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The Heritage Language Maintenance of Chinese Migrant Children and their Families

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Abstract

This thesis explores the Chinese heritage language maintenance attitudes and practices of migrant families in Australia. Chinese heritage language maintenance in the 21st century is situated at cross-roads: On the one hand, there is the well-established sociolinguistic fact of rapid heritage language loss and shift to English; on the other hand, the rise of China has significantly increased the value of the Chinese language globally. This thesis explores Chinese heritage language maintenance against this tension between the well-known tendency of assimilation to English and the emerging importance of Chinese.

Adopting a sociolinguistic ethnographic approach, the study focuses on the language attitudes of both parents and children, heritage language practices both in and outside the home, and children's Chinese language proficiency outcomes and contributing factors. Data were collected through open-ended interviews, informal conversations, participant observation, the collection of evidence of literacy practices, postings on WeChat, and background questionnaires. A total of 31 families, including 27 parents and 32 children, participated in the study.

Findings show that parents are highly motivated to maintain their children's Chinese heritage language, while children's attitudes to Chinese are more varied. Both parents and children highlight the economic value of Chinese for career development and the symbolic value of Chinese for identity expression. Even so, children sometimes resist learning Chinese because they perceive Chinese to be an irrelevant and difficult language. The key factor mediating children's attitudes is their age of arrival and their age at the time of the research.

With regard to language practices diverse maintenance strategies in and outside the home were observed. In the home domain, the common strategies employed are speaking Chinese, practising Chinese writing, and consuming Chinese through media entertainment. The major difficulties and obstacles undermining maintenance efforts are children's resistance, parents' dual expectations with regard to heritage language maintenance and mainstream educational success, and lack of societal support. Spaces outside the home for Chinese language practice include community schools, mainstream schools and peer communication in mainstream schools. Age of migration is highly relevant to children's language preferences and use at home, their perceptions of Chinese classes, and engagement in peer networks.

Overall, language attrition and underdevelopment constitute the most frequent Chinese proficiency outcome, particularly when it comes to reading and writing skills. However,

proficiency outcomes are variable, and outcomes correlate with age of migration, parental involvement, print resources, and peer influence.

The study has multiple implications for migrant families, policy makers, and schools.

Statement of Candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled “Heritage language maintenance of Chinese migrant children and their families” has not previously been submitted for a degree, nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree, to any university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and that it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literatures used are indicated in the thesis. The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee, as noted in Ethics Approval Reference number: 5201700390 on 21 June 2017.

Yining Wang

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List of Acronyms

ABC	Australia-born Chinese
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACTFL	American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank
CHL	Chinese heritage language
ESL	English as a second language
HL	Heritage language
HLA	Heritage language acquisition
HSC	Higher School Certificate
IB	International Baccalaureate
ICAS	International Competitions and Assessments for Schools
IEC	Intensive English Centres
IM	Instant messaging
L1	First language
L2	Second language
LOTE	Languages other than English
NAPLAN	The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
OC	Opportunity classes
SL	Second language
SNS	Social network site
USA	The United States

Glossary

Aldi: a supermarket chain

ATAR: a number based on HSC results between 0.00 and 99.95 that indicates a student's position in their year group and determines their entry into university

Baozi(包子): Chinese steamed buns

Chinese Continuers: an HSC Chinese course for arrivals under the age of 10

Dizigui(弟子规): a Chinese classic (written in Qing Dynasty in the form of rhyming three-character verses) based on Confucius philosophy, teaches the basic moral values and virtues of being a good person.

Gaokao(高考): Chinese university entrance examination

Gongfu(功夫): Chinese martial arts

Goujitiaoqian(狗急跳墙): a desperate dog tries to jump over the wall

Gouniandaji(狗年大吉): Good luck in the Year of the Dog

Guzheng(古筝): a Chinese instrument

HSC: the high school graduation examination in New South Wales

HSC Chinese Background Speakers: the HSC Chinese course for arrivals aged 10 and above

HSC Heritage Chinese: an HSC Chinese course for arrivals under the age of 10

ICAS: a skill-based assessment of six subjects designed for primary and secondary students

IB: the internationally recognised program

IB Chinese A: a high-standard Chinese course in IB system for mother-tongue speakers

Jiaozi(饺子): Chinese dumplings

Jinyong(金庸): a well-known *Gongfu* novelist in Hongkong

Look as if dogs are crawling(跟狗爬似的): a Chinese colloquialism, meaning look crooked, shapeless and twisted

NAPLAN: a series of academic assessment focussing on basic skills such as reading, writing, language (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy.

OC: Opportunity Classes which cater for academically gifted and talented students in year 5 and 6 across NSW

Pinyin(拼音): the pronunciation system of Chinese characters

Taobao (淘宝网): the most popular Chinese online shopping website in China and also the world's biggest e-commerce website

The Selective High School Test: a placement test for admission into highly competitive public schools for high-achieving and gifted students

Tianzige(田字格): the worksheet with square boxes used as a learning aide for writing Chinese characters

Wan(碗): bowl

Wanshuang(晚霜): night cream

WeChat(微信): an instant messaging and social networking platform, enabling interactive exchange through mobile devices

Wonder Kid in Huanggang (《黄冈小状元》) is one of the series of popular workbooks named after the Chinese city of *Huanggang* which is well-known for having the top scorers in *Gaokao*.

Transcription and Translation Conventions

Data for this thesis were collected in Chinese and English.

Spoken Chinese data were transcribed in simplified Chinese characters. The conventions of written Chinese were used in the transcription. The analysis was conducted on the basis of the Chinese originals. Excerpts of Chinese data that are presented in this thesis as evidence are accompanied by an English translation for the convenience of the reader. All translations are by me.

Where data excerpts are not preceded by a Chinese version, those data were originally in English.

Transcription conventions

...	Researcher omission
Bold	Emphatic stress
<i>Italics</i>	<i>Pinyin</i>
[Comment]	Researcher explanation

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Researching Chinese heritage language maintenance

Rapid heritage language attrition and loss is a well-established sociolinguistic fact in migrant-receiving societies such as Australia. However, the rise of China and the growing global importance of the Chinese language is another. This tension is at the heart of this research, which investigates Chinese heritage language maintenance in Australia in the context of the tendency in the country towards linguistic assimilation to English and the emerging importance of Chinese. How do contemporary Chinese migrant families in Australia deal with this tension? Are their children less likely to lose their Chinese, or is maintaining Chinese as hard as ever, notwithstanding the increasing number of Chinese migrants in Australia and the rise of China?

It was questions such as these that set me off on this research journey. I am motivated to conduct research into Chinese heritage language maintenance in the Australian diaspora for a range of reasons. These include my own educational and career background in China and my parenting experiences prior to, and after, migration, as well as the emergent conflicts between pervasive language attrition and increasing language maintenance desires.

My educational and career background as a major in English language education, in English Chinese translation, and then as a language teacher in China instilled in me a passion for language learning, particularly for English language learning. They also inspired me to further my studies in an English-speaking country. Prior to undertaking PhD research in Australia, I had completed all of my education in China. When I graduated as an English major twenty years ago, I felt dissatisfied with my English fluency and was desperate to improve my English language skills further. Five years later, I received my master's degree in translation and became a university teacher in southern China, but I continued to feel insecure about my English skills, particularly English orality. During these two decades, I witnessed how English fever spread across China and millions and millions of students invested huge amounts of time and money into learning English, mostly with poor results, particularly in oral skills. I, like most people in China, attributed the failure of English language education largely to the lack of an authentic English-speaking environment and felt that being immersed in an English-speaking country was the best solution. These experiences and frustrations of second language learning have long prompted me to consider issues of second language learning in relation to first language acquisition.

These questions became even more urgent when I became a parent myself. Dissatisfied with the English education in schools in China and my own English language learning trajectory as mentioned above, I became convinced that it would be best to raise my daughter bilingually from a young age. Therefore, when my daughter was three years old, I enrolled her in a Chinese-English bilingual kindergarten in a city of southern China and started to focus on reading her English bedtime stories. At the time, I gave little thought to her Chinese because I believed it would be internalized and nurtured in the larger Chinese-speaking environment. During the three years she spent in the bilingual kindergarten, her English literacy skills gradually surpassed her Chinese literacy skills, and in the last kindergarten year, her English reading comprehension significantly outperformed her Chinese reading comprehension. For example, she could read her age-appropriate English picture books on her own, but she could not read the Chinese ones. At that time, I felt amazed by her English performance and proud of my language strategy. I received many compliments from her teachers and other parents. She became a model student in the kindergarten and I also enjoyed being labelled a model parent.

The situation dramatically changed when my child entered primary school. Within the first three months in the primary school, she was identified as a problem student because her Chinese proficiency did not meet her teachers' expectations. There were quite a few times I felt awkward to face her teachers' complaints and critical remarks. There was one teacher who said that she could not believe that a university teacher like myself would have nurtured such a problem child. The shift from a model parent to a problem parent caught me unawares and I felt extremely anxious. The anxiety increased as I supervised my daughter's two-hour daily homework. At that point, I started to feel regretful about the language strategy I had adopted previously. I became desperate for a change of environment.

When I received a PhD admission offer from Macquarie University, I was excited to be able to leave this messy educational and language situation behind for a while. When my family came to Australia, my daughter was nine years old and had finished Year 3 in her primary school in China. Now fully attuned to the importance of Chinese, it was not long after my family had settled down in the new environment that we began to feel panic about her Chinese language attrition. At the same time, my husband and I began battling a constant sense of impotence to change her swift assimilation to English and Chinese language attrition. Within one year, I found she had forgotten how to write most of the Chinese characters she had been able to write before coming to Australia, let alone the short essays she had been able to write previously. I also found that the few Chinese girls within my daughter's network all spoke

English with each other. That meant she had no opportunities to speak Chinese with her peers in Australia. Once I had a better understanding of the differences between the Chinese and Australian school systems, I began to realize that maintaining Chinese in Australia is far more difficult than learning English in China.

Beyond this personal motivation, my current research is driven by known tensions between pervasive language attrition and increasing language maintenance desires in the broader Chinese diaspora. I will discuss the existing research that undergirds this thesis in detail in Chapter 2.

In short, this research was originally motivated by my own perplexity and frustration with learning English myself and maintaining my daughter's Chinese, and further shaped by the existing research into processes of language attrition, heritage language maintenance desires, and varied heritage language proficiencies in the diaspora. Therefore, this research aims to untangle the heritage language maintenance trajectories of Chinese migrant children and their families in Australia with a focus on their language attitudes, language maintenance strategies, and language proficiency outcomes. These questions are embedded in the specific context of Chinese migration to Australia, so the next section will describe the demographics of this context.

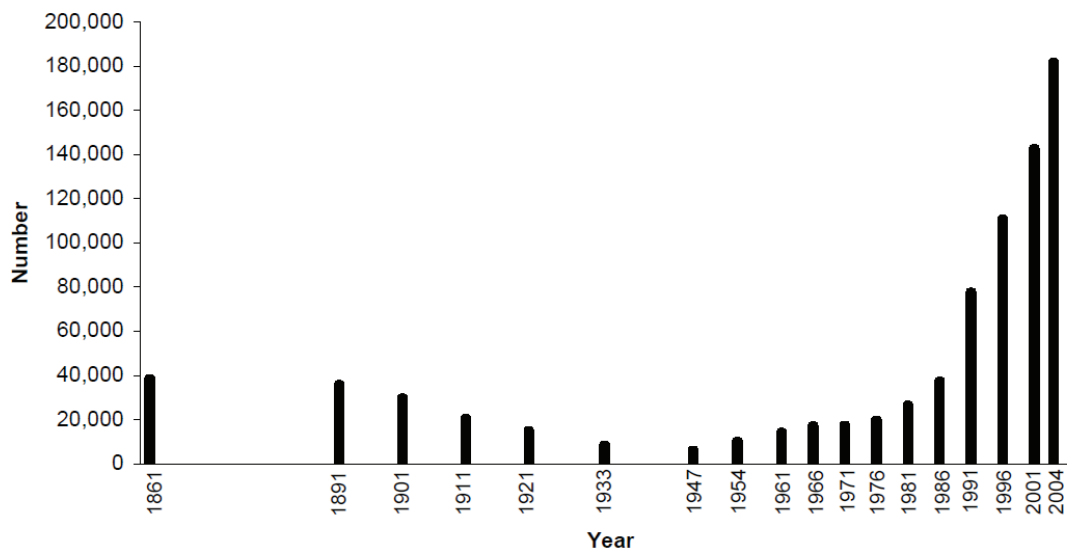
1.2 Chinese immigrants in Australia

1.2.1 History of Chinese immigration to Australia

Chinese migration to Australia can be divided into three distinct periods (Hugo, 2008; Jupp, 2001): first, the earliest influx of Chinese laborers in the second half of the nineteenth century, associated with the discovery of gold; second, the decline and stagnation of Chinese immigration under the White Australia Policy between the 1900s and the 1970s; third, the rapid growth of contemporary Chinese migration from the 1980s until now. The fluctuation of Chinese migration is shown in Figure 1. 1 (Hugo, 2005, October, p. 3):

Figure 1. 1. China-born population in Australia from 1861 to 2004

Source: Price *et al.* 1984; Australian Censuses and ABS 2005



Note: 1861 to 2001 data are Census counts, 2004 data refer to the estimated resident population

The earliest wave of large-scale Chinese migration to Australia can be traced back to the 1840s when the gold rush provided an impetus for Chinese labourers to seek their fortune in Australia. “Between the 1840s and the 1890s, more than 100,000 Chinese entered the Australian colonies” (Jupp, 2001, p. 197) and “[t]he Chinese were the dominant Asia-born group in Australia in the late nineteenth century” (Hugo, 2008, p. 84). In the second half of the nineteenth century, the majority of Chinese immigrants were from the two southern provinces of Guangdong and Fujian (Jupp, 2001). Specifically, “[d]uring the peak of Chinese immigration, and thereafter, almost all Chinese in Australia were Cantonese” (Jupp, 2001, p. 197). However, the enactment of the White Australia Policy (1901-1973) brought “a halt to Chinese immigration” accompanied by “significant return migration”, and the Chinese diaspora in Australia “saw a decline in the China-born population from 38,142 in 1861 to 6,404 in 1947” (Hugo, 2008, p. 84). The White Australia Policy, introduced in the early twentieth century, “constructed the legal basis for the racial superiority of ‘whiteness’ over ‘Chineseness’ and other ‘colournesses’” (Mu, 2014b, p. 478) and started “the worst period of exclusion of Asians in Australian history” (Shen, 2001, p. vi). It was not until World War II that the “Australian government gave temporary refuge to non-Europeans”, and a small number of ethnic Chinese came to Australia as war-time refugees (Shen, 2001, p. 67). In fact, as a result of Australian anti-Chinese movements, and China’s political environment of isolation, very few Chinese came to Australia from Mainland China between 1949 and the late 1970s (Shen, 2001).

