First Language Maintenance: The Comparison of Chinese immigrant parents’ attitudes, the children’s language use patterns and their family environments

by

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Abstract

An exploratory study was conducted to investigate Chinese parents' attitudes toward their children's first language maintenance. Interviews were conducted to collect data from a total of 30 parents who came from two distinct socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. Fifteen parents sent their children to a university lab preschool (ULP group) and the other fifteen enrolled their children in a community-based day care (CDC group) in a Chinese-speaking neighborhood in Vancouver. The Family Environment Scale (FES) (Moos, 1974) was also used to collect information about the family social and emotional dynamics. All parents from both groups felt that it was important for their children to maintain their Chinese. However, it was found that parents and children from the CDC group used more Chinese than parents and children from the ULP group in most situations. Furthermore, the CDC parents were more concerned about the academic and literacy aspects of the language learning while the ULP parents were more personal and social oriented. These two groups of parents had similar scores in almost every sub-scale of the FES except for the sub-scales of active-recreational orientation, organization, and conflict. In the sub-scales of active-recreational orientation and organization, the ULP families had higher scores than the CDC families and there was a statistical significance between these two groups. The CDC group scored higher than the ULP group in the sub-scale of conflict and the scores of these two groups were statistically different. It was also found that there were positive correlations between some sub-scales scores in the FES and the language use patterns in the ULP group.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background of the research problem

During the past few decades in Canada, similar to many other industrialized countries, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of immigrants. As a result, the number of students whose first language is other than English has increased. For example, more than half the students in Vancouver schools speak English as a second language (Cummins, 1992; Vancouver School Board, 1994). In several Metro Toronto school systems, more than 50% of the school population comes from a non-English-speaking background (Cummins, 1981; 1992). Since language is considered as a major expression of cultural identity, the maintenance of one’s culture depends largely upon the maintenance of the first language. According to Skutnabb-Kangas (1994), to maintain and develop the mother tongue is a self-evident, fundamental linguistic human right. In addition, some advantages for students to maintain their first language include developing positive attitudes and pride in one’s self and one’s background, increasing cognitive and affective developments, facilitating the learning of other languages, increasing job opportunities, and promoting stronger links between parents and schools (Vancouver
School Board, 1995). However, for immigrant parents, helping their children to maintain their culture and the first language may not be a high priority as the attainment of proficiency in the majority language in order to achieve academic and economical successes in an English-speaking society in the future.

In the past, it was often assumed that immigration and acculturation meant that an immigration group should give up its native language for the sake of assimilation (Wong Fillmore, 1991a). Children from families whose home language was not English were expected to immerse themselves into the mainstream of schools, primarily through the use of English (Li, 1982; Soto, 1991; Wong Fillmore, 1991a). Wu (1995) indicated that the willingness and the ability to integrate into the new society is enhanced by their proficiency in the dominant language. Thus, the maintenance of the first language appears to be neglected or of less importance compared to the acquisition of the majority language in immigrant families. In order to help immigrant children adjust to the new English-speaking society, a great effort of time and money has been contributed to English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. For example, in the province of British Columbia in 1994/1995, there were more than 62,000 ESL students enrolled in the public school system. ESL programs were offered in 73 of 75 school districts. The percentage of students within any district who were enrolled in ESL varied from 0% to 48%, with ESL services concentrated in six districts in the Lower Mainland area (Ministry of Education, 1995). Over the past five years, the ESL enrollment in public schools has increased by 82% and increased international immigration to B.C. and more Canadian-born students requiring ESL support may account for this increase. Meanwhile, ESL funding has
increased to accommodate the growing enrollment. In 1994/95, budgeted expenditures for ESL programs increased to $73.6 million, up from $58.2 million in 1993/94 (Ministry of Education, 1995).

While recognizing the importance of the ESL education, one must not overlook the importance of maintaining one’s first language. In the position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (1996), it was suggested that “the loss of children’s home language may result in the disruption of family communication patterns, which may lead to the loss of intergenerational wisdom, damage to individual and community esteem, and children’s potential nonmastery of their home language or English.” Skutnabb-Kangas (1994) also suggested that all people should identify positively with their mother tongue and that this identification should be accepted and respected by others.

In the recent few decades, a more positive and pluralistic attitude toward bilingualism appears to have emerged. Several studies suggest that knowing more than one language is a cognitive asset and more attention has been placed on bilingual and heritage language education (Arnberg, 1987; Auerbach, 1993; Cummins, 1978; 1983; 1991; Danesi, 1988; D’Onofrio, 1993; Garrett et al., 1994; Gibbons, 1991; Goncz & Kodzopelijie, 1991; Hakuda & Garcia, 1989). In Canada, programs of heritage instruction have been instituted in the public elementary school systems of some provinces. For example, in 1987-1988 in British Columbia, the federal government contributed about $550,000 for the teaching of 31 heritage languages to 14,590 students in 1,014 classes (Beynon & Toohey, 1991). In the Year 2000 program, heritage education is
acknowledged as a legitimate component of the Humanities strand. The principal aims of these programs are to promote the continued vitality of ethnic cultures and to enrich children's education experiences through the maintenance of their own languages. It was believed that recent initiatives of the British Columbia Ministry of Education in recognizing and attempting to maintain the rich linguistic diversity of the province's citizens are significant and encouraging (Beynon & Toohey, 1991). However, the annual budget for the heritage education is fairly small compared to the time and effort that the government contributes to the ESL education.

Since English is the dominant language in North America, it may be difficult for people from other ethnic backgrounds to maintain their home languages because of the limited opportunities to use the language and the lack of appropriate resources. Berryman (1982) indicated that immigrant parents play important roles in their children's second language acquisition and first language maintenance. Meanwhile, Arnberg (1987) also stated that parents' attitudes toward bilingualism are more important in a more direct way because parents are models for their children. Children usually imitate their parents' attitudes and behaviors. Thus, if parents show that it is a positive and useful thing to know two or more languages and to participate in two or more cultures, it may help their children to develop similar positive attitudes. A study of Vietnamese Chinese families with children in bilingual primary schools found that 60% of the parents saw the bilingual program as a vehicle to transmit culture and to retain the use of their native language (Turnpin, 1991). Wu (1995) also suggested that many Chinese parents thought it would be beneficial for their children to grow up with a knowledge of the Chinese language. The
positive attitudes of parents may have contributed to 10,000 students attending Chinese language classes outside of school hours in all Australian states. Conversely, if parents are negative toward one of the languages and cultural groups, it may make it difficult for their children to see the benefits of being bilingual and bicultural.

According to Du (1994), the results in her study (n=15) showed that Chinese immigrant parents in Vancouver would like their preschool-age children to be bilingual. The parents attached greater importance or had higher expectations for their children's speaking skills in Chinese than their reading and writing in Chinese. All of the parents ranked English learning for their children in all language skills very important. Du (1994) indicated that the starting point of her study was parental attitudes and family practice, which were of critical importance when raising children bilingually. Children to whom a minority language was transmitted by their parents would enjoy the benefits of bilingualism. However, although her study focused on one particular ethnic group, the subjects were homogeneous, which were all foreign-born and had a relatively high level of education in their country of origin before they had immigrated to Canada while this study focused on the same ethnic group but subjects were from different educational and socioeconomic backgrounds. It seemed that there was a lack of intra-cultural comparison dealing with different aspects of the immigrant family environment in her study.

In this study, it was assumed that parental attitudes toward the maintenance of their children's first language may vary and this variability of attitudes may be related to specific aspects of their family environments. Li (1982) observed that there was a negative correlation between socioeconomic status (SES) and language shift of Chinese-Americans.
The lower SES groups had a greater tendency to change their mother tongue, which was Chinese, to the majority language English. She also indicated that this relationship may not be linear which meant that it was not necessary for people from higher SES groups to maintain their mother tongue better. However, the Family Environment Scale (FES) (Moos, 1974) has never been used in a study concerning parental attitudes toward the first language maintenance. One of the major goals of this study was to investigate the relationship between the family environments and parental attitudes toward their children’s maintenance of the first language. Since Chinese immigrant parents come from all kinds of backgrounds and have stayed in Canada for different lengths of time, their attitudes toward the first language maintenance may not be the same. The findings of this study which focused on the relationship of the family environment in immigrant families and their attitudes toward the first language maintenance of their children would be a novel contribution to research literature.

1.2 Research questions

This study involved 30 Chinese parents of young children in Vancouver. Interviews about their attitudes of their children’s first language maintenance and their family environments were conducted to understand the relationships between these two variables. The extent to which the emotional and social environments of the family affected parental attitudes to language maintenance was a major focus of this study.

The specific research questions of this study are:
1. What are Chinese immigrant parents' attitudes toward their children's first language maintenance?

2. What are the language use patterns and language environments in families from different socioeconomic and educational backgrounds?

3. What are the differences in terms of the family social and emotional environments in Chinese immigrant families?

4. What are the relationships between the children's language use patterns and their family social and emotional environments?

1.3 Significance of the study

Language can be defined as the recorder, expressor, and carrier of phenomenology (Fishman, 1977). Language contact becomes inevitable when different cultural groups co-exist in particular locations. In such situations, the role of language as a symbol of ethnicity becomes of paramount importance. In Canada, the number of Chinese population has increased dramatically since 1967 as a result of changing immigration policies (Cummins, 1992; Du, 1994). For example, 38,947 immigrants arrived in 1994 in British Columbia (Vancouver School Board, 1995). The linguistic and cultural diversities have increased substantially within the schools of major urban centres in recent years (Cummins, 1992). Specifically, the Chinese community has become one of the larger minority communities in Canada, especially in the two major cities Toronto and Vancouver. In the lower mainland area of Vancouver, the number of Chinese immigrants has increased dramatically and the Chinese language and culture can be easily seen. The
top four countries of origin of local ESL students are Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam, and China (Vancouver School Board, 1994). These students are becoming the mainstream in the Vancouver school system. Therefore, it is relevant for studies concerning Chinese immigrants, especially with a focus on preschool-age children, to be conducted.

In Wong Fillmore's (1991a) large-scale study (n=1,001) of home language use patterns among language minority families, it was suggested that losing the heritage language can lead to the consequences of the breakdown of communication between parents and children. Immigrant parents in North America frequently attain only limited command of English while their children rapidly lose facility in the home language, with the result that the common medium of family communication may be weakened. Previous studies have largely neglected the relationship between the parental attitudes of their children's first language maintenance and their family environments. The findings of this study will present a picture of how a group of Chinese parents perceive their children's first language maintenance in a multicultural society. In addition, the relationship between the parental attitudes and their family environments will also be examined. The findings of this exploratory study may provide information for further study by focusing on specific aspects addressed by the Family Environment Scale (Moos, 1974). This study may also provide some implications for educational practice and possible insights to both immigration groups and educators.
1.4 Definitions of terms in this study

Some technical terms that are relevant to this study are defined below.

**First language:**

First language refers to the language that a person first learned at home in childhood and still understands (Statistic Canada, 1991). In this study, it refers to the language that parents and their children speak at home and it can be either Mandarin or Cantonese. In the research literature concerning language maintenance, the term “language” refers to the child’s first language. A variety of terms have been used to refer to minority languages such as: first language, native language, mother tongue, heritage language, ancestral language, ethnic language, and non-official language (Cummins, 1983). According to Cummins’ definition (1983), the term “first language” is used when the minority language is the child’s first learned language while the term “heritage language” generally refers to the community ethnocultural language which is not necessarily the child’s first-learned language. However, in this study, these two terms share the same meaning and they refer to the language that children and their parents use at home other than English. Specifically, in this study, they refer to Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese).

**Chinese:**

It is an umbrella term that includes over 20 Chinese languages and dialects such as Mandarin, Cantonese, Taiwanese, and Shanghainese. Mandarin Chinese is also known as
Modern Standard Chinese (MSC) and is the official dialect in both mainland China and Taiwan. People who speak a dialect other than Mandarin Chinese in their daily life are assumed to be able to understand Mandarin. In this study, some subjects who speak Mandarin can also speak other dialects such as Taiwanese and Cantonese.

**Mandarin:**
Mandarin is the official standard language that most people speak in mainland China and Taiwan. It is also called “Putonghua” in mainland China. In this study, the subjects who speak Mandarin as their first language are from mainland China and Taiwan.

**Cantonese:**
Cantonese is one of the dialects that is spoken in the Guandong province, located in the southeast part of mainland China and Hong Kong. Cantonese shares most of its characters with other Chinese dialects, but differs in tones, pronunciation, vocabulary, and sentence structures. A large number of Chinese immigrants in Vancouver speak Cantonese as their first language because they originally came from Hong Kong or Guandong province. In this study, a great number of its sample population came from Cantonese-speaking families.

**Ethnic origin:**
This refers to the ethnic or cultural roots or ancestral origins of the population, but ethnic origin should not be confused with aspects of nationality or citizenship. In this study, all
subjects are of Chinese ethnic origin but they come from various areas and countries such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, Vietnam, Mauritius, and Canada.

