigrant families face in combating language loss (Spolsky, 2004; Canagarajah, 2008; Clyne, 2003; Maguire & Curdt-Christiansen, 2007; Gibbons & Ramirez, 2004)” (p. 353).

Spolsky (2004) asserts that his framework for studying LPP can also be applied to studying FLP: “Just as in any other social unit, language policy in the family may be analyzed as language practice, ideology and management” (p. 43). Furthermore, whether in macro or micro LPP, Spolsky (2004) asserts there is a “language manager”:

The language manager might be a legislative assembly writing a national constitution . . . Or it might be a national legislature, making a law determining which language should be official. Or it could be a state or provincial or cantonal or other local government body determining the language of signs. It can be a special interest group seeking to influence a legislature to amend a constitution or make a new law. It can be a law court determining what the law is or an administrator implementing (or not) a law about language. Or it can be an institution or business, deciding which languages to use or teach or publish or provide interpreters for. Or it can be a family member trying to persuade others in the family to speak a heritage language (p. 8).

Language ideology plays a key role in shaping LPP and is a key driving force behind language shift. Many scholars have noted the relationship between language ideology and language shift but “the potential impact of language ideology on family language shift has yet to be explored in a focused way” (Felling, 2006, p. 20). Felling (2006) argues that what individuals and families believe about language plays an important role in whether they maintain their HL or shift to the dominant one. Language ideology is very important if what one believes about language affects what they do with language—especially if what parents believe is not based on evidence but rather on myth and folk theory. For example, if parents believe that teaching their children two languages simultaneously can have negative effects such as language delay or language confusion, it might deter them from teaching their children the heritage language (King & Fogle, 2006-CALdigest). Also, many people believe that children growing up in households in which parents speak different languages will “automatically” learn the languages because they are exposed to them at home. However, linguists argue that mere exposure to a language is not enough to guarantee that children learn to speak it (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1995).

FAMILY LANGUAGE POLICY

Many scholars have argued for more studies on family language planning and policy. Spolsky (2004) states: “Most of the knowledge that we have of family language policy derives from anecdotal accounts or from ethnographies of interesting multilingual communities” (p. 43). He stresses the importance of studying language transmission in the family domain to understand patterns of language shift/maintenance and views the home as an important site to examine how external pressures impact family language policies. King and Logan-Terry (2008) cite the need to “provide better descriptive data on how family language policies are implemented and negotiated in the home, as well as how such policies and practices are linked to both child language usage and caretaker identities in the family” (p. 7). Luykx (2003) argues for an expanded view of language policy to include FLP because FLP plays a significant role in language shift:

It is important to expand our current conception of ‘language policy’ to include not only the sphere of official state actions but also decisions made about the community and family level (such decisions are often implicit and unconscious, but they are no less crucial to determining the speed and direction of language shift) (p. 39 as cited in Felling, 2006, p. 14).

Shohamy (2006) also argues for an expanded view of language policy and asserts the need to look beyond official policy documents because sometimes “mechanisms” covertly and implicitly affect language practices. Mechanisms can range from rules and regulations, to language educational policies and language tests to “language in public space.” She argues that language in public space is one of the major mechanisms affecting de facto policies. Language in public space include actual language items found in streets, shopping centers, public spaces, and private ones like homes (e.g., street signs, billboards, internet, titles of books, names of people, etc.). Language in public spaces is affected by language ideology, myths, propaganda, and coercion.

Despite calls to incorporate the family domain into LPP research, Felling (2006) states the response has been “underwhelming” most likely due to “scholarly divisions within linguistics” since “LPP researchers are generally unconcerned with family dynamics, and family analysts are likewise unconcerned with the concepts and frameworks of LPP” (p. 14). However, some scholars have combined the frameworks and are among the first to situate FLP within the broader LPP framework. For example, Piller (2001) focuses on “private language planning” and states “it is not only states who engage in language planning but also individuals” (p. 62). In her study of 47 English-German couples, Piller (2001) looked at couples’ language choice and negotiation of identity in interlinguistic marriages. She found the majority of couples use the community language as the language of communication with one another. In explaining why they use the language they use, most couples stated that it was the result of “habit”—i.e., the language they used when they first met is the language they tend to stick with. Also, Grosjean (1982) speaks of childhood bilingualism as ‘a planned affair’ and of ‘planned bilingualism in the family’ in reference to parents who make a conscious decision to raise their children bilingually” (p. 169, 173).

King and Fogle’s (2006) study looked at the family language policies of parents trying to raise their children bilingually in Spanish and English and focused on what sources parents drew from to establish their language policies. They found that though parents “cite and acknowledge input from the popular press and parenting literature as well as from family networks, parents frame these external sources in terms of the beliefs they have formed as a result of their own personal experiences. Their own personal encounters with language learning—successful or unsuccessful—seem to serve as the primary motivator in opting for an additive or enrichment family language policy” (p. 706). Jackson’s (2009) study of Japanese women married to Australian men living in Japan also found that the parents developed their family language policy “not so much on the popular literature as on anecdotal stories from friends and acquaintances” (p. 281). King and Fogle (2006) argue that “family language policies for the promotion of additive

bilingualism have become incorporated into mainstream parenting practices” (p. 695). –

Felling’s (2006) study looked at the family language policies of 15 middle and upper-middle-class Iranian families in the U.S. She found that parents held pro-bilingualism language ideologies that indicate “bilingualism is good for my child” and “language transmission makes me a good parent.” Furthermore, Felling’s study concurs with King and Fogle’s (2006) assertion that family language policies of raising children bilingually has become part of mainstream middle-class parenting practices since many of the parents in her study viewed raising children bilingually as simply part of “good parenting” (p. 162).

However, even though all of the parents in Felling’s study held positive attitudes towards bilingualism and wanted their children to know the HL, and that most of the parents had made the decision to speak only Persian at home, Felling concludes that language shift was still occurring in these families. Perhaps most troubling about this language shift is that

...it appeared that it was their [parents’] own Spockian approach to parenting that had robbed them of this inclination [to fight children’s resistance], since, in trying to attend to every little detail of their children’s lives (i.e., hyper-parenting), they ultimately had less time and energy for language maintenance and, in many cases, simply ‘gave up’. Hence, it was somewhat paradoxical that the very ideology that made language maintenance so important to parents in the first place (a belief that they alone were responsible for developing their children’s cognitive potential) was ultimately responsible for its demise (p. 163).

Thus, sadly, even though the parents were trying to teach their children the HL, they found it too difficult to enforce the family language policies (both for themselves and their children) while juggling the day-to-day demands of childrearing and family life; so that many eventually gave up

trying to teach their children the HL. Felling's (2006) study is significant in that it is one of the few that directly examines family language policy and planning in relation to language shift.

Park's (2007) study of Korean parents and adolescents found that while parents and adolescents had positive beliefs and attitudes towards bilingualism and the HL, the families adopted three different types of family language policies: Korean at home; English at home; or *laissez-faire* (which ultimately resulted in English). She found that parents who adopted Korean as the home language policy had children who attained higher proficiency in Korean and were more confident in their Korean abilities than children whose parents used English at home or adopted a *laissez faire* policy, which ultimately resulted in English. While the adolescents tended to use more Korean with their parents and their parents' generation, they used English predominately with their peers. Park also found that adolescents used the HL more for listening than speaking purposes and Korean was not identified as a language of literacy despite the availability of books, videos, and SATs in Korean, etc. One of Park's most interesting findings is that the "Home serves as the number one domain for HL use. However, it is not the place, but the parents that make home a heritage language domain" (p. 137). Overall, Park concluded that language shift is occurring amongst the second-generation and that some predictors of Korean proficiency are if adolescents speak Korean with their parents and if they watch Korean TV programs. It is important to note that although the adolescents had many factors which previous research has found to encourage HL maintenance such as availability of HL in worship institutions (Tse, 2001), HL schools, literacy materials and other mass media in HL, in general, Korean adolescents in Park's study are passive bilinguals rather than active bilinguals. Even though adolescents in Park's study had access to the HL in church, she found that they used mainly English with one another instead of the HL.

Curd-Christian's (2009) study of 10 Chinese immigrant families in Quebec, Canada, examined parents' beliefs about language ideology and its impact on their FLP decision-making.

She found that parents' language ideologies played both a visible and invisible part in forming the families' FLP and that FLPs are strongly influenced by sociopolitical and economic factors. In particular, parents' educational background, their immigrant experiences, and their cultural disposition (permeated by Confucian thinking) contributed significantly to parents' high educational expectations and aspirations for children to learn Chinese, English, and French. Parents valued multilingualism for its "market value" (p. 364). Parents did not believe that learning English and French should be at the cost of losing the HL (Chinese).

FAMILY LANGUAGE DYNAMICS

As stated previously, "family language dynamics" (Felling, 2006, p. 23) do not refer to a specific area of research, but for the purposes of this present study, the phrase refers a collection of studies that focus on "outside-family forces" (Lambert & Taylor, 1996, p. 480) and "inside-family dynamics" to examine patterns of language maintenance and language shift. This review will include studies focusing on both co-ethnic marriages (couples who share a common HL) and cross-national marriages (couples who have different native languages).

While some studies have focused on "outside-family forces" and others have focused on "inside-family dynamics," the majority of studies tend to examine a combination of both. Both outside and inside forces have been found to be significant in regards to language maintenance and language shift. The present study focuses on "inside-family dynamics"; hence, this literature review will focus on factors related to "inside-family dynamics" with a brief discussion of some "outside-family forces" that existing research has identified as significant.

Inside-family dynamics. Studies have investigated many variables that affect "inside-family dynamics"—some have examined household dynamics (e.g., multigenerational living and family relations) and others have focused on variables associated with children, but the majority of studies have focused on variables related to parents. Studies have found that parents play a crucial

role in language transmission. A number of scholars (Alba, Logan, Lutz, & Stults, 2002; Arrigada, 2005; Stevens, 2005) have found that children with two non-English language parents are more likely to speak their parents' language than children who live with only one non-English language parent. Also, Pease-Alvarez, Hakuta, & Bayley (1996) found that children from immigrant families were "quite successful at maintaining oral proficiency in Spanish, regardless of language use patterns outside the home, as long as approximately equal amounts of Spanish and English are used in adult-child interactions at home. Once English predominates at home, children's spoken Spanish proficiency drops sharply" (p. 137).

The focus of this study is on family language policies and how parents in mixed marriages are trying to raise their children linguistically; hence, I will focus on factors related to parents. However, I will also briefly discuss factors associated with children and household dynamics. Specifically, this literature review focuses on parents' gender and social class, parents' beliefs and attitudes toward bilingualism and the HL, parents' language proficiency, and parents' discourse strategies and home literacy practices.

Gender. Before going further, it is important to note in existing research literature that while many studies examine the role of "parents" in language transmission, there is a bias in the research in which a disproportionate number of mothers as compared to fathers participate in the studies (see Okita for fuller discussion). In Wu's (2007) study of 25 families, only 3 fathers participated. Likewise, in Park's (2007) study of nine parents—seven are mothers and only two are fathers. Some studies have been more clear in their focus on the gender of parents, such as Okita's (2002) study of 28 families (Japanese women married to British men) which focused on the mothers' perspective. While the bulk of research tends to examine bilingual childrearing from the mothers' perspective, there are some studies that focus on the father's perspective.

Jackson's (2009) study of Australian men married to Japanese women focused on the fathers' perspective. Velázquez (2008) initially began her study with the intent of focusing on 10 Spanish-speaking families but ultimately focused on the mothers as the main informants since "it was observed in all households that when the mother and the father had diverging opinions regarding their children's education in general, and family linguistic policies in particular, it was the mother's opinion that held more weight and ultimately translated into specific actions" (p. 34-35). Some studies from the onset focus specifically on mothers and children like Crago, Anna-Hatak, and Ninqiuruvi (1993), who examined communicative interactions between Native American mother and children.

Gender has been found to play a role in parenting and intergenerational language transmission. Some studies have concluded that children are more likely to develop bilingually in instances where the mother is the minority-language speaking parent (Kamada, 1995b). Why do mothers play such a key role? Pavlenko and Piller (2001) state that in many cultures "the images of ideal femininity place women firmly inside the community, making them the transmitters of the home language, and of cultural, ethnic, and religious traditions" (p. 26 as cited in Eamer, 2008, p. 28). Zentella (2000) found that girls of Puerto Rican descent were more likely to use Spanish than their brothers which supports Dasgupta's (1998) study which found that "parents encourage their daughters to use the non-English language in the home more than their sons because women bear the weight of signifying their communities' ethnic identity" (Stevens & Ishizawa, 2007, p. 1011).

Pavlenko (2001) argues that bilingual child-rearing is consistently conceptualized as "women's work" (p. 134). Eamer states "because women usually spend more time with their children than fathers do, and because they often see themselves as responsible for language maintenance, they generally assume most of the language maintenance work" (Eamer, 2008, p. 28-29). Both in co-ethnic marriages and mixed marriages, the task of childrearing and thus, bilingual childrearing tends to fall more on the mothers' shoulders because more mothers tend to be stay-at-home

mothers and men tend to work outside of the home. Alshaboul's (2004) study of 6 Arab families found that since all of the fathers had jobs and/or attended school fulltime, the responsibility for parent-initiated literacy activities rested mainly with the mothers and that "the greater role in the family literacy interactions in general and any direct instruction in Arabic fell to the mothers in all of the families" (p. 94).

Morris and Jones' (2007) study of 12 mixed Welsh-speaking families also found that mothers play a key role in language socialization. They found that the general language pattern was that the Welsh-speaking parent speaks Welsh when alone with the child or when addressing the child directly in the presence of the non-Welsh speaking parent (except 2 couples who always spoke English with children); furthermore, the most significant factor in Welsh language socialization of young children was the amount of time children spent alone with the Welsh-speaking parent. Thus, because mothers tend to be primary caretakers of children at this young age, children were more likely to acquire Welsh if the mother was the Welsh-speaking parent rather than the father. Mothers typically spend more one-on-one time with children than fathers even when both parents worked outside the home. Typically, Welsh-speaking fathers did not spend a lot of time alone with children and looked to other factors (e.g., schooling) to teach children Welsh. Furthermore, grandparents—especially maternal grandmothers—had significant effect on language socialization since two-thirds of maternal grandmothers were the child's second caregiver after the mother. Ishizawa (2004) also found grandparents—specifically maternal grandmothers -- to influence language use.

However, Morris and Jones (2007) note "each family's language practices were shaped by the experiences and values of both parents...parents were often replicating their own childhood experiences in their parenting practices" (p. 493); e.g., Welsh-speaking parents who spoke Welsh to their children had themselves been brought up in Welsh-speaking households and that "Family and individual language practices are established early and are very hard to change even when the

individuals involved develop a greater understanding and fluency in the language” (p. 499). For example, parents spoke English with one another regardless of ability to speak Welsh.

In terms of family language policy, in most of the families, one parent tended to make the decision about language and it was usually made by the mothers. All but one child were read to by their parents; however, only two parents read to kids only in Welsh and other Welsh-speaking parents read to kids in English instead of Welsh. Non-Welsh speaking parents who wanted their children to learn Welsh read to kids in Welsh and used Welsh TV, videos and DVDs. Some Welsh-speaking mothers’ choice of friends and social activities were made partly on language; however, “How conscious these decisions were varied from one mother to another, and seemed in part to reflect how highly or not the mother valued Welsh as part of her own identity and her socialization of her child” (Morris & Jones, 2007, p. 496). Lastly, Morris and Jones note: “Even in those families where the non-Welsh speaker did not mind Welsh being spoken in their company, we found a tendency for Welsh-speakers to use English when they were present out of politeness and in order to include the non-Welsh speaker in the discussion” (p. 494)

As stated earlier, Okita’s (2002) study of Japanese women married to British men living in the UK concurs that bilingual childrearing falls predominately on the shoulders of mothers. However, she goes a step further to say that raising children bilingually is not only hard work and emotionally demanding, but also that it is “invisible work.” It is hard and emotionally demanding because mothers were juggling teaching children Japanese and worried whether children were learning English as well as balancing these concerns with other extra-curricular issues. It was found to be particularly problematic because some husbands did not understand it was hard work, but rather, viewed raising children bilingual as “natural.” Hence, many husbands were blind to their wives’ efforts which made it even harder on the wives since they did not feel supported. Okita described this as “invisible work.” Many wives viewed teaching Japanese to their children as part of their identity. Also, Okita found a difference between “novice” parents and “veteran” parents; novice

parents tended more towards “hyperparenting” whereby they put so much pressure on themselves that they eventually burned out.

Two other interesting findings from Okita’s (2002) study include (a) some of the husbands who were the most supportive of their wives raising children bilingually sometimes found themselves isolated from their wives and children since they had little to no proficiency in Japanese; and (b) the initial decision about language in regards to raising children was made by the wife alone.

Okita’s (2002) study brings up many important issues dealing with raising children bilingually and mothers—specifically that mothers tend to feel (and society tends to put) the responsibility for bilingual childrearing more on the mothers’ shoulders and that it is more tied to the mother’s identity.

Nabeshima’s (2005) study of Japanese women married to American men living in the U.S. found many similar findings to Okita’s but also differed in some significant ways. Some of the similarities are:

- (a) couples saw bilingual childrearing as mainly women/mother’s role/responsibility-- especially since men tended to be the breadwinners and women stay-at-home moms.
- (b) while parents want their children to know the HL, many were concerned about “pushing” kids to learn Japanese because the children were not interested or they had too many activities going on;
- (c) some mothers expressed concern about delays in language acquisition; e.g., children might not speak English well enough by kindergarten;
- (d) some parents (both mothers and fathers) were concerned about speaking Japanese in front of non-Japanese speaking family and friends because they did not want them to feel left out; hence, they used English.

However, some of the differences in the findings of the two studies are:

- (a) “While the women tended to feel a heavier responsibility for bilingual childrearing than did the husbands, these mothers in the early stages of childrearing tended not to view this responsibility as an enormous burden” (Nabeshima, p. 140); only 10% of women expressed resentment towards their husbands for not being supportive enough of bilingual childrearing. The majority of wives expressed appreciation for spouses’ financial contributions towards ways to increase Japanese language exposure (e.g, money for Japanese classes, long distance calls to relatives in Japan, family vacations to Japan) and esteem;
- (b) “Most of the women saw teaching their children Japanese as a ‘natural’ thing since they are Japanese” (p. 145), but the author notes “It was evident from the interviews that bilingual childrearing required effort in terms of planning, coordination, and execution” (p. 141).

Varro’s (1998) survey of 146 American women married to French men found that bilingual childrearing is closely tied to mothers’ identities. She found that the majority of women viewed it as their duty “to promote their children’s bilingualism (i.e. their English), considered to be the minimum requirement to *justify* the ‘mixed marriage’” (p. 110). Furthermore, Varro states “it came to be a measure of a successful marriage: a bilingual child meant the woman had managed to maintain and transmit her own cultural and personal identity, embodied in ‘my language,’ and the contrary was keenly felt as a personal failure” (p. 110). However, Varro notes: “the child’s bilingualism ultimately depended most on having heard his/her *mother* address him/her almost exclusively in English, but this in turn depended on the support she received from the *father*, that is, on the fact that he too used English at home. . . . The native father’s cooperation is essential for the mother to be able to maintain her language with the children” (p. 112). Because “most parents switched, mixed, and lapsed,” Varro states the second most important factor for bilingualism was

“*support for English outside the home*” such as attending bilingual schools or vacations in English-speaking countries.

Social class. While issues of gender are important, other studies have looked at the relationship between social class and parental attitudes towards bilingualism and actual behavior. Historically, it was primarily “elite bilinguals,” who were interested in raising their children bilingually. Piller (2001) defines “elite bilinguals” as “middle-class international couples, expatriates, and academics who raise their children in a non-native language” and that “elite bilingual” also meant “the right people speaking ‘the right languages’” (Piller, 2001b, p. 69) with “‘world’ languages more valued than others” (Boyd, 1998, as cited in Piller, 2001, p.). Kouritzin (2000) is an especially interesting case of an elite bilingual (Canadian married to Japanese) because she has written about her experiences raising her children in a language she is not fluent in. As a professor in education, she has done extensive research on first language loss and she and her husband have decided to raise their children in “hothouse” conditions of delaying their children’s exposure to English as long as possible by speaking to them only in Japanese until they start school, hiring a Japanese nanny, and taking annual family trips to Japan. Kouritzin states “These decisions were not made lightly but were based on years of study and research on the consequences of L1 loss and on how best to raise bilingual children” (p. 313). However, despite all the resources available to her, she notes how difficult it is for her as a mother since she is not fluent in Japanese:

English is the language of my heart, the one in which I can easily express love for my children; in which I know instinctively how to coo to a baby; in which I can sing lullabies, tell stories, recite nursery rhymes, talk baby talk. In Japanese, there is an artificiality about my love; I cannot express it naturally or easily. . . . I have no models to teach me how a loving mother speaks when she strokes a child’s hair, wipes away tears, cradles a newborn, introduces a puppy, points out the moon and the stars, splashes in the bathtub, or spreads her arms and says ‘I love you this much’ (Kouritzin, 2000, p. 314).

King and Fogle (2006) note there are increasing numbers of both language-minority and language-majority parents wanting to raise their children bilingually. Whereas this was usually only reserved for upper-class elites, King and Fogle (2006) and Piller (2001) assert that raising children bilingually has become part of mainstream middle-class parenting: “Bilingual parenting –like toddler maths, art and music classes, baby sign language instruction and infant gym classes—are now commonplace in middle class circles (Piller, 2005)” (King & Fogle, 2006, p. 695-696).

Piller (2001) found that all of the parents in her study planned to raise their children bilingually and that their plans were largely shaped by popular guidebooks on child bilingualism. Furthermore, she states: parents had “linguistic ideologies that tout bilingualism as a value in itself” (p. 77) and that “parents who operate in these circles are often inclined to raise their children with two languages, no matter what those language are” (p.). It is important to note that in her study, Piller (2001) breaks from the traditional use of “elite bilingual” and ignores language status; instead she focuses on class, occupation, and a parental choice to raise bilingual children.

King and Fogle (2006) in their study of 24 families who are trying to raise their children bilingually in Spanish and English found that while parents did draw on expert advice and popular literature in forming their family language policies, they were selective about it and sometimes used the expert advice and popular literature to support their decisions, but other times rejected it. Overall, parents “primarily relied on their own personal experiences with language learning in making decisions for their children” and used extended families as points of negative contrast (p. 695). Important to note is that some of the parents in King and Fogle’s study are not native speakers of Spanish, with half of the families in mixed marriages (Latino married to non-Latino; however, not all parents identified as Latino were Spanish dominant). King and Fogle (2006) conclude that “family language policies for the promotion of additive bilingualism have become incorporated into mainstream parenting policies” and not just reserved for the upper class (p. 695).

Lambert and Taylor (1996) compared language ideologies that middle-class and working-class Cuban mothers have towards bilingualism. They found that middle-class mothers placed more value on maintaining Spanish whereas working-class mothers placed more emphasis on linguistic assimilation—greater emphasis on learning English than Spanish. Lambert and Taylor state that “working-class Cuban American mothers, with their distinctive pattern of values and attitudes, have oriented their children toward a ‘subtractive’ form of biculturalism and bilingualism. . . a type of trade-off wherein greater emphasis is placed on English than Spanish” (p. 496). In contrast, the middle-class mothers were found to be “oriented towards an ‘additive’ form of bilingualism/biculturalism for their children, a form that trades nothing off, but instead protects the heritage culture at the same time as the Americanization takes place” (p. 496) (as cited in Eamer, 2008, p 22).

While some assume that middle-class parents are more likely to be successful in raising bilingual children than working-class parents, Scheter and Bayley (1997) found that of the four Mexican-descent families in their study (2 families in TX and 2 families in CA) “the family that had moved most fully into the middle-class was the least successful in intergenerational transmission of Spanish despite the parents’ commitment to cultural maintenance” (p. 513); this was the more affluent Texas family (Baez family), who lived in a predominately Anglo neighborhood, used English almost exclusively in parent-child and sibling interactions with Spanish only being used for occasional directives and for endearments. While the children in this family participated in cultural activities; these activities were all carried out in English. However, while this finding is interesting, it should be read with caution as some families’ social and economic status in the U.S. may be different from Mexico. For example, one of the families in CA (Villega family) had not achieved as much affluence in the U.S. as did the family in TX (Baez family), however, in Mexico the Villega family belonged to the well-educated, professional class. In the U.S., the Villega family established a Spanish-only policy in parent-child interactions. The mother taught the son to read and write in Spanish and they are planning to send him to Mexico for high school. Furthermore, it is important to note that Scheter and Bayley’s study included families of

“Mexican-descent” with parents who had varying degrees of proficiency in Spanish—some were born and raised in Mexico and immigrated to the U.S. as adults, while other parents were born and raised in the U.S.

Parents’ beliefs & attitudes towards bilingualism & HL. Many studies have examined parents’ beliefs and attitudes towards bilingualism and the HL (Young & Tran, 1999; Mayhorn, ; Scheter, Sharken-Taboada, & Bayley, 1996; Pease-Alvarez, 1993; Suarez, 2002; Worthy & Rodriguez-Galindo, 2006; Wu, 2007; Park, 2007; Scheter & Bayley, 1997; Shin, 2005). Overall, regardless of which language, the vast majority of studies have found parents:

- (1) have positive beliefs and attitudes towards bilingualism and the HL;
- (2) want their children to know the HL;
- (3) give various reasons (e.g., cultural and economic) for wanting children to be bilingual.

One recurring fear in the U.S. is that many immigrant parents want their children to learn the HL as long as it does not interfere with their academic achievement and learning English (Shin, 2005; Park 2007; Wu, 2007; Scheter & Bayley, 1997).

Wu’s (2007) study examined the attitudes and behaviors of 25 Chinese immigrant parents (Chinese married to Chinese) and their children toward learning English and Chinese. She found that parents and children overall had positive attitudes towards bilingualism and maintaining Chinese language ability. The main reasons parents gave for wanting their children to know the HL:

1. culture/identity—“it’s their heritage”
2. career opportunity
3. communication with family members from the country of origin (e.g., parents, grandparents, etc.)
4. “research” that says being bilingual helps kids to be smarter (however, none of the parents cite a specific study).

However, even though many of the parents wanted their children to learn the HL, other than sending their children to HL school, many had not formulated an explicit family language policy for their families. Many of the parents said time was an issue—parents were busy with work and did not have time to teach the children, and the children were involved in extracurriculars and had homework from regular school: “Usually what parents did was to send their children to Chinese school and rely on the teachers to take all the responsibility for teaching their children and maintaining their Chinese ability” (Wu, 2007, p. 114). Wu found that while many parents claimed that they spoke only Chinese at home, the children reported that they spoke mostly English at home to their parents and siblings and only English to their friends. Similar to Park’s (2007) study of immigrant Korean parents and adolescents, Wu found that parents who were most active in promoting Chinese to their children and who insisted on using Chinese in the home were more successful in maintaining their children’s Chinese. She argues that studies generally do not portray the difficulties and realities of life for immigrants: Many parents simply “struggle with all of the daily tasks in daily living...helping their children learn and develop their Chinese ability is only a small part of what they must do every day to survive...The time and effort[s] required to maintain or develop Chinese may not be doable for all parents, even when Chinese is valued” (p. 227).

Other reasons parents gave for wanting their children to know the HL are related to religion and future plans. Alshaboul’s (200) study of immigrant Arab families found that the imminence of returning to the home country and the importance of Arabic literacy tied to daily reading of the Koran, were two big factors for parents wanting to teach their children the HL. Similarly, Jackson (2009) found that future plans, such as where to live, influenced parents’ decision on which language to emphasize. For example, since many parents had decided to live in Japan, the parents emphasized learning the Japanese language and culture.

Nabeshima’s (2005) study of Japanese women married to American men living in the U.S. found that parents gave various reasons for wanting their children to be able to speak Japanese:

- (a) want children to learn Japanese so they can be more open-minded about other cultures;
- (b) professional opportunities in the future;
- (c) easier to learn a foreign language when young;
- (d) cognitive advantages of early bilingualism;
- (e) teaching Japanese as a “gift” mothers can give to their children;
- (f) want children to be able to communicate with grandparents in Japan.

It is important to note that the last reason given—so that children can communicate with grandparents in Japan—was not universal as seven women did not cite this as a reason. Of the seven, four of the women reported that they are not close to their parents. The impact of close family relations will be discussed more in the “Household Dynamics” section.

Lao (2004) examined the beliefs and attitudes toward bilingual education and the HL of 86 Chinese parents (Chinese-dominant and English-dominant) who enrolled their children in a Chinese-English bilingual preschool in San Francisco. She found that both Chinese-dominant and English-dominant parents agreed on two of the top three reasons for sending their children to bilingual preschool. Chinese-dominant parents enrolled kids in Chinese-English bilingual preschool because:

1. A high level of bilingualism could provide their children better career opportunities (practical advantages of being bilingual);
2. Chinese-language development would facilitate communication with the Chinese-speaking community; and
3. positive effects on self-image

Reasons why English-dominant parents enrolled kids in Chinese-English bilingual preschool:

1. Bilingual education would enhance the opportunity for children to be Chinese-English bilingual;

2. Chinese-language development would facilitate communication with the Chinese-speaking community; and
3. A high level of bilingualism could provide their children better career opportunities (practical advantages of being bilingual).

The majority of parents wanted their children to speak both Chinese and English at home; however, in actual practice, the majority of English-dominant parents spoke to kids in only English or mostly English with some Chinese. Of the Chinese-dominant parents, half reported speaking to children only in Chinese or mostly Chinese with some English and half reported speaking mostly English with some Chinese or English only. Lao found that children spoke to their siblings only in English or mostly English with some Chinese. Literacy-wise, Lao found that while the majority of English-dominant parents read to their children almost every day in English, they rarely or never read to their children in Chinese. Also, one-third of Chinese-dominant parents never or rarely read to kids at all in either language, but the ones who did read more Chinese stories to kids than did English-dominant parents. Lao found that parents' expectations of children's level of Chinese proficiency varied due to parents' Chinese proficiency and the availability of Chinese resources at home. For example, the majority of Chinese-dominant parents expected children to achieve middle school to high school level literacy whereas the majority of English-dominant parents expected conversational to elementary school level literacy. Lao concludes by arguing that schools need to work in concert with parents to establish more effective home-school partnerships to meet the different language needs and expectations of the parents and students and to provide students with meaningful language and literacy experiences.

It is important to note that the majority of English-dominant parents rated their reading and writing in Chinese as "poor" and "very poor" and their Chinese speaking skills as "fair," "poor," and "very poor." While Lao does not state explicitly that English-dominant parents' limited Chinese proficiency was a factor in the language parents used at home to communicate with children and

the books that parents read to children, it seems logical to conclude that parents' Chinese proficiency may be an important factor. The importance of parents' proficiency in the HL will be discussed more in the next section since studies have found that parents' language proficiency affects their language choice.

Parents' language proficiency. Not only are parents' beliefs and attitudes towards the HL a key factor in intergenerational language transmission, but also parents' language choice and use and proficiency in the HL. Hakuta and D'Andrea's (1992) study shows the importance of parents' language choice and use. In their study of 308 high-school students of Mexican background, Hakuta and D'Andrea looked at the teens' actual and self-reported proficiencies in Spanish and English, self-reported language choice behavior in various settings, and their language attitude and concluded: "Maintenance of Spanish proficiency was principally associated with adult language practice in the home, and was not predicted by teens' language choice outside the home or their language attitude" (p. 72). They note that the adult language choice was affected by immigration, English proficiency, and increasing distance in the familial social network ties to Mexico. Adults' language choice outside of the home showed a "rapid and constant shift towards English" and was "unrelated to Spanish proficiency, but instead was predicted by the subject's language attitude" (p. 72).

While the focus of the present study is on the language use in mixed families where only one parent is a heritage language speaker, even in co-ethnic marriages, language proficiency can be an issue. Spolsky (2004) states "in any language-choice situation, the three major conditions affecting choice are the speaker's proficiency in language (zero proficiency normally preventing choice), the desire of the speaker to achieve advantage by using his or her stronger language and the desire of the speaker to derive advantage by accommodating to the wishes of the audience" (p. 43).

As previously noted in Lao's (2004) study, Chinese-dominant and English-dominant parents had varying levels of proficiency in the HL with regard to speaking, listening, reading, and writing in Chinese and English. Parents' level of proficiency and ease with using the HL and/or English tends to affect how much they use the HL and English with their children.

In Shin's (2005) study of immigrant Korean families, all of the families were Korean married to Korean. However, there was one family where the mother was a first-generation Korean married to a second-generation Korean, who spoke very little Korean. Shin notes that this couple had problems trying to teach Korean to their children due to the father's limited proficiency in Korean.

Chrisp's (2005) study of 50 Maori parents found there were four key factors that influenced whether parents used Maori in the home: language knowledge, situation, motivation, and critical awareness. In regards to language knowledge, Chrisp found that parents' Maori was often acquired passively, associated with negative experiences in school, and generally at a low level and used with little confidence, especially because they were often criticized by older fluent speakers. Perhaps one of the most interesting findings is that "It was not so much real proficiency as perception of proficiency that influenced willingness to speak [the] language" (Spolsky, 2004, p. 44).

Similar to the adolescents in Park's (2007) study, Maori parents tend to use Maori only with ceremony and older people. Motivationally—because the Maori language and identity are so closely tied, many felt anxiety related to inadequacy of proficiency in Maori. Also, since many parents were just starting careers and bringing up children, they lacked the time and emotional commitment to consistently try to teach their children Maori. Time has also been cited in numerous other studies as an issue for bilingual childrearing (Okita, 2002; Felling, 2006; Wu, 2007; Alshaboul, 2004). Chrisp concluded that in general, parents were not critically aware of issues about intergenerational transmission and language acquisition. While some parents had

developed strategies for themselves to learn and use Maori and to teach their children, “few participants were aware of sources of information about Maori intergenerational transmission, and in some cases seemed to rely on other people to maintain the language” (Chrisp, 2005, p. 178). Mar’s (1988) study of 14 Chinese-Caucasian interracial couples focused specifically on how parents raised their children in regard to ethnic identity; this study included four intraracial couples (Chinese married to Chinese) for comparison purposes. He specifically made a point to include an equal number of Chinese father-Caucasian mother and Chinese mother-Caucasian father couples. Similar to Chrisp’s study, Mar found that instead of trying to teach their children Chinese, parents relied on outside resources: four families sent their children to Chinese school; four families relied on grandparents and extended family, and one family on their monolingual Chinese-speaking babysitter. Mar notes that only four of the families attempted to teach their children Chinese themselves, despite the fact that in the majority of the families, there was at least 1 parent who could speak Chinese fluently. Mar found only one family felt successful in making their children bilingual; this family was intraracial). The two most common explanations parents gave as to why they did not teach Chinese language to their children: too difficult and requires too much effort.

Parents’ discourse strategies & home literacy practices. Parents use a variety of strategies to teach and maintain their children’s proficiency in the HL. Studies of family language policies usually examine what language(s) parents speak to children and what language(s) children respond in. The most commonly studied are parental discourse strategies, home literacy practices, and heritage language schools. This literature review will focus on parental discourse strategies, as the present study focuses on parents’ experiences trying to raise their children bilingually. This literature review will also note some studies focusing on home literacy practices (Tse, 2001; Alshaboul, 2000). There has been increasing interest in studies of HL schools (Wu, 2007; You, 2008; Maloof). These studies tend to evaluate how effective HL schools are in teaching children the HL and many studies have noted the many challenges HL schools face: lack of trained teachers; lack of interesting and appropriate curriculum and materials for children living in the

U.S., etc. Since the focus of the present study is on the parents, studies of HL schools are not included in this review.

There is a long history of research focusing on parental discourse strategies. These studies have typically examined the language development of the children of bilingual couples. There are four main strategies that parents use: One-Parent One-language (OPOL), only the Minority-language at Home, code-switching and language mixing, and consecutive introduction of two languages. Of the various parental discourse strategies, the two most researched parental discourse strategies are the OPOL and only the minority-language at home; thus, this literature review will focus on OPOL and only the minority-language at home strategies. Piller (2001) states that “most of the research literature on childhood bilingualism is mainly concerned with the processes and patterns involved in bilingual acquisition rather than the parents’ role and perspective” (p. 63). Because this study is focused on the parents’ perspective and the experiences of interlinguistic couples, I will only briefly touch on key studies that are focused on children’s bilingual linguistic development.

The earliest study of OPOL strategy was Ronjat’s (1913), which documented his son’s first five years of bilingual acquisition of French and German. He spoke only French to his son and his wife spoke only German to their son. Ronjat was viewed as successful, since at age 15 his son was a balanced bilingual, equally fluent in French and German. Another key study was Leopold’s (1939-1949) four-volume work documenting his daughter’s bilingual development in German and English. They too used the OPOL strategy, but were not as successful as Ronjat. At 15, his older daughter’s German was clearly weaker than her English, while his younger daughter refused to speak German from a very early age and became a passive bilingual—able to understand German but not speak it.

Dopke (1992) examined the bilingual language development of six 2-year-old children in English-German-speaking families. She found that the OPOL strategy did not work equally well for different families. She cites four key factors as influencing bilingualism:

- (a) quantity and quality of linguistic input (places emphasis more on quality than quantity; employs teaching-oriented linguistic input; e.g., paraphrasing, elaboration, expansion);
- (b) parental interactional style (child-centered verbal interactions);
- (c) parents insisting on using the minority language (“consistent adherence” [p. 186]);
- (d) emotional compatibility of two languages (children have “satisfying” experiences in both languages)

She concluded that children whose parents were the most consistent in their language choice and who were most insistent that the children respect the OPOL policy achieved the highest levels of proficiency. It is important to note that Dopke (1998) states that the OPOL principle is a framework for language choice—not a strategy—and that parents using the OPOL as a framework can choose various strategies on a continuum from monolingual (avoid language mixing and switching) to bilingual (not rigid about separating languages). She states that “the further towards the bilingual [i.e., mixing] end of the continuum parents’ strategies are, the less likely the child is to develop an active command of the minority language” (Dopke, 1998, p. 50). She argues that the OPOL principle creates the richest and most varied input possible for dual-language families whose minority language is not supported in society.

Of the only the minority-language at home strategy, the first study documenting this is Pavlovitch’s (1920) of his son (of Serbian-speaking parents living in France), who was exposed to only Serbian until he was 13 months old, when he was exposed to French. This study ended when his son was 2 years old and the researcher states that his son started to speak both languages simultaneously and never mixed or confused the languages. Fantini (1982, 1985) analyzed his two children’s bilingual acquisition of English and Spanish. The family spoke only Spanish at

home while living in the U.S. and found that both children were fully bilingual and bicultural when the older child was 10.

Yamamoto (2001) examined family language use of interlinguistic Japanese-English-speaking couples living in Japan. She found that the more parents used the minority language (English) and the less the minority-language parent spoke the majority-language (Japanese) with children, the more often children tended to use the minority-language with the minority-language parent. This is significant because it differs from the One Parent-One Language (OPOL) strategy that many scholars have argued is the best way to raise children bilingually. Yamamoto also found that the OPOL strategy was not the most commonly employed pattern of communication at home and even when employed, it did not guarantee the child's exclusive use of English to the English-speaking parent. Lastly, it should be noted that families made different choices on what language was used at home and how it was used, and that the families changed their decisions on language use over time.

It is important to note that in all of these studies (Ronjat, 1913; Leopold, 1939; Dopke, 1992; Pavlovitch, 1920; Fantini, 1982, 1985; Yamamoto, 2001), parents are native speakers of the language they were teaching their children and fluent in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Also, in previous studies that I have already discussed—parental discourse strategies were studied and found to be significant (Wu, 2007; Lao, 2004; Varro, 1998; Morris & Jones, 2007; Pease-Alvarez, Hakuta, & Bayley, 1996; Scheter and Bayley, 1997), while in other studies parental discourse strategy was one of several factors examined but was not highlighted in detail as a key finding (Okita, 2002; Jackson, 2009; Park 2007; Felling, 2006).