The end of the White Australia Policy in 1973, coinciding with the opening-up policy in China in the late 1970s, started a new influx of immigration from China. According to Jupp (2001), in the middle of the 1990s, mainland China became the third most important country of origin, behind England and New Zealand. Meanwhile, “[t]he China-born population doubled between the census years of 1986 and 1991, and by 1996 had increased a further 40 percent to 111,000 people” (Jupp, 2001, p. 219). In contrast to migration from the southern Chinese provinces during the colonial period, the new wave of migration in the last two decades of the twentieth century brought, for the first time, significant numbers of students and scholars from non-Cantonese speaking parts of China (Jupp, 2001). Jupp also stated that this new trend of migration profoundly altered the composition of the Chinese population in Australia. This aligns with Shen’s (2001) finding that the massive exodus of many Chinese intellectuals from mainland China in the late 1980s and early 1990s markedly broke the traditional patterns of Chinese migration mainly from Guangdong and Fujian province. However, despite the increasing Chinese population from non-Cantonese areas, Cantonese remained the Chinese majority language in Australia by the end of the twentieth century (Jupp, 2001).

The continuing influx of migrants in the twenty-first century, with the rapid development of Mainland China's economy, further altered the character of the Chinese population in Australia. Different from most previous Chinese migrants, who came to Australia as gold-diggers, wartime refugees and poor students, the recent migrants, who came to Australia against the backdrop of the rise of China, represented a group of middle-/upper-class Chinese who were mainly students, scholars, professionals and economic migrants. As Hugo (2008) stated, these increased flows have occurred at a time when the Australian immigration policy has become more focused on economic and skill criteria, so China-born people in Australia are a highly skilled, highly educated, high income group. Similarly, Galligan & Roberts (2007) pointed out that Chinese people settling today “are often fluent in English, well-educated and often very prosperous” (p. 100). Specifically, “[s]ome 78.1 percent of permanent arrivals and 79.5 percent of long term arrivals were drawn from the top three occupational categories”, such as managers/administrators, professionals and associate professionals (Hugo, 2008, p. 90). Overall, the new migrants from various parts of mainland China have evidently enriched and restructured the composition of the Chinese population in Australia. That is, the demographic transition has brought significant dynamic changes to the Chinese diaspora in Australia, in terms of places of origin, languages and

language ideologies, educational needs and orientations, and their identification with China and Australia (see also Section 1.2.2).

This brief historical sketch of Chinese immigration/migration in Australia demonstrates the dynamic composition of the Chinese immigrant population through these major historical, political and economic periods. Since it is the relatively newly arrived Chinese families which constitute the focus of this study, the next section will look at the Chinese population and the Chinese language in Australia in the twenty-first century in greater detail.

1.2.2 The Chinese population and the Chinese language in 21st century Australia

The Chinese population and the number of Chinese speakers in Australia underwent a rapid growth in the twenty-first century. In terms of Australia's population by country of birth, China, behind England and New Zealand, was the third largest source of immigrants at both the 2011 and 2016 censuses (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017). According to the latest statistics, the Chinese born population (651,000 people), which was only slightly lower than the number of immigrants from England (992,000 people), having moved into second position, accounted for 2.6% of the whole population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019). As shown in Table 1. 1 and Table 1. 2 the number of people born in China was rising significantly, from 1.5 percent (318,969) of the Australian population in 2011, to 2.2 percent (509,555) in 2016, and then to 2.6 percent (651,000) in 2018. Meanwhile, Chinese immigrants predominantly inhabited urban locations in Australia, as shown in Table 1. 3. Specifically, at the 2016 census, Sydney was home to 44% of the Mainland China-born population of Australia, while Melbourne was home to 31% ("Chinese Australians," 2019).

With the demographic transformation of the Chinese population in Australia, the number of Chinese speakers underwent a significant increase, along with the status of Chinese languages themselves. Both 2011 and 2016 censuses showed that the Chinese language became the most widely spoken language other than English in Australian homes (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Before the end of the twentieth century, Chinese Australians were predominantly of Cantonese descent, from the southern provinces of China, and accordingly, Cantonese was the dominant language in the Chinese diaspora (see Section 1.2.1). Due to the sharp increase of recent migration from various regions of Mainland China, the number of Mandarin speakers has now surpassed the number of Cantonese-speakers by a wide margin.

As shown in Table 1. 2, Mandarin was the most commonly spoken home language other than English in Australia, and the number of Mandarin speakers dramatically increased, from

2011 (336,410 people) to 2016 (596,711 people). Though Cantonese was the fourth and fifth most common home language respectively in the 2011 and 2016 censuses, the number of Cantonese speakers only experienced a slight increase from 2011 (263,673) to 2016 (280,943). As shown above, Mandarin is gaining an increasingly prominent position compared with Cantonese or other Chinese varieties. The prominence of Mandarin as a home language is particularly highlighted in big cities such as Sydney. For example, in the City of Sydney, among the 36.1% of people who spoke a language other than English at home, up to 9.9% of the population, or 20,635 people, predominantly spoke Mandarin at home (City of Sydney, n.d.).

Table 1. 1 Australia's population by country of birth

Australia's population by country of birth – 2018 (a)		
Country of birth (b)	persons	% (c)
England	992 000	4.0
China	651 000	2.6
India	592 000	2.4
New Zealand	568 000	2.3
Philippines	278 000	1.1
Vietnam	256 000	1.0
South Africa	189 000	0.8
Italy	187 000	0.7
Malaysia	174 000	0.7
Scotland	135 000	0.5
All overseas-born	7 342 000	29.4
Australia-born	17 650 000	70.6

(a) Estimates are preliminary.

(b) With top 10 overseas-born countries listed for 2018.

(c) Proportion of the total population of Australia.

Source: (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019)

Table 1. 2 Culturally and linguistically diverse Australia

	2016	2011
Language spoken by a person at home (top 5)		
1	English only - 72.7% (17,020,417)	English only - 76.8% (16,509,291)
2	Mandarin - 2.5% (596,711)	Mandarin - 1.6% (336,410)
3	Arabic - 1.4% (321,728)	Italian - 1.4% (299,833)
4	Cantonese - 1.2% (280,943)	Arabic - 1.3% (287,174)
5	Vietnamese - 1.2% (277,400)	Cantonese - 1.2% (263,673)
Country of Birth (top 5)		
1	Australia – 66.7% (15,614,835)	Australia – 69.8% (15,017,846)
2	England – 3.9% (907,570)	England – 4.2% (911,593)
3	New Zealand – 2.2% (518,466)	New Zealand – 2.2% (483,398)
4	China – 2.2% (509,555)	China – 1.5% (318,969)
5	India – 1.9% (455,389)	India – 1.4% (295,362)

Source: (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017)

Table 1. 3 Chinese population in major Australian cities (2016)

Capital city	Population (2016 census)	%
Sydney	487,976	10.8
Melbourne	356,324	8.5
Canberra	22,445	6
Perth	99,229	5.5
Brisbane	99,593	4.7
Adelaide	50,216	4.1

Source: ("Chinese Australians," 2019)

1.2.3 Chinese as a heritage language and Chinese language learning in Australia

The existing literature uses the umbrella term 'Chinese' to refer to all varieties of the Chinese language. The Chinese varieties are basically grouped into seven major varieties or dialects: "Mandarin (the northern), Yue (includes Cantonese), Wu (includes Shanghainese), Xiang, Gan,

Kejia [Hakka] and Min", and many of the dialects are mutually unintelligible (Taylor & Taylor, 2014, p. 21). "Mutually unintelligible though the dialects may be, the Chinese are loathe to call them 'different languages'" (Taylor & Taylor, 2014, p. 22). "Chinese see themselves as one unified nation of one ethnic group, the Han people, under one central government, speaking one language, Chinese" (Taylor & Taylor, 2014, p. 22). Among the seven major varieties, "only Mandarin has a corresponding written form, which is shared by all literate Chinese whatever *Fangyan* [dialect] they may speak" (W. Li, 1994, p. 41). Mandarin, as the official language in mainland China, holds unique prestige over all other varieties. Actually, as has been pointed out by Wiley et al. (2008), Chinese people customarily refer to all Chinese varieties other than Mandarin as *Fangyan* ('dialects'). Since all the participants in my research come from mainland China, they can all be considered as speakers of Mandarin, which is the official and dominant language of mainland China. In fact, 'Mandarin' is the English language name for the language while the participants generally use the term 'the Chinese language'. The term 'Mandarin' is seldom used except to differentiate 'Mandarin' from other dialects. The "socially constructed dispositions of the linguistic habitus, which imply a certain propensity to speak and to say determinate things (the expressive interest) and a certain capacity to speak" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 37) may be related to the prestigious position of Mandarin as the lingua franca in Mainland China. Thus, unless otherwise specified, the phrase 'the Chinese language' mentioned in the excerpts in my thesis refers to Mandarin.

Different definitions of Chinese heritage language learners can be found in the literature. He (2008) defined a Chinese heritage language learner as "a language student who is raised in a home where Chinese is spoken and who speaks or at least understands the language and is to some degree bilingual in Chinese and in English" (p. 110). Following Bhatti's (2002) definition, Mu (2015a) proposed an age limit to identify someone as a Chinese heritage language learner. In his view, "if born outside Australia, Chinese heritage language learners had to have moved to Australia before the age of 13, as children below 13 are considered less shaped by their learning experiences" (Mu, 2015a, p. 51). Combining these two definitions, in this research, heritage language learners refer to the China-born children who arrived in Australia before the age of 13.

As mentioned in the above section, the Chinese diaspora population and the number of Chinese speakers among new immigrants has grown, and will probably continue to grow, but it is widely reported that Chinese heritage language is rarely maintained and developed between different generations (M. Chow, 1983; Curdt-Christiansen, 2013; G. Li, 2006b; W. Li, 1994; Luo & Wiseman, 2000). Amidst the tensions of a growing Chinese population and

limited Chinese language maintenance, “[o]ne of the emerging challenges in relation to this population is the maintenance of the home language, Chinese in this case, and the shift to English” (Mu, 2015a, p. 49).

Chinese as a heritage language has received increasing attention in recent decades in Australia and around the world (He & Xiao, 2008; Mu, 2014a; D. Zhang, 2008). On the one hand, with the increasing influx of Chinese migrants, Chinese, particularly Mandarin, has become increasingly noticeable within various social settings. According to the latest statistics, the China-born population became the second largest group of overseas-born people living in Australia from 2017, with particularly strong growth since 2002 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019). Meanwhile, the 2011 and 2016 censuses (Table 1. 2) showed that Mandarin was the most commonly spoken home language in Australia after English (see also Section 1.2.2). Due to globalization and the increasing significance of the Chinese language in the twenty-first century, learning the Chinese heritage language is increasingly gaining prominence among Chinese families and within the Chinese diaspora (see details in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4).

On the other hand, the prominence of the Chinese language in the globalized world has also resulted in increasing Chinese language learning by more and more non-Chinese background students. As Tong & Cheung (2011) stated, “the rapid growth in the number of Mandarin learners and speakers all over the world indicate the potential for development of Mandarin into an international language after English” (p. 55). Chinese teaching began to be widely incorporated into mainstream schools after the ALLP [the Australian Language and Literacy Policy] was issued in 1991 (Chen & Zhang, 2014, p. 189). With the states of Victoria and New South Wales taking the lead, Mandarin began to be taught in Australia nationwide as part of the curriculum in primary and secondary education systems, including state, Catholic and independent schools (Chen & Zhang, 2014, p. 189). Due to the rapid growth in the number of Chinese migrants and the increasing prominence of the Chinese language, Chinese parents and communities are endeavouring to maintain and develop the Chinese language between the generations (see details in Chapter 2). As Chinese language learning constitutes an important part of parental educational planning in Chinese migrant families (see Chapter 4), the next section will examine the value of education within the discourse of the Chinese diaspora.