**The Family Environment Scale (FES):**

The Family Environment Scale consists of 90 true-false format questions concerning family structures and dynamics. It was developed by Moos in 1974 and it comprises ten sub-scales (cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, independence, achievement orientation, intellectual-cultural orientation, active-recreational orientation, moral-religious emphasis, organization, and control) that measure the social-environmental characteristics of families. The ten FES sub-scales are grouped into three major dimensions: the relationship dimension, the personal growth dimension, and the system maintenance dimension. The FES can be used to describe and compare family social environments, contrast parent and child perceptions, and examine actual and preferred family milieus. It is a standardized and valid test (Moos & Moos, 1986).

**Language minority children:**

These are children whose first language is different from the one that wider communities and schools use. In this study, language minority children refers to those who speak a language other than English at home.
1.5 Organization of the thesis

There are five chapters in this thesis. Chapter 1 includes the background of the research questions, specific research questions, and the significance of this study. Several technical terms that are relevant to this study are also explained and defined in this chapter. In chapter 2, the history of Chinese immigration to Canada and relevant literature of the first language maintenance are reviewed. Chapter 3 presents the methodology and the design of this study. Sample selections, instrument designs, and the procedures of interviews are also provided in this chapter. In chapter 4, the data are analyzed and the results are interpreted. Chapter 5 includes the discussions and conclusions of the findings in the context of primary research questions. Implications for educational practice are addressed and recommendations for future studies are provided in view of the limitations of this study.
Chapter 2

Review of the Related Literature

This chapter reviews relevant literature on first language maintenance and family environments. In order to provide a context for the study, it will begin by giving an account of the history of immigration to Canada. Since the study is about Chinese immigrants, it will also give a brief history of Chinese immigration in Canada, followed by a historical review of first language maintenance. To provide some theoretical backgrounds on first language maintenance, factors affecting language maintenance and shift and research findings with regard to children's first language maintenance will be discussed. Finally, a review of the research on family and day care environments will be addressed.

2.1 The historical context of immigration to Canada

Canada is a country of diverse languages and cultures. Its population consists of people from various ethnic and language backgrounds. About two-thirds of all immigrants to Canada come from non-English-speaking countries (Gillett, 1987). As Mayfield (1995) stated, the best descriptor of Canadian families now and in the foreseeable future is
"diversity" (p.18). 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 and with projections of 250,000 annually from 1992 through to 1996 (Cummins, 1992; Du, 1994). The 1991 Census also showed that 5.0 million Canadians (18%) would speak a language other than English or French, some 2.3 million (8%) speak a non-official language most often at home and 4.1 million (15%) had a non-official language as mother tongue.

The 1994/1995 annual report of the Ministry of Education of British Columbia indicated that ethnic diversity was a defining characteristic of British Columbia’s population. Since 1990/1991, the percentage of British Columbia public school students whose first language is other than English has increased from 11% to 15%. In some Lower Mainland districts such as Richmond in 1993/94, up to 56% of students spoke a language other than English at home (Ministry of Education, 1995). Moreover, it was estimated that 37% of Canadians over the age of 15 have at least one foreign-born parent and 18% of Canadians have been born outside of Canada. One of the reasons that Canada is very much a nation of immigrants is because of its liberal immigration policies. It admits more immigrants (8.8 per 1,000 population) than the United States (2.5) and Australia (7.6) (cited in Mayfield, 1995).

The history of Canadian immigration can be broken down into four periods: 1867 to 1896, 1896 to the outbreak of the World War I, the inter-war years, and the post World War II era (Wood, 1978). In the first phase, immigrants from places such as Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Asia, East India, and the Caribbean came to Canada. During the
second phase, immigrants mainly came from Central and Eastern Europe. At the same time, the Canadian government imposed its first immigration restrictions against specific ethnic groups such as Chinese, Japanese, and East Indians who were considered to be “visible minorities.” In the third phase, the number of immigrants greatly decreased because of the outbreak of World War I and the adjustments of the post-war years. The number of immigrants began to increase again from 1923 and restrictions against Orientals continued until the 1960s. The fourth phase, which started around 1946, has been characterized by a more diverse immigrant population in terms of education, occupations, and ethnic origins. During this phase, a great number of refugees primarily from Europe and other regions such as Asia, Africa, and South America have been admitted into Canada. The immigration policies have changed from an ethnically selective basis to an open policy based upon predetermined criteria. In 1967, the Canadian government introduced regulations which removed all nationality and ethnic origin bias in selection criteria (Wood, 1978). Since then, the number of Chinese immigrants to Canada has increased and a very different Chinese society has appeared (Tan & Roy, 1985).

2.1.1 The history of Chinese immigration to Canada

The two main historical forces of the original Chinese immigration were a rural crisis in China and the Western imperialism (Tan & Roy, 1985). However, not all immigrants have been equally welcome to Canada and the Chinese were among the least popular and the most harshly treated over time. According to Ashworth (1993), Chinese
immigrants first entered the province of British Columbia in the late 1850s. They first worked in the gold fields but as time went by, they dug coal, built railroads and became merchants and house servants. Several anti-Chinese groups started forming and pressure was put on both the provincial and dominion governments to reduce Oriental immigration and to restrict the activities of them by the mid-1870s. During that time, Chinese immigrants were seen as a caste apart and an unassimilable group (Ashworth, 1993). Only after World War II did Canada repeal the discriminatory laws. It was not until the mid-1960s that Chinese immigration was placed on equal footing with that of other races and nationalities.

Post-war Canadian society has been much more liberal in its outlook. While isolated incidents occurred, official institutional racism had declined. Chinese immigration is governed by the same legislation and regulations as all would-be immigrants (Tan & Roy, 1985). The number of Chinese immigrants has increased substantially after 1967 due to the change of immigration policies. The Chinese Canadian population was 124,600 in 1971 and expanded to 285,800 by 1981 (Statistics Canada, 1971; 1981; cited in Du, 1994). In the 1986 census, the number increased further to 412,800. In the 1991 census, the number of Chinese Canadian population expanded to 517,000 (Statistics Canada, 1986; 1991). The most recent twenty-year period has witnessed rapid growth in the number of Canadians with Chinese as a mother tongue. According to Mayfield (1995), the countries of origin for immigrants have shifted from forty years ago. Approximately 90% of the immigrants came from Europe in the past while currently almost one out of six immigrants was born in Hong Kong or China. Yet, while law and custom permitted
integration, the federal government through its multiculturalism program encouraged Chinese, like all other Canadians, to make pluralism a legitimate fact of Canadian society and to preserve and celebrate their ethnic identity to be both Chinese and Canadian (Tan & Roy, 1985).

2.2 First language maintenance in a historical perspective

Educators and immigrant parents have different opinions toward first language maintenance. A historical review of these attitudes toward the first language maintenance is provided to present insights into a wide range of viewpoints.

According to Fitzgerald (1993), bilingualism was not only widespread but also respected and appreciated from pre-colonial days into the mid-1800s. Before the first Europeans arrived on the continent of North America, between 200 and 500 languages in about 15 language families were spoken in the land (Casanova & Arias, 1993; Castellanos, 1992; Heath, 1981). During that time, bilingualism was supported and was considered an advantage for everyday trading, teaching and spreading of the gospel (Castellanos, 1992). Bilingualism was politically protected at least from early post-Columbus times until the late nineteenth century. Both bilingual and monolingual education in the native language were encouraged (Fitzgerald, 1993).

In the 1880s, attitudes began to change. English nativism intensified and the support for bilingualism began to waiver. An “Americanization” campaign was launched and fluency in English became associated with patriotism (Casanova & Arias, 1993;
Tamura, 1993; cited in Fitzgerald, 1993). In Canada, the prevailing attitude toward ethnic
diversity was termed "Anglo-conformity" in the first half of this century. It was assumed
that all minority groups should give up their own languages and cultures to become
assimilated into the dominant English culture (Cummins, 1981). Many North American
educators saw bilingualism almost as a disease that not only interfered with the
"Canadianization" or "Americanization" process, but also caused language handicaps and
confusion in children's thinking (Cummins, 1981). This negative attitude lasted until the
middle of the 19th century.

Since the mid-1900s, the core issue of language maintenance has become
increasingly explicit and attitudes have changed. In Canada, a number of policies were
developed relating to language use. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act suggested to
people to preserve and enhance the use of languages other than English and French, while
strengthening the status and use of the official languages of Canada (cited in Vancouver
School Board, 1995). The Ministry of Education also indicated that one of the ways for
integrating multicultural and anti-racism awareness across the curriculum is to provide
opportunities for students to communicate in their first languages. In addition, according
to the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) policy, school boards recognize the
developmental natures of language learning (second language learning as well as first
language learning) and provide a continuum of services to meet the changing needs of
ESL students as they progress in their language development (cited in Vancouver School
Board, 1995). A more tolerant and accepting attitude toward the maintenance of first
language has emerged.
2.3 Factors affecting language maintenance and language shift

When different cultural groups coexist in a particular location, language contact becomes inevitable. In a situation of language contact between language A and language B, language A may replace language B so that language A is used in most social contexts. In such a scenario, language A is maintained and there is a shift from language B to language A among members of the speech community (Wu, 1995). For example, when Chinese immigrants arrive in Canada, they learn the mainstream language (A) to adapt to the new culture which is English. However, all too often, they also tend to drop their home language (B) and in time, many of the immigrant children would lose their first language (Wong Fillmore, 1991a). In such a situation, Chinese is replaced by English and there is a shift from Chinese to English among these Chinese immigrants.

According to Siren (1991), the process of language maintenance to language shift has the following recognizable stages: (1) minority language is retained; (2) bilingualism is attained, the minority language is retained as the principal language; (3) the majority language becomes the principal language and the mother tongue is retained as a second language; (4) the mother tongue is spoken with less and less frequency.

Various studies have been conducted to identify factors relevant to language maintenance in different language contact situations (Arnberg, 1984; 1987; Bernhard et al., 1996; Bratt Paulston, 1994; Du, 1994; Garner, 1988; Gillett, 1987; Harrison, Bellin & Piette, 1981; Janik, 1996; McGregor & Li, 1991; Lewin, 1987; Li, 1982; Putz, 1991;

The factors that influence language maintenance and language shift are discussed below.

2.3.1 Demographic factors

According to Grosjean (1982), language maintenance and language shift are affected by the size of the ethnic group, time of immigration, continued immigration, and permanent immigration. For example, a group that arrived a long time ago and is not presently renewed by new immigrants from the home country, such as Polish Americans, is more likely to shift to the dominant language. Recent immigration groups that are being reinforced by new monolingual speakers such as Chinese Canadians or Korean Americans have better opportunities to maintain their first languages. Wu (1995) further suggested that the numerical strength of that group relative to other groups is one important factor that enhances the maintenance of a minority language. A larger group tends to have better opportunities to retain its language because it affords more speakers of that particular community language. In the 1986 Australian census, the states where the numerical strength of a community group is the strongest, are also those states that the language shift of that particular group is the lowest (Clyne, 1991). The numerical growth and distribution of Chinese in Australia has implications for the maintenance of dialects such as Mandarin and Cantonese which are well represented by strong number of speakers in Australia.
2.3.2 Geographical factors

Geographical factors include geographic concentration, urbanization, and isolation from other minority groups, majority groups or home country (Grosjean, 1982).

Geographic concentration is a crucial factor for language maintenance or shift. If the members of an ethnic group have little contact with other minority groups or majority groups because of geographic concentration, it favors language maintenance. Conversely, if a group is isolated from its home country, they tend to shift from the home language to the dominant language. For example, the Albanian community in the United States was isolated both politically and geographically from the home country. Young Albanian Americans were not receiving the strong reinforcement of first language maintenance unless native speakers were continually arriving or if they themselves could travel to Albania. Kloss (1966) also suggested that language islands, i.e. circumscribed territories where the minority tongue is used for daily communication, enhance language maintenance in America (cited in Wu, 1995). Li (1982) indicated that the relationship between geographic concentration and language maintenance is more prominent in the third generation of Chinese American than the second generation because the third generation is more distant from its ethnic roots compared to the second one.
2.3.3 Economic factors

Speaking a particular language, whether a first language, a second language or both, may have economic advantages. It can help access jobs which require such knowledge of specific languages (Cummins, 1992; Lieberson, 1970; Veltman, 1983). Parents usually regard their children's shift to the majority language as a way to promote the socioeconomic status (SES) of the family (Edwards, 1985; Li, 1982). For example, in Australia, the number of Chinese and non-Chinese students studying Chinese at primary or secondary levels increased from 2,300 in 1988 to 123,000 in 1991. It represents a 440% increase and this growing support is motivated to a large extent by the growing economic importance of Chinese as a trade language (Djite, 1994). Wu (1995) also stated that the economic status attached to the language can enhance its ethnolinguistic vitality.