Other than parents' language use at home, another important factor in intergenerational language transmission are home literacy practices. Tse's (2001) study examines the HL histories of 10 adults who have managed to attain high levels of literacy in their HL (Spanish, Cantonese, and

Japanese) despite being raised in the U.S. She found that participants' access to HL print in their homes and in the HL communities was primarily through participation in worship and leisure activities. In particular, Tse (2001) states "Important to note is the role played by community organisations, most notably religious organisations in HL communities, in using the language for communication and worship" (p. 265). Unlike the adolescents in Park's (2007) study who had access to the HL in church but who instead chose to use mainly English with one another, the participants in Tse's study used the HL. Furthermore, Tse notes participants had (a) the help of more literate people, who modeled reading the HL for practical purposes and pleasure; (b) contact with community institutions (e.g., religious organizations); (c) access to "light" reading materials (e.g., magazines, novels, comic books); and opportunities to act as "language brokers" (interpreters and translators) for their families.

Alshaboul's (2004) study primarily examined the home literacy practices of his own family as well as included data from four other Arab families living in the U.S. He found that the five factors that influenced the degree and quality of literacy practices in the families were (a) time demands—all of the fathers had jobs and/or attended school full time; thus the responsibility for parent-initiated literacy activities rested mainly with the mothers; (b) future plans—intention to return and the immediacy of departure appeared to be related to the degree of action being taken by the parents to increase their children's literacy levels in Arabic through some kind of direct instruction; (c) age of children—all families with school-aged children were more actively engaged in instruction in Arabic; thus, age of children seemed to impact the consistency and frequency with which parents engaged their children in learning experiences with academic Arabic; (d) media—the TV and computer are central to English language exposure and learning. Access to HL materials--families who were less active in supporting their children's literacy or providing the least instruction in Arabic had fewer HL resources. Some families said they didn't know where to get books and materials to teach their children Arabic;

(e) mothers as teachers—“the greater role in the family literacy interactions in general and any direct instruction in Arabic fell to the mothers in all of the families” (p. 94).

Alshaboul concludes that the driving factors behind home literacy practices were religious beliefs and imminence of return to the home country.

His study also reveals the importance of children’s agency in patterns of language use in the family. Though both Alshaboul and his wife attempted to enforce the family language policy of only Arabic at home, his oldest son and his youngest son resisted this policy. The oldest son at different times rebelled and did not want to learn Arabic, but his parents forced him. However his younger sister (Asia) needed less direct encouragement and has been a self-initiator in learning Arabic; she wanted to learn Arabic when the parents began teaching the older brother as a means to get her parents’ support and attention too. The third child (son) uses English 100% of the time at home, though his parents believe he is capable of using Arabic since every once in a while he would say something in Arabic. Even though the parents insist he speak Arabic at home, he refuses. Their youngest child #4 (girl) speaks only English and does not know Arabic. Though Alshaboul did not examine issues of gender and the birth order of his children, this would be interesting.

Alshaboul notes there are four patterns of language use in the family:

- (1) parents speak Arabic to each other and to children; children respond in Arabic;
- (2) parents speak English to children; children respond in English and Arabic;
- (3) parents speak English; children respond in English;
- (4) parents code-switch to each other and to children; children code-switch back and among themselves too.

Alshaboul notes that over time, pattern #4 replaced pattern #1 as the dominant pattern; however, the parents are consciously trying to revert to pattern #1, especially with the younger son (child

#3) because he almost never speaks Arabic. The parents count on pattern #3 to develop English literacy practices and skills among the household, especially for the youngest daughter (child #4). Pattern #4 dominates interactions between children at home; they speak only English when playing by themselves or with other children.

Home literacy patterns at home regarding parents reading to their children has not been consistent and some findings have been surprising. For example, Shin (2005) found that though the immigrant Korean parents in her study had limited proficiency in English, 55% said they read to their kids in English. In Lao's (2004) study of Chinese parents who send their children to bilingual Chinese-English preschool, she found that the majority of English-dominant parents read to their children in English, with very few reading to their children in Chinese. Of the Chinese-dominant parents, fewer parents read to their children at all, but of the ones who did read to their children, they read more in Chinese than did the English-dominant parents.

Children's agency and birth order. Though parents may make concerted efforts to pass on the HL to their children, it is not just the parents who have a say. As discussed in Alshaboul's (2004) study, children exert agency over whether or not they will abide by their parents' wishes to maintain the HL, and have resisted parents' efforts even when parents stated beliefs and desires are congruent with behavior to teach their children the HL.

Tuominen's (1999) study of 18 multilingual immigrant families found that even in homes where parents shared the same non-English language as their native language, English was the language most spoken at home because the children in these families were often the ones who decided what the family's home language would be. Tuominen (1999) states that the parents who were most successful in maintaining the HL as the language in the home "were able to withstand their children's efforts to force them toward one language over the other because they had the

educational and financial resources to find native-language reading materials, language schools, and literature on bilingualism, and to plan family trips to their native country” (p. 73).

Furthermore, Tuominen concluded that parents’ educational and socioeconomic statuses influenced whether or not parents maintained the HL or shifted toward English:

“Multilingual parents who have true language choices because they speak both their own language and English fluently and who understand American culture are able to set rules about home language use and enforce them with their children more easily than less-educated and less-well-off parents” (p. 73). Again, Tuominen’s study reminds us the influence social class and economic class have on parents’ language choices.

Some scholars have noted the number of siblings and birth order as being significant. Shin’s (2005) study found that all children, once they entered school, spoke more English with parents and less Korean. Dopke (1992) has noted that starting school and the language of formal instruction (majority language) is a strong influence in children’s language use with children tending to prefer using the majority language at home after starting school. Wong Fillmore’s (1991) study of preschool children from immigrant families found that young children who were taught in English at school became the language change agents of language use in the home to English, even if their parents had limited proficiency in English. However, even before entering school, fewer second-born kids than first-born kids spoke Korean with parents while even fewer third-born kids did so. In general, latter-born children speak more English with parents than first-born kids.

Hoffman’s (1985) study followed her two children’s trilingual language development in Spanish, German, and English while living in the U.S. She spoke exclusively German (her strongest language) to them while her husband spoke Spanish, his native language. She found that having an older sibling increased opportunities for the younger sibling to be exposed to the language

spoken at school and in the community (English). The siblings often used the language of the school and community with one another.

Yamamoto's (2001) study of interlinguistic Japanese-English-speaking couples living in Japan found that the two key factors which promoted children's use of the minority language (English) were if children attended English-medium schools and if they had no siblings. Both factors were found to be significant because they increased children's opportunities to engage in the minority language. Overall, Yamamoto concludes that children's language use is highly influenced by the community language, Japanese, whose influence directs them more towards passive bilingualism (i.e., understand English but do not actively use it) and monolingualism (understand Japanese only). Yamamoto's study is one of the largest studies of its kind.

Studies have also examined children's beliefs and attitudes towards the heritage language, children's proficiency in the HL, children's agency, and family relations. McCarty, Romero-Little, and Zepeda (2006) found that while some Native American youth in their study expressed pride in their HL and viewed the HL as "a tool for negotiating multiple languages and cultural worlds," others have "internalized the message. . .that speaking Navajo is an emblem of shame that must be renounced. . . youth feel they must make an either-or choice between language affiliations [(marginalized) Navajo or (privileged) English]" (p. 672). McCarty et al. (2006) conclude that "Most youth in our study indicated that they value the heritage language, view it as integral to their senses of self, want and expect adults to teach it to them, and employ it as a strategic tool to facilitate their English language learning in school" (p. 674).

Household dynamics: Mixed marriage, multigenerational living, family relations.

Numerous studies (Alba et al, p. 471; Stevens, 1992; Grenier, 1984) have found that in mixed marriage households, the language most couples use with each other is English (Alba, Logan, et al, 2002). However, Grenier (1984) found that bilingual parents are more likely to speak a mother

tongue when there are preschool-age children in the home. Another factor which has been found to promote HL maintenance is multigenerational living. Ishizawa (2004) found that children who live with non-English language grandparents are more likely to speak the non-English language.

Some scholars have also started seeing a relationship between positive family relationships (e.g., parent-child) and HL maintenance. For example, Tannebaum and Berkovich's (2005) study of 180 adolescents found that "Adolescent children who reported closer relationships with their parents were more likely to have positive attitudes toward L1, as if extending their positive emotions toward their parents to their parents' language, leading to great willingness to know and use their language" (p. 301). Tannebaum and Howie's (2002) study of 40 immigrant Chinese children in Australia found that children who perceived their family to be more cohesive and low in hierarchy were more likely to use and prefer to use their parents' mother tongue—i.e., secure and close family relationships are associated with language maintenance. However, the authors note that it is not possible to make definite conclusions about causal influence since it could be bi-directional e.g., high level of mother tongue maintenance contributes to family cohesion and positive relationships.

Eamer's (2008) study of three generations of three ethnic families (Italian, Ukrainian, and Korean) living in Canada examined the patterns of language use and language maintenance and shift. Her study supports many of the findings mentioned above (Ishizawa, 2004; Tannebaum & Kerkovich, 2005; Tannebaum & Howie, 2002).

Eamer investigated several factors related to parents, children, and household dynamics. Overall, the Ukrainian and Italian families were able to maintain the HL to the third generation but not the Korean family. Eamer suggests that some possible reasons why the Ukrainian and Italian families were able to maintain the HL to the third generation may be due to: intergenerational living (both families had grandparents live with them for a time); close parent-child-grandchild relationships;

parents served as L1 literacy models and children grew up seeing L1 print in the home; and emotional attachment to L1. In contrast, the Korean family did not have intergenerational living; the family unit did not seem as close; the grandparents' dominant language was Japanese rather than Korean, due to the Japanese occupation. Thus, the grandparents tended to read more in Japanese than Korean, and the Korean G1s and G2s were eager to embrace English and did not express as strong of an emotional attachment to the HL as the Italian and Ukrainian G1s and G2s did.

It is important to note that while the first generation of all three families married co-ethnics (i.e., Italian married Italian; Korean married Korean; Ukrainian married Ukrainian); the second generation from the Ukrainian and Korean families married non-co-ethnics. Contrary to the majority of HL studies that have found language shift to be happening in immigrant families, Eamer found that the third-generation children from the Italian and Ukrainian families are more proficient in the HL than their second-generation parents.

OUTSIDE-FAMILY FORCES

Some important “outside-family forces” that studies have found are factors related to ethnolinguistic vitality. The notion of ethnolinguistic vitality (EV) as outlined by Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor (1977) involves three key categories of variables as summarized by Miller (2000): “status factors (economic status, social status, socio-historical prestige, and status of language both within and outside a community), demographic factors (number of members, distribution, concentration, proportion, birthrate, and patterns of immigration and emigration), and institutional support factors (the extent to which the group receives support for language in both formal and informal institutions such as home, school, government, church, business, etc.) (p. 170 as cited in Velazquez, 2008, p. 16-17). It is usually thought that “the more status, demographic representation and institutional support an ethnic group enjoyed in society, the greater would be its EV. Conversely, an ethnic grouping that did not score highly on those variables, would

experience a shift towards those with more vitality” (Mann, 2000, p. 458 as cited in Velaquez, 2008, p. 18). However, Mann (2000) argues for an expanded view of sociolinguistic vitality, asserting that a language will have good vitality even if it has low status, low demography, and low institutional support if there is a “sociocommunicational need for it” (p. 470, as cited in Velaquez, 2008, p. 18). It should also be noted that while “ethnolinguistic vitality is an important determinant of family transmission policies, perceived prejudice is an equally potent determinant in the opposite direction [...] Of particular but not sole weight in their decisions not to transmit Spanish to the children may well be parents’ own childhood experiences of reprisals against Spanish-speakers in school” (Evans, 1996, p. 197 as cited in Velaquez, 2008, p. 15).

Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor’s (1977) notion of EV involving status factors, demographic factors, and institutional support factors are similar to the Baker’s (2001) list of 10 key factors why some languages are kept and others lost:

1. number and density of speakers
2. supply/resupply: immigration
3. closeness of homeland and ease of communication with homeland
4. attitude toward homeland and rate of return
5. stability of immigrant community: growth/decay
6. economic stability of the group
7. social mobility of the group
8. economic utility of the mother tongue (MT)
9. level of education in the MT
10. intensity of group identity with the MT in the face of discrimination.

Baker (2001) also lists six factors that affect language maintenance and language loss:

1. The presence/absence of mother tongue (MT) institutions (e.g., media, schools, community organizations, leisure activities, etc.)

2. The strength of cultural and religious activities in the MT
3. The extent to which the MT is a recognized language of the homeland
4. The salience of the MT as a marker of ethnic/family/community identity
5. The importance of the MT as a language of instruction
6. The degree of acceptance of the majority language in instruction.

Implicit in many of the factors that Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor (1977) and Baker lists as significant in regard to language maintenance and shift is geography. Caldas and Caron-Caldas (2002) found location to be very important. The authors of the study (father is American of Acadian ancestry and mother is French-Canadian) wanted to raise their children with two mother tongues and tracked the language preferences of their three children over a 6-year period in two different settings (the family's LA home during the school year and their summer home in Quebec). They tabulated the amount of French and English being spoken in casual dinnertime conversations. In LA, the kids went from 75% of utterances in French to less than 5% whereas in Quebec, 91-97% of utterances were in French. The parents spoke to the children in French during meals but ultimately found this strategy to be counterproductive as the children reached adolescence and "stroved to 'demarcate' a linguistic space separate from their parents" (p. 492 in Eamer, p. 150). This study found the two critical factors in determining the children's language preference were:

- (a) setting (English dominant vs French dominant)
- (b) adolescent identity construction (apart from parents)

Trieu's (2009) study compared and contrasted identity construction of 1.5 and second-generation ethnic Chinese-Vietnamese Americans and Vietnamese Americans in Los Angeles County, CA and Orange County, CA. She found that location had a significant impact on participants' language use and ethnic identity choice. The largest Vietnamese American population resides in Orange County, CA whereas a large Chinese-Vietnamese population resides in Los Angeles County, CA. Trieu found that the second-generation Chinese-Vietnamese who live in Los

Angeles County tend to speak Chinese whereas those who live in Orange County tend to speak Vietnamese. Furthermore, regardless of generation, the percentage of Chinese-Vietnamese who live in Los Angeles tend to speak more Chinese than those who live in Orange County, and the percentage of Chinese-Vietnamese who speak Vietnamese is higher in Orange County than in Los Angeles. It is important to note that while respondents varied in their ability to speak the ethnic language(s)--some are almost fluent while others only know some phrases-- many have lost or never acquired the ability to read and write in the ethnic language(s).

In regards to ethnic identity choice, Trieu found that ethnic identity choice correlates with location because location impacts the availability of ethnic resources, family motivation, and peer influences. She found that for Chinese-Vietnamese growing up in Orange County, the most instrumental factor in determining early identity formation was their desire to be accepted by their peers; thus, many of the respondents chose to pass as Vietnamese in order to fit in with their Vietnamese peers rather than asserting their Chinese-Vietnamese identity. For the Chinese-Vietnamese who grew up in Los Angeles County, the two strongest factors that influenced their identity choices were (1) the role of family and (2) availability of Chinese ethnic resources and networks.

One interesting finding between the Chinese-Vietnamese and Vietnamese Americans was the different ways they spoke about the ethnic language. For the Chinese-Vietnamese, language was a crucial factor that influenced their early-life ethnic identification choice. For the majority of Chinese-Vietnamese respondents, whatever language they spoke at home determined what ethnic identity they self-identified as in their youth. Whereas language had a profound impact on how many Chinese-Vietnamese identified themselves ethnically, for Vietnamese Americans, language was viewed as a means to connect with the ancestral culture and the older generation.

While many respondents from both groups expressed a desire to pass on their ethnic culture, celebrations, and traditions to their children, many stated they do not know enough to do so.

However, 68% of respondents who felt they did not know enough about their ethnic culture stated they were willing to learn. Others shared that they were not exposed to ethnic celebrations and would not try to pass it on. Currently, ethnic celebrations have shifted towards “generalized cultural knowledge” for both groups since the majority do not know the reasons for celebrating the holidays nor the specific rituals to perform to celebrate the holidays.

Another interesting difference between Chinese-Vietnamese and Vietnamese Americans is that Vietnamese Americans never questioned their Vietnamese identity and no one ever challenged their Vietnamese ancestry. The big question for Vietnamese Americans was whether they wanted to embrace their Vietnamese identity. Trieu found that Vietnamese Americans who participated in Vietnamese community organizations tended to develop a stronger ethnic identity. Vietnamese Americans who lived in Orange County had various Vietnamese resources available to them. However, many Vietnamese Americans who lived in Los Angeles County lacked ethnic community support and “as a result, many felt isolated from the community and in turn expressed ethnic self-hatred during their youth” (Trieu, 2009, p. 113). Trieu concludes that parental language use and knowledge of cultural traditions seems to be eroding for both groups.

Pfiefer’s (1999) study of the Vietnamese population in Toronto found that most of the Vietnamese temples and churches in his study “draw their participants from considerably larger physical areas than the immediate parts of the city in which their meeting sites are located. In fact, some institutions possess memberships which seem to be almost completely unrelated to the geography of members’ residences’ within the larger metropolitan area” (chp 11, p. 3). Thus, he concludes “The ecological assumption that residential clustering is a necessary condition for the participation of co-ethnics in given community institutions is not supported”; rather, he states that it is more of a “‘community with neighbourhood’ model of ethnic community activity” (p. 3).

SUMMARY

Language policy and planning has typically focused on policies at the microlevel. However, more recently there have been more calls to study language policy at a microlevel—specifically that of the family unit. There are many factors that affect family language policies. It is helpful to examine both factors related to “inside-family dynamics” as well as outside family forces. In studying family language policies, gender and social class have been found to be significant as well as parents’ beliefs and attitudes, parents’ language proficiencies and language choice and use, parents’ discourse strategies and home literacy practices, as well as factors related to children (agency and birth order), household dynamics (mixed marriage, multigenerational living, and family relations). In regard to outside family forces, status factors, demographic factors and institutional support factors have been found to be significant.

Chapter 3

BACKGROUND OF VIETNAMESE AMERICANS IN THE UNITED STATES

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss existing research on Vietnamese and to give background information of the Vietnamese American population in the U.S. to better understand the participants in this study. One of the earliest research studies done on Vietnamese was by anthropologist Gerald Hickey in 1958 titled “Social Systems of Northern Vietnam” and “Village in Vietnam” (1964). This was done at a time when Vietnam was still a relatively closed country to Western researchers. Other scholars (Scott, 1976; Wolf, 1969) since Hickey have done research in Vietnam writing about Vietnam during the course of the U.S.-Vietnam War and afterwards. In general, the majority of research studies on Vietnamese have been done in the United States. Some studies have also been done in Canada, Australia, and Europe. This may be reflective of the fact that after the U.S. involvement in Vietnam ended, the majority of Vietnamese refugees and immigrants ultimately immigrated to the United States. Of the 3 million overseas Vietnamese, the countries with the largest population are as follows: the United States (1.2 million), France (400,000), China (300,000), and Australia (200,000) and Canada (200,000) (Chan & Dorais, 1998). For the purposes of my study, I am not interested in research done in Vietnam but on Vietnamese Americans in the United States.

STUDIES OF VIETNAMESE IN THE UNITED STATES

According to Do (1994), much of the literature on Vietnamese in the United States has focused on five general categories: (a) overall account of Vietnamese plight from last days of war and arrival in the U.S.; (b) documenting life in refugee camps and difficulties U.S. government faced in processing, resettling, and finding sponsors for refugees; (c) changing public perceptions and

responses to refugees; and (d) general occupational and socioeconomic adaptation patterns of Vietnamese refugees; and (e) mental and physical health issues due to resettlement (e.g., personal adjustment problems due to limited English proficiency, separation from family, lack of job skills, etc.).

In 1979, Montero asserted that “there have been few scholarly studies on Vietnamese refugees and their adaptation to the United States” (p. 5). This has changed drastically in the last 25 years. There currently exists a plethora of scholarly studies examining how Vietnamese are adapting to life in the U.S. While much of the research in the 1980s focused on the adaptation and assimilation of Vietnamese refugees and immigrants and the refugee experience, more recent studies on the Vietnamese American population in the United States have focused on the children of the Vietnamese immigrants and refugees—the 1.5 generation and second generation. This is a unique time to study the 1.5 and second generation Vietnamese Americans because they are the first to grow up predominately in the U.S. Nationwide, the Vietnamese are the fourth largest group in Asian American community behind Chinese, Filipino, and Asian Indian Americans (US Census 2000).

Historically, research on Vietnamese immigrants tended to look at them as “model minorities” and attempts to find reasons for their successful assimilation to the United States (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Zhou & Bankston, 1998; Caplan et al., 1989). Other studies have documented the problem of Vietnamese youth involved in gangs (Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Vietnamese immigrants have been studied in many disciplines such as sociology (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Zhou & Bankston, 1998); geography (Pfeifer, 1999), education (Tran, 2002; Nguyen, 2002; Nguyen, 2005), and psychology (Tran, 2003) to name a few. Furthermore, there have been a few studies (Frank, 2000) that have looked at a smaller population within Vietnam, the ethnic Chinese Vietnamese. This distinction between Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese Vietnamese is an important one because even

though the Chinese Vietnamese have integrated into dominant Vietnamese society, many still retain and assert their ethnicity as Chinese rather than Vietnamese.

Of the studies done in the United States, the majority of studies on Vietnamese Americans have been focused on the Vietnamese in California (Pham, 2004; Mooney, 1995; To, 1999; Mayhorn, 1989; Do, 1994; Saito, 1999). This is understandable as almost 50% of the Vietnamese in the United States live in California. However, studies have also been done in areas with smaller populations of Vietnamese such as Louisiana (Zhou & Bankston, 1998), Arizona (Nguyen, 2005), Kansas (Tran, 2002), Pennsylvania (Kibria, 1993; Lee, 1998), and Georgia (Maloof, 1998).

CHARACTERISTICS OF VIETNAMESE IN THE U.S.

What do we know about the Vietnamese immigrant community in the United States? The Vietnamese, like many other immigrant groups in the United States, are a heterogeneous group. However, there are some key characteristics that are helpful to know regarding Vietnamese Americans.

History of immigration. One notable characteristic of Vietnamese immigration is that there are four “waves” of immigration to the United States. The four waves differ in regards to Vietnamese immigrants’ level of education, socioeconomic status, and reasons for coming to the United States and leaving Vietnam and influence their ability to adapt to life in the U.S. The first wave consisted mainly of South Vietnamese government officials, members of the Vietnamese elite, and Vietnamese who had been affiliated and worked with the Americans. They tended to be middle to upper class, more educated and from an urban background. The majority were from the south or those who used to live in north but moved south after the communists took over the north. The second and third waves referred to as the “Boat People” since many escaped from Vietnam via boats; they consisted of both ethnic Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese Vietnamese. Some people in the third wave also came as a result of the U.S. Orderly Departure program. The second and third waves came from a mixture of urban and rural backgrounds and tended to be less educated

than the first wave. The fourth wave consisted predominately of Amerasian children and their families and refugees (many of whom were political prisoners from reeducation camps and their families). The fourth wave basically ended the entry of Vietnamese refugees into the United States. After the fourth wave, those in Vietnam who wanted to come to the United States had to be sponsored by family members who were already in the U.S.

While outsiders may not be able to distinguish between ethnic Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese Vietnamese, the distinction is an important one and very important within the Vietnamese and Chinese immigrant communities in the United States. Historically, there has been much distance, if not animosity, between ethnic Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese Vietnamese. The ethnic Chinese in Vietnam have tended to retain a distinct cultural identity with strong ties to Chinese culture and the Chinese language. The ethnic Chinese Vietnamese used to live primarily in the Saigon metropolitan area—in an area known as Cholon (literally translated as “Big [lon] Market [cho]”) and speak both Cantonese and Vietnamese and were primarily merchants and business owners. Many of the ethnic Chinese Vietnamese speak both Cantonese and Vietnamese; thus, it is not uncommon for ethnic Chinese Vietnamese to codeswitch between Cantonese and Vietnamese with one another. The government in Vietnam used to discriminate against ethnic Chinese Vietnamese for jobs and during the Vietnam’s conflicts with Cambodia and China, the Vietnamese government kept them under surveillance and harassed them. Kibria (1993) notes that since the ethnic Chinese Vietnamese played a central role in rice trading in Vietnam, they were often resented by the ethnic Vietnamese for their economic power. The ethnic Chinese Vietnamese tended to be business owners and merchants of middle to lower-middle class background.

It is important to note that the majority of ethnic Chinese in Vietnam view themselves as Chinese and not Vietnamese; thus, this may affect census reporting. Furthermore, many ethnic Vietnamese do not view the ethnic Chinese Vietnamese as “Vietnamese” but rather as “Chinese,” while the Chinese Americans in the U.S. generally do not view the ethnic Chinese Vietnamese as “Chinese”

but rather as “Vietnamese.” Frank (2000) states that the ethnic Chinese Vietnamese in the San Berdino California area are not wholly accepted in Vietnamese community nor in the Chinese community (from Hong Kong, mainland China, and Taiwan). In a sense, the ethnic Chinese Vietnamese Americans are a “double minority”—neither wholly accepted as “Chinese” or “Vietnamese.” Until recently, research on the ethnic Chinese Vietnamese American experience has been quite limited (Lee, 1996; Frank, 2000; Reyes, 2007).

The differences in waves of Vietnamese immigration to the United States is evident in differences found by Mayhorn (1989), who included participants from only the first wave, and Kibria (1993), whose sample those predominately from the second and third waves and none from the first wave. Mayhorn’s sample were all in California, tended to be from the upper-middle class in Vietnam with higher levels of education, and were quickly moving if had not already attained middle-class status in the U.S. whereas the sample from Kibria’s (1993) study tended to be from the pre-1975 urban middle-class of South Vietnamese society and were struggling to move towards middle-class status in the U.S.

Demographics. The majority of Vietnamese have settled primarily in the West (694,859) and in the South (425,248) with smaller numbers in the Northeast (162,707) and Midwest (135,520) (2005 American Community Survey). According to the 2005 American Community Survey, the following list shows the five states with significant populations of Vietnamese:

1. California – 539,150
2. Texas – 159,107
3. Washington – 60,543
4. Florida - 55,555
5. Massachusetts – 48,583

(U.S. Census 2000).

According to the U.S. 2000 Census, the top five U.S. metropolitan areas with large numbers of Vietnamese are:

1. Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County CA CMSA - 233,573
2. San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, CA CMSA - 146,613
3. Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, TX CMSA - 63,924
4. Dallas-Fort Worth, TX CMSA - 47,090
5. Washington D.C./VA/MD/WV PMSA - 43,709

Socioeconomic status. Vietnamese in the United States have made considerable socioeconomic progress as revealed in comparing data from the 1990 U.S. Census and the 2000 U.S. Census. Overall, the U.S. Vietnamese median family income has increased from \$29,800 in 1990 to \$46,929 in 2000. The percentage of Vietnamese receiving public assistance income in 1990 was 25% but in 2000 decreased to 10.2%. The percentage of Vietnamese families below the poverty level improved: in 1990, 24% were below the poverty level and in 2000, only 14.3% were below poverty level. Furthermore, while only 43% of Vietnamese in the U.S. were homeowners, almost 60% became homeowners in 2000.

According to the U.S. 2000 Census, Vietnamese in the U.S. hold various occupations: 28.8% are involved in production, transportation, and material moving occupations; 26.9% are in management, professional, and related occupations; and 18.6% are in sales and office occupations. Only 5.9% are involved in construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations and .6% are involved in farming, fishing, and forestry occupations (Reeves & Bennett, 2004, p. 14).

In general, it should be noted that the status of Vietnamese Americans is steadily improving socioeconomically as can be seen from the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census data. However, it is

important to note that this is not true for all Vietnamese in the U.S. Zhou and Bankston (1998) state:

Although the two decades from the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s saw the establishment and consolidation of Vietnamese communities throughout the country, many of the newcomers have not moved up far economically. As of 1990, poverty affected almost half the first- and 1.5 generation Vietnamese children, and just under a third of the second generation, as opposed to one tenth of the general U.S. population. (p. 5)

Education. Overall, while Vietnamese have lower levels of educational achievement than other Asians, the Vietnamese tend to be more educated and proficient in English when compared with other Southeast Asians (Le, 1993, p. 172 as cited in Chung, 2000, p. 224). For example, there is a growing body of research examining why Vietnamese Americans seem to achieve higher academically than other Southeast Asians such as the Cambodians (Kim, 2002; Le, Monfared, & Stockdale, 2005). Even though many Vietnamese children struggle with English proficiency and come from low socioeconomic backgrounds, Zhou and Bankston (1998) note:

Over the past ten years or so, Vietnamese children have come to excel academically not only by the standards expected of a new refugee group but also by comparison with segments of the established population. . . .and have started to win top awards at schools across the country. (p. 130)\

The media commonly touts Vietnamese as “model minorities,” “Asian whiz kids,” and “valedictorians” (Brand, 1987). It is not uncommon to read stories in the newspapers and studies about Vietnamese who have recently immigrated to the U.S., speaking little or no English, parents never attending college, and after a few years of schooling in the U.S., they win academic honors (Caplan, Choy, & Whitmore, 1989). Some attribute Vietnamese students’ high academic achievement to cultural theory and credit Confucian values of hard work and cultural emphasis of the importance of education (Caplan, Choy, & Whitmore, 1989). On the other hand, Vietnamese

youth have also been labeled as “delinquents” and members of Asian gangs who terrorize Asian restaurants, stores, and neighborhoods ((Bankston & Zhou, 1997; Long, 1996).

However, scholars such as Kibria (1993), Portes & Rumbaut (2001), Chung (2000), Weinberg, (1997), and Rutledge (1992), and Zhou and Bankston (1998) show that the answers behind Vietnamese educational achievement are much more complex. Weinberg (1997) critiques two large-scale studies that looked at the academic achievement of Southeast Asian refugee students. One study was Ima and Rumbaut’s (1995) that looked at students in San Diego County, California while Caplan et al. (1992) looked at smaller samples at five locations (Boston, Chicago, Houston, Orange County, CA, and Seattle). Ima and Rumbaut’s (1995) study found that while the reading scores of Vietnamese students were below the national average, their GPAs were “well above those for white Anglos” and their math test scores placed them in the top quartile of the nation (as cited in Weinberg, 1997, p. 143). Caplan et al. (1992) found that 25% of Vietnamese students had an overall A average, over 50% had an overall B average, 17% had a C average, and 4% had an average below C. However, Weinberg (1989) notes “neither study took into account socioeconomic changes that occurred in the home countries during wartime. Upward and downward social mobility changes were analyzed only when these occurred in the United States” (p. 143). For example, Do (1994) reports that it is not uncommon to have former business men employed as dishwashers in the U.S.; a former college professor who now drives a bus; former officers in the South Vietnamese Armed Forces as school janitors (p. 71). While media stories applaud the academic success of Vietnamese immigrant students whose parents come from low socioeconomic backgrounds (e.g., Vietnamese children of a janitor who win academic honors), Weinberg (1997) states:

Quite likely, some of the children of these underemployed degree holders are the valedictorians hailed in the press for their scholarship and the humble employments of their fathers and/or mothers. Doubtless, few of the downwardly mobile parents neglected to instruct their children in the avenues to high academic success. In these cases, it is

more accurate to speak of the operation of middle-class educational standards, regardless of the immediate circumstances of the parents. (p. 139-140).

Furthermore, Weinberg (1997) critiques Caplan et al.'s (1989; 1992) studies because neither of the two studies included "even one case study of a child who did not do well in school" and "the authors have an unaccountably elevated conception of the educative capacity of schools in low-income areas of American cities that are attended by Southeast Asian refugee children" (p. 144-145). Weinberg also asserts that "the work by Caplan and associates tends to overstate the achievements of refugee parents" (p. 144). For example, Caplan et al. (1992) state "Indochinese parents have found employment and climbed out of economic dependency and poverty with dispatch;" however, Weinberg (1997) notes "in 1992, the same year in which this statement [previous statement by Caplan et al.] was published, 89% of Vietnamese living in California were receiving some form of government assistance" (p. 144).

Language. Vietnamese is the seventh-most spoken language in the United States with over one million people who are 5 years and older speak Vietnamese at home. According to the U.S. 2000 Census, 93% percent of the Vietnamese Americans surveyed reported speaking a language other than English at home and only 6.9% speak only English at home (Reeves & Bennet, 2004, p. 11). Of the 93% that reported speaking a language other than English at home, over 30% reported speaking English "very well" and approximately 62% reported speaking English less than "very well" (Reeves & Bennet, 2004, p. 11).

Young and Tran's (1999a) study revealed slightly different statistics (84.6% of adults surveyed speaking only Vietnamese at home; 15.4% spoke both English and Vietnamese at home; no families reported speaking only English at home) but combined with the U.S. 2000 Census data contributes to give a fuller picture in regards to children's use of Vietnamese. The Vietnamese parents in Young and Tran's (1999a) study reported that Vietnamese was the language spoken

most often by 59.2% of the children and 7.8% of the children used mostly English. Furthermore, the parents reported that the language spoken most often between children was Vietnamese (45.1%), 21.6% spoke only English with each other, and 33.3% of the children spoke both English and Vietnamese between themselves. A little over 61% of the parents encouraged the use of Vietnamese in the home and the longer the families live in the United States, the more the parents encourage the children to retain Vietnamese.

To (1999) surveyed a group of Vietnamese American college students in California and asked what language(s) they use to communicate with other Vietnamese: 25(24%) said they speak Vietnamese only, 15 (14%) English only, 44 (42%) English and Vietnamese while 22 (20%) were missing a response. This shows a decrease in Vietnamese language use among the college-age population as compared to the statistics given in the U.S. 2000 Census.

Thus it seems that language-wise, Vietnamese American students are continuing to speak Vietnamese, but researchers are finding that there is a definite language shift within Vietnamese families and especially amongst the younger generation towards the use of both Vietnamese and English with their peers and even a small percentage that have switched to speaking only English. It is important to note however, that many of the studies (To, 1999; Kibria, 1993; Zhou & Bankston 1994; Mayhorn, 1989) on Vietnamese Americans have either excluded ethnic Chinese Vietnamese or not explicitly mentioned them in the studies; thus, it is difficult to know what the patterns of language shift and maintenance are of the ethnic Chinese Vietnamese.

Religion. The majority of Vietnamese Americans in the United States tend to be either Catholic or Buddhist. According to Dominic Dinh Mai Luong, the first Vietnamese American Roman Catholic bishop in the United States, there are over 400,000 Vietnamese American Catholics in the U.S. (*Associated Press*, May 2, 2003). In Orange County, church figures estimate that Vietnamese Americans make up 11% of people attending Catholic services. The Diocese of

Orange has about 1.1 million Roman Catholics of whom 32,500 are Vietnamese Americans. In Bankston and Zhou's (1995) survey of a Vietnamese community (population: 4,566) in eastern New Orleans, they found that this community was heavily Catholic. Of the 402 Vietnamese high school students surveyed, 87.3% reported themselves as Catholic, 10.4% as Buddhist, and 2% as other. Approximately 80% of the Vietnamese high school students reported that they attended church at least once a week

In To's (1999) study of 106 Vietnamese college students (ages 18-25) in California, she found that the majority of the participants reported their religious affiliation as Buddhist 51 (48%) and Catholic 39 (36.8%) with 5 (4.7%) reporting "Christian," while there was only one each reporting atheist, none, other, Buddhist and Catholic, Buddhist, and Christian. Furthermore, the students' reported their families' religion to be Buddhist 55 (51.9%) or Catholic 39 (36.8%) with 3 (2.8%) Christian, 1 (.9%) atheist, 6 none (5.7%), and 2 (1.9%) as Buddhist and Catholic.

Political affiliation. When the Vietnamese initially came to the United States they strongly supported the Republicans because they saw Republicans as anti-communist. However, in recent years, more second-generation Vietnamese Americans are leaning towards the Democratic party because they resent the cutbacks on health programs and the perceived anti-immigrant posture of the Republican party. In 1992, in Orange County 62% of Vietnamese-American voters were Republican (three times the number of Democrats). However, in 2002, only 38% were Republican, 32% Democrat, and 26% Independent (Wisckol, 2004).

UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF VIETNAMESE IN THE U.S.

While Vietnamese immigrants may share many similarities with other immigrant groups like the Chinese and Mexican immigrants, they differ in many ways. Unlike the Chinese, who may have been in the United States for several generations, the Vietnamese are considered one of the most "recent" immigrants (Reeves & Bennet, 2004). The majority of Vietnamese in the U.S. are either

first- or second-generation Americans. Approximately 76% of Vietnamese living in the U.S. are foreign-born with only 24% born in the United States (Reeves & Bennet, 2004, p. 9). Almost 52% of the foreign-born Vietnamese came to the U.S. prior to 1989 and approximately 48% arrived between 1990-2000 (Reeves & Bennet, 2004, p. 10). Furthermore, the children of Vietnamese immigrants and refugees are the “new second generation” and America’s single largest group of refugee children, will be the first to grow up almost entirely in the United States. Zhou and Bankston (1998) note: “Now, as in the past, the emergence of a second generation involves a new, decisive chapter in the ethnic experience. After the first generation moves to America seeking a better life for their families, their children either realize or smash those hopes” (p. 2).

Also, unlike the Chinese and Mexican immigrants, the Vietnamese tend to be less visible in U.S. society due to their smaller numbers; and thus, this may be one of the reasons why they are less researched. According to the U.S. 2000 Census, there are over 10 million Asians in the United States. The Chinese (2.3 million) are the largest group with Filipino and Asian Indian in second and third and the Vietnamese (1.1 million) as the fourth largest group. However, the population of Hispanics (41.3 million) dwarfs the Asians in comparison (U.S. 2000 Census). Of the 41.3 million Hispanics, almost 70% are of Mexican origin.

One characteristic that is helpful and unique in understanding the Vietnamese immigrant experience in the U.S. as compared to the Chinese and Mexican is that many of the Vietnamese fled Vietnam as refugees; thus, their relationship with their home country tends to be much more conflicted than other immigrant groups in the U.S. Overall, there is a relationship of distrust between Vietnamese Americans and Vietnam because the majority of Vietnamese Americans were refugees who fled Vietnam. The majority of Vietnamese in the United States tend to be anti-communist, resentful and/or fearful of the communist Vietnamese government, and afraid to go back to Vietnam even though it has been over 30 years since the end of the Vietnam War involving the United States. Due to these fears, few of the older Vietnamese Americans have

gone back to visit Vietnam. Thus, until recently there has been limited on-going patterns of contact in travel, communication, and interaction (social, cultural, and economic) between Vietnamese Americans in the United States and Vietnam. Relations between overseas Vietnamese and Vietnam appear to be improving because the Vietnamese government states that, while in 1987 only 8,000 overseas Vietnamese returned to Vietnam for visits, increased to 160,000 in 1993, and 300,000 in 1997 (Chan & Dorais, 1998). In contrast, many Chinese immigrants and Mexican immigrants continue to maintain relationships with family and friends in their countries of origin—either with visits back to the home country, phone calls or letters, there are still some Vietnamese immigrants who are less likely to do so because of fear of the communist Vietnamese government.

However, because many of the Vietnamese immigrants received “refugee” status, they were given legal resident status and later became U.S. citizens. This is very different for many Mexican immigrants who do not have legal status in the U.S. Furthermore, because the Vietnamese were classified as refugees, they were eligible for government assistance such as welfare (Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid, food stamps) and also special federal programs such as Refugee Cash Assistance and Refugee Medical Assistance in contrast to “the vast majority of immigrants in the United States, both in the past and today, have not had access to such government aid programs” (Kibria, 1993, p. 13).

Although government policies and programs may have helped Vietnamese immigrants and refugees in the initial years of resettlement, perhaps both a combination of government assistance and resentment of the Vietnam War contributed to U.S. society’s lukewarm reception of Vietnamese immigrants and refugees in the U.S.

SUMMARY

This chapter highlighted just some of the many existing studies on Vietnamese Americans in the U.S. The majority of studies have focused on how Vietnamese Americans are adapting and

assimilating to life in the U.S. This chapter also gave a brief overview of some general characteristics of the Vietnamese population in the U.S.—history of immigration, states/regions with large Vietnamese populations, socioeconomic status, education, language, religion, and political affiliation—and notes how the Vietnamese are different from other immigrant groups in “newness,” visibility, numbers, and conflicted relationship with their “homeland.”