1.3 Education as a core value

Extant research has demonstrated that Chinese immigrant parents place an exceptionally high value on, and are actively engaged in, their children's education (G. Li, 2002, 2006c; J. Li, 2001, 2004; Mok, 2015; Wu, 2011). Researchers usually attribute Chinese migrant parents' dedication to their children's education to cultural influences such as Confucian philosophy and their immigration situations. Traditionally in China, respect for education and belief in diligence are emphasized as the crucial means of changing the destiny of the individual and/or the whole family and thus achieving upward social mobility. Admiration of academic achievement has been consistent throughout ancient and contemporary society. This consistent desire for educational success can be interpreted by an old Chinese saying '万般皆下品，唯有读书高' (all occupations are less prestigious than that of a scholar) and contemporary conceptions, such as '知识改变命运' (knowledge changes destiny). The idea of academic success being of critical value for a whole family can be dated back to the Chinese tradition which regarded success in the imperial examination as a significant event of '光宗耀祖' (bringing honour to the ancestors). Thus, succeeding in examinations serves as a crucial means of achieving upward social mobility for the whole family. In fact, the imperial Examination System and *Gaokao* (Chinese university entrance examination), from ancient to contemporary China, have established the foundation of the prevailing desire for school success. High academic performance is believed to be achieved by acquiring learning virtues such as diligence, endurance of hardship and perseverance (Mok, 2015, p. 39). Meanwhile, many researchers have argued that Confucian philosophy acts as Chinese cultural root which constructs parental education expectations and practice (G. Li, 2002; J. Li, 2001, 2004; Mok, 2015; Wu, 2011). In particular, two widely-shared Confucian values – 管 (parental discipline) and 孝 (filial piety) are highlighted as necessary for Chinese moral education (J. Li, 2004). 管 (parental discipline) "in children's early years is deemed necessary to help them develop and adopt socially and culturally desirable behaviours" and 孝 (filial piety) "motivates the children to perform in accordance with the desire of their parents" (J. Li, 2004, pp. 179-180). In J. Li's (2004) study of both parents and their adolescent children in seven Chinese immigrant families, it was found that the parents strongly connected themselves to Chinese cultural values, and 'parental discipline' and 'filial piety' were regarded as tacit rules in these Chinese families. "School achievement was the parent's top priority because they viewed it as a ladder for life betterment" (J. Li, 2004, p. 171). Meanwhile, though this parent-child consensus was influenced by the new migration context, most children in J. Li's (2004) study endorsed their parents' expectations of academic excellence and associated their own

academic desire with Chinese cultural values. They believed that school achievement, or a prestigious university education, was a ticket to a future career, while school failure was a betrayal of Chinese tradition, and a hazard that would jeopardize their future. As J. Li (2004) stated, "since these prevailing cultural beliefs have been historically valued in Confucian heritage and institutionally reinforced by the Chinese government, they represent a Chinese way of life" (pp. 178-179). Although the immigrant Chinese families have resided in a new country, they still identify with Chinese cultural values and strongly strive for upward mobility through academic excellence. As G. Li (2002) stated, "the parents perceive education as the pathway to their family and children's long-range goal of employment, good wages, and other benefits and are willing to make sacrifices to work toward these goals for their children" (p. 20).

Besides, Chinese parents' emphasis on education is closely associated with their immigrant status. "Perceived disadvantaged minority status is another driving force underpinning high parental educational expectations, science-oriented career aspirations, and children's striving for academic achievement" (J. Li, 2004, p. 180). In an analysis of the data of the Canadian employment situation between 1971 and 1991, P. S. Li (1998) found that race was still a significant factor influencing the employment sector and Chinese was under-represented in many occupations, particularly management, academia and administration. These minority and racial limitations may result in excessive fears and anxieties that drive Chinese parents to hold high expectations for their children's education (J. Li, 2004). To cope with minority disadvantage, the parents in J. Li's study placed high expectations on their children's academic performance and hoped that education would create a chance for success in mainstream society. Further, "to avoid competing with mainstream society, all seven families encouraged their children to excel in science subjects so as to take up professions in engineering and other technical fields" (p. 486).

In addition to high parental expectations, Chinese parents have been found to take a more active role in their children's literacy learning and schooling (Chao, 1996; G. Li, 2002, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c; J. Li, 2001, 2004; D. Zhang, 2008). Chao (1996) found that, compared with Caucasian parents, Chinese parents not only placed a great degree of value on education, but were also more prepared to invest in, and sacrifice more for, their children's education, to use a more direct intervention approach to their children's schooling and learning, and to convey a stronger belief that they could play a significant role in their children's school success. Further, Chinese parents are more prepared to take an active role in remedying the shortcomings they perceive in their children's schooling. For example, Chinese parents used

Chinese math textbooks to teach their children and/or assigned additional homework to assist their children's math learning when they were not satisfied with the math education in the mainstream schools (G. Li, 2002, 2006a, 2006b; D. Zhang, 2008). To assist their children with better English skills, Chinese parents also engaged their children in a variety of reading and writing activities at home such as dictating and copying words, reading to and with the child, and asking children to write regularly (G. Li, 2002, 2006c). Besides, parents generally encourage their children to pursue well-paid high-tech jobs, while discouraging their children to specialize in the perceived unrealistic or impractical fields such as the arts (J. Li, 2001, 2004). Thus, Chinese tradition and minority status in the new country jointly contribute to the high parental expectations of Chinese families.

In sum, given the increasing prominence accorded to the Chinese language, maintenance and development of children's heritage language may become an indispensable part of the educational plan of many Chinese families, given that education is a core value for them.

1.4 Thesis outline

The study examines the trajectories of heritage language maintenance of Chinese children and their families in Australia, with a particular focus on their language attitudes and maintenance practices. This introductory chapter has explained my motivation for the current research as an English language major and teacher in China, as a parent with the desire to raise a bilingual child prior to and after migration, and as a researcher who intends to untangle the tension between English language assimilation and heritage language maintenance desires. After that, I provide an overview of Chinese migration to Australia, historically and contemporarily, and describe Chinese immigrants' educational ideology, which is shaped by Chinese culture and migrant status.

Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical framework that informs the study and reviews the existing literature that is pertinent to its themes. The chapter begins with an examination of language ideologies and motivations in relation to second language learning and (Chinese) heritage language maintenance. Then, the chapter reviews the theories of family language policy in relation to heritage language maintenance, and examines the existing studies focusing on language use patterns and language maintenance strategies of Chinese immigrant families. Lastly, the chapter reviews the existing findings on the heritage language outcomes of Chinese immigrant children and the factors contributing to their Chinese language proficiency.

Chapter 3 introduces the methodology of the study. It first provides the rationale underpinning the qualitative ethnographic research design. Following that, the chapter gives an account of the participant recruitment criteria and process, which is followed by a delineation of the profiles of research participants. The 31 participating families in my research represent a group of well-educated middle-class Chinese families living in Australia. The chapter then goes on to explain the various methods used in collecting the data. These methods include open-ended qualitative interviews, informal conversations, participant observation, collection of evidence for Chinese literacy practices, use of WeChat posts and hard copies of the background questionnaires. After that, my researcher positionality is detailed along with the tensions I experienced between my roles as a fellow parent and as a researcher, between being an expert and a novice, and as both an insider and an outsider. Then, the chapter addresses the inductive thematic analytic method employed before concluding with the limitations of the chosen methods.

From Chapter 4 to Chapter 7, I provide the findings of the study relevant to the research questions. In Chapter 4, I explore heritage language attitudes from the perspective of parents in diasporic discourses in Australia. The chapter firstly presents how parents associate their heritage language desire with an investment in their children's economic, career and educational future. Then, the chapter shows how parents see the importance of Chinese for their children's ethnic and cultural identity and family cohesion.

Chapter 5 shifts the focus from parents' attitudes towards Chinese to those of their children. The chapter gives a detailed account of children's view of learning Chinese as being a chore, difficult, (ir)relevant, an investment, or as a marker of identity. Meanwhile, the chapter demonstrates how age at migration plays out in their multiple language attitudes. The chapter also shows how language attitudes are dynamically contextualized within different diaspora discourses.

Chapter 6 examines how these Chinese families used various strategies to maintain their children's Chinese language in the home. Their maintenance practices in the home Chinese include speaking Chinese at home, Chinese literacy practice and the viewing of entertainment programs in Chinese. Specifically, with regard to home language use, the chapter demonstrates how age of migration plays out in children's language use patterns. With regard to literacy practice, the chapter shows how the various resources are employed by parents and what barriers are encountered during the implementation of literacy practices.

Chapter 7 shifts the focus of maintenance practice from the home domain to the domain outside the home. The chapter explores children's Chinese language learning experiences in community schools and mainstream schools, as well as their language practice with peers in mainstream schools. Specifically, the chapter examines perceptions and experiences in Chinese classes in different schools and through different stages of their mainstream education. At the same time, it shows how age arrival factors influence their perceptions of the classes and language use in mainstream schools.

Chapter 8 examines the children's language proficiency outcomes and factors contributing to their differential language proficiencies. This chapter reveals the trend of children's language loss, language attrition and poor language development, but also shows promising examples of their heritage language development and advancement. The chapter then illustrates four distinct contributing factors, namely, age of arrival, parental commitment, print resources and peer influence.

Chapter 9 concludes the thesis. The chapter revisits the research questions by providing a summary of the findings and conclusions. The chapter ends with an outline of the implications of this study of heritage language for migrant families and language policy makers.

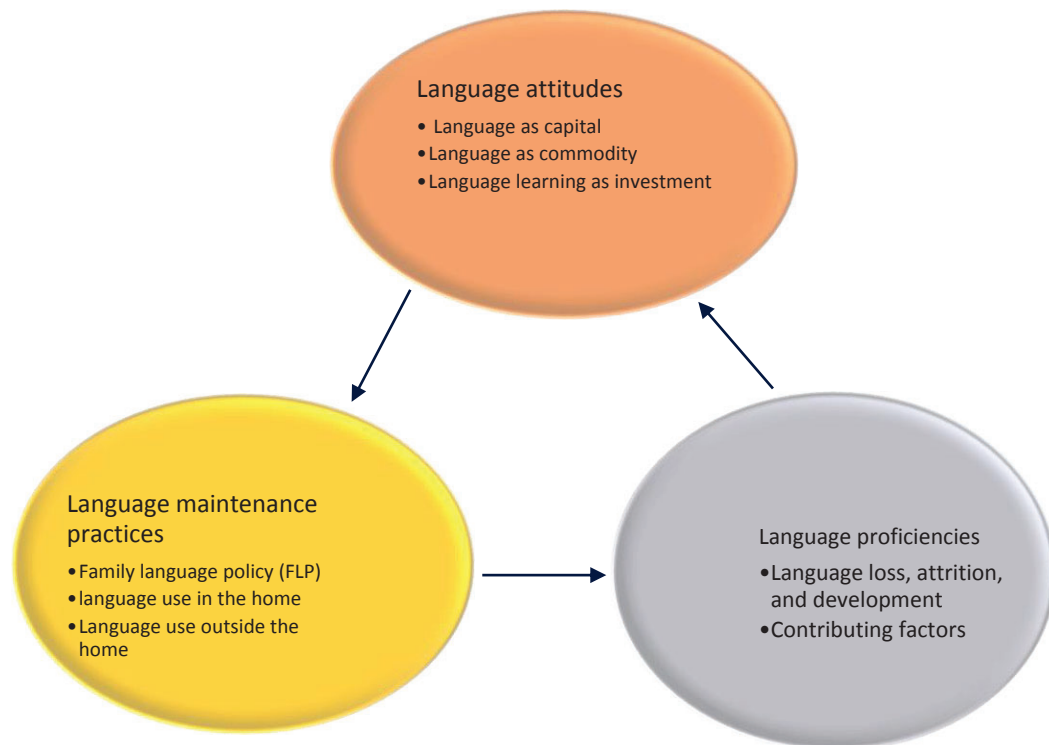
Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews existing research related to heritage languages in migration contexts. The chapter is theoretically framed along language attitudes, language maintenance practices and heritage language outcomes, which are interacting with each other. As shown in the diagram below (Figure 2. 1), language attitude serves as the driving force of language maintenance practices which lead to ultimate language proficiency outcomes; meanwhile, language outcomes will in turn influence learners' language attitudes by strengthening or weakening learner's language learning wills, and then increase or reduce their language use and practices.

Given that this is a vibrant and vast field of research, this chapter mainly focusses on literature related to Chinese heritage language. The chapter begins with a review of dominant language ideologies as well as research into heritage language attitudes of Chinese parents and children in their migration context. Then it moves to a theoretical review of family language policy and the existing studies of Chinese heritage language use and practices in and outside the home. After that, the chapter focusses on the extant studies of language proficiency outcomes of Chinese migrant children and the contributing factors to their actual heritage language ability. Throughout, I identify under-researched areas. The research questions, which are presented at the end of the chapter are designed to contribute to closing the identified gaps.

Figure 2. 1 An overview of the theoretical framework



2.2 Attitudes to heritage language maintenance

In this section, I will review the different ideology camps in relation to second and heritage language learning. The section will then turn to look, respectively, at parents' and children's attitudes to Chinese as a heritage language. Finally, the section will examine conflicts and convergences between the attitudes of parents and children.

2.2.1 Attitudes and motivation in heritage language learning

Language attitudes and motivation are recognised as important factors influencing language maintenance. Individuals' motivation to learn another language is largely based on their attitudes towards the language and the community who speak the language (Lukmani, 1972; D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). Specifically, "positive learning attitudes and experience was the factor most predictive of motivational magnitude (intended learning efforts in the present) and direction (intended continuation of study in the future)" (Wen, 2011, p. 41). Positive attitudes toward a heritage language often result in increased efforts in learning it, and in higher proficiency levels, and vice versa (D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009).

In the past few decades, understanding of the role of attitudes and motivation in heritage language learning has undergone a conceptual transformation from social psychological

notions focusing on integrative and instrumental motivations to post-structural notions of language learning as investment.

Attitudes and motivation in language learning research was pioneered by Gardner and Lambert (Gardner & Lambert, 1959, 1972). These researchers identified two types of language orientations, namely integrative and instrumental motivations. Integrative motivations relate to the desire to identify with a particular culture and language community, while instrumental motivations emphasize pragmatic and utilitarian benefits of language learning, such as getting a good job or education credentials. However, “the two motivational orientations may not be clear-cut or dichotomous” (Lu & Li, 2008, p. 92) and learners’ motivations are likely to be both intrinsically and instrumentally constructed. For example, Chinese heritage language learners in Wen’s (1997) study demonstrated both integrative and instrumental motivations. Their initial motivation was intrinsic and related to their curiosity about their own cultural heritage as well as their interests in Chinese arts and literature. As they progressed in their language learning, their efforts became more instrumentally motivated by desired results, such as high scores.

Irrespective of the type of motivation, positive or negative attitudes and motivations present strong predictors of second language achievement:

[G]reater personal motivation—be it ‘instrumental’ or ‘integrative’—produces a greater likelihood of attaining high levels of L2 proficiency. The same is likely true in HLA [=heritage language acquisition], though the question of motivation in HL [=heritage language] classrooms has gone unexplored to date (Lynch, 2003, p. 3).