2.3.4 Institutional factors

Tertiary institutions provide institutional support for the maintenance of language in various ways. Bettoni and Leal (1994) suggested that universities are prestigious institutions that give status to the subjects that are taught. Giles et al. (1977) and Veltman (1983) both stated that the use of the language within the educational system is thought to favor language maintenance. For example, the Chinese people and Indian people established Chinese and Indian primary and secondary schools in Malaysia, which helped maintain their languages, Mandarin and Tamil (Yong, 1996). However, it has also been
pointed out that education in a minority language is not necessarily enough to insure maintenance if there are other societal forces resisting it, such as opposing to establish ethnic schools (Edwards, 1985; Veltman, 1983). Moreover, when a language is linked to religion, it will favor group cohesion and language maintenance (Giles et al., 1977; Grosjean, 1982; Fishman, 1985). The only remaining German language islands in the United States were mainly those of the Mennonites, the Amish, and the Hutterites, for whom religion and language were strongly linked (Grosjean, 1982).

In addition, it is recognized that mass media, press, radio and television are factors which can affect language maintenance (Lieberson, 1970; Wu, 1995). Clyne (1991) suggested that the use of community languages on radio showed that these languages are not only home languages but that they have currency in the larger social context. However, no further studies have been conducted to investigate the relationship between the mass media and the maintenance of heritage languages. Wu (1995) also indicated that there was a shortage of children’s programs both on ethnic television and radio. This may have negative implications for language maintenance as children play pivotal roles in preserving the language.

2.3.5 Status factors

According to Giles et al. (1977), group status is assumed to be determined by the social and economic status of its members and also by its historical past. Li (1982) indicated that there was a high likelihood of language shift at both ends of the
socioeconomic status scale. The lowest socioeconomic status group has the least resistance to pressure for language maintenance while the middle-class Chinese Americans were the most successful in retaining their heritage language. However, Siren (1991) stated that the impact of socioeconomic status may not be a linear function. The historical past, as well as the status of the language itself, can be perceived differently by in-group and out-group members (Husband & Saifullah Khan, 1982). Du (1994) suggested that there were no objective criteria of status.

2.3.6 Attitudes

According to Grosjean (1982), the attitude of an ethnic group toward its native language is an important factor of language maintenance and shift. It has been recognized that language is not only an instrument of communication but also a symbol of group identity. A language is also accompanied by attitudes and values held by its users and by people who do not know the language.

Attitudinal factors are associated with the efforts of linguistic minority groups to maintain their heritage languages, and include nationalistic values, attitudes toward the language, and people's emotions about the language they speak (Lewin, 1987). Attitudes of a language minority group toward its heritage language is an important factor of maintenance. If the group is emotionally attached to the language and has pride in its literary and cultural heritage, its members will make likely efforts to maintain its language and pass it on to their children. In a society where different language groups coexist, the
language attitude plays a key role in the lives of users of these languages and influence the learning of a first language (Grosjean, 1982). Grosjean (1982) also indicated that attitude is one of the major factors in accounting for which languages are learned, used, and preferred by bilinguals. It is an important factor for second language learning and the success of bilingual education (Lyon & Ellis, 1991). For example, in the United States, there is a widespread phenomenon of immigrant parents encouraging their children to learn English so as not to be stigmatized later in life and to advance socially. Negative or positive attitudes toward a language profoundly affects the users of the language either negatively or positively (Grosjean, 1982).

In addition, there are many other factors that play a role in terms of language maintenance and shift such as the minority group’s social configuration, its origins, assimilative power of societies and educational policy (Grosjean, 1982). Wu (1995) suggested that immigrants from Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore tend to assimilate better into the English-speaking society than those from non-English speaking countries because of their better English proficiencies. It is important to recognize the fact that it is very difficult to make generalizations about language maintenance and shift from one context to another.

Language maintenance and shift result from the complex interplay of a web of factors in a language contact situation. It is difficult to determine the extent of the influence of any one factor (Wu, 1995). Factors that have an effect on language maintenance and shift are often ambivalent. There may be a combined effect of different factors because most variables are interrelated and it is hard to separate them analytically.
Therefore, this study focused on a specific minority group and samples from different socioeconomic and educational backgrounds were chosen to investigate the differences of parental attitudes toward their children’s first language maintenance and their family social and emotional environments.

2.4 Research findings with regard to children’s first language maintenance

The question of maintaining one’s first language has been controversial among immigrant families and educators. Those who hold positive views toward the maintenance of their first language tend to believe that learning takes place by building on what children already know (Garrett, Griffith, James & Scholfield, 1994). Usually, they use their first language to help children acquire a second language. The use of the mother tongue is a signal to the children that their language and culture are valuable and some claimed that this will have a beneficial effect on perception, attitudes, motivation, and academic achievement. Conversely, those who have opposite views think that using two languages would confuse children (Garrett, Griffith, James & Scholfield, 1994). This school of thought argues that there is no demonstrated link between more favorable attitudes toward a language and greater proficiency in that language. However, this exploratory study will not rate children’s first language proficiency and will only focus on the relationship between parental attitudes and their family environments.

Home or family settings are important factors in determining children’s language maintenance. Putz (1991) conducted a study concerning language maintenance and
language shift in the speech behavior of German-Australian migrants in Canberra, Australia. Questionnaires were sent to 150 German immigrants and 59 of them were answered and returned. This study showed that language maintenance was highly based on the traditional factors of the family domain and social activities, which in general seem to contribute to the maintenance of community languages. In this study, it was shown that the two interpenetrating domains of friendship networks and club/festivities were the main factors for promoting the first language. Furthermore, the home or family domain represented another important non-English speaking setting, and consequently determined language maintenance to a great extent.

In English speaking countries such as the United States and Canada, it appears that when language-minority children first learn English, they begin to lose their primary language at the same time. Wong Fillmore (1991a) indicated that children at age three or four are in an expressive language-learning mode. They learn whatever languages they hear, as long as the conditions for language learning are present. Children may be very fluent in their primary language before they start school. However, once they begin to immerse into English-speaking environments, they tend not to maintain their first language because they may not want to be different from others at school. They encounter strong forces for assimilation as soon as they enter the English-speaking world of the classroom. Thus, it was concluded that the earlier immigrant children were exposed to English, the greater the loss of their first language they may experience (Wong Fillmore, 1991a).

Once the first language is no longer spoken or understood by children, it can be disruptive on family relations since most immigrant parents are only fluent in their first
language, which is usually not English. When parents are not able to talk to their children, they cannot convey to children their values, beliefs, understanding, or wisdom about how to cope with their experiences. Wong Fillmore (1991a) suggested that when parents lose the means for socializing and influencing their children, rifts develop and families lose the intimacy that comes from shared beliefs and understanding. Other research also indicated that promotion of the first language at the preschool stage both at school and through parent-school cooperation will promote primary language proficiency, conceptual development, and family communication at no cost to conceptual development in English (Cummins, 1991). For many reasons, it is important for immigrants to maintain their first language.

In another study, Li (1982) investigated the language shift of Chinese Americans (n=4,046). It was found that the retention ratio among Chinese-Americans was 89% from the first to the second generation, but was only 58% from the second to the third generation. The longer an immigrant group lived in the United States, the greater was the loss of linguistic heritage. Moreover, it was observed that the lowest socioeconomic status (SES) group had the lowest resistance to pressure for language assimilation while the middle-class Chinese-Americans were the most successful in retaining their native language. However, the researcher also indicated that this relationship was by no means linear but as the generation of immigration increased, the tendency toward linearity increased.

Another study was conducted concerning language maintenance and shift in three minority speech communities including Tongan, Greek, and Chinese (n=242) in New
Zealand (Holmes et al., 1993). Questionnaires and face-to-face interviews were used to collect data. It was found that there was a general decline in proficiency in the ethnic language from one generation to the next. For example, among the 51 adult Chinese respondents of this study, all of them reported that they had good Chinese speaking ability. These 51 subjects had a total of 70 children between them and they reported that 12 children had no ability in speaking their heritage language while over half had very limited ability. It was suggested that English was steadily displacing Chinese in this ethnic group. However, it was also indicated that second- and third-generation parents among the Chinese community had sometimes consciously decided to use their heritage language to their children and this practice had at least temporarily helped children maintain their heritage language. There is a gap in the research literature in terms of the intra-cultural comparison of parental attitudes in their children's first language maintenance. Thus, a study that involved Chinese immigrant parents from different educational and socioeconomic backgrounds is necessary in order to fill this gap.

2.5 Research findings with regard to the family and day care environments

Mayfield (1995) stated that there are many kinds of families and a family is a common denominator for children. The family is the context for children's early literacy development (p. 17). The potency of family background factors as developmental influences compared to other socialization contexts has long been recognized. With a rising rate of maternal employment comes a rising rate of infants and toddlers attending
day care facilities. Consequently, parents, educators, and researchers now have a vested interest in the effects of day care on infant development more than before (Ackerman-Ross & Khanna, 1989).

Ackerman-Ross and Khanna (1989) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between day care and young children's language performance (n=40). A total language score, receptive and expressive language scores, and an IQ score were derived for middle-class, Caucasian three-year-olds whose families were intact and who had attended high-quality day care since infancy. These scores were compared with those of their home-reared counterparts. Parent questionnaires were developed to collect information about variables thought to affect language development. These variables included parents' income and education, child's birth order, quantity and type of verbal stimulation by parents, and parents' child care time. Results showed that there was no difference between the home and day care children on IQ or any of the three dependent language measures. However, IQ was found to be the strongest predictor of language performance, with birth order ranking the second. Moreover, it was found that fathers' language activity time was significantly related to their children's language performance, as was parents' education level. Ackerman-Ross and Khanna (1989) studied the relationship between day care and young children's language performance, but the children in their study were all monolingual. Further research needs to be conducted to investigate the relationship between day care and immigrant children's first language performance.

Another study examined the relations between home literacy environment and child language ability (Payne, Whitehurst & Angell, 1994). The subjects were 323 four-year-
olds who were attending Head Start and their mothers or primary caregivers. Overall frequency of shared picture book reading, age of onset of picture book reading, duration of shared picture book reading during a recent day, number of picture books in the home, frequency of child’s requests to engage in shared picture book reading, frequency of child’s private play with books, frequency of shared trips to the library, frequency of caregivers’ private reading, and caregivers’ enjoyment of private reading constituted the literacy environment. These variables were measured by using a questionnaire completed by each child’s primary caregiver. Correlations were found between characteristics of the home environment and language or literacy skills in children. Previous studies suggested that differences in the quality of the literacy environment existed between socioeconomic groups and that these differences were related to child language ability (Payne, Whitehurst & Angell, 1994). It was demonstrated in this study that there were also differences in the quality of literacy environment within lower socioeconomic groups that are related to the child language ability. These results suggested that despite the economic difficulties and other stresses faced by the low-income families, many still managed to engage in interactions such as shared picture book reading that were motivated by long-term goals such as school readiness. Furthermore, the results showed that these interactions affected children’s skills, no less in low-income families than in the middle class families. The findings of this study suggested that the home literacy environment of children from low-income families can be enhanced to good effect.

Kontos (1991) studied the child care quality, family background and children’s development. The purpose of her study was to determine the contribution of family
Review of the Related Literature

background and child care quality to preschool children's cognitive, language, and social development. One hundred three-to five-year-old children from 10 different child care centers participated. The mothers of each child were interviewed to obtain information regarding family background, and child care quality was measured via several state licensing instruments and the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (Harms & Clifford, 1980). Results revealed that family background variables were significant predictors of three measures of children's cognitive and language development.

In a study conducted by Goelman, Shapiro, and Pence (1991), the Family Environment Scale (FES) was applied and it was found that caregivers' family intellectual and emotional environments had contributed to the child-rearing environment of the family daycare. However, the FES has never been used in examining the parental attitudes toward their children's first language maintenance. An open-ended question such as how the family environments affect parents' attitudes toward the first language maintenance will be investigated by analyzing the scores converted from sub-scales of the FES. Therefore, it may be useful to use the FES to examine the effect of the roles of family environment on attitudes toward language maintenance.

From the review of the literature, many studies have been conducted in various countries concerning languages other than Chinese (Arnberg, 1984; Cummins, 1991; Holmes, Roberts, Verivaki, & Aipolo, 1993, Janik, 1996; Lewin, 1987; Putz, 1991; Schafer, 1988). In Canada, a country proud of its diverse cultural resources, more attention has been placed on language and cultural maintenance in the recent years. By examining the strength of an ethnic group's language-retention ratio, one can gain insights
into the plight of immigrants who seek to maintain their cultural heritage. Cummins (1992) also suggested that in many respects, Canada’s educators and decision makers have been caught unprepared for the influx of diverse students. As a result, considerable debate has been generated about how governments and school boards can best respond to the cultural and linguistic needs of these students. In Canada, especially in the province of British Columbia whose population consists of a great number of Chinese immigrants, a study to investigate parental attitudes toward their children’s maintenance of their first language would be helpful. Only when their attitudes are analyzed and presented systematically can the educators and the government provide appropriate assistance to immigrant families and related social problems may be prevented.
Chapter 3

Methodology

The purpose of this exploratory study was to understand family environment factors and parental attitudes towards their children's maintenance of the first language of Chinese immigrant parents. Data were collected by interviewing Chinese parents with children ages 3 to 6. The interview method was used in this study because it had been used effectively in related previous studies (Du, 1994; Lewin, 1987; Putz, 1991; Williamson, 1991; Wong Fillmore, 1991a). Interviews were also conducted in the respondent’s primary language (either Mandarin or Cantonese). Primary languages were used in the interviews in order to help establish rapport and cooperation with the interviewees. The participants of this study were all Chinese parents who lived in Vancouver. Interviews were conducted by a native Mandarin speaker or a native Cantonese speaker.
3.1 Subjects

The subjects of this study were 30 Chinese parents with children aged 3 to 6 years old. Fifteen of them were selected from a university lab preschool and the other 15 were selected from community-based day care programs in primarily Chinese neighborhoods in Vancouver. Both the preschool and the daycare centre were English-speaking settings. Among the 15 parents from the university lab preschool, all respondents were mothers except for one father while the 15 from the daycare centre were all mothers.