Chapter 4

METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to learn about parents' experiences trying to raise their children bilingually in a mixed marriage where one parent is a heritage language speaker and the other parent has little to no proficiency in Vietnamese. The research questions are:

1. What are parents' beliefs and attitudes towards the HL and culture? Specifically, what are their motivations for wanting their children to know the HL?
2. What are the families' family language policies, either explicit or implicit, and how did they develop?
3. What strategies do parents use to teach their children the HL?
4. What are the patterns of language use in the family?
5. What factors influence language use?
6. How long do families stay the course to teach their children the HL? What factors affect whether or not families continue teaching their children the HL?
7. What are parents' goals and expectations regarding children's proficiency in the HL? How do parents define "success" regarding their efforts to teach the HL?

The previous chapter gave general background of the Vietnamese in the U.S. This chapter will highlight my position as a researcher and decision to use qualitative methods for the present study, give background information on the participants in this study (online survey and interviews) and the Eden Center (Vietnamese "hub" for the Washington DC metropolitan area. I will also discuss how I collected and analyzed the data.

POSITIONALITY OF RESEARCHER

I am a 1.5 generation ethnic Chinese-Vietnamese American. My family immigrated to the U.S. when I was 4 years old. Growing up, my parents always stressed our Chinese heritage and told me I was Chinese, not Vietnamese. However, they would speak predominately Vietnamese at home with each other and us, their five children. I attended a Chinese heritage language school on Saturdays for 1 year when I was in middle school. In graduate school, I sat in on a Vietnamese language class and also participated in an intensive Vietnamese language program one summer for 6 weeks run by SEASSI. However, I have limited proficiency in Vietnamese and only know a few token phrases in Cantonese. I have always known that I'm not an "American" but what am I—"Vietnamese American" or "Chinese American"? It was only in graduate school that I learned the term "ethnic Chinese born in Vietnam" which seems to best encapsulate my ethnic identity. So now I have a label "ethnic Chinese born in Vietnam" but it's easier to tell people that I'm "Chinese-Vietnamese American" if they ask. A question that has come up repeatedly—asked of me and that I ask myself sometimes is can you be Chinese if you don't speak Chinese? And if you speak Vietnamese really well, does that make you more Vietnamese than someone who speaks less?

Where am I now with my language and identity? I am married to a Caucasian American whose first language is English and fluent in Spanish. His Spanish in all areas (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) is better than my Vietnamese. So why am I trying to teach our Vietnamese when (a) my husband could more easily teach our children Spanish and (b) Spanish has wider use? Because my heart tells me to. While it would be wonderful if our children learned Spanish, it is not their heritage language.

Currently, we are living in Lancaster, PA which does not have a large Vietnamese population or many resources available. The public library does not have any Vietnamese bilingual books or

media. There are few stores or restaurants. My family lives 2 hours away so other people who could talk to my children in Vietnamese are not readily accessible.

Why am I interested in this study? I am interested in learning about other mixed families' experiences trying to teach their children Vietnamese. As a fairly new mother, I have noticed too often how parents—especially mothers—are plagued with guilt of “not doing enough” & “wish I could do it better” mentality. I don't want my study to contribute to the guilt and huge burden parents already feel. This study is not about “shoulds” nor is it to evaluate children's or parents' Vietnamese language proficiency or to compare what parents say they are doing with what they are actually doing. The purpose of this study is to learn about these families' lived realities—given their unique family situations and goals, what are parents doing to reach their goals for their children? Real life is complex and messy and more often than not—doesn't fit into neat boxes that researchers prefer. Hence, this is a mixed methods study with data from questionnaires, in-depth interviews, participant observations and field notes and researcher journal.

It is important that I, as the researcher, am aware of the preconceived ideas and bias that I bring to the study while seeking to understand how participants view their reality and interact with their surroundings. I, as the researcher, am not neutral. As a 1.5 generation ethnic Chinese-Vietnamese American married to a White Caucasian American with two young children, I have a personal interest in this topic. I believe that bilingualism (and multilingualism) is good. My interest in the topic of heritage language maintenance, shift, and loss and its effects on intergenerational relationships is deeply personal. Richard Rodriguez (1980) recalls his experiences growing up: “As we children learned more and more English, we shared fewer and fewer words with our parents” (p. 32). The linguistic barriers eventually isolated him from his parents so much so that “the young voice, frustrated, would end up saying, ‘Never mind’—the subject was closed”(Rodriguez, 1980, p. 32).

My linguistic interactions with my parents are similar to Rodriguez's. However, whereas Rodriguez believes that it is good that he learned English and had to leave his Spanish behind, I do not believe that heritage language loss is good nor necessary to learn English. Though I speak Vietnamese, my proficiency is limited so I am only able to talk with my parents about basic things like food, weather, and shopping. I feel a deep sense of loss and sadness that I am not able to talk with my parents about things that are close to my heart—like my faith and all of the things I am learning as I complete my doctoral research. My parents are puzzled by my academic studies—what is it that I do all day and why am I studying about how Vietnamese-Caucasian American couples raise their children?

Seidman (2006) tells researchers to ask themselves important questions such as “What is my stake in the inquiry, and what do I get out of pursuing my interest and learning about it? What are my expectations about the subject of inquiry?” (p. 32). My stake in the inquiry is that I want my children to be able to communicate with his grandparents in their heart language so that they can teach him about his cultural ancestry and share their life experiences and wisdom with him. What do I get out of pursuing my interest and learning about it? My hope is that I can help other couples who are in mixed marriages and also other 1.5 and second-generation children of immigrants see that it *is* possible to try to teach their children the heritage language even if they are not fluent in it. Instead of looking at the cup and seeing it as half empty—that I should feel badly that I can only speak some Vietnamese, I would like to see the cup as half full—that I should feel good that I *can* speak some Vietnamese. Why do we beat ourselves up that we are not “fluent native speakers” of a language - able to read, write and speak competently in all language registers? Those in academia stress the importance of being able to read and write in the HL so that one is able to access it for economic power and future job opportunities. But what if one's HL is not one of power like Chinese or Spanish? And what if I just want to know enough of my HL so that I feel comfortable speaking with my family? Why do we believe that the best and only way to be a speaker of a language is to have the proficiency of a native monolingual speaker? So

to be truly considered bilingual, one must put two monolingual parts together to make one bilingual?

The issues of heritage language speakers are manifold—some recurring issues are: regret in not learning the language; shame/embarrassment that you don't speak the language very well, identity—how can you be Vietnamese if you don't speak Vietnamese? So how does a heritage language speaker, who has limited proficiency in the HL, and married to a non-heritage language speaker, teach it to their children? These issues are further complicated when there is more than one heritage language (e.g., ethnic Chinese-Vietnamese American).

I would like to see a change in paradigm of how we look at heritage language speakers and change how heritage language speakers see themselves. Why do we view heritage language speakers as deficient because they may have limited vocabulary or be more comfortable using the HL in the domestic registers (i.e., more informal) as opposed to someone learning Vietnamese as a foreign language who is more proficient in the academic register (i.e., more formal)? By acknowledging that I do not come to my research from a disinterested position, I hope that it will help me to “minimize the distortion such interest can cause in the way they carry out their interviewing” and have included an autobiographical section explaining my connections to my proposed research (p. 32)

As an educator, graduate student, mother, and child of immigrant parents, I see bilingualism as good. I think immigrant parents should teach their children the heritage language and culture. However, how do I match my beliefs of what I “should” do and want to do when faced with the realities of life and juggling life's priorities? What is my motivation to teach my children Vietnamese?

Wei (2000) argues for even more transparency than Seidman and states that “the identity of the researcher is extremely important, as it affects the aims and objectives of the research, the relationship with the people being studied and the choice of theoretical and methodological perspectives” (p. 475 as cited in Felling, 2006, p. 33-34). Since my parents more identified with their Chinese heritage, we rarely participated in any Vietnamese functions while I was growing up and never maintained any relationship with the Vietnamese American community in the Washington DC metropolitan area. I was one of two Vietnamese American students at my undergraduate college so there was no Vietnamese American community there. After I graduated from college, I lived overseas for a couple of years then returned home briefly to complete my master’s degree and then left again for graduate school and marriage. Hence, while I am somewhat familiar with the area, I have not been apart of the Vietnamese American this community since I was a child living at home with my parents.

During my years as a graduate student at Arizona State University, on and off I made attempts to get to know the Vietnamese American students on campus by sitting in on some Vietnamese language classes and participating in the Tet festival hosted by the university. Among the undergraduate Vietnamese American students I was considered a “big sister”. I also visited a Vietnamese Catholic church and observed some of their Vietnamese language classes for the children. I was definitely considered an outsider at the Catholic church since I am not Catholic and not a member of their parish. While the people were friendly, they were very reserved with me.

All in all, I have never quite felt comfortable in my own skin. While my Chinese-Vietnamese identity is important to me, I am much more comfortable in a room with Caucasians than in a room filled with Asians. By acknowledging that I do not come to my research from a disinterested position, I hope that it will help me to “minimize the distortion such interest can cause in the way they carry out their interviewing” (Seidman, 2006, p. 32).

QUANTITATIVE, QUALITATIVE, OR MIXED METHODS?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of the various research approaches and methodologies? One of the biggest advantages of quantitative research is the ability to have a large sample as compared to qualitative research which tends to be limited to smaller samples. However, one of problems with just using quantitative research is that it is difficult to get in-depth. For example, in both To's (1999) and Phinney et al's (2001) studies, the findings are only correlational and no causation can be inferred from the results of their data. Phinney et al. (2001) also note that "the models do not demonstrate causality or establish the direction of effect" (p. 150).

Doing qualitative or mixed methods requires much more of a time investment than quantitative to gather data but when done well, results in deep, rich data that while not generalizable (most qualitative research does not aspire to be generalizable), provides new insights. However, a disadvantage with qualitative research is the small number of participants. Researchers may learn a lot about a few individuals and their families, but it is difficult and time-consuming to gather data on a large group of people.

I wanted to be especially careful of what Okita (2002) warns:

In a way, it does not matter how many hours a researcher spends talking to informants about childrearing and language development if the informant feels the researcher is not interested in her/his own difficulties, however 'trivial.' The data will simply not be generated. Examples of potentially 'trivial' issues in this study include the frustration of 'not enough time,' children not behaving themselves, colic or eczema problems, and so on. It is the combination of these things, together with inherent dilemmas in the project, which makes bilingual-childrearing in intermarried families emotionally demanding

work, but they tend to remain invisible since they remain outside the realm of most ‘data collecting.’ (p. 226)

A mixed methods approach in some ways allows researchers to gain the advantages of both quantitative and qualitative research. In a mixed methods approach, researchers could include a larger number of participants in their sample by using a questionnaire while gaining more in-depth information through interviews and observations.

Not only are my research questions better suited to be investigated using a qualitative approach, I feel that a qualitative approach is a better fit for me as a researcher and the kinds of questions I am interested in based on my beliefs and paradigm. Whereas quantitative researchers strive to be objective and maintain a disinterested stance, I do not believe that research can be objective nor bias-free.

I believe that a qualitative research approach is uniquely suited to my research questions because I want to do an exploratory study to document the experiences of 1.5 and 2nd generation Vietnamese-Caucasian couples raising children bilingually since little research has been done with this population. Because I believe in “the importance of language and stories in a person’s life as ways toward knowing and understanding,” I believe that in-depth interviewing is the method that will be most useful in answering my research questions. Seidman (2006) states “at the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (p. 9).

In-depth interviewing is especially useful for my study because I want to learn about the experiences of 1.5 and second-generation Vietnamese Americans and their spouses and “what meaning they make out of” their experiences trying to teach their children the ethnic language when they themselves may not be fluent in the heritage language. I want to get to know well the

participants in my study and hear their stories. I want to help participants examine their experiences as parents.

In Seidman's (2006) book, he references Schutz's (1967) example of walking in the woods and seeing a man chopping wood. While the observer can have an "observational understanding" of the woodchopper; however, "what the observer understands as a result of this observation may not be at all consistent with how the woodchopper views his own behavior. Thus, just by observing the woodchopper chopping wood—we do not know if he was supplying a logger, heating his home, or getting in shape, or for another reason altogether. While I do intend to observe family interactions, participant observation can only tell me part of the story. To truly get at the questions I want to ask—to find out about parents' experiences trying to teach their children the heritage language while they themselves may not be fluent—requires in-depth interviewing. Seidman (2006) states that interviewing is a valuable tool because it "provides access to the context of people's behavior and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behavior" (p. 10).

I believe that interviewing is the best method that would allow participants to tell their stories and experiences. In general, most researchers would agree that interviews provide richer data than other methods; Piller (2001) states "interviews have enjoyed increasing popularity over the last decade since they yield data that allow for deeper insights into private language practices and how they relate to linguistic patterns at large than either census data or questionnaires" (as cited in Felling, 2006, p. 48-49).

One advantage of a qualitative approach is that it allows researchers to delve into the complexities of particular case studies and not try to paint them with broad strokes. I want to be especially careful of Okita's caution:

In a way, it does not matter how many hours a researcher spends talking to informants about childrearing and language development if the informant feels the researcher is not interested in her/his own difficulties, however ‘trivial.’ The data will simply not be generated. Examples of potentially ‘trivial’ issues in this study include the frustration of ‘not enough time,’ children not behaving themselves, colic or eczema problems, and so on. It is the combination of these things, together with inherent dilemmas in the project, which makes bilingual-child rearing in intermarried families emotionally demanding work, but they tend to remain invisible since they remain outside the realm of most ‘data collecting’ (p. 226).

Okita (2002) found that “it [emotionally demanding nature of bilingual-child rearing] is largely invisible, even to many of the informants of this study, particularly fathers. It is even more invisible to researchers who rely on quantitative methods, and to qualitative researchers if they fail to explore the informants’ views about matters which may be considered marginal” (p. 226). By using a qualitative approach, I can go in-depth in getting to know the participants and hearing their stories. However, while one of the strengths of a qualitative approach is that I can go in-depth, one of its limitations is that I can only study a small number of people, and thus, the findings from my study would not be generalizable.

A possible limitation of interview data is that the data are all self-reported and that participants need to rely on their memories regarding their own language use as well as their language use with their families. Eamer (2008) found that some participants’ recollections of their language use differed from what other family members reported. One way I will try to address the limitation of interview data as self-reports is by interviewing both spouses and if possible, the children. I also anticipate that I will do some participant observation. Wolcott (2001) notes “...observation and interviewing yield complementary rather than comparable data. What people tell us tends to reveal how they believe things *should be*. What we ourselves observe firsthand is more likely to

reveal how things are...” (pp. 20-21). Since I am primarily interested in learning about participants’ experiences as seen from their perspectives, I do not view self-reported data as a big limitation.

Although written questionnaires might be able to get at some of the same data as in-depth interviewing, I believe that they are best answered through in-depth interviews because interviewing allows me to ask follow-up questions based on participants’ responses and try to get at things that are important to them. Yamamoto (2001) acknowledges the limitations of survey data from her study: “While the data derived from the questionnaire survey reveal the present language situation of the families, they tell us little about why and how they have reached decisions on their language use. Nor do they tell us much about whether there have been any developmental changes in their language use over time. Follow-up interviews with a small subset of the subject families in the questionnaire survey are used for this final investigation” (p. 45).

Furthermore, Yamamoto (2001) acknowledges that some of the questions on the survey in her study—especially factual questions on language use—were closed questions and did not allow participants to elaborate on their responses. In follow-up interviews, Yamamoto was able to ask questions such as “Under what circumstances or on what principles has the family reached decisions on their language use? Is the family satisfied with the choices made, or does the family have regrets or concerns about its chosen course?” (p. 103)

PARTICIPANTS

Online survey. Since this survey was online, participants are from all across the U.S. (16 states) and also from abroad (2 countries). At the time of this writing, sixty-nine people have completed the online survey. Almost all of the participants had a Bachelor’s and/or post-college degree and many of them had white-collar jobs though there was a significant number of homemakers/stay-at-home mothers. Almost twice as many women completed the online survey as

compared to men. The vast majority of people who completed the survey were the Asian spouses and not as many the non-Asian spouses. All but 5 of the 69 listed English as their strongest language. The second strongest language for most of the respondents was Vietnamese. The majority had one or two children and a smaller number having three or more children. A more in-depth description of these families is given in Chapter 4.

Interviews. Four couples participated in the interviews. The participants in this study are in a mixed marriage, have children living at home with them, and reside in the Maryland/Washington DC metropolitan area. While the actual number of 1.5 and second-generation Vietnamese Americans married to non-Vietnamese is not known, the number of those in mixed marriages who choose to teach their children the heritage is even smaller (cite correspondence w/C. Le email & MLA map). It is important to note that all of the parents in the study have expressed a desire to teach their children the heritage language. Whereas some studies (Mar, 1988; Okita, 2002; Yamamoto, 2001) have chosen to limit the couples included in their studies based on children's ages—my only criteria is that they have children living at home with them.

There were two families with a Vietnamese father and Caucasian mother and two families with a Vietnamese mother and Caucasian father. Three of the Vietnamese spouses were born in North America (3 in U.S. and 1 in Canada) and one was born in Vietnam and immigrated to the U.S. at the age of 15. The Vietnamese spouses all had varying degrees of proficiency speaking Vietnamese and all are fluent in English. All four families lived in the MD/Washington DC metropolitan area. The families were middle to upper-middle class and all participants had a high level of education (Bachelor's degree and beyond). A more in-depth description of these families is given in Chapter 4. Please see Table 1 for more details about the participants' background information.

Table 1

Background Information of Interview Participants

Name	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Birthplace	Age of Arrival	Education	Occupation
Phuong	F	Vietnamese	32	U.S. East Coast	Her parents immigrated to US as young adults	Post-graduate degree	Lawyer
Kevin	M	Caucasian	41	U.S. Midwest	0	Post-graduate degree	Lawyer
Nu	F	Vietnamese	40	Vietnam Saigon	14-15 years old	Bachelor's degree	Stay-at-home-mom (previously electrical engineer)
Patrick	M	Caucasian	43	U.S. East Coast	His parents 1 st generation to leave Ireland	Bachelor's degree	Electrical engineer
Cuong	M	Vietnamese	42	Canada	His parents immigrated to Canada as college students	Bachelor's degree	Architect
Valentina	F	Caucasian	43	U.S. East Coast	0	Post-graduate degree	ESOL teacher
Tan	M	Vietnamese	32	U.S. West Coast	His parents immigrated to US as young adults	Post-graduate degree	Physician
Kerri	F	Caucasian	32	U.S. West Coast	0	Post-graduate degree	PhD student

Note: Age of arrival 0 = Family has been in U.S. for two or more generations

Location. The Washington DC metropolitan area has the fifth largest Vietnamese population in the United States. There is no “Vietnesetown” in DC and Maryland. Unlike the Vietnamese population in Orange County, CA, the Vietnamese community is dispersed throughout the Washington DC metropolitan area. The largest Vietnamese center is Eden Center in Falls Church, VA with people driving as far as 4-5 hours to go there. In the Eden shopping center, there are over 120 stores with two markets, numerous restaurants, grocery stores, jewelry

stores, travel agencies, etc. Basically, it is a “Vietnamtown” with street signs in Vietnamese and where you can conduct all of your business in Vietnamese. Weekly newspapers, monthly magazines, and DVDS and music are all available in Vietnamese for purchase. There are also Vietnamese churches and temples. The flags of the United States and the former South Vietnam are proudly displayed here. It is the closest you will feel that you are in Vietnam on the east coast. At Eden Center, it is possible to do business entirely in Vietnamese. More first-generation Vietnamese frequent the Eden Center than the second-generation (Meyers, 2006).

DATA COLLECTION

Initial criteria for participants & recruitment. I had hoped to have more participants for both the online survey and interviews; this is a very small group. I had initially started out with a strict criteria of:

- (a) 1.5 and second-generation Vietnamese American married to a non-Vietnamese
- (b) with children living at home.

Sixty-nine people responded to my survey from the U.S. and internationally. Of the 69, thirty-five indicated they were interested in being interviewed. Of the 35, five couples lived in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. One of the five couples was a Vietnamese who immigrated to the U.S. when she was 26 years old. One arrived at age 15 and two were born in the U.S. and one was born in Canada. Although one of the couples did not fit the 1.5 and/or second-generation criteria, I decided to include them since there were so few couples. Unfortunately, I ultimately could only include portions of their data in the analysis since my audio recorder cut off the ends of their sentences for the interviews.

Because this was such a select population, I had to work very hard to find and recruit participants to complete the online survey. First I sent an email out to family, friends, and colleagues asking for their help in getting my survey out to people who fit the criteria. Since that had limited

success, I then scoured the Internet for Vietnamese American associations to ask them to send the information letter and the link to online survey to their members. It should be noted that I am friends with one of the couples in the study. The Caucasian wife and I were graduate students in the same ESL/ESOL master's program.

Online survey. Before developing questions for my online survey and interviews, I read several studies (Yamamoto, 2001; Okita, 2002; Eamer, 2008; Felling, 2006; Park, 2007; McCarty, 2006) focusing on language use. My survey contains some of my own original questions as well as adapting some questions from the other studies. I created my online survey on Zoomerang.

I tested the online survey with seven people, got their feedback, and revised it substantially. The survey consisted of a total of 29 questions about language use, language decisions, beliefs about Vietnamese language and culture, strategies used to teach Vietnamese language and culture, links with the Vietnamese community, and demographic information. The questions were a mixture of open-ended, multiple-choice, ranking, and Likert scale.

Finding people to complete the online survey was more difficult than I had anticipated. I first started off with my personal contacts and asking family and friends to complete the survey and to forward an email introducing my study and asking for their help in getting the word out about my online survey. Since I only had a small number of responses, I then scoured the Internet looking for Vietnamese American organizations in the U.S. and emailing them to help me in getting the word out about my survey to find possible respondents who might fit the criteria. In total, I received 68 completed surveys; only 66 met my criteria for analysis.

It is important to note that Okita states: "The survey was able to provide 'what'-type of information, but only limited information on why and how. For these, a qualitative approach was needed, namely in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The objective was to produce a 'depth and

roundedness of understanding' rather than a 'broad understanding of surface patterns,' and 'data generation' rather than 'data collection'" (p. 230).

After I had a number of responses to my online survey, I looked at their answers and noted topics I wanted to pursue more in-depth and developed my interview questions. I tested my interview questions with two couples in mixed marriages (French-American and Vietnamese-Caucasian). The French-American couple I interviewed face-to-face and the Vietnamese-Caucasian couple I interviewed via phone. I made substantial changes to the questions. Also from testing my interview questions with the couples, I realized that I was able to gather much more interesting data in the face-to-face interviews than interviewing over the phone for these reasons: (a) I was able to develop better rapport in person; (b) I felt the lack of eye contact and eye contact hindered good data collection; and (c) it was difficult to audio record the interview with both of them together because they only had one phone. Also with testing out my interview questions with the Vietnamese-Caucasian couple, I realized that I needed to make sure the couples I included in my study for the interviews are currently or were at some point actively doing something to teach their children the heritage language—otherwise, it would be a very unfruitful interview.

Interviews. Of the sixty-nine completed surveys, thirty-five people indicated they were interested in participating in interviews. Because I wanted to do face-to-face interviews, I invited only the people in the MD/NOVA/Washington DC area to participate in the interviews—six people. I sent an email thanking the six people in the Washington metropolitan area for completing the online and asked for a good time to call so that I could talk to them about the interviews. Of the six, one declined to participate (she misread the survey) and five agreed to participate.

I interviewed a total of five couples for the study. When I initially designed my study, I wanted to focus only on 1.5 and second-generation Vietnamese-Americans married to non-Vietnamese.

However, because my population is so select and small, I decided to include one couple which is a first-generation Vietnamese wife-Caucasian husband. I was interested in comparing their responses with those of the 1.5 and second-generation parents. However, in the end, data from the first-generation Vietnamese wife-Caucasian husband was not included in the analysis for this dissertation since there were technical difficulties in audiorecording their interviews.

According to Seidman's (2006) interviewing method, the first interview "establishes the context of the participants' experience," focusing on the participant's life history; "the interviewer's task is to put the participant's experience in context by asking him or her to tell as much as possible about him or herself in light of the topic up to the present time" (p. 17). The second interview "allows participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurs," and the third interview "encourages participants to reflect on the meaning their experience holds for them" (Seidman, 2006, p. 17).

I adapted Seidman's (2006) interview format. Instead of his three-interview sequence with one individual, I interviewed each spouse individually first and then interviewed both of them together in the final reflection interview; hence, in the first interviews with the spouses, I combined establishing "the context of the participants' experience" with asking participants to "reconstruct the details of their experience." Then, in the reflection interview with both spouses together, I asked participants to "reflect on the meaning their experience holds for them" (Seidman, 2006, p. 17).

I interviewed the first two couples following this format:

Interview #1: Spouse A individually (75 minutes) face-to-face

Interview #2: Spouse B individually (75 minutes) face-to-face

Break (15 minutes to 2 hours)

Interview #3: Both spouses together (90 minutes) face-to-face

I interviewed two couples using this format; however, I ran into four issues:

- (a) interview fatigue—for participants (& me) since all three interviews were conducted in 1 day with only a short break between the second & third;
- (b) I did not have time to go over the first two interviews and adapt the interview questions for the reflection interview for their specific situation;
- (c) the participants did not have time to reflect on their interviews and talk with one another; and
- (d) childcare was an issue for the reflection interview—it was difficult for both parents to stay engaged and not be distracted with taking care of their child(ren).

One unexpected bonus of having couples together with the children was that I got to observe the family's interactions and language use. Thus, for the remaining three couples, I changed the interview format to the following:

Interview #1-Spouse A individually (90min) face-to-face

Interview #2-Spouse B individually (90min) face-to-face

Break: 1-2 weeks

Interview #3-Spouses together (60min) via phone

Overall, this interview format work out much better since:

- (a) it took away the issues of interview fatigue and being distracted because of childcare;
- (b) the participants had time to reflect and talk with one another about interviews;
- (c) I had time to listen to their interviews and transcribe some of the interviews before the third interview so it was much fresher in my mind and I had time to adapt/refine questions for their specific family situation;
- (d) I developed more rapport with couples since it was over a period of time and continued correspondence via phone and email to schedule reflection interview;

Unfortunately, with this revised interview format I was not able to observe as much family interaction with both parents together with children, but I felt the positives outweighed the one negatives.

All of the face-to-face interviews were conducted in participants' homes except for the couple who lived on a small boat because there was not enough room in the boat; thus, the interview took place in the community room of their yacht club. All of the interviews were conducted in English. Interviews were semi-structured and began with a set of pre-thought questions but there was room for exploration as the interview progressed. Before the follow-up interview with the both spouses together, I listened to the audiorecordings of the interviews again and skimmed the transcripts, noting areas and questions I wanted to follow up on. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed.

Observation & fieldnotes. After each of the interviews, I jotted down fieldnotes and/or recorded my thoughts on my recorder as I drove home from the interviews so it was fresh in my mind about how I felt the interview went, my initial impressions of the interview, and described the setting and home, and patterns I noticed between the couple I just interviewed and previous couples.

Four of the five couples' interviews were conducted in their home so I was able to observe the family surroundings: the neighborhoods and house so I could see if there was a large Vietnamese community and if there were Vietnamese materials available in the home. One couple lived on a small boat so I was not able to see their living space since we conducted the interview in the library of the yacht club where their boat was docked. They described the materials they had available in Vietnamese.

Researcher journal. Throughout the study, I recorded ideas for interview or survey questions as they came to me, ideas for further research, reflections on the interviews, patterns I saw emerging from the interviews in a journal—both on my laptop and in a small notebook journal. I also used the journal to document my feelings, thoughts, and ideas as a researcher but also as a parent in a mixed marriage trying to teach my children Vietnamese.

DATA ANALYSIS

Transcription & coding. When I had time in between interviews, I started transcribing the interviews because I wanted to transcribe while the interview was still fresh in my mind so that I could note the nuances and interactions. I felt this strategy was better than waiting until all the interviews were completed before transcribing them. Ideally, I wanted to transcribe each of the first interviews with the couples first before the next follow-up interview; however, this was not always possible since some of the interviews were close together due to people's schedules.

In the first go-through of the first few interviews, I focused on just transcribing to try to get into the groove and become familiar with using the foot pedals and typing. As I got more comfortable transcribing, with subsequent interviews, I would pause in the transcription process to write down in my researcher journal anything I thought was interesting –jotting down key words, patterns, themes, or categories emerging in the families and couples or if participants said something really powerful.

After I completed my three interviews with each couple, I did a third run-through of the audiorecordings of the interviews and transcripts. This time my focus was on immersing myself in the data so that I was very familiar with it and looked for themes and categories I saw emerging and combined some ideas. In this third listening and reading, I copied and pasted quotes from the interviews that fit the codes and supported the themes and categories.

I immersed myself in the data—listening and reading the transcripts multiple times and jotted down key words, categories, patterns, and themes I saw emerging. In the course of listening and reading the transcripts multiple times, I copied and pasted quotes that fit the codes. I decided not to use a qualitative software program because while the amount of interview data was sizeable, I felt immersing myself in the data was more effective in teasing out the nuances of the interview data.

SUMMARY

This chapter discussed my position as a researcher—specifically my motivation and goals for this study and also my decision to focus on qualitative research versus quantitative research. The study of mixed couples (Vietnamese married to non-Vietnamese) is a very select and small population. Since it is difficult to find data specific to this population, not much is known about them. Data from my online survey found that there are more Vietnamese females who marry exogamously than Vietnamese males. Also of the mixed marriages, a higher proportion of Vietnamese females marry Caucasian males than other ethnicities. The children of this population tend to be younger children—less teens and college students.

The main data were the online surveys and in-depth interviews. For the interviews, I adapted Seidman's three-tier interview process. I also used participant observation, fieldnotes, and a researcher's journal. Coding was done by immersing myself in the data and looking for patterns, themes and categories that emerged. The next two chapters will discuss findings from the online survey and interviews.

Chapter 5

FAMILY VIGNETTES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will first give some background information of the families' immigration histories, participants' patterns of language use growing up, parents' self-reported Vietnamese language skills, and information about their children. I will also give short vignettes for each family of my interviews with them.

BACKGROUND OF FAMILIES AND VIGNETTES

Phuong & Kevin. Phuong's parents are both originally from Hanoi but their families fled south when they were about 3 or 4 years old with the exodus when the communists came. Both of her parents grew up in the city. Phuong recalls that her mother sometimes talks about how her family was one of the wealthiest in her neighborhood in Vietnam because they were the only one who had a TV. Phuong's parents were college students in Saigon and left April 29, 1975 (1 day before Saigon fell). They were dating but not married at time and left individually with their families. Her father came to CA; her mom came to TX. Shortly after arriving in the US, her parents reconnected, got married, and settled on the East coast where the mother's sister was living; she was married to a US Marine in NJ. Phuong was born 1977 in Philadelphia. Her father went back to college, studied in Philadelphia and got a job with IBM. They lived in NJ for a bit, then moved to CA but did not like it as much there and missed the East Coast, so parents requested transfer back to MD and have lived in MD since 1990. Phuong's parents still live in the house that they have lived in since 1990. Currently Phuong lives 20 minutes from her parents. Phuong is the oldest of six; they are all about 3 years apart and all born in the U.S. Like her, each of her siblings has both an American name—their official name, the name that is on their birth certificate and all their school records, and a Vietnamese name—the name that their family calls them but is not on their birth certificate. Phuong notes that some of her Vietnamese friends give

their children American first names and Vietnamese middle names. In her and her siblings' case, on paper they only have American names but usually go by their Vietnamese names with their family and friends. Sibling #2 (sister) is also a lawyer, married to another lawyer (non-Vietnamese) and also lives in DC area. They do not have children yet but have two dogs, which they speak to in Vietnamese. Sibling #3 (brother) used to live in DC but recently moved back home to live with their parents; he is in a period of transition with careers and needs to save some money, and figure out his next step. Sibling #4 (sister) lives in Northern VA, sibling #5 (sister) is a college student nearby and lives on campus during the school year, and sibling #6 (sister) is a senior in high school and lives at home with their parents.

Language proficiency & language experiences growing up. Phuong self-reports that she is “fluent” in English (all skill areas) and “fluent” in speaking Vietnamese but about the third grade level for reading and writing in Vietnamese. Growing up, Phuong notes that there were two or three families in their neighborhood but not in her school; she went to Catholic school all the way through high school, and there were other Vietnamese students. Phuong’s family went to a Vietnamese church in the area but did not attend every Sunday because they also belonged to an American Catholic church where she sang in the choir. However, for big holidays like Tet, they went to the Vietnamese Catholic church and went enough that they got to know some of the people at the Vietnamese church. When asked why her family went to two different churches, Phuong responds, “I think my parents wanted to take us to a Vietnamese church but recognizing that it wasn’t as good or vibrant a church as our church close by.” She further elaborated that the family preferred the American Catholic church because it had youth activities and that the Vietnamese priests’ sermons were not as good because “everything was in Vietnamese so there was a—you really have to struggle to pay attention.” However, her father did start a youth group at the Vietnamese Catholic church that held retreats and things like that for kids. From that, she made very good friends whom she is still friends with today and describes them as “among her closest Vietnamese friends” and still gets together with the kids all the time. Overall, Phuong

notes that her family would attend the Vietnamese Catholic church about once a month while she was growing up. Currently, Phuong and her family attend an American Catholic church in DC and says that “the only time I go back to the Vietnamese church is for baptisms.”

Linguistically growing up, Phuong’s family only spoke Vietnamese at home. She notes that each of them when they started school, either pre-school or nursery school, did not speak any English since they never learned English at home. When asked how this was Vietnamese-only language policy was achieved, Phuong replies, “my parents never spoke English to us and they never let us speak English back to them. And so over time it just felt very strange to speak English to them.” She further elaborates, “Even now, when I visit my mom at her store, you know where it’s an American environment where everyone else is speaking English, it still feels strange to speak English to her in the presence of other people because I’m just so used to speaking Vietnamese to her.” Phuong also notes that her family would also use Vietnamese when communicating with relatives but at school and everywhere else they would use English—even with Vietnamese friends since most people are more comfortable speaking English.

Growing up, Phuong observed her mother listening to music in Vietnamese, reading books in Vietnamese, and her parents would watch Vietnamese movies together but she and her siblings never watched any Vietnamese movies or TV programs. Phuong also notes that though there was a public library nearby that had a very large Vietnamese language collection, she does not remember her mother checking any of the Vietnamese books out or reading Vietnamese books to her; instead, her parents would “in reading to us they did what I do with him which is I’ll read an American book but I will tell the story in Vietnamese. So I won’t read out loud in English to him.” Phuong notes that her parents seemed to be more focused on her ability to speak Vietnamese versus read or write Vietnamese since “I can never remember my mom sitting down and teaching us you know—writing.”

Though Phuong attended Vietnamese language weekend school growing up, she states “My parents sent us to language classes at our Vietnamese church but you know, they weren’t very good and we’d often skip class and didn’t pay attention in class, and we didn’t learn anything there.” She says it was not very good since “they were taught by somebody who didn’t have any experience teaching. There wasn’t any reinforcement during the week because we didn’t have homework. You know so 1 hour once a week when you’re just mostly sitting in the back row hanging out with your friends was not enough to—you know, we weren’t committed to learning to read and write. And the teacher wasn’t skilled in techniques to teach you know that population I don’t think.”

Interestingly, though Phuong could have tested out of French for her foreign language requirement in college, she decided to take Vietnamese. Phuong states that she did not learn to read or write until she went to college which offered two years of Vietnamese language classes; she took both years. The Vietnamese language class was helpful because she could not read and write at all before and now can read at a third-grade level; however, she does not feel that the class improved her speaking or listening skills. Of her siblings, she is the only one to have any formal training because none of her siblings’ colleges offered Vietnamese language classes.

Though both Phuong’s mother and father lived in Saigon, her mother speaks with a more northern accent because of her parents while Phuong’s father speaks with a southern accent. As a result, Phuong notes that she and her siblings speak sort of a hybrid southern-northern dialect with the added twist that they were all born in the US. Phuong is very self-conscious of her Vietnamese since growing up, she had to endure many rude comments from her parents’ friends: “When I speak Vietnamese to older Vietnamese adults, they always make fun of my Vietnamese language and I think that’s the single worst thing that they’ve done to kill off—you know, they always say, ‘She speaks like she’s from Hue,’ or you know, ‘Xau noi ngoc nu vai,’ [Why do you talk like that?] or whatever and it’s like ‘I’m trying’--I was born in the States, you know, what do you

want? So I think um, I might—I do speak Vietnamese with my parents’ friends but you know, I’ve endured enough rude comments throughout my life that I can see why people wouldn’t—you know that they would just speak English.”

However, in regards to how she is raising Dung (Michael), Phuong states that she is not self-conscious around him, because “with Michael, he doesn’t make fun of me so it’s come much more naturally um, very very instinctive.” She has requested that her parents and siblings speak to him only in Vietnamese since that is what the pediatrician told Phuong and Kevin to do. She notes that they do not have many Vietnamese books and foresees “one day we’ll have to figure out how to teach him how to read and write but um, it--that doesn’t seem to be a priority for my parents.”

In regards to what language she uses when interacting with other Vietnamese speakers outside of her family, Phuong states, “I’ve never—I can never think of any Vietnamese friends anywhere in life where I’ve spoken Vietnamese with them. I dated two guys who were Vietnamese in college um, all of my friends from college who are Vietnamese don’t speak [Vietnamese with each other]—you know, I was in a Vietnamese student association, we never spoke in Vietnamese. My—the bar association here that I helped found, we—everything is in English.” She further elaborates on this pattern of English use amongst her Vietnamese friends: “Most of my friends who are Vietnamese married Vietnamese spouses um, and they don’t speak Vietnamese to each other.” Thus, for Phuong, it seems that the only time she really speaks Vietnamese is with her children, parents, and siblings.

Vignette. I arrive at their house at about 8:30am. They live in a middle- to upper-middle-class neighborhood in MD. It is a single-family house with a small yard. There is limited parking on streets near their house. There is a sign that says M-F, you need to have a permit to park. It is an interesting mix between suburban and urban. As I drive to their house, I pass what looks like downtown with trendy eateries and cute shops very near their house. Their neighborhood, while

within walking distance to the restaurants and stores, has a suburban feel. Each single family home has a small yard although the streets are crowded with cars since not all of the homes have garages. It is an affluent neighborhood with families who are solidly middle-class and upper-middle-class socioeconomic status.

I ring the doorbell and it is answered by a young Vietnamese woman with a small dog yapping in the background. The first thing I notice is that she is pregnant and since I am too, and to make conversation and break the ice, I ask her when she is due. She is due about 1 month before me and we also have in common that we are waiting to find out the genders of the babies. I follow her into the kitchen where she asks me if I would like some orange juice or tea and a bagel. I have brought homemade banana muffins to share and offer them to her.

We get settled in the room closest to the front door near the stairs and I tell her again the basics about my study and ask her if she has any questions and if it is okay to record the interview. A little while later, a little boy comes down the stairs with his father and they head towards the kitchen to eat breakfast. Phuong asks for a good morning kiss in Vietnamese and he complies.

Throughout the interview, I am struck by how articulate her responses are. I wonder if that is because she is a lawyer or that she has really thought these things through or a combination of both. She is very aware of the Vietnamese resources that are available and not available in the area. However, I am also struck by her and her husband's dislike of driving long distances. When asked about Vietnamese resources in the area, she says there are not a lot in the area as compared to Eden Center. Because growing up, my family and I would drive the 2 hours plus to shop and eat at the Eden Center, I am astounded that it is only a 20-30 minute drive from their house to the Eden Center but yet, they do not seem to go very often. Her idea of Vietnamese resources in the area is that essentially things would be right in her immediate neighborhood.

Tan & Kerri . Similar to Phuong's parents, Tan's parents both were born in the north but then in 1954, their families moved to the south. His mother was 1 year old when her family moved to the south. Tan's father came to the U.S. in 1972/73 as a graduate student when he was 24 years old; his mother came to the U.S. at the age of 21 in 1975 after the Vietnam War ended. She and her sisters fled Vietnam. However, Tan notes that his mother was "very lucky" because her older sister was a flight attendant for Pan Am and was able to get his mother out on one of the last Pan Am flights out so she did not have to endure some of the hardships of being Boat People. Tan's parents met in the U.S. and married. Tan was born in CA.

