# The Development of Bilingualism in Early Childhood: 

Chinese Parents' Attitudes, Beliefs and Family Practice

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#### Abstract

An exploratory study was conducted to examine what Chinese immigrant parents have thought and done in regard to their children's bilingual development. An interview schedule was used to collect data from a total of 15 parents who have been selected from eight preschool and daycare settings in Vancouver. The multiple case study approach was used for analysing the results. The parents attached greater importance to or had higher expectations for their children's speaking skills in Chinese (L1) than their reading and writing skills in L1. Their motives for wishing their children to retain L1 were given in the following order: personal/social motives, symbolic motives, intellectual motives, and instrumental motives. All of the parents ranked English (L2) learning for their children in all language skills very important. The instrumental motive played the most important role. All parents reported that there was a tendency for their children to use more and more L2 at home once they were in daycare. Upon this change, some parents responded to their children in L2 at home. It seems that these parents' reactions depended on their children's language proficiency in L1 and L2. When their children's L1 was still good or their L2 was average or poor, these parents tended to take no action in helping their children retain L1 and they hoped that their children would first learn L2 well . In addition, most parents reported that they had made an effort to help their children maintain L1. However, most of them met with difficulties in doing so. The main factor causing such difficulty was the English-speaking social environment. Furthermore, most parents perceived that the family environment was the main source for their children to learn L1. As for L2 learning, they thought that their children could learn it naturally from many sources such as schools, friends and TV. Though not very conclusive, there was an indication in this study that the presence of monolingual grandparents and home country visits were two factors in helping children maintain L1.


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## Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the research problem

During the past few years in Canada, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of new immigrants. According to the 1991-1995 Annual Report to Parliament (1991/1995), immigration has risen from 200,000 in 1990 to 220,000 in 1991, and to 250,000 in 1992 where it will be stabilised for the rest of the planning period. This rapid rise of immigration in Canada has resulted in increasing numbers of children whose first language (L1) is other than that of the school (L2). For example, more than 50 percent of the school population in several Metro Toronto school systems do not have English as a L1 (Cummins, 1981), while in the Vancouver school system the figure is around 47.9 percent (Early, 1990).

As Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) argued, these language minority children are subject to both strong external pressures from the larger community and strong internal pressures from their families to become bilingual, that is to say, the children are expected to use and comprehend both home language and the wider community language. The risk of failure in the attempt to become bilingual is greater for minority children than for the children of any of the other categories such as the majority group children, and the consequences of failure may be catastrophic. Being monolingual or very dominant in just one language, the children may either lose future educational and job opportunities in the majority community (if they do not master L2), or they may become excluded from contact with their parents and other relatives,
their origin and culture (if they neglect L1). Moreover, recent research findings showed that bilingualism can promote the cognitive, linguistic and psychosocial development of children (Cummins, 1981; Diaz, 1983; Troike, 1978).

In addition, among minority children in Canada there is typically a strong tendency to replace L1 with English (Cummins, 1981). This is largely because the children are constantly bombarded by stimulation in English. However, in spite of this, some children manage to develop high levels of proficiency in both languages (Cummins, 1981).

Mary Ashworth, one of the educators who has tirelessly and effectively advocated "education for a multicultural society", noted the fact that the roots of the term education imply drawing out children's potential, making them more than they were; however, when children come to school potentially or actually bilingual, speaking their mother tongue only or their mother tongue and English/French, and they leave school monolingual in English, then our educational system has made children less than they were. The fundamental purpose of education has been negated (cited in Cummins, 1989b, p.4). In short, the intended educational goal for language minority children is to help them develop their bilingualism rather than monolingualism.

As Mary Ashworth has advocated, since early 1970s, there has been a widespread educational concern for both the promotion of minority language skills and the academic development of minority children. In 1971, the federal government adopted the policy of "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework". Since then, heritage language education for minority children has flourished. Much research has been done by focusing on heritage language education and bilingual education in the school setting. Results of these studies suggested that minority children's L1 proficiency can be promoted at no cost to the development of proficiency in L2 (Cummins, 1983).

Some research efforts have also been made to explore the development of children's bilingualism in the family domain (Arnberg, 1979,1987; Garner, 1988; Grosjean, 1982;

Lieberson, 1970; Saunders, 1982; Siren, 1991; Veltman, 1983), because "the family is the key institution for understanding mother tongue maintenance, for it is within the family that most children learn their first language" (Lieberson, 1970, p.200). It appears that the important role of the parents in their children's acquisition of two languages in the home is confirmed in many studies (Arnberg, 1979, 1987; Grosjean, 1982; Siren, 1991).

In some studies, the researchers have attempted to explore the relationship between parental variables and their language use at home. They found a strong relationship between parental nativity and their language use (DeVries \& Vallee, 1980; Veltman, 1981, 1983). It appears that persons who were brought up in their home country are more likely to speak and be spoken to in the minority language than persons brought up abroad.

Other research findings suggested that there is a relationship between the mother's education level and their child's language use (Saville-Troike, 1986). It seems that the mothers who are uneducated and remain in the home tend to provide a L1-speaking home environment more likely than the mothers who are educated and have greater opportunity to take part in activities outside the home.

In addition, some researchers have investigated parental attitudinal factors and their actual language use and strategy at home (Arnberg, 1984; Lewin, 1987; Putz, 1991; Siren, 1991). One of the most comprehensive studies in this area was reported by Siren (1991). Her study involved more than 600 families in the Stockholm area whose parent(s) spoke a language other than Swedish at home. It was designed to explore to what extent the parents wish to maintain their languages and transmit them to their children through interviews with these parents. She found that there exist some differences in the language maintenance and shift rate among different minority groups. The results were consistent with the findings in other studies (Cummins, 1991; Saunders, 1982). One of her important findings was that the results for the children's L1 proficiency parallel the results for the parental language transmission intentions and efforts in the home.

Some small scale studies which dealt with language transmission in immigrant families mainly focused on one or two language minority groups (Arnberg, 1984; Lewin, 1987; Putz, 1991). The emphasis of these studies was either on the relationship between parents' language-related attitudes and their language choice at home with their children (Lewin, 1987), or on the effects of a language strategy on their children's language use (Arnberg, 1984), or on the language ecology factors contributing to language maintenance or language shift (Putz, 1991). In short, one of the important findings in Putz's study showed that language maintenance is largely based on the traditional factors of the family domain and social activities. Putz (1991) suggested that the factors influencing language maintenance or shift should be considered within a broader socio-historical context in which the particular minority group is involved.

In summary, much has been done in the investigation of children's bilingual development in the family domain in language minority groups. It appears that there exist some differences in language maintenance and shift rate among different minority groups. In addition, the factors contributing to language maintenance or shift in one group can not be generalised to other groups due to the complex socio-historical context in which the particular minority group has been involved. In this case, in order to get a rich information concerning children's bilingual development in the family domain and their parents' attitudes and family practice in one particular minority group, a comprehensive investigation in this particular minority group is needed.

It seems that there is a lack of comprehensive research dealing with Chinese immigrant families in the related field in the literature. The purpose of this study is to address the scarcity of the information and investigate Chinese parents' attitudes and beliefs toward the development of their children's bilingualism and their family practice.

### 1.2 Research questions

This was a multiple case study which involved a comprehensive examination of 15 Chinese parents' attitudes and beliefs toward the development of their children's bilingualism and their family practice in the home. The underlying socio-linguistic factors influencing parents' attitudes and actions were also explored to some extent.

The general questions which direct the study are:

1. How did Chinese parents perceive their children's bilingual development in the family domain?
2. What is the present language use pattern in the home ?
3. What language environment and strategies have parents provided or used in the home?
4. What are the main factors affecting the parents' attitudes, beliefs, and actions involved in the above three questions?

### 1.3 Significance of the study

Largely as a result of changing immigration policies in Canada, the Chinese population increased substantially after 1967. In 1986, there were 412,800 Chinese origin people in Canada (Statistics Canada, 1986). In the major urban cities such as Toronto and Vancouver, the Chinese community is one of the largest language communities. In spite of the diversity of dialects in its language (e.g. Mandarin, Cantonese, etc.), the culture is the same for all of Chinese origin people. The findings of this study will present a picture of how a group of Chinese parents perceived their children's bilingual development in a multicultural society and
what language environment these Chinese parents have provided for their children. In addition, the main factors affecting parents' attitudes, beliefs and actions will also be presented.

Because additive bilingualism is the goal for language minority children, the findings should provide information and insights for educators or family counselors to educate parents in the benefits of bilingualism, and to encourage parents to promote additive bilingualism for children by strengthening the weaker language of children at an early stage of the children's language development.

This is an exploratory study. The findings may provide some implications for further study in this area on a larger scale or at a deeper level by focusing specifically on certain problems emerging from this study. They will also provide some implications for educational practice.

### 1.4 Definitions of terms

Since some terms used in this study are somewhat unique to the discipline, the terms relevant to the study are defined below.

## Bilingualism

A pattern in which an individual uses two languages either in different domains or in the same domain indicates that the individual is bilingual. It is also defined in a broad sense as "the production and/or comprehension of two languages by the same individual" (Cummins, 1981).

## Cantonese

It is one of the Chinese dialects spoken in the Guangdong area, the southern part of China and Hong Kong. It shares most of the characters with other Chinese dialects, but has independent pronunciation, tones, different vocabulary items, and some different sentence structures. In this study, there is a large sample population who speak Cantonese as their native language in the daycare and preschool settings. Among them, one Cantonese-speaking parent who could speak Mandarin well, participated in the study.

## Chinese

It covers many dialects such as Mandarin, Cantonese, and Shanghainese. Mandarin Chinese is the standard official language used in both mainland China and Taiwan. Generally speaking, people speaking a dialect other than Mandarin Chinese in their daily course of life in mainland China are supposed to be able to also speak Mandarin. In this study, all the subjects can speak Mandarin very well, though some of them speak other dialects such as Shanghainese and Taiwanese in their daily life.

## Ethnic Origin

It refers to the ethnic or cultural "roots" or ancestral origins of the population and should not be confused with aspects of citizenship or nationality.

## Language minority children

It refers to children whose first language or home language is different from the language of the wider community and its schools.

## Language shift

It refers to the change from the habitual use of one language to that of another. The absence of language shift is called Language maintenance (Weinreich, 1970).

## Mother tongue

In the Canadian Census, it has been operationalized as the language first learned in childhood and still understood. It is often used interchangeably with First language(L1). In this study, L1 refers to the Chinese language.

## Second language (L2)

It refers to the non-native language learned and used within one country in which the language is used and in which it has official status.

### 1.5 Organization of the thesis

This thesis has five chapters:

Chapter 1 presents the research problem in the context of multicultural policy in Canada. The significance of the study is discussed and some technical terms relevant to the thesis are explained.

In chapter 2, the researcher provides a brief account of social-historical context for the study and an overview of people's views of bilingualism in a historical perspective. The researcher also overviews the factors influencing language maintenance and language shift in minority groups, and provides a comprehensive review of earlier research about different aspects of parental language transmission at the family level, aiming at drawing a whole
picture of what has been done and found in the related literature and what has yet to be found in this area so as to establish a possible need for the present study and likelihood for obtaining results.

In chapter 3, the researcher describes in detail how the study was designed and conducted.

In chapter 4, the researcher uses a multiple case study approach to describe and analyze the findings of the study, accompanied by tables, figures, and quotations, aiming at answering the research questions directing the study.

In chapter 5, the researcher draws conclusions of the study in accordance to the general questions which direct the study, discusses the findings of the study, and addresses the implications for educational practice. In view of the limitations of the study, some recommendations for further research are made.

## Chapter 2

## Review of the Related Literature

### 2.1 Context of the study

Cultural diversity and pluralism are characteristics of the Canadian society. Since 1870s, immigrants from such places as Western and Eastern Europe, Asia, East India and the Caribbean entered the country combining with the Native Indians to form Canada into a cultural mosaic (Scott, 1981). According to the 1871 census, only 8\% of Canada's population was of non-British or non-French ethnic origin. Little change in the composition of population took place until a decade before World War I when there was an influx of immigrants from central and eastern Europe. At this time, immigration restrictions were imposed against Orientals such as Chinese, Japanese and East Indians who were regarded as "visible minorities". Such restrictions were continued until the 1960s. As far as Chinese immigrants to Canada are concerned, largely as a result of changing immigration policies, the Chinese population increased substantially after 1967. In 1971, the Chinese Canadian population was 124,600 ; by 1981 it had expanded to 285.800 (Statistics Canada, 1971, 1981). By the time the 1986 census was taken, it had increased further to 412,800 (Statistics Canada, 1986).

According to the 1986 census of Canada, the British group comprised $34 \%$ of the Canadian population and the French $24 \%$. Persons of both British and French ethnic backgrounds made up $5 \%$ of the country's population, while another $13 \%$ had a mixed ethnic
heritage of British and/or French and other origins. A quarter of Canadians reported neither British nor French origins. In 1991, 31\% of the population reported ethnic origins which were neither British nor French, up from $25 \%$ in 1986. It is reported that Asian, Arab and African single origins increased from $4 \%(986,000$ people) in 1986 to $6 \%$ ( 1.6 million) in 1991.

In such a rapidly growing diversified linguistic and cultural context, the federal government adopted the policy of "multiculturalism within a bilingual framework" in 1971. This policy is based on the recommendations of Book IV of the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism and represents a major shift in federal policy regarding ethnic diversity. Under this policy, there are two official languages in CanadaEnglish and French, but there is no official culture. All ethnic groups are encouraged to enrich Canadian society by continuing to develop their unique cultures which is in contrast to previous "Anglo-conformity" policy. Furthermore, the benefits of linguistic diversity to Canadian society were also emphasized in the report. It recommended that the teaching of languages other than English and French, and cultural subjects related to them, be incorporated as options in the public elementary school program, where there is sufficient demand for such classes. Since then, heritage language teaching across Canada has flourished. The principal aims of these programs are to promote the continued vitality of ethnic cultures and to enrich children's educational experience (Cummins, 1981).