Among the 15 parents from the university lab preschool, two of them were born in Canada while the other nine have lived in Canada from 5 to 22 years. The other four parents were considered to be “new immigrants” who had lived in Canada for approximately one to two years. These parents came from families that speak either Mandarin, Cantonese or English. All of them were permanent residents of Canada except for one who came from Taiwan because her husband was doing post-doctoral research at the university and was expected to stay for at least four years. Among the 15 parents from the community-based daycare centre, all of them were permanent residents and were all born outside of Canada. The length of their stay in Canada ranged from 4 to 20 years and most of them were from Cantonese-speaking families. These parents were selected to participate in this study according to the following criteria:

- both mother and father were Chinese
- parents had a child aged 3 to 6 years old and the child was attending either the university lab preschool or the community-based daycare centre in Vancouver
• the parents understood either Mandarin or Cantonese

Following is the further comparison of these two distinct groups of parents. The background information about the parents, their children, and their families was collected from the first section of the questionnaire used in the interview (Appendix B). Among the thirty subjects in the total sample, fifteen were parents of children who were attending a university laboratory preschool (ULP) and the other fifteen were from a community-based day care centre (CDC). In the ULP group, interviewees consisted of fourteen mothers and one father while all fifteen respondents in the CDC group were mothers. The length of residence in Canada of the ULP group ranged from 1 year and 1 month to 34 years (M = 12.06; SD = 10.52). Two of the mothers were born in Canada and nine of them reported having been in Canada between 5 and 22 years. The other four mothers considered themselves to be new immigrants and had been in Canada between 13 and 27 months. All subjects, except for one in the ULP group, were permanent residents of Canada and all of them were married. In the CDC group, all respondents were permanent residents of Canada, married, and were born outside of Canada. The range of their residential years in Canada for CDC group was between 4 and 20 years (M = 12.49; SD = 4.47).
Table 3.1.1: Fathers' occupations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Managerial, Administrative, Professional, Businessmen</th>
<th>Sales, Services, Clerical, etc.</th>
<th>Not currently in the paid labor force</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ULP</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1.2: Mothers' Occupations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Managerial, Administrative, Professional, Businessmen</th>
<th>Sales, Services, Clerical, etc.</th>
<th>Not currently in the paid labor force</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ULP</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To study the differences in socioeconomic classes between the two groups, the occupations of both fathers and mothers were asked. Table 3.1.1 shows that thirteen fathers from the ULP group were in managerial, administrative or professional occupations such as doctors, dentists, and engineers while four fathers from the CDC group were in this category. Two fathers from the ULP group and nine fathers from the CDC group were in occupations such as sales, services and clerical positions. Furthermore, two fathers from the CDC group were not currently in the paid labor force. There are more fathers in professional occupations in the ULP group than those in the CDC group. Although four mothers from the ULP group were in managerial or professional occupations, such as pharmacists and chartered accountants, none of the CDC mothers were in this category (Table 3.1.2). Nine mothers from the ULP group and
thirteen from the CDC group reported that they were not currently in the paid labor force and were full-time housewives.

In summary, more fathers from the ULP group had professional or administrative occupations than fathers from the CDC group. A large proportion of mothers from both groups were not currently in the paid labor force, but more mothers in the ULP group had professional occupations than mothers in the CDC group. Thus, these two groups of parents are different in terms of their occupations and socioeconomic backgrounds.

As shown in Table 3.1.3 and 3.1.4, the majority of fathers and mothers from the ULP group were born in Hong Kong and Taiwan while those from the CDC group were born in Vietnam or China. Two fathers and two mothers from the ULP group were born in Canada and one ULP mother was born in Mauritius. Most parents from both groups spoke Cantonese as their first language as they were growing up (Table 3.1.5 and 3.1.6). Those who spoke English when growing up also understood and spoke Cantonese but their ability to read and write Chinese was limited. The parents who spoke Mandarin as a first language were from Taiwan and they were also able to understand and speak Taiwanese. One mother from the ULP group spoke French when she grew up in Mauritius, but she was of Chinese descent and was fluent in Cantonese.
Table 3.1.3: Country of birth (Fathers):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>Hong Kong</th>
<th>Taiwan</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Mauritius</th>
<th>Vietnam</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ULP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1.4: Country of birth (Mothers):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>Hong Kong</th>
<th>Taiwan</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Mauritius</th>
<th>Vietnam</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ULP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1.5: Language spoke when growing up (Fathers):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Mandarin</th>
<th>Cantonese</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Chiuchow</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
<th>Shanghainese</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ULP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1.6: Language spoke when growing up (Mothers):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Mandarin</th>
<th>Cantonese</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Chiuchow</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
<th>Shanghainese</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ULP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examining the educational backgrounds, thirteen fathers and thirteen mothers from the ULP group graduated from universities or graduate schools (Table 3.1.7 and 3.1.8). In contrast, none of the parents from the CDC group had any university degrees and for many of them, completion of high school was the highest level of educational achievement.

The family structure of both groups is presented in Table 3.1.9. In this study, the term “nuclear family” refers to a father, a mother and their children. In this study, thirteen families from the ULP group and ten from the CDC group were nuclear families. CDC families tended to have more non-parental adults in the household than ULP families. Table 3.1.10 shows the number of children living in the family or household. Eight families from the ULP group had only one child while thirteen families from the CDC group had more than one child.
Table 3.1.7: Fathers' educational achievement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grad school</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>High school</th>
<th>Elementary school</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ULP</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1.8: Mothers' educational achievement:

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grad school</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>High school</th>
<th>Elementary school</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ULP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1.9: The number of adults living in the family or household:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ULP</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1.10: The number of children living in the family or household:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ULP</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The children's mean age in the ULP group (50.7 months) was younger than that of the CDC group (56.4 months). Thirteen children from the ULP group and seven from the CDC group were first born. Within each group, seven children were males and eight were females. The average length at preschool of the ULP group was 12.6 months and 14.4 months for the CDC group. All respondents from the ULP group reported that they still had close relationships with their relatives and friends in their country of origin while two out of fifteen from the CDC group reported that they did not have any close relationships with their country of origin anymore.

In summary, parents from the ULP group had more formal education than the CDC parents and the ULP group had more parents with professional occupations than those from the CDC group. Most parents in the ULP group came from either Hong Kong or Taiwan while most CDC parents were from Vietnam or China. Four ULP parents were born in Canada, but all CDC parents were born outside of Canada. The majority of parents in both groups spoke Cantonese or Mandarin as a first language when they were children. Only a few of the families in the sample stated that they currently lived with other adults such as grandparents in the same household. Moreover, the children’s average ages and the length of time they were enrolled in preschools were very close. Both groups reported that they still had close relations with friends and relatives in their country of origin except two parents from the CDC group. In conclusion, the ULP and the CDC group were similar in terms of their family structure but different in the educational and professional backgrounds of parents.
3.2 Instrument

Interviews were used to collect data from the parents. The interview included a questionnaire (see Appendix B) developed by the researcher and the Family Environment Scale (FES) (Moos, 1974; 1986) (see Appendix C). There were four major areas of the questionnaire: 1) background information (e.g. years in Canada, parental occupation and educational achievement, country of origin, language spoke when growing up, language proficiency); 2) present language use patterns in the family (e.g. the proportion of the first language (L1) and the second language (L2) used among family members); 3) language environment at home (e.g. the number of English and Chinese books at home, hours of watching English or Chinese TV programs, videos); 4) parents' attitudes toward their children's maintenance of the first language (e.g. the importance for their children to understand Chinese, parental expectations of their children's first language proficiencies). Most questions were Likert-scale formatted. For example, parents were asked to indicate on a five-point scale how important they felt it was for their child to understand Chinese. Some questions were open-ended and provided parents the opportunity to express their ideas about their children's first language maintenance.

The questionnaire was developed and piloted by the researcher with the references from related previous studies conducted by Arnberg (1984), Du (1994), Lewin (1987), Putz (1991), and Wong Fillmore (1991a). In Arnberg's (1984) study, the interview/questionnaire covered the following topics: 1) background information; 2)
language pattern in the family; 3) language environment at home; and 4) information concerning the child's bilingualism. Du (1994), who used Arnberg's four topics as the basic categories for her study, included the following areas: 1) background information; 2) present language use pattern in the family; 3) language environment in the home; and 4) parents' attitudes toward their child's development of bilingualism. Since this study is related to these two previous studies, the researcher modified the first three categories and expanded the last one to the parents' attitudes towards their child's first language maintenance.

Lewin (1987) explored the relationship between language-related attitudes of English speaking immigrants in Israel and their choice of L1 and L2 for communication with their Israeli-born children. A sample of 20 parents were interviewed to collect information about their background and their attitudes toward learning and using L1 and L2. In the study entitled "Language maintenance and language shift in the speech behavior of German-Australian migrants in Canberra," Putz (1991) attempted to describe and analyze the speech behavior of this particular ethnic group. In Putz's questionnaire, he asked questions concerning the background information, language use patterns and language environments. In another study conducted by Wong Fillmore (1991a), the evidence and findings from a nationwide study of language shift among language-minority children in the U.S. were discussed. The findings suggested that the loss of a primary language, particularly when it is the only language spoke by parents, can be very costly to the children, their families, and to society as a whole.
The Family Environment Scale (FES) (Moos, 1974; 1986) was designed to measure several aspects of the social and interpersonal climate of the family. There are 90 true-false formatted questions concerning family structures and dynamics. The scale surveys a family member's perceptions of the patterns of relationships within the family, dimensions of personal growth, and the nature of the family's customary organization and decision-making activities (Fowler, 1981). It is a self-administered questionnaire organized into ten sub-scales of nine items each. These sub-scales are cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, independence, achievement orientation, intellectual-cultural orientation, active-recreational orientation, moral-religious emphasis, organization, and control. The items are presented in a true-false format and individual scores can be easily converted into standard scores using the conversion table in the appendix of the manual.

Pilot studies were conducted to test the validity of the family demographic questionnaire and the FES. Two Chinese parents who formerly sent their children to the university lab school and one parent with grown-up children who lived in a Chinese-speaking neighborhood participated in the pilot study. Few questions were rephrased and one question concerning the family annual income was eliminated after the interviews with these parents.

### 3.3 Procedures

The investigator first contacted the director of the university lab preschool and the coordinators of a number of community-based daycare centres to get their approval to
conduct this study in their schools (see Appendix D). One university lab preschool and one of the community-based daycare centers agreed to participate in this study. It was a daycare centre located in a community centre in a primarily Chinese neighborhood in Vancouver. The coordinator distributed 40 copies of Parent Information Consent Forms to the parents. As requested by the director and coordinators, the Parent Consent Forms were prepared both in English and Chinese (see Appendix A). Parent Consent Forms were sent out to Chinese parents in these two schools either by the investigator, class teachers, or the coordinator. A total of twenty seven copies of Parent Consent Forms were distributed in the university lab preschool and forty in the community-based daycare centre. Parents who were interested in this study were asked to sign and return the consent forms to the investigator or class teachers. Fifteen parents from each school agreed to take part in this study. A native Cantonese speaker was hired as the interpreter during data collection because most parents from the community-based daycare centre understood Cantonese better than Mandarin, which is the investigator's first language. The parents from the university lab preschool mainly came from Hong Kong and Taiwan. The majority of parents from the community-based day care centre came from China and Vietnam.

Parents were interviewed either at the preschools or their homes. Among the fifteen subjects from the university lab preschool, nine interviews were conducted in English and six in Mandarin. In the community-based daycare centre group, nine interviews were conducted in Cantonese and six in Mandarin. After the interview, parents were also asked to complete the Family Environment Scale. If parents had difficulty
understanding the questions in the Family Environment Scale, the interviewer translated the questions into the respondent’s first language and went through the questions with them. However, some parents from both groups preferred to do the questionnaire and the Family Environment Scale at home because of their time constraints. This situation was allowed as long as parents had no difficulty reading and understanding English. Thus, eight questionnaires out of 30 were returned to the researcher without interviewing the respondents in person. On average, the data collection procedure took up to 40 minutes.

After the data collection was completed, each respondent was assigned to a code number. The data collected from the questionnaire interviews were grouped into four categories for analysis. They were (1) background information about the parents and their children; (2) present language use pattern in the family; (3) language environment at home; and (4) parents’ attitudes toward their child’s maintenance of the first language. The responses were then converted into scores. The individual scores of the Family Environment Scale were also converted into standard scores by using the conversion table in the appendix of the manual. Responses to open-ended questions were transcribed for later analysis and coding.
Chapter 4

Results

The results of this study will be presented in this chapter in the order of the research questions presented above on page 7:

1. What are Chinese immigrant parents' attitudes toward their children's first language maintenance?

2. What are the language use patterns and language environments in families from different socioeconomic and educational backgrounds?