Social psychological understandings of motivation have increasingly become framed in post-structural terms in contemporary scholarship. As Cameron (2012) noted, “[t]he traditional motives for acquiring or maintaining particular languages (e.g. that they are authentic symbols of identity, or prestigious vehicles of ‘high culture’) are increasingly yielding to a more calculating economic rationalism...” (p. 354).

In an extreme form of instrumental motivation, languages can be understood as operating in a marketplace where different languages possess different market values. The concept of the ‘linguistic market’ and ‘linguistic capital’ emanates from the work of Pierre Bourdieu (see Bourdieu, 1977, 1986). Bourdieu's (1986) concept of capital offers a theoretical instrument to examine the grounds on which language attitudes and motivation are constructed and sheds light on contemporary scholarship in heritage language education. Bourdieu identified various forms of capital. Economic capital is immediately and directly convertible into money and “is at the root of all the other types of capital” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 250). Cultural capital

includes dispositions of the mind, cultural goods, and educational qualifications. These are convertible, under certain conditions, into economic capital. Social capital is linked to the possession of a durable network of acquaintances and recognition, which is convertible, under certain conditions, into economic capital. Symbolic capital, finally, is “a reputation for competence and an image of respectability and honourability” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 291). For Bourdieu (1986), capital represents power, extending from economic, cultural to social and symbolic, and “how these forms of capital are distributed represents the immanent structure of the social world”(Darvin & Norton, 2016, p. 28).

Bourdieu’s capital theory accentuates multiple values/capital of languages and the transformation among different forms of capital, while Heller’s (2003, 2010) concept of language as commodities centers on the economic value of languages. Language commodification has resulted in a burgeoning “language industry” of schools, tutoring services, language learning materials or apps, which are based on seeking to profit from language learning (Cameron, 2012; Gogonas & Kirsch, 2016; Piller, Takahashi, & Watanabe, 2010; Rubdy & Tan, 2008). In the area of foreign language instruction, languages have long been treated as commercial commodities and English is the single most valuable commodity in the global linguistic market (Cameron, 2012). The purchase of English language education is widespread, both inside and outside English-speaking countries. Besides English, the international lingua franca, any other language or language variety may also become a commodity, particularly in the employment market. The market value of a language may significantly influence language learning desires, choices and practices. For example, all the Fujianese families in Zhang’s (2008) research, and some Cantonese families in Francis, Mau & Archer’s (2014) research, encouraged their children to learn Mandarin rather than their familial dialect because Mandarin was perceived as the most prestigious and profitable Chinese language. Thus, attitudes towards language or dialects, positive or negative, may, to a significant degree, be determined by power relations and commercial value. Both Bourdieu’s concept of language as a form of capital and Heller’s language as commodities, align with Norton’s (1995, 2000) notion of language learning as investment.

Based on the capital theory of Bourdieu (1986), Norton (1995, 2000) constructed the notion of language learning as investment which recast the earlier concept of motivation with its integrative and instrumental sub-categories. By investing in a second language, learners expect or hope to have a good return on their investment; a return that will give them access to “a wider range of symbolic and material resources which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital and social power” (Darvin & Norton, 2016, p. 20). Norton (1995)

posited that “this return on investment must be seen as commensurate with the effort expended on learning the second language” (p. 17). Thus, for Norton, as to the nature of capital of languages, the role of investment has been accentuated once the proficiency of certain languages is perceived to deliver certain benefits, which are not limited to material/economic, but social and cultural. Over recent decades, language learning as investment is considered foundational in language education and acquisition field, and increasingly explored by researchers (Darvin & Norton, 2015; Norton & Gao, 2008; Peirce, 1995; Prendergast, 2008).

In sum, attitudes and motivations are widely believed to be highly influential in language learning (Hancock, 2006; Lao, 2004; Lu & Li, 2008). The social-psychological model of motivation dominated early research in the field. More recently, language has increasingly come to be understood as a commodity or as a form of capital, and language learning as a form of investment. This conceptual transformation has coincided with a transformation of the value of Chinese, which is an increasingly powerful form of economic, political and cultural linguistic capital. Against this background, which has seen economic aspects of language learning come to the fore at the same time that Chinese has gained economic clout, what does heritage language maintenance mean for Chinese migrant families? The next section will review literature on parents’ attitudes to Chinese as a heritage language.

2.2.2 Parental attitudes to Chinese as a heritage language

As pointed out in Chapter 1, Chinese (and its varieties) is one of the largest diasporic languages in the world. Therefore, this section will review the attitudes of Chinese diasporic parents to Chinese language maintenance. A key theme in the literature examining attitudes to Chinese as a heritage language relates to tensions between parents’ and children’s attitudes. Parents have often been found to be highly motivated to pass on their heritage language to their children, particularly for economic and career reasons, but also because they regard the Chinese language as an intrinsic part of Chinese identity. After reviewing the literature on parental attitudes and motivations in this section, the following section (2.2.3) will review children’s attitudes and motivations. The second generation is widely reported to lack motivation and to see Chinese as irrelevant, tedious and difficult. However, as Section 2.2.3 will also show, motivations and attitudes are never static and may shift over time as children grow up.

Parental attitudes to Chinese, as shown in the burgeoning literature, are increasingly constructed upon their instrumental motivation, with a focus on the economic value of Chinese in the employment market (Curd-Christiansen, 2014; Lao, 2004; Mau, 2013; D.

Zhang, 2008; D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009; J. Zhang, 2009, 2010). First, the rise of China undergirds parents' growing aspirations for Chinese language maintenance. In the American context, for example, parents' "language loyalty" to Mandarin was "closely tied to their perceptions of the career opportunities and prestige brought about by the prominent economic growth in the home country" (J. Zhang, 2010, p. 253). Similarly, within the context of Singapore, parents also associated their commitment to maintaining Chinese with its increasing economic power, and commented "China is on the rise" or "China is a very important market" (Curdts-Christiansen, 2014, p. 46). In this vein, "with increasing job opportunities in China and other parts of Asia, economic advantage and social prestige have become major incentives for language maintenance" (Man, 2006, p. 214). Second, regardless of their dialect background, Chinese parents' desire for their children's heritage language is generally linked to Mandarin, the official and most prestigious language of China. For example, Fujianese parents were found to lack interest in their children's Fujianese maintenance but considered Mandarin a key resource for their children's future (D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). Considering Mandarin a pragmatic asset in the job market, Mandarin serves as the symbolic tie to their Chinese heritage, irrespective of their original family dialect. Obviously, "[p]assing down' all the heritage languages is undoubtedly neither practical nor desirable, and the decision to maintaining [Sic] certain languages over others is a political act" (Mau, 2013, p. 244).

Beyond economic motivations, the retention of Chinese identity and heritage is fundamental to parents' motivation for heritage language transmission, as documented in a number of studies (Curdts-Christiansen, 2014; Hancock, 2006; D. Zhang, 2008; D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). First, expertise in Chinese is seen as the carrier of Chinese ethnicity and the signifier of Chinese authenticity. Parents have been found to expect that their children can use the Chinese language to express their ethnicity. This logic can be interpreted as "without the Chinese language, you are no longer Chinese" (D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009, p. 84). Further, speaking Chinese is also seen as the marker of authentic Chinese identity. "Not to be able to speak one's own mother tongue brings shame and has consequences" for people as they may be positioned as 'fake Chinese'" (Curdts-Christiansen, 2014, p. 46). Second, Chinese is widely regarded as the linguistic and cultural heritage that should be maintained. For example, almost all parents in Curdts-Christiansen's (2014) study acknowledged that learning Chinese was important for maintaining cultural values and maintaining ethnic roots. Specifically, some participants expressed strong appreciation of the 'beauty' of the Chinese language and saw 'proverbs and idioms' as representations of the beauty and knowledge of

Chinese culture and literature. Similarly, learning Chinese literacy was perceived to be inextricably linked with the transmission of traditional Chinese cultural beliefs, values and norms by Chinese parents in Scotland (Hancock, 2006).

The importance of heritage language for communication with family members and to maintain community connections is another frequently-mentioned theme in the research literature (Francis, Archer, & Mau, 2009; Lao, 2004; Lei, 2013; H. L. Xu & Moloney, 2014; D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). For example, some parents were found to urge their children to learn Chinese because they were afraid that their children's lack of Chinese proficiency would hinder them in communicating deeply and comfortably. Conversely, parents whose children lacked Chinese proficiency reported the absence of precisely this deep and comfortable communication (see D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). Similarly, a high proportion of Chinese-dominant parents in an American Chinese-English bilingual pre-school expected that their children's Chinese development would facilitate their communication with Chinese speaking communities (Lao, 2004).

In sum, parents have been found to have a strong motivation to maintain Chinese as the heritage language. They see Chinese as a valuable resource for their children's future career, as the carrier of Chinese ethnicity and as a signifier of Chinese authenticity, and also as a tie to family and community connections. As pointed out above, children's perspectives do not necessarily align with parental attitudes and the next section will review the literature in relation to children's attitudes to Chinese.

2.2.3 Children's attitudes to Chinese as a heritage language

As shown in the previous section, Chinese diasporic parents have often been found to be highly motivated to enable their children to maintain their Chinese. Children's attitudes to Chinese, by contrast, tend to be more varied. The extant research shows that children's attitudes to Chinese centre on their views of Chinese as being an irrelevant, tedious and difficult language, albeit beneficial for their future careers, and as being connected to their ethnic identity.

Many second-generation Chinese children have been found to lack motivation for Chinese language maintenance. The reasons for that lack of motivation are related to beliefs that Chinese is irrelevant, tedious and difficult (Francis et al., 2009; G. Li, 2006b; Man, 2006; D. Zhang, 2008; D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009; J. Zhang, 2009, 2010). Among 60 British-Chinese children from complementary schools, for instance, those who were negative towards their Chinese classes saw Chinese as irrelevant to their lives and Chinese learning as

a pointless exercise with no benefit for their futures (Francis et al., 2009). It was Chinese literacy practice, in particular, that was often resisted by children in the research. In an investigation of the learning experiences of Chinese children in Chinese language schools in Canada, as many as 63% of respondents stated that reading Chinese was 'hard' or 'very hard,' and 57% stated the same about Chinese writing. Additionally, 16% rated their classes as 'unpleasant' or 'very unpleasant' (Man, 2006). Given their lack of motivation for Chinese learning, most children, especially older children, reported that the only reason they studied Chinese was to obey their parents (D. Zhang, 2008). Furthermore, the majority of these children also reported that Chinese is a difficult language to learn, especially the complex written system. That this perception is objectively true is evidenced by research that found that compared to other languages other than English (LOTEs), Chinese language learners progressed at a slower pace (Chen & Zhang, 2014). The large number of characters to be mastered in the limited study hours available, in particular, constituted a significant challenge for Chinese background and non-background students alike.

Children's positive motivation to learn Chinese has been found to be strongly associated with their view of Chinese as being beneficial for their future careers and school success, in line with the views of their parents (Francis et al., 2009; Francis, Mau, & Archer, 2014; Mau, 2013; Mu, 2014b; Wen, 2011; Willoughby, 2017; H. L. Xu & Moloney, 2014). Firstly, the perceived economic value of Chinese may become the dominant driving force for children's commitment to Chinese. For heritage Chinese learners in America, their decision to continue learning Chinese tended to be "closely related to the perceived usefulness of the language career-wise, and the perceived importance of the language in today's global economy" (Wen, 2011, p. 57). This instrumental orientation resonated with undergraduate students of Chinese studies in the Australian context, where job or career considerations were found to be among the dominant reasons for studying Chinese (H. L. Xu & Moloney, 2014). Besides, for school-aged children, getting good marks became an important reason for studying Chinese in school (see Willoughby, 2017). This suggests that "learning Chinese in recent decades has been associated with some kind of economic gain rather than a deeper and higher level of intellectual and cultural pursuit" (H. L. Xu & Moloney, 2014, p. 383). Secondly, children's increasing desire for Chinese has been found to pertain specifically to Mandarin. Some Cantonese-heritage adolescents, for instance, considered Mandarin as "linked to their ethnic origin and symbolic to their cultural identity" (Mau, 2013, p. 254). When asked about their lack of motivation to learn their home language, Cantonese, they frequently mentioned 'Mandarin is Chinese, and Cantonese is dialect' as a reason. This power relation is also

reflected in Francis et al.'s (2009) research, where some pupils perceived the benefits of Mandarin as opposed to Cantonese. They "position Cantonese as archaic and 'under threat'; as the property of an older generation, irrelevant to younger generations in both social and economic terms" (Francis et al., 2009, p. 533). As the instrumental value of Cantonese decreases, learning Mandarin is potentially a logical choice that offers both a marketable skill and a symbolic connection to their heritage for those pupils and families who no longer use Chinese, of any dialect, as a 'mother tongue' (Mau, 2013).

Besides, children's attitudes to Chinese is related to their perceptions of the relationship between language and ethnic identity. Learning Chinese for the maintenance of heritage and identity has been well-documented as a dominant reason for heritage language motivation (P. Duff, Y. Liu, & D. Li, 2017; Francis et al., 2009; Francis et al., 2014; He, 2008; Man, 2006; Mau, 2013; Mu, 2016). Firstly, the Chinese language is seen as the symbol of ethnic embodiment. Young Chinese Australian adults, for instance, frequently linked their racial identity - 'looking Chinese' - to the use and learning of Chinese (Mu, 2016). In this study, "all participants were very much aware of the stereotype that Chinese looks were symbolic signs for being able to speak Chinese" (Mu, 2016, p. 300). Similarly, in the Canadian context, university students of Chinese ancestry, compared to non-heritage language learners, felt much more strongly that they were learning Chinese because it was an integral aspect of their self-concept (Comanaru & Noels, 2009). Second, proficiency in Chinese is widely seen as the signifier of ethnic authenticity. In the identity exploration of adolescents attending Chinese complementary schools, proficiency in Chinese was related to the concept of being 'full' or 'proper' Chinese, while lack of proficiency induced powerful emotions such as 'disgrace', 'shame' and 'embarrassment'. Ethnic Chinese without Chinese proficiency were sometimes even called derogatory names such as 'BBCs' or "bananas" (Francis et al., 2009; Francis et al., 2014). Thus, "the perceived necessity for young people of Chinese origin to be proficient in the Chinese language emerged as grounded in powerful moral discourses of duty, identity and inclusion/exclusion" (p. 210). Thirdly, Chinese language and culture is regarded as a valuable heritage that should be preserved. As described by He (2006):

[T]he vast majority of (adult) HL learners cite 'cultural/social identity' as the principal reason for studying the language; to a greater extent than the SL [second language] learner, the HL learner is likely to be motivated by an identification with the intrinsic cultural, affective, and aesthetic values of the language" (p. 2).