Though his mother went to school for a bachelor's degree at various points when he was growing up, she never finished and just started working. Currently his parents have their own business. His father's background initially was in accounting but he went back to school to be a lawyer so now their business is a combination of taxes and a law. His parents work together with his mother taking care of the day-to-day stuff and his father traveling a lot to look for different opportunities. His father spends a lot of time in Vietnam doing international business type stuff for Vietnamese companies that want to invest abroad. Conversely, his parents also work with Americans who want to invest in Vietnam. His father works with relatives who are lawyers in Vietnam. The majority of Tan's family is in the U.S.—almost all on my mother's side except for one half-sister and almost all of his father's side, except for an aunt and her family and an uncle (who passed away) and his family. Tan only has one younger brother who is 14 years younger than he is who just graduated from high school. Both Tan and his younger brother only have Vietnamese names. At one point growing up, Tan wanted to change his name to an American name since it was an unusual name both in Vietnamese and English but he has come to embrace and be proud of his name. Tan and Kerri gave their daughter a Vietnamese name, one that is also unusual even for Vietnamese. They have chosen not to give her an American middle name because they do not want people calling her by an American name.

Language proficiency & language experiences growing up. Linguistically, Tan self-rates his Vietnamese as good on the domestic level talking with his parents and brother, but his reading and writing as “poor;” he says that he could probably read a menu but probably not read at a first-grade level. He self-rates himself with listening and speaking higher but notes that his speaking is restricted due to limited vocabulary: “I think ah, like on a 1 to 5 scale, 5 being the best. I think hmm, listening is probably the best, I think it’s probably like a 3 or 3 ½ maybe. I think speaking is like a 2 and then reading and writing is like a 1 or lower or a half. I guess I would expand it to a 10 point scale if I’m going to a half, but you know, you get it basically.”

Growing up, Tan did not think his Vietnamese was bad compared to his peers—other Vietnamese who were born in the U.S. or immigrated when they were very young and were his age; e.g., his cousins and his parents’ friends. And still compared to this group, he feels his Vietnamese is pretty good. However, about 5 years ago, when Tan and Kerri went to Vietnam, he was struck by how little he knew since there was a lot he did not understand when he was in Vietnam: “You know we were on tours and with the tour guide there were a lot of words that I did not know what it meant and um, and when I spoke, it seemed like people had a harder time understanding me than I thought they would. I don’t know if that’s like an accent issue or something else, but um, but I kinda like in the end—language is just like making people understand and you understand so I mean they couldn’t understand me as well as I thought they would. So that’s why I would rate my speaking that way.”

Tan notes that his parents are northern and speak the northern dialect and that the majority of Vietnamese Americans he interacts with are from the south; hence, “a lot of times—everyone here is from the south so—for example, my advisor is Vietnamese and sometimes when he speaks, it takes me a little bit of time for me to understand him just because I need to like kinda like process it more.” It is interesting that Tan acknowledges difficulty understanding people due to southern and northern accents because his family is a mix of northern and southern speakers. Both his

parents speak with a northern accent. Even though she grew up in the south, Tan's mother has a northern accent because her parents spoke the northern dialect at home and her family tended to self-identify more as northerners even though she grew up in the south and went to school in the south. On his father's side, many of Tan's uncles, who speak with a northern accent, married southerners or people from central Vietnam, like Hue, who speak with a southern accent. Thus, many of his cousins speak with a southern accent because their mothers speak with a southern accent. While Tan does not note having any difficulty understanding his aunts or uncles who speak with a southern accent, he did notice that when he went to Vietnam, especially the central part, that he had problems: "It took me so long to like understand and stuff like that."

Growing up, Tan states that his parents would speak only Vietnamese with him and that he was expected to respond in Vietnamese. If he responded in English, they would tell him to speak Vietnamese: "I remember when I was young, um, maybe in grade school, a lot of times I would answer them in English. Um, just because it was quicker and they would tell me to speak to them in Vietnamese—they would remind me—kinda like chide me, you know—you know like "speak in Vietnamese" and um, um, yeah, they definitely did." When asked if he ever refused to speak Vietnamese, Tan stated "I don't think I ever refused. I think it was kinda like when your parents tell you to do anything else that they had—like wash your hands or something like that. Just one of those things that my parents would remind me to do and I always did. I can't remember ever just refusing or going through a period where I only spoke to them in English as a form to rebel or something—I think I always spoke in Vietnamese once they reminded me."

When his younger brother was born, Tan does not remember his parents telling him to speak Vietnamese with his younger brother: "I don't ever remember my parents telling me specifically like you need to speak Vietnamese with him. I think I remember another thing actually is that when he was a little baby—like it felt very natural to speak to him—a baby in Vietnamese. And so, I think as he grew up, it just kinda you know, I kept speaking to him in Vietnamese."

However, growing up he would always speak English with his cousins: “I always thought that was kind of neat or weird because with my cousins, um, we all speak in English to each other—even, on my mom’s side, the cousins tend to be younger and they’re all born here. Yeah, so we all speak in English to each other. And then on my dad’s side, they tend to be older and so a lot of them were not born here. I think none of them were born here actually. Um, but even with them, I still speak to all of them in English—even the older ones whose English is accented. Um, and whose Vietnamese is maybe—although I don’t know—they’ve been here so long now—but they speak Vietnamese very well—fluently. Um, yeah, but with my brother, I’ve always talked to him in Vietnamese.” When asked why the difference in language use between with his younger brother and his cousins, Tan replies: “I think my brother’s a lot younger than a lot of my cousins. And maybe—I don’t know. Maybe by then for me to him at least, I think at that age—so I was you know, I was a freshman when he was born. So 15. I don’t know. I think by that age or even later—you know, you understand like the value of your culture or something like that. Or the value of having another language. So, I think for me personally speaking to him, it was um—I wanted him to preserve or know Vietnamese. And then, um, and then, yeah, it just stuck I guess.” Tan notes that “And now we’ll [Tan and his brother] speak in English more--you know, especially if we’re—I don’t know, something stupid like video games or something quickly like you know—but we usually use Vietnamese. I mean around the dinner table and stuff, the whole conversation is in Vietnamese like between my parents--my brother, my parents--me, my brother-me.” Tan notes that his younger brother’s Vietnamese is better than his—especially in terms of vocabulary. When communicating with other Vietnamese speakers outside of his family, Tan states that he is only comfortable using Vietnamese with other Vietnamese speakers if they are similar to him (Vietnamese American with similar proficiency level) versus someone who is Vietnamese-Vietnamese and fluent.

Growing up, Tan notes that though he lived in an area with a large Vietnamese community and that his father knew a lot of people in the community, his family was not active in the community.

They rarely attended Vietnamese cultural events or celebrations in the community. When he was about 10, his family moved to another suburb where there were fewer Vietnamese in the neighborhood. Like Phuong, Tan attended a private school where there were no other Vietnamese students. During the summers growing up, Tan and his cousins would spend a lot of time at each other's houses and they would also see each other at big holidays like Tet and Christmas. Otherwise, they would see each other about once a month or once every two months. Interestingly, though Tan lived in an area with a large Vietnamese population growing up, his parents never offered to send him to Vietnamese language school. He notes now, "Yeah, they never offered it. And that's kind of weird. I don't know why. I kinda wished they had. I think it would've been much easier now." Though Vietnamese was offered in college, Tan notes that language was not a priority in college since his schedule was very tight between his major and doing premedical requirements and the college having a lot of requirements: "And so I didn't have much—maybe four classes of electives or something like that throughout my four years—four semesters. And so, I think all of that I used for Spanish just because at that point, you know, thinking about it if you do two full years of a college language, I don't think you'll be as far as if I had just taken those classes to learn more Spanish versus other requirements."

In regards to how Tan and Kerri are raising Mai linguistically, like Phuong, Tan has requested that his parents and brother speak to her only in Vietnamese. Kerri notes that his family has been really good about that and one of the few times she has seen them use English with Mai is after she did something good, they said, "Good job!" and then continue in Vietnamese.

When communicating with his parents, Tan usually speaks Vietnamese except for certain words that he does not know. Though Tan and his family speak mainly Vietnamese to Mai, he notes that "we see sometimes she speaks a little bit of Vietnamese but a lot of it is English." Tan especially noticed this when he was gone for awhile on business trips and then when he returned, he noticed Mai speaking a lot more English. However, since he's been home more, he has noticed that she is speaking more Vietnamese. Unfortunately, because Tan and Kerri are on the East Coast and their

families live on the West Coast, they do not get to see them often and Mai does not get to see her grandparents much other than video chatting. Kerri shares an interesting story of Tan's family's interaction with Mai: "Um, the one thing that they do is sometimes when they say things that are encouraging—sometimes they say that in English. [small laugh] which is kinda funny—I'm not sure why like "Good job!" or something. I don't know why—that *one* [emphasis] specific instance. . . . You know if she um, like if we're video chatting or something like that—this is in the beginning. Now they don't do it anymore, but you know if she would sing a song or something. At the end, they would be like 'Oh, good job!' and Tan would be like "Why are you speaking English all of a sudden?" [laughs]. . . . But literally *only* [emphasis] words of encouragement. It's not like they would switch to English and keep speaking English. They'd be like "Oh, good job!" and then they'd say something in Vietnamese. I'm not sure why that happened, but. But yeah, but now they just say everything in Vietnamese."

Vignette. I found Kerri in the course of looking for organizations online that would help me connect with other Vietnamese Americans. She had signed up on the MeetUp of Vietnamese in Baltimore. In her profile, she said that she had recently moved here from CA and was missing good Vietnamese food from her in-laws. I emailed her, introduced myself and asked if she would be willing to participate in my study. She said yes. At the time, I had not finished testing out my questions for the online survey and interviews yet but told her I would contact her when I was ready to begin collecting data.

Kerri served as my main point of contact for their family. It was through her that I emailed and called to make arrangements for the interviews. In the process deciding on what would be most conducive to good interviews, we discussed the possibility of having my husband and son come so that my husband could take care of their daughter during the interview. I had offered this since we seemed to have so much in common with them—both of our husbands are physicians, our children about the same age, and we are both doctoral students. However, Kerri declined saying that their

apartment was very small but there was a park across the street from their apartment if my husband and son wanted to play there.

Driving to their apartment, they were definitely in the city part of the city near the hospital and the university. When I arrived and parked on the street, I called her on my cell from downstairs so she could open the door for me since the doorbell was broken. Walking into their apartment, I saw shoes were on the floor by the door, and near the entrance was a table with a computer and kids' toys underneath. There was a small sofa in the living room. Through the living room was the kitchen with a high chair in the middle. Next to the sofa was a door leading to the bathroom. Directly across the bathroom was the parents' bedroom. There was a small TV across from the sofa.

I interviewed Tan first while Kerri took care of Mai. I sat on the floor with some pillows cushioning my back. I went through the IRB with Tan. He was fine with it all and we started the interview. He was very comfortable with being interviewed and talked freely. In the middle of our interview, Mai and Kerri came into the room and I was able to observe the family interactions. Tan spoke to Mai in Vietnamese. He spoke Vietnamese with a northern accent. While I could understand most of what he said to her, I did not understand everything. At one point the cat came in and licked one of the muffins I had brought to share. It seemed like Tan switched in and out of Vietnamese effortlessly—using English with Kerri and Vietnamese with Mai.

After I finished my interview with Tan, he got Mai ready to leave for an excursion. Kerri and I were left alone in the apartment so it felt much more leisurely—two friends sipping tea and chatting about life with a 1.5 year old while going to graduate school. Perhaps what struck me most about Kerri is how open she was towards Vietnamese language and culture and how positive and upbeat she was. I was impressed that she studied Vietnamese for a whole year and seemed to learn a lot from it. I also learned that she was very smart, good at learning languages, and quite

humble. At one point during the interview, there was a moving, yet slightly awkward moment when I asked her what aspects of Vietnamese culture she wants to teach her daughter. She started talking and then teared up.

Just with the brief glimpse I had of their family interactions, it seems like indeed Tan tries to exclusively speak only Vietnamese to Mai. For the most part, it seems that Kerri understands what is being said since it is fairly basic Vietnamese and the same terms are used fairly often. Kerri feels comfortable enough with Vietnamese that she will mix some Vietnamese with her English when speaking with Mai and Tan as a family. For his part, it seems Tan does not mix with Kerri although he knows that she knows some Vietnamese.

Cuong & Valentina. Cuong's parents are northerners. He emphasizes the fact that most of his relatives are from the north and that there is a big cultural distinction between northerners and southerners: "Ah, first and foremost you can pick each other from accents. Second is there's the definite political outlook. So the northerners who fled, um, fled for fear for their lives and um, have never really felt at home in the south or maybe the southerners made them feel distinct. But even my cousins grew up in this ambiguous mode where they would make fun of the northern accent, but they themselves were children of northerners. Um, you know, they—I think the reason they would bring this up was when the country fell, the power structure flipped so drastically and it was all run by northerners. Northerners with very distinct accents, very distinct cultural you know, attitudes. And so I think the way of distinguishing their anti-communism was my cousins would say, "oh" they would make fun of the quote northern accent, zhao bac ye. That became almost a pejorative." After 1954, both sides of Cuong's family all immigrated to the south with the exception of his father's aunt.

Both of Cuong's parents came to Canada on a scholarship at the age of 17 - 18. They met in Montreal and soon afterwards, they got married. Cuong and his two younger brothers were all

born in Canada. His mother finished her degree but his father continued getting more advanced degrees. Cuong notes that his parents were supposed to have gone back to Vietnam but with the war, his father just kept on getting degree after degree to delay the process. His father knew things were pretty bad in Vietnam and Cuong's uncles told his father there was no hurry to return. In 1978, his father got his PhD—in total, his father got two masters and a PhD. Though in 1974, Cuong's family was given humanitarian reasons for getting citizenship, they were technically supposed to be on a plane going back the minute his father was done with his degree. The fact that one of his uncles had been forcefully deported kind of always haunted Cuong's parents.

Language proficiency & language experiences growing up. Cuong self-rates his proficiency in Vietnamese and French as “lower level--verbally probably much better and grammar-wise--very rusty.” Because Cuong grew up in Canada, he studied French up to grade 12 and feels his French is stronger than his Vietnamese “because I wasn't pushed to the same level [at the Vietnamese weekend language classes] as I was with high school French. However, he notes “I would say *because* of exposure to relatives, it developed in a different way. Maybe there's more confidence with spoken Vietnamese because of exposure to relatives whereas I wasn't as exposed to as many French-Canadians.” He explains that due to Vietnamese exposure from his parents and also his cousins who lived with them from 1977-1984—“it was full-time—I couldn't escape it.”

When asked about studying Vietnamese, Cuong states: “Well, there was never formal instruction, I mean there was just the weekend classes and um, what was different was just exposure to relatives.” It is interesting that he does not consider attending Vietnamese weekend classes as “formal instruction.” Cuong began attending Vietnamese language weekend classes when he was 8 years old and continued until he was 12 or 13 years old at which point he and his brothers stopped because they started doing other things like Tae Kwon Do.

When asked if attending Vietnamese language school on the weekends was optional, Cuong recalls, “Back then you know, it was—I had no choice and then. But once I moved out I did make an attempt to get back into learning it.” He goes on to add, “I don’t know if I resented it. I mean I enjoyed being able to play floor hockey in the afternoons [S & H laugh]. And we kinda acted nuts. Ah, but ah, I don’t know if I would say resented it, but it wasn’t—it was definitely it came from my parents and not from me.”

Later on when Cuong was in his mid-20s, he asked his father to find a tutor to work with him on his Vietnamese. Cuong and a friend would go for weekend sessions with the tutor. Cuong notes that this was very different from the weekend Vietnamese language classes because “the onus was on us to keep it up.” He compares the one-on-one tutoring sessions with the weekend language classes: “Well she treated us differently. You know, we were no longer kids who needed to be disciplined and so, you know, the topics were a little more interesting. It wasn’t just like being told how great your culture was but it was being able to engage a little bit more intellectually with the stuff instead of just being told this myth, this legend, ah, that kind of thing.” The tutor gave them newspaper articles or magazine articles and they would have to read it—practice their pronunciation and then they would “winnow out the intent of the article” and then she had them write a response to the article.

Growing up, Cuong says that his parents would usually always speak Vietnamese to him and his two brothers, but they did not require that their children speak Vietnamese back to them and did not require their children to use Vietnamese when speaking with each other. Sometimes Cuong’s parents would speak English if they really wanted to make a point clear. Cuong believes his parents did not strictly enforce a Vietnamese-only language policy because “They were concerned very much with integrating. They wanted me to integrate so they didn’t—they let me get away with a lot of things that um, ah, you know for example, they didn’t strictly enforce the honorifics. I didn’t realize the subtleties of say between um, co and jo, and um, coa and zhi—I didn’t realize

that. They didn't bother and my other relatives felt that if my parents were ok with that, they wouldn't enforce that protocol." This pattern of his parents speaking Vietnamese to him and Cuong responding in English and the brothers speaking only English with each other continues even today. When asked why Cuong chose to respond to his parents in English, he states, "I don't know. It just felt more comfortable. I felt I could just come across clearer. Also, I think my dad would always correct my grammar so much that I just got fed up. I would just speak in English because at least he couldn't correct my English."

While all three brothers went to Vietnamese language school for about the same amount of time, growing up, Cuong says that his Vietnamese was better than his brothers' but since both of his younger brothers have spent time traveling in Vietnam and made efforts to improve their Vietnamese proficiency while he has not. Hence, now his brothers' Vietnamese is more proficient than his. The middle brother's Vietnamese in particular has improved drastically because he did research for his PhD in Vietnam and spent significant time there living with relatives. Cuong's youngest brother is a diplomat who married a Vietnamese-Canadian and is currently based in China so his Mandarin is very good.

In regards to language use with his relatives, Cuong states that in general, they would speak in Vietnamese to him unless they felt he did not understand something and then they would use English. Interestingly enough, with his relatives, Cuong says that he sometimes responded in English and sometimes in Vietnamese depending on the relatives' English proficiency. For those whom he felt could not understand English and with older relatives, Cuong would speak Vietnamese. Conversely, with his cousins, as his cousins' English got better, he would switch to using English with them.

While the community in which Cuong grew up in had a relatively small Vietnamese community, he says the community was very active. He describes his father as one of the most active people in

the Vietnamese communities they lived in—“a mover and shaker”— filling roles such as president of the Vietnamese Student Association in college and starting the Vietnamese-Canadian Association in a local city, as well as helping to get 4,000 people resettled. Thus, growing up, Cuong was always exposed to the Vietnamese community. Cuong was exposed not only to the Vietnamese community in public arenas but also at home because after Vietnam fell, a lot of relatives fled Vietnam and his family ended up helping various cousins and relatives come into the country and some lived with them for a few years.

In terms of language use with his children, Cuong never tried to speak Vietnamese with his oldest daughter because with the first one, he just remembers being overwhelmed learning how to be a parent. Before they had their second daughter, Cuong and Valentina met a couple at the pool who said they had not taught their first child their heritage language and regretted and had decided to do it with their second child. This encounter served as the impetus for Cuong to decide he would speak Vietnamese to their second daughter. Cuong spoke Vietnamese to their second daughter until she was about 2 years old and then stopped. He and Valentina had also asked his parents to speak Vietnamese to the children but his father only did so for a short time and his mother never did. Since then, Cuong has not tried to speak Vietnamese to either of his children and English is the main language used in the home. Because their oldest daughter is in a Spanish-English immersion program and their younger daughter will start next year, Spanish is the language being focused on currently.

Vignette. Coming into this interview, I was curious as to how it would go since: (a) I was friends with them; and (b) I knew they had very busy lives and were a bit stressed out due to the husband’s work load and stress from work. Valentina and I had attended the same Master’s ESOL program together and had worked as graduate assistants. We had also hung out socially a few times with playing volleyball on the weekends and meals sometimes when I was in town. Their lives significantly changed and got a lot busier when they had two children and bought a house.

I interviewed Valentina first. We sat on the front porch as this was the most comfortable for her since she has really bad scoliosis and Cuong was cleaning the house. My husband had come with our son and had taken their two daughters to the nearby woods for a walk.

I started the interview with the basic IRB protocol. It was a little awkward at times for both of us since I would ask a question, Valentina would begin to answer and then stop and say, “Um, I don’t think I want to go there because Cuong’s parents might want to read your study one day and they’ll know it’s them.” So at times she felt torn between sharing with me as a friend versus with me as a researcher. Even though I would not use her real name, if Cuong’s parents did indeed read this study and knew that Cuong and Valentina had participated in it, it would not be difficult for them to figure out who they were. Hence, I had to be respectful of Valentina’s desire not to share some information. In some of my questions when I asked Valentina how important it was to Cuong that their children learn the HL, she said, “Not fair!” Sometimes I did not know if she was joking and sometimes I was concerned about offending her if I pushed too hard on a question so in the end, I did not push or ask questions I might otherwise have if she was not my friend. Hence, concern methodologically about interviewing friends came up as an issue in Valentina’s case but not Cuong’s for me.

Interestingly enough, it did not seem that Cuong felt the need to monitor his responses as much as Valentina did. In his responses, Cuong said, “I’m just trying to tell the truth and be as honest as I can be” even knowing that if his wife heard some of his responses, she might not be too happy with him. Of all the interview participants, it seemed that Cuong was most open to reflection and honest with himself. He was the one who pointed out the contradiction of “If I say that I want my children to learn the HL and to learn about Vietnamese culture—what am I doing to teach them?”

Basically, English is the dominant language in this family. Since the older daughter is in an English-Spanish bilingual program and the younger daughter will be too—Spanish is the second most used language in the family—especially as the majority of the ethnic population in their area speak Spanish. Spanish tends to be used in the home in conjunction with completing homework from school. Both parents have noted that the elder daughter struggles with reading in Spanish. Cuong and Valentina both have studied French but now seem to rarely use it. Besides the occasional Vietnamese friend who is more comfortable speaking Vietnamese than English, there is no occasion or need for Cuong to use Vietnamese at home or at work. His pattern of speaking to his parents and brothers in English continues even though their Vietnamese proficiency has improved a lot.

For this family, it is clear that time is an issue and that time efficiency is a big focus. It is also clear that since Valentina is the primary caretaker for the children, her parenting philosophy is most evident with Cuong viewing himself in the role as supporter and to reinforce what she does with the children.

It should be noted that a few months after my interview with them, Cuong's mother passed away after a long battle with breast cancer. The whole family went to Canada and Cuong got there in time to see his mom before she passed away. They had a traditional Buddhist ceremony for her at the hospital with a Vietnamese Buddhist monk attending.

Nu & Patrick. Nu describes her family growing up in Vietnam as middle-class. Nu says that she and her siblings were fortunate to be able to go to school because her parents did not have anything to do with the previous government so they were left in peace. However, her mother had a small business selling fabric from their home in Saigon; the communists wanted to nationalize all property so they went into the house and took whatever they wanted and they put her father in

jail for several months. Nu's mother does not know how to read or write, but she describes her mother as "street smart."

In 1984, Nu escaped Vietnam via boat with just her twin sister at the age of 14, just before she was to enter tenth grade. Describing the escape, Nu says that her parents paid "a fortune" to escape via boat. Because her parents feared getting caught and losing their home, they sent a couple of their children at a time out of Vietnam. After leaving Vietnam, she and her twin stayed in a refugee camp for about 15 months in Indonesia. Once they arrived in the U.S., they were considered unaccompanied minors and the U.S. government helped them with some money until they finished high school and they lived in their aunt and uncle.

Nu is one of seven children, she is the middle child. She and her twin sister were the first children to flee, then two years later, two more sisters left. Currently, her parents live in Vietnam with two of children (one son who left but returned to Vietnam and one sister who has Downs) and one sister lives in Australia.

When looking back at her time in Vietnam growing up as a child, Nu says, "My generation is pretty much the hardest—the unluckiest generation. Let's think about this. Boom, I was about 6-7 years old, Saigon fell. You know become communist. What do I get? What does my generation get? Poverty, um, chaotic, no education."

Language proficiency & language experiences growing up. Linguistically, because Nu has lived in the U.S. for 25 years, she feels her proficiency in English and Vietnamese skills is fairly similar though she prefers to speak English rather than Vietnamese with other Vietnamese speakers. She states "I'm neither good at Vietnamese nor English. But yes, I can write in Vietnamese well if I need to, but I'm stuck in the middle, girl." She further elaborates:

So, I you know like if you go into the river, I don't have a chance to let's say stop learn—I don't have a chance to keep my language. Let's face it. When I came here I was in high school. I have to learn the language just to read the book, then after that I have to learn the language again. You see to go to college--university, God forbid. And then after that, I have to learn more to go to work so people can comprehend me. Ok, so there we go. And gradually in the river, slowly you will become the river. You will drown. You will become it. So basically I'm in the English world and gradually I just become it.

While Nu says that she is fluent in Vietnamese in all skill areas (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) she notes that “it's no longer an instant” but that she has to stop and think—“Naturally what comes out of me is English. It's like a banana, girl. Inside I'm white, outside I'm yellow. Let's face it. That's the—the if speak to some old lady in Vietnamese or I speak to my mom and dad, instantly I am Vietnamese.”

As to her English, Nu states, “In English, I'm stuck too, ok?” [Nu small laugh]. She explains that partly the reason why she chose to major in engineering is because it deals with numbers and not language since English was so difficult for her to learn and says “So that's why majority of Vietnamese that came to this country—the first generation are all engineer. Because you are right or you are wrong. Numbers—that's it. It's logical. Now, the second generation, now you see more doctors, lawyers. Rare. Rarely. Very few lawyers. Because all English again.”

In regards to language use with her siblings who are in the U.S., she says it is “mixed half this and half that,” but “When I don't want my husband to hear something—all Vietnamese” [M laughs]. When she communicates with Vietnamese friends, she prefers to use English. When asked why, she states “I don't know. I don't know how the brain work that way. Because maybe you know, I have an option. If I speak to young people—Vietnamese people-I have an option knowing that

they would understand me either way so I mix. Now, if I speak to some people who absolutely don't know English, then immediately, my mind just turns Vietnamese. But I read, I can write, I can understand perfectly [Vietnamese]—even though my speaking is a little bit slower.”

In regards to how she is raising her children linguistically, Nu says:

Because it is so difficult to speak to them [in Vietnamese]. It's not difficult—it's my fault. To be honest, if I insist on it, I may be able to continue to speak to them. The only way for you to learn any language is to speak to them. But we are in a society that—in an English-spoken society. How do you say that ok. And that's why naturally I speak to them in English—unfortunately, you know. I wish but although some simple words I can tell them “go brush your teeth”, “go shower”, “go eat”—something very simple. They would understand, but anything more lengthy than that then, my older daughter would understand more.

When asked why it is difficult to speak Vietnamese with her children, Nu replies, “If I speak to them in Vietnamese that sounds more foreign. . . .Because English seems to be so natural now even though I speak most of the time spoken English or not in the right form, the right grammar. My children correct my own English, which is wonderful because at least I know I do the right thing. They are better than me. That's true. Um, so yeah.”

When asked if it feels “foreign” to speak Vietnamese with her siblings, parents, or older Vietnamese, she replies, “No, no. But only with my children. Um, but with my siblings or Vietnamese friends or my parents—no problem.” When pushed for a fuller explanation, she explains that “It's the environment you are in. . . .But I think the environment like say if I'm around my children are around with English people but if I speak Vietnamese, I think because the people around me listen to that too and I feel a little bit rude that they don't understand what I'm saying.”

In regards to raising her children linguistically, Nu recalls that with her oldest child, she spoke only Vietnamese with her until she was 2 ½ years old. When asked why she stopped speaking Vietnamese with her children, Nu replies: “What happened—I don’t know what happened with me but I switched.” But when I pushed her to remember, Nu stated “I think it was my fault. But hey, what can you do? I don’t know why I switched um, I think my father-in-law said one time, ‘Hey, speak eng!’ and I was thinking ‘Hey, I live in this country—you know, just might as well speak the language.’”

After her children were born, she continued to work for 5 years then quit her job so that she could stay at home with the children. When she was working, the children at one point were placed in a daycare with a Vietnamese babysitter; then were switched to an Indian lady, and then were switched to another Vietnamese lady because the first Vietnamese woman had moved away. When asked why she changed child providers, Nu stated “Because I thought that um, maybe it’s good that I send them back to the Vietnamese lady so at least they can hear the tone. However, most of the time they in front of the Sesame Street, so much for Vietnamese.” [M laughs]. Nu notes that though the first Vietnamese babysitter did place the children in the front of the TV with Sesame Street, they did speak more Vietnamese and Nu spoke more Vietnamese at home “which made a big difference.”

Currently, Nu and Patrick estimate that the percentage of Vietnamese being used is 2-5% as compared to 95-98% English. Usually Nu speaks Vietnamese with her children in doing daily morning routines such as “Wake up, brush your teeth, etc.” and she teaches them Vietnamese rhymes while in the car. Nu says, “They’re good at it. They have good memory. Many Vietnamese—many American-born Vietnamese here don’t know that. So at least what I can do is—at least I can give—I try, ok?” [M & H laugh]

Vignette. I arrived at 8:30am and parked in front of their house. As I was gathering my things and locking up the car, I noticed a young girl in a school uniform walking her dog. She looked mixed and I wondered if she was one of their daughters. My wondering ceased when she entered the front doors of the house with the dog.

When I knocked on the door, Nu answered the door and all 3 kids were in school uniforms. There was the normal morning chaos of every having their backpacks and lunches ready for the day and a discussion of who would drop the kids off to school while the other was interviewed.

As I stood around observing their morning routine, I struck up a conversation with the two girls who seemed quite curious about me. One of the girls (Lucy, the middle child) even asked if I would be there when they got home. Nu asked me if I wanted some tea because that's what she drinks every morning and I said, "Sure." It was decided that Nu would drop the kids off so Patrick could get started on the interview and then go visit his mother at the hospital. His mother was recently diagnosed with cancer.

Nu is very vivacious and quite vocal. Throughout the morning—after she returned from dropping the kids off to school, asked us if she had time to go to Chick-a-Filet and if we wanted anything. I was a bit surprised because I did not think it would be open so early in the morning. She returned with milkshakes for both of us saying that she felt that she needed to be a good host. She then seemed surprised that we were not done with the interview yet and said she would go do ironing. Throughout all of these mini interruptions, Patrick's response was always a good-natured "Yes, dear" especially to her concern that he finish the interview quickly so he could go visit his mother. To Patrick's credit, he never expressed impatience and in fact was very giving of his time with me for the interview and seemed to enjoy talking. Shortly after we finished the interview, he left to go to the hospital.

To give me a short break, Nu gave me a tour of their home. It is a beautiful, spacious single-family home. She took a lot of pride in showing their home to me and pointing out work that John had done on the house as well as telling me about how they had gotten a bargain on the house and they had to fix it up otherwise they never would've been able to afford such a nice house.

Throughout the tour, Nu was playing the big sister role and giving me advice on if I liked their curtains; that she had had it custom made for a good price and pointed out artwork from Vietnam that she had gotten at a bargain price. The kids' rooms are all beautifully decorated. Perhaps one of the interesting things is that while Patrick Jr. has his own room, he does not sleep in it. He prefers to sleep in his sisters' room (the girls share a room). It seems that the kids are quite close and get along well.

When it was Nu's turn to be interviewed, I apologized for Patrick's interview running over and I promised her that I would try to keep to the time limit for our interview. She then said it was no problem; she had a lot of time but that she was just worried about Patrick getting to see his mother. From the start of the interview, I sensed that Nu liked to talk and was quite chatty. In fact, almost from the onset, I felt that she was reaching out to me and offering a hand in friendship—something I had not sensed in the first two interviews with my other couples. It seemed that what motivated her desire to be part of my research study was that she was impressed that I was pursuing my PhD and was encouraging me to do what few other Vietnamese do. I felt in a way like she was a big sister.

When Patrick returned from the hospital, he seemed a little surprised to see me—probably because yet again my interview with Nu had run over time. However since I was there, it seemed like Patrick was interested in doing the third interview, but since the two previous interviews had gone well and I was feeling tired and also one of them was going to have to leave within 1 hour to pick the kids up from school, I said that I preferred to wait a couple of days and do the final follow-up interview via phone if that was ok with them. However one thing that I really wanted to do before

I left but did not get a chance was to schedule the date and time of the interview with them, but they seemed to prefer not to do it then and I did not push it. Both were very gracious and told me if I had any other questions to call them. I left these two interviews feeling pretty good overall— (1) because I had enjoyed the interviews and they seemed to too and (2) I felt I had gotten pretty interesting data.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, I gave background information about the families focusing on the Vietnamese spouses—specifically their family’s immigration from Vietnam, their language experiences growing up, and their language proficiency in the HL. For three of the four Vietnamese participants, English is their dominant language since they were born and raised in the North America and educated in English-medium schools. One of the participants feels like her language skills are “in the middle” between both English and Vietnamese but prefers speaking English even though she is aware that she makes grammatical mistakes when speaking English. For all of the couples in this study, English is the primary language they use with one another. It should be noted that all of the non-Vietnamese spouses at some point or another have made efforts to learn some Vietnamese.

Chapter 6

SURVEY FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study was to learn about parents' experiences trying to raise their children bilingually in a mixed marriage. I used a multi-method approach with surveys and interviews. Both methods attempted to answer the research questions from different perspectives. In this chapter, I will first give demographics and background information and of the survey respondents and interview participants and compare them to the overall Vietnamese American population in the U.S. Then I will discuss the survey findings in terms of patterns of language use, family language policy and planning, strategies parents have used to teach HL and culture, and parents' beliefs about the HL and culture.

BACKGROUND OF SURVEY & INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Criteria for survey & interview participants. For both the survey and interviews, I initially started out wanting to focus on 1.5 and second-generation Vietnamese Americans married to a non-Vietnamese living in the United States and who had children living at home. Sixty-nine people total completed the online survey. Unfortunately, not all of the 69 survey respondents adhered to my initial criteria. Two of the survey respondents do not live in the U.S.—one lives in Australia and one in Canada. Because the present study is focused on Vietnamese Americans in the U.S., I excluded these two surveys for analysis. One survey respondent is not married but has been with her partner for 7 years; this survey was included for analysis. In regard to generation status, I decided to include all survey respondents regardless of generation status since focusing only on 1.5 and second-generation would be greatly limited the number of respondents. Thus, a total of 67 surveys are included for analysis in this study.

It cannot be emphasized enough that this study of mixed marriage couples (Vietnamese Americans married to non-Vietnamese) who have children is a very select and small population. According to the 2004 American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau), of all the Asian subgroups (e.g., Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Filipino, Asian Indian, Cambodian, Laotian, Hmong, etc.), the Vietnamese are the least likely to marry someone outside their ethnicity. I worked very hard to find and recruit participants to complete the online survey and feel fortunate to have gotten the number to complete the survey from across the nation. It is difficult to find data specific to this population, and not much is known about them. This survey is a small beginning to learn more about this unique group.

Interracial marriages in the United States have immensely increased in the past few decades with the 2000 Census reporting that there currently are 1.5 million interracial couples with nearly half of intermarriages occurring between Asians and Caucasians (U.S. Census, 2004). According to the 2000 U.S. Census, of the 6 major Asian American ethnic groups, Japanese Americans had the highest proportion of outmarriage (marrying another Asian ethnic group and/or another race e.g., Japanese-White). Vietnamese Americans have the lowest rate of outmarriage (marrying another Asian ethnic group and/or another race) (Le, 2008).

Age. The majority of survey respondents fell in the 31-40 year old category (47). There were five respondents in the 20-30 year old group; 11 in the 41-50 age group; and four who were 50 years old and older. In regards to the interview participants, three are in the early 30s and five are in their early 40s.

20-30 yr old: 5

31-40 yr old: 47

41-50 yr old: 11

50+: 4

Years Married. Of the 69 survey responses, I had to exclude four because two responded “Yes” and two were not married. There was a wide range of lengths of time that people have been married: 12 have been married 0-4 years; 20 have been married 5-9 years, 28 have been married for 10-14 years, and five have been married for 15 years or more.

0-4 yrs: 12

5-9 yrs: 20

10-14yrs: 28

15+yrs: 5

Of the interview participants, two couples fell in the 5-9 year range and two couples fell in the 10-14 year range. Specifically, one couple has been married 5 years, one for 7 years, one for 13 years, and one for 14 years.

Children. Of the survey respondents, the majority has one or two children and a smaller number have three or more children. Specifically, of the survey respondents, 24 couples had only one child, 30 had two children and 14 had three or more children. However, this data needs to be read with caution as many of these couples are in the early years of their marriage and may still be in the process of having more children and also two survey respondents noted that this was their second marriage.

At the time of this survey, the majority of the children were still relatively young with the majority falling in the 0-4 year group (56). Thirty-four children were 5-10 years old, four were 11-13 years old, one was 14-18 year old, and four were 19 years old or older.

Ages of children:

0-4 yr old: 56

5-10 yr old: 34

11-13 yr old: 4

14-18 yr old: 1

19+ yr old: 4

Of the interview participants, at the time of the interviews, two families had only 1 child (though one was pregnant). One child was 25 months old and the other was just turning two at the time of the interviews. One family had two children, ages 5 and 7. The fourth family had three children, ages 7, 9, and 11.

Education, work, & social class. Both survey respondents and interview participants have a high level of education. Almost all of the survey respondents had either a Bachelor's (33) or post-college degree (30). Only four had attended some college but held no degree and two had an Associate's degree. There were none who held only a high school diploma or equivalent or less. The interview participants were even a more highly educated group. Of the eight interview participants, three had a Bachelor's degree and five had a post-college or professional degree.

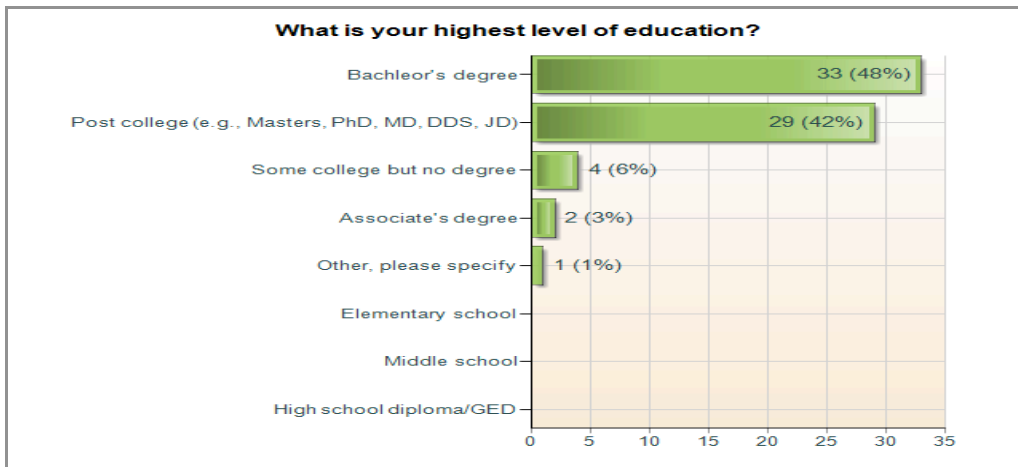


Figure 1. Survey respondents' education.

It should be noted that both survey respondents and interview participants have a high level of education as compared to the average overall population of the U.S. in general and also the average Vietnamese population in the U.S. in particular. According to the 2009 American

Community Survey (US Census Bureau), of the Vietnamese Americans age 25 and over, 30% have less than a high school diploma, 21.2% have a high school diploma or GED, 23.6% have some college or associate's degree, 18.4% have a Bachelor's degree, and 6.7% have a graduate or professional degree.

Occupation-wise, of those who worked outside of the home, the majority of survey respondents and interview participants are white-collar professionals (e.g., teachers, doctors, engineers, technology, etc). Also, there are a number of stay-at-home mothers. It should be noted that interview participants fall into an even more elite professional group with two lawyers, two trained as engineers (one who is currently a stay-at-home mother), a doctor, architect, teacher, and PhD student. Both in terms of education and occupation, survey respondents and interview participants are either middle or upper-middle class. This concurs with research that has found that intermarriage is more common among the middle class and among those who are more educated (holding a college degree or higher) (Hwang, Saenz, & Aguirre, 1997; Lee & Yamanaka, 1990).