3. What are the differences in terms of the family social and emotional environments in Chinese immigrant families?

4. What are the relationships between the children's language use patterns and their family social and emotional environments?
4.1 Parental attitudes toward their children's maintenance of first language

In this section, “attitudes” are defined as parental perceptions of: (1) the importance of their children to maintain Chinese; (2) the current level of the children’s language proficiency; (3) their expected level of their children’s language proficiency; (4) the advantages and disadvantages of children maintaining Chinese; (5) the ways in which they supported the maintenance of Chinese in the home.

Table 4.1.1: The importance for your child to maintain Chinese:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not important at all</th>
<th>Little important</th>
<th>Somewhat important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>understand</td>
<td>ULP 0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CDC 0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total 0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speak</td>
<td>ULP 0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CDC 0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total 0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>read</td>
<td>ULP 0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CDC 0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total 0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>write</td>
<td>ULP 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CDC 0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During interviews, parents were asked to indicate how important they felt it was for their children to maintain their first language (Appendix B, Section IV, Question 1). The degree of importance was then coded with “1” for “not important at all” and “5” for “very important.” A majority of parents from both groups felt that it was “important” or “very important” for their children to be able to understand, speak, read, and write
Parents were asked to indicate the level of their children's ability to use Chinese in listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Appendix B, Section IV, Question 2). Most parents from both groups felt that their children's ability to listen and speak Chinese was good or excellent. Three parents from the ULP group indicated that their children's ability to speak Chinese was poor. In the CDC group, it was found that mothers' educational achievement and their children's fluency in oral Chinese were highly correlated (p<0.05). In addition, there was a positive trend between the mothers' educational achievement and the actual level of their children's understanding of the Chinese language in the CDC group. However, while no parents rated their children's reading or writing as good or excellent, seven parents from the CDC group felt that their children's ability to
read Chinese was average. Only two of the ULP parents rated their children's ability to read Chinese as average. From the parents' perspective, the level of reading and writing in Chinese was better in the CDC group than the ULP group (Table 4.1.2).

Table 4.1.3: What level of fluency of Chinese would you like your child to obtain?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Do not care</th>
<th>Do not know</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>listening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ULP</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speaking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ULP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ULP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ULP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of parents in both groups wanted their children to be excellent in their ability to listen and speak Chinese (Appendix B, Section IV, Question 3). The answers of this question were coded with “1” for “do not care” and “5” for “excellent.” The mothers' educational achievement and the parental expectations of their children being able to listen and speak Chinese were also highly correlated in the CDC group (p<0.05) when Spearman correlation analysis was used. However, in terms of being able to read and write Chinese, parental expectations varied. Few parents from each group stated that they did not care if their children could read or write Chinese. Nevertheless, some parents felt that it was important for their children to be able to read and write Chinese (Table 4.1.3). Overall,
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parental attitudes toward their children's maintenance of the first language in both groups were similar in terms of listening and speaking Chinese but ULP and CDC parents had differed somewhat when it came to reading and writing. The parents who indicated that they did not care about their children's reading and writing ability in Chinese stated that they had limited skills in the Chinese language themselves. They said that their children will grow up in Canada and it may not be necessary for their children to be able to read and write Chinese. In conclusion, the ULP and CDC parents had similar expectations on the maintenance of their children's first language. However, the CDC parents and children actually used more Chinese in more situations than the ULP parents and children.

Parents were also asked to indicate the advantages and disadvantages for their children to maintain Chinese (Appendix B, Section IV, Questions 4 and 5). A large number of parents from both groups stated that it was important for their children to maintain their Chinese proficiency so that the children could communicate with other Chinese-speaking people such as family members or grandparents. It would also be easier for them to get a job in the future if they were bilingual. Four parents from the ULP group and one CDC parent also indicated that it would help maintain the Chinese culture if their children were able to be proficient in the Chinese language. Conversely, when asking about the disadvantages of maintaining Chinese, thirteen ULP parents and fourteen CDC parents stated that there were no disadvantages for their children to maintain Chinese. However, two ULP parents indicated that they either had to spend more effort and time providing resources to enhance their children's learning or worried about the possibility of not integrating into the mainstream culture. Another parent from the CDC
group indicated that another disadvantage for her child to maintain Chinese was high pressure or stress for the child since she thought that her child was still too young.

Parents were asked the importance of different methods of maintaining a child's first language (Appendix B, Section IV, Question 6). No significant differences between groups were found. All thirty parents from both groups indicated that it was very important to talk to their children in Chinese at home. Other important ways to help maintain their children's Chinese included reading Chinese books to their children (n=5), learning the language at Chinese schools (n=17) or watching Chinese TV/videos (n=7). Another suggestion from one ULP parent was to let her child spend time with grandparents so that the child could learn and practice from the conversation with grandparents. Overall, parents from both groups had similar perceptions in terms of how to help their children maintain Chinese.

Parents from both groups had similar responses in terms of how frequently they bought Chinese books for their children (Appendix B, Section IV, Question 7a). Two from the ULP group and four from the CDC group stated that they never bought any Chinese books for their children. The frequency of buying Chinese books ranged from once a month to four times a year for thirteen ULP parents and eleven CDC parents. Furthermore, when asked about how often they borrowed Chinese books for their children from libraries (Appendix B, Section IV, Question 7b), six ULP parents and five CDC parents stated that they never did. For other parents, it ranged from twice a week to once a month. Children from eleven ULP parents and eight CDC parents did not go to any Chinese language schools. Four ULP children went to the Chinese school once a week for
about two hours on Saturdays. Seven CDC parents stated that their children went to Chinese schools two hours a day, five days a week (Appendix B, Section IV, Question 7c).

Parents were also asked how often they went back to their country of origin with their children (Appendix B, Section IV, Question 7d). Four ULP parents and eleven CDC parents reported that they never went back while eleven ULP parents and four CDC parents stated that they went back to their home country once a year or once every two to three years. Among these thirty parents, two ULP parents indicated that they went back to their home country with their children two or three times a year.

Parents from both groups had similar responses on questions regarding Chinese videos or TV shows (Appendix B, Section IV, Questions 7e and 7f). Four ULP parents and three CDC parents reported that their children never watched Chinese videos or TV. The rest of the children from both groups watched Chinese TV/videos from once a week to every day. However, as previously discussed, the amount of time that children watched Chinese TV/videos differed significantly between these two groups even though the frequencies were similar. Eight parents from each group indicated that their children listened to Chinese radio almost every day while two from each group stated that their children never did. The remaining children listened to Chinese radio once in a while.

Five ULP and eleven CDC parents stated that their children visited Chinese friends very often (Appendix B, Section IV, Question 7g). These CDC parents indicated that their children played with other Chinese children almost everyday since they lived in a Chinese-speaking neighborhood. The remaining children visited Chinese friends three
times a week to once every two weeks. Only one ULP parent indicated that her child never visited Chinese-speaking friends except when visiting grandparents once or twice a week.

Preschools and day care centres can be significant environments for young children and the parents were asked if their children demonstrated different language use patterns at home after starting to go to school (Appendix B, Section IV, Question 8). In both groups, thirteen of fifteen parents reported that their children’s language use patterns had changed. Some parents found that their children spoke English more frequently with family members, friends, and in the neighborhood. Other children tended to mix English with Chinese in their conversations and some parents reported that their children’s English proficiencies had improved after starting school. The two ULP parents who stated that their children’s language use patterns did not change explained that English was the primary language they used at home. Two CDC parents who found their children’s language use patterns were the same indicated that their children spoke mainly Chinese both at school and at home and they had only been in the day care for about three months at the time of the interviews.

Six ULP parents and eight CDC parents had no problems in helping their children maintain Chinese (Appendix B, Section IV, Question 9). Other ULP parents had some other difficulties; had to either remind or insist their children to use Chinese all the time, or there were not many facilities available in this English-speaking society. Two ULP parents also indicated that it was difficult for them to help their children maintain Chinese due to their own limited Chinese language skills. The primary difficulty that the CDC parents
encountered was that they found reading and writing Chinese too hard for their preschool-age children. Overall, the difficulties that ULP parents experienced tended to be more social or environmental factors while the CDC parents were more concerned about the academic aspects of language learning.

Furthermore, parents were asked to identify the main reasons for these difficulties in helping their children maintain Chinese (Appendix B, Section IV, Questions 10). In general, the ULP parents were more concerned about the language-learning environment while the CDC parents were more concerned about learning the characters of Chinese written language.

4.2 Language use patterns and language environments

The data concerning language use patterns of parents and their children at home and outside the family were collected by using the second section of the questionnaire (Appendix B) and the results were summarized in Table 4.2.1. One-way ANOVAs were used to examine the differences between the ULP group and the CDC group. All differences reported in this chapter are statistically significant to p<0.05. Parents in the CDC group spoke Chinese to each other (95.00%) more frequently than parents from the ULP group (70.67%). When talking to their children, ULP fathers reported that 63.33% of their conversation was in Chinese while ULP mothers used 63.67% of their conversation in Chinese. The CDC fathers indicated that 90.00% of their conversation with their children was in Chinese while CDC mothers used 94.00% of their conversation
in Chinese when talking to their children. Similarly, children from the ULP group spoke
English (45.33%) more frequently when talking to their parents compared to those from
the CDC group (18.67%). Thus, children from the CDC group used more Chinese when
talking to their parents (81.33%) than those from the ULP group (54.67%). The language
use patterns between parents themselves and parents-children in these two groups were
statistically significant.

In terms of language use patterns with siblings, friends, at school, and in the
neighborhood, it was reported that children from the CDC group tended to use more
Chinese than those from the ULP group. The ULP and the CDC groups were significantly
different in children’s language use patterns with their friends, at school, and in the
neighborhood. Children from the ULP group used more Chinese than English in talking to
their grandparents but children in the CDC group used Chinese 100% of the time when
talking to their grandparents. The amounts of time that the children spoke Chinese to
their grandparents between the ULP and CDC groups were also significantly different.
Overall, children from the ULP group used more English than Chinese in their daily lives.
Conversely, children in the CDC group spoke more Chinese than English in most
occasions and overall, used more Chinese than the ULP group.
Table 4.2.1: Language use patterns (approximate percentage of time):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>ULP</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>CDC</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father and mother talk to each other in English</td>
<td>29.33</td>
<td>34.32</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>9.06</td>
<td>7.04</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father and mother talk to each other in Chinese</td>
<td>70.67</td>
<td>34.32</td>
<td>95.00</td>
<td>9.06</td>
<td>7.04</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father talks to the child in English</td>
<td>36.67</td>
<td>20.93</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>17.22</td>
<td>14.52</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father talks to the child in Chinese</td>
<td>63.33</td>
<td>20.93</td>
<td>90.00</td>
<td>17.22</td>
<td>14.52</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother talks to the child in English</td>
<td>36.33</td>
<td>23.79</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>12.85</td>
<td>18.88</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother talks to the child in Chinese</td>
<td>63.67</td>
<td>23.79</td>
<td>94.00</td>
<td>12.85</td>
<td>18.88</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child talks to you in English</td>
<td>45.33</td>
<td>26.69</td>
<td>18.67</td>
<td>25.60</td>
<td>7.79</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child talks to you in Chinese</td>
<td>54.67</td>
<td>26.69</td>
<td>81.33</td>
<td>25.60</td>
<td>7.79</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child talks to his/her siblings in English</td>
<td>58.57</td>
<td>39.34</td>
<td>29.29</td>
<td>25.86</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>p&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child talks to his/her siblings in Chinese</td>
<td>41.43</td>
<td>39.34</td>
<td>70.71</td>
<td>25.86</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>p&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child talks to his/her friends in English</td>
<td>73.33</td>
<td>30.16</td>
<td>40.67</td>
<td>38.07</td>
<td>6.78</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child talks to his/her friends in Chinese</td>
<td>26.67</td>
<td>30.16</td>
<td>59.33</td>
<td>38.07</td>
<td>6.78</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child talks to his/her grandparents in English</td>
<td>13.85</td>
<td>18.39</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child talks to his/her grandparents in Chinese</td>
<td>86.15</td>
<td>18.39</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child speaks English at school</td>
<td>87.67</td>
<td>25.27</td>
<td>63.33</td>
<td>36.19</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>p&lt;0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child speaks Chinese at school</td>
<td>12.33</td>
<td>25.27</td>
<td>36.67</td>
<td>36.19</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>p&lt;0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child speaks English in the neighborhood</td>
<td>76.00</td>
<td>27.72</td>
<td>32.00</td>
<td>35.29</td>
<td>14.41</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child speaks Chinese in the neighborhood</td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td>27.72</td>
<td>68.00</td>
<td>35.29</td>
<td>14.41</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2.2: The number of Chinese books and English books at home:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese books</th>
<th></th>
<th>English books</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>over 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ULP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To further compare the different language environments (Appendix B, Section III), parents were asked about the number of Chinese and English books that their children had at home (Table 4.2.2). Five ULP and six CDC families had more than ten Chinese children books at home for their children. In addition, fourteen ULP families had more than twenty English books for their children while only seven CDC families had more than twenty English books at home. One-way ANOVAs revealed a significant difference in terms of the number of English books that parents had at home for their children between these two groups. In comparison, the ULP parents had more English books than the CDC parents had at home for their children. Both groups reported that they had fewer Chinese books than English books for their children at home.
Table 4.2.3: How often do you read to your child in Chinese and in English:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese books</th>
<th></th>
<th>English books</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>never</td>
<td>seldom</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ULP</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4.2.3, all parents read more English books to their preschool-age children more frequently than Chinese ones. In the ULP group, twelve parents indicated that they often read English books to their children, but only one family responded that they often read Chinese books to their children. In the CDC group, four parents often read English books to their children and two parents often read Chinese books to their children. In comparison, the ULP parents owned more children's books and they read books to their children more frequently than the CDC parents. Spearman correlation analyses revealed a significant positive correlation between the mothers' educational achievement and the number of English books they had at home for their children (p<0.05) in the ULP group. The ULP mothers with higher levels of educational achievement tended to have more English books for their children and they also read more often to their children compared to the ULP mothers with lower levels of formal educational achievement. Similarly, the mothers' educational achievement and the frequency they read English books to their children were highly correlated in the CDC group. This suggests that CDC mothers with higher levels of formal educational achievement read English books to their children more often than less educated CDC mothers (p<0.05). Moreover, although not statistically significant, there was a trend
between the mothers' educational achievement and the frequency with which they read Chinese books to their children in the CDC group.