This integrative motivation also resonates with that of heritage college students in Yang's (2003) study, where the search for Chinese roots was found to be the most important reason for Chinese language learning.

However, the view that links Chinese proficiency with Chinese identity is prevalent only among children who are already engaged in learning Chinese. The identity perceptions of those with limited or no Chinese proficiency are less centered on the language-identity link. For young British Chinese people with limited Chinese fluency, for instance, 'not speaking Chinese' did not preclude their identification as Chinese (Mau, 2013). Their Chinese identity was constructed flexibly on Chinese cultural practices and traditional activities such as eating rice, the celebration of Chinese festivals, and viewing Chinese TV programs. For these speakers of limited Chinese, their hybrid Chineseness has transcended conventional language ideologies, which consider the Chinese language as "the soul of Chinese identity" (Shen, 2001, p. 123)

The variable relationship between Chinese proficiency and Chinese identity highlights the situated and shifting nature of language attitudes in relation to language learning, particularly as children mature. For example, many university-level heritage learners admitted that, when they were younger, learning Chinese had been an unpleasant activity forced on them by their parents. As young adults, they regarded it as a wise and worthwhile investment (Wong & Xiao, 2010), however. These students saw Mandarin as 'the next world language' and they hoped that it would help them to fully realize their goals and reach their ideals of bettering their career prospects by becoming an 'international' person. This suggests that both age, and the changing economic and political status of China, has a transformative effect on heritage learners' attitudes to Chinese. This transformation is also evidenced in another group of university heritage learners who reported having disliked Chinese lessons at a young age but were desirous to seek their cultural heritage once they were grown up (He, 2006). Age is critical to understanding children's shifting attitudes: "It usually requires psychological maturation on the part of the individual to realise the true value and benefit of knowing one's HL and culture, which often comes at a later age" (J. S. Lee, 2002, p. 130).

Overall, Chinese-background children demonstrate variable attitudes to Chinese. Lack of motivation to learn Chinese is associated with perceptions of Chinese as irrelevant, tedious and difficult. By contrast, positive motivation is related to perceptions of Chinese as career investment and identity embodiment. The importance of Chinese proficiency for Chinese identity is more likely to be expressed by children who are committed to Chinese learning, while those with limited or no proficiency in Chinese are unlikely to link the Chinese identity to Chinese language proficiency. In addition, it is important to note that children's attitudes to Chinese are dynamic, fluid and shifting. Positive and negative attitudes may change and are

contingent upon children's age and their maturation process as well as the changing role of China in the world. As both parents' and children's attitudes to Chinese have been reviewed, the next section will focus on the heritage language maintenance and strategies in and outside the home.

2.3 Practices of heritage language maintenance

In the previous section, I reviewed parents and children's attitudes to Chinese. Language attitudes are one thing but they are insufficient without considering practices as another key aspect of language maintenance. This section, with a focus on language practices, will start with the conceptualization of family language policy in relation to language maintenance, as well as a brief examination of the pervasiveness of language shift in migrant families (Section 2.3.1). After that, the section will focus on Chinese heritage language use and practices in the home (Section 2.3.2) and outside the home (2.3.3).

2.3.1 Family language policy and the pervasiveness of language shift

Family language policy, "the newly emerging field" (King, Fogle, & Logan - Terry, 2008, p. 907), is receiving increased currency within sociolinguistics as researchers endeavor to explore the factors resulting in the different language outcomes of immigrant children (Curdt-Christiansen, 2013; Smith-Christmas, 2016). The family domain is regarded as crucial to answer the fundamental question why some children maintain or acquire their minority or heritage languages while others fail to do so. Therefore, family language policy is widely considered as critical to the success or failure in maintaining and preserving languages (Schwartz & Verschik, 2013; Smith-Christmas, 2016; Spolsky, 2012; Xiaomei Wang, 2017). A focus on family language policy is particularly relevant for heritage language practitioners and learners because it deepens our understanding of how home language practices are implemented, as well as how heritage language learners are best supported (King et al., 2008).

Family language policy can be defined as explicit and overt as well as implicit and covert planning in relation to language choices, use and practices within the home among family members (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009, 2018; King et al., 2008). Thus, family language policy refers to "the deliberate and observable efforts" by means of families' conscious involvement and investment as well as "the default language practices in a family as a consequence of ideological beliefs" (Curdt-Christiansen, 2018, p. 420). Family language policy takes into account of "what families actually do with language in day-to-day interactions; their beliefs and ideologies about language and language use; and their goals and efforts to shape language use and learning outcomes" (King et al., 2008, p. 909). Thus,

research on family language policy has, to a great extent, observed and highlighted the three interrelated core components: language ideology, language practice, and language management (see Curdt-Christiansen, 2018; Curdt-Christiansen & La Morgia, 2018; Xiaomei Wang, 2017). Language ideologies, as “the driving force of language policy” (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009, p. 354), are observed to impact, to a great extent, on family language choices, practices and planning (see Curdt-Christiansen, 2009; Smith-Christmas, 2016; Xiaomei Wang, 2017). Since language ideologies and attitudes have been reviewed in the previous section, the following sections, with a focus on heritage language practices and management, will start with an examination of children’s actual heritage language situation, i.e. the pervasiveness of heritage language shift.

Over recent decades, accelerated language loss and attrition in immigrant children has been widely documented (Clyne, 2001; Clyne & Kipp, 1996; Fillmore, 1991, 2000; Fishman, 2001). Research keeps echoing Fishman’s and his colleagues’ observation, from half a century ago, that there is a significant break in intergenerational continuity in the use of the heritage language in immigrant families (Fishman, Nahirny, Hofman, & Hayden, 1966). Actually, inter-generational language shift within three generations, for example, is often the norm for immigrant language behaviours (Clyne, 2005; Clyne & Kipp, 1997; Curdt-Christiansen, 2009; Fishman, 1991; Piller & Gerber, 2018; Raschka, Li, & Lee, 2002; Spolsky, 2012). “Most migrant groups have become English-dominant by the second generation and English-monolingual by the third generation” (Piller & Gerber, 2018, p. 3). Situated in the broad migrant diaspora, Chinese is not exempt from this pattern of language shift. In an analysis of the language shift of second-generation children, which is now almost two decades old, Clyne (2005) observed the massive intergenerational shift in Chinese groups, ranging from four per cent in the first generation to 37.4 percent in the second generation in Chinese families originating from the People’s Republic of China. Given the massive changes in Chinese migration since then (see Chapter 1), the next section will review more recent literature regarding Chinese heritage language use and practice in the home.

2.3.2 Chinese heritage language use and practices in the home

Language practices are the observable behaviour and choices of what people actually do with the varieties of languages (Spolsky, 2009). Family language practice, which is shaped by family language policy, refers to “patterns of language choice and preference within the family and in different contexts” and this practice could “reflect socio-cultural changes in intergenerational interactions within immigrant families” (Schwartz, 2010, p. 178). Family

language management refers to “efforts to control the language of family members, especially children” (Spolsky, 2007, p. 430) and “[i]t starts with the parents’ decision about the language choice to be used with the children” (Schwartz, 2010, p. 180). Thus, language practice or language use pattern of Chinese children inside and outside the family may be the result of parental intervention or negotiation between parents and children.

It is widely reported that first-generation parents generally promote Chinese-language use in the home and predominantly speak Chinese to their children, while children, though maintaining heritage language use to some degree, demonstrate an evident shift to English (Curdt-Christiansen, 2013; Kuo, 1974; Luo & Wiseman, 2000; D. Zhang, 2008; D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009; J. Zhang, 2009). A parental policy of exclusive Chinese language use in the home is common, but rarely successful. For example, all the three families in J. Zhang’s research (2009) invested substantial efforts in their children’s Chinese and some parents strictly enforced a Mandarin-only policy at home. However, children often code-switched to convey their meaning at home or even habitually replied in English.

A key transition that usually marks the beginning of children’s language shift is the moment when they start school in the host society. In Kuo’s (1974) study of the bilingual patterns of 47 pre-school children from 44 Chinese immigrant families, for example, it was found that “[t]he beginning of the nursery school or kindergarten was obviously a turning point in terms of language preference for the bilingual children” (p. 136). In this research, quite a few children, once they picked up some English in school, were found to speak “almost exclusively English at home” or to reject everything in Chinese despite parents’ efforts to speaking Chinese to them. (p. 136)

Besides the tendency towards the increasing use of English and language shift, there emerged noticeable generational differences in terms of the language used. That is, children tend to use different languages to different generations, such as to their parents and siblings. The differentiated language use with family members has been documented both quantitatively and qualitatively (Curdt-Christiansen, 2014; Dai & Zhang, 2008; Kuo, 1974; G. Li, 2006b; Mau, 2013; Raschka et al., 2002; J. Zhang, 2009). For example, in a survey of the linguistic habitus of 80 college students of Chinese heritage, about 92% of the respondents always or mostly used Chinese when speaking to their grandparents, 51% to their mothers, 47% to their fathers, but only 8% and 4% to their siblings and friends respectively (Dai & Zhang, 2008). This finding echoes that of Kuo (1974), where approximately half of the 47 preschool children spoke English to their siblings and other Chinese children all or most of

the time, while only a quarter of them did so to their parents. This bilingual use pattern indicates that children “may continue to use the heritage language, but only minimally in a limited environment, that is, in the home” mostly with their parents (Dai & Zhang, 2008, p. 42).

Children’s language shift tendency and their differentiated language use patterns across generations demonstrates the overwhelming pressures towards English language assimilation from siblings, cousins and peers (J. Zhang, 2009), as well as the limited influence of parents. In fact, “[c]hildren’s desire to conform to their peer networks, on the one hand, and the wish of the older generation to maintain the families’ first language in a second-language environment on the other, underlies the ‘struggle’ between language maintenance or language change” (Raschka et al., 2002, p. 23). These constant ‘struggles’ and strong English assimilation shapes their differentiated language orientations in the family. That is, their spoken language at home may be more Chinese-oriented during interaction with parents, and particularly grandparents, but English-dominant with siblings and Chinese friends. Speaking Chinese at home is one part of family language policy, and Chinese literacy practice at home is another key strategy employed by many Chinese families as observed by many researchers (Curdt-Christiansen, 2013, 2014; P. A. Duff, Y. Liu, & D. Li, 2017; G. Li, 2002, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Mau, 2013; H. Xu, 1999; D. Zhang, 2008; D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009; J. Zhang, 2009). Parents have used a variety of linguistic resources such as Chinese textbooks, Chinese literature, and Chinese media to facilitate Chinese literacy in the home. Chinese literacy practice may be undertaken through character writing, story reading, math drills or media consumption. These language materials become a good resource which parents often use for home tutoring and assigning Chinese homework for their children (see Curdt-Christiansen, 2013; G. Li, 2002, 2006b; D. Zhang, 2008; D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009; J. Zhang, 2009). G. Li’s research (2002, 2006a, 2006b, 2007) definitively documented and detailed the specific strategies and resources parents employed in the home domain. In her research, parents mainly used textbooks they brought from China to teach their children Chinese characters and maths, used story books or other print materials to develop their Chinese skills and build up their general knowledge, and assigned Chinese homework to strengthen the effect of home tutoring. Actually, besides using Chinese language textbooks and materials, Chinese maths textbooks were frequently used by parents to teach their children’s literacy and numeracy and also to strengthen their language skills (G. Li, 2002, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; D. Zhang, 2008; D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009).

Besides print materials, Chinese media is a tool frequently used by parents, whether formally

or informally, for children's heritage language input. For example, all children in J Zhang's (2009) study consumed Chinese media organized for them by their parents. In one family, watching films and programs in Mandarin was a legitimate substitute for practicing piano or doing extra academic work. In this case, parents made sure to choose videos with Chinese captions to support character recognition. In the Canadian context, students in Toronto demonstrated a strong sense of ethnic identity, were desirous to learn Chinese and widely used Chinese in various settings (Man, 2006), all of which contrasts with children's heritage language behavior in most other research. These unusually favorable results were embedded in strong media support both at home and in the society, through a variety of Chinese newspapers, television stations, magazines, video shops, and cinemas (Man, 2006). Up to 46% and 43% of the students engaged 'very often' in the more 'receptive' activities of watching TV and listening to the radio respectively. It was found that the Chinese reading and writing that students were involved in was mainly through Chinese media, such as newspapers, magazines and television programs.

Though parents employ various strategies and resources to maintain and develop their children's heritage language, they have experienced various barriers to their maintenance efforts (see Curdt-Christiansen, 2013; G. Li, 2006b; J. Wang, 2012; D. Zhang, 2008; D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009; J. Zhang, 2009). These barriers, which undermine maintenance efforts, are typically children's resistance, parents' dual expectations and the assimilative force of institutions and society.