Gender & ethnicity. Almost twice as many women (45) completed the online survey as compared to men (23). Though the survey asked for both the Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese spouses to complete the survey, a larger number of Vietnamese spouses than non-Vietnamese spouses completed the survey. It is important to note that specifically, the largest group to complete the survey was Vietnamese females. Of the survey respondents, the largest number identified themselves as either "Vietnamese" or "Vietnamese-American" (38). Seven self-identified as "Vietnamese-Chinese" or "Chinese-Vietnamese"; this is important to keep in mind because as discussed in Chapter 3, ethnic Chinese-Vietnamese differ from ethnic Vietnamese in terms of identity and language. Fifteen identified as "Caucasian," (one stating "half White, half Middle-eastern"); "White," "American," or "Caucasian American"; two as "Asian," one as "Chinese." One self-identified as "Irish-American;" another as "Danish, German, English", and one as "Vietnamese/German."

Vietnamese/Vietnamese-American: 38

Vietnamese-Chinese; Chinese-Vietnamese: 7

Chinese: 1

Asian: 3

Caucasian/White/American: 15

Other (e.g., Vietnamese-German, multiple ethnicities, etc): 3

Survey data revealed that more Vietnamese females tend to marry exogamously than Vietnamese males. This concurs with findings from existing studies that have found that more Asian females tend to marry exogamously than Asian males. For example, the Pew Research Center found that 40% of Asian females married outside of their race as compared to only 20% of Asian males marrying outside of their race (Passel, Wang, & Taylor, 2010). Fortunately in my interviews, I was able to include an equal number of Vietnamese males and females who married exogamously. Of the eight interview participants, two are Vietnamese males married to Caucasian females and two are Vietnamese females married to Caucasian males.

Research has found that of the Vietnamese who do not marry a co-ethnic, they are most likely to (1) marry other Asians or (2) marry Caucasians as compared to other ethnicities. Furthermore, of Vietnamese mixed marriages, the most common pairing is Vietnamese females with Caucasian males. Thus, the fact that all four couples in my study are Vietnamese-Caucasian pairings is not surprisingly since statistically, that is the most common combination. The fact that I was able to include an equal number of Vietnamese males and females married to Caucasians in the interviews was an unexpected benefit.

Nativity & age immigrated to U.S. Of the total 67 survey respondents, twenty-four of the survey respondents were born in the United States. Of the 43 born abroad, 36 were born in Vietnam, one was born in each of the following countries: Italy, Canada, England, Hong Kong,

and Cambodia. One did not state country born in. Eighteen of those born abroad immigrated to the U.S. when they were 0-5 years old, 11 between the ages of 6-13, four between the ages of 14-18, and four were 19 years old or older.

Of those born abroad, the year in which they immigrated to the U.S. is significant as it corresponds with events historically. There were two survey respondents who immigrated to the US in 1973 (one as a 2 year old and one as a 3 year old). This is significant because prior to 1975, there were relatively few Vietnamese in the U.S. April 1975 was when the first wave of Vietnamese starting arriving in the U.S. because of the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam and the communists taking over Saigon. Fifteen survey respondents immigrated to the U.S. in 1975. As stated previously in Chapter 3, the first wave of Vietnamese tended to be the elite of South Vietnam, had a high level of education, most likely had close ties with the American military, and were mainly from urban areas.

Sixteen survey respondents immigrated to the U.S. between 1976-1985 and four between 1986-1999. These survey respondents would most likely be part of the second and third waves of Vietnamese immigrants to the U.S. coming to the U.S. as refugees historically known as Boat People or under one of three U.S. programs (the Orderly Departure Program, the Amerasian Homecoming Act, or the Humanitarian Operation). Vietnamese in the second and third waves tended to be either middle-class or working-class and had lower levels of education and could either be from the urban or rural areas. Significant to the second wave is that a large number of them were ethnic Chinese Vietnamese and were part of the merchant class. Lastly, there was only one survey respondent who arrived in 2000 or later. (Note: The numbers below do not all match up because some respondents did not give their age and/or year immigrated to US.)

Born in US: 24

Outside US: 43

Of the 43 born abroad, age immigrated to US

0-5yr old: 18

6-13yr old: 11

14-18yr old: 4

19+yr old: 4

Of those born abroad, the years they immigrated to the U.S.

Before 1975: 2

1975: 15

1976-1985: 16

1986-1999: 4

2000 or later: 1

According to the 2009 American Community Survey (US Census Bureau), of the over 1.6 million Vietnamese living in the U.S., almost 586,000 are born in the US and a little over 1 million are foreign-born. Of this 1 million, about 42% immigrated to US before 1990, 37% entered between 1990-1999, about 21% entered 2000 or later.

Of eight interview participants, all four of the Caucasian spouses were born in the U.S. (three whose families have been in the U.S. for at least three generations or more and one whose parents were first generation to leave Ireland). Of the four Vietnamese spouses, three were born in the U.S. (parents were first generation to leave Vietnam) and one, Nu, who was born in Vietnam and immigrated to the U.S. when she was 15 years old. Nu was part of the second wave and was one of the Boat People; she and her twin sister escaped by boat and were in a refugee camp in Indonesia before arriving to the U.S.

Research has found that Asians born or raised in the U.S. are more likely than foreign-born Asians to be involved in interracial or interethnic marriages (Passel, Wang, & Taylor, 2010). Survey data supports this as the almost all of the Vietnamese survey respondents were either born in the U.S. or immigrated to the U.S. when they were young children. Also, as stated earlier three of the four Vietnamese spouses are native-born and one immigrating to the U.S. at the age of 15.

Residence. Survey respondents currently reside in 16 different states. People who completed the survey are primarily located in the East: Maryland (15), Virginia (13), New York (8), Washington DC (2), Pennsylvania (2), New Jersey (2), and Connecticut (2). Additionally, from the West, survey respondents are located in Arizona (7), California (4), Texas (3), Washington (2), and Hawaii (2). Survey respondents are also located in the West North Central States: Indiana (2) and Minnesota (2). In the South, there was one in Florida and one in Louisiana.

MD: 15

VA: 13

NY: 8

AZ: 7

CA: 4

TX: 3

DC: 2

WA: 2

IN: 2

HI: 2

PA: 2

CT: 1

NJ: 1

LA: 1

FL: 1

MN: 1

It is surprising that the majority of the people who completed the online survey in the East when demographically, of the total Vietnamese American population in the U.S., the majority live in the West. According to the 2005 American Community Survey, the five states with significant populations of Vietnamese are: (1) California, (2) Texas, (3) Washington, (4) Florida, and (5) Massachusetts (U.S. Census 2000). Perhaps this discrepancy can be explained because I have more contacts on the East Coast and less on the West Coast to get the word out to people about my survey.

Research has found that there is a strong regional pattern to the intermarriage.

Passel, Wang, and Taylor (2010) found among all new marriages in 2008, 22% in the West were interracial or interethnic as compared with 13% in both the South and Northeast and 11% in the Midwest. It is difficult to tell whether survey respondents followed this pattern since where they are currently living is not necessarily where they met and married.

It is important to note that for the interview portion of this study, all of the participants are all from the MD/Washington DC metropolitan area due to travel limitations because I currently live on the East Coast. While the number of Vietnamese are primarily located in the West, it should be noted that the Washington D.C./VA/MD/WV area ranks fifth of the top U.S. metropolitan areas with large numbers of Vietnamese (U.S. 2000 Census). While research studies have focused primarily on the Vietnamese American population in CA, less has been done with the Vietnamese American population on the East Coast. This study was an attempt to fill this gap.

Vietnamese community. Fifty-five percent (35) of survey respondents stated that there is not a large Vietnamese population where they are currently living while 45% (29) stated there is. When asked to give their best guess estimate of how many Vietnamese live in their city, 48

respondents chose to answer this part. Of the respondents who guessed, it is telling that 10 believed there were 1-1,000 Vietnamese in their city and 11 said 1,001-10,000. Seven believed it was between 10,001-40,000 and nine estimated to be 40,000+. Seven stated they did not know.

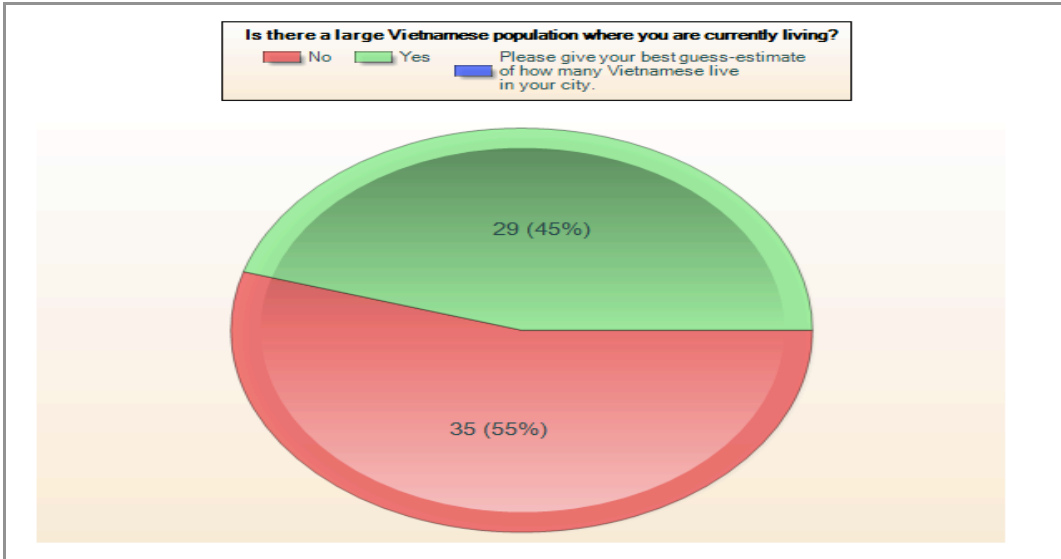


Figure 2. Vietnamese population.

When asked if there is a place in their community where Vietnamese gather, 70% (47) of the survey respondents said yes, while 30% (19) said no. If yes, respondents were asked to give the name of shopping center, church, school, etc of the place. Thirteen noted the Eden Center in Northern Virginia; 13 stated “churches/temples,” 10 stated “markets or shopping centers,” five named a general area, and two noted schools.

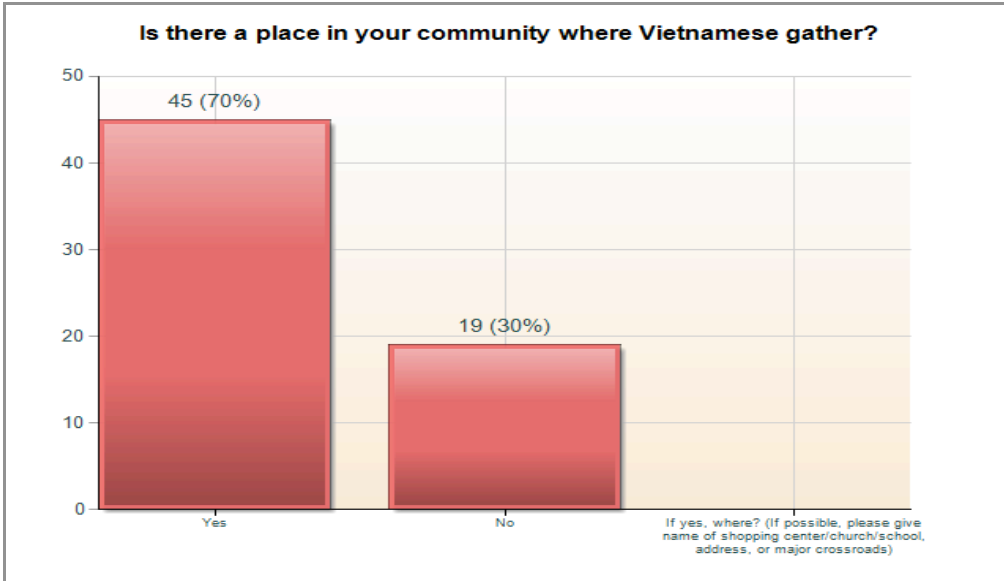


Figure 3. Vietnamese gathering place.

When asked if they have friends who are Vietnamese, 89% (58) of survey respondents said yes and 11% (7) said no. However, when asked how often they see them, 28 said that they rarely or never see them, 17 said “sometimes” and six said “often.”



Figure 4. Vietnamese friends.

PATTERNS OF LANGUAGE USE

Language proficiency. Of the 67 survey respondents, almost all reported that English is their strongest language (65) and two stated Vietnamese. Survey respondents were also asked about proficiency in other languages. The second strongest language for most of the survey respondents was Vietnamese. It is important to note that the language use of the Vietnamese-Chinese and Chinese-Vietnamese respondents was a mix of English, Chinese, and Vietnamese or English and Chinese as compared to those who self-identified as Vietnamese/Vietnamese-American who typically spoke a mix of English and Vietnamese. Other than Vietnamese, some languages most commonly listed as second, third, or fourth strongest languages were French, Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese). Other less commonly cited languages as third or fourth strongest languages were Greek, Mongolian, and Taiwanese.

English strongest language: 65

Vietnamese strongest language: 2

Of the 85.2% Vietnamese Americans who speak a language other than English at home, 51.7% speak English less than “very well” (2009 American Community Survey). The survey respondents do not fall into this population of speak English less than “very well” as the majority state that English is their strongest language.

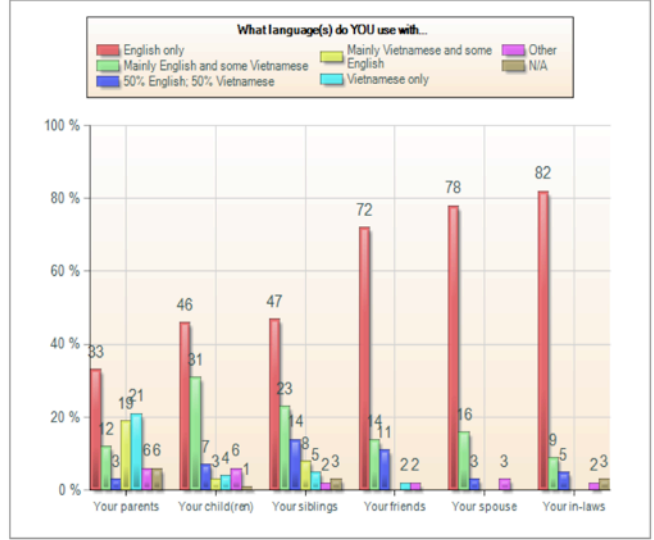
What language(s) do you speak with...? For the 67 survey respondents, English is the dominant language used in interactions across the board—with spouses, children, parents, siblings, in-laws, and friends. English tends to be used most with the in-laws, spouses, and friends. With in-laws, 54 speak only English, six speak mainly English and some Vietnamese, three speak 50/50 English and Vietnamese, one speaks Vietnamese only, and one speaks a mix of English, Vietnamese, Cantonese, and Mandarin. In regard to language used with spouses, 52 speak only English with each other, 11 speak mainly English and some Vietnamese, two speak 50/50 English

and Vietnamese and one speaks a mix of English, Vietnamese, and Cantonese, while another speaks English and Mandarin. With friends, 47 speak only English, nine speak mainly English with some Vietnamese, seven speak 50/50 English and Vietnamese, one speaks only Vietnamese, and one speaks Spanish and Japanese with a few friends.

Survey respondents were more likely to speak Vietnamese with their parents than anyone else, but it is important to note that the majority uses some English with their parents. Twenty-two respondents speak only English and eight speak mainly English with some Vietnamese with their parents, while two speak 50/50 English and Vietnamese, 13 speak mainly Vietnamese and some English, and 14 speak only Vietnamese with their parents. One respondent speaks English and Italian with her father and only English with her mother while another speaks English or Mandarin with her father and English or Vietnamese with her mother.

Other than their parents, survey respondents were most likely to use Vietnamese with siblings and their children. Vietnamese language use was slightly higher with siblings than with children. Three speak only Vietnamese with their siblings, five speak mainly Vietnamese and some English, nine speak 50/50 English and Vietnamese, and one speaks Vietnamese and French. However, the majority of respondents tended to use English with their siblings: 31 speak only English and 15 speak mainly English with some Vietnamese.

In regard to language use with their children, the majority of respondents speak English: 31 speak only English and 21 speak mainly English with some Vietnamese. However, four parents report speaking only Vietnamese to their children, two mainly Vietnamese and some English, and five speak 50/50 English and Vietnamese. Additionally, two speak a mix of English, Vietnamese, and Cantonese, while another parent speaks a mix of English, Mandarin, and Vietnamese, and one parent speaks only French to their children.



What language(s) do YOU use with...							
	English only	Mainly English and some Vietnamese	50% English; 50% Vietnamese	Mainly Vietnamese and some English	Vietnamese only	Other	N/A
Your spouse	52 (78 %)	11 (16 %)	2 (3 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	2 (3 %)	0 (0 %)
Your child(ren)	31 (46 %)	21 (31 %)	5 (7 %)	2 (3 %)	3 (4 %)	4 (6 %)	1 (1 %)
Your parents	22 (33 %)	8 (12 %)	2 (3 %)	13 (19 %)	14 (21 %)	4 (6 %)	4 (6 %)
Your siblings	31 (47 %)	15 (23 %)	9 (14 %)	5 (8 %)	3 (5 %)	1 (2 %)	2 (3 %)
Your in-laws	54 (82 %)	6 (9 %)	3 (5 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	1 (2 %)	2 (3 %)
Your friends	47 (72 %)	9 (14 %)	7 (11 %)	0 (0 %)	1 (2 %)	1 (2 %)	0 (0 %)

Figure 5. Respondents’ language use.

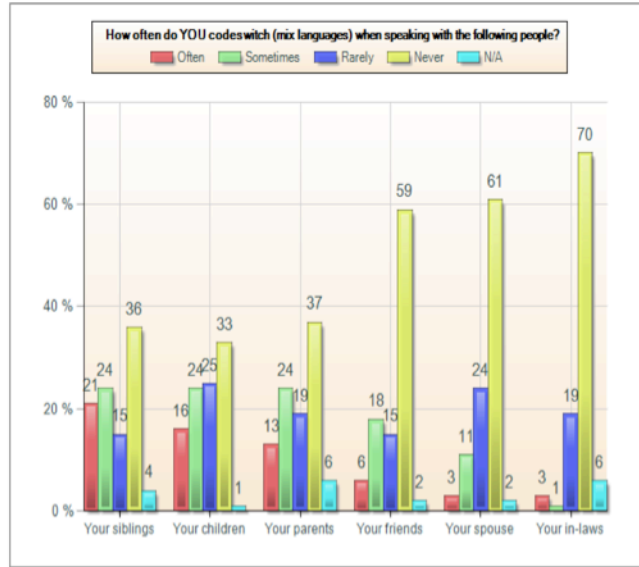
According to the 2009 American Community Survey (US Census Bureau), of the over 1.5 million Vietnamese age 5 years and older, 14.8% speak only English at home while 85.2% speak a language other than English at home. Of those who speak a language other than English at home, 51.7% say they speak English less than “very well.” While Census data is helpful in gathering general information of a large number of people, it is not as helpful in learning more detailed. At first glance, if one were to take the 2009 American Community Survey statistics regarding language use and English proficiency at face value, it would seem that heritage language maintenance is not an issue, but rather that learning English is the problem. However, survey data from this study suggests that while some Vietnamese parents are speaking Vietnamese to their

children at home; this is not the case for the majority of 1.5 and second-generation Vietnamese American mixed households. Furthermore, survey data suggests that language shift is occurring in many of these families despite parents' efforts to teach their children the HL.

Codeswitching. When asked, "How often do you codeswitch with the following people...?" respondents most commonly used codeswitching with (1) their siblings, (2) their children, and (3) their parents. Specifically, in regard to codeswitching with their siblings, 14 codeswitch "often," 16 "sometimes," 10 "rarely," and 26 "never." In speaking with their children, 12 stated they "often" codeswitch and 16 "sometimes," while 17 "rarely" and 23 "never" codeswitch. With parents, nine reported codeswitching "often," 17 "sometimes," 13 "rarely," and 26 "never."

Respondents were least likely to codeswitch with their in-laws, spouses, and friends.

Codeswitching was least done with in-laws. Forty-seven said they "never" and 13 "rarely" codeswitch with their in-laws, while one "sometimes," four does so "often." With their spouses, 41 survey respondents "never" codeswitch, 16 "rarely," three "often," and seven "sometimes." With friends, 40 said they never codeswitch, 11 "rarely," 12 "sometimes," and four "often."



How often do YOU codeswitch (mix languages) when speaking with the following people?					
	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
Your spouse	2 (3%)	7 (11%)	16 (24%)	40 (61%)	1 (2%)
Your children	11 (16%)	16 (24%)	17 (25%)	22 (33%)	1 (1%)
Your parents	9 (13%)	16 (24%)	13 (19%)	25 (37%)	4 (6%)
Your siblings	14 (21%)	16 (24%)	10 (15%)	24 (36%)	3 (4%)
Your in-laws	2 (3%)	1 (1%)	13 (19%)	47 (70%)	4 (6%)
Your friends	4 (6%)	12 (18%)	10 (15%)	39 (59%)	1 (2%)

Figure 6. Frequency of codeswitching.

When speaking with their children, almost half (49%) parents stated they don't mix English and Vietnamese. Of those who mix, 40% said they mix words or phrases and 22% mix whole sentences in English and Vietnamese. Two parents noted they sometimes use Spanish and two others use English and Chinese. One parent stated that he/she translates; i.e., speak in Vietnamese and translate in English and vice versa. Also, one parent reported speaking only French with her children.

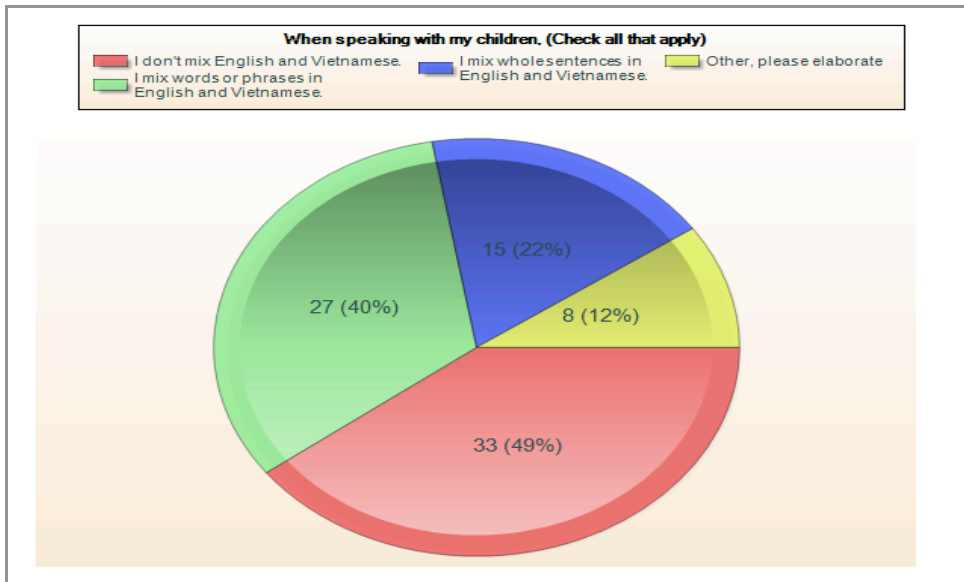


Figure 7. Codeswitching with children.

Language(s) others use with your children. Overwhelmingly, English is the dominant language used with children from friends, in-laws, spouses, siblings, and parents. The people most likely to speak English with their children are: (1) friends, (2) in-laws, and (3) spouses. The people more likely to use Vietnamese with their children are their parents and siblings.

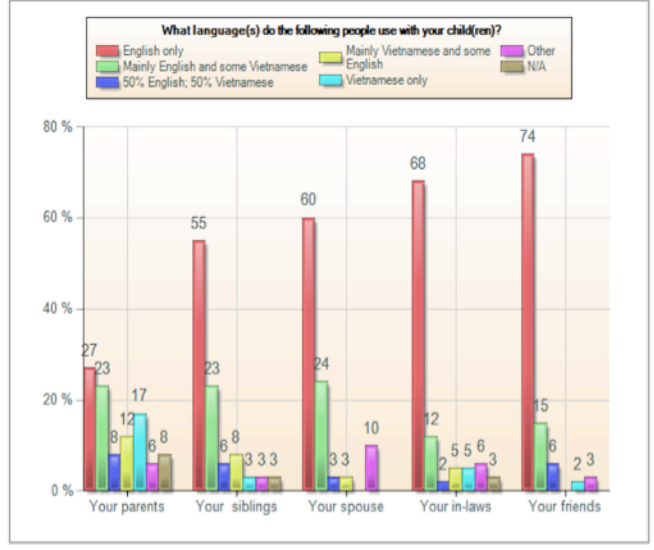
Specifically, forty-eight survey respondents reported friends speak only English to their children and 10 respondents stated friends speak mainly English and some Vietnamese. Four respondents reported friends speaking 50/50 English and Vietnamese and one survey respondent reported that friends speak only Vietnamese. One respondent reported that friends speak a mix of English and Mandarin to their children and another respondent said that friends speak a mix of Taiwanese, Mandarin, and English. One survey respondent reported that friends speak some Spanish to their children.

Regarding in-laws' language use with their children, 44 survey respondents stated that their in-laws speak only English to their children and nine reported that in-laws speak mainly English and some Vietnamese to their children. One respondent reported that in-laws use 50/50 English and

Vietnamese, three mainly Vietnamese with some English, and three respondents stated that their in-laws speak to their children only in Vietnamese. Two reported that their in-laws use Chinese with their children and two specified Cantonese, while one stated a mixture of English and Mandarin, and another stated that their in-laws use mainly Taiwanese and Mandarin. One stated their in-laws use Spanish.

Of all the family members and friends, survey respondents' parents were the most likely to Vietnamese with their children. For example, 11 respondents stated their parents use only Vietnamese with their children; eight use mainly Vietnamese with some English; and five use 50/50 English and Vietnamese. Eighteen respondents stated that their parents use only English and 15 use mainly English with some Vietnamese with their children. One respondent states that her mother speaks mostly Vietnamese and some English with her daughter while her father speaks mostly Vietnamese and some Cantonese, Mandarin, or English; another stated that her parents use a mix of English, Mandarin, and Vietnamese while another states that her parents use mainly Cantonese with some English. One respondent states her parents use Chinese with her children while another specifies Mandarin Chinese.

While the majority of respondents' siblings tended to use only English (36) or mainly English with some Vietnamese (16) with their children, four respondents noted that their siblings use 50/50 English and Vietnamese, five speak mainly Vietnamese with some English, and two speak only Vietnamese to their children. One notes his/her siblings speak mainly Cantonese with some Vietnamese and English and another states his/her siblings use a mix of English, Vietnamese, and Chinese.



What language(s) do the following people use with your child(ren)?							
	English only	Mainly English and some Vietnamese	50% English; 50% Vietnamese	Mainly Vietnamese and some English	Vietnamese only	Other	N/A
Your spouse	40 (60 %)	16 (24 %)	2 (3 %)	2 (3 %)	0 (0 %)	7 (10 %)	0 (0 %)
Your parents	18 (27 %)	15 (23 %)	5 (8 %)	8 (12 %)	11 (17 %)	4 (6 %)	5 (8 %)
Your siblings	36 (55 %)	15 (23 %)	4 (6 %)	5 (8 %)	2 (3 %)	2 (3 %)	2 (3 %)
Your in-laws	44 (68 %)	8 (12 %)	1 (2 %)	3 (5 %)	3 (5 %)	4 (6 %)	2 (3 %)
Your friends	48 (74 %)	10 (15 %)	4 (6 %)	0 (0 %)	1 (2 %)	2 (3 %)	0 (0 %)

Figure 8. Other people’s language use with children.

FAMILY LANGUAGE POLICY AND PLANNING

Decision on language to speak with children. The survey asked: “When you decided on which language(s) to speak to your child(ren), how much did you and your spouse discuss it?” Survey respondents were mixed in how much they discussed it: 19 respondents said they did not discuss it all and 18 said they discussed it “a little” while 17 said they discussed it “some” and 15 said they discussed it “a lot.”

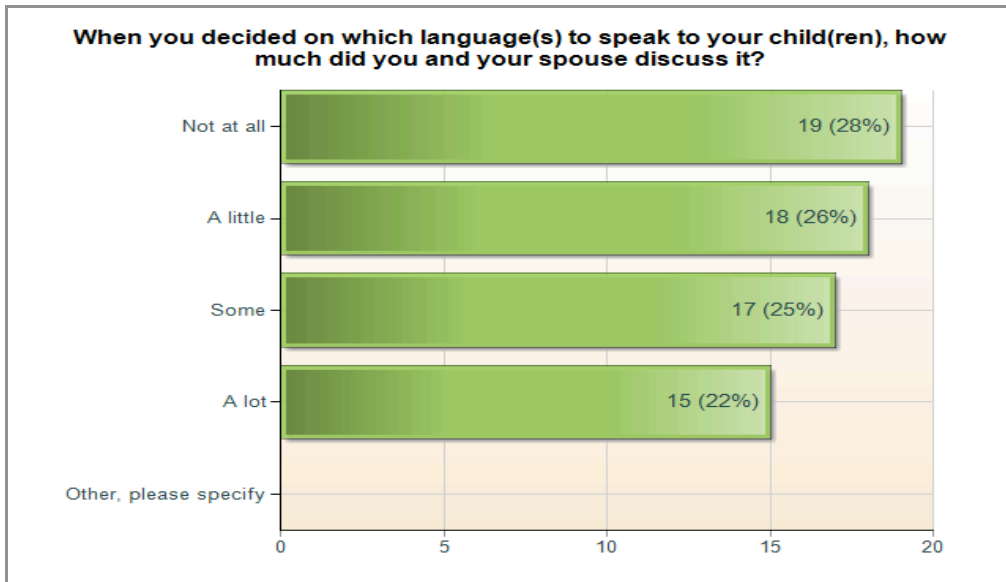


Figure 9. Discussions about family language policy and planning.

Differences of opinion. When asked, “Did you and your spouse have differences in opinion about which language(s) to use with your children?” the majority (53) said they had no differences at all, 10 stated they had a couple of differences, one said some differences, two had major differences, and three answered “Other.” One noted that while she and her husband agreed that they wanted to expose their children to both English and Vietnamese, she said, “I don’t think my husband was as enthusiastic about it as I.” Another reported, “We did not have many differences except my husband really encourages Vietnamese, but it is me who find it difficult to speak primarily VN-ese.” One stated they chose a Spanish immersion program for their daughter because “it was the most practical even though neither of us are fluent in Spanish.”

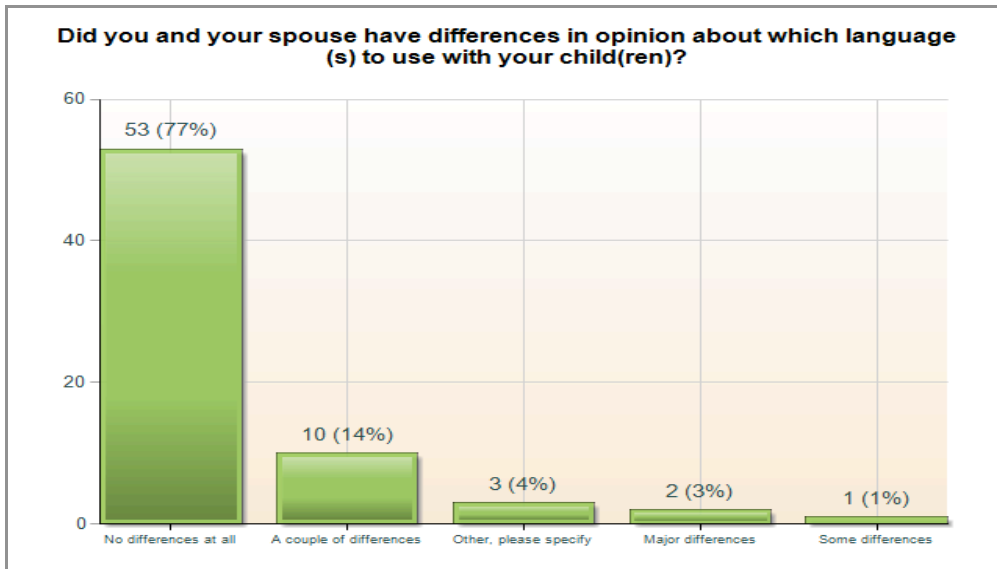


Figure 10. Differences of opinion regarding language use with children.

Language decisionmakers. When asked, “Who was most influential in deciding which language(s) to use with your children?” the majority (52) stated that the respondent and their spouse were most influential in deciding which language(s) to use with their children; 12 stated mainly them; five stated mainly their spouse; one stated the Vietnamese grandparents and one stated their child(ren). One stated that “There wasn’t a conscious decision made.”

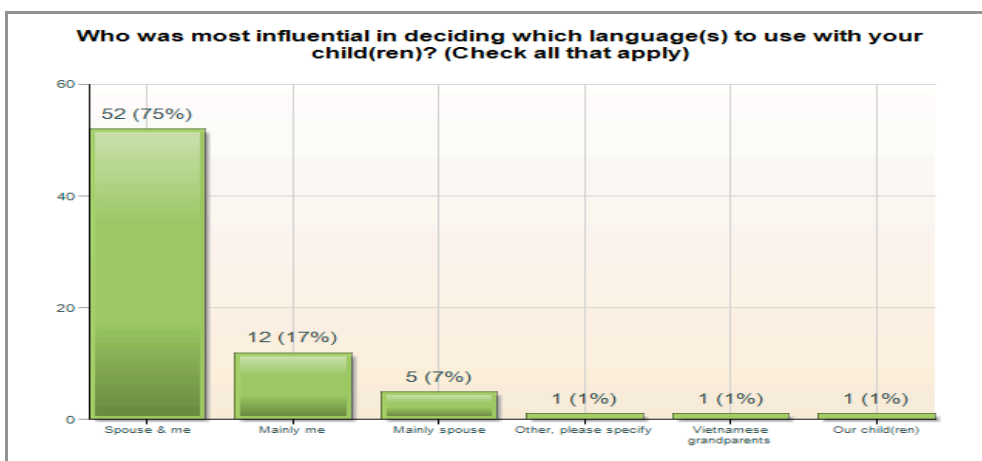


Figure 11. Language decision makers.

HERITAGE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Desire & importance for children to learn HL & culture. In the survey, respondents were asked to rank their agreement/disagreement (strongly agree/agree/disagree/strongly disagree) with four statements:

1. I want my children to be able to speak Vietnamese.
2. It is important my children be able to speak Vietnamese.
3. I want my children to know about Vietnamese culture.
4. It is important my children know about Vietnamese culture.

Overall, more parents want and feel that it is more important their children learn about Vietnamese culture than desire or feel it is important that their children be able to speak Vietnamese.

Specifically, 43 parents strongly agreed and 24 agreed with the statement “I want my children to know about Vietnamese culture;” one disagreed and one strongly disagreed. Forty-one parents strongly agreed and 20 agreed with the statement “It is important that my children know about Vietnamese culture,” while six disagreed, one strongly disagreed, and one was not sure. Thirty-two parents strongly agreed and 27 agreed with the statement “I want my children to be able to speak Vietnamese,” while three disagreed, two strongly disagreed, and five were not sure.

Furthermore, 29 parents strongly agreed and 18 agreed with the statement “It is important that my children be able to speak Vietnamese,” while 15 disagreed, three strongly disagreed, and four were not sure.

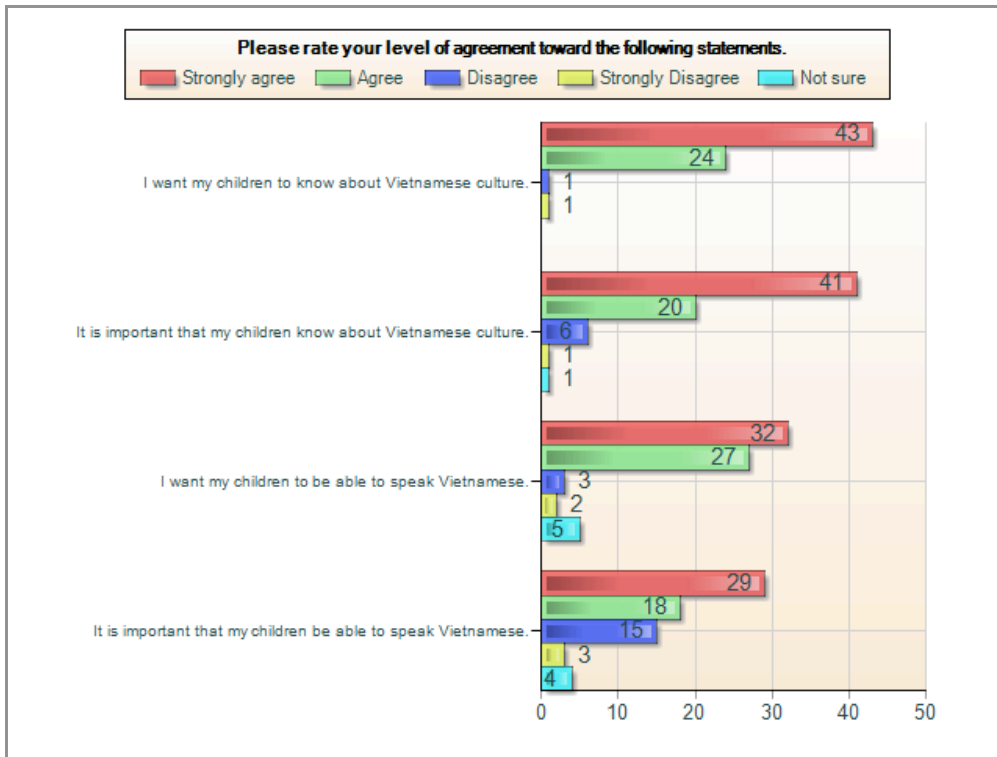


Figure 12. “Want” vs. “Important” to learn Vietnamese language and culture.

The comments that 10 of the respondents wrote in are especially telling. Though the respondents want their children to be able to speak Vietnamese, they are very aware of the many challenges to making this possible:

- “My wish is to have my son be truly bilingual but realistically I think he will be mainly English speaking with some Vietnamese proficiency.”
- “But it’s a challenge because, along with her dad, I have the most influence over her language development, but my own Vietnamese speaking skills are quite limited.”
- “But it is very difficult for my child to speak Vietnamese as I don’t speak it very well.”
- “I’ve always wanted my children to know what I know, unfortunately it’s harder than I expected.”
- “But it is difficult because there are no Vietnamese people around us when my children grew up.”

However, some parents also expressed that while they would like their children to be bilingual, they would not “push” their children to learn Vietnamese specifically:

- “The more languages the better, but the focus is on Chinese as China is the next dominant world power after the US.”
- “At least that [Vietnamese] and Cantonese and Mandarin -- my roots are bi-cultural. Would be nice if she'll be at least as versed in Spanish as I am too though.”
- “I'd like them to speak Vietnamese, but it's not "important" necessarily.
- I think it would be nice if they could speak another language, whether it's Spanish, French, Chinese, Vietnamese, etc. It doesn't have to be Vietnamese.”
- “It would be nice, but not something that I push.”
- “Would like the knowledge to be there, but not a must.”

In regards to desire and importance for their children to learn about Vietnamese culture, some parents are very committed to this goal:

- “Our son needs to know where we all came from. Exposing our son to different culture make him a better person overall. Open mind is a road to success.”
- “I want my culture to pass on as far as it is willing to go. I am determined for my children to know who and where they came from.”

However, others don't necessarily want to teach their children about Vietnamese culture: “There are many things about Vietnamese culture that I don't care for, especially the patriarchy.”

Furthermore, because some parent(s) are from mixed roots, they did not want to focus exclusively on their children learning about Vietnamese culture:

- “And Chinese too.”
- “Yes, she should know her heritage, however the family is Chinese/Vnese and adheres to Chinese culture.”