Table 4.2.4: How many hours does your child watch Chinese and English TV/videos per week?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese TV</th>
<th></th>
<th>English TV</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ULP</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>8.05</td>
<td>12.93</td>
<td>9.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>12.33</td>
<td>9.60</td>
<td>13.27</td>
<td>10.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another factor affecting the children's language environment is the exposure to the Chinese language in the media, such as TV. Children from the CDC group watched more Chinese TV/videos (12.33 hours per week) than those from the ULP group (5.4 hours per week). There was also a significant difference in terms of the hours of Chinese videos and TV programs that the children watched per week between the ULP (5.4 hours per week) and CDC group (12.33 hours per week). However, children from both groups watched similar amounts of English TV/videos per week (Table 4.2.4) and no statistical significant difference was observed.

When asking the parents in which situations their children would prefer to speak in Chinese, the responses from the ULP parents can be divided into two categories. In the first category, eleven parents found their children spoke more Chinese at home, with their grandparents or when parents reminded or insisted that the children use Chinese. In the second ULP category, the children who would prefer to speak Chinese whenever they met Chinese people or when the children knew the people they were talking to understood only Chinese. In the CDC group, the responses can be divided into three categories. Four
parents reported that their children spoke Chinese all the time or most of the time. Eight parents stated that their children spoke Chinese at home or with grandparents. This is consistent with the results of the eleven ULP parents. The remaining three parents indicated that their children spoke Chinese when they did not know how to say the word in English.

In terms of which situations the children preferred to speak in English, the majority of children from both groups spoke mostly English at school or when playing with friends. When the children met Caucasians or other English-speaking people, the children would speak English. In general, the situations that children preferred to speak English or Chinese were similar between these two groups. A few children in the CDC group had extremely limited proficiency in English. The children switched between Chinese and English primarily depending on the people he/she was talking to or the situation he/she was in such as in school or at home.
4.3 The comparison of the Family Environment Scale results

Table 4.3.1: The results of the Family Environment Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FES sub-scales</th>
<th>ULP Mean</th>
<th>ULP SD</th>
<th>CDC Mean</th>
<th>CDC SD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active-Recreational Orientation</td>
<td>52.00</td>
<td>9.72</td>
<td>41.93</td>
<td>9.82</td>
<td>7.96</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>58.73</td>
<td>9.30</td>
<td>51.00</td>
<td>7.71</td>
<td>6.12</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>60.53</td>
<td>10.84</td>
<td>58.93</td>
<td>7.98</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressiveness</td>
<td>56.60</td>
<td>9.53</td>
<td>52.20</td>
<td>8.37</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>48.27</td>
<td>12.67</td>
<td>41.33</td>
<td>7.08</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement Orientation</td>
<td>54.93</td>
<td>8.72</td>
<td>51.33</td>
<td>9.66</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual-Cultural Orientation</td>
<td>53.93</td>
<td>13.04</td>
<td>46.47</td>
<td>12.01</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral-Religious Emphasis</td>
<td>51.20</td>
<td>11.69</td>
<td>48.87</td>
<td>9.14</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>51.60</td>
<td>8.68</td>
<td>48.13</td>
<td>8.82</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>41.87</td>
<td>9.51</td>
<td>49.93</td>
<td>8.47</td>
<td>6.01</td>
<td>P&lt;0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the FES can be divided into three categories. The first category included the two sub-scales that the ULP parents scored higher than the CDC parents. In this category, one-way ANOVAs revealed that the scores of the ULP parents and the CDC parents differed significantly (p<0.05) in sub-scales of active-recreational orientation and organization. In the second category, the ULP and the CDC parents had similar scores in cohesion, expressiveness, independence, achievement orientation, intellectual-cultural orientation, moral-religious, and control. Parents from both groups had similar perceptions in these seven sub-scales and there were no statistically significant differences. In the third category, the CDC parents had significantly higher scores in the sub-scale of conflict than the ULP parents (p<0.05) (Table 4.3.1).
4.4 The relationships between the Family Environment Scale and the language use patterns

As shown in Table 4.4.1, Pearson correlations were used to investigate the relationships between aspects of the family environment and language use patterns in immigrant families. In the ULP group, the cohesion sub-scale in the FES (Moos, 1974) was correlated (p<0.05) with: (a) the percentage of time that the children talked to their parents in English or Chinese; (b) the percentage of time that the children talked to their siblings, friends; and (c) the percentage of time that the children spoke English and Chinese in the neighborhood. In other words, the children from more “cohesive” families used more English and less Chinese when talking to their parents, siblings, friends, and in the neighborhood. The parents also used more English and less Chinese when talking to each other in more “cohesive” families in the ULP group.

There was a correlation between the expressiveness sub-scale and the percentage of time that the children spoke English and Chinese to their siblings (p<0.05). In families with higher scores on expressiveness, children communicated with their siblings more in English and less in Chinese. The conflict sub-scale was significantly correlated with the percentage of time that the children used English and Chinese in the neighborhood (p<0.05). When there were more conflicts within families, children tended to use less English and more Chinese in the neighborhood. There was also a significant correlation which showed that the more “independent” the families were, the children spoke more English and less Chinese to their grandparents.
The intellectual-cultural orientation sub-scale was correlated with: (a) the percentage of time that mothers and fathers talked to each other in English and Chinese; (b) the percentage of time that mothers talked to their children; and (c) the percentage of time that the children talked to their parents (p<0.05). When families were more "intellectual" and "cultural" oriented, the parents tended to talk to each other more in English and less in Chinese and fathers used more English and less Chinese in their conversations with their children. In addition, the children used more English and less Chinese when talking to their parents.

The active-recreational orientation sub-scale was correlated with: (a) the percentage of time that mothers and fathers talked to each in English or Chinese; (b) the percentage of time that mothers talked to their children; (c) the percentage of time that the children talked to their siblings, friends; and (d) the percentage of time that the children spoke English and Chinese at school or in the neighborhood (p<0.05). In families with higher scores in the sub-scale of active-recreational orientation, parents used more English and less Chinese when talking to each other. Mothers also spoke more English and less Chinese to their children. In addition, children tended to use more English and less Chinese when talking to their parents, siblings, friends, in the school, or in the neighborhood.

In the CDC group, the only correlation was between the intellectual-cultural orientation sub-scale and the percentage of time that mothers and fathers talked to each other in English (p<0.05). These parents used more English and less Chinese with each other.
Table 4.4.1: Significant correlations of the Family Environment Scale sub-scales and the language use patterns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FES sub-scales</th>
<th>Language use patterns</th>
<th>ULP</th>
<th></th>
<th>CDC</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>Child talks to you in English</td>
<td>r= 0.59</td>
<td>p&lt;0.02</td>
<td>r= 0.59</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>Child talks to you in Chinese</td>
<td>r= -0.59</td>
<td>p&lt;0.02</td>
<td>r= -0.59</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>Child talks to his/her siblings in English</td>
<td>r= 0.82</td>
<td>p&lt;0.02</td>
<td>r= -0.04</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>Child talks to his/her siblings in Chinese</td>
<td>r= -0.82</td>
<td>p&lt;0.02</td>
<td>r= 0.04</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>Child talks to his/her friends in English</td>
<td>r= 0.64</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
<td>r= -0.31</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>Child talks to his/her friends in Chinese</td>
<td>r= -0.64</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
<td>r= 0.31</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>Child speaks English in the neighborhood</td>
<td>r= 0.55</td>
<td>p&lt;0.03</td>
<td>r= -0.38</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>Child speaks Chinese in the neighborhood</td>
<td>r= -0.55</td>
<td>p&lt;0.03</td>
<td>r= 0.38</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressiveness</td>
<td>Child talks to his/her siblings in English</td>
<td>r= 0.78</td>
<td>p&lt;0.03</td>
<td>r= 0.17</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressiveness</td>
<td>Child talks to his/her siblings in Chinese</td>
<td>r= -0.78</td>
<td>p&lt;0.03</td>
<td>r= -0.17</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>Child speaks English in the neighborhood</td>
<td>r= -0.56</td>
<td>p&lt;0.03</td>
<td>r= 0.13</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>Child speaks Chinese in the neighborhood</td>
<td>r= 0.56</td>
<td>p&lt;0.03</td>
<td>r= -0.13</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Child talks to his/her grandparents in English</td>
<td>r= 0.67</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Child talks to his/her grandparents in Chinese</td>
<td>r= -0.67</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual-Cultural Orientation</td>
<td>Father and mother talk to each other in English</td>
<td>r= 0.56</td>
<td>p&lt;0.02</td>
<td>r= 0.63</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual-Cultural Orientation</td>
<td>Father and mother talk to each other in Chinese</td>
<td>r= -0.56</td>
<td>p&lt;0.02</td>
<td>r= -0.63</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual-Cultural Orientation</td>
<td>Mother talks to the child in English</td>
<td>r= 0.65</td>
<td>p&lt;0.01</td>
<td>r= -0.40</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.4.1: (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Correlation Value</th>
<th>p-Value</th>
<th>Correlation Value</th>
<th>p-Value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual-Cultural Orientation</td>
<td>Mother talks to the child in Chinese</td>
<td>$r = -0.65$</td>
<td>$p &lt; 0.01$</td>
<td>$r = 0.40$</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child talks to you in English</td>
<td>$r = 0.59$</td>
<td>$p &lt; 0.02$</td>
<td>$r = -0.13$</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child talks to you in Chinese</td>
<td>$r = -0.59$</td>
<td>$p &lt; 0.02$</td>
<td>$r = 0.13$</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active-Recreational Orientation</td>
<td>Father and mother talk to each other in English</td>
<td>$r = 0.65$</td>
<td>$p &lt; 0.01$</td>
<td>$r = 0.34$</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Father and mother talk to each other in Chinese</td>
<td>$r = -0.65$</td>
<td>$p &lt; 0.01$</td>
<td>$r = -0.34$</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother talks to the child in English</td>
<td>$r = 0.52$</td>
<td>$p &lt; 0.04$</td>
<td>$r = -0.10$</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother talks to the child in Chinese</td>
<td>$r = -0.52$</td>
<td>$p &lt; 0.04$</td>
<td>$r = 0.10$</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child talks to you in English</td>
<td>$r = 0.59$</td>
<td>$p &lt; 0.01$</td>
<td>$r = -0.01$</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child talks to you in Chinese</td>
<td>$r = -0.59$</td>
<td>$p &lt; 0.01$</td>
<td>$r = 0.01$</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child talks to his/her siblings in English</td>
<td>$r = 0.88$</td>
<td>$p &lt; 0.01$</td>
<td>$r = -0.02$</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child talks to his/her siblings in Chinese</td>
<td>$r = -0.88$</td>
<td>$p &lt; 0.01$</td>
<td>$r = 0.02$</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child talks to his/her friends in English</td>
<td>$r = 0.70$</td>
<td>$p &lt; 0.01$</td>
<td>$r = -0.08$</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child talks to his/her friends in Chinese</td>
<td>$r = -0.70$</td>
<td>$p &lt; 0.01$</td>
<td>$r = 0.08$</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child speaks English at school</td>
<td>$r = 0.54$</td>
<td>$p &lt; 0.03$</td>
<td>$r = 0.05$</td>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.4.1: (Continued)

| Active-Recreational Orientation | Child speaks Chinese at school |  \( r = -0.54 \) |  \( p < 0.03 \) |  \( r = -0.05 \) | N.S. |
| Active-Recreational Orientation | Child speaks English in the neighborhood |  \( r = 0.63 \) |  \( p < 0.01 \) |  \( r = -0.13 \) | N.S. |
| Active-Recreational Orientation | Child speaks Chinese in the neighborhood |  \( r = -0.63 \) |  \( p < 0.01 \) |  \( r = 0.13 \) | N.S. |
5.1 Discussion

This study investigated Chinese immigrant parents' attitudes toward their children's maintenance of the first language and the language use patterns in the family. It also studied the social and emotional environments of families from different socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. Moreover, the relationships between the Family Environment Scale (FES) (Moos, 1974) sub-scale scores and the language use patterns in immigrant families were investigated.