Over several decades of debate on bilingualism, recent research findings from many parts of the world show clearly that bilingualism has no negative effects on the development of children's cognitive ability and in many cases has positive effects (Cummins, 1979; Cummins \& Mulcahy, 1978). Moreover, increased economic and scientific interdependence in the international arena also creates greater demand for competent bilinguals who can facilitate cross-cultural cooperation. Under this context, interest in the phenomenon of bilingualism among both researchers and policy-makers has continued to grow during the
past few years (Cummins, 1992). Issues concerning the appropriate educational programs and policies, such as bilingual education programs for minority group children and minority language maintenance and shift among minority children have drawn great attention.

The present study is intended to explore one of these issues and focuses on studying immigrant parents' attitudes and beliefs about the development of their children's bilingualism. Their family practice is also investigated to some extent.

### 2.2 Bilingualism in a historical perspective

Attitudes toward bilingualism among educators are diverse in the literature. Arguments for and against minority language maintenance and language shift are numerous and represent a wide range of view points.

### 2.2.1 Previous views about bilingualism

In the first half of this century, the prevailing attitude toward ethnic diversity in Canada has been termed "Anglo-conformity." It was assumed that all ethnic groups should give up their own languages and cultures and become assimilated into the dominant British culture (Cummins, 1981). Many North American educators saw bilingualism almost as a disease that not only interfered with the Canadianization or Americanisation process, but also caused language handicaps and confusion in children's thinking (Cummins, 1981). In a survey, it was found that teachers generally supported the idea that more English should be used in the homes of language minority children (California State Department of Education, 1982). Based on this view, many schools redoubled their efforts to eradicate minority children's L1.

Children were often punished for speaking their L1 in school (Cummins, 1981). Teachers also advised parents to use English as much as possible in the home in order to help their children to become fully proficient in English (Carter, 1970; Rodriguez, 1981). Parents of language minority children often accepted this advice and tried to use English in communicating with their children in the home, because they feared that the use of L 1 might confuse their children and reduce their chances of academic success (Cummins, 1981; Rodriguez, 1981). As a result, the acquisition of English for these children often resulted in the erosion or loss of their mother tongue (Rodriguez, 1981).

## Factors influencing previous views about bilingualism

It is not surprising that many educators held such views. In the past, many students from minority backgrounds often experienced difficulties in school and performed worse than monolingual children on verbal IQ tests and on measures of literacy development (Cummins, 1989b; Dolson, 1985). In addition, the overwhelming majority of studies prior to 1962 found strong evidence for the so-called 'language handicap' in bilingual children (see reviews by Arsenian, 1937; Darcy, 1953, 1963; Diaz, 1983; Macnamara, 1966). When compared to monolinguals, bilingual children appeared inferior on a wide range of linguistic abilities. They were also shown to have a poorer vocabulary (Barke \& Perry-williams, 1938; Grabo, 1931; Saer, 1923), lower standards in written composition, and more grammatical errors (Harris, 1948; Saer, 1923).

Under these conditions, it was natural for educators to assume a direct relationship between minority language background and school performance. Thus, bilingualism was regarded as a major cause of the poor school performance of some groups of minority children (Cummins, 1981, 1989b).

## The empirical research findings

However, some researchers have cautioned that most early studies on bilingualism have been conducted without proper controls for some critical variables such as SES, sex, age of the subjects, age at which the subjects were first exposed to English, the language used to test subjects, and the degree of bilingualism. For these reasons, many have questioned the validity of the research findings (Cummins, 1976; Diaz, 1983; Darcy, 1953; Jones, 1960). For example, as early as 1930 , McCarthy pointed out that bilingualism in the United States was seriously confounded with low socio-economic status. She found that more than half of the occurrences of bilingualism in school children could be classified as belonging to families from the unskilled labour occupational group.

Tsushima and Hogan (1975) reported that grade four and five Japanese-English bilinguals performed at a significantly lower level than a unilingual control group on measures of verbal and academic skills. The bilingual children had been exposed to both English and Japanese in the home from infancy. However, no details were given of the bilinguals' relative competence in both languages, that is, their degree of bilingualism.

Beginning with the Peal \& Lambert investigation in 1962, the findings in studies on bilingualism changed from mostly negative to mostly positive findings. In 1962, Peal and Lambert conducted a study with French-English bilinguals in Montreal. They controlled for degree of bilingualism by using only bilinguals who had attained a relatively similar degree of competence in both languages, that is, "balanced" bilinguals. They found that the group of balanced ten-year-old bilinguals not only showed a higher level of non-verbal intelligence than the unilingual control group, but they also performed at a higher level on measures of verbal intelligence.

The majority of more recent studies, following Peal and Lambert (1962) have taken precautions to ensure that the bilingual subjects had developed a similar level of competence in both languages, and were considered balanced bilinguals (Cummins, 1976; Diaz, 1983). In
some studies (Ianco-Worrall, 1972; Liedke \& Nelson, 1968), the matching of bilingual and unilingual groups on non-verbal IQ, as well as SES, sex and age, provided an additional safeguard against bias.

Results of the more recent studies indicated that bilinguals showed higher levels of concept formation and on measures of verbal and non-verbal ability, and that the attainment of balanced bilingualism might have a positive effect on "cognitive flexibility" (Cummins, 1976; Diaz, 1983).

### 2.2.2 Types of bilingualism - additive and subtractive bilingualism

These recent positive findings are inconsistent with the negative findings of earlier results. Many researchers have suggested explanations for the disparate findings. Arsenian (1937) was one of the early researchers to suggest that bilinguals differ from one another in many ways. Based on the earlier findings, Lambert (1975) made a convincing argument that bilingualism has additive and subtractive forms. Additive bilingualism occurs when conditions favour the development and maintenance of the L 1 while permitting the learning and use of a L2. Subtractive bilingualism occurs when conditions favour the development of a L2 to the detriment of the L 1 .

According to Cummins (1989b), an important characteristic of bilingual children in more recent studies is that, for the most part, they were developing an additive form of bilingualism. In other words, these children were in the process of attaining a relatively high level of both fluency and literacy in their two languages. However, earlier studies tended to involve bilingual subjects from language minority groups whose L1 was gradually being replaced by their L2 (Cummins, 1976). Thus, many of these earlier studies produced evidence
that a bilingual paid for his L2 competence by a lowering of his L1 competence. That is to say, these children were developing a subtractive form of bilingualism (Cummins, 1976).

In summary, the low levels of proficiency in both languages and academic difficulties found in some groups of language minority children should be attributed not to bilingualism itself, but rather to the lack of full bilingualism in them. As shown above, numerous studies indicated that additive bilinguals enjoy cognitive, linguistic and psychosocial advantage over monolinguals. Conversely, when compared to their monolingual counterparts, subtractive bilinguals are consistently found to be at a disadvantage in their cognitive, linguistic and psychosocial development (Cummins, 1976, 1989b; Dolson, 1985). As a result, many researchers argued that additive bilingualism should be our stated goal in educating language minority children (Cummins, 1979, 1981). However, it is believed that additive bilingualism does not develop automatically in minority children (Cummins, 1981).

## Factors contributing to additive and subtractive bilingualism

In many cases, bilingualism in the minority group is often of the subtractive type (Cummins, 1981; Lambert, 1975). Learning the language of the dominant group is often a transitional step toward assimilation or, at a minimum, development of the mother tongue is weakened by frequent exposure to the L2. According to Wong Fillmore (1991), the younger children are when they encounter these assimilative forces, the greater the effect on their L1.

However, there are some children who have developed high proficiency in both L1 and L2 (Cummins, 1981). This gave rise to the questions about what factors lead to the different patterns of bilingualism and how they contribute to the development of these different patterns of bilingualism.

In a theoretical model which identifies factors that are instrumental in the development of additive or subtractive bilingualism, the authors (Landry, Allard \& Theberge, 1991) proposed that bilingual competence will be largely determined by the extent of
opportunities to use L1 and L2 within the individual's network of linguistic contacts. According to the authors, the school and family milieu play an important role in providing such opportunities.

Based on additive philosophy, many efforts have been made in the school settings. One of the efforts was the implementation of bilingual programs in several provinces of Canada as well as many parts of the world. Results of the evaluation studies on these programs showed that minority children educated partly or mainly via L1 not only better maintain their L1 but also learn L2 as well as minority children schooled exclusively via L2 (Cummins, 1981, 1984, 1986; Cummins \& Mulcahy, 1978; Hakuta, 1985, 1986; Rosier \& Farella, 1976; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1984; Willig, 1985).

The family context in which the family has maintained L1 as the main home language is regarded as the additive home environment, and the family context in which a switch to L2 has occurred is regarded as the subtractive home environment. Research findings showed that the students from the additive home situations had certain advantages in academic achievement, language development, and psychosocial adjustment over their counterparts from the latter home situations (Dolson, 1985).

Another study (Cummins \& Mulcahy, 1978) carried out with the Edmonton Ukrainian-English Bilingual Program, reported that the grades one and three students, who were relatively fluent in Ukrainian as a result of parents using it consistently in the home, were significantly better able to detect ambiguities in English sentence structure than either equivalent unilingual English-speaking children not in the program or children in the program who came from predominantly English-speaking homes. Research results showed the importance of family input as well as bilingual programs to the development of bilingual children.

In summary, additive bilingualism for minority group children is dependent on the maintenance of a strong Ll ambiance in the school and family milieu. English-only programs
are the most common ones for language minority children in Canada as well as many other parts of the world. In this case, home milieu becomes extremely important to successfully raise children bilingually. Unlike the majority language children who have many sources of language and cultural input, for the minority language children the parents may represent the major or only source of input which the children receive (Arnberg, 1987).

So far, a great deal of research dealing with intergenerational language maintenance and shift placed the emphasis either on the family or on the community level. Such research approaches as interviews with immigrant parents or children, observation, sometimes complemented with other small-scale measures (e.g. reading measures), are often employed in the studies (Chumak-Horbatsch, 1987; Cummins, 1991; Siren, 1991; Wong Fillmore, 1991). Some general research findings with regard to children's bilingual development in the family domain in minority groups are discussed in the following sections.

### 2.3 Research findings with regard to children's bilingual development in minority

## groups

### 2.3.1 Language maintenance and shift in minority groups

It has been reported that an increasing number of established linguistic minority groups see their survival as distinct communities threatened as a result of language loss (Cummins, 1992). The trend toward language shift can be found in research done by Cummins (1991), Jaakkola (1976), Lieberson (1970), Saunders (1982), Siren (1991), Veltman (1981, 1983) and Wong Fillmore (1991). For example, the 1976 Australian Census shows that $44 \%$ of

Dutch immigrants, $31 \%$ of Maltese immigrants, $28 \%$ of German immigrants, $20 \%$ of Polish immigrants, $10 \%$ of Yugoslav immigrants, $6 \%$ of Italian immigrants and 3\% of Greek immigrants had shifted to using English only (Saunders, 1982). In the case of minority francophones in Ontario, Canada, the assimilation rate rose to $33.4 \%$ in 1986 from a level of $28.8 \%$ in 1981 (Wagner \& Grenier, 1991). In other words, one in three Franco-Ontarians are shifting from French to English as their major language of daily use during the course of their lives.

It is evident from previous research that some differences exist in the language maintenance and shift rate between different minority groups and individuals. In some minority groups such as Chinese, Korean, Navajos and Hispanic Americans, their mother tongues are actively used in all domains of life in America today (Grosjean, 1982; Lieberson, 1970).

## Factors influencing language maintenance and shift

Why do some minority groups or individuals shift little by little into monolingualism and lose their minority language while others retain theirs? This question has been the object of many studies (Fishman, 1966; Gaarder, 1977; Grosjean 1982; Lieberson 1970). Various reasons can be put forward to explain why some individuals and groups are more successful than others at maintaining their language in another country. Generally speaking, the forces influencing language maintenance and shift in a pluralistic situation can be categorised into the following factors:

## (1) Demographic factors

They usually include size of group, birthrate of group, time of immigration, continued immigration and permanent immigration. A group that believes it will stay only a short while
in this country has a natural tendency to retain its language and culture and to make sure that the children can speak and write the home language (Grosjean, 1982).

## (2) Geographical factors

They include geographic concentration, urbanisation, isolation from other minority groups or majority groups or home country. Isolation may favour either maintenance or shift. It favours maintenance if the members of the group, because of geographic concentration, for example, do not have to interact with other minority groups or with the English-speaking majority. But it favours shift when the group is isolated from the home country (Grosjean, 1982). Li (1982) finds that the relationship between geographic concentration and language maintenance is more prominent in the third generation of Chinese-Americans than in the second generation.

## (3) Economic factors

Speaking a particular language can have economic advantages because knowing the language (either L1 or L2 or both) gives access to jobs which require such knowledge (Lieberson, 1970; Veltman, 1983). Parents often regard their children's shift to the majority language as a way to climb the socio-economic ladder (Edwards, 1985).

## (4) Institutional factors

Institutional support has been defined as "the degree of formal and informal support a language receives in the various institutions of a nation, region or community" (Giles, Bourhis \& Taylor, 1977). The use of the language within the educational system is thought to favour language maintenance (Giles et al., 1977; Veltman, 1983), but it has also been pointed out that education in a minority language is never enough to insure maintenance if there are other societal forces opposing it (Edwards, 1985; Veltman, 1983). It is recognised that mass media, press, radio and television are factors which can affect maintenance, although the
absence of these need not imply language shift (Lieberson, 1970). If language is linked to religion, it will favour group cohesion and language maintenance (Giles et al., 1977; Grosjean, 1982; Fishman, 1985)

## (5) Status factors

Group status is assumed to be determined by the social and economic status of its members and also by its historical past (Giles et al., 1977). However, the impact of socio-economic status may not be a linear function. Li (1982) finds a high likelihood of language shift at both ends of the socio-economic status scale. The historical past, as well as the status of the language itself, can be perceived differently by in-group and out-group members (Husband and Saifullah Khan, 1982). There are no objective criteria of status.