Children's resistance to heritage language practices presents a significant challenge for parents to implement family language policies though some children are highly invested in maintaining their heritage language on their own, either to comply with parental desires or for their desired economic benefits (also see Section 2.2). For example, irrespective of parents' strong emphasis on heritage language learning, most Chinese children considered it a useless language in the U.S. (D. Zhang, 2008). The difficulty in implementing a 'language rule' at home is constantly reported in research, where children's refusal to speak Chinese hindered the enactment of family language policy and accelerated their language attrition (G. Li, 2006b; J. Zhang, 2009). In fact, in the constant conflicts between parent and child preferences, the family is no longer an exclusive space of mother tongue dominance, but a meeting ground for two competing languages – the ethnic minority language and the mainstream language (Kuo, 1974).

Besides children's resistance, parent's dual expectations present a big challenge for their children's consistent practice of Chinese. Parents, on the one hand, would like their children to grow up proficient in both Chinese and English, but on the other hand they fear that learning Chinese will negatively influence their children's progress in English. Then they normally suspend tutoring children's literacy at home or stop their learning of Chinese in community schools due to the pressing task of learning English (see G. Li, 2006b).

"Intrinsically, family language decisions are connected in significant ways with formal school education as parents are concerned with their children's social standing in the future" (Curd-Christiansen & Wang, 2018, p. 236). Thus, their language practices, grounded in the social utility, power and value of a language in a given society, are often made without taking into consideration the need for maintenance of minority languages (Curd-Christiansen & Wang, 2018).

Actually, both children's resistance to language maintenance and parents' dual expectations reveal a lack of institutional and societal support for heritage language. Firstly, children's perception of the heritage language being 'useless' suggests a lack of support for heritage language learning in English-dominant US society:

Although the parents may themselves value the heritage language and exhort their children to do the same, the latter receive a conflicting, undercurrent message from their school and the outside environment that reduces the heritage language to a marginal, even "useless", status. As a result, the children find it hard to agree with their parents on the importance of the heritage language (D. Zhang, 2008, p. 124).

Secondly, parent's prioritisation of English over Chinese is built on English-only principles in relation to school success. They believe that children must be highly skilful in English to be successful in an English dominant society. "For the immigrant family in particular, state-controlled education commonly sets up a conflict between heritage languages and the national standard language" (Spolsky, 2012, p. 6). The maintenance of heritage language in migration contexts demands tremendous effort and perseverance, while powerful assimilative forces from mainstream schools and the English dominant environment discourage the maintenance efforts of individual parents and make them succumb, eventually, to the English-Only norm prevalent in the host country (D. Zhang, 2008).

In sum, parents have been found to strongly support their children's heritage language learning by means of various strategies. Firstly, they may speak Chinese to their children in the home. However, despite parental efforts, children tend to increasingly use English at home. At the same time, children's language use at home shows a clear pattern of generational

difference. They may speak Chinese to their parents, but their language use with siblings and peers predominantly follows the English-speaking norm. Children's differentiated language orientations in the family demonstrate the strongly assimilative pressure of siblings and peers and also bear some traces of family influence. Another important Chinese language maintenance strategy is practising Chinese literacy at home. To implement Chinese literacy practice, parents use a wide range of print resources, including Chinese textbooks and literature, as well as selected media programs. These resources are widely used for home tutoring and homework assignments. However, these language maintenance efforts have encountered distinct obstacles particularly children's resistance, parents' dual expectations, and lack of institutional and societal support. The next section will focus on experiences of Chinese language learning outside the home.

2.3.3 Chinese heritage language use and practices outside the home

Since the previous section reviewed heritage language use and practices in the home, this section will move to examine children's experiences of learning Chinese outside the home, where formal instructions take place. Specifically, the section will focus on the domains of Chinese learning in community schools, in mainstream schools and at the post-secondary stage.

Due to the many challenges with effective heritage language tutoring in the home, parents often turn to community schools as a means of regularizing their children's language learning, whether it be focussed on oral or on written skills (P. A. Duff et al., 2017). Chinese weekend schools are highlighted as the major domain of Chinese heritage language maintenance in a number of studies (Archer, Francis, & Mau, 2009; Curdt-Christiansen, 2004, 2009; Francis et al., 2009; Francis et al., 2014; G. Li, 2006b; Man, 2006; Mau, 2013; Mau, Francis, & Archer, 2009; M. Wang, 2003; J. Zhang, 2009). Interviews with 60 pupils from six Chinese complementary schools, for example, revealed that about 80% of the participants had attended Chinese school for more than five years, and 13 (22% of all pupils) had been attending for over 10 years" (Mau et al., 2009). Due to the popularity of Chinese schools for the learning of Chinese, it will be meaningful to explore perceptions about community Chinese classes from various perspectives.

The role and effectiveness of Chinese community schools is widely debated among parents, students and researchers. The positive evaluation of Chinese community schools is centred on the role of heritage language retention in identity construction. Firstly, community language schools serve as a bulwark against language and culture loss (H. P. H. Chow, 2001; Francis & Archer, 2005; Francis et al., 2014; Koda, Zhang, & Yang, 2008; McGinnis, 2005;

Xueying Wang, 1996; J. Zhang, 2009). Chinese diasporic parents preferred “a school education in the heritage language for their children instead of a sporadic learning at home”, so, they believed that children could “learn the language more formally and consistently” under systematic education in language schools (D. Zhang, 2008, p. 120). The crucial role of community schools in transmitting the heritage language is also validated by the documented positive evidence focusing on the outstanding learners and competition winners of Chinese heritage language (see J. Zhang, 2009). Secondly, community schools play a positive role in facilitating the formation of ethnic identity, cultural awareness and ethnic socialization (H. P. H. Chow, 2001; W. Li & Wu, 2009; Mau, 2013; Wen, 2011). For example, some students have been found to have a positive experience of Chinese weekend classes, they found the classes interesting and culturally-informative, and then regarded their community schools as enjoyable social places (Mau, 2013). Other students constructed the Chinese school as an ‘idealised’ learning space with like-minded, Chinese peers, and appreciated Chinese school as a safe space away from racism and from the pressure of “being a minority within minorities” (Archer et al., 2009). The positive side of language schools is identified as successfully injecting a healthy amount of cultural awareness into the students and providing opportunities for students to establish a strong Chinese friendship network (H. P. H. Chow, 2001).

However, negative aspects of learning within Chinese schools have also been found, and some researchers problematize the effect of input, teaching methods and the actual function of the schools. Firstly, extant research has shown that children rarely develop high-level or age-appropriate proficiency by means of learning Chinese in heritage language schools. In S. Wang’s (2004) four-year-long in-depth study of Chinese community schools, it was found that “there was no sense of progress or achievement” in the long term, and “students basically stay at the same level, unable to move forward in their HL proficiency or literacy” (p. 368). This perception is validated in M. Chow’s (1983) study of Chinese adolescents from seven Chinese language schools in Toronto, where the adolescents’ ability to read and write could be rated as poor. Secondly, the teaching techniques and contents are viewed as being didactic and old-fashioned. Among those who described an overall negative experience at Chinese schools, much of their dissatisfaction was related to the teaching and learning, with typical comments, such as ‘boring’, ‘difficult’ and ‘insufficient input’ (Mau, 2013). In fact, “[d]ue to the nature of the language (i.e. non-phonetic written script, tone-based pronunciations), learning Chinese requires a certain amount of didactic, ‘rote’ learning that might appear alien to UK educated pupils” (Mau, 2013, p. 250; Mau et

al., 2009) as well as “appear alien to Western educators” (Mau et al., 2009, p. 31). Thirdly, Chinese community schools are criticized for catering more for ethnic socialization, rather than for language learning. It has been pointed out that language learning inside the schools is less effective in terms of language teaching and learning, but more effective with regard to forming social networks with people of their own ethnic background or class-specific ethnic groups (S. C. Wang, 1995; H. Xiao, 1998; D. Zhang, 2008).

Against the backdrop of both positive and negative scenarios regarding Chinese schools, the large variation across community schools must be acknowledged, “some of which perform better than some others in fostering a good environment and motivating students to engage in heritage language and culture, and therefore in HL behaviour” (J. Wang, 2012, p. 75). In fact, it is undoubtedly an extremely challenging task to develop children’s Chinese heritage language to their full potential solely by means of Chinese language schools. Firstly, with increasing numbers of ‘third’ generation immigrant children and a growing number of mixed Chinese heritage children, along with the newer migrants from mainland China and a small number of non-Chinese wishing to learn Chinese, Chinese complementary schools undoubtedly face more new challenges to cater to their ever more diverse users (Mau, 2013). At the same time, even within the same classroom, the pupils’ Chinese abilities could still vary considerably, although classes at Chinese schools are generally organized by ability rather than pupils’ age (Mau, 2013). Secondly, limited hours of teaching each week and insufficient language reinforcement outside the schools all add significant difficulties in fostering high-level reading and writing skills (M. Chow, 1983).

In contrast to Chinese community schools, Chinese programs in mainstream schools are under-researched. As Duff et al. (2017) stated, “[t]here appears to be scant research on language learning and use among Chinese heritage language (Eisenclas & Schalley) learners in public, credit-based school courses – either those designed to teach Chinese or in other mainstream subject areas in which students might be encouraged to produce multilingual texts” (P. A. Duff et al., 2017, p. 424). The limited research that exists reports results of Chinese language education in mainstream schools as being largely unsuccessful (see also Section 2.4). In Australian schools, for example, a high drop-out rate in Chinese courses has been found, and the overall retention rate of Chinese language programs beyond the compulsory years was as low as 6% (Orton, 2010). Even in the comparatively favourable scenario of Singapore, where Mandarin, as one of the four official languages, is taught as a subject throughout primary and secondary education, many parents were found to seek

private tuition to advance their children's Chinese because they regarded Chinese language input in school as far from being sufficient (Curd-Christiansen, 2014).

Currently, there is a growing body of research focusing on Chinese language learners at the post-secondary level, but the teaching and learning of heritage language is rarely detailed or elaborated. The current post-secondary Chinese language research tends either to address the motivations of Chinese heritage learners or to compare Chinese heritage and non-heritage learners in terms of their motivation and general performance (Comanaru & Noels, 2009; Dai & Zhang, 2008; He, 2008; Lu & Li, 2008; Wen, 1997, 2011; Y. Xiao, 2006; H. L. Xu & Moloney, 2014; Yang, 2003). As to the dimension of motivation, in a close examination of the particular motivational orientations of a group of Chinese heritage language learners in one Australian university setting, it was found that motivation related to heritage and cultural identity was balanced by the drive towards employment prospects or the perceived economic capital of learning Chinese (H. L. Xu & Moloney, 2014). Regarding the comparative analysis of heritage and non-heritage learners, it was found that heritage language students were more influenced by instrumental motivation than non-heritage students (Lu & Li, 2008) and they did not perform better in reading comprehension, vocabulary learning and character writing, though they outperformed their non-heritage peers in listening and speaking assessments (Y. Xiao, 2006).

In sum, studies of the formal instruction of Chinese heritage language centre on community schools, mainstream schools, and the post-secondary stage. Firstly, perceptions of the role and effectiveness of Chinese community schools have been found to vary. Positive accounts argue that Chinese classes can help to stem the tide of language and culture loss as well as facilitate identity formation and ethnic socialization. However, in other research Chinese classes have been found to be ineffective in fostering high-level proficiency. Such accounts present Chinese schools as sites of socialization over learning and report that teaching techniques and contents are overly didactic and old-fashioned. Overall, existing research shows that it is extremely challenging to develop high-level Chinese proficiency, given the limited number of learning hours and the growing diversity of learners. Secondly, Chinese programs in mainstream schools are under-researched and the existing studies reveal that Chinese language learning in mainstream schools is, by and large, unsuccessful. Thirdly, research in post-secondary Chinese language learning contexts tends to focus on learner motivation or compares the motivation and general performance of heritage and non-heritage Chinese learners rather than detail the learning and teaching of Chinese.

The next section will focus on children's actual heritage language outcomes, as well as the factors contributing to these outcomes.

2.4 Heritage language proficiency and contributing factors

As shown in previous sections, parents' aspirations regarding the development of their children's Chinese language proficiency have led to the adoption of various maintenance strategies and practices, both inside and outside the home. In this section, I will review the literature on the heritage language outcomes of immigrant children and the factors contributing to these outcomes. Then, I will examine the factors contributing to children's heritage language attrition, development and attainment.

2.4.1 Language outcomes: Language loss, attrition, maintenance and development

There is a broad consensus in heritage language research that language shift and loss are a major tendency, and that heritage languages are rarely maintained and developed among the different generations of immigrants (M. Chow, 1983; Clyne & Kipp, 1997; Curdt-Christiansen, 2013; Fillmore, 1991, 2000; G. Li, 2002, 2006a, 2006b; W. Li, 1994; Luo & Wiseman, 2000; D. Zhang, 2008; D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009; J. Zhang, 2009). In M. Chow's (1983) study of Canadian-Chinese adolescents from seven Chinese language schools, for example, though the majority of the adolescents maintained positive attitude towards ethnic language maintenance, there emerged a substantial ethnic language loss among them. When migrant children reach young adulthood, their bilingual ability is typically characterized by (near-)native level English proficiency (Jia, 2008; Jia, Aaronson, & Wu, 2002), and a weaker native language (albeit with varying degrees of proficiency) (Jia, 2008). For many, Chinese heritage language development follows the pattern described by Y. Xiao (2008a), "the HL learner has an early exposure to his L1, involuntarily switches to the dominant L2, goes through a mainstreaming process, becomes a speaker of the dominant L2, and comes to the language classroom to relearn his HL as a foreign language in his later life" (pp. 264-265).