- “I’m part Chinese & Vietnamese and my husband is part Irish, German, & French. I want to raise my children to be culturally aware of all cultures, not only mine.”

Reasons parents want children to learn Vietnamese. Given a choice of five possible reasons parents want children to learn Vietnamese, respondents were asked to rank in order of importance to them with 1 being most important and 5 being least important. Twenty-three ranked “So they can communicate with their Vietnamese grandparents” as most important with another 17 ranking it as #2. “So they know their heritage language” ranked high on respondents’ list as 20 had ranked that as #1 and 21 ranked it as #2. The third reason respondents ranked highly was “It is good for children to know more than one language” with 20 people ranking it as #1 and 14 people ranking it as #2. Overall, parents ranked “For future career opportunities” and “So they can fulfill a foreign language requirement for school” as least important to them. Thirty-seven ranked “So they can fulfill a foreign language requirement for school” as #5 and 15 ranked “For future career opportunities” as #5.

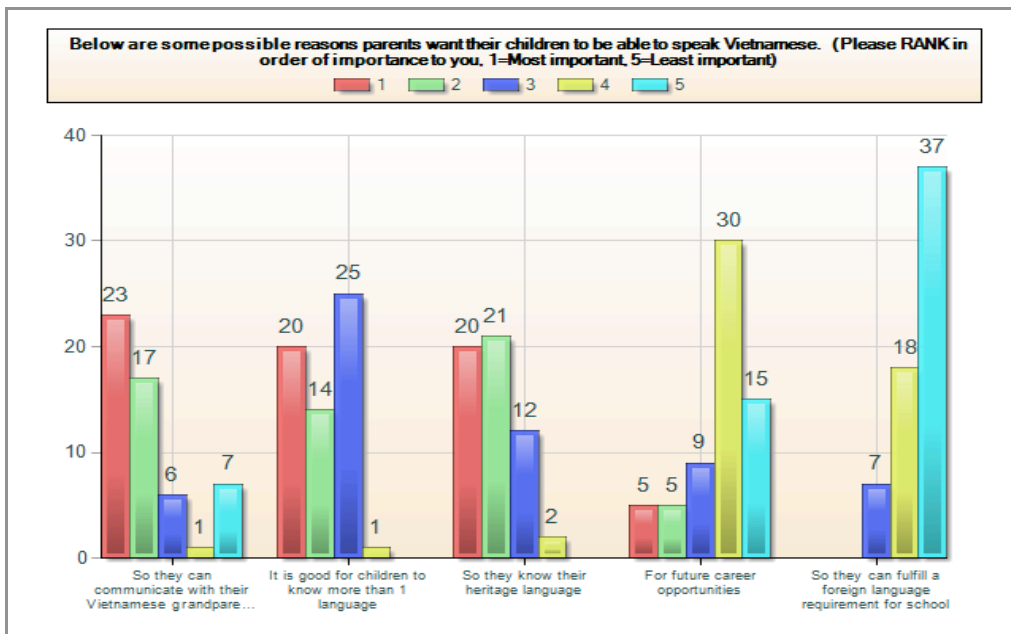


Figure 13. Ranking of reasons parents want children to learn HL.

When asked as an open-ended question “Why do you want your children to learn Vietnamese?” by far, the most common reason given was because it is part of their children’s heritage. Below are some quotes from respondents’ surveys are:

- “Because they are part Vietnamese so they should speak the language.”
- “To know their heritage.”
- “Because they’re Vietnamese.”
- “It is part of who they are.”
- “To know where they are from.”
- “Proud of Vietnamese heritage and area we live.”
- “I think language is a vital part of a culture and it is important to my husband and I that our daughter appreciate and honor her Vietnamese-half to the extent possible.”
- “Because it is a part of their heritage. Because their father and his family speaks Vietnamese.”

The second most given reason was so the children can communicate with the Vietnamese grandparents and family members:

- “To communicate with family members and understand Vietnamese culture.”
- “To be able to communicate with my parents.”
- “I want my children to learn Vietnamese, so that they learn another language and can use what they learn with their grandparents. It would make my in-laws very happy. I think it would also help them to identify with their ancestors.”
- “It is extremely important to me that my children be able to speak Vietnamese, both with myself and their grandparents.”
- “I would want them to learn at least the basics to speak to their grandparents respectfully.”

The third most commonly given reason is that it is good for children to be bilingual:

- “I think it is valuable to be able to speak more than one language; it is a reflection of your heritage and a way to show respect for where you have come from. I am only able to speak one language (and tiny bits of others) and I have always regretted that and hoped my children would speak other languages from a young age. I also think it allows you to learn other languages more easily in the future if you know two (or more) from birth. I think it is embarrassing that most Americans (like myself) don’t bother ever learning another language. It is a kind of cultural arrogance that is unfortunate.”
- “It’s always good for our children to know and learn more than less. Speaking more languages are even better! Therefore, it’s a great opportunity to have someone living in the same house speaking other language for my children to learn and practice speaking that language at their own home!”
- “To begin with, it’s a great self-assurance beneficial for individual with bilingualism/multilingual skill. In addition, it keeps the brain active which perhaps prevent Alzheimer later on in life...☺”
- “As I’ve stated before, I want my children to learn a second language, whether it’s Vietnamese, Spanish, French, etc., doesn’t really matter. Having a second language will give them an advantage when competing for jobs.

It is important to note that some survey respondents though they desired their children to be bilingual and know Vietnamese, it seemed their motivation stemmed more from the belief that learning Vietnamese would help their children to learn other languages and/or for other potential benefits of being bilingual rather than the desire for their children to know the Vietnamese language as an end unto itself.

Several people gave different reasons for wanting their children to learn the HL. For example, one person listed five reasons and ranked them:

1. Sense of identity and self-esteem.
2. Practical usage with my non-English speaking parents.
3. Global awareness.
4. Find more opportunities when looking for employment.
5. Selfish reasons—Because I am Vietnamese too.

Another person listed several reasons in no particular order: “Because it’s my mother tongue, because it’s important to me, because I want her to know where she came from, because it gives her access to a different world view, because it’s beautiful, because it’s culture, because it will ground her, because it’s who she is, because, because, because...☺”

Research has found that reasons parents typically give for wanting their children to learn/maintain the HL (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Spanish, etc.) are: to maintain their heritage/identity, to be able to communicate with grandparents and family members, maintain ties with country of origin, and for more opportunities in the future (Lao, 2004; Wu, 2007; Park, 2007). Data from this survey concurs with the top two reasons parents giving for why they want their children to learn Vietnamese: heritage/identity and communication with grandparents and family. Survey findings that some parents want their children to learn Vietnamese because it is “good for their children to learn another language” and be bilingual suggests that respondents in this study are similar to parents in King and Fogle’s (2006) study that found bilingual parenting becoming incorporated into mainstream parenting practices that viewed bilingual parenting as “good parenting.” However, respondents in this study differ from other HL parents in other studies in that none stated they wanted their children to learn the HL to maintain ties with Vietnam. This may be due to the fact that the majority of first-generation Vietnamese fled Vietnam and arrived in the U.S. as refugees. Furthermore, few parents reported wanting their children to learn Vietnamese for “future opportunities” since Vietnamese is a low-status, low-power language as compared to other languages like Chinese.

Reasons want children to learn Vietnamese culture. When asked “Why do you want your children to learn Vietnamese culture?” almost all the respondents stated that they wanted their children to learn about Vietnamese culture because it is part of their heritage:

- “Self knowledge & to be proud of background and heritage.”
- “Because it is part of what makes them unique.”
- “So they know where they came from.”
- “I want them to know about where their ancestors are from and that they are part Vietnamese.”
- “So they know their roots.”
- “It’s half of their heritage, they should know about it. It’s important to me, influences much of who I am so they should know as well.”

However, as before with parents’ desire for their children to be bilingual, it seems that for some parents, their desire for their children to learn about Vietnamese culture is not just about learning Vietnamese specifically but a broader desire for their children to know about other cultures and be multicultural:

- “It’s important for them to understand themselves and all cultures of the world.”
- “It’s important to learn about different cultures.”
- “Broaden their knowledge and understand their root.”
- “It is part of who they are and it will nourish their intellect as well as their soul. Also, because I am Vietnamese, I want them to be able to be proud of their ancestors and where they came from. It is a small world after all and they need to embrace not only their culture but think and live globally.”

TEACHING VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Strategies and challenges to teaching Vietnamese language. Survey respondents were given a list of 13 possible strategies of things parents can do to teach their children Vietnamese

and asked to check off the strategies they are using or have used. The strategies parents most used were:

1. Asking Vietnamese grandparents to speak to children in Vietnamese (41)
2. Speaking to their children in Vietnamese (40)
3. Have Vietnamese grandparents take care of my children (30)
4. Have my children listen to Vietnamese music (27)
5. Have my children watch Vietnamese videos, TV shows, etc (21)
5. Ask extended family to speak to my children in Vietnamese (21)
6. Read to my children in Vietnamese (16)
7. Make play dates with other Vietnamese parents and children (11)
8. Speak to my spouse in Vietnamese (10)
9. Enroll my children in a Vietnamese school (8—although in the write-in portion of this question 2 stated they were looking for a VN school for their children)
10. Teach my children to read and/or write in Vietnamese (7—additionally 1 parent bought board books and asked spouse to read and another is looking for board books)
11. Take my children to Vietnam (6)
12. Hire a Vietnamese-speaking nanny/babysitter (3)



What are you doing/have done to try to teach your child(ren) Vietnamese? (Please check all that apply)	
Speak to my children in Vietnamese	40 (62%)
Speak to my spouse in Vietnamese	10 (16%)
Read to my children in Vietnamese	16 (25%)
Teach my children to read and/or write in Vietnamese	7 (11%)
Have my children watch Vietnamese videos, TV shows, etc	21 (33%)
Have my children listen to Vietnamese music	27 (42%)
Have Vietnamese grandparents take care of my children	30 (47%)
Ask grandparents to speak to children in Vietnamese	41 (64%)
Ask extended family to speak to my children in Vietnamese	21 (33%)
Hire a Vietnamese-speaking nanny/babysitter	3 (5%)
Enroll my children in a Vietnamese school	8 (12%)
Take my children to Vietnam	6 (9%)
Make playdates with other Vietnamese parents and children	11 (17%)
Other, please specify in box below	16 (25%)

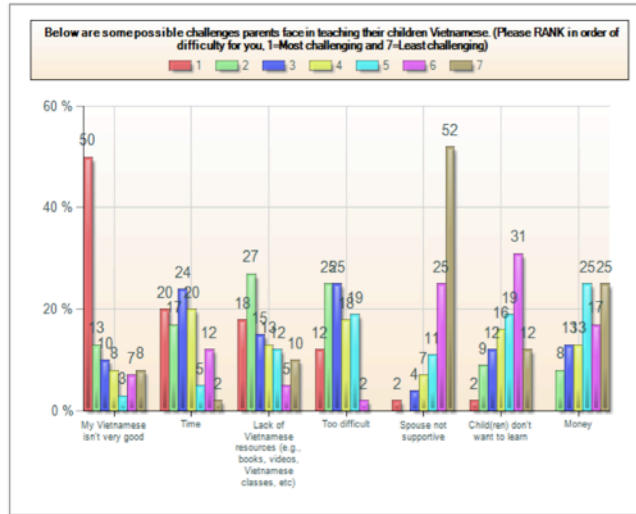
Figure 14. Strategies use to teach HL.

When asked “What are some strategies/techniques you would like to do with your children to teach the Vietnamese language but are not able to?” respondents gave many different responses. Of the 55 people who responded to this question, responses can be grouped into eight key categories:

- Lack of proficiency in HL and/or Habit (12)

- Access to Vietnamese speakers (7 e.g., family, friends, play dates)
- Access to Vietnamese language school (7-not available in their area or children too young)
- Availability of Vietnamese nanny (4)
- Opportunity to visit Vietnam (4)
- Access to more Vietnamese resources e.g., books, videos, music, etc. (3)
- Vietnamese parent (3-Vietnamese spouses teaching Vietnamese; 1 didn't before but want to now)
- Children too young (4-parents want to teach children Vietnamese but believe that children are too young now)

Parents were given a list of seven possible challenges parents face in teaching their children Vietnamese and asked to rank in order of difficulty for them with 1=most challenging and 7=least challenging. By far, the number one challenge for the majority of parents is limited proficiency in Vietnamese; 50% of respondents listed this as their #1 difficulty. The second most commonly cited difficulties were lack of Vietnamese resources and time, followed by “too difficult” as third. Reasons that were ranked low as challenges to teaching their children Vietnamese were spouse not being supportive, children not wanting to learn, and money.



Below are some possible challenges parents face in teaching their children Vietnamese. (Please RANK in order of difficulty for you, 1=Most challenging and 7=Least challenging)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Time	12 (20%)	10 (17%)	14 (24%)	12 (20%)	3 (5%)	7 (12%)	1 (2%)
Money	0 (0%)	4 (8%)	7 (13%)	7 (13%)	13 (25%)	9 (17%)	13 (25%)
Too difficult	7 (12%)	14 (25%)	14 (25%)	10 (18%)	11 (19%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
Spouse not supportive	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	2 (4%)	4 (7%)	6 (11%)	14 (25%)	29 (52%)
Child(ren) don't want to learn	1 (2%)	5 (9%)	7 (12%)	9 (16%)	11 (19%)	18 (31%)	7 (12%)
My Vietnamese isn't very good	30 (50%)	8 (13%)	6 (10%)	5 (8%)	2 (3%)	4 (7%)	5 (8%)
Lack of Vietnamese resources (e.g., books, videos, Vietnamese classes, etc)	11 (18%)	16 (27%)	9 (15%)	8 (13%)	7 (12%)	3 (5%)	6 (10%)

Figure 15. Challenges to teaching Vietnamese.

When asked as an open-ended question, “What are your biggest challenges teaching Vietnamese to your children?” sixty people answered this question but since some of them gave more than one reason, there are over 60 when added up. Overall, parents’ reasons can be grouped into eight main categories of challenges:

- Lack of Vietnamese proficiency (28)
- Lack of access to other Vietnamese speakers (8)
- Spouse (7-either non-Vietnamese spouse cannot speak Vietnamese or the Vietnamese spouse does not consistently speak Vietnamese with children)
- Parent (6-not consistent in speaking Vietnamese)

- Time (5)
- Society, TV, School—all English dominated (7)
- Children (1-“They are not willing to try...English comes faster to them)

Research has found that parents who try to teach their children the HL often cite lack of HL resources (books, etc.), lack of trained teachers and appropriate curriculum at HL schools, limited time due to school and extracurricular activities, dominance and of English in society, and children not wanting to learn the HL as key challenges to HL maintenance, (Park, 2007; Wu, 2007; Alshaboul, 2004; Felling, 2006; Okita, 2002). Survey data suggests that lack of HL resources, limited time due to school and extracurricular activities, and dominance of English in society are factors for respondents in this study. However, what this survey found that other studies have not to be an issue is parents’ limited proficiency in the HL. This difference may be due to the fact that the majority of parents in the other studies of both co-ethnic marriages (Park, 2007; Wu, 2007; Alshaboul, 2004; Felling, 2006) and interlinguistic marriages (Okita, 2002; Yamamoto, 2001; Jackson, 2009), are either native speakers or have a high level of proficiency of the target language they are trying to teach their children.

Strategies and challenges to teaching Vietnamese culture.

Parents were given a list of five possible strategies to teach children about Vietnamese culture and asked to check off the things they have done or are doing; they also had the option to write in responses if their strategies were not listed. Ninety-two percent (61) of the parents said they eat Vietnamese foods and 74% (49) celebrate Vietnamese holidays. Other strategies to teach their children about Vietnamese culture were to talk to their children about differences and similarities between Vietnamese and American culture (64%) and ask Vietnamese grandparents to talk about how they grew up (36%). Other less commonly used strategies were to take a trip to Vietnam (9%), read books, sing songs/play games, shop/visit Vietnamese stores/neighborhoods, and for

parent to take a Vietnamese class. Two parents said their children were too young for a culture lesson.

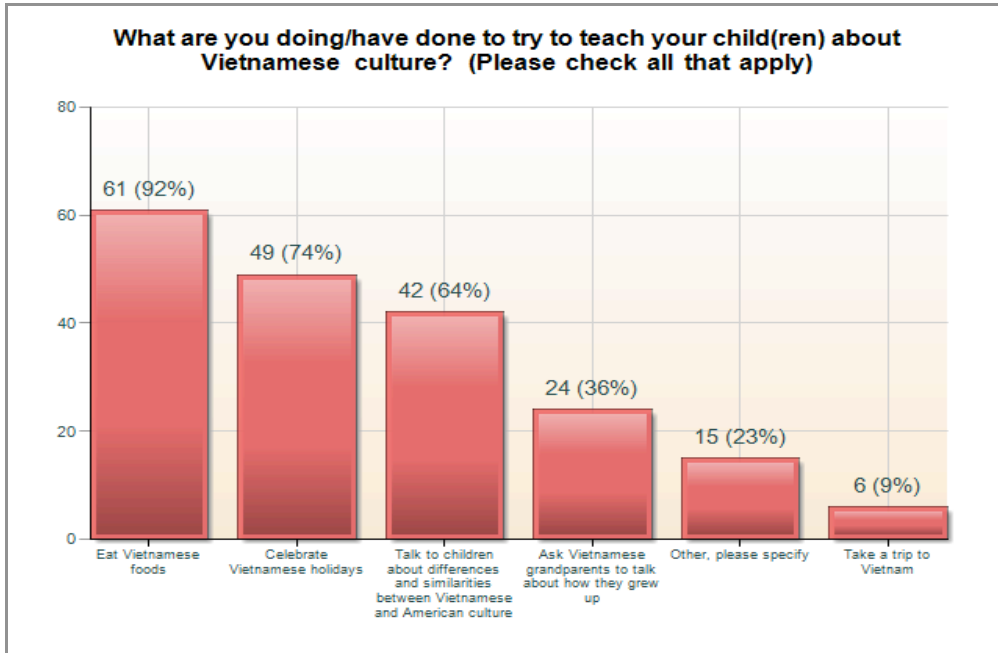


Figure 16. Strategies use to teach Vietnamese culture.

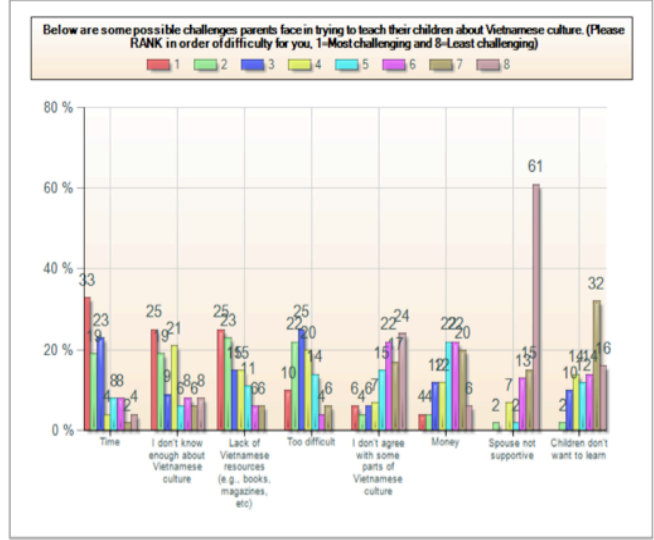
Parents were given a list of eight possible challenges parents face to teach their children about Vietnamese culture and asked to rank them in order of difficulty for them with 1=most challenging and 8=least challenging. Overall, the top three challenges were: (1) time, (2) lack of Vietnamese resources, and (3) lack of knowledge of Vietnamese culture, and (4) too difficult.

Specifically, 33% of survey respondents ranked “Time” as their #1 most challenging, 19% as their #2, and 23% as their #3. There was a close tie between “Lack of Vietnamese resources” and “I don’t know enough about Vietnamese culture” as the second most commonly cited challenge for parents to teach children about Vietnamese culture. Twenty-five people ranked “Lack of Vietnamese resources” as their #1, twenty-three as their #2, nine as their #3, and fifteen as their #4 as compared to 13 ranked “I don’t know enough about Vietnamese culture” as their #1, ten as their #2, five as their #3, and eleven as their #4. The fourth most commonly cited issue in teaching

children about Vietnamese culture was “too difficult.” Five ranked it as their #1 challenge, eleven as their #2, thirteen as their #3, and ten as their #4.

“I don’t agree with some parts of Vietnamese culture” and “Money” were in the middle with varying degrees of agreement. Three ranked “I don’t agree with some parts of Vietnamese culture” as their #1, two as their #2, 3 as their #3, and four as their #4 whereas eight ranked it #5, 12 as #6, nine as #7, and 13 as #8. “Money” was ranked #1 by two, #2 by 2, #3 by six, #4 by six, #5 by 11, #6 by 11, #7 by 12, and #8 by 3.

Overall, issues that were least challenging for parents in trying to teach Vietnamese culture to their children were: (1) spouse not supportive, (2) children don’t want to learn, (3) money. Specifically, 61 ranked “spouse not supportive” as their #8 least challenging, seven as their #6, and six as their #6. However, one respondent did rank it as #2, three as their #4, and one as their #5. “Children don’t want to learn” was ranked #8 by 8 and #7 by 16. However, one ranked it #2 and five ranked it #3. Seven respondents ranked it as their #4, #5, and #6 respectively.



Below are some possible challenges parents face in trying to teach their children about Vietnamese culture. (Please RANK in order of difficulty for you, 1=Most challenging and 8=Least challenging)								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Time	17 (33%)	10 (19%)	12 (23%)	2 (4%)	4 (8%)	4 (8%)	1 (2%)	2 (4%)
Too difficult	5 (10%)	11 (22%)	13 (25%)	10 (20%)	7 (14%)	2 (4%)	3 (6%)	0 (0%)
I don't know enough about Vietnamese culture	13 (25%)	10 (19%)	5 (9%)	11 (21%)	3 (6%)	4 (8%)	3 (6%)	4 (8%)
Spouse not supportive	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	3 (7%)	1 (2%)	6 (13%)	7 (15%)	28 (61%)
Lack of Vietnamese resources (e.g., books, magazines, etc)	13 (25%)	12 (23%)	8 (15%)	8 (15%)	6 (11%)	3 (6%)	3 (6%)	0 (0%)
Money	2 (4%)	2 (4%)	6 (12%)	6 (12%)	11 (22%)	11 (22%)	10 (20%)	3 (6%)
Children don't want to learn	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	5 (10%)	7 (14%)	6 (12%)	7 (14%)	16 (32%)	8 (16%)
I don't agree with some parts of Vietnamese culture	3 (6%)	2 (4%)	3 (6%)	4 (7%)	8 (15%)	12 (22%)	9 (17%)	13 (24%)

Figure 17. Challenges teaching Vietnamese culture.

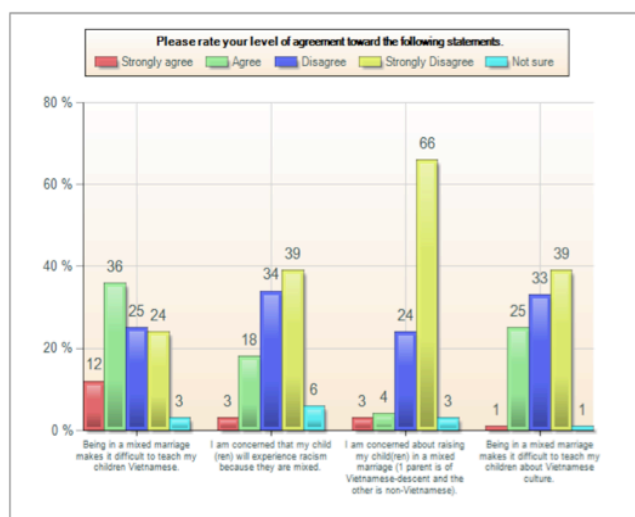
When asked as an open-ended question, “What are your biggest challenges in teaching Vietnamese culture to your children?” 14 respondents cited lack of knowledge of Vietnamese culture, 10 cited lack of Vietnamese community where they are currently living, seven cited “time,” seven cited lack of Vietnamese resources and/or opportunities and six cited distance from Vietnamese family. Additionally, four noted being in a mixed marriage was a challenge since one

of the parents has limited knowledge of Vietnamese culture and four noted that their children are still too young to understand/be taught about Vietnamese culture.

Concerns about being in a mixed marriage. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with four statements about being in a mixed marriage:

1. I am concerned about raising my children in a mixed marriage (1 parent is of Vietnamese-descent and the other is non-Vietnamese).
2. I am concerned that my children will experience racism because they are mixed.
3. Being in a mixed marriage makes it difficult to teach my children Vietnamese
4. Being in a mixed marriage makes it difficult to teach my children about Vietnamese culture.

By far, the majority disagreed or strongly disagreed with three of the four statements. The statement most parents did not agree with most was: “I am concerned about raising my children in a mixed marriage.” Sixty-six percent (45) strongly disagreed and 24% (16) disagreed while only 3% (2) strongly agreed and 4% (3) agreed with 3% (2) not sure. In regards to the statement “I am concerned that my children will experience racism because they are mixed,” 39% (26) strongly disagreed and 34% (23) disagreed, while 18% (12) agreed, 3% (2) strongly agreed, and 6% (4) were not sure. In regards to the statement: “Being in a mixed marriage makes it difficult to teach my children about Vietnamese culture,” 39% (26) strongly disagreed and 33% (22) disagreed, while 25% (17) agreed, 1% (1) strongly agreed, and 1% (1) was not sure. Perhaps the most surprising was respondents’ response to “Being in a mixed marriage makes it difficult to teach my children Vietnamese.” Only 12% (8) strongly agreed and 36% (24) agreed, while 24% (16) strongly disagreed and 25% percent (17) disagreed with 3% (2) not sure.



Please rate your level of agreement toward the following statements.					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not sure
I am concerned about raising my child(ren) in a mixed marriage (1 parent is of Vietnamese-descent and the other is non-Vietnamese).	2 (3 %)	3 (4 %)	16 (24 %)	44 (66 %)	2 (3 %)
I am concerned that my child(ren) will experience racism because they are mixed.	2 (3 %)	12 (18 %)	23 (34 %)	26 (39 %)	4 (6 %)
Being in a mixed marriage makes it difficult to teach my children Vietnamese.	8 (12 %)	24 (36 %)	17 (25 %)	16 (24 %)	2 (3 %)
Being in a mixed marriage makes it difficult to teach my children about Vietnamese culture.	1 (1 %)	17 (25 %)	22 (33 %)	26 (39 %)	1 (1 %)

Figure 18. Concerns about mixed marriage.

SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the findings from the online survey. In total, there were 69 respondents who completed the survey. However, only 67 surveys were included for analysis. The online survey was helpful in that I was able to gather data from a larger number of participants nationwide regarding their background information (where they are currently living, education, years married, number of children) and their beliefs and attitudes about Vietnamese language and culture and specifically reasons why they want their children to learn Vietnamese language and culture. The online survey also asked questions about patterns of language use in the their

families, families' language policies and strategies they are using/have used to teach their children the Vietnamese language and culture, and challenges they face.

Chapter 7

INTERVIEW FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I shared key findings from the survey. In this chapter, I will discuss the key findings from the interviews regarding what factors influence how parents develop family language policies, factors that impact how language practices are carried out, and patterns of language use. It is important to note that in this study, I interviewed the parents at a certain stage of their and their children's lives. Two families had had only one child at the time of the interviews and the children were still fairly young (2 year olds) and had not started school. The other two families had two or more children and most were attending school at the time of the interviews. Five or ten years from now, the families' stories might look very different.

THEME A: PARENTS WITHOUT FULL FLUENCY NEVERTHELESS ARE ABLE TO PASS LANGUAGE ON TO THEIR CHILDREN

It is natural to assume that the more proficient parents are in speaking the HL, the more likely it is that parents will speak the HL with their children, family, friends, and other HL speakers. In fact, I had anticipated that HL proficiency would be the most important factor in determining parents' development of the family language policy and influencing patterns of language use. However, this was not the case for the four families. Participants who were less proficient in the HL were the ones who used the HL the most when speaking with their children, parents, and siblings, whereas those who were more proficient in the HL were less likely to use Vietnamese with their children, parents, and siblings.

While I did not formally assess participants' actual Vietnamese language proficiency and instead asked participants to rate themselves, of all the participants, it was clear that Nu is the most fluent in Vietnamese in all skill areas (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). However, despite Nu's fluency in Vietnamese, she rarely uses Vietnamese with her children, uses a mix of English and

Vietnamese with her siblings who live in the U.S., and prefers to speak English with other Vietnamese. The only times she will use Vietnamese is with her family who live in Vietnam and who have limited to no proficiency in English; or when she meets a Vietnamese speaker who she knows has difficulty speaking English.

Nu. By far, of the four Vietnamese HL speakers, the person who is most fluent in all four skill areas (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) of Vietnamese is Nu because she was born in Vietnam and lived and attended school in Vietnam until she was 13 years old. However, high fluency in the HL has not translated into high use of the HL with her children, family, and friends.

With her oldest child, Nu reports speaking only Vietnamese with her daughter until she was about 2 ½ years old. Despite Nu's fluency in Vietnamese, she states: "If I speak to them [my children] in Vietnamese that sounds more foreign Because English seems to be so natural now..." even though she is aware that she makes grammatical mistakes when speaking English and her children correct her. She estimates that now, 99% of all her interactions with her children are in English. Vietnamese language use is now confined to simple routine things like "Go brush your teeth," "Go shower," or "Go eat." Patrick has noted that Nu tends to use Vietnamese more with the children times right before and after spending time with other Vietnamese speakers and also since having participated in the interview with me.

With her family and friends, Nu reports an interesting pattern of language use. Typically, she uses a mix of English and Vietnamese with her siblings who are living in the US. However, Nu says she can "automatically switch" to speaking only Vietnamese if she is talking about her husband or her parents and she does not want her husband or children to understand what she is saying. Neither she nor her siblings have thought to ask the others to speak to their children in Vietnamese since they themselves do not follow a policy of trying to speak only

Vietnamese with them at home. Nu notes that though all of her siblings married Vietnamese spouses, her children's Vietnamese proficiency is the same or better than her siblings' children except for the nieces and nephews who are being taken care of by Vietnamese grandparents.

With her parents and siblings who are in Vietnam and Australia, she speaks only Vietnamese because her parents do not speak English at all and her siblings have limited proficiency in English. Though she prefers using English when communicating with other Vietnamese, she notes, "If I speak to some old lady in Vietnamese or I speak to my mom and dad, instantly I am Vietnamese." She can "switch completely to Vietnamese" if she knows the other person does not speak English. However, Nu prefers speaking English with other Vietnamese because she prefers the more egalitarian qualities of English (e.g., "I," "you") and not having to deal with the complexities of Vietnamese honorifics in regard to age and gender (e.g., "Chi," "co," "jho," "em," etc.).

In terms of spending time reading Vietnamese books, magazines or watching/listening Vietnamese programs and music, Nu notes that she rarely does this—probably only about 5% of the time with things such as watching programs like "Paris by Night" and very rarely reading books in Vietnamese: "5% Vietnamese. 5%--can you imagine that? Only when I put something in Vietnamese then I listen to it and watch it. But other than that mostly it's English."

Phuong. Though she considers her Vietnamese speaking to be fluent, Phuong acknowledges that her vocabulary is "limited to what I've learned from my parents" and that sometimes "I'll throw in English words here and there. And I think my parents will do the same because they just don't know the words themselves..." Kevin concurs that Phuong and her family consistently speak Vietnamese with each other and will insert English words when they lack the Vietnamese vocabulary: "She's—they're very fluent. . . .there's a lot of English words thrown in so I don't know where she would test in vocabulary. She'll probably tell you that she would test

not very well in written language.” However, though Phuong self-rates her Vietnamese speaking as fluent, she feels self-conscious speaking Vietnamese around older Vietnamese adults because of the rude comments that she endured from her parents’ friends when she was growing up.

Though Phuong is self-conscious about her Vietnamese skills, she is not self-conscious of speaking Vietnamese with her son because “he doesn’t make fun of me so it’s come much more naturally um, very, very instinctive.” She further elaborates:

I was surprised by how easy it was to speak Vietnamese to Michael. Um, I’ve mostly been self-conscious about my Vietnamese skills. Mostly because Vietnamese adults make fun of my accent, but with a child who is your child—I think that he or she doesn’t know if you’re pronouncing something a little bit wrong or if you’re not quite using the right word. Um, so it came very easily to me and it felt very natural to do it. Um, to a point now where I feel strange not speaking Vietnamese to him and he really does absorb it.

Though Phuong and her siblings’ Vietnamese is not as fluent as Nu’s and her siblings, she and her siblings try to speak Vietnamese with one another and always with their parents. Phuong says this is because their parents early on established a family language policy of speaking only Vietnamese at home:

My parents never spoke English to us and they never you know, let us speak English back to them or anything. And so over time it just felt very strange to speak English to them. Um, and ah, even now, when I visit my mom at her store, you know where it’s an American environment where everyone else is speaking English, it still feels strange to speak English to her in the presence of other people because I’m just so used to speaking Vietnamese to her.

Phuong's parents and siblings continue to follow this language policy even now as adults. The family language policy has been so instilled that "It's much more unnatural for um, for my family to speak English to each other." However, Phuong acknowledges that patterns of language use are slowly changing now due to non-Vietnamese speakers becoming part of the family:

My sister married someone who's not Vietnamese and my next sister has a serious boyfriend who is not Vietnamese. Um, so to the extent that we get together with all of my siblings and their spouses and boyfriends—more English is spoken—it might evolve into a conversation where we're all speaking in English because there are three people there who are actively part of the conversation. But if we're sitting at the dinner table, we would be speaking Vietnamese.

Phuong further elaborates on patterns of language use in her family:

If it's like a couple of siblings who have come over um, you know, and we're just barbequing and having a couple of beers, um, then we might be speaking English to each other. Now if I go into the kitchen and I'm doing dishes with my sister then we'll speak Vietnamese to each other. So where there are a large number of people who speak English among the siblings we might end up speaking English to each other but if it's just two, one-on-one, and they're both siblings, we would always be speaking Vietnamese to each other. And when my parents are present we would almost always be speaking Vietnamese to each other.

She self-rates her ability to read and write Vietnamese at the third grade level but reports that she rarely reads Vietnamese books to her son. Instead, she "reads in Vietnamese" by using English children's books and talking about them in Vietnamese with her son—either telling the story in Vietnamese or asking her son questions about the pictures. Other than speaking Vietnamese with her family, Phuong's exposure to Vietnamese is rare. She never watches Vietnamese videos or TV programs or listens to Vietnamese music or talk shows and other than Vietnamese menus and a few Vietnamese children's books, has limited exposure to Vietnamese print.

Tan & Kerri. Tan self-rates his Vietnamese as good on the domestic level talking with his parents and brother. For example, he says that he can easily talk to his parents on the phone about:

What Mai is up to, what Kerri and I are up to, um, you know at home usually it's about you know, like—I don't know--what's for dinner or like what are we going to do today and things like that. But I wouldn't talk to my parents about ah, oh, I do talk to them about politics but not—you know, it's a lot of English then mixed in, so. Um, and I talk to my brother—although now I think he and I speak a little more English, but—but still we speak Vietnamese to each other um, just about whatever, you know, how his school is and things like that.

In terms of his reading and writing in Vietnamese, Tan self-rates it as “poor” saying that he could probably read a menu but probably not read at a first-grade level. He self-rates his listening and speaking ability in Vietnamese higher than reading and writing but notes that even with speaking, he has limited vocabulary: “I think ah, like on a 1 to 5 scale, 5 being the best. I think hmm, listening is probably the best, I think it's probably like a 3 or 3 ½ maybe. I think speaking is like a 2 and then reading and writing is like a 1 or lower or a half.” Of the four participants, it seems that Tan is the least proficient in reading and writing Vietnamese; however, this does not seem to deter him from speaking Vietnamese with his daughter whether at home, in public, or in front of other Vietnamese speakers.

It is difficult to gauge Tan's actual Vietnamese speaking and listening ability since I was only able to observe his interactions with his daughter on and off for one afternoon. If I were to venture to guess, I would say that though Cuong might actually have higher proficiency in listening and speaking Vietnamese than Tan, Tan is more comfortable speaking Vietnamese because (a) he grew up with a firmly established FLP where his parents only spoke to him in Vietnamese and required him speak to them only in Vietnamese; (b) personality-wise, he does not seem to be as

concerned about making mistakes speaking Vietnamese with his daughter as Cuong seems to and thus, seems to inhibit Cuong's ability to speak Vietnamese with his daughter.

While both Phuong and Cuong growing up had negative experiences of their Vietnamese being corrected and made fun of by others, Tan did not seem to have negative language experiences growing up. However, Kerri does note that Tan feels self-conscious about his Vietnamese ability:

I think he's very self-conscious about it. I feel like he feels like he doesn't speak it very well. Like if someone would randomly ask him—like you know, how's your Vietnamese or something? He would say, 'Oh, it's ok. I mean you know, I kinda speak like a 3rd grader.' That's how he'll sort of explain it. But it's very important to him. It's like—he wouldn't *want* [emphasis] to speak English with his parents--ever. It would be very weird for him and for a brief period where they were trying to sort of speak a little more English for my benefit, it was just very weird and uncomfortable for him and he was like—he just hated it. It was weird. So it's not like he's 'I want to speak English.' I think he wishes his Vietnamese was better.

In their goal of wanting to raise their children bilingually, Tan and Kerri seem the most committed and on the same page as a couple. While in the other couples, there may be one spouse very committed and the other supportive, it was interesting to note how important it was to both Tan and Kerri that their child (and future children) learn Vietnamese. Kerri is so committed to this goal that she took Vietnamese language classes for 1 year in graduate school. It also helps that she has an ear for languages and is also very interested in learning languages. When she was taking the Vietnamese language class, Kerri said that she was able to understand about 30% of the interactions with Tan and his family but now probably only understands about 10%. Because Tan was never taught how to read and write in Vietnamese, Kerri is better able to read and write Vietnamese even though she may not always understand what she is reading:

I mean like—I am able to—I know—I can say the words but I don't necessarily know what they mean. [small laugh] But like you know she has a couple of kids' books and I can understand. . . . I can pronounce the words ok and things like that. But um, but anything harder than this—um-hmm. [small laugh] I can say the words but I won't know what they mean.

Kerri shares of their trip to Vietnam, “So when we went to Vietnam, a couple of times there were signs and I would read them and then he would say what they meant [laughs] so yeah.” In talking about Tan's ability to reading Vietnamese, Kerri first says, “Well, he can't read.” But then she goes on to elaborate:

Yeah, he can read them, but like he doesn't—he can figure out what they mean—easily from the diacritics and stuff but sometimes he'll ask me like what the—what a certain diacritic is or—he's not very good with his vowels so he doesn't know what like the hook on the—well, he does know what the hook on the o does because of pho. Pho, I should say [corrects herself and says it with the correct tone]. But um, like the “a” with the hat versus the “a” without the hat, that he doesn't know how to pronounce very well. But since his speaking is like-obviously way better than mine, he can figure it out pretty easily.

Though Tan has limited Vietnamese proficiency and sometimes feels self-conscious about it, he tries to speak only Vietnamese with his daughter, parents, and brother. Both he and Kerri note that he is very consistent in observing this language policy. In terms of his interactions with his family, Kerri states:

They totally [emphasis] really only speak to each other only in Vietnamese. It's awesome. . . . It'll be all Vietnamese and then it'll be like one funny English word in there like toilet paper or something [small laugh] you know like he doesn't know or

whatever. But that's the same way he speaks with her [Mai]. But he never starts and is like, 'Oh—why am I speaking? I should speak Vietnamese.' No.

The only time he will use English in speaking with Mai or his parents and brother is if he does not know the word in Vietnamese:

I try to only speak in Vietnamese—even if Kerri is there. Actually—even if—it doesn't matter who is there. Even if other people are around, yeah, I try to. Like at daycare I'll speak to her in Vietnamese and um, yeah, like yesterday we went to friends' houses and I spoke to her in Vietnamese. And um, and I think it's to train me too—so that I *only* [emphasis] you know like I get used to speaking to her only [emphasis] in Vietnamese and it feels unnatural to speak to her in English. The only time I speak to her in English is like—like let's say if there is someone else um, and they are interacting with Mai and I want her to do something in the context of that other person then I might speak to her in English so that they will understand that I want Mai to do that or don't want Mai to do something or whatever, you know. So I think that's the time—that's the exception. Besides words I don't know.