## (6) Attitudes

It has been recognised that language, not only as an instrument of communication and a symbol of group identity, is also accompanied by attitudes and values held by its users and also by persons who do not know the language. In a community where different language groups coexist, language attitude plays an important role in the lives of users of these languages and influence the learning of a first language (Grosjean, 1982). It is one of the major factors in accounting for which languages are learned, which are used, and which are preferred by bilinguals. In the United States, there is a widespread phenomenon of immigrant parents encouraging their children to learn English so as not to be stigmatised later in life and so as to advance socially (Grosjean, 1982).

It is important to note that it is extremely difficult to make generalisations about language maintenance and shift from one context to another. Some of these factors are often ambivalent, in that they may favour either maintenance or shift . In addition, there is probably
a combined effect of different factors. Since most variables are interrelated, it is difficult to keep them apart analytically (Giles et al., 1977).

In the next section, literature related to minority language maintenance and shift is examined in great detail in a family perspective.

### 2.3.2 Minority language transmission in a family perspective

## Parental variables influencing language use

## Parental nativity and language use

Recent Canadian findings suggest that parental nativity plays an important role in the explanation of language shift and retention (DeVries \& Vallee, 1980). Persons who were brought up in their home country are more likely to speak and be spoken to in the minority language than persons brought up abroad. This finding is consistent with the results of other studies which find a strong relationship between parental nativity and language use (Veltman, 1981, 1983).

However, there are some differences between language groups. According to Veltman (1983), foreign born parents in the Portuguese, Chinese, and Greek language groups have retained the use of their respective languages to a greater extent than parents in other minority language groups.

## Mother's education and language use

It seems that there is a relationship between the mother's level of education and their children's language use. When women are uneducated and remain in the home they are often isolated from the major language and tend to remain monolingual and to continue speaking
the native tongue. When they are educated and have the opportunity to take part in activities outside the home, their increasing bilingualism and integration into the majority can have the opposite effect and the retention of the minority language may be in danger (Saville-Troike, 1986).

## Parents' motives for language transmission in the bilingual family

Linguistic maintenance may be viewed as a series of branching processes beginning at birth and ending with parenthood and the new generation (Lieberson, 1970, p.176). The basic issue in the development of bilingualism in the home is the choice made by bilingual parents in the language transferred to their offspring. Language continuity is almost inevitable if both parents are monolingual, whereas the language transmission of bilingual parents is not predetermined in the same way (Lieberson, 1970). Bilingualism provides a necessary condition for language choice to take place. This option means that knowledge of the causes of bilingualism are not necessarily sufficient for determining whether the mother tongue or the second language will be transferred to the offspring of bilingual parents. Siren (1991) in her study summarised the parents' motives for their wish to help their children learn or retain their L1. The motives frequently encountered can be classified into the following main categories:

## (1) Personal/social motives:

A common language in the family contributes to family cohesion. It helps the children to keep contact with the parents' native country and with the grandparents and it is also good for communication between parents and children.

## (2) Symbolic motives:

The minority language has not only a communicative but also a symbolic value representing the parents' culture and tradition or their ethnicity.

## (3) Instrumental motives:

Language proficiency is a resource and being bilingual gives better chances in life including greater job opportunities.

## (4) Intellectual motives:

Bilingualism is an intellectual advantage and being bilingual makes it easier to learn other languages.

## (5) Parents as models:

Parents are models for their children's language learning.

## Parental language strategy

In reviewing the literature concerning strategies for raising a child bilingually, four main strategies were usually found to be used in the bilingual family (Arnberg, 1979, 1987; Grosjean, 1982):
(1) Mixed strategy - parents use two languages interchangeably in and out of the family, letting such factors as topic, situation, person, and place dictate which language should be used.
(2) One person - one language strategy - It is used in the mixed marriage family. Each parent consistently spoke his/her native language to the child.
(3) Initial one - language strategy - parents use one language with the child initially and then, at a specific age, introduce the other language.
(4) Home language different from majority language strategy - parents use mother tongue in the home and the other outside the home.

Research findings concerning the effects of various strategies in raising children bilingually have not been very conclusive (Grosjean, 1982). One reason for this is because it is difficult to ensure that families differ on strategy alone. For example, maybe some families have the opportunity to travel frequently to the home country or receive extended visits from relatives who live in the home country.

However, in one study, Arnberg (1979) found that, regardless of strategy, it is probably difficult for a child to become a true bilingual while living in a country in which one of the languages is dominant, even when the minority language is a high-status language.

Nevertheless, observations from many bilingual families seem to suggest that it does "pay off" to consistently use the minority language in the home, either in the form of a one person - one strategy or by only using the L1 in the family. All factors being equal, families who provide consistent input are more likely than those who do not, to have children who actively use their mother tongue (Arnberg, 1987).

## Yariations and change in parental language use

Many parents who speak a language other than the officially recognised language of a country and who wish their own language to be retained in the home by their children, often do not succeed in achieving this. In some cases they simply do not try to do so; or they see little point in their children's speaking any language other than the language of the new country, since that is where they will be living and growing up. In other cases, parents do wish to pass their home language on to their children, but are discouraged by the seeming
impossibility of doing so and are tempted to abandon the attempt (Saunders, 1982). Such discouragement may come from outside the family or from within the family itself. Usually two processes have a particular significance for parents' attempts to transmit a minority language to their children. One is the intrusion of the majority language into parental interaction with the child. It has been reported that parents' language use is continually under the influence of environmental pressure, and support of the majority language may be felt much stronger than the support for the minority language (Harrison, Bellin \& Piette, 1981). The other is dominance of the majority language among siblings, which may make parents' control over the mother tongue directed at the children less secure.

Discouragement may also come from parents' unrealistic expectation for their children to be not only bilingual but equally proficient in both languages. As Arnberg (1987) pointed out, even if parents in the non-mixed-language family situation are successful in maintaining the use of the minority language, it should be recognised that it is unlikely that their children will be able to achieve the same proficiency level in the language as they would have had they remained in the minority language country.

The concept of language transmission seems to imply a linear process from parents to child, but in reality some researchers found that parents' language is continually adjusted to the language of their children. Arnberg found that if a child actively uses the minority language, the parents are also stimulated to use it to a greater extent (cited in Siren, 1991). But when the child begins to have more contacts outside the home and begins to learn the majority language, the child's changing language use will also have repercussions on the parents' language. Parents also feel tempted to abandon the use of the minority language when children refuse to speak it or speak it with a lot if interference (Arnberg, 1987; Saunder, 1982). Sometimes a pattern of asymmetrical communication develops, which may last for a period of time or become a habit, when the parents speak one language to the child
and the child uses another language in the same interaction (Arnberg, 1979; Jaakkola, 1976; Saunders, 1982).

Raising children bilingually has been shown to require a great deal of effort from parents. It appears that parents who continue to talk to a child in the language he or she is reluctant to speak, will ensure that their child is acquiring a passive knowledge of that language which will, in most cases, eventually be activated (Arnberg, 1987).

## Language choice and use in the home

In our daily interactions with others, we are constantly changing the variety of the language we use. In the same way a bilingual person can adjust to the situation by using one or the other of two languages. Four main factors are found to account for language choice (Grosjean, 1982):
(1) The participants in the interaction
(2) The setting (i.e. time, place) and the situation
(3) The topic
(4) The function of the interaction

## Language choice and the characteristics of the participants

Age plays a role in language choice. It has been reported that older people prefer to speak minority language whereas younger people prefer to speak the majority language among themselves in the bilingual situation (Gal, 1979; Schweda, 1980).

The language proficiency of the speaker and of the interlocutor is very important. Rubin (1968) states that people often consider the ability of the speaker and the addressee in choosing between languages. Generally speaking, the bilingual person prefers to use the language in which both the speaker and the addressee are proficient.

The history of linguistic interaction between the two participants plays a large role in language choice. In many instances two people speak a particular language to one another simply because they always have. This is especially true of the children of immigrant families, in which youngsters spoke L1 to their grandparents.

In general, researchers are in strong agreement that certain common patterns of language use are evident in the family (Gorman, 1971; Sridhar, 1988). The minority language is used more frequently than the majority language in conversations with parents and less frequently with siblings. Sridhar (1988) stated further that children consistently use more L1 with their grandparents than with their parents.

## Language choice and the situation

The formality of the situation has been reported by a number of researchers to play a role in language choice. Rubin (1968) found out that in less formal situations or intimate and familial relation, the minority language is usually spoken by bilinguals. In economic and formal social relations, the majority language is widely used.

The presence of monolinguals in the interaction also plays a role in language choice. Gal (1979) reported that in Oberwart, bilinguals speaking Hungarian to one another will always switch over to German when a monolingual German speaker comes toward them.

## Language choice and the content of discourse

Fishman (1965) writes that some topics are better handled in one language than another, either because the bilingual has learned to deal with a topic in a particular language, the other language lacks specialised terms for a topic, or because it would be considered strange or inappropriate to discuss a topic in that language.

Garner (1988) reports that Swedish is regarded with particular affection by some Swedish community members in Melbourne, who find it better than English for discussing
domestic matters and expressing deep emotions. For another ethnic community in a Melbourne - Russian community, Russian is preferred for integral reasons (its symbolic importance, its beauty and emotional power), and English for instrumental reasons (its practical necessity).

In conclusion, Canada continues to be a multicultural society. The government encourages all ethnic groups to enrich Canadian society by continuing to develop their unique cultures. The benefits of linguistic diversity to Canadian society were also emphasised under the multicultural policy. In addition, recent research has shown that bilingualism has positive effects on the development of children's cognitive ability. Although heritage language education or bilingual education have begun to flourish in a few major cities of certain provinces in Canada, English-only programs are the most common ones for minority children in Canada. In this case, parents in the family domain take the primary responsibility for raising their children bilingually. A great deal of research has been done to explore various aspects of children's bilingual development in the family domain, including the relationships between parental variables and their language transmission, parental attitudinal factors about their children's bilingual development, parents' language use and strategies at home, factors influencing parents' language use at home. However, since the factors influencing parents' attitudes and actions have to be considered within the socio-linguistic context, it is extremely difficult to make generalisations about children's language maintenance and language shift from one context to another. Therefore, in order to get a whole picture about parents' attitudes and beliefs toward raising their children bilingually in certain minority groups, a comprehensive examination in this particular group is needed. It seems that there is a lack of any comprehensive examination of Chinese immigrant families in this area. This study addresses the scarcity of such information and attempts to investigate Chinese parents' attitudes and beliefs toward the development of their children's bilingualism. Their family practice is also examined to some extent.

## Chapter 3

## Methodology

The purpose of this study was to collect information by interviewing Chinese parents of preschool and kindergarten children on their children's development of bilingualism. The interview method was chosen because it had been used effectively in the past for studies of this type (Wong Fillmore, 1991; Williamson, 1991). The interviewers in these studies conducted the interviews by using the interviewees' primary language. Williamson (1991) stated, the interviewing process depends on the success of the interviewer establishing rapport with the interviewee. The more closely the interviewer's membership character, especially in regard to ethnicity and language, resembles that of the population, the more successful the interview (p.139). Therefore, the researcher also used the interviewee's primary language throughout the interviews.

In this study, the participants were all Chinese immigrant parents. The interview was conducted in Mandarin Chinese by a native Chinese-speaking researcher. It was expected that this would be an easier way for the interviewer to establish rapport with the interviewees if the interviewer resembled the interviewees both in ethnicity and language.

### 3.1 Subjects

The study involved the in-depth interviewing of 15 Chinese parents. They were drawn from eight English-speaking daycare and preschool settings in Vancouver. These daycare and
preschool centers all had a large Chinese population. Five of them were community-based preschool settings which were located in the Chinatown area. The list of these daycare and preschool centers was provided by Early Childhood Multicultural Services. The majority of Chinese children in these preschool and daycare centers were from Cantonese-speaking families. The other three settings were university-based daycare centers in which the children's parents were studying or working in the university. The numbers of Chinese children in these three university-based daycare centers were 7, 7 and 1 out of 25 children respectively. The majority of these Chinese parents were Mandarin speakers.

Finally, five parents were selected from the five community-based preschool and daycare centers. One from each of them. Ten were from the university-based daycare centers. They were selected according to the following criteria:

- both parents are Chinese;
- the parents have a 3-6 year-old child whose L1 is Chinese and who is attending Englishspeaking preschool or daycare;
- parent(s) can speak Mandarin Chinese.


### 3.2 Instrument

An interview schedule was developed by the researcher for the study (see Appendix A). It covered four major areas: 1) background information (e.g. parents' education and occupation, years in Canada, child's age and daycare experience); 2) language use patterns in the family (e.g. the proportion of L1 used among family members); 3) language environment in the home (e.g. the number of books in L1 and L2 in the home); 4) parents' attitudes toward the development of their children's bilingualism. Most of the questions in
the last three categories were asked in a comparable and repetitive way in order to establish internal validity. For instance, parents were asked to assess the degrees of importance for their children to learn L1 and L2 respectively and their reasons for thinking so. In the subsequent questions, parents were asked to give their opinions about the advantages and disadvantages for their children to maintain L1 and L2. Their responses to these questions were supposed to overlap to some extent because of the repetitive nature of these questions. In this way, the consistency of the parents' responses to these relevant questions would be obvious.