Against the pervasiveness of weak intergenerational transmission of the heritage language, children's literacy skills have been found to exhibit more severe attrition than speaking skills (Dai & Zhang, 2008; Hendryx, 2008; Jia, 2008; Y. Xiao, 2006, 2008a). It may be the fact that "heritage language illiteracy is another typical characteristic of CHL [Chinese heritage language] learners' linguistic habitus" (Dai & Zhang, 2008, p. 42). In a study of 85 recent Chinese immigrants in New York, for example, Chinese heritage language reading and writing abilities, compared with speaking abilities, started at a lower level and were subject to greater attrition (Jia, 2008). This aligns with Hendryx's (2008) research, where Chinese

heritage language learners in Chinese language classes at the university level were more likely to be proficient in speaking Chinese than in reading or writing it. Furthermore, compared with non-heritage students, Chinese heritage language learners did better in speaking and listening, and they did not show an advantage in reading comprehension, vocabulary learning, and Chinese character writing (Y. Xiao, 2006). In fact, “[o]ver the developmental time, the learner’s L1 lives a short life and transforms into a HL linguistic system, marked with incomplete grammar knowledge and skewed language skills” (Y. Xiao, 2008a, p. 265). Thus, literacy becomes the first victim of intergenerational language shift, indicated by the steep decline in literacy ability (Tse, 2001a).

Extant research attributes the negative result of heritage language performance in large degree to strong assimilation pressures from the wider society (Curdts-Christiansen, 2013; Fillmore, 1991; Luo & Wiseman, 2000), inconsistent or ineffective support from families (Curdts-Christiansen, 2013; G. Li, 2006b; Schwartz, 2010) and unsuccessful language education in institutions (Benz, 2015; Clyne, 2005; Moloney & Xu, 2012). Above all, “[l]anguage-minority children encounter powerful forces for assimilation as soon as they enter the English-speaking world of the classroom in the society's schools” (Fillmore, 1991, p. 342). “When the dominant language substitutes for an ethnic language as the means of communication, the erosion of that ethnic language increases” (Luo & Wiseman, 2000). “In this era of globalized language battle, minority languages can easily be forced to give way to the more powerful languages, thus leading to language loss” (Curdts-Christiansen, 2013, p. 293). Besides, parents’ linguistic desires do not necessarily translate into practices and the implementation of family language policy often confronts sizable challenges (see Section 2.3.2). In addition, in most English-dominant societies such as Australia, language education other than English is, typically, highly unsystematic and fragmented, and has long been found to result in extremely low levels of language proficiency (Clyne, 2005; Lo Bianco, 2008; Piller & Gerber, 2018). Despite over 40-year-history of teaching Chinese in Australian primary and secondary schools, there has been limited sustained success in Chinese language learning in Australian schools (Orton, 2016). Overall, migrant Chinese children typically use Chinese, a mixed language, or English at home, receive mainstream education in the medium of English and only pursue heritage language literacy at weekend Chinese schools (Koda, Lü, & Zhang, 2008; Koda, Zhang, et al., 2008; Y. Xiao, 2008a, p. 261). Thus, the maintenance and advancement of Chinese solely depends on the availability of Chinese instruction outside mainstream education, such as literacy study in weekend community schools or activities at home, neither of which, however, has been fruitful (Y. Xiao, 2008a).

Though children's swift language shift often occurs within one or two years of schooling as observed by a number of studies (G. Li, 2002, 2006a, 2006b; D. Zhang, 2008), language shift or maintenance is also mediated by the age of arrival (see also Section 2.4.2). That means late-arrival children may maintain their heritage language in the long run or experience language shift later in their lives. In a three-year-long study documenting the linguistic process of ten Chinese children and adolescents who immigrated to the USA between ages 5-16, for example, the younger arrivals (with arrival ages of 9 or younger) switched their language preference from Chinese to English within the first year, were exposed to a significantly richer English environment than their Chinese environment, and became more proficient in English than in Chinese. Conversely, the older arrivals maintained their preference for Chinese across the three years, were exposed to a significantly richer Chinese environment than English environment, and maintained Chinese as the more proficient language (Jia & Aaronson, 2003). Besides, immigrant children with similar arrival ages may show different patterns of language proficiency from language loss to well development. Children's heritage language loss, attrition or development are related to parental interference and children's actual language practice both in and outside the home (see Section 2.3). The next section will review the distinct factors contributing to children's heritage language proficiency.

2.4.2 Factors contributing to heritage language proficiency

Language loss is not a necessary or inevitable outcome when children acquire second languages (Fillmore, 1991, 2000). Children's language attainment is not determined by one single condition or factor, but is "a result of many factors balancing with each other" (J. Wang, 2012, p. 73). This section will review contributing factors, with a focus on age at migration, family involvement and the use of print materials in particular, peer influence, and institutional support.

Age at migration is a significant predictor of the degree of children's heritage language retention and proficiency (Chan, 1989; Fillmore, 1991; Jia, 2008; Jia & Aaronson, 2003; Kondo-Brown, 2006; Luo & Wiseman, 2000; Mu, 2014b). Firstly, age of migration indicates prior proficiency in the heritage language and the knowledge of the heritage culture, both of which shape children's language preferences and practices, and in turn influence their decisions to maintain their ethnic language (Luo & Wiseman, 2000). In Jia & Aaronson's (2003) three-year longitudinal study, for example, most of the younger arrivals (who emigrated at age nine or before) reported a lack of interest in further developing their Chinese reading and writing skills because they found Chinese harder than English. In

contrast, the older arrivals (who emigrated after age nine) all felt that Chinese was easier than English and they subsequently continued to prefer, and use, Chinese. Over the three years, the younger arrivals increasingly used English as the predominant reading language, whereas the older ones continued to do most of their leisure reading in Chinese.

Secondly, age of arrival is closely associated with children's peer preferences and choices, which subsequently influence their language use and fluency. Following the above example, over the three years, younger arrivals, as a group, dramatically increased the average number of English-speaking friends and maintained low numbers of Chinese-speaking friends (Jia & Aaronson, 2003). In contrast, older arrivals, as a group, had low numbers of English-speaking friends but consistently high numbers of Chinese-speaking friends. This is consistent with Luo & Wiseman's (2000) research, where Chinese-speaking peers were more influential for the emigrated-at-older-age group (i.e. emigrated after age 5), whereas English-speaking peers were more influential for the emigrated-at-younger-age group (born in America or emigrated at age 5 or younger). Thus, among children in immigrant families, native-born, younger-arrived and older-arrived children "display different language patterns because of different amounts of exposure to the native culture" and the different composition of their peer networks (Luo & Wiseman, 2000, p. 310). It is those who migrated at an older age than their younger migrant peers that are likely to maintain and/or continue to develop Chinese to a greater extent, both in the oral and the written medium.

A large body of research literature points to the critical role of the family in heritage language maintenance (Curdt-Christiansen, 2013; Döpke, 1992; Fishman, 1991, 2001; Hinton, 1999; King et al., 2008; Lao, 2004; G. Li, 2002, 2006a, 2006b; X. Li, 1999; J. Wang, 2012; J. Zhang, 2009). Home language practice is regarded as the most crucial factor in predicting whether or not the heritage language will be transmitted across generations (Lao, 2004). That is, "what parents do or do not do to support their children's HL matters" (G. Li, 2006b, p. 29). Above all, parents' active communication with children in Chinese "did significantly, positively predict the possibility for the children to speak Chinese" (J. Wang, 2012, p. 76). Actually, "parents who actively involve their children in everyday conversations, problem solving, and family interactions through the use of the HL tend to be successful in intergenerational transmission of the language" (G. Li, 2006b, p. 18). Next, the consistency of family language practice is presented as a major reason for optimal outcomes. In Raschka et al.'s (2002) field work with 34 children and their families, the children whose parents consistently and exclusively used Chinese as the communication language generally achieved good levels of Chinese fluency, whereas those whose parents used both English and Chinese

interchangeably demonstrated, on the whole, a much lower degree of Chinese language ability (Raschka et al., 2002). The rapid language loss of the young children in G. Li's (2006b) research was found to occur soon after their parents gave up Chinese reading and writing practice in favour of English learning. Thus, "[p]arental attitudes and practices – 'persistency and consistency of use, as well as efficacious parental teaching techniques' – are the strongest variables that consistently predict children's competences in and attitudes towards Mandarin" (J. Zhang, 2009, p. 205).

In terms of the efficaciousness of home language practice, home literacy activities, especially the use of print materials, were increasingly found to be crucial for ultimate heritage language attainment (Lao, 2004; G. Li, 2002, 2006a, 2006b; Spreadbury, 1994; Tse, 2001a; Y. Xiao, 2006, 2008b). Children who are taught to read and write in the heritage language, and who have consistent opportunities to interact in the heritage language through written texts, tend to have more positive attitudes toward the language and are less likely to lose the language (Fishman, 1991; G. Li, 2006b; W. Li, 1994). Children's books, for example, are necessary resources for children to foster positive attitudes towards literacy learning (G. Li, 2002) and then facilitate the achievement of high-level proficiency. In contrast, poor literacy environments, those with a lack of print materials in particular, largely contribute to poor Chinese language development (Hendryx, 2008; Jia, 2008; Koda, Lü, et al., 2008; Koda, Zhang, et al., 2008; Lao, 2004; Y. Xiao, 2006, 2008b). In Lao's (2004) study of both Chinese- and English-dominant families, for example, children in a print-poor environment at home generally found it difficult to further reinforce and develop the Chinese literacy they developed at school. Overall, a supportive home language environment characterized by rich print resources facilitates children's positive attitude towards reading and writing (G. Li, 2002), while a lack of access to Chinese print limits children's literacy growth in the language (Lao, 2004).

However, families as the primary life context may only exert a short period of influence on children, even if they keep trying to exert influence (J. Wang, 2012; J. Zhang, 2009). As children age, peer groups soon exert a much stronger influence on children's speech and language behaviour (Kerswill, 1996) and when children reach a certain age, peer influence may become the most predictive factor in children's ethnic language maintenance (Luo & Wiseman, 2000). Under the pressure of strong English assimilative pull, having peers with whom one can speak the language is an important factor in heritage language maintenance (Hinton, 1999). This peer influence not only helps a child develop positive attitudes towards the heritage language, but also socializes them into different literacy-related activities in that

language (G. Li, 2006b; Tse, 2001a; J. Zhang, 2009). For example, in the promising scenario of Toronto's success in maintaining children's heritage languages (see Section 2.3), though children used more English than Chinese with friends, they generally had quite a number of Chinese-speaking friends in and outside school and regarded their heritage language experiences with friends as enjoyable (Man, 2006). This suggests that Chinese-speaking peers can consolidate parental influence on immigrant children's ethnic language preservation, while English-speaking peers may overwhelm any positive influence from parents (Luo & Wiseman, 2000). In fact, children's frequent and fluent use of either language is closely associated with whether they socialize mostly with English- or Chinese-speaking peers (Luo & Wiseman, 2000).

Another important factor contributing to heritage language maintenance is "contact with institutions", including "both those in the HL community such as weekend language schools and community organizations and those in non-heritage communities such as public schools" that value the heritage language (G. Li, 2006b, p. 19). From the community level, students who receive formal instruction in weekend language schools and are involved in a variety of heritage cultural activities tend to develop more positive views of the language and are exposed to a wider variety of literacy activities (Hinton, 1999; G. Li, 2006b, p. 19; Tse, 2001b). Similarly, public schools that value and validate minority cultures and languages in their instructional practices foster participants' positive attitudes towards heritage language maintenance (G. Li, 2006b). However, when schools devalue students' first language and enforce an English-only policy, this may result in students' negative attitudes toward their first language and culture and their rapid language shift to English (G. Li, 2002, 2006b).

In sum, studies with a focus on Chinese heritage language maintenance have found that age of migration, family involvement, particularly home print environment, peer influence, and institutional support are significant factors contributing to overall language proficiency outcomes. The next section will summarize this literature review, identify the research gaps, and formulate the relevant research questions.

2.5 Summary and research questions

In this chapter, I have reviewed relevant research into attitudes to Chinese heritage language maintenance, practices of heritage language maintenance, and heritage language proficiency outcomes. Following on from this, I will now identify the research gaps related to

Chinese heritage language maintenance in Australia and formulate my research questions in response to this lacuna.

I started by examining the ideologies and motivations in relation to heritage language learning and attitudes that have been found to be specific to Chinese heritage language maintenance. First, I looked at different ideology camps in relation to second and heritage language learning from social psychological orientations to post-structuralist theories. The social psychological school, pioneered by Gardner and Lambert, identifies two types of language orientations, namely integrative and instrumental motivations. The former refers to the desire to identify with a particular culture and language community, while the latter emphasizes pragmatic and utilitarian functions, such as career or educational benefits. In recent decades, social psychological understandings of motivation have increasingly become framed in post-structural notions which see languages as capital and commodities, and language learning as an investment. Post-structural approaches to attitudes and motivation are theoretically grounded in Bourdieu's (1986) concept of various forms of capital. Bourdieu's conception foregrounds the convertibility of non-economic capital to economic capital and the economic value of languages is further highlighted in Heller's (2003, 2010) theory of 'commodification of language', which treats languages as commodities on the employment market. Both Bourdieu's language-as-capital and Heller's language-as-commodity align with Norton's (1995, 2000) notion of language-learning-as-investment, a form of profit seeking by means of language learning.

Secondly, I examined parents' and children's attitudes to Chinese as a heritage language. It was found that parents are generally highly motivated to pass on Chinese to their children while children exhibit more variable attitudes towards Chinese. Parents focus on the economic value of Chinese in the employment market, the symbolic value of identity representation, and the social value of family communication. By contrast, children often see Chinese as irrelevant to their lives and regard learning Chinese as tedious and difficult. At the same time, children's motivations and attitudes are never static but may shift over time. Their positive or negative attitudes are contingent upon their age and maturation process, as well as the dynamic power status of Chinese in the market. When children grow older, they are more likely to engage in learning Chinese for reasons similar to those of their parents. That is, they tend to see the importance of Chinese learning for their careers, school success, identity embodiment, and heritage retention. Their desire for Chinese relates specifically to Mandarin, the lingua franca of China. Thus, overall, parental and child attitudes both conflict and converge.

Following the review of attitudes to Chinese, I examined family language policy situated within the discourse of pervasive language shift, as well as Chinese heritage language use and practices in and outside the home. Firstly, I examined the role of family language policy in the maintenance of heritage languages and drew attention to the phenomenon of accelerated language attrition and lack of intergenerational continuity in the use of the heritage language.