Some examples Tan gives for words he does not know in Vietnamese are

Like certain animals like unicorn for example—I don't know that in Vietnamese. Um, what else? There was one the other day—oh, centipede—I mean that's another animal. Um, yeah, I think things like that. A lot of nouns I don't know. Um, there are times too when there are certain verbs and things like that—things that I think, oh, I should ask my parents how to say that. Yeah, but usually it's like things—you know because kids everything is like—oh, you know the other thing is like shapes. I don't know the words for a lot of shapes and um, so things like that you know. Things that kids are learning at this age like a lot of nouns, right and so yeah. Some of them I may not know. But I've also learned a lot because of her because we have books in Vietnamese, so yeah. Like

some of these books—like this animal book—I know some of these but you know, like a hedgehog—I didn't know that in Vietnamese. You know. Or hippo. Yeah, so I read these to her and learn some because I read to her.

Though Tan strives to speak only Vietnamese to Mai, the one exception is that he usually reads to her in English but occasionally he or Kerri will read the few Vietnamese children's books that they have to her: "Yeah, so no, I read to her in English. That's another time I speak to her in English. And we have like three Vietnamese books around and I try to read those to her. Um, it would be nice for us to get more books in Vietnamese—I would want to--we want to get more books for her in Vietnamese so that we can read them to her and so I can learn myself [K small laugh]. Similar to Cuong, Tan finds it difficult to speak Vietnamese with Mai when describing stories or movies (e.g., *Finding Nemo*).

While Tan feels his Vietnamese proficiency is pretty good when compared to other Vietnamese Americans like himself (born and raised in the U.S.), Tan's use of Vietnamese is primarily confined to his daughter, parents, brother, and aunts and uncle. He speaks English with his cousins and in interactions with Vietnamese speakers outside of his family will usually use English such as when ordering at Vietnamese restaurants, or with his advisor (from school/work).

Cuong. Of the four participants, it is hardest to gauge Cuong's actual Vietnamese proficiency and his self-rating since it seems he tends to be hard on himself. Of the few times I have heard him speak, he sounds fairly fluent to me and I am aware that his Vietnamese is better than mine. From the interviews, Cuong's concerns about getting the nuances right when translating English books in Vietnamese and making mistakes in Vietnamese when speaking with his daughter reveals that he seems to have very high standards regarding his Vietnamese proficiency so it is difficult to judge Cuong's actual Vietnamese speaking and listening proficiency as compared to Phuong's and Tan's, who seem to be less concerned with making

mistakes when speaking with their children and family. Partly why Cuong lacks confidence in his Vietnamese ability is that his father corrected his Vietnamese “a lot” when he was growing up to the point that he got fed up and switched to only speaking to his parents in English.

Ha: And do you feel self-conscious when you’re using Vietnamese, um, with friends or with your family members?

Cuong: Yeah, I do. I do. And I think part of that is my dad corrected me a lot and that just discouraged me. It did--because if one’s always being self-conscious of one’s mangled up this tense or that tense, then yeah, it inhibits—it inhibits things...

For example, Cuong shares “If we’re reading stories and stuff to the kids, it’s hard for me to translate those stories for—you know I realize that just even reading stories would be tough because of the nuances and stuff. Um, you know I don’t really have a resource to draw from. You know to ask—did I get that right? Did I get this sentence right?” Furthermore, Cuong shares concerns about his Vietnamese ability:

And my skills—I’ve always had a little--maybe not as confident about it—I didn’t feel pushing it. You know, didn’t feel the impetus to push it. Because I was never sure if my grammar was right or wrong anyways. [C laughs.] And so I thought, you know if I’m speaking to Miki, but if I’m mangling things up, I’m not sure I want her to then be you know, amplifying my mistakes.

In regards to reading and writing and vocabulary, it seems that Cuong is more proficient than Phuong or Tan because he is able not only to listen to BBC webcasts in Vietnamese but also able to read articles in Vietnamese, “winnow out the intent of the article” and write a response. Of reading the articles and writing a response, Cuong compares these skills to “basically what a junior. high school student would be expected to do.” This is quite advanced compared to the grade 3 reading and writing level that Phuong feels she is at and even Tan’s self-reported grade 1 or less level.

Even after almost 2 years of speaking Vietnamese with his daughter, Cuong says it was “mentally taxing sometimes” to speak in Vietnamese and instead of getting easier, he found that “there was a point where I was speaking less and less Vietnamese to her” because “it was harder for me to come up with the vocabulary, it was easier to be understood and . . . ease of communication.” He notes:

Trying to make that transition from baby talk and discipline stuff to more advanced conversation—maybe I felt a little lost, I’m not sure how to do that. I’m not sure how to make that transition where you know, instead of disciplining the child you’re trying to expand their worlds—because their worlds are expanding. You know at the age of two their behavior changes or they’re becoming more their own person and stuff. And um, but I would say that it’s all about context. I’m surrounded by parents and I know—I guess I depend a lot on how other parents relate to their kids. I take my cues from that and so with English being all that you know—language all around me, I sort of echo that world.

So shortly before Miki turned two, Cuong stopped speaking Vietnamese with her and spoke only English. This has continued to the present and Kerri laments that “There is no Vietnamese floating around.” Cuong believes that unless something drastically changes in their lives like moving to Vietnam to live or living with or near his parents for a time, the Vietnamese language will stop with him unless his children decide to pursue learning Vietnamese on their own when they are older.

Discussion. For the parents in this study, their lack of full fluency does not preclude a commitment to pass on the HL to their children. It was surprising that of the four Vietnamese parents, it was least important to the parent who was most fluent in Vietnamese (Nu) that her children learn the HL. Whereas the two participants who were most committed to teaching their

children the HL (Tan and Phuong) and made a conscious effort to speak only Vietnamese with their parents and siblings were the ones who struggle more with fluency in the HL. Past studies have found that even though parents and children may use the HL when communicating with one another, more often than not, children tend to speak English with their siblings and friends (Alshaboul, 2004; Park, 2007; Wu, 2007; Lao, 2004). Thus, the fact that two of the participants speak predominately Vietnamese with their siblings is significant. One must wonder how this was accomplished? With Phuong, she notes that her parents always enforced the Vietnamese-only language policy but Tan's case is interesting in that his parents never explicitly told him to speak Vietnamese with his younger brother but that he himself decided to do so since he wanted to help his brother preserve the HL. Findings from this study suggest that family language policies and language practices that first-generation-immigrants establish have a strong influence on how the second-generation eventually go on to raise their children linguistically and is vital to whether the HL will be maintained or lost by the third generation.

Despite the fact that all four participants have been able to maintain the HL to the 1.5/second-generation, it is clear that even in the "success" stories of Phuong and Tan, language shift is taking place. All four participants' Vietnamese proficiency is less than their parents' and they anticipate that their children's will probably be less than their own unless they make concerted efforts to improve their Vietnamese so that they can keep up with their children's language needs as they grow up. For Nu and Cuong, they have accepted that their children will have very limited to no proficiency in the HL unless their children themselves decide to pursue learning the HL later on their own; hence, language shift to English will be complete by the second generation for these two families if they continue on their current trajectory.

THEME B: PARENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE HL

Previous studies have found that one of the challenges many families face in trying to raise their children bilingually is that they are trying to juggle many different life demands such as parents' work, children's school, homework, and extracurricular activities, concern that maintaining the HL will negatively impact their children's ability to learn English in addition to finding time and energy to fit in HL weekend classes (Okita, 2001; Park, 2007; Alshaboul, 2004; Wu, 2007).

This study found that one of the key factors influencing families' language policies and practices was parents' attitudes toward the HL. In talking about parents' attitudes toward the HL, I am referring to two main areas: (a) how important it is to parents that their children learn the HL and/or culture versus competing priorities and (b) parents' willingness to push/not to push their children to learn the HL and/or culture. Parents who felt it was "important" that their children learn the HL tended to take the attitude that it was a non-negotiable and were willing to push the children if needed. Parents who viewed learning the HL to be "good" tended to take the attitude that it was optional and other priorities such as sports or supporting children in their whatever their interests are as more important. It is significant to note that all of the parents to some extent saw it was part of their obligation as parents to teach their children the HL and culture but whether they actually followed through on teaching their children was ultimately determined by how important parents felt learning the HL was for their children as compared to other competing priorities. Parents' efforts were not confined just to if they were willing to push their children but also to themselves and families. It required extra effort on the HL spouse's part to make a conscious effort to speak the HL with their children despite limited HL proficiency and pressing time demands to communicate efficiently. HL spouses also asked their family to speak Vietnamese with their children and reminded them when they forgot.

For two of the families (Tan & Kerri; Phuong & Kevin), that their children learn the HL was clearly a very high priority and they were willing to put in a great deal of effort to make it happen.

For the other two families (Cuong & Valentina; Nu & Patrick), while they believe it would be “good” if their children learned the HL it was not so “important” that it was a high priority and other things eventually took over. It is significant to note that all four families listed Spanish as an important language that they hoped their children would learn.

Tan & Kerri. While in most families, one spouse tends to feel more strongly about wanting their children to be bilingual, in Tan’s and Kerri’s case, both spouses have a strong desire to raise their children bilingually in Vietnamese and English as evidenced by Kerri’s response when asked if they had talked about how they want to raise their children:

Actually we had very little discussion about it because we both felt very strongly the same way. . . . we felt very strongly that we wanted her to be bilingual, that the other language would be Vietnamese, and you know that he was going to have to do most of the work for you know, speaking it with her—all the work really. And um, yeah, that’s—we hardly even talked about it because we both felt so strongly about it that it was a perfect match and outlook, so that’s what we’ve done.

Because it is very important to Tan and Kerri that their children be able to speak Vietnamese, they have are willing to put in a lot of effort to give Mai as much exposure to Vietnamese as possible. For example, Kerri took Vietnamese language classes for 1 year in graduate school and Tan makes a consistent effort to speak to Mai exclusively in Vietnamese all of the time:

I try to only speak in Vietnamese—even if Kerri is there. Actually—even if—it doesn’t matter who is there. Even if other people are around, yeah, I try to. Like at daycare I’ll speak to her in Vietnamese and um, yeah, like yesterday we went to friends’ houses and I spoke to her in Vietnamese. And um, and I think it’s to train me too—so that I *only* [emphasis] you know like I get used to speaking to her *only* [emphasis] in Vietnamese and it feels unnatural to speak to her in English. The only time I speak to her in English is like—like let’s say if there is someone else, um, and they are interacting with Mai and I

want her to do something in the context of that other person then I might speak to her in English so that they will understand that I want Mai to do that or don't want Mai to do something or whatever, you know. So I think that's the time—that's the exception-- besides words I don't know.

Furthermore, because Tan believes it is important that Mai have as much exposure to Vietnamese as possible, he will remind his parents and brother to speak Vietnamese when they slip and speak English. Another indication of how important it is to Tan and Kerri that Mai learn the HL is that they are willing to push her to do so even if in the future she says she does not want to:

I think that's the tough thing about lessons of any kind, right? [small laugh] Kids almost always have a period of where they're like "Ugh, I don't want to play guitar, I don't want to play piano whatever." The tough thing is like in my case, my mom took us to piano lessons really young and I was like "No." My mom was like "Ok, that's fine, why don't we try guitar?" In this case, I'm not really willing to say, "Ok, let's try Spanish" [small laugh]. You know, it's *really* [emphasis] important. So I guess I would look into a few things—like is it that school or did somebody at that school or is it like an element of it that we could change that she would like it more? Um, or is it just like no matter what she's not going to like the lessons? I don't know. That would be a tough call. I would be a little bit inclined unless there's somebody horrible there or something—some specific reason why she doesn't like it or she's getting teased or something, I think we would press on. And um, you know try to address whatever specific big issues she has with it. You know, if it would help with my going, if it would help to do something fun after or something if that would encourage her to go, I think we would try that. But I don't think it would be good enough just for her to be like "I don't like"—that wouldn't cut it. That would definitely not be a good enough reason to stop in my eyes. Sometimes—I don't know. Hopefully, they enjoy it is possible but sometimes with kids,

from my own experience, you just have to get over a hump and it becomes routine and something you do and it's ok.

Tan sees no problem in expecting and enforcing his children to speak Vietnamese since that is what his parents did with him:

I'd tell her to speak to me in Vietnamese. Yeah, I mean that's what my parents did and um, and you know, yeah, I think it's just proper. Um, you know, it would just be like she did something that I didn't think was right you know, yeah, I would tell her not to do or tell her to do this, so. Yeah, I would have her answer me in Vietnamese.

When asked what language they wanted their children to learn other than English, both Tan and Kerri stated their first choice is Vietnamese. When I probed more to try to find out Tan's and Kerri's reasons for wanting their children to learn Vietnamese versus a more marketable language, an interesting discussion ensued regarding why they believe it is important for Mai to learn the HL and culture:

Tan: Yeah, it's just makes sense to me that she speaks Vietnamese. Um and you know, I speak with my parents and my brother and I would want her to speak it with them as well and then with my aunts and uncles and things like that. It's just part of her and I think um, I think it's good for her to know that. I think after the Vietnamese is where we can kind of talk about what's marketable and things like that. But for a child I think um, I don't know if I would harp so much on marketability. I think it would be more on what she enjoys or what she's interested in just because I think the act of learning another language when you're younger at least is maybe more important than—than um, you know, making sure it helps her get a job 20 years later.

Kerri: I totally agree. And for her, I think for her it's totally different. And I think for Tan it's totally different too. Like for me—because I'm not Vietnamese [small laugh]

and because I kind of am in a stage of needing to market myself as somebody who can do public health in other countries, I do have to take that into a factor. Now, having not really learned another language which is so unfortunate in and of itself. But for her, I agree. She is you know, culturally Vietnamese and I think that is an important part of her culture is being able to speak the language and um, you know, in the larger picture, it's sad that as people remain in the States they—as the generations progress, they lose the ability to speak the language that their ancestors spoke and I think that we have the chance to preserve that so I think that that's really important to both of us. And right, the third thing which I think for me, I think the third language should be more marketable [small laugh] um, but I think for her, at this point, it's important and I wouldn't change that answer because I think of having Vietnamese be her second language um, just because it's part of her cultural heritage and it's important to learn any language and that one makes a lot of sense.

Thus, Mai learning Vietnamese is much more than just learning another language but so that she can communicate with Tan's family and because it is “part of her” and it would be “good for her to know her cultural heritage.” Perhaps helpful to understanding why it is so important to Tan that Mai learn the HL and culture is that he sees it as part of his responsibility as a parent to teach her:

Um, [small pause] I think it's a big part of my um, so I guess--let me put it this way. Like being a parent I think is a big part of my life. And it's hard because I feel like sometimes I don't get to put as much time into it as I would want but it is probably the biggest priority of my life. It doesn't mean I drop everything else for it, but um, you know, at the end of the day, the thing that I could—I think I would be willing to give up like my other priorities like being a good doctor or being successful in my profession if it meant that I could be a good parent. And then so within that category of being a good parent, I think a huge part of it is um, teaching Mai about her culture and about Vietnamese. It's certainly not all of it um, but it is a large part of it. You know, maybe I

don't know—maybe half of it or something like that. Because you know there are lots of things about being a good parent you know but raising your kids and stuff like that but yeah, I think it is a big part.

Phuong & Kevin. Both Phuong and Kevin want to raise their children bilingually and believe that it is important their children know Vietnamese. While Kevin is supportive of Phuong's desire to teach their children Vietnamese, the majority of bilingual work falls to Phuong since Kevin does not speak the HL. In her efforts to raise Michael bilingually, Phuong makes a conscious effort to speak to him only in Vietnamese regardless of where they are or who is around. Based on the recommendation of their pediatrician, Phuong has spoken to Michael only in Vietnamese since he was 2 weeks old. She persevered even though:

The whole first year I felt a little bit silly because there was no feedback from him so I had no idea if he was learning anything at all because he wasn't speaking. Um, but then I started to realized that he was actually understanding. You know the very first I remembered just rudimentary, "Ernie o dau?" I would ask him and he would turn as an infant and look at Ernie. So he was responding to my inquiry just one very simple Vietnamese word but he was actually listening and responding in my language so that was definitely the first time I realized that it was actually ah, absorbing into something else.

Similar to Tan, Phuong states that she plans to raise her children with the same language policy that her parents used: "I will continue to you know, require that he only speak Vietnamese to me in the same way that my parents did so I'm hopeful that I will be able to mirror their success." Furthermore, when asked what she would do if Michael spoke to her in English, she stated, "If he says anything to me in English, then I'll say to him, Mommy didn't understand that, say that in Vietnamese."

She has also requested her family (parents and siblings) speak to him only in Vietnamese and will remind them to speak Vietnamese if they forget: “My family—my parents and my siblings only speak Vietnamese to him at my request. I think sometimes—not my parents but some of my siblings will revert to speaking English with him and I will ask them to switch to Vietnamese.” One of the main reasons why it is important to Phuong her children to learn Vietnamese is: “it’s going to be the way that I want them to communicate with their grandparents which to me is our strongest—our most direct link to our culture. . . to me it’s very much tied to a cultural identity.”

When asked what they would do if at some point their children did not want to take Vietnamese language classes, Kevin stated:

Ah, you know, it’s your job as a parent to push back a little bit to make them give it a fair shot but you know, if you have a kid who just doesn’t like playing the piano you know ah, let them figure out something that they’re good at and that they like, you know I think that’s more important. So um, so you know we haven’t talked about Vietnamese classes or anything like that. So um, but just in general I think that’s how we would you know, how we would approach whether Michael wants to do sports or really wants to do art classes. I think we’re both kind of open-minded and you know, let’s figure out what he really likes and give him those opportunities.

While Kevin states that they would “push back a little” with their children to learn Vietnamese if their children resisted, it did not seem that he felt as strongly as Tan and Kerri about pushing their children to learn Vietnamese. Also, when asked what language she wants Michael to learn most, her first choice was Spanish because:

I think by 2050, there will be more Spanish-speaking people than eng-speaking people in the U.S. or something like that. So you know that will certainly be in his lifetime and um, I think it would be very important for him—not just from a business perspective but from a bridging a gap. I think with what AZ is doing now we are um, it’s very divisive

and if for him to learn or know Spanish would help him to be more emphatic and to realize that he has much more in common with these people that they are not um, you know, I'm not entirely sure what the motivation of the AZ law is, but I think to the extent that more people spoke Spanish and could understand and have an empathy that we wouldn't really be in this place in this country. So I would vote Spanish. I loved French. I love the language. I still do, but I think Spanish will be more useful for him in the long run.

I was perplexed by Phuong's first choice of Spanish over Vietnamese since it seemed throughout her interview that Vietnamese was very important to her and her family so I pressed her to elaborate a bit more on her answer:

Ha: So hopefully you won't have to make a choice but if there was a choice between Vietnamese & Spanish?

Phuong: Um, that's a hard one. I would hope that he wouldn't lose what he's learned in Vietnamese. Um, he will not have an opportunity to learn Vietnamese in his grade school here. Wherever we send him, there will not be that choice. So ah, I think that he'll learn Spanish or he may choose French or German or something but I hope he chooses Spanish. Um, and then I would do everything in my power to make sure that he can learn Vietnamese as well. Like I said there are Vietnamese language schools. I *hope* [emphasis] I don't have to drive to VA every single Saturday but if that's what it takes so that he can sort of have a foundation for language.

Perhaps in the end, Phuong, like Nu and Patrick and Cuong and Valentina, is just being "practical" since Vietnamese is not offered as a language at the public school and since Spanish is the more useful language in the U.S. and in the world as compared to Vietnamese.

Nu & Patrick. With Nu and Patrick, it is not a matter of whether they are willing to push their children or not, but that they both do not view learning Vietnamese as “important” for their children as compared to other things like learning English and Spanish and playing soccer. The driving force for Nu and Patrick was what they believed would be most useful for their children to be successful in the future. Many times—both in their individual interviews and joint interview, Nu and Patrick talked about the importance of learning English. Though there is a small part of Nu that desires for her children to know something of her HL and culture, she stresses that English is the language of power that will help her children to be success:

Ha: And then what about your goals for your kids in regard to language and culture?

How well do you expect them to be able to speak Vietnamese?

Nu: I don't expect. If they know Vietnamese, it's a blessing. I pray that they speak fluent—fluently and write brilliantly in English. I would like them to pursue law because—

Ha: wait, in English—you want them to be fluent in English--not Vietnamese?

Nu: Yes, in English—no. Because that's where we living. That's the language that we need to success. I don't want them to fail simply because they cannot write properly or they cannot speak eloquently. That's the one thing I miss, but I don't want my children to live through me because I didn't do it, but I know very important—I told them American[s]—the reason they are successful the way they are because of the language—they use words to work things out—not physical, you know although recently the Iraq stuff with the world, but most of the time, Americans use word[s]—diplomatic, right? And I wish they would be able to speak very well like Obama. He speak very well. Most of them are lawyer. They speak very well and they write well and that's what I would like them to be able to do.

Patrick concurs about the importance of English:

Um, but the language, perhaps we've just gotten lazy and said you're English-centric. You're graded on that. You're not graded on Vietnamese right now, um because you are looking at all the education pieces that you have in front of them and so it would be good to be able to put Vietnamese—some kind of knowledge on resumes and be honest about it. Um, and so, um, but it hasn't been a super priority. Just fit it in when you can fit it in is how it's broken down.

After English, Nu and Patrick view Spanish as the second most useful language for their children to learn; hence, even though Vietnamese is their children's heritage language, the language they most want their children to learn (other than English) is Spanish. Unlike Phuong who said it would be a hard choice if she had to between her children learning Vietnamese or Spanish, for Nu and Patrick, it was a no-brainer of Spanish over Vietnamese. Patrick states:

I'm leaning towards Spanish. I think that's something that has greater future use for them here. I'd like them to have two languages so they get a little grander world perspective. So they can travel a little bit. And um, and function when they move about. And Vietnamese is yes, 70, 80 million but it's Vietnam and that's the only place. And so I don't expect them travelling a whole heck of a lot there. And the world is pretty international so pick your languages and they're probably going to be very English, American-centric and then the bordering languages are French—doesn't really count in Canada. . . .but the cultural change here—ethnicity and demographics—Spanish would be something that's on the growing side, so Spanish is probably it.

Nu concurs with Patrick for her reasons why she wants her children to learn is Spanish due to the presence of so many Spanish speakers around the world and that Vietnamese is not a very useful language to learn because there are so few speakers. However, one of the reasons she wants her children to learn Vietnamese is because she believes it will help them to learn other languages:

Nu: Other than English? Spanish.

Ha: Not Vietnamese? Why Spanish?

Nu: Because it's a—God forbid, besides Chinese and India, which you know 1 point something billion—because majority of—English is the main language and then, um, Spanish because the majority of countries in this world use those two languages if you actually think about it. The whole Europe is English and Spanish. The whole South America and- and Spanish.

Ha: So more people to be able to speak it with is your reasoning for picking Spanish?

Nu: Yes. Why not? Because you are in a system that use those language to work, to success-- so why not? You see—however if they understand a little bit about Vietnamese so basically that would help them to learn another language because they say ok, I know something else besides English so. [phone rings in background & Nu checks number and decides not to pick up]

Ha: I'm curious then, you and Patrick seem to be more practical because he actually said Spanish is pretty high up there. Um, so it wouldn't—so if your kids grew up like they're 25 and out of the house and if they spoke no Vietnamese but could speak Spanish, you would be happy?

Nu: I would be happy, yeah. And I would learn the language myself because a lot more people use it. Why do you bother the other way? Honestly. However if you-

Ha: Why do you bother?

Nu: To learn Vietnamese when nobody is really use it here where you are living. So where ever --just learn the tool that can help you to success instead of ok. Now, like I said if a person know a different language—for example, yourself --you know a little bit of Vietnamese, you will have no problem learning a different language. No honestly. But let's say a person that just speak English, they are a little bit afraid to learn a new language. . . .You need to have an efficient tool to success in your own environment.

Of the four families, Nu and Patrick are the only ones who had their children enrolled in the Vietnamese language weekend school. The two older children attended for 2 years and John and the youngest child attended for 1 year, but when the children started playing soccer, they stopped going to the Vietnamese language school. When asked why the children stopped going to, Patrick shared the reasoning for their decision:

Soccer is athletic. But any sport is. We wanted them to run around. We didn't want them to be couch potatoes. Ah, and you also do it for the social aspects. It's the other kids in the neighborhood, it's the kids you're at school with, um, so it helps to build the social skills and so we looked at that and we balanced that with Vietnamese and said, "Ok, we'd like you to learn Vietnamese, we'd like you to learn soccer, but we've got to run around and can't quite get both done—which one do we prioritize?" And we went with the sports piece of it. We also looked at—look we're busy 7 days a week--really busy 6 days a week and the seventh day—Sunday is a day of rest and now we're off to Vietnamese class. Maybe had it fallen on a Saturday, it might've had a little more chance but we were trying to get a day where we were at the house and um, so it just sort of dropped off because of the calendar.

Nu also gave similar reasons of social skills for choosing to drop the Vietnamese language classes in favor of soccer. Implicit in her response seems to be the belief that the social skills need to be learned now but the HL or learning another language can always be learned later:

Then I think the Vietnamese take the second place to their sport, to their well-being. The language eventually if they want to—I'm sure they can pick up. But what they need to pick up now is you know, athleticism, um, basically know how to play certain sport. Why? Because it's important for their social skills, for their team work. Once they have that as they grow up, they will—if they want to learn another language—anything, they will do fine. But the most important thing is to go out, make friends, be social, learn the

English—they know English thank God. [Nu small laugh]. You know, and Vietnamese is just second priority in my opinion—to me.

However, despite these other priorities (e.g., Spanish and soccer) being more important for Nu, there is still a part of her that has not let go of trying to teach her children some Vietnamese language and culture. It is surprising that Nu is still trying to speak some Vietnamese to her children given how low she ranks Vietnamese in relation to other priorities such as other extracurricular activities for the children like sports, Spanish, and music. Perhaps there is small part of her that holds on to the hope that her children will be to speak the HL:

Ha: Why do you think you're making more of a conscious decision now when they're older versus when they were younger?

Nu: I think better late than never. I don't know. Truly I don't know but I think that because I want—I know they have the ability to still understand Vietnamese—to still learn it. I speak it everyday.

Ha: You speak it everyday to them?

Nu: I try now. Compared to before. Yes, I speak a lot more Vietnamese now compared to ever, ever before for years. Yeah, I make an effort. And I said to myself if I keep doing this, I know you know how to speak the language. Or at least when they go back to Vietnamese school you know they have some idea.

Ha: So you're planning on putting them back into Vietnamese school?

Nu: I would like to, yes.

Ha: When?

Nu: Hopefully next year if they don't complain.

Ha: And what if they complain?

Nu: But it depend on the schedule too. We have so much sports, so much activity. At least one day a week I take a break from it. So if I speak to them in Vietnamese a lot more and they understand a lot more, it's ok to me. They don't need to go to the class.

Because it's not easy to learn Vietnamese with all the punctuation—drive you crazy.

Yeah. But as long as they can understand me, I know it would come back to them.

It was difficult to tell sometimes whether Nu really wanted her children to learn the HL or not. For example, she first says that she is now trying to speak more Vietnamese with her children and then says that if they go back to Vietnamese language school, it will help them, but then when asked if she plans to send the children again, she says no because they are already involved in so many activities that she does not want them to burn out. Perhaps helpful in explaining why Nu seems conflicted with her making more of an effort now to speak Vietnamese with the children when they are older is as Patrick puts it not a matter of prioritizing well but “consistency in approach”:

Patrick: So we had some discussion [about teaching children Vietnamese]. And probably like a lot of good things—on the road to hell, good intentions, you never quite close out. So, it was a topic that came up. And a desire to at least provide some exposure.

Ha: So can you think of 1 or 2 really key intentions that you really wanted to do but kinda fell by the wayside along the way?

Patrick: Hmm, [pause] probably a consistency in approach. Because you're not going to learn it without practice. And um, as I said, prioritizing the hours to do that was probably the biggest piece that got in the way.

Ha: So you don't think you prioritized very well?

Patrick: Well, I think we prioritized fine. I think we probably could have made a little more effort in continuing the focus. So when we were in the car, this is when she would try to teach them some things because we spend a lot of time driving around here stuck in traffic, this and that. Um, but your focus was you filled it in when you could as opposed to you really set aside an hour instruction and structured it. That was probably the weakness there was the structure. Um, like I said if it was a two person Vietnamese-speaking household then it would probably have flowed by osmosis. You know, you just

would be exposed to it and they would have asked you a question in Vietnamese and you would have an answer in Vietnamese and so, they [the kids] had an option here.

Cuong & Valentina. Similar to Nu and Patrick, while Cuong and Valentina both want their children to learn the HL and culture and view it as “good,” neither feel it is so “important” that they would push their children to learn the HL and culture. Crucial to understanding this family is that though it is usually the HL spouse who is most influential in deciding whether or not to teach their children the HL and culture, in Cuong and Valentina’s case, Valentina is very much the driving force in how they approach childrearing since she spends more time with the children, “does a lot of the parenting,” and “cares a lot” about what the children learn and how they are parented. Thus, Cuong sees his role as to support and reinforce Valentina in her parenting:

Valentina does a lot of nurturing so I get a lot of my cues from how she wants to raise the kids and you know. So I try to tailor it the way I communicate with the kids to the way Valentina communicates with the kids so that we’re both reinforcing each other.

For him, it is much easier to reinforce Valentina’s parenting in English than in Vietnamese: “Even though Kerri feels strongly that I should be speaking in Vietnamese. . .when it comes to discipline issues and stuff, I don’t know. I just think it’s easier when we both operate from the same language.”

Cuong states that he never tried to speak Vietnamese with his first child, Jacklyn, because he was overwhelmed just learning how to be a parent. With his second child, Cuong decided he would speak Vietnamese with her. However, after about 2 years, Cuong stopped speaking Vietnamese with her. When asked why he stopped speaking Vietnamese with his daughter, Cuong states:

I guess maybe once she—once Miki hit maybe like [pause] before she hit two maybe when it tapered off for me. And um, I don’t know. I guess when the child changes and sometimes I would be lacking words. . . .let’s say I was surrounded by more Vietnamese, I think the situation would be different. So

just because I'm like a parrot, I depend on context. You know, a parrot really depends on hearing things and the parrot will just spit it out. I think I'm that way. Ah, you know maybe because it needs more mental effort and I don't have the surroundings to help reinforce that mental effort, and I drop back to what's the easier language to communicate in.

Important to note is that Cuong and Valentina have asked his parents to speak Vietnamese with their children but for the most part, his parents have not. Cuong does not feel that he is in a good position to push his parents to speak Vietnamese with them since he himself is not speaking Vietnamese with his children. Valentina explains that there are two key issues why they have not insisted that Cuong's parents speak Vietnamese with their children:

Yeah, the fact that we're I might say a long-distance relationship with Cuong's parents totally determines things for us... if they lived next door or an hour away even and we saw them once a week or 5 times a week instead of once or twice a year—then we would have really pushed for “Please speak to them in Vietnamese.” Because they'll really get something out of it, you know. We did ask them to speak to the kids in Vietnamese and they—like I said with Jacklyn they never did. With, ah, Miki, Cuong's dad did it for a little while because Cuong was doing it. Um, but you know it was awkward to push for it more than that because the reality of it is as Cuong says, the current situation is—the kids are not exposed to Vietnamese. And so, if his parents started speaking to them in Vietnamese once or twice a year, the kids wouldn't understand their visits with them once or twice a year because they're not getting Vietnamese any other way, you know. If they were somehow exposed to Vietnamese—whether it be from their grandparents or they were taking Vietnamese language on a regular basis already which we haven't done—I told you a little bit about that story—you know if we were doing that and they *had* [emphasis] some background in Vietnamese, then maybe his parents would work with that. You know, but they have nothing so your parents are like, you know, his

parents would have to take a lot of initiative and I would love it if they did, but you know, it's just not in them. You know, if they wanted to take a lot of initiative, if they were really dedicated—we want these kids to learn Vietnamese, then, you know, maybe they would say, “Ok when we visit once or twice a year, we're going to teach them even if we're not going to speak exclusively in Vietnamese—because if they spoke to them *exclusively* [emphasis] in Vietnamese and only saw them once or twice a year, I'd think you know, the communication between the kids and them would—would suffer.

Interestingly, it seems more important to Valentina than to Cuong that their children learn the HL and culture. Cuong states that he knows “she was hoping that they would learn Vietnamese. You know language and culture means a lot to her” and that she “definitely wishes I would speak in Vietnamese—I know that. I hear that about 10 times a day.” However, while Valentina would like her children to learn the HL and culture, she firmly holds to the Western child-centered parenting philosophy that parents should not impose their interests on their children but rather support their children in whatever their interests are. Thus, while Valentina feels it would be “good” for the children to learn the HL and culture, learning the HL and culture is not so “important” that she would push or force her children to do so:

I guess maybe I'm thinking about you know, like if they're not interested, I'm not going to push them. You know, like, if they're 10 or they're 15 and I'm like “Oh, let's go to Vietnamese language class or let's go to the Tet festival,” and “No, Mom, I'm just not interested.” Like at this age, they're open to everything and anything. So I can do what I want with them and expose them to what I would like to expose them to. Um, and so I'm telling you that it interests me to do that with my children. But it's not so important that I would say, “You need to do this.” Like some things you might say if it were health-related or something, you would say, “You need to do this. This is important for your health that you do this,” alright? [small laugh] but with Vietnamese culture it's more optional. It'd be nice but you know.

Valentina is especially careful not to impose her interests on her children in regard to pushing the HL and culture because she has heard stories of how Cuong's parents forced him to attend Vietnamese language weekend classes and community events growing up:

I guess, yeah, in some ways I'd like to have a little more exposure for them, but not like, you know, from what I've learned from Cuong. . . . You know, hearing Cuong talk about the way he grew up also makes me feel like I don't ever want our kids to feel you know, *obliged* [emphasis] to do something or be apart of something. So if they have no interest, you know, albeit—that's fine. But if they do, then I want to support and encourage that and so I do want to keep having a dialogue with them about it and talking about it—you know, do you want me to find a Vietnamese language class for you? Do you want to go to this Tet celebration? You do? Great! I'd love to—let's go. You do want to have a language class? How important is it to you? Do you want to do this instead of a different activity you're doing if we don't have time to do everything? Ok, then ok, I'll find one for you or I'll make a class for you.

When asked if he wants to teach his children about Vietnamese culture, Cuong replies, "I guess I could." Since he does not sound enthusiastic, I repeat the question:

H: But do you want to?

Cuong: Do I want to? I think just out of necessity—yes. Do I want to? I don't know.

Ha: Wait of necessity—why would it be necessary for you to teach?

Cuong: Well, it's their heritage. They should know about it. Um, right now Jacklyn's not that interested in it. And I don't know if she's not interested because I haven't brought it up explicitly. You know, right now, I'm just trying to ride the wave of what *her* [emphasis] interests are. Right now, her interests lean a lot towards Harry Potter and they also lean a lot towards natural phenomenon that interests her. And crafty things and you know—those are her interests and I'm not sure where to shoehorn in Vietnamese because we're also throwing math at her and piano at her so you know—the poor kid—where am

I going to shoehorn in you know that stuff about Vietnamese culture? I'm hoping that one day there will be an interest where I can ride with that. Because say right now she's interested in Anne Frank or the war in Iraq. You know there's a lot she's absorbing right now, so.

Ha: So you wouldn't consider that you tried to share that that she would then take an interest in it? You'd rather kind of follow her lead versus take a lead?

Cuong: Ah, I guess I—I just haven't done it yet because um, Valentina does a lot of the parenting. You know and Valentina takes a lot of—cares a lot of what they learn and stuff and so—I'm not blaming Valentina—I'm just saying that the way the time works out and interests worked out is that there's the mother and there's the father. In this case, the father—he works to keep the mortgage going [Cuong laughs]. And um, he spends time with the kids but generally just a couple hours a day. And so within those couple of hours a day realistically—I'm telling her to you know, comb her hair, do laundry, there's very little time to work in—which is why I said before that what the woman said may have been cruel, uncalled for, but there was an element of truth there.

Hence, I am not sure if Cuong is reluctant to push his children to learn the HL and culture because he does not feel it is important for his children to learn, if he simply does not want to teach them, or because he desires to support his wife in how she parents (i.e., following children's interest instead of imposing his goals on them), or a combination of all of the above. While Cuong feels it would be “good” for his daughter to learn Vietnamese, he questions if he wants to pass on the HL to his daughter because of his limited proficiency in the HL:

...my skill set in Vietnamese is that I have enough to operate you know, to order stuff from a menu or to you know, get basic functions done. But my Vietnamese was—is never—I've never really felt comfortable enough to operate fluently—like super fluently. Like by that I mean truly express nuanced meaning. It's just—I don't have the vocabulary for it. I never had the formal training to create that you know what I mean?

Like ah, normally with English language, we went through 12, 13 years of you know, just basic training—English language skills and reading skills. So you know, the Vietnamese I've managed to pick up was really the level of grade 1, grade 2 person. And so um, because the vocabulary and reading skills are such low level, I don't know if I want to pass that on as a parent. Um, and so I sort of found the easiest path—whether it's morally justifiable—it's probably not, but you know the path I've reached is “Well, I'm not that good. So do I want to perpetuate it?”

It is significant to note that Cuong feels self-conscious about stopping trying to teach Miki Vietnamese: “I feel self-conscious because I'm a little bit ashamed. Kinda like I didn't ah-ah, like I didn't fulfill my paternal duty or something.” He recognizes that most likely Vietnamese will not be passed on to his children, “it's almost like if you view one language as a branch than I'm kind of sad but I'm not sure if this branch will continue to pass me. The kids probably won't know the level of Vietnamese that I have unless we make a huge concerted effort.” For Cuong, he very much feels like he is being pulled in many directions between work and being a father and wishes that he was able to speak more Vietnamese:

...it'd be good for them to know more Vietnamese than I've---cause you know, they know so little. Ah, so they could have probably learned more from me, but ...There are only so many hours in a day you can spend with the kids—especially as a working father who has—I have so little time with my kids to begin with. And um, Vietnamese is something that doesn't come as naturally to me. . . . So it takes more effort to operate in Vietnamese than you know the natural default is to not go through that effort. And um, um, cause there are just so many other things I'm trying to work on with the kids like math skills or imagination skills or technical skills, or you know—tons of things that you're trying to bring---that you're trying to share with your child. And when you're a father, you know really I have 2-3 hrs a day I get to see them.

Discussion. Previous research has found that bilingual families engage in language planning and develop family language policies (Felling, 2006, Piller, 2001b; King & Fogle, 2007). This study found that while proficiency was a factor in determining family language policies and practices, it was not the most central. Parents’ parenting philosophies—namely their beliefs about what is “important” for their children to learn was the most influential in determining if parents were willing to make the extra effort to push themselves to speak to their children exclusively in Vietnamese, whether they were willing to push their children to learn the HL and enforce the expectation that children will speak only Vietnamese with the Vietnamese parent, and whether they were willing to push their families to speak Vietnamese with their children.

While they varied in their goals and expectations of HL proficiency for their children, all of the parents wanted their children to learn the HL and culture. Also, it is important to note that all of the parents to some extent felt an obligation as parents to teach their children the HL and culture. However, whether parents actually followed through on teaching their children was heavily influenced by whether parents felt learning the HL was important for their children’s well-being and success for the future. Furthermore, it is significant to note that all four families listed Spanish as an important language that they hoped their children would learn with two families stating that (other than English) Spanish is the number one choice of language they would want their children to learn—even higher than Vietnamese.