References for the questions were from the following sources in this field: Arnberg (1984), Lewin (1987), Putz (1991), and Wong Fillmore (1991). In Arnberg's study, the interview/ questionnaire covered the following four topics: 1) background information; 2) language pattern in the family; 3) language environment in the home; and 4) information concerning the children's bilingualism. These four topics became the basic categories for this study. In Lewin's study, the author investigated the relationship between language related attitudes of English-speaking immigrants in Israel and their choice of L1 and L2 for communication with their children by means of an interview. The subjects were asked to provide their background information and their attitudes toward learning and using L1 and L2. The purpose in Putz's study was to explore the use of German and English by one particular ethnic minority in Australia-German community members in different situations from the perspective of the sociology of language. Using his questionnaire, Putz asked the questions concerning language use pattern, language environment in a pervasive way. Both Lewin's and Putz's questionnaires helped to enrich the questions used in the interview schedule for this study. The findings in Wong Fillmore's study were also used as sources for designing questions in 11-16 in the fourth category which dealt with children's language shift and maintenance. Wong Fillmore found in her study that as immigrant children learn L2, the patterns of language use change in their homes. The results suggested that these children
were losing their L1 as they learned L2. Based on her findings, the researcher decided to further explore information in this area.

Before conducting the study, five interviews were conducted subsequently on the university campus with five university students who had children between five and eight years of age and who had been in Canada between six months to five years. Two of the families were immigrants. The other three were not. Based on this pilot study (see Initial Interview Schedule in Appendix B) and a meeting with research committee members, some changes were made in the interview schedule. The researcher found that some parents responded to questions 1-3 in the second category by giving an estimated proportion (percentage) of L1 and L2 usage at home. The interviewees felt that this type of response provided more specific information, and they felt comfortable with this type of response. Accordingly, these three questions were rephrased and all the subjects were asked the percentage for using L1 and L2 in their homes during formal interviews. However, it is important to note that the same proportion of L1 and L2 usage may not mean exactly the same proportion in different parents' minds. The percentage provided by the parents are, of course, their perceptions of the approximate proportion of L1 and L2 usage among family members. In addition, question 1 in the third category was divided into two questions and the subjects were asked how many books in L1 and L2 respectively were in the home instead of being asked about the proportion of books in L1 and L2 in the home. Questions 1-2, 5-8 were rephrased from general to more specific questions and all of the numerical scales were changed to words to make the questions more straightforward and clearer. In addition, some open-ended questions starting with " Why " or " Would you tell me why or how..." were added at the end of some questions in order to gain more information from the subjects.

### 3.3 Procedures

Through the initial telephone contact with preschool and daycare centers, ten preschool and daycare centers agreed to participate in the study. Five community-based preschool and daycare centers claimed that there was a large Chinese population in their daycare centers but most of these Chinese people were Cantonese-speaking people and they were not certain about how many of these people could speak Mandarin. They asked for 10-40 Parent Consent Forms (See Appendix C) to send to the parents. Five university-based daycare centers asked for 50 Parent Consent Forms to send to them, ten for each daycare.

The Parent Consent Forms were typed in both English and Chinese. They were sent together with a cover letter to classroom teachers which stated the purpose of the study and the criteria for the selection of the subjects (see Appendix D). The teachers were asked to put the forms in all of the Chinese children's newsletter packets for their parents to pick up in their centers. The parents who met the criteria and who agreed to participate in the study either phoned the researcher directly or sent the signed consent forms to the daycare centers. Finally, fifteen parents from eight preschool and daycare centers agreed to take part in the study and informed the researcher either by phone or by sending their consent forms to the classroom teachers in the daycare for the researcher to pick up. Among them, twelve were from Mainland China, two from Taiwan, and one from Hong Kong.

All interviews took place in the subjects' home except for the four subjects from the university-based daycare centers who preferred to be interviewed in their working places on campus. Each interview lasted 30 to 45 minutes. All interviews were conducted in Mandarin Chinese by the researcher and were recorded on audiotape. Later they were transcribed and translated from Chinese into English for analysis. It was worth mentioning that the data collected from a total of fourteen interviewees were analyzed in the end. The data from one
of the original fifteen interviewees were discarded because the father's non-immigrant status was inconsistent with that of the rest of the subjects, which was considered an important factor affecting the parents' attitudes toward their children's L1 maintenance and shift (Arnberg, 1987). Responses to the questions were grouped into four categories for analytic purposes in the following chapter. They were (1) Background data about the parents and their children; (2) Parents' attitudes and beliefs toward the development of their children's bilingualism; (3) Language use pattern in the family and daycare; (4) Family practice on the development of their children's L1 and L2.

The tape recordings of the interviews were translated and transcribed into English in the order of the questions appearing in the interview schedule. This transcription did not begin until all interviews had been conducted. Both qualitative information such as parents' explanations and interpretations, and quantitative information such as the number of books and the proportion of L1 and L2 usage were transcribed with the exception of information not related to the research since some parents gave examples of events that happened in families other than their own. An analysis of the data was then undertaken. This was a process of establishing and refining themes, and categorizing and counting the frequency of the responses to the same theme or category. All scales used in assessing degrees of importance, evaluating and expecting children's language skills were coded with numbers ranging from one to five. Quotations that could illustrate certain typical example of subjects' views and actions concerning their children's bilingual development were selected from the qualitative information to interpret and enrich the findings.

## Chapter 4

## Results

### 4.1 Background data about the parents and their children

The characteristics of the subjects and their children are shown in the accompanying figures and tables.

The data of a total of fourteen interviews were translated and transcribed for analysis. Among the fourteen interviewees, five were fathers and nine were mothers. They all planned to remain in Canada. When being asked to assess their English proficiency, three of them chose "very good", two chose "good", nine chose "average". All of them said that they still maintained close relationships with their relatives in China by letter and phone. Seven of the families had visited China with their children once or twice. Though the other seven families had not had any chances to visit China, four of the parents said that the children's grandparents had come to visit them and two parents said that the grandparents were still staying with them in their homes. As far as family members were concerned, ten families had only child, three families had two children, and one family had four children. Among the children whose ages were between three and six in the families, nine of them were boys, five were girls.

FIGURE 4.1 LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN CANADA


It is evident from Figure 4.1 that all of the subjects and their spouses were born in China. The range of residential years in Canada for parents was between three and ten years. For children, according to the data, the shortest residential period was one year. That is to say, the range for all of the children was between one and six years. More specifically, eight mothers and children had lived in Canada between two and four years. It can also be inferred that most of the mothers came to Canada with their children or they gave birth to children after their arrival in Canada.

FIGURE 4.2 EDUCATION LEVELS IN CHINA


FIGURE 4.3 EDUCATION LEVELS IN CANADA


Figure 4.2-4.3 showed that all of the fathers in this study had post-secondary degrees in China. Of the fourteen fathers, ten had undergraduate degrees. Of the fourteen mothers, ten had post-secondary degrees in China and four had secondary degrees. Since they came to Canada, eight fathers and four mothers had completed or were doing graduate studies. Three fathers and four mothers had entered a short-term training program. Two fathers and six mothers had been working since they came to Canada without pursuing any study.

FIGURE 4.4 PARENTS' OCCUPATION


As shown in Figure 4.4, eight fathers were doing graduate studies. Four others were self-employed and running their own business such as a trade company or local services. One father worked as a chef and another was an engineer in a company. Of the fourteen mothers, one was a graduate student, and two were attending nurse training programs. One of the mothers was working as a professor, two were research scientists, one worked as a company manager and one was an accountant. Two mothers helped their husbands run their own business and had no other full- or part-time jobs. One mother was a housewife.

FIRUGE 4．5－A CHILD INFORMATION－AGE，LENGTH OF RESIDENCE AND YEARS IN DAYCARE


[^0]FIGURE 4．5－B CHILD INFORMATION AGE，LENGTH OF RESIDENCE AND YEARS $\operatorname{N}$ DAYCARE

－Age
Length of Residence
－Years in Daycare

As shown in Figure 4.5, six children were born in Canada. Their parents declared that their children either stayed at home with their mothers or grandparents, or they were looked after by a Mandarin Chinese-speaking person before they entered daycare. Therefore, all of these six children's L1 was Chinese. The rest of the children were brought to Canada from China when they were between one year and a half to four years old. So far, all of the children had been in daycare from three months to three years. For those children who were above five and had entered kindergarten, most of them went to kindergarten for half day and to daycare for the other half. Only one child went to kindergarten for half day and spent the other half day with his grandparents at home.

In summary, it seemed that the data concerning the parents' and their children's background information had many common features. In this study, all parents were brought up in China. Since they came to Canada, they had all become permanent residents in Canada. They all planned to stay in Canada and still maintained close relationships with relatives in China. As for their children, they had all lived in a Chinese-speaking environment for a period of time either in China or in Canada before they entered English-speaking daycare. Their L1 was Chinese. It appeared that this was a highly educated subject group since most of the parents had post-secondary degrees in their home country. However, their occupations in Canada represented a variety of categories differing from professional to nonprofessional positions.

### 4.2 Parents' attitudes and beliefs toward the development of their children's bilingualism

In this section, parents' attitudes and beliefs toward the development of their children's bilingualism are explored.

Because of the relatively small number of subjects and their peculiar characteristics such as their high educational level, the multiple case study approach was employed for analyzing the results in this study. The data were presented individually from A to N and analyzed individually or in several groups according to the subjects' common characteristics. The figures in the accompanying tables and graphs were not used for the purpose of statistical analysis but rather for presenting the data in a clearer form. In order to concretize the results given in the tables and graphs, they were supplemented by the information that emerged from the interview and by the quotations from the subjects who were interviewed. The quotations were translated from Chinese as accurately as possible.

### 4.2.1 Degrees of importance in L1 and L2

All of the parents were asked to assess the degrees of importance for their children to speak, read, and write in L1 and L2. They were given four scales to choose from: 1) very important; 2) important; 3) unimportant; 4) very unimportant. These four scales were coded with 4, 3, 2, and 1 in Figure 4.6 respectively.

FIGURE 4.6-A DEGREES OF IMPORTANCE IN LI


| TSpaaking図ReadingWWriting |
| :---: |
|  |  |
|  |  |

FIGURE 4.6-B DEGREES OF IMPORTANCE IN L1


## Speaking in L1

As shown in Table 4.6, eleven parents answered that it was very important for their children to be able to speak Chinese. One said that it was important. They gave the following explanations for why they thought so:

- We are Chinese people. Chinese is our mother tongue; (B, C, E, F, I, N)
- The children live in a Chinese-speaking home environment. They should take the advantage to master two languages; (J, K, N)
- Speaking is the most direct way to express oneself and to communicate with others; (D)
- Our relatives are still living in China. Our children would be able to converse with them; (B, C, J)
- It is good for our children to know two languages. (B, I)

Two parents thought that it was unimportant for their children to be able to speak Chinese (A, K). Parent A thought that because his child was living in Canada and his future job prospects would be in Canada, too. In parent K's family, the opinions concerning this question were different between the parents. The mother was the interviewee who said that she did not realize how important it was for her child to be able to speak Chinese fluently, though she knew that it would be easier for her child to learn two languages at the same time than those children from the English-speaking-only home environment. She told the interviewer that her husband thought that it was very important for their daughter to be able to speak Chinese fluently. Her husband thought that as a child of Chinese origin, it would be strange if his daughter could not speak Chinese well.

## Reading and writing in L1

Most parents did not expect their children's reading and writing skills in L1 to be as highly developed as their children's speaking skills. In general, they thought that writing was too hard for the children to master (C, E, G, J, K, M, N); writing skills needed frequent practice (D); the children had not enough time or chance to practice reading and writing because of the environment $(\mathrm{H}, \mathrm{N})$; it was impossible for their children to learn reading and writing very well (G), and it is not practical either (J). Here is a typical example of what the parents thought:
" I think that learning Chinese is a very good advantage for my child in his future. Because we parents are Chinese people and we have lived in China for nearly thirty years. Naturally, we have brought many things from China when we came here. We could not only teach him Chinese language but also pass over the culture at the same time. Realistically, I do not expect his Chinese writing skill to be very good because of the social environment. He has little chance of practicing it." (H-Mother)

However, two parents thought that speaking, reading and writing had the same degrees of importance (I, L). Parent I thought that it was good for his child to know Chinese well in these three skills, but he had no time to teach his child. Parent L said:

> " Because our daughter is living in an English-speaking country, we feel that learning L1 is more important than learning L2 at home. We do not feel worried about her English. She spends almost eight hours in English-speaking environment during the weekdays which were much more than in Chinesespeaking environment. We hope that she knows how to listen and speak

Chinese well. Now she is 6 year old, we think we should start to teach her how to recognize words and to write. We think she should reach our goal. What is important is to insist on doing it." (L-Father)

## Speaking, reading and writing in L 2

When being asked how important it was for their children to be able to speak, read and write in English, all parents without exception chose very important in all three skills. Their explanations were as followed:

- The children's education, life and career are in Canada in the future. If they wanted to get a higher education or a good job, it would be very important for them to master English very well; (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, M)
- We hope that our child would be successful in school; (N)
- If the child wanted to mainstream into the English-speaking society, her English must be very good. We have experienced the difficulty of living in such a society without being able to speak English fluently. (L)


### 4.2.2 The advantages and disadvantages for learning L1 and L2

The parents were asked "What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages for your children to learn L1 and L2 ?" They gave the following responses:

## The advantages for learning L1

- As a Chinese origin, the child should know the language of his home country; (5)
- It would help maintain Chinese culture alive for my child; (4)
- It is good for my child to be bilingual. Proficiency in two languages makes a better educated person; (8)
- It would help maintain contact with our relatives in China; (6)
- It would facilitate communication with us; (4)
- It could help my child in his future work; (6)
- It would enable him to make friends among Chinese-speaking people. (1)
* Total frequency of responses: 34
* More than one response per subject possible.


## The advantages for learning L2

- It is very necessary for my child because it is the official language of the country where he lives now; (6)
- It is very important for the child's future study, work and life in Canada. (10)
* Total frequency of responses: 16
* More than one response per subject possible.


## The disadvantages for learning L1 and L2

Two parents thought that there were some disadvantages for their children to learn L1 at the same time as they learn L2 (D, F).
"If my child spoke one language all the time, he might speak it more fluently. Now, when he speaks Chinese and can not find the suitable word, he tends to switch to English. That causes his Chinese not very fluent. I found that two languages conflicted each other sometimes in my child." (D)
" I think that when the child is young, if I forced him to become bilingual, it would cause confusion in his brain. Probably the development of the child's language would be affected and delayed when compared with those unilingual children. I am afraid that both of his languages would develop slowly." (F)

When being asked whether they had anything to support their beliefs, both parents said that their opinions came out of their common sense and also from others' comments.

None of the parents thought that there would be any disadvantages for their children to learn English.

### 4.2.3 Evaluation of the children's listening and speaking skills in L1 and L2

In this part, the children's listening and speaking skills in L1 and L2 are investigated. Because the children whose parents were interviewed were all between 3 and 6 years old, many of them had not developed their reading and writing skills in either L1 or L2. The parents were asked to assess their children's listening and speaking skills by rating them "excellent", "good", "average", "poor", and "very poor". These five scales were then coded with $5,4,3$, 2, and 1 respectively and presented in Figure 4.7-4.8 for analysis.

FIGURE 4.7-A EVALUATION OF THE CHILDREN'S LISTENING SKILLS IN L1 AND L2


FIGURE 4.7-B EVALUATION OF THE CHILDREN'S LISTENING SKILLS IN L1 AND L2


FIGURE 4.8-A EVALUATION OF THE CHILDREN'S SPEAKING SKILLS IN L1 AND L2


| ELI |
| ---: | ---: |
| WL2 |

FIGURE 4.8-B EVALUATION OF THE CHILDREN'S SPEAKING SKILLS IN L1 AND L2


It was worth noting that all parents reported that their children's listening skills in L1 were excellent or good. Five parents reported that their children's listening skills in L2 were average. Children's speaking skills in L1 were excellent or good except for two cases. Six parents reported that their children's speaking skills in L2 were average or poor.

## The judgment on language skills in L 1 and L 2

When being asked how they judged their children's language skills in L1 and L2, the parents gave the following statements for their judgment:

## In L1:

- Some parents thought that their children's listening and speaking skills were both excellent because the children could understand their parents very well and express everything very well;
- Some parents thought that their children's language skills in L1 were good but not excellent because they found that sometimes their children spoke a few Chinese words in a funny way or spoke Chinese by using English structure. Sometimes the child had a bit of difficulty understanding what the parents said to them or could not understand some Chinese words;
- Some other parents assessed their children' s language skills by comparing them with the same-aged children in China, and thought that their children's language skills were a little bit left behind. In this case, they said that their children's language skills were just good;
- The parents who had rated their children's language skills average said that their children could not speak Chinese fluently, or sometimes they made an upside-down sentence.


## In L2:

- Some parents assessed their children's language skills in L2 by their teacher's judgment. They thought that their children's English was excellent because the teacher said that their children's English level was just the same as other native English-speaking children in the class. Other parents thought that their children's English was excellent because the children were speaking English very fluently;
- Some parents compared their children's English with other native English-speaking children and thought that their children's English was a bit behind and could be only rated good. Other parents thought that their children's English was good because their children could not speak English very fluently or sometimes asked them how to say some words;
- Some parents thought that their children's English was average because they found that their children could speak some words, but often made some grammatical mistakes, and tended to use short sentences. Sometimes the children could not understand completely what the teacher had said in class.


### 4.2.4 Parents' expectations of their children's language skills in L1 and L2

In this part, parents' expectations of their children's language skills in L1 and L2 are explored. All parents were asked to give five scales "excellent", "good", "average", "poor", and "very poor" to express their expectations for their children. These five scales were coded with $5,4,3,2$, and 1 respectively and presented in Figure 4.9 for analysis. In addition, when the parents said that they had no expectations about certain language skills for their children and stated that certain language skills would be developed totally in their children, this category was coded with 0 in Figure 4.9.

FIGURE 4.9-A PARENTS' EXPECTATIONS OF THEIR CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE SKILLS IN L1


FIGURE 4.9-B PARENTS' EXPECTATIONS OF THEIR CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE SKILLS $\mathbb{N}$ L1

$\square$ Speaking
Reading [in Writing

## Parents' expectations of their children's language skills in L1

Figure 4.9 showed that nine parents expected their children's spoken Chinese to be excellent and the rest hoped that they could reach a good level. Generally speaking, the parents had lower demands on their children's reading and writing skills, especially on their writing skills in L1 than on their speaking skills.

The parents hoped that their children's spoken Chinese could be excellent or good because it was good for them to communicate with parents and other Chinese people. Reading and writing were much harder to learn than speaking. Speaking could be learned naturally in the home language environment. Reading and writing needed a lot of practice. Many parents thought that it was unrealistic for their children to know reading and writing very well due to time, social environment and degrees of importance. Five parents said that they would not expect or force their children to learn to read and write Chinese.

Among the fourteen parents, three of them expected their children's three language skills in L1 to be excellent. They thought that it certainly had advantages but no disadvantages for their children to master the language skills. However, along with other parents, they were also worried that their children could not reach this goals in all three skills due to the time and language environment around them.

## Parents' expectations of their children's language skills in $\mathbf{L 2}$

The parents interviewed in the study all expected their children's English skills in speaking, reading, and writing to be excellent. They said that there should not be any differences in the English skills between their children and other native English-speaking children. It seemed that they had such opinions in common with one another. In their minds, English was their children's language tool if the children were going to live in the English-speaking country. Four parents mentioned that they hoped that their children would be successful in their
studies and career, and they did not want to see any English difficulty become a barrier for success.

### 4.2.5 Parents' perceptions of the ways in which children learn L1 and L2

## Parents' perceptions of ways for L1 learning

Parents thought:

- The family environment was the main source for the children to learn L1; (6 parents)
- Parents should keep speaking L1 to their children at home; (7 parents)
- Parents should send their children to private Chinese school to learn L1; (4 parents)
- Parents should read Chinese stories frequently to their children; (2 parents)
- The children could learn L1 from their siblings. (1 parent)
* Total number of responses: 20.
* More than one response per subject possible.


## Parents' perceptions of ways for L 2 learning

- The parents thought that their children learned English mainly in school. They may learn it either from teachers or friends in school; (7 parents)
- Other parents thought about it in a broader perspective and said that their children were living in an English-speaking country, and they could learn English naturally from many sources such as school, friends, society and TV. (7 parents)


### 4.2.6 Parents' perceptions of their roles in the development of their children's

## L1 and L2

All parents perceived their roles in their children' $s$ language development as giving advice, help and instruction. But they differed in "to what degree" and "in which language" they should give such help. Eleven parents said that they should help their children learn L1 by providing a Chinese-speaking environment. Among these parents, three of them explained that they would not do much in helping their children learn English because two of them did not think that their English was very good, and another parent did not think that his child had any problem in learning English. Three other parents among the eleven parents mentioned that they would try to help their children maintain L1, but that they would not force their children to learn L1.

Two other parents thought that parents should provide a good learning environment for their children to learn both languages. Of the two parents, one mentioned that she would help her child learn English, and encourage him to learn Chinese. She said that it was no use forcing the child to learn L1, if the child did not want to.

One parent said that he did not care very much about whether his son would become bilingual or not. He thought that the most important thing for his child was to learn to speak English very well. Parents should teach their child both languages, but mainly should pay attention to the child's English. It was not meaningful for the child to be able to speak and read some Chinese when his English was not good.

In summary, most of the parents attached greater importance to or had higher expectations on their children's speaking skills in L1 than reading and writing skills in L1. They thought that it was unrealistic to expect their children's reading and writing skills in L1 as well as their speaking skills due to the features of Chinese characters and the social
environment. Generally speaking, the parents had the following motives for their wish to help their children retain L1:

## 1. Personal/social motives ( 10 responses)

It would help maintain contact with relatives in home country or Chinese members in the community.
2. Symbolic motives ( 9 responses)

L1 has a symbolic value representing their culture and ethnicity.
3. Intellectual motives (8 responses)

Proficiency in two languages makes a better educated person.
4. Instrumental motives (6 responses)

It would give children greater job opportunities in their future.

In regard to L2 learning, all parents thought that it was very important for their children to learn L2 well in all language skills. It appears that the instrumental motive played the most important part in parents' mind. They all hoped that their children would be successful in their future studies and career in Canada.

In general, parents perceived the family environment to be the main source for their children to learn or maintain L1 and mentioned their important roles in helping their children reach this goal. On the contrary, parents thought that their children could learn English naturally from many sources such as schools, friends and TV.

It seems that most of the children, according to the parents, were excellent or good at listening and speaking skills in L1. However, about 6 children's listening and speaking skills in L2 were considered average or poor.

### 4.3 Language use pattern in the family and daycare

### 4.3.1 The change of language use pattern after the children entered daycare

When being asked whether they have found any change in their children's language use pattern in the home after their children went to daycare, all parents except for two (B, M) reported that their children tended to speak more and more English at home after they entered daycare within 1 to 6 months. The reasons for the different rates of change were due to many factors such as the previous language environment before daycare, the length of residence in Canada, individual differences in learning L2, and personality, etc. It was beyond the scope of this study to further discuss this problem.

### 4.3.2 Present language use pattern in the family and daycare

In this part, a picture of the current language use pattern in both L1 and L2 between the parents and their children is presented. The parents were asked to provide information concerning the rough proportion of the L1 and L2 usage among the parents and their children in the home and in school.

The figures shown in Table 4.1 were the parents' estimate of the proportion of L1 usage in the home and school. They may not be very accurate due to respondents' inability to recall and to the way intervening events and experience color recollections. However, they did show the main trend of the perceived present family language use pattern in L1 and L2.

TABLE 4.1-A THE PROPORTION OF L1 USAGE

|  | A <br> $\%$ | B <br> $\%$ | C <br> $\%$ | D <br> $\%$ | E <br> $\%$ | F <br> $\%$ | G <br> $\%$ |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| L1 Among Parents | 90 | 95 | 95 | 95 | 99 | 90 | 98 |
| L1 Used by <br> Parents to Child | 90 | 80 | 95 | 90 | 50 | 85 | 95 |
| L1 Used by <br> Child to Parents | 70 | 80 | 75 | 85 | 50 | 75 | 95 |
| L1 Used by <br> Child in School | 0 | 0 | 10 | 5 | 20 | 5 | 0 |

TABLE 4.1-B THE PROPORTION OF L1 USAGE

|  | H <br> $\%$ | $\mathbf{I}$ <br> $\%$ | J <br> $\%$ | K <br> $\%$ | $\mathbf{L}$ <br> $\%$ | M <br> $\%$ | $\mathbf{N}$ <br> $\%$ |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| L1 Among Parents | 99 | 90 | 80 | 100 | 95 | 100 | 90 |
| L1 Used by <br> Parents to Child | 90 | 90 | 80 | 90 | 90 | 100 | 20 |
| L1 Used by <br> Child to Parents | 50 | 80 | 5 | 5 | 90 | 99 | 0 |
| L1 Used by <br> Child in School | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 |

## Language among parents

Table 4.1-A \& B showed that all of the parents except J family spoke L1 at least $90 \%$ of the time among themselves in the home. Two families used Shanghai dialect, and one family used native Taiwanese language. Most parents said that they felt natural and comfortable speaking L1 in the home. One parent mentioned that they spoke L1 on purpose because they hoped that their child would speak L1 in the home.

Some of the parents described the circumstances in which they felt like speaking English words or sentences. In general, they liked speaking English when they wanted to say the words they learned in Canada, or the things that happened here and which they thought could not be expressed as well well as in Chinese.

## Language used by parents to child

It is evident from Table 4.1 that most of the parents in the study were speaking Chinese over $80 \%$ of the time with their children in the home, except for two cases ( $\mathrm{E}, \mathrm{N}$ ). Among them, some parents made great efforts to provide a Chinese-speaking environment in the home. The following were some examples:
"I insisted on speaking L1 with my son because I'm afraid that he would lose L1 after he entered daycare." (C-mother)
" His father and I feel worried that he would lose his L1. We often helped him when he could not find suitable words in Chinese by translating English to Chinese for him. We pushed him to speak L1 at home."(H-mother)
"We heard others' experience. We were told that our children have already been in school and speak English all the time there. So we do not need to be worried
about their English. When they come back home, if we did not talk with them in L1, they would forget it very soon. A few of our friends' kids had such experience. Their kids often responded to their parents in English. We spoke L1 at home on purpose." (I-father)

For those two parents (E,N) who spoke no more than $50 \%$ of L1 with their children at home, the following explanations were given:

- The children tended to respond to their parents in English even though the parents spoke Chinese to them; (N)
- Occasionally the children could not understand well when their parents spoke Chinese to them. So the parents had to change and use more English; (N)
- After the children entered daycare or kindergarten, the parents hoped to help their children adapt to school quickly. Therefore, they spoke English to their children and then translated it into Chinese for the children to understand. (E)

It was worth mentioning that one mother found her child's English improving so fast and tending to use simple and practical words after her child came back from daycare, so she intended to practice English with her child for about six months. During these six months, she used about $40 \%$ of English with her child until she found that her child's Chinese language became poorer and poorer. Now the mother changed to use Chinese $90 \%$ of the time in the home and also asked her child to try to speak Chinese at home (K-mother).

Although most of the parents were using L1 with their children in the home recently, a few of them expressed their worry about their children's L1. They found that it was getting harder and harder for their children to keep speaking L1 in the home. They mentioned a couple of things that they thought would cause such difficulty:

- After the children entered daycare or school, the time spent in Chinese-speaking environment could not compare with the time spent in English-speaking environment (see Table 4.1). Only occasionally a few children had some chances of speaking Chinese in daycare. That usually happened when the children were newcomers to daycare or they met other Chinese children there;
- In reality, the children only had a limited time with their parents when they came back home from daycare. However, many of the parents were very busy with their works and studies. Although some parents hoped that their children could keep speaking Chinese at home, it was hard for these parents to put it into action and help their children develop their Chinese language skills. Unfortunately, some of the children were tending to speak less and less $\mathrm{L1}$ at home;
- In the past, e.g., before entering daycare or within the first few months of being in daycare, the children had a few Chinese-speaking peers in the neighborhood or in the daycare. Now these peers all tended to speak English at home. It made it harder for parents to ask their children to keep on speaking Chinese at home.


## Language used by child to parents

Evidently, the proportion of L1 used by the children to their parents varied to some extent. Generally speaking, most of the parents reported that there was a trend for their children to speak more and more English when they came home from daycare. In most cases, the children would use some English words or simple sentences mixed with Chinese when they talked with their parents, or when they learned some English words here and they could not find the suitable Chinese words to replace them. Sometimes they tended to use English when they tried to describe what had happened in daycare or school or what the teachers had said to them. However, there were a few children using English most of the time at home. One child stopped speaking Chinese with his parents ( N -father). According to his parents, he only
spoke some Chinese with his grandparents who had little knowledge of English when he went to visit them.

## Language used by child to siblings

Because only four families had more than one child, the figures of the language used by the children to their siblings were not put in a table. Three of these parents reported that their children used more than $80 \%$ of Chinese when talking to their siblings. One parent said that her child only used English when talking to his brother.

In general, all of the children were quite sensitive about the situation regarding when they should speak Chinese or English. Their parents reported that their children knew that they should speak Chinese to Chinese-speaking people or to their grandparents who could not speak English well. Most of the children would transfer to use English whenever they met English-speaking people or when they went outside. For example, one child told her grandmother not to speak Chinese when they went out and said to her grandmother " This is Canada." (F).

In summary, parents in all families except for one family (J) spoke $90 \%$ of L 1 among themselves in the home. Considering language used by parents to their children, all of the parents except for two cases ( $\mathrm{E}, \mathrm{N}$ ) spoke over $80 \%$ of L 1 with their children in the home. Two parents spoke no more than $50 \%$ of L 1 with their children due to different reasons. In one family, the child could not understand L1 well and tended to refuse to respond to her parents in L1. In the other family, the child's L2 was not good enough to adapt to school. Her parents spoke L2 to her in order to help her improve her English. All of the parents reported that there was a trend for their children to speak more and more English at home. However, the proportion of L1 used by the children to their parents varied to some extent. Nine children were using over $70 \%$ of L 1 when talking to their parents. Two were using $50 \%$. Three (J, K, N) were using $0 \%$ to $5 \%$ of L1.

However, three parents ( $\mathrm{F}, \mathrm{I}, \mathrm{N}$ ) reported that in the presence of their monolingual grandparents, the children had to change to use L1. The parents who had visited China with their children all pointed out that their children's language proficiency in L1 had improved greatly and there had been a change in their L1 usage at home after they returned home to Canada from China.

### 4.4 Family practice on the development of children's L1 and L2

### 4.4.1 Parents' $s$ reactions to their children's language use pattern change since they

## entered daycare

## How did parents feel and respond to the changes?

Six parents said that when their children spoke L2 to them, they tended to respond in L2 too (A, D, E, F, J, N). They felt that:

- Their children were still using L1 most of the time at home, and their children's L1 was still very good. The parents did not need to feel worried about their children's L1 now; (A, D)
- At present, the children's main difficulty was L2 but not L1. The parents would like to help their children first learn L2 well ; (E, F)
- Sometimes the parents had to respond in L2 because the child could not understand them well when they spoke L1 to him; (J)
- The parents unconsciously responded to their child in L2 when the change happened three years ago. Gradually they found that their child tended not to speak L1 at home.

Now the parents were trying to use L1 with their child but they could not insist on doing it because the child always spoke and replied to them in L 2 . (N)

Six parents reported that they responded to their children in L1 mostly at home (C, G, H, I, K, L). Their cases were a little bit different from one another:

- Parent C felt that their child's L2 was not very good at that time. Sometimes the child could not find the suitable words in L2. So parents often responded to him in L1 and helped him understand the meaning in L1 when the child spoke L2 to them; (C)
- Parent G felt glad that her child could speak L2 at home now. She thought if her child could not understand or speak L2, he would feel different in daycare. Now that she found that her child was at ease in daycare, she preferred to speak L1 to him at home, only sometimes she responded in L2;
- Parent I often spoke L1 to her child at home. But sometimes she also responded in L2;
- Parent L thought that their child's two languages were both good. At home, the parents chose to speak L1 with their child;
- Parent K recollected that when her child tended to use more and more L2 at home, her husband and she did not care so much about it and often responded in L 2 too. Soon after they found that their child's L2 progressed so fast and gradually the child could not speak L1 well. Now the parents both responded to their child in L1 mostly. The child could understand them in L1 but replied to them in L2 mostly.

Two parents reported that they did not find much change in their children's language use pattern since they entered daycare (B, M). Parent B said that they tended to use mixed languages before, and now they still used mixed languages with their child. Parent $M$ said that her child still used L1 with the parents at home.

## What have parents done or planned to do to help their children maintain L1?

Five parents said that they have not done anything yet (A, D, E, F, N). They gave the following explanations:

- Parents A and D did not find any problems in their children's L1. The children's L1 was still good and they still used L1 most of the time at home. Parent A said that his attitudes would depend on the development of his child's two languages. If the child tended to speak L2 most of the time in the future, he would use L1 with him;
- Parents E and F said that they did not see any difficulty in their children's L1 speaking skills. They thought that the recent main difficulty for their children was L2. They would like their children to first learn L2 well ;
- Parent N said that they realized that they were a bit late in doing something to help their child maintain L1. They decided to try to speak more L1 at home with their child.

Nine parents reported that they did something to help their children maintain L1. Generally speaking, these parents were all trying to provide a L1 home environment for their children. They insisted on speaking L1 to their children and asked their children to speak L1 to them at home; they helped their children to transfer the meaning from L2 to L1 when the children spoke or watched TV; they bought L1 books and read to their children; they borrowed L1 videos and tapes for their children; they sent their children to Chinese class. A description in detail about the home environment that parents had provided for their children would be presented in section 4.3.2.

## The difficulties that parents have met in helping their children maintain L1

Six parents reported that they met with difficulties in helping their children maintain L1 $(H, J$, $\mathrm{K}, \mathrm{L}, \mathrm{M}, \mathrm{N}$ ). The difficulties lay in:

- Whatever efforts parents made, their children tended to speak L2 at home; (H, J)
- The child had no interest in speaking or learning L1; (N)
- The children had difficulties speaking or transferring to L1 to different degrees; (K, L)
- The child did not like attending Chinese class in his spare time. (M)

They thought that the difficulties were mainly caused by the following factors:

- The children were living in an English-speaking social environment. They spent most of their time in daycare or school; (H, J, K, L, N)
- Time spent in the home with their parents was limited for children. Furthermore, some of these parents were busy with their work and could not find much time to help their children; ( $\mathrm{H}, \mathrm{N}$ )


### 4.4.2 The language environment that parents provided for their children recently

In this part, the language environment in the home is investigated. The focus was on three categories: 1) The number of books in L1 and L2 presented in the home; 2) The frequency of reading these books for children; 3) The frequency of watching TV and videos in the home.

All of the parents were asked to provide information about the number of books present in their home. Only a few could give the exact number of books, so all of them were asked whether there were more than ten books in either language. When the number was less than ten, they were asked to give the approximate number.

Data related to the second category were coded with "often", "sometimes", "seldom", and "never". When the parents reported that they read to their children on a regular basis, i.e. every day recently, the data was coded with "often". If it was on an irregular basis, the data
was coded with "sometimes". A few parents reported that they read to their children on an irregular basis before, but they rarely did it recently due to various reasons, the data was coded with "seldom".

TABLE 4.2-A THE NUMBER OF BOOKS AND FREQUENCY OF READING BOOKS

|  | A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Number of Books in L1 | 0 | $>10$ | $>10$ | $>10$ | 0 | $>10$ | $>10$ |
| Reading in L1 | never | often | often | sometimes | never | sometimes | often |
| Number of Books in L2 | $>10$ | $>10$ | $>10$ | $>10$ | $>10$ | $>10$ | $1-2$ |
| Reading in L2 | seldom | often | often | sometimes | often | sometimes | seldom |

TABLE 4.2-B THE NUMBER OF BOOKS AND FREQUENCY OF READING BOOKS

|  | H | I | J | K | L | M | N |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Number of Books in L1 | $>10$ | $>10$ | $>10$ | $>10$ | $>10$ | $>10$ | $>10$ |
| Reading in L1 | often | seldom | often | seldom | sometimes | often | seldom |
| Number of Books in L2 | $>10$ | $>10$ | $>10$ | $>10$ | $>10$ | $>10$ | $>10$ |
| Reading in L2 | never | often | often | sometimes | often | often | seldom |

Table 4.2 showed that most parents except for two parents (A, E) provided Chinese books for their children to read. Six parents reported that they often read these books to their children. Three said that they sometimes read to their children. Other three parents said they seldom read to their children.

During the interview, the parents expressed various considerations about providing a language environment in the home. Their opinions were summarized below:

- A few parents hoped that their children could speak Chinese language well in the future. In the meantime, they thought that their children's English needed improving too. So they sometimes or often read to their children in both languages; (C, D, L, M)
- One parent hoped that his child could speak two languages well in the future. However, his wife's and his English was not good enough, so they seldom read English books to their child. Furthermore, they were too busy to help their child learn any Chinese; ( N )
- Another parent thought that her English was poor and could not help her child learn English. So she helped her child learn Chinese and read Chinese at home; (G)
- One parent would like her child to first learn English well. She thought that she should help her child adapt to the new environment quickly, since her child entered daycare not long ago. She did not provide any Chinese books for her child at home; (E)
- A couple of parents said that they did some reading in Chinese before. Since their children entered daycare or kindergarten, teachers usually assigned one book each day or each week for the parents to read for their children. Recently they tended to read more and more English books at home. In addition, most of the Chinese books had been read several times, and their children lost interest in them; (I, K)
- One parent reported that she only read Chinese books to her child. She said:
" I would like to read Chinese books to him at home. He could understand

Chinese very well. At the time when he entered daycare, he could not speak one word in English. Even in this case, I continued reading Chinese books to him at night, because I am not worried about the development of his English. He is involved in an English-speaking environment, he could catch up very fast later. On the contrary, if we ignored teaching him Chinese now, it would be very hard for him to pick it up later. Many parents told me that their children were getting older now. They tended to speak less and less Chinese. I think if I did not help my child make a good foundation when he was still young, it would be harder for him to learn it when he grows up." (H)

In Table 4.3, the frequency for the children to watch TV and video in both languages in the home is presented. Generally speaking, when the children watched TV and videos for half an hour to three hours on the average per day, it was coded with "often"; If the average hour was half an hour to less than three hours per week, it was coded with "sometimes"; If the children watched TV and videos on an irregular basis, or rarely watched them, it was coded with "seldom".

TABLE 4.3-A FREQUENCY OF WATCHING TV AND VIDEOS IN L1 AND L2

|  | A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Seldom |  | L1 | L1 | L1 | L1 | L1\&L2 |  |
| Sometimes | L1 |  |  |  |  |  | L1 |
| Often | L2 | L2 | L2 | L2 | L2 |  | L2 |

TABLE 4.3-B FREQUENCY OF WATCHING TV AND VIDEOS IN L1 AND L2

|  | H | I | J | K | L | M | N |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| seldom | L1 |  |  | L1 |  | L1 | L1 |
| Sometimes |  | L1 | L1 |  | L1 |  |  |
| Often | L2 | L2 | L2 | L2 | L2 | L2 | L2 |

According to the parents, most of their children watched TV and videos out of their own interest. It is evident in Table 4.3 that more than half of the children seldom watched Chinese TV and videos. When being asked about the reasons, the parents gave the following explanations:

- There was little access to watch Chinese TV and videos at home;
- Sometimes the parents borrowed or bought some Chinese videos, they did not think the programs could be compared with English programs in numbers and in quality;
- It was a fact that many of the Chinese videos here were Cantonese speaking. Most parents felt it was hard to understand them;
- Some of the parents were too busy to watch TV or video in either language. Sometimes they would rather let their children watch TV out of their own interest.

Among these parents, only one of them mentioned that recently he borrowed a Chinese video with the purpose that his child could get some knowledge of Chinese history and culture.

In summary, as previously mentioned, there was a tendency for children to speak more and more English at home after they entered daycare. The parents' reaction to such change was quite different. A few parents reported that they did not do anything to help their child maintain L1. These parents often responded to their children in L2. It seems that sometimes parents' reactions to the change depended on their children's language proficiency in L1 and L2. Four parents (A, D, E, F) felt that their children's L1 was still good, so they did not need to be worried about their children's L1 or to do anything to help their children maintain L1. Two of them ( $\mathrm{E}, \mathrm{F}$ ) thought that recently the main difficulty for their children was L2, so they would like their children to first learn L2 well.

Meanwhile, most of the parents reported that they made efforts to help their children maintain L1. These parents insisted on speaking L1 and responded to their children in L1 at home. They also bought Chinese books and did some reading in Chinese. Six of them reported that they met with difficulties while doing so and they thought that English-speaking social environment was the main factor for the difficulties.

## Chapter 5

## Discussions, Implications, and Recommendations

### 5.1 Discussions of the study

This was an exploratory, and comprehensive investigation dealing with what Chinese immigrant parents thought and did in regard to their children's bilingual development in the home.

Although raising children bilingually has been the object of many earlier studies, the present one is unique in the following respects:

1. The starting point was parental attitudes and family practice, which are of crucial importance when raising children bilingually. Children to whom a minority language is transmitted by their parents will enjoy the benefits of bilingualism.
2. The study focused on one particular minority group, in contrast to most earlier studies which focused on heterogeneous groups. Specifically, it examined Chinese immigrant parents' attitudes and beliefs toward their children 's bilingual development and their family practice.
3. The subjects of this study were all from non-mixed language families where both parents in each family were foreign-born and had received a relatively high level of education in China before they had immigrated to Canada. This is in contrast with earlier studies which focused on mixed-language families or subjects with
varied educational backgrounds ranging from a low to high level.
4. In this study, the children in each family were all between three and six years of age, in contrast to most earlier studies which looked at elementary school children and teenagers. The children in this study all had Chinese as their L1.
5. The multiple case study approach was employed for analyzing the results of the study. Some common characteristics of the subjects and their individual characteristics were both explored in the study.

The next section of this chapter is organized in accordance with the general questions which directed the study. The findings are also discussed in light of some insights which emerged from the study.

## 1. How did Chinese parents perceive their children's bilingual development in the family domain ? (4.2.1-4.2.6 speak to this research question)

Generally speaking, most parents ranked L1 learning or maintenance, especially in speaking skills for their children very important or important. Their motives for wishing their children to retain L1 can be put into the following categories: personal/social motives, symbolic motives, intellectual motives, and instrumental motives. It appears that personal/ social motives ranked highest in these parents' motives for helping their children retain L1. One explanation for this may be that these parents are all first-generation immigrants. According to their reports, all of them still retained close relationships with their relatives in China, which made them alert to their children's language skills in L1, especially in their speaking skills. Another possibility is that Chinese people tend to have a great attachment to their cultural roots. The parents do not like to see their off-springs isolate themselves from their home country or from other Chinese members in the community.

All parents without exception ranked L2 learning for their children very important. Instrumental motives played the most important role in parents' consideration about L2 learning for their children, since they all hoped that their children would be successful in their future studies and work in Canada.

It seems that most parents had higher expectations for their children's speaking skills in L1 than reading and writing skills because of the features of Chinese characters and the social environment. It is a fact that learning to read and to write in Chinese requires a great deal of time and practice. Most parents felt that it was difficult either for them to teach Chinese within a limited time or for their children to learn it in an English-speaking social environment.

In general, parents perceived their roles in their children's bilingual development as giving advice, help and instruction. Most parents perceived the family environment to be the main source for their children to learn L1, and mentioned their own important roles in helping their children maintain L1. On the contrary, parents thought that their children could learn L2 naturally from many sources such as schools, soceity, and friends.

## 2. What is the present language use pattern in the home? (4.3.1-4.32 speak to this research question)

It appears that parents in all families except for one family spoke over $90 \%$ of L 1 among themselves in their homes. Considering language used by parents to their children, all of the parents except for two cases spoke over $80 \%$ of L1 with their children.

Wong Fillmore (1991) found in her study that language minority children encounter powerful forces for assimilation as soon as they enter English-speaking classrooms. The younger children are, when they encounter these assimilative forces, the greater the effect on their L1. This also seemed to be true in this study. The children in this study had been in
daycare for about three months to three years. According to their parents' reports, there was a tendency for their children to use more and more L2 at home once they were in daycare. However, the proportion of L1 used by the children to their parents varied to some extent. Nine children were using over $70 \%$ of L 1 when talking to their parents. Two were using $50 \%$. Three were using $0 \%$ to $5 \%$ of L1.

The results of earlier studies have shown that there is a relationship between parental nativity and minority language use (DeVries \& Vallee, 1980; Veltman, 1981, 1983). People brought up in their home country are more likely to speak L1 than people brought up abroad. In this study, all parents were brought up in their home country. However, the language use patterns between parents and their children varied to some extent. It can be inferred that parental nativity may play an important role in language retention of L 1 , but it is not the only factor influencing minority language maintenance at home. Other factors such as parental attitudes toward two languages, institutional support (i.e. heritage language education in school), societal forces (i.e. media, press, radio and TV) also have great influence on L1 usage in the home. Furthermore, there is evidence from this study that interactions with Chinese-speaking grandparents and home country visits were two other factors that helped the children maintain and improve their L1 proficiency.

## 3. What language environment and strategies have parents provided or used in the home ? (4.4.1-4.4.2 speak to this question)

As previously mentioned, most parents perceived the family environment to be the main source for their children to learn L1. On the contrary, they perceived that their children could learn L2 from many sources such as school, society, and TV. Most parents reported that they made efforts to help their children maintain L1 at home. They insisted on speaking L1 and responded to their children in L 1 at home; they bought Chinese books and did some reading
in Chinese for their children; they borrowed or bought Chinese tapes and videos for their childrne to listen and watch; they sent their children to Chinese class. However, most of them met with difficulties while doing this. They perceived that the main factor causing the difficulties was the English-speaking social environment.

It is evident in this study, that some parents placed a higher priority on helping their children maintain L1 than others. For example, upon the change of their children's language use pattern in the home once in daycare, the parents' reaction varied to some extent. Nine parents reported that they had helped their children maintain L1. Five parents said that they did not do anything to help their children retain L1. It seems that these parents' reaction depended on their children's language proficiency in L1 and L2. When their children's L1 was still good and L2 needed improving, some parents (A, D, E, F) tended to respond to their children in L2 and did not do anything to help their children maintain L1, because they were not worried about their children's L1. Parents (E, F) hoped that their children would first learn L2 well. According to parent E's report, she was using $50 \%$ of L2 when talking to her child, and her child was using the same amount of $L 2$ when speaking to her.

It is not strange for these parents to take such actions. "Language planning on the societal level reflects the values of those in power, and this power relationship is also reflected in the language choice in the family" (Siren, 1991). All of the parents in this study expressed the hope that their children would be successful in their future studies and work in Canada, which motivated them to help their children first learn L2 well.

However, it is a well-known fact that people usually continue with language habits once they are established (Grosjean, 1982). This was proven in the K and N families where their children were fluent in Chinese before entering preschool. When the children in these two families began using more and more English at home, their parents did not seem to care very much and did not do anything to help their children maintain L1, because at that time, the children's L1 was still good. However, after one year or so, the parents found that their
children either had difficulty speaking L1 or refused to speak and respond in L1 at home. The children in these two families ( $\mathrm{K}, \mathrm{N}$ ) were now only using $5 \%$ and $0 \%$ of L 1 at home. The experience of these two families shows that the other Chinese parents must be cautious taking similar actions.

## 4. What are the main factors affecting the parents' attitudes, beliefs, and actions involved in the above three questions? (the factors emerged through an analysis of the above three questions. They underlay the findings in 4.2.1-4.4.2)

Factors that appeared to emerge as underlying the parents' beliefs and practices are tentatively offered below. These parents appeared to view L1 maintenance, especially speaking as very important for their children. It seemed that personal/social values ranked highest in their wish to help their children maintain L1. They wished them to maintain ties with their L1-speaking family, community and cultural heritage. They believed that speaking was the most direct way to express themselves and to communicate with others, and it might be more easily achieved in the area of oracy than in literacy. In addition, they thought that their children were living in a L1-speaking home environment, they should take the advantage to learn to speak L1 well. Therefore, they often spoke to their children in their L1 and expected them to respond in the language of the home. Instrumental motive ranked a bit lower than social motive, which suggested that parents of young children may feel that their children are too young to benefit from bilingualism.

All parents thought it was very important for their children to learn L2 in all language skills. Instrumental motives played the most important role. They hoped that their children would be successful in their future studies and work in Canada. As a result, sometimes some parents tended to help their children first learn L2 well when their children's L2 needed improving.

As mentioned above, parents believed the home to be the primary source for L 1 input. They did not appear to see the role of preschool and later school in sending positive or negative messages to be a factor, or the role of L 1 or play with their bilingual peers. Perhaps parents need to be helped to become more aware of the larger societal influences for good or ill that may be brought to bear on their children's bilingual development. In turn, they may need guidance in developing strategies to respond to these external forces.

### 5.2 Implications for educational practice

The findings from this study have provided some insights and implications for educators working with Chinese parents to achieve the benefits of bilingualism with their children and help them develop this bilingualism at an early age.

It appears that some parents had some misbeliefs about bilingualism or a lack of information about the benefits of bilingualsm. Parents D and F thought that learning two languages at the same time might cause confusion in their children's brains, and as a result, would delay the development of both languages. Parents $A$ and $K$ thought that it was unimportant for their children to learn L1, since their children's future job prospects were in Canada, thus, they should learn English well. Therefore, it is the educators' responsibility to inform parents of recent research findings in regard to children's bilingual development and the benefits of being bilingual in Canada.

Wong Fillmore (1991) found that as immigrant children learn English, the patterns of language use change in their homes. As stated earlier, the younger they are, when they learn English, the greater the effect. This is especially problematic for children in the preschool level. At this age, children have simply not reached a stable enough command of their L1 not to be affected by contact with a new language that is promoted as heavily as English is in the society. The consequences of losing L1 could affect their social, emotional and educational
development as well as the integrity of their families. It is evident from this study that some of the parents ( $A, D, E, F, K, N$ ) did not realize the importance of helping their children maintain L1 when their children were young. Parents need to be informed of the serious consequences of not providing a L1-speaking language environment for their children at home. This could result in their children losing their ability to use their first language.

In this study, all parents perceived the family environment to be the main source for their children to learn L1, and that parents played an important role in providing the L1speaking environment. It seems that many of the parents in this study did a great deal to help their children maintain L1 by insisting on speaking L1 at home, buying and reading Chinese books, borrowing Chinese story tapes and video tapes, sending children to Chinese class. However, two parents (H, J) said that their children tended to use only 50\% and 5\% of L1 at home although they had tried hard to insist that they speak L 1 to their children at home and read Chinese books at night. The parents claimed that the English-speaking environment was the main factor for this difficulty. Moreover, the time was limited for their children to learn L1 at home, since most of the children's time was spent at preschool and the parents were very busy with their work and studies. Many other parents may feel as discouraged as these two parents when trying to help their children retain L1. However, parents need to be informed that raising children bilingually requires a great deal of effort from them. Research findings suggest that all factors being equal, families who provide consistent input are more likely than those who do not to have children who actively use their L1 (Arnberg, 1987). In addition, parents also need to be informed of the efficient strategies needed to raise children bilingually. This can be done by giving them some examples of how other families have successfully raised their children bilingually. Preschool educators might be able to help parents in this manner, or provide them with printed information.

Some parents also mentioned that Chinese-speaking peers in preschool could contribute to their children's L1 maintenance. Siren (1991) reported in her study that home-
language support in preschool can contribute to L1 maintenance. Teachers in preschools must be made aware of the benefits of bilingualism and work with these parents to encourage and help their children retain L1.

Two parents (K, M) said that their children did not like to attend Chinese class. One reason was that it was difficult to learn Chinese reading and writing. Another reason was that the class was not organized well enough to make the children feel interested in learning L1. It is recommended that teacher training courses need be provided to Chinese teachers teaching such classes.

Two parents (I, K) mentioned that they could not find enough resource books in the Chinese language. Therefore, the few books they had were read to their children several times. Their children lost interest in listening to them again and again. As a result, they seldom read Chinese books to their children now. Parent J said that though she often bought Chinese books and read them to her child, she felt that the few Chinese books she could get here could not be compared with the high numbers of English books found in stores. After several rereadings of the same books, her child would lose interest in them. Therefore, raising children bilingually will also require the attention and support from society. Public libraries, school libraries as well as bookstores should attempt to help fill this need. Dual language books could also be provided. Hopefully, as Canada continues to grow as a multicultural society, people in this society will pay more attention to the bilingual development of children from different ethnic groups by providing more and more resource materials for these different ethnic group children.

Since many individual families represent specific features concerning parents' attitudes, and family language environment and practice, it is necessary to further explore individual families in order to better understand specific questions that emerged from this study. For example, in family $M$, their child had been in daycare and kindergarten for about three years. This parent reported that her child still used $99 \%$ of L1 at home. Further studies
exploring families of this type (where high levels of L1 were maintained), the following questions need to be implemented to explore: "What was language environment in his family?", "Who was playing the main role in helping the child retain L1?", and "What language strategies did the parents use with their child?". Such findings could be used to help parents wishing to maintain their children's L1 in the home.

### 5.3 Recommendations for further research

In this section, suggestions and recommendations are made in light of limitations of the study and the implications of the findings.

The interview method used in this study proved to be an effective instrument for obtaining information concerning how parents perceived their children's bilingual development and how they raised their children bilingually. Through interviews, it was possible for parents to describe various aspects of their children's bilingual development as accurately as possible. However, in terms of parents' assessment of their children's language proficiency in L1 and L2, the parents' actions, and the language use pattern in the home, an interview method alone may not be adequate for describing them accurately. In addition, the reliability and accuracy of parents' reports may be doubtful due to the respondents' inability to recall. It is suggested that the interview method should be supplemented by direct observations in the homes. Moreover, other measures such as oral and listening measures of the child's language proficiency in L1 and L2 might also be necessary in future studies.