Secondly, I looked at how Chinese heritage language is maintained, particularly in children's actual language use in the home. To facilitate children's heritage language learning, parents adopt a variety of strategies and resources. The most frequently observed rule is that of "Chinese-only at home". However, despite parental efforts, many children experience swift language shift once they start schooling. Besides the increasing use of English at home, they demonstrate a distinct generational difference in terms of language use in the family. That is, their spoken language may be Chinese-oriented in communication with their parents, but largely follows the English-speaking norm in socializing with their siblings and Chinese peers. Besides speaking Chinese at home, parents endeavour to implement Chinese literacy practice at home. They use various print resources, such as Chinese textbooks and literature, as well as ethnic media programs, for home literacy tutoring and homework assignments. However, these maintenance efforts have encountered significant barriers, particularly children's resistance, parents' dual expectations, and the assimilative force of institutions and society.

Thirdly, I reviewed children's experiences of learning Chinese outside the home, with a focus on the domains of community schools, mainstream schools and at the post-secondary level. Chinese community schools are regarded as the major domain where children can receive formal instruction in Chinese, but their role and effectiveness in language maintenance is controversial. Some studies have found that Chinese community schools are effective and systematic, and evidently contribute to heritage language maintenance, the formation of ethnic identity, and the strengthening of connections within the ethnic group. These findings contrast with other research that shows the weak effect of Chinese community schools on fostering high-level proficiency. This may be due to outdated teaching methods or an orientation towards socialization rather than language learning. In fact, there exists large variation among community schools, where some schools perform better than others in heritage language instruction and education. At the same time, due to the growing number and greater diversity in the backgrounds of learners, Chinese teaching in community schools is confronted with growing challenges within the limited learning time available. Besides

language learning in community schools, Chinese programs are also provided in some mainstream schools, but the actual learning and language use in such classes remains under-researched. The small existing body of research reveals that Chinese learning in mainstream schools tends to be fragmented and mostly unsuccessful. Currently, research on Chinese heritage language increasingly focusses attention on the post-secondary stage. These studies center either on heritage learner motivation or on a comparison of heritage and non-heritage learners in terms of their motivation and general assessment results, while heritage learners' learning processes and their actual language use in the classes remain mostly unresearched.

Following the review of Chinese heritage language maintenance practices, I examined Chinese migrant children's Chinese language outcomes, and factors contributing to their language proficiencies. Above all, language shift and attrition are the tendency, and Chinese is rarely maintained across generations. In terms of heritage language recession, children's literacy skills were found to be more vulnerable to severe attrition than speaking skills. The widespread lack of success in Chinese heritage language education is the result of a combination of factors, including powerful forces for assimilation from the English-dominant society, lack of consistent and sufficient input from families, and ineffective Chinese programs in institutions. Besides, children's language often swiftly shifts within one or two years of schooling in the host country, but their language shift or maintenance is also mediated by their arrival age. Late arrival children may maintain Chinese use in many domains, even in the long run, or their language shift may occur much later in their lives. In addition, language loss or attrition is not necessary or inevitable when it comes to heritage language maintenance. Chinese children who migrate at similar ages may show different patterns in their language outcomes, ranging from language loss to high-level Chinese proficiency. These differentiated language proficiency outcomes are the result of multiple interacting factors, particularly age at migration, family involvement and the use of print materials, peer influence, and institutional support.

Firstly, age at migration is a significant predictor of language use patterns, heritage language proficiency, and even the composition of children's English/Chinese-speaking networks. That is, an older arrival age is more closely correlated with frequent Chinese use, higher literacy skills in Chinese and more attachment to Chinese-speaking peers, while a younger arrival age is more likely to correlate with frequent English use, lower proficiency in Chinese and a larger network of English-speaking peers. Secondly, families play a determining role in intergenerational transmission of Chinese, especially when children are young. Families'

influence is maximised by means of consistent engagement and the full use of print materials. Thirdly, as children age, peer influence may become the most predictive factor in children's ethnic language maintenance. Chinese-speaking peers can facilitate children's use of Chinese and strengthen parental influence on their ethnic language preservation. Fourthly, contact with institutions that value the heritage language greatly strengthens participants' positive attitudes towards Chinese and encourages their literacy practice.

As mentioned in the previous sections, most of the research into Chinese heritage language maintenance focusses on children of similar age groups, such as preschool-aged children, teenagers, or college students, while few studies on Chinese language maintenance target heritage language learners of a broad age range. Besides, locally born children of migrants are typically the foci of most (if not all) heritage language studies and the language trajectories of Chinese migrant children as a group continue to remain largely unknown. In addition, existing studies of the learning of Chinese mostly focus on a single domain, such as the home or community schools, while research surveying children's language use in broader social settings is sparse.

With the aim of addressing these research lacunae, this study intends to focus on Chinese migrant children (1.5 generation) of a broad age range (from primary school age to young adulthood) and of various ages at the time of migration (from preschool age to pre-puberty age), and to trace their heritage language practices in broader domains, including home, community schools and mainstream schools. In particular, based on the findings reviewed in this chapter, I will examine the language attitudes, heritage language use and practices, and language proficiency outcomes of a group of Chinese migrant children and their families. Thus, this study is designed to provide a cross-sectional inquiry into children's heritage language trajectories at different stages of migration and in different social settings. In this way, the study hopes to make contributions to three sociolinguistic areas, namely language ideologies and maintenance attitudes, heritage language maintenance practices in diasporic contexts, and heritage language outcomes in migration contexts. The following five research questions have been designed to guide this study:

1. What are parents' perspectives and attitudes towards Chinese maintenance?
2. What are children's attitudes towards Chinese language and identity?
3. What language maintenance practices are evident in the home context?
4. What language maintenance practices are evident outside the home?
5. What language proficiency outcomes can be observed, and what are the factors contributing to these outcomes?

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methods and approaches adopted in this study for data collection and analysis. It starts with a presentation of the conceptual approach underpinning this qualitative ethnographic research. Then, the focus shifts to an account of the rationale for the recruitment criteria, the process of research participant recruitment, and the major recruitment channels. Following that is the description of the profiles of the 31 participating families, particularly the 32 children included. After that, the chapter describes the various methods used in data collection, specifically interviews, informal conversations, participant observation, evidence of Chinese literacy practices, WeChat posts, and background questionnaires. Next, I reflect on my researcher positionality and the multiple roles I have played during interaction with different participants. What follows is an explanation of the major methods used in my data analysis. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the strengths and limitations of the study.

3.2 Sociolinguistic ethnographic approach

This study intends to explore the heritage language maintenance of Chinese families in Australia.

Specifically, as stated in Chapter 2, it seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are parents' perspectives and attitudes towards Chinese maintenance?
2. What are children's attitudes towards Chinese language and identity?
3. What language maintenance practices are evident in the home context?
4. What language maintenance practices are evident outside the home?
5. What language proficiency outcomes can be observed, and what are the factors contributing to these outcomes?

Guided by existing research in the field, as reviewed in Chapter 2, to answer these research questions, this study adopted a qualitative methodology, specifically drawing on a sociolinguistic ethnographic approach. With the aim to provide locally, temporally, and situationally limited but thick and detailed explorations of a research problem (Flick, 2009), qualitative research “stud[ies] things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018a, p. 43). Ethnography in sociolinguistics is a systematic, qualitative study of beliefs, culture, social interactions and behaviours of small societies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018b; Naidoo, 2012) with a focus on language use under social factors. One central concern of ethnographic research is to “give insider accounts of what is going on in a particular society or group” (Piller, 2002b, p. 184). Therefore, this approach is best suited to examining Chinese families' worlds in relation to their children's heritage language maintenance and also to letting “their voices be heard and valued” (Chang, 2015, p. 62). It is particularly the following features of ethnography that

make it ideally suited for the research problem at hand: situatedness, contextualization, partiality, and subjectivity (see also Butorac, 2011).

Ethnography, as explained by Blommaert (2005), is “an approach in which the analysis of small phenomena is set against an analysis of big phenomena, and in which both levels can only be understood in terms of one another” (p. 16). The sociolinguistic ethnographic approach enables research to situate “parents and children’s stories and experiences” and their ideologies, both in small diasporic contexts at home and in the community and “in the wider social and political landscapes” (Motaghi-Tabari, 2016, p. 48) of their home and host countries, and thus better understand their contextualized practices and ideologies.

In my research, both parents and children’s language attitudes and ideologies, their heritage language maintenance strategies, and their language outcomes cannot be understood outside of their immediate home and current diasporic settings, their emergent social context in the migrant country, and the dynamic political situation of both their home and host countries. In other words, participants’ beliefs and practices are not only connected to the broad social contexts in Australia and China, but to the small contexts of their immediate home, diasporic communities and social circles. They are not only related to their emergent domains in Australia, but to their previous situations in China and even to the dynamic political power relationship between Australia and China. Therefore, the meanings of these contextualized practices and ideologies are best understood if situated in both the wider and smaller settings, the emergent and the previous situations.

These “situated events and contextualised narratives” are constructed and interpreted by both the researcher and the researched (Blommaert & Jie, 2010, p. 66), as “through rapport building, active listening, and observation, meaning and reality are co-constructed and contextualized rather than comprising one intrinsic truth” (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003, as cited in Chang, 2015, p. 62). Actually, “there are multiple realities” and “meaning is constructed between the researcher and the researched” (Butorac, 2011, p. 37). This acknowledgement of the situatedness of truth makes it possible for ethnography to deal with different, or even contradictory, ideas that might emerge from participants at different times. Throughout my data collection and analysis, I frequently noticed shifting accounts of participants’ language and educational ideologies and orientations. Ethnography allows us to understand not only that these accounts may be prompted by participants’ divergent thoughts and new situations, but also that they may be embedded in existing nuances within participants’ understanding, as well as in their relationship with myself at different points in time.

In fact, the open and context-sensitive approach of sociolinguistic ethnography allowed my data collection to mature over time. Initially conceived as an interview study for the most part, as my

research proceeded, I was increasingly capable of noticing the greater richness and authenticity of data generated from diverse data sources and increasingly realized the “value of initiating data collection in a variety of settings” (Butorac, 2011, p. 39) and “the importance of engaging more than one method of data collection” (Butorac, 2011, p. 40). Ethnography gave me the flexibility to respond to, and go beyond, the collection of interview data, as I will explain in the following sections.

3.3 Participant recruitment

To answer my research questions, I developed a design that would allow me to recruit research participants of Chinese migrant families in Australia with at least one focal child and one parent in each family. It was decided that participating children should be old enough to articulate their own ideas about Chinese language maintenance and so the minimum age was set at eight years. Additionally, it was decided that focal children should have at least some Chinese language experiences prior to migration, and so another criterion was that they should have arrived in Australia at age four or above. Finally, it was important that focal children should have substantial exposure to education in Australian schools. Therefore, they should have been enrolled in an Australian school for at least one year at the time of data collection.

There were around ten months from the start of my PhD studies to the day I received ethics clearance – the moment when my recruitment and data collection could legitimately start. I made use of this time to establish various social networks. Recruitment can be a difficult undertaking (B. J. Lee, 2014), particularly for novices such as myself, who was not only new to research but also new to Australia. Fortunately, my daughter’s school provided me with an initial chance to meet Chinese children and their families. However, her school was white-dominated and Chinese children accounted for a very small proportion of the school population. Furthermore, they had mostly been born in Australia and so did not fit my selection criteria. Even so, by the time I received ethics approval, I had built a small network of Chinese families through my daughter’s network. Because my daughter was the initial reason for the formation of that social circle, families with girls were predominant in that group.

Another network I established was with people from the church where I took my daughter for her weekly Bible study. The reason for me, an atheist, taking my daughter to a Christian church had nothing to do with my research initially. Instead, I hoped that the church environment would provide my daughter with some moral guidance during her adjustment to her new environment and her mental development. However, beyond my expectations, the English-speaking church ended up playing a very important role in my participant recruitment in the initial stage of my PhD studies.

Overall, participant recruitment caused me considerable anxiety in the first ten months before the official start of data collection (on receiving ethics approval) and I considered many strategies.

However, because of the networks I had established in the pre-recruitment phase, recruitment proved surprisingly easy. However, recruiting in this way meant that sometimes I was introduced to potential participants who were slightly outside my recruitment criteria (e.g., the child had arrived in Australia at age three instead of age four). In these cases, it would have been rude to reject them, and the recruitment criteria were relaxed in the interest of maintaining good relationships with my networks. This approach is in keeping with the ethnographic approach (see 3.2) and allows me to collect richer data (see 3.5 below). In total, the focal child in three families was slightly outside the pre-defined recruitment criteria: Daughter 1 had migrated at age 3, and Daughter 2 and Son 6 were only seven (instead of eight) years old at the time of the interview (see

).

Once I had received ethics approval, I undertook formal recruitment through five channels: my family social network, the network of the church I regularly visited, the network of fellow PhD students, advertising, and snowballing (Table 3. 1).

Table 3. 1 An overview of recruitment channels

Recruitment channels	Number of participant families recruited
Family social network	11
Church social network	6
Fellow PhD student social network	2
Advertising	3
Snowballing (through other participants)	9
Total	31

The next section describes the profile of the families recruited through these channels.

3.4 Participants

A total of 31 families, comprising 27 parents and 32 children were recruited for the research (). All these participants migrated to Australia from mainland China. Of the 27 parents, 24 were mothers and only three were fathers. In family language research, this distinctive gender imbalance, with a prevalence of women, has also been observed by other researchers (e.g. Piller, (2002a); Torsh, 2020).

In terms of parents' educational backgrounds, the majority of participating parents are well-educated, and the majority of parents have some level of higher education (Table 3. 2). Their high level of education is also reflected in their visa types, where Skilled Migrant entrants and work or study visas predominate. Regarding the employment situation prior to their migration, Table 3. 2 shows that most of these families were employed in professional fields such as IT, law, finance, and medicine, which are generally considered desirable and high-paying jobs in China, even if