Although many previous studies focused on the first language maintenance, this present one is unique in the following respects:

1. This study focused on a particular minority group, in contrast to several earlier studies which focused on different language groups. This study specifically examined Chinese immigrant parents' attitudes toward their children's first language maintenance. The term "immigrants" was used very broadly in previous studies. There are various sub-groups within each minority group and each sub-group has specific characteristics. Although all of the parents in this study were "Chinese immigrants," they came from two distinct
socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. Moreover, the focus on these particular sub-groups made this study unique.

2. The Family Environment Scale (FES) (Moos, 1974) was never used in previous or related studies of language maintenance in Chinese immigrant families. It was employed here for two reasons: (a) to examine the social and emotional aspects of the Chinese immigrant families in this study for the first time; and (b) to study relationships between the family social and emotional environments and the language use patterns in Chinese immigrant families.

The following section of this chapter is organized in accordance with the primary research questions which guided this study (shown on page 7). The findings are also discussed in light of some insights which emerged from the study.

1. What are Chinese immigrant parents’ attitudes toward their children’s first language maintenance?

Overall, most parents in this study had positive attitudes about maintaining their children’s first language. The majority of parents from both groups indicated that it was “important” or “very important” for their children to be able to speak and understand Chinese. Du (1994) summarized the motives of parents in her study who wished their children to retain the first language. The motives included personal/social motives, symbolic motives, intellectual motives, and instrumental motives. In this study, it was
found that most parents also ranked the personal/social motives as the most important reasons to maintain their first language. They would like their children to retain the first language in order to communicate with family members or to help future career opportunities.

In both groups, more parents thought that it was more important for their children to be able to speak and understand Chinese than to read and write. Although these two groups of parents came from different socioeconomic and educational backgrounds, there were no significant differences between these two groups in terms of the parental attitudes toward their children’s first language maintenance. The finding of this study is different from that in Li’s (1982). In terms of the socioeconomic status and the parental attitudes toward language maintenance, Li (1982) indicated that people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds tended to have greater language shift from their first language to the majority language. However, in this study, it appeared that parents from lower educational and socioeconomic backgrounds used Chinese more frequently with their children than parents from higher educational and socioeconomic backgrounds. One possible explanation for this was that most parents were first-generation immigrants and most of them still had close relationships with their family and friends in their country of origin. The other possibility may be the growing economic power in Asia, where the immigrant parents came from. It may be helpful for the children’s future careers if they were fluent in both languages. This point of view was less visible in the early 1980s when Li conducted her study. It may be possible that her findings are outdated.
Although both groups of parents claimed that the maintenance of Chinese was important, the CDC parents and children reportedly practiced it more than the ULP group. For instance, parents and children from the CDC group tended to use more Chinese in most situations than the ULP group. One possible explanation for this was that the ULP parents who came from higher educational and socioeconomic backgrounds were more westernized in the professional and social works and spoke more English than the CDC parents who were financially poorer, less educated, and participated less English-speaking social and professional situations. With less formal education, the CDC parents may have less proficiency in English. Furthermore, the CDC parents lived in Chinese-speaking neighborhoods and opportunities to use English may be limited.

In terms of the difficulties that parents encountered in helping their children maintain the first language, it appeared that the ULP parents were more concerned about social and environmental factors such as the limited resources and the English speaking society. The CDC parents appeared to be more concerned about the academic aspects of language learning such as being able to read and write Chinese characters. In their opinions, teaching their children literacy seemed to be the major focus and the primary difficulty in learning a first language. Although a few more ULP parents rated reading and writing higher than the CDC parents, the actual fluency in reading and writing was higher in the CDC children.
2. What are the language use patterns and language environments in families from different socioeconomic and educational backgrounds?

The language use patterns of these two groups of parents and children were different. The ULP parents and children used more English and less Chinese in their daily lives while conversely, the CDC parents and children spoke Chinese more frequently than English in most situations.

In terms of language environments, it was found that the ULP parents had more English books for their children than the CDC parents. Both groups of parents reported that they had fewer Chinese books than English books for their children. In addition, all parents read more English books to their children than Chinese ones. In both groups, the mothers with higher levels of education had more English books for their children and also read more often to their children compared to the mothers with lower levels of formal education.

To further compare the different language environments, parents were asked about the amount of their children's exposure to the Chinese language in the media such as TV. Both groups reported that their children watched similar amounts of English TV/videos per week. However, children from the CDC group appeared to watch more Chinese TV/videos than children from the ULP group. Wu (1995) suggested that the availability of ethnic media at least provided some opportunities to use the language. It may enhance the status of the language in some cases.
3. What are the differences in terms of the family social and emotional environments in Chinese immigrant families?

When the scores in every sub-scale on the FES were compared between the ULP and CDC families, it was discovered that the groups were more similar than dissimilar except for the sub-scales of active-recreational orientation, organization, and conflict. Although the ULP parents scored slightly higher in most sub-scales, these differences were not statistically significant. This result is somewhat surprising since the two groups represented two distinct socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. It may be possible that the FES is not sensitive enough to differentiate these two sub-groups of the Chinese immigrants.

In the sub-scales of active-recreational orientation and organization, the ULP parents scored significantly higher than the CDC parents. One possible explanation is that parents from the ULP group had higher levels of formal education than the CDC parents. The ULP parents also came from higher socioeconomic backgrounds and they may have more time and money for their children and family. Furthermore, these results may reflect the fact that ULP families were more western oriented. The FES is based on assumptions of western family values, which the ULP parents seem to have adopted more readily than CDC parents. It may be possible that more westernized families would score higher than less westernized families in these two sub-scales. There may be some problems in using the FES in studies of non-western cultural contexts.
In the conflict sub-scale, the CDC parents scored higher than the ULP parents. According to Moos (1986), the number, age, and gender of children in the family can affect the emotional quality of the home environment. Cohesion is lower and conflict higher for mothers with two children and mothers with male children when compared to mothers with one child. Abbott & Brody (1985) also indicated that the presence of two children in a household tended to increase family conflict. On average, the CDC parents had more children than the ULP parents and this may be one of the possibilities that these two groups had different scores on the FES sub-scale of conflict. Another possible explanation is that a few parents in the CDC group openly expressed concerns with the relevance of the FES and confusion regarding understanding some questions in the FES. For example, a number of parents indicated that they did not understand the meaning of the questions “Family members often try to one-up or out-do each other” (FES question 73) or “Family members sometimes hit each other” (FES question 53).

4. What are the relationships between the children’s language use patterns and the family social and emotional environments?

There are more correlations between the FES scores and language use patterns in the ULP group than the CDC group. It appeared that ULP parents and children used more English and also had higher scores in the sub-scales of cohesion, expressiveness, independence, intellectual-cultural orientation, and active-recreational orientation in their families. In addition, parents and children tended to speak more English in the ULP
families with lower levels of conflict. In the CDC group, the only statistically significant correlation was with the sub-scale of intellectual-cultural orientation. Parents and children also used more English in more intellectually and culturally oriented families.

This is an exploratory study of the relationships between the FES and language use patterns in immigrant families. Therefore, it is beyond the scope of this study to offer definitive conclusions on this measure. One of the possible explanations for the different results between these two groups is that immigrant families are not familiar with instruments such as the Family Environment Scale, especially for parents from lower socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. A few CDC parents indicated that they did not understand the questions in the Family Environment Scale. The other possibility is that the Family Environment Scale may not reflect the social and emotional environments of Chinese immigrants because of the cultural differences. Further research needs to be conducted to investigate the possible reasons of these results with Chinese immigrant families from different socioeconomic and educational backgrounds.

5.2 Implications of research findings

This is an exploratory study and the findings of this study may provide some implications for early childhood educators who work with young children from different family backgrounds. This study may also help immigrant parents develop understandings about maintaining the children’s first language at an young age and provide educators an opportunity to understand characteristics of sub-groups among Chinese immigrants.
Most parents in this study indicated that it was important for their children to maintain their first language. However, it was found that the family practices were different from parental expectations in the ULP group. The CDC group seemed to practice more in their first language than the ULP group and the ULP parents should be aware of this research finding. According to Arnberg (1987), parents who provide consistent input are more likely to help their children to retain their first languages than those who do not. It is possible that the CDC group may retain their first language better then the ULP group in the long run if the CDC group continues to use more Chinese in their daily lives. The researcher should inform the ULP parents of the research findings and appropriate strategies concerning the practice of the first language maintenance. For example, parents should be encouraged to participate and engage in activities that their first language can be used with their children besides talking to their children in Chinese at home, such as sharing stories, songs, drawings, and experiences of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In school settings, a parent information board or a newsletter can be developed using a language and reading level appropriate for the parents. The information board or the newsletter may be bilingual whenever it is necessary.

In this study, parents indicated that their children used more English after they started going to school. This confirms the findings of Wong Fillmore’s (1991a) study that the language use patterns change in the home when immigrant children start to learn English. As Du (1994) indicated, it can be problematic for preschool-age children because they simply have not reached a stable enough command of their first language. The maintenance of the first language would be affected by contact with a new language that is
promoted as heavily as English is in the English-speaking society. Parents, especially the ULP parents, should be informed by teachers and educators about the consequences of children losing the ability in their first language. Losing a first language may affect their social, emotional, and educational developments and the integrity of their families. Parents should also try to use as much Chinese as possible with their children since they indicated that one of the most important ways to help their children retain Chinese was talking to them in Chinese.

Eleven out of thirty parents in this study reported that their children take Chinese lessons in Chinese language schools. Strong institutional support for the heritage language is vital and necessary to mitigate against this process of heritage language shift for the linguistic minority group. However, the ULP parents reported that they did not send their children to Chinese language schools because of their concerns about the appropriateness of the curriculum and the teaching style of the Chinese class. Parents in this study also indicated that there is a lack of standard guidelines to help parents choose an appropriate school for their children. According to Du (1994), one of the reasons that children did not like to attend Chinese schools was because the classes were not organized well enough to make children feel interested in learning the first language. In addition, it is difficult for children to learn reading and writing in Chinese, especially for preschool-age children. The appropriateness, context, curriculum and style of the formal first language education for young children needs to be further considered. It is suggested that appropriate and pedagogically sound instruction and experiences should be developed by professionals and provided in the early childhood education programs.
Parents in this study also indicated that their children watched Chinese TV programs, videos or listened to Chinese radio. Clyne (1991) suggested that the use of community languages on TV or radio showed that these languages are home languages and they are valuable. However, parents in this study reported that there are very few children’s programs on the multicultural channels. Some parents indicated that even though there are Chinese programs or videos, the language and the context of these programs may not be appropriate for young children. As a result, their children watched more English TV programs than Chinese ones. This may have negative implications for language maintenance as children play important roles in preserving the language. Also, there is a lack of children’s programs on ethnic radio. Therefore, it is suggested that more appropriate programs to be developed by educators and parents are encouraged to help their children choose appropriate ethnic TV programs or videos to increase children’s contact and to enhance the maintenance of their first language. Further studies need to be conducted to investigate the effect of ethnic programs on children’s first language maintenance.

In terms of recommendations for programs and practice, it is suggested that if an early childhood teacher can speak the child’s home language or the early childhood education setting is bilingual, it can provide the child with opportunities to hear and use their home language in school settings. Bernhard et al. (1996) investigated the linguistic match in the early childhood education settings. They indicated that there is evidence that match-mismatch of language and discursive practices between minority students and teachers are important variables in explaining academic performance. It was suggested
that if there was at least one teacher or staff person in an early childhood education setting that matches the children’s linguistic background, then the children’s family language was more likely to be safeguarded. Even if a teacher can make the effort to learn a few words in a child’s home language, it may help validate and affirm the child’s language and culture, further demonstrating the teacher’s respect for the child’s linguistic and cultural background (NAEYC, 1996).

Even though this study did not specifically focus on teachers’ roles in children’s first language maintenance, it was found that the school is a significant environment that affects immigrant children’s language use patterns. To help maintain the first language, teachers can bring Chinese speakers such as children’s grandparents or merchants in the neighborhood into the classroom. Teachers can also use books or videos in Chinese to honor and value the language in early childhood settings. Moreover, teachers should know more about specific patterns of linguistic and social interactions of an ethnic group, but should not make any global assumptions and conclusions about people from a certain minority group. Linguistic, cultural, and racial diversity present challenges to the Canadian education system at all levels. Teaching and collaborating with students is facilitated in situations where there is some degree of linguistic and cultural sensitivity between teachers and students.