THEME C: PROXIMITY TO HL COMMUNITY & AVAILABILITY OF HL RESOURCES

Previous studies have found that HL maintenance tends to be more successful in areas where there is a large population of co-ethnics because there are more opportunities to use the HL and also because HL institutions and resources are available to reinforce the HL such as HL churches/temples, HL books, newspapers, magazines, music, TV programs, and mass media (Baker, 2001; Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor, 1977). Also, Trieu (2009) found that ethnic Chinese

Vietnamese and Vietnamese Americans who were involved in ethnic community organizations were more likely to maintain their HL language and have a stronger ethnic identity.

However, these findings assume that if participants have access to Vietnamese resources that they will in fact make use of them. Three of the four families live in reasonable proximity to a large Vietnamese community (10-30 miles; and the fourth family about 50 miles), Eden Center in Falls Church, VA where many Vietnamese resources (e.g., Vietnamese language school, church/temple, books, etc.) are available. However, for various reasons, families made limited use of them.

Existing research seems to suggest that if minority-language speakers live in an area near other minority-language speakers that they will (a) interact with other speakers of the minority-language and (b) that these interactions will be in the HL. This was not necessarily the case for participants in this study who defined their “community” primarily as the neighborhood they live in where there were no or few Vietnamese families even though they lived in reasonable proximity to a large Vietnamese community (one of the largest on the East Coast). Furthermore, in interactions with Vietnamese speakers outside of their immediate family, participants preferred to speak English. Thus, while there some instances where the HL could have potentially been spoken (e.g., Vietnamese restaurants, Vietnamese friends, etc.), many times, participants used English.

Phuong & Kevin. This family was closest to the Eden Center and the Vietnamese community—about a 20-30 minute drive. It should be noted that of all four families, Phuong seemed to be the most knowledgeable of the Vietnamese resources available where she currently lives since she and her family have lived in that area for many years. For example, growing up, she and her family sometimes attended the local Vietnamese Catholic church and language school, her sisters have been involved in the Vietnamese girl/boy scouts, the county library has a large collection of Vietnamese books and she herself founded the Vietnamese American Bar Association for the DC area, as well as having many Vietnamese friends in the area from her childhood. When asked about whether she knew of any Vietnamese resources available in the area, Phuong replies:

Yeah, there are some. I mean there's a large Vietnamese community in um, northern VA. Um, so it's my understanding there is some better sounding Vietnamese language school set up over there. I don't know when he gets a little bit older—I think they don't take kids until they're 5 at least. I don't know how well organized it is or you know anything about it, but. Um, so there's a large Vietnamese community there. X County where I live now there is—at least it used to be in Rockville, MD—um, a large Vietnamese language library—section of the library um, and there may well be Vietnamese language books for children in there too. I can do interlibrary lending so it can send them right to the X library here if I wanted to get those books. Um, there's one large Vietnamese parish here, our Lady of Vietnam, and I think there's an equally large one in northern VA that some of my friends do go to. Um, we have Verizon fios cable, we have the option of paying for a Vietnamese language channel. Um, so we have not opted for that yet um, I'm not sure if there are any Vietnamese programming on it. I don't watch any TV myself so it wouldn't be for me. Um, my some of my siblings—4 of them, my 4 youngest siblings, the ones who grew up largely in MD once we settled here all went through Vietnamese scouting and my youngest sister is still involved in that, so there are things like that.

When asked what Vietnamese resources she makes use of/participates in, Phuong replies:

We haven't used any of the library resources. Um, you know we have been exposed to go to the scouting events um, through my siblings. We'll go to Chuc Tet, there's always one or two organized every year in our area. Um, but um, and we eat a lot at the Eden Center in Northern VA but um, you know, largely our exposure is to restaurants.

Thus, while there are many Vietnamese resources located in their area, for various reasons, they have not made use of them all. For example, as Phuong stated, though there is a Vietnamese language school, her son is not old enough to attend. Also, though there is a Vietnamese Catholic

church near their home, they currently attend an American Catholic church (and also sometimes an American Presbyterian church because Kevin is Presbyterian). Even growing up, Phuong says that her family preferred attending the American church more than the Vietnamese church because it was more “vibrant,” the priest’s homilies were better and it was easier to follow in English. Now that she is in a mixed marriage, it is not surprising that she and her husband and son attend the American church so that they can both understand.

Also another reason is that Phuong feels that the Vietnamese resources available (e.g., children’s Vietnamese CDs, videos, language school) are not as good quality as compared to the resources available in English:

I think there’s a whole series of these because I have Te Hai Chai 11 or something. Um, it’s very poor quality and he doesn’t watch any television anyway so I put it on a couple of times but he’s not been that interested in it. Um, because to the extent that he watches any television at all—which is maybe once every other week, he’ll watch. The nanny doesn’t—isn’t allowed to put TV for him and I don’t watch TV so he’s never exposed to a TV. To the extent that he has any television at all, it would be Sesame Street in high definition so you know, Elmo is hard to compete against you know, Elmo on TV. So he’s not been as interested in these DVDs but I should probably try and put them on more.

As stated before, Phuong attended Vietnamese language classes at her church when she was growing and says the classes were “not very good” and she did not learn anything there because:

they were taught by somebody who didn’t have any experience teaching. There wasn’t any reinforcement during the week because we didn’t have homework. You know, so 1 hour once a week when you’re just mostly sitting in the back row hanging out with your friends was not enough to—you know, we weren’t committed to learning to read and

write. And the teacher wasn't skilled in techniques to teach you know that population I don't think.

It should be noted that this family defined their "neighborhood" as primarily the houses near them and that there are no Vietnamese families in their neighborhood. Regarding their neighborhood and their criteria for choosing where to live Phuong states:

This is a very non-diverse neighborhood I think unfortunately, it's ah um, it's just not very affordable. Um, most—and I also think that my Vietnamese friends value different things. We wanted a place that was urban where we could walk to a lot of different restaurants and shops and the trade-off was we bought a very old house and had to spend money fixing it up. My friends can spend the same exact amount and buy a house in Fairfax, VA, that's brand-new with a 3-car garage that has 5,000 sq ft. I mean I'm not kidding they have like these gigantic houses so I think they just—for them, even the first time my mom—the day that we took possession of this house was the first time my mom saw it and she walked in and she said she couldn't believe that this was all that two lawyers could afford. So I think that that is the attitude that you know Vietnamese people have. That a house is in some way a status symbol and so they want houses that have crystal chandeliers and 3-car garages and green lawns and ah, that wasn't our priority. We wanted a place where we wouldn't have to drive everywhere and a place where Michael could run right next door and knock on the door and play with kids. So we just had different priorities. But yeah, there aren't that many Vietnamese—it's not very diverse.

Even in cases where Phuong and Kevin are involved with the Vietnamese community or attend Vietnamese events, the interactions tend to be in English. For example, Phuong says that when they attended one of her younger sister's Vietnamese scouting events, the whole program was done in English. And even in the Vietnamese American Bar Association that Phuong helped

found, she notes that all of the meetings and events are in English. So while there is much potential for Vietnamese language use, Phuong notes that in the majority of her interactions with Vietnamese outside of her family is in English:

I can never think of any Vietnamese friends anywhere in life where I've spoken Vietnamese with them. I dated two guys who were Vietnamese in college um, all of my friends from college who are Vietnamese don't speak—you know, I was in a Vietnamese student association, we never spoke in Vietnamese. My—the bar association here that I helped found, we—everything is in English.

Cuong & Valentina. This family lives about a 30-minute drive to the Eden Center and live in the same county as Phuong and Kevin. Because Valentina would like her children to have more exposure to the Vietnamese language and culture, she has worked hard to learn about what Vietnamese resources are available in the area but does not seem to be as aware of as many of them as Phuong is—probably because Phuong grew up there and her family has more connections with other Vietnamese families in the area.

Valentina is also aware that there is a large Vietnamese community in Northern VA and of the Eden Center, which has a lot of Vietnamese stores and restaurants and that there are Vietnamese books available from the public library through interlibrary loan. However, similar to Phuong and Kevin, Valentina and Cuong have not made use of many of the available Vietnamese resources for various reasons. For example, Valentina says that she has not looked into borrowing Vietnamese books from the public library. In her search for Vietnamese resources, Valentina found that Vietnamese language classes are offered at a local Vietnamese church; these were combined with religious education and a Vietnamese temple that was not associated with religious teaching. Because Cuong and Valentina are not religious, they do not attend the Vietnamese church or temple which is not far from their home; personal lack of religion is also the reason why Valentina decided not to visit the Vietnamese language class offered at the church. Valentina took their

older daughter, Jacklyn, to visit a Vietnamese language class being taught at the temple.

However, Jacklyn decided she did not want to attend because she did not like the teaching style.

The class was a Vietnamese immersion class geared mainly for Vietnamese children whose parents speak Vietnamese at home.

Important to note is that Valentina helped to found a Vietnamese dance group at Jacklyn's school.

However, though there are other Vietnamese children at the school, none of them chose to join and the dance group consisted of Caucasian and Hispanic children. Similar to Phuong's case, while there was potential for Vietnamese language to be used, this was not the case and English was used.

Cuong believes that if he were more surrounded by Vietnamese—Vietnamese friends and/or Vietnamese family that he would speak more Vietnamese with his children:

So let's say Chi X is just living down the street -- or let's say I was surrounded by more Vietnamese, I think the situation would be different. So just because I'm like a parrot, I depend on context. You know, a parrot really depends on hearing things and the parrot will just spit it out. I think I'm that way. Ah, you know maybe because it needs more mental effort and I don't have the surroundings to help reinforce that mental effort, and I drop back to what's the easier language to communicate in.

However, while Cuong believes that being surrounded by more Vietnamese would help to speak more Vietnamese with his children, when they were looking to buy a house, Cuong and Valentina both note that being near a Vietnamese community or Vietnamese resources was not a consideration at all in their priorities. Rather their priorities for finding a place to live was focused mainly on what they could afford that was not “cookie cutter-ville”—meaning that they wanted to live in a neighborhood where people were diverse and close to the area where they had lived

previously, convenient to DC, and places they like to frequent. While Cuong and Valentina note that it might be nice to have more interactions with other Vietnamese, Cuong states:

I think it's meeting good people. And then—ah, I think meeting good people and being able to be understood. You know, I think where Valentina and I ah, are very um, what we like in friendships is being able to connect with people which means therefore being able to relate to them. Since we're both highly North American and ah, you know, so we tend to gravitate to sort of certain types of personalities and so, in the Vietnamese community, there's a whole range. There's the range from say ah, very conservative, very nationalistic to not conservative, not nationalistic. And so um, if the demographics in this area were different say like in CA, then I'm sure we would have lots more Vietnamese friends. But the demographics being what they are in MD you know, we tend to just the people we do have time to hang out with are generally Caucasian. But that's not by matter of choice, I think it's just by—just the personalities we mesh better with.

Valentina goes on to elaborate:

In my case, I think um, I agree with Cuong, but I would add that um, I think I am interested in if I could meet some Vietnamese people who would be really interested in like—sort of um, maybe teaching Vietnamese to my kids or you know, inviting us to Vietnamese cultural events but who aren't overbearing in anyway. Um, but who would connect us a little bit with the community so we'd have a little more exposure. Um, because like up till now, I told you I haven't had success in finding a language class for the kids and we tried once and I didn't feel like we connected with the people there at all. You know, so it's not that we want to—you know that I feel like oh, I want to meet Vietnamese people, but you know, it depends on—again, the person themselves, you know. It's the personalities click for us. It's definitely an added benefit if I made a

friendship or connected with somebody who like I said is interested in teaching our kids about Vietnam, Vietnamese culture and language.

When asked if he is interested in getting involved in the Vietnamese community, Cuong states, “Ah, intellectually, yes. But as you know, being a parent—you barely get your job and your parenting done.” Thus, neither Cuong nor Valentina have not made much of an effort to get to know some of their neighbors who are Vietnamese nor to become involved in the Vietnamese community.

Nu & Patrick. Nu and Patrick are about 30 miles (50 minute drive) to Eden Center. While they note that there is not a large Vietnamese community where they live and that the Vietnamese are scattered in their area, it is large enough that there is a Vietnamese Catholic church that offers Vietnamese language classes. While the Vietnamese Catholic church is fairly nearby, their family currently attends an American Catholic church and only occasionally go to the Vietnamese church for big holidays like Tet. At one point, Patrick and the children attended the Vietnamese language classes for 2 years but dropped it because it conflicted with soccer games. They also used to regularly go to the Eden Center to shop and eat but there are Korean grocery stores that are closer so they do not go as often. In regards to Vietnamese friends, Nu says that there is one Vietnamese family in their neighborhood and she gets together with the Vietnamese wife for lunch about once or twice a week for lunch. However, since the woman is trying to learn English, they communicate in English. Nu and Patrick’s children also sometimes play with the Vietnamese children but they speak English with them.

Nu does note that she does not have many Vietnamese children’s books and other resources. However, I am not sure how hard she has tried to get them since she has family in Vietnam who she could ask to send some to the US if she really wanted them.

Tan & Kerri. Of the four families, Tan and Kerri are the farthest from a sizeable Vietnamese community and Vietnamese institutions and resources. Eden Center is about 50 miles (over 1 hour drive) from where they are currently living and the city where they are currently living has only 3,000- 5,000 Vietnamese; thus, there are few Vietnamese resources available in their area. They very much feel the difference of living in an area with few Vietnamese resources since before moving to the East Coast, they lived on the West Coast where they had access to a lot of Vietnamese restaurants, grocery stores, and were closer to Tan's parents so that they were able to visit them more often.

Though they are the farthest of the four families from Vietnamese resources, they are the most enthusiastic about finding good Vietnamese restaurants, Vietnamese grocery stores, a Vietnamese language school. Kerri notes that there are about 10 Vietnamese restaurants in their city and they have eaten at five of them but have not been impressed with the food. If Eden Center were closer to them, Kerri and Tan would probably go more often, but even with it being over 50 miles away, Kerri says "anytime we're even vaguely in the area we'll go." During the year that they have lived here, they have gone about five times. This is probably as much if not more frequent than the families who live closer to Eden Center. Because both Kerri and Tan love Vietnamese food so much, they were willing to drive to another city 30 minutes away to eat pho but were disappointed with the quality, saying it was not worth the drive.

Despite their busy schedules, both Tan and Kerri very much want their children to attend Vietnamese language school and Vietnamese cultural events, and Kerri says they would be willing to do a lot to make it happen:

Well, a festival we would drive for I think. Um, although we didn't go down to Eden Center or anything like that for Tet but I didn't quite know what was going on so I thought it might just be like a normal day at Eden Center only super busy. But if I knew something were going on or if there's something that she could see or an event or something like that then certainly we would drive you know an hour-ish, an hour plus for

something like that. But if it were a school, I mean practically—half an hour would be totally reasonable but other than that—I don't know—we're pretty excited about the school idea so we might be willing to drive a little more but practically just because we're so busy and you know there's—there's so little time that that would be a little harder. But if there were actually a school, we would be so excited about it we would definitely try even if it were like you know 45 minute or an hour drive. Um, we would try it and see how it worked. Um, especially if you're in an area where we could combine it with something else like seeing friends or something like that. Um, if it were local within half an hour—no question we would absolutely do it.

Tan concurs, saying:

I think a school I'd be very, very excited about. Um, so I'd be willing to travel and or even a little more for that. I mean I think um, pediment for me is my work schedule—it's kind of random sometimes. I work weekends. In my mind it's very hard to do something with her that is scheduled—even though we think it's scheduled—it's like predicted. It's just yeah, I think that would be hard. But in terms of distance, to me that would less of an impediment. Um, cost might be an issue because we don't have all that money—much money.

Despite being so busy and limited access to Vietnamese ingredients since there is only a small Vietnamese grocery store near them, Kerri has found the time and creativity to make Vietnamese foods such as bun thit nuong [grilled pork and noodles] and coi cuon [spring rolls]:

From the nuoc mam [fish sauce] to the duc chua [pickled vegetables] to the yeah, um we kinda make everything according to Tan's mom's specifications [laughs]. But then we're able to get the ingredients for some things more simple like that at H-Mart. It's a local Korean grocery store which is only half an hour away so we can make do with stuff like that ok, but you know it's not exactly the right ingredients for a lot of other dishes.

Furthermore, Kerri so wants to give Mai more exposure to Vietnamese that she has been trying to find a Vietnamese playgroup. In fact, that is how Kerri and I met. She had joined the Vietnamese MeetUp group for their city in the hopes of finding a Vietnamese playgroup for Mai or just Vietnamese families who speak Vietnamese with their children so that Mai can have more exposure to Vietnamese:

Oh I wish we had more friends that were Vietnamese and also a couple of the friends—so basically there are two families that we know that have um, children who have a Vietnamese parent—either both or one. And um, and neither of them are teaching their kids Vietnamese so that's kind of tough. I mean we love getting together with them because they've got kids and great people and it's really fun, but as far as getting them together in order to have more Vietnamese spoken—that doesn't happen. So that's too bad I think—that's a shame. Um, but, um, yeah, so I wish there were—I wish she could have a playgroup where there was more Vietnamese spoken—that would be great. That would be fun. Or even families we know where they would speak Vietnamese to the kids. I would even take her—you know myself even if I didn't totally get what was going on if the other parent would speak Vietnamese to them, that would be awesome.

Unfortunately, for Kerri and Tan, there are few Vietnamese where they are currently living. When I asked if there were any Vietnamese graduate students at her school, Kerri said there was only one she knew of and one undergraduate student. However, neither had children. Thus, even though they would like to find other Vietnamese-speaking children for Mai to play with, they have not been able to since of the two Vietnamese families they know with children, neither speak Vietnamese to their children. Though finding other families who speak Vietnamese with their children has not been a priority for the other three families, it would probably be difficult for them if they wanted to since the majority of the Vietnamese families they know are not consistently trying to speak to their children in Vietnamese.

Discussion. Research suggests that there are some political, social, demographic, cultural, and linguistic factors that encourage language maintenance while other factors encourage language loss. Typically, research has associated that language-minority speakers who live near a large community where a large number of speakers live closely together as supportive of language maintenance and even more so if speakers have access to HL institutions (e.g., schools, community organizations, mass media, etc.) (Baker, 1998). However, this study found that while families may live near a large Vietnamese community and have access to Vietnamese institutions, families had limited interactions with the Vietnamese community and did not maximize the many HL resources available to them. There were various reasons for this. One was preference and convenience. For example, for three of the four families, there were Vietnamese churches and temples near their home. However, two of the families were not religious so they did not make use of the church/temple. For the two families who do attend church regularly, while there were Vietnamese churches near their homes, both attended an American church due to preference (e.g., prefer the American church) and convenience (e.g., the Vietnamese church was close but the American one was closer). Another reason is that though there is a Vietnamese language school, two of the families have children who are too young to attend. The other two families with children who are old enough to attend do not because of conflict with children's other extracurricular activities and because how the Vietnamese language class was taught was incompatible with their child's learning style. Furthermore, it should be noted that while there are many cases where the HL could potentially be used, English was used instead (e.g., with Vietnamese friends).

SUMMARY

In this chapter, I discussed the three key findings from the interviews that were revealed in different themes. First, I was surprised to find that higher proficiency in the HL did not necessarily translate to higher HL use. Instead, the most important factor that seemed to influence participants' HL use was if their parents had established and enforced a strict Vietnamese only at

home language policy with them growing up. Secondly, the factor that seemed to be most influential in determining family language policies was parents' parenting philosophies—namely, if parents felt it was important for their children to learn the HL and were willing to push themselves and their children to achieve this goal. The third key finding was that being near a large Vietnamese and having access to Vietnamese resources (e.g., Vietnamese language school, Vietnamese church/temple, Vietnamese books, etc.) does not guarantee that people will be involved with the larger Vietnamese community outside of their families nor that they will utilize the Vietnamese resources availability.

Chapter 8

CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

The main focus of this study was to learn about the experiences of parents in mixed marriages trying to raise their children bilingually. Many studies have focused on the experiences of first-generation immigrant parents who are trying to teach/maintain the HL with their children and have documented the many challenges they face such as the high-status of English, children's resistance to learning/speaking the HL, and limited access to HL institutions and resources (e.g., HL schools, books, TV programs, etc.) (Wu, 2007; Alshaboul, 2004; Felling, 2007). Studies of cross-national marriages have tended to focus on strategies parents use in raising their children bilingually such as the One-Parent One Language or only minority language at home strategies (Yamamoto, 2001; Jackson, 2009).

However, though the number of people marrying a partner of a different race or ethnicity is increasing (Passel, Wang, & Taylor, 2010), little research has been focused on this population (Qian & Licter, 2001; Le, 2009). In particular, even less is known about mixed Vietnamese families (Vietnamese married to non-Vietnamese) in the United States. This study attended to this gap by gathering background and demographic information and patterns of language use of Vietnamese Americans in mixed marriages.

MAJOR FINDINGS, CONTRIBUTIONS & IMPLICATIONS

First finding. One of the major findings was simply learning more about this special population of mixed marriages (Vietnamese married to non-Vietnamese with children living in the U.S.) (e.g., their level of education, whether or not they are trying to teach their children the HL, strategies they use, challenges they face, patterns of language use, etc). Overall, this group is highly educated, predominately middle to upper-middle class, and can be found throughout the

U.S. with about half living in areas with a large Vietnamese population and half not. Furthermore, it seems that outside of their families, half of these families have limited interactions with the larger Vietnamese community in their area and have limited involvement in Vietnamese organizations. Census data notes that the 40% of the total Vietnamese American population lives in CA; thus, not surprisingly, the majority of studies on Vietnamese Americans focus on the population in CA. This study contributes to the existing research because this study focused on learning more about the less researched Vietnamese American community located on the East Coast (MD, VA, NY, etc) as opposed to in the West.

Second finding. Another key finding is that parents without full fluency nevertheless are able to pass the HL on to their children. It is important to note that for all of the participants, their strongest language is English with varying degrees of proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing Vietnamese. Ironically, the person, who is the most fluent Vietnamese speaker of the group, rarely speaks Vietnamese to her children and if given a choice, prefers to speak English with other Vietnamese speakers unless she knows that the other person has limited English proficiency. The two participants who try to speak only Vietnamese with their children, parents, and siblings are those who grew up in homes, in which their parents had established a strict “only Vietnamese at home” language policy. Thus, because it was the norm to speak Vietnamese with their parents and siblings when they were growing up, participants note it is “strange” or “awkward” to speak English with their families now; thus, they have continued this language policy even now as adults. Furthermore, it is very important to these participants that their children learn Vietnamese so that they can communicate with their family.

Studies have found that parents play a key role in their children’s language development and that whether parents’ attitudes towards bilingualism and the HL influences their children’s attitude and learning of languages (De Houwer, 1998). However having positive attitudes towards the HL and bilingualism are not enough to guarantee that children learn the HL, parents must also be

consistent in their behavior in speaking and teaching the HL to their children (Felling, 2006; Yamamoto, 2001; Okita, 2002; Jackson, 2009). What has not been previously discussed is the impact of the family language policies and language choices of first-generation immigrant families have on their second-generation children who then become parents to the third generation. This study contributes to this discussion because it highlights the great impact of how parents' decision to enforce a heritage language-only policy at home shapes how the children later parent their own children since their parents have modeled for them how to do it and they have seen that it can be done successfully since it worked for them. Thus, for parents who may want to raise their children bilingually but feel hindered by limited proficiency in the HL, they can know that they are not alone and be inspired by these two families, who despite the many challenges of raising their children bilingually in a mixed marriage and as HL speakers are continuing to do so.

Third finding. A third key finding is that a central factor influencing families' language policies and language practices was parents' attitudes toward the HL. Parents' attitudes were broken down into two main issues: (a) how important it was to parents for their children to learn the HL versus other competing priorities (e.g., sports); and (b) if parents were willing to push/not push their children to learn the HL. Parents who held the belief that it is "important" for their children to learn the HL versus it is "good" for their children to learn the HL made teaching the HL a much higher priority and were willing to put in a lot more effort to meet this goal. This required the HL parent to make a conscious decision to be consistent in speaking the HL with their children despite limited HL proficiency, pressing time demands, and the desire for efficient communication with their children.

Furthermore, parents who viewed their children learning the HL as "important" were also willing to push their children to learn if the children were reluctant to doing so. For these parents, it was not an option. Some parents also requested that the Vietnamese grandparents, uncles, and aunts to

speaking only Vietnamese with their children and would remind their families to speak Vietnamese if they forgot.

It is important to note that the primary (and in some cases only) strategy parents were using to teach their children the HL was by speaking Vietnamese to their children. Parents rarely read to their children in Vietnamese and the children are rarely exposed to Vietnamese print. One possible explanation for this is because this was how they were raised growing up with their parents establishing family language policies of speaking only Vietnamese at home but never sitting down to read in Vietnamese to them or teaching them how to write.

The typical pattern among U.S. minority language speakers is to learn English and lose the HL (Portes & Hao, 1998). If HL speakers are able to maintain their HL, they tend to have greater proficiency in speaking and listening than in reading and writing (Valdez, 2000). This study contributes to the existing literature because it supports previous research that has found HL speakers' tendency to have stronger oral skills than literacy skills and expands on this research by shedding light on why this is the case for many HL speakers. While first-generation immigrant parents might make a concerted effort to speak to their children in the HL, less effort is put into teaching their children to read and write in the HL. Thus, when the children become parents, it is difficult to teach their children what they do not know or feel confident in.

The implications of this for second and third-generation immigrants are great. Parents trying to raise their children bilingually need to be clear what their HL goals for their children are—is it only to be able to speak the HL or also to be able to read and write? If so, at what proficiency do parents expect children to learn to read and write in the HL? The elementary level (e.g., reading a menu) or a high level (e.g., reading a newspaper article)? Who will teach their children these skills? Is going to a HL school once a week for an hour or two enough?

Research has found that HL speakers are more likely to develop a high level of literacy in their HL if they (a) perceive their HL to have a high level of language vitality (parental, institutional, and peer support) and (b) have access to HL literacy environments and guidance from more literate adults and peers (Tse, 2001). Thus, it seems that unless something drastically changes in parents' current proficiency in reading and writing the HL, there are children unlikely to develop reading and writing ability in Vietnamese to a significant degree of proficiency since their parents rarely if ever read in Vietnamese themselves and they do not have literacy models who can help them learn. Furthermore, families have limited or no reading materials in Vietnamese for the children to read.

Fourth finding. Another key finding is that while three of the four families lived in areas where they had access to a large Vietnamese community and Vietnamese resources (e.g., Vietnamese language school, stores, restaurants, churches/temples, etc.), they had limited involvement with the Vietnamese community and did not utilize many of the Vietnamese resources available. Existing research discusses a number of factors that have been found to encourage HL maintenance, such as the existence of minority-language (HL) institutions (schools, community organizations, mass media, etc.), cultural and religious ceremonies in the HL, HL is standardized and exists in a written form, the HL is the national language of the homeland, use of an alphabet which makes printing and literacy relatively easy, large number of speakers living closely together, etc.)

(Baker, 2001). However, findings from this study question whether living in areas that have these factors which have been found to encourage HL maintenance is sufficient for HL maintenance if the HL speakers themselves do not make efforts to interact with the Vietnamese community nor make use of the HL resources available such as HL schools, churches/temples, etc. This study found that many of the families did not make use of the existing Vietnamese community and resources for various reasons. Furthermore, even during the times that the families interacted with

the larger Vietnamese community outside of their families, while there was the potential for HL use, it was more often that English would be used.

LIMITATIONS & SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There were a number of limitations to this study that hopefully future research will be able to address. The three most important were:

- (a) the limited number of participants (4 families in the interview and 67 respondents for the survey),
- (b) that the participant population was fairly homogenous (all high level of education, middle to upper-middle-class, Vietnamese-Caucasian couples mostly with young children, on the East Coast), and
- (c) that this was a cross-sectional study and not a longitudinal study.

Also, while it should be noted that it was not the intent of this study to measure the parents' or children's actual HL proficiency, it would be interesting if future studies were able to do this to see how successful parents are maintaining the HL with the family language policy and strategies they use.

Another possible limitation is that the majority of data was self report and research has found that people do not always do what they say they do. Although there is some triangulation since I interviewed both spouses, it is still self report and the majority of data not based on observation for a long period of time. However, a more problematic issue with self-report and not observation was that for two of the couples who had stopped trying to teach their daughter a few years ago, memory was an issue.

Suggestions for future research would be that similar research could be done with a larger number of participants and include families of more diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and other mixed partnerings so that intra-group differences could be explored. All of the couples interviewed were

Vietnamese-Caucasian couples. While this is the most common partnering, there are many others such as Vietnamese-Hispanic, Vietnamese-Chinese, etc. Also, future studies could make sure to include more Vietnamese fathers married to non-Vietnamese mothers and Vietnamese mothers married to non-Vietnamese fathers to analyze if differences in gender of the HL parent makes a difference in family language planning and language use.

Also, future studies could be done on other mixed languages families of other immigrant groups in the U.S. Comparisons of co-ethnic Vietnamese married to Vietnamese couples who are trying to raise their children bilingually would be interesting. Participants in this study noted that many of the people they knew in Vietnamese-Vietnamese marriages were not speaking Vietnamese to their children.

Parents have noted that it is fairly easy to speak the HL with their children when they are younger before they begin school because they are more able to control their environment. Parents have also noted that the language demands of a baby/toddler are less complex than when children grow older. It would be interesting to see if parents are able to transition to the language needs of their children as they grow older.

A longitudinal study would be helpful to be able to watch children's language development as well as how language patterns of families as they increase from one child to two or more children since research has found that siblings influence each other's patterns of language use. It would be enlightening to compare couples in mixed marriages with young children and older children to see how family language policies and practices differ in strategies, change over time and in different life phases of the family and children and how long families stay the course trying to teach their children the HL.

Future research could also follow these families and see where they are a year from now, 2 years from, 5 years from now, etc. Children's language repertoires are dynamic. While some children may learn the HL early in life (e.g., before they enter school), they may shift toward speaking only English when they are older and perhaps shift towards speaking more HL when they are adults.

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APPENDIX A
SURVEY COVER LETTER

Dear Friends,

I am a PhD student under the direction of Professor Terry Wiley in the College of Education at Arizona State University. I am looking for participants for my dissertation project. If you are: (1) 18 or older, (2) in a mixed marriage (one spouse is Vietnamese and the other is non-Vietnamese) and (3) have children living at home with you, then I would like to ask for your help.

I am conducting a research study to examine the experiences of Vietnamese mixed families in regard to language and culture. If you would complete an online survey attached to this link <http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/?p=WEB229ZS3BVR7V> , I would be very grateful. The survey should take about 20 minutes to complete. I think you will find that reflecting on these issues is an interesting and enjoyable exercise.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. Your responses will be anonymous. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team at: Dr. Terry Wiley (480) 965-6357 or Ha Lam (717) 569-0134. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.

Also, if you know of other couples in a mixed Vietnamese marriage with children, it would be very helpful to me if you could forward the link of the online survey <http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/?p=WEB229ZS3BVR7V> to them and ask them to complete it. It would be helpful if both you and your spouse complete the survey separately. If possible, it would be helpful if you could complete the survey by Feb 26, 2010. Completion of the survey is your consent to participate.

Your participation in this research is VERY much appreciated!

Sincerely,
Ha Lam, PhD Candidate
College of Education
Arizona State University

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW INFORMATION LETTER

Dear Friends,

I am a PhD student under the direction of Professor Terry Wiley in the College of Education at Arizona State University. I am looking for participants for my dissertation project. If you are: (1) 18 or older, (2) in a mixed marriage (one spouse is of Vietnamese descent and the other is non-Vietnamese) and (3) have children living at home with you, then I would like to ask for your help.

I am conducting a research study to examine the experiences of Vietnamese mixed families who are trying to teach their children Vietnamese language and culture. I am inviting your participation, which will involve a total of 3 interview sessions (one with you individually, one with your spouse individually, and one with both you and your spouse). Please note that I am interested in interviewing both you AND your spouse, not just one or the other. Each interview will be 60-90 minutes. The interviews will be audiotaped. The tapes will be erased upon completion of the study. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop the interview at any time.

I would like to audiotape this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be taped; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know. The tapes will be kept in a locked drawer in my home and will be erased upon completion of the study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. Your responses will be confidential. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team at: Dr. Terry Wiley (480) 965-6357 or Ha Lam (717) 569-0134. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.

Thank you in advance for your participation,

Ha Lam, PhD Candidate
College of Education
Arizona State University

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR VIETNAMESE SPOUSE

General Background

1. Could you please tell me about your background?
 - *Where were you born, grew up, currently reside?
(neighborhood growing up & now; were there Vietnamese in your neighborhood & school growing up?; Vietnamese stores/centers?, etc)
 - *Generational status/immigration history?
 - *Your family? (what your parents did/do; how many siblings?; what place are you? What languages do your siblings speak?)
 - *Your childhood (language learning)?
 - *How would you describe your ethnic background?
 - *Your parents' nationality/ethnic background?
 - *What is your highest level of education?
 - *What is your vocation?

Language & Cultural History

1. What languages do you know? What is your level of proficiency (R/W/L/S)? How did you learn the language(s)?
2. What language(s) do you use primarily in conversations with your child? Your spouse? Your parents? Your siblings? Your friends? Your in-laws?
3. How much VN does your spouse understand/speak?
4. How often do you speak VN with your spouse? In what contexts?
5. How often does your child(ren) see you speak VN? In what contexts?
6. If you have more than one child, what is the main language your children speak amongst themselves? Do they ever use VN with each other? If yes, when?
7. In what context do you usually use VN?
8. Do you codeswitch? (e.g., intersperse VN with English and English with VN or other languages?)
9. Do you use VN for work?
10. Have you received any formal language instruction in VN?
11. Did/do you have VN books in your home growing up/now?
12. Did/do you listen to VN music or radio growing up/now?
13. Did/do you watch VN TV/video programs growing up/now?
14. How strong is your sense of connectedness to the VN language and culture?
15. In what ways do you view yourself as VN? American? Other?
16. Do you have friends who speak VN? Do you speak VN with them?

Language & Cultural Decisions

1. Please tell me how you and your spouse decided what language(s) you and your spouse would speak to your child? Did you make a conscious decision with respect to what language(s) your child would speak in which context?
2. If yes, who was involved in the decision-making process? Who was most influential in deciding which language(s) you should speak to your first child in?
3. When you decided, how much did you and your spouse talk about it? Did you and your spouse have differences in opinion about language use? If so, what?
4. Which language did you and your spouse start to speak to your first child?
5. Have you had to change/adapt your decision to teach VN? If yes, why?
6. What do you think are the most important things that influence language use in your family?
7. How important is it to you that your child(ren) speaks VN? Why?
8. What things have you done to teach your child(ren) VN? How is it going?
9. How important is it to you that your child(ren) learn about VN culture? Why?
10. What are the most important things about VN culture that you want your child(ren) to learn?
11. What things have you done to teach your child(ren) about VN culture?

12. Do you celebrate any ethnic holidays? What do you do?
13. How important is it to spend time with other Vietnamese people? How often do you spend time with Vietnamese people? Do you speak VN when spending time with other VN people?
14. How would you describe your children's ethnic background? (e.g., Asian American; Vietnamese-White; mixed, etc.)

Children

1. Do you know a child who has lost his/her Vietnamese?
 - *Who? (prompt for details)
 - *How did this begin?
 - *Why do you think this child has lost his/her Vietnamese?
 - *How do you feel about this?
2. How would you feel if your child does not learn Vietnamese? Do you think this will happen?
3. What can parents do to teach their children the HL?
4. What role/responsibility, if any, do you think schools should play in helping children to learn the HL?
5. What can schools do to help children learn the HL?

Parenting

1. Can you tell me what an ordinary (weekday) day is like? Weekends? (when the children were small vs when they started school).
2. What are your greatest challenges in trying to teach your children Vietnamese?
3. Do you have any concerns about your children being mixed? Why or why not?

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR NON-VIETNAMESE SPOUSE

General Background

1. Could you please tell me about your background?
 - *Where were you born, grew up, currently reside?
(neighborhood growing up & now; were there Vietnamese in your neighborhood & school growing up?; Vietnamese stores/centers?, etc)
 - *Generational status/immigration history?
 - *Your family? (what your parents did/do; how many siblings?; what place are you? What languages do your siblings speak?)
 - *Your childhood (language learning)?
 - *How would you describe your ethnic background?
 - *Your parents' nationality/ethnic background?
 - *What is your highest level of education?
 - *What is your vocation?

2. Marriage
 - *How long have you been married?
 - *How did you meet?
 - *How many children do you have? (ages & gender)
 - *How would you describe your children's ethnic background? (e.g., Asian American; Vietnamese-White; mixed, etc.)

Language & Cultural History

1. What languages do you know? What is your level of proficiency (R/W/L/S)? How did you learn the language(s)?
2. What language(s) do you use primarily in conversations with your child? Your spouse? Your parents? Your siblings? Your friends? Your in-laws?
3. How often do you speak VN with your spouse? In what contexts?
4. How often does your child(ren) see you speak VN? In what contexts?
5. If you have more than one child, what is the main language your children speak amongst themselves? Do they ever use VN with each other? If yes, when?
6. In what context do you use VN?
7. Have you received any formal language instruction in VN?

Language & Cultural Decisions

1. Please tell me how you and your spouse decided what language(s) you and your spouse would speak to your child? Did you make a conscious decision with respect to what language(s) your child would speak in which context?
2. If yes, who was involved in the decision-making process? Who was most influential in deciding which language(s) you should speak to your first child in?
3. When you decided, how much did you and your spouse talk about it? Did you and your spouse have differences in opinion about language use? If so, what?
4. Which language did you and your spouse start to speak to your first child?
5. Have you had to change/adapt your decision to teach VN? If yes, why?
6. What do you think are the most important things that influence language use in your family?
7. How important is it to you that your child(ren) speaks VN? Why?
8. What things have you done to teach your child(ren) VN? How is it going?
9. How important is it to you that your child(ren) learn about VN culture? Why?
10. What are the most important things about VN culture that you want your child(ren) to learn?
11. What things have you done to teach your child(ren) about VN culture?
12. Do you celebrate any ethnic holidays? What do you do?

13. How important is it to spend time with other Vietnamese people? How often do you spend time with Vietnamese people? Do you speak VN when spending time with other VN people?

Children

1. Do you know a child who has lost his/her Vietnamese?
*Who? (prompt for details)
*How did this begin?
*Why do you think this child has lost his/her Vietnamese?
*How do you feel about this?
2. How would you feel if your child does not learn Vietnamese? Do you think this will happen?
3. What can parents do to teach their children the HL?
4. What role/responsibility, if any, do you think schools should play in helping children to learn the HL?
5. What can schools do to help children learn the HL?

Parenting

1. Can you tell me what an ordinary (weekday) day is like? Weekends? (when the children were small vs when they started school).
2. What are your greatest challenges in trying to teach your children Vietnamese?
3. Do you have any concerns about your children being mixed? Why or why not?

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR JOINT INTERVIEW

(Vietnamese & non-Vietnamese Spouse together)

Language & Cultural Decisions

1. Please tell me how you and your spouse decided what language(s) you and your spouse would speak to your child? Did you make a conscious decision with respect to what language(s) your child would speak in which context? 232
2. If yes, who was involved in the decision-making process? Who was most influential in deciding which language(s) you should speak to your first child in?
3. When you decided, how much did you and your spouse talk about it? Did you and your spouse have differences in opinion about language use? If so, what?
4. Which language did you and your spouse start to speak to your first child?
5. Have you had to change/adapt your decision to teach VN? If yes, why?
6. What do you think are the most important things that influence language use in your family?
7. How important is it to you that your child(ren) speaks VN? Why?
8. What things have you done to teach your child(ren) VN? How is it going?
9. How important is it to you that your child(ren) learn about VN culture? Why?
10. What are the most important things about VN culture that you want your child(ren) to learn?
11. What things have you done to teach your child(ren) about VN culture?
12. Do you celebrate any ethnic holidays? What do you do?
13. How important is it to spend time with other Vietnamese people? How often do you spend time with Vietnamese people? Do you speak VN when spending time with other VN people?
14. How would you describe your children's ethnic background? (e.g., Asian American; Vietnamese-White; mixed, etc.)

Parenting

1. Can you tell me what an ordinary (weekday) day is like? Weekends? (when the children were small vs when they started school).
2. What are your greatest challenges in trying to teach your children Vietnamese?
3. Do you have any concerns about your children being mixed? Why or why not?