As Williamson (1991) stated, research into any form of human behavior is subject to the problems of validity and reliability (p.138). It is fair to ask as to what degree these samples and interviews are valid and reliable. It is conceivable that individuals favorable to the retention of minority languages or conscious of the language question were somewhat
more likely to agree to be interviewed. In addition, all parents in this study were brought up in their home country and received a relatively high level of education before they immigrated to Canada. Therefore, the information may not reflect the view of the general population concerning children's bilingual development. Furthermore, the number of subjects was small and the subjects had special features such as their educational level, making generalizations of this study to a broader population of the same minority group or to other minority groups is limited. Since most of the subjects in this study had university degrees in China and came from Mainland China, they do not represent the whole population of the Chinese community since a large proportion have come to Canada from Hong Kong and some from Taiwan. Therefore, a stratified random sampling technique in future studies on a larger scale in terms of the population's educational level and homeland should be applied to eliminate this shortcoming.

It seems that the school language environment plays an important role in children's L1 maintenance. Siren (1991) reported that when mothers speak a minority language exclusively to their children, even a small amount of home-language support in preschool can contribute to the L1 maintenance. In any further study, the language environment provided for children should be considered not only in the family domain but also in school context. For example, researchers may explore the following: "How many Chinese-speaking children are in the class?", "What are the teachers' attitudes toward children's L1 maintenance and L2 learning?", "Do teaching materials reflect multiculturalism?", "Are bilingual materials available?".

Earlier studies have shown that the presence of siblings can make a big difference in a child's L1 maintenance. Gorman (1971) reported that monolingual interaction between the child and older siblings is relatively rare. It seems that certain common patterns of language use are evident. L1 is used more frequently than L2 in conversations with parents and less frequently in conversations with siblings. In this study, among the four families which had
more than one child, parents in three families (C, I, M) reported that their first-born children used $80 \%$ of L1 with their siblings. Parents in the other family (N) said that their child always used L2 with his sibling. According to these parents, the percent of L1 used by their child to them were $75 \%, 80 \%, 99 \%$ and $0 \%$ respectively in the four families. No conclusive evidence was found by the researcher to support the previous findings. In future studies, a more extensive comparative study based on a larger number of families having more than one child would be required to explore in this area.

Earlier studies in different contexts also yielded contradictory results regarding possible sex differences in attitudes toward L1 maintenance. Veltman (1983) found that among foreign-born parents both in Australia and in the United States, women retained the use of the L1 as the principal language to a greater extent than men. This seems to contradict the findings of other researchers who claimed that women tend to be more favorably disposed towards prestigious languages than men (Edwards, 1985; Gal, 1979). In this study, the researcher did not separate the subjects concerning their gender differences when analyzing the data due to the small amount of subjects involved in the study. In future studies intending to explore the sex differences in attitudes toward children's L1 maintenance, a larger sample including approximately equivalent numbers of mothers and fathers should be used.

In summary, raising children bilingually has been shown to require a great deal of effort from parents. Earlier research has shown that the results for the children's L1 proficiency parallel the results for the parental language transmission intentions and efforts in the home. In addition, school support and societal support such as mass media, press and TV, combined with parents' efforts can greatly contribute to the maintenance of children's L1. Moreover, the presence of monolingual grandparents in the family and home country visits have been shown to be two more main factors in helping children maintain L1. It is hoped that the findings of this study will provide some insights for educators when educating parents in the benefits of bilingualism and also for the parents who intend to raise their

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## Appendices

## A Interview Schedule

## I. Background Information

## parents

1. How many years have you been in Canada?

Years $\qquad$
2. How much education do you have ?

Father: in China $\qquad$ in Canada $\qquad$
Mother: in China $\qquad$ in Canada $\qquad$
3. What do you do now in Canada? Father: $\qquad$ Mother: $\qquad$
4. How would you rate your knowledge of the English language?

Very good Good Average Poor Very poor
5. Do you plan to remain in Canada? Yes $\qquad$ No $\qquad$ Not certain $\qquad$
6. Do you still have a close relationship with your relatives and friends in China?

Yes $\qquad$ No $\qquad$
If yes, in which way: visit $\qquad$ by phone $\qquad$ by letter $\qquad$ other $\qquad$
7. Child: age ___ birth order ___ gender ___ years in day care(preschool) $\qquad$

## II. Present Language Use Pattern in the Family

1. How often do you use English and Chinese respectively when you and your husband talk to each other?
English (\%)___ Chinese (\%)
2. How often do you use English and Chinese respectively when talking to your children?

English (\%)
Chinese (\%) $\qquad$
3. How often does your child use English and Chinese respectively with :
a. you English (\%) $\qquad$ Chinese (\%) $\qquad$
b. his/her siblings

English (\%) $\qquad$ Chinese (\%)
c. his/her friends English (\%) Chinese (\%)

At school $\qquad$
$\qquad$
In the neighbourhood $\qquad$
$\qquad$
4. In which situations do you find that your child likes to speak Chinese?
5. In which situations do you find that your child likes to speak English?

## III. Language Environment in the Home

1. How many Chinese books are there in your home for your child?

## 0

$\qquad$ 1-5 $\qquad$ 5-10 $\qquad$ above 10 $\qquad$
2. How many English books are there in your home for your child?

0 $\qquad$ $1-5$ $\qquad$ 5-10 $\qquad$ above 10 $\qquad$
3. How often do you read to your child :

Often Sometimes Seldom Never
a. an English book $\qquad$
b. a Chinese book

Probe: Would you tell me why you often (don't often) read to your child in English or Chinese?
4. About how many hours on the average does your family watch Chinese videos or TV? hours per week $\qquad$ hours per month $\qquad$ other $\qquad$
Probe: Would you tell me why(why not) your family watches Chinese videos or TV ?
5. About how many hours on the average does your family watch English videos or TV ? hours per day $\qquad$ hours per week $\qquad$ other $\qquad$
Probe: Would you tell me why(why not) your family watches English videos or TV ?

## IV. Parents' Attitudes toward their Child's Development of Bilingualism

1. How important do you feel it is for your child to speak Chinese: Very important Important Unimportant Very unimportant to read Chinese: Very important Important Unimportant Very unimportant to write Chinese: Very important Important Unimportant Very unimportant

Would you please tell me why you think so?
2. How important do you feel it is for your child
to speak English: Very important Important Unimportant Very unimportant
to read English: Very important Important Unimportant Very unimportant
to write English: Very important Important Unimportant Very unimportant

Would you please tell me why you think so?
3. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages for your child to maintain Chinese?
4. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages for your child to learn English ?
5. How good is your child's English?

| listening: | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Very poor |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| speaking: | Excellent | Good |  | Average | Poor |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Would you tell me how you judge it?
6. How good is your child's Chinese?
listening: Excellent Good Average Poor Very poor
speaking: Excellent $\overline{\text { Good }} \overline{\text { Average }} \overline{\text { Poor }} \overline{\text { Very poor }}$

Would you tell me how you judge it?
7. How well do you like them to know English ?
speaking: Excellent Good Average Poor Very Poor
reading: Excellent Good Average Poor Very poor
writing: Excellent Good Average Poor Very poor

Why?
8. How well do you like them to know Chinese ?
speaking: Excellent Good Average Poor Very poor

writing: Excellent Good Average Poor Very poor

Why?
9. In your opinion, how should your child learn to speak English? e.g. at home, at school, from radio/TV, etc. Why do you think so ?
10. In your opinion, how should your child learn to speak Chinese? e.g. at home, at school, from radio/TV, etc. Why do you think so ?
11. Did you find any change in your child's language use pattern at home after he/she went to day care or preschool?
Yes $\qquad$ No $\qquad$ If yes, what changes did you find?
12. What effect did your child learning English have on your family ? e.g. on the language use pattern in your family?
13. How do feel about it and usually how do you respond to this change?
14. Have you done anything to try to help your child maintain Chinese ? e.g. buy books, private lessons or schools, travel abroad, etc.
15. Do you have any difficulty helping your child maintain Chinese?

Yes $\qquad$ No $\qquad$
If yes, what are the difficulties?
16. What do you think is the main reason for meeting such difficulty?
17. What do you think parents should do in the development of their child's Chinese and English learning?
18. What else do you like to tell me about your child ?

## B Initial Interview Schedule

## I. Background Information

parents:

1. How many years have you been in Canada? Years $\qquad$
2. How many years of schooling do you have?

Father: in China: $\qquad$ in Canada

Mother: in China: $\qquad$ in Canada $\qquad$
3. What do you do now in Canada?

Father: $\qquad$ Mother: $\qquad$
4. How would you rate your knowledge of the English language?
$\begin{array}{lllllll}\text { Very good } & 5 & 4 & 3 & 2 & 1 & \text { Very poor }\end{array}$
5. Do you plan to remain in Canada?

Yes ___ No ___ Not certain ___
6. Do you keep close relationship with your relatives and friends in China ?

Yes $\qquad$ No $\qquad$
If yes, in which way: visit $\qquad$ by phone $\qquad$ by letter $\qquad$ other $\qquad$
7. Child: age ___ birth order $\qquad$ gender $\qquad$ years in day care(preschool) $\qquad$

## II. Present Language Use Pattern in the Family

1. Which language do you use more often when you and your husband talk to each other?

English $\qquad$ Chinese $\qquad$ the same amount $\qquad$
2. Which language do you use more often when talking to your children?

English $\qquad$ Chinese $\qquad$ the same amount $\qquad$
3. Which language does your child use more often with :
a. you

English $\qquad$ Chinese $\qquad$ the same amount $\qquad$
b. his/her siblings

English $\qquad$ Chinese $\qquad$ the same amount $\qquad$
c. his/her friends ?

English Chinese the same amount
At school
$\qquad$
4. In which situations do you find that your child likes to speak Chinese?
5. In which situations do you find that your child likes to speak English?

## III. Language Environment in the Home

1. What is the proportion of books in Chinese and English being present in your home for your children?
1/1
$1 / 2$ $\qquad$ $1 / 3$ $\qquad$ other $\qquad$
2. How often do you read to your child?

Very often Often Sometimes Seldom Never
a. an English book $\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$
b. a Chinese book $\qquad$
$\qquad$
$\qquad$ _-_
3. About how many hours on the average does your family watch Chinese videos or TV ? hours per week $\qquad$ hours per month $\qquad$ other $\qquad$
4. About how many hours on the average does your family watch English videos or TV? hours per day $\qquad$ hours per week $\qquad$ other $\qquad$

## IV. Parents Attitudes toward Their Child's Development of Bilingualism

1. How important do you feel it is for your child to maintain Chinese ?
$\begin{array}{lllllll}\text { Very important } & 5 & 4 & 3 & 2 & 1 & \text { Unimportant }\end{array}$
2. How important do you feel it is for your child to learn English?
$\begin{array}{lllllll}\text { Very important } & 5 & 4 & 3 & 2 & 1 & \text { Unimportant }\end{array}$
3. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages for your child to maintain Chinese?
4. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages for your child to learn English ?
5. How good is your child's English?
$\begin{array}{lllllll}\text { Very good } & 5 & 4 & 3 & 2 & 1 & \text { Very poor }\end{array}$
6. How good is your child's Chinese ?
$\begin{array}{lllllll}\text { Very good } & 5 & 4 & 3 & 2 & 1 & \text { Very poor }\end{array}$
7. How well do you like them to know English ?
8. How well do you like them to know Chinese ?
9. In your opinion, how should your child learn to speak English? e.g. at home, at school, from radio/TV, etc.
10. In your opinion, how should your child learn to speak Chinese? e.g. at home, at school, from radio/TV, etc.
11. Did you find any change in your child's language use pattern at home after he/she went to day care or preschool?
12. What effect did your child learning English have on your family? e.g. on the language use pattern in your family?
13. Have you done anything to try to help your child maintain Chinese ? e.g. buy books, private lessons or schools, travel abroad, etc.
14. Do you have any difficulty helping your child maintain Chinese ?
15. What do you think is the main reason for meeting such difficulty?
16. What else do you like to tell me about your child?

## C Parent Consent Form

## Dear Parents:

I am a Chinese graduate student in early childhood education in UBC. In recent years, the development of bilingualism among the immigrant children has been drawing more and more attention among educators and parents. I'm interested in conducting a study concerning " Chinese Parents' Attitudes toward Their Children's Development of Bilingualism ". Information obtained from the study is expected to provide insights for educators to promote children's bilingual development by working together with their parents. A 30-minute interview/questionnaire in Mandarin has been designed to get information from the parents.

Now I am seeking Chinese parents who are willing to participate in the interview. Any Chinese parents who speak Mandarin and have ESL children in daycare or preschool are welcome to participate in the interview. Confidentiality is assured. The interviewees' names will be kept anonymous. After data is summarised and analysed, all the raw data will be destroyed. Moreover, refusal to participate in the interview or withdrawal from it at any time is allowed without prejudice to your child's participation in the daycare program.

If you would like to participate in the interview or have any questions, please feel free to contact Ms. Ting Du at 224-7324(h) or my supervisor Dr. Hillel Goelman at 822-6502 or Dr. Ann Lukasevich at 822-2102.

If you would like to participate, please sign both pages. Keep one page for yourself and leave one page for me to pick up later.

Thank you for your concern !
I would like to $\qquad$ or would not like to $\qquad$ participate in the interview.

Signature $\qquad$ Date $\qquad$
Phone Number $\qquad$

## D A Cover Letter to Teachers

## Dear teachers:

I'm a graduate student in early childhood education in UBC. I'm interested in conducting a study concerning "Chinese Parents' Attitudes toward Their Children's Development of Bilingualism".

Enclosed are Parent Consent Forms. Now I'm looking for Chinese parents who can speak Mandarin Chinese and have ESL children in your daycare. Would you please help me distribute these forms to those Chinese parents in your class? Those parents who meet the requirement and would like to participate in the interview would sign on the forms. They can either phone me directly or send the consent forms to the teachers for me to pick up later.

Thank you very much for your cooperation !

## Ting Du

phone: 224-7324


[^0]:    ［age
    ⿴囗⿱一一⿱宀八⺀大 Length of Residence
    C Years in Daycare