The lack of resources has been a problem in first language maintenance. During the interviews, parents expressed concerns about the difficulty of getting appropriate children’s literature in their first language. Parents stated that children may lose interest in learning their first language after rereading the limited selection of books several times.
Although there are more books in languages other than English and French in public libraries, the quantity and quality of children's books are still limited. Local bookstores, public libraries, and publishers should be encouraged to help solve this problem and fulfill this growing need. Parents should be informed about where and how to find appropriate materials for their children.

5.3 Recommendations for future research

Suggestions and recommendations are made in this section in light of limitations of the study and implications of the findings.

The sample selection in this study was not completely randomized. Many parents from the CDC group were referred to the investigator by the director or the teacher at the day care centre. As a result, there may be some sampling bias. In addition, the size of the sample is small but it was adequate for this was an exploratory study. For future studies, it is suggested that the sample size should be increased to reduce the bias and to increase the generalizability of the study.

The FES (Moos, 1974) was used in this study concerning the first language maintenance for the first time. Although there is a Chinese edition of the FES, it was not available when interviews were conducted. In addition, the Chinese edition was not applied because of the limited reading ability of some parents. As a result, the investigator translated all the ninety questions into Mandarin or Cantonese in order to let participants understand them. However, two parents from the CDC group indicated that
they had difficulty understanding the questions even though they were translated into their first language. They reported that several questions were beyond their experiences or not related to their daily lives. A few parents stated that some questions sounded “ridiculous” or “meaningless” to them such as “Family members often try to one-up or out-do each other” (FES question 73) or “The Bible is a very important book in our home” (FES question 78).

One ULP parent stated that her responses to the FES were influenced by her mother who lived in the same household. Most of her answers to the FES survey were actual practices in her family, but she indicated that she would have things done in different ways if her mother did not live with them. Moreover, many parents from both groups complained about the repetition in the FES. Parents also stated that some questions were irrelevant from the Chinese culture. Thus, another standardized and valid test that is more relevant and appropriate to the Chinese culture should be designed and used when conducting further research in the future. The strengths and weaknesses of the FES also need to be carefully reconsidered.

This is an exploratory study that involved one specific ethnic group. Other cultural groups or the maintenance of languages other than the Chinese immigrants should be considered in future studies. In this study, both the family demographic questionnaire and the FES are self-reporting instrument. If the observation method could also be used in future studies, it would help researchers to understand the family practice and language use patterns in immigrant families better. In addition, in-depth case studies that focus on specific subjects of this study and longitudinal studies that focus on outcomes of children
and their families should be conducted to further understand the parental attitudes on the first language maintenance within Chinese immigrants. The impact on families of children becoming more proficient than parents in a second language should also be studied in the future.
Bibliography


Appendix B

Questionnaire

1. Background Information:

1. How many years and months have you lived in Canada? ____ year(s) ____ month(s)

2. How long do you plan to stay in Canada?
   - 0-3 years
   - 3-5 years
   - permanent resident

3. What is your marital status?
   - single
   - married
   - separated
   - divorced
   - widowed

4. Father’s usual occupation: __________________________
   Mother’s usual occupation: __________________________

5. Country of birth: Father ________ Mother ________

6. What language did you speak when you grew up?
   Father ________ Mother ________

7. Please indicate the highest level of educational achievement:
   Father: in your country of origin:
     - elementary school
     - high school
     - college/university
     - graduate school
   in Canada:
     - elementary school
     - high school
     - college/university
     - graduate school
Mother: in your country of origin:

____ elementary school
____ high school
____ college/university
____ graduate school

in Canada:

____ elementary school
____ high school
____ college/university
____ graduate school

8. Please list the adults and children living in this family or household:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Age</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>10.</td>
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</table>

9. Please indicate the proficiency of the following languages:

Father:

a. Mandarin
   Excellent   Good   Average   Poor   Very poor   Don’t know
   ___         ___     ___       ___    ___          ___

b. Cantonese
   ___         ___     ___       ___    ___          ___

c. Taiwanese
   ___         ___     ___       ___    ___          ___

d. English
   ___         ___     ___       ___    ___          ___

e. French
   ___         ___     ___       ___    ___          ___

f. other( )

Mother:

a. Mandarin
   Excellent   Good   Average   Poor   Very poor   Don’t know
   ___         ___     ___       ___    ___          ___

b. Cantonese
   ___         ___     ___       ___    ___          ___

c. Taiwanese
   ___         ___     ___       ___    ___          ___

d. English
   ___         ___     ___       ___    ___          ___

e. French
   ___         ___     ___       ___    ___          ___

f. other( )

10. Please tell me about your child who is enrolled in this daycare/preschool:

Date of birth (YY\MM\DD) __________ birth order _____ gender (M / F)

When did your child begin day care or preschool? __________
11. Do you still have a close relationship with your relatives and friends in your country of origin?
   Yes ______  No ______
   If yes, in which way and how often:
   Often   Sometimes   Seldom   Never
   visit                     ____   ____   ____   ____
   by phone                 ____   ____   ____   ____
   by letter                ____   ____   ____   ____
   other (______)           ____   ____   ____   ____

II. Present Language Use Pattern in the Family:

1. Approximately what percentage of time do the mother and father talk to each other in English? ______ (%)  
2. Approximately what percentage of time do the mother and father talk to each other in Chinese? ______ (%)  
3. Approximately what percentage of time do the mother and father talk to your child in English?
   Father ______ (%)  
   Mother ______ (%)  
4. Approximately what percentage of time do the mother and father talk to your child in Chinese?
   Father ______ (%)  
   Mother ______ (%)  
5. Approximately, how often does your child speak English and Chinese with:
   a. you                   English (%) ______ Chinese (%) ______  
   b. his/her siblings     English (%) ______ Chinese (%) ______  
   c. his/her friends      English (%) ______ Chinese (%) ______  
   d. his/her grandparents English (%) ______ Chinese (%) ______  
   e. at school            English (%) ______ Chinese (%) ______  
   f. in the neighborhood  English (%) ______ Chinese (%) ______  

6. In which situations do you find that your child prefers to speak Chinese?  
   ____________________________________________  

7. In which situations do you find that your child prefers to speak English?  
   ____________________________________________  

III. Language Environment at Home:

1. Approximately, how many Chinese books does your child have?
   0 ______ 1-10 ______ 11-20 ________ over 20 ________

2. Approximately, how many English books does your child have?
   0 ______ 1-10 ______ 11-20 ________ over 20 ________

3. Approximately, how often do you read to your child?
   a. an English book
   b. a Chinese book

4. Approximately, how many hours on average does your child watch Chinese videos or TV?
   hours per week __________

5. Approximately, how many hours on average does your child watch English videos or TV?
   hours per week __________

IV. Parents' Attitudes Toward Their Child's Maintenance of the First Language:

1. Please indicate how important you feel it is for your child:
   Very important Important Somewhat important Little not important at all
   to understand Chinese: ______ ______ ______ ______ ______
   to speak Chinese: ______ ______ ______ ______ ______
   to read Chinese: ______ ______ ______ ______ ______
   to write Chinese: ______ ______ ______ ______ ______

2. Please indicate the level of your child's Chinese:
   listening: Excellent Good Average Poor Very poor
   speaking: ______ ______ ______ ______ ______
   reading: ______ ______ ______ ______ ______
   writing: ______ ______ ______ ______ ______

Comments: ____________________________________________________________
3. What level of fluency of Chinese would you like your child to attain?
   listening:  Excellent   Good   Average   Don't know   Don't care
   speaking:  Excellent   Good   Average   Don't know   Don't care
   reading:   Excellent   Good   Average   Don't know   Don't care
   writing:   Excellent   Good   Average   Don't know   Don't care

   Comments:  

4. What are the advantages for your child to maintain Chinese?

5. What are the disadvantages for your child to maintain Chinese?

6. There are many different ways that children learn to speak and maintain their Chinese. In your own opinion, what are the most important two ways that children learn and maintain their Chinese? (Please tick two)
   ______ talk to your child in Chinese at home  
   ______ read Chinese books to your child  
   ______ learn Chinese at school (Chinese school)  
   ______ watch Chinese TV/videos  
   ______ listen to the Chinese radio  
   ______ others (please indicate __________)

7. a. How often do you buy Chinese books? (e.g. monthly, weekly, et cl.)

   b. How often do you borrow Chinese books from libraries?

   c. How often does your child go to private lessons or school?

   d. How often do you go back to your home country with your child?

   e. How often does your child watch Chinese videos?

   f. How often does your child listen to Chinese radio/tapes?

   g. How often does your child go visit Chinese friends?
h. Please indicate other things that you have done to help your child learn or maintain Chinese (___________________________________________________________________________________).
How often? _______________________________________________________________________________________

8. Did you find any changes in your child’s language use pattern at home after he/she began going to day care or preschool?
   Yes _____ No _____
   If yes, what are these changes?
   _______________________________________________________________________________________________

9. What difficulties have you found in helping your child maintain Chinese?
   _______________________________________________________________________________________________

10. What are the main reasons for these difficulties?
    _______________________________________________________________________________________________

11. What else do you want to tell me about your child?
    _______________________________________________________________________________________________

Thank you very much for your cooperation and time!
68. In our family each person has different ideas about what is right and wrong.
69. Each person's duties are clearly defined in our family.
70. We can do whatever we want to in our family.
71. We really get along well with each other.
72. We are usually careful about what we say to each other.
73. Family members often try to one-up or out-do each other.
74. It's hard to be by yourself without hurting someone's feelings in our household.
75. "Work before play" is the rule in our family.
76. Watching T.V. is more important than reading in our family.
77. Family members go out a lot.
78. The Bible is a very important book in our home.
79. Money is not handled very carefully in our family.
80. Rules are pretty inflexible in our household.
81. There is plenty of time and attention for everyone in our family.
82. There are a lot of spontaneous discussions in our family.
83. In our family, we believe you don't ever get anywhere by raising your voice.
84. We are not really encouraged to speak up for ourselves in our family.
85. Family members are often compared with others as to how well they are doing at work or school.
86. Family members really like music, art and literature.
87. Our main form of entertainment is watching T.V. or listening to the radio.
88. Family members believe that if you sin you will be punished.
89. Dishes are usually done immediately after eating.
90. You can't get away with much in our family.
1. Family members really help and support one another.
2. Family members often keep their feelings to themselves.
3. We fight a lot in our family.
4. We don't do things on our own very often in our family.
5. We feel it is important to be the best at whatever you do.
6. We often talk about political and social problems.
7. We spend most weekends and evenings at home.
8. Family members attend church, synagogue, or Sunday School fairly often.
9. Activities in our family are pretty carefully planned.
10. Family members are rarely ordered around.
11. We often seem to be killing time at home.
12. We say anything we want to around home.
13. Family members rarely become openly angry.
14. In our family, we are strongly encouraged to be independent.
15. Getting ahead in life is very important in our family.
16. We rarely go to lectures, plays or concerts.
17. Friends often come over for dinner or to visit.
18. We don't say prayers in our family.
19. We are generally very neat and orderly.
20. There are very few rules to follow in our family.
21. We put a lot of energy into what we do at home.
22. It's hard to "blow off steam" at home without upsetting somebody.
23. Family members sometimes get so angry they throw things.
24. We think things out for ourselves in our family.
25. How much money a person makes is not very important to us.
26. Learning about new and different things is very important in our family.
27. Nobody in our family is active in sports, Little League, bowling, etc.
28. We often talk about the religious meaning of Christmas, Passover, or other holidays.
29. It's often hard to find things when you need them in our household.
30. There is one family member who makes most of the decisions.
31. There is a feeling of togetherness in our family.
32. We tell each other about our personal problems.
33. Family members hardly ever lose their tempers.
34. We come and go as we want to in our family.
36. We are not that interested in cultural activities.
37. We often go to movies, sports events, camping, etc.
38. We don't believe in heaven or hell.
39. Being on time is very important in our family.
40. There are set ways of doing things at home.
41. We rarely volunteer when something has to be done at home.
42. If we feel like doing something on the spur of the moment we often just pick up and go.
43. Family members often criticize each other.
44. There is very little privacy in our family.
45. We always strive to do things just a little better the next time.
46. We rarely have intellectual discussions.
47. Everyone in our family has a hobby or two.
48. Family members have strict ideas about what is right and wrong.
49. People change their minds often in our family.
50. There is a strong emphasis on following rules in our family.
51. Family members really back each other up.
52. Someone usually gets upset if you complain in our family.
53. Family members sometimes hit each other.
54. Family members almost always rely on themselves when a problem comes up.
55. Family members rarely worry about job promotions, school grades, etc.
56. Someone in our family plays a musical instrument.
57. Family members are not very involved in recreational activities outside work or school.
58. We believe there are some things you just have to take on faith.
59. Family members make sure their rooms are neat.
60. Everyone has an equal say in family decisions.
61. There is very little group spirit in our family.
62. Money and paying bills is openly talked about in our family.
63. If there's a disagreement in our family, we try hard to smooth things over and keep the peace.
64. Family members strongly encourage each other to stand up for their rights.
65. In our family, we don't try that hard to succeed.
66. Family members often go to the library.
67. Family members sometimes attend courses or take lessons for some hobby or interest (outside of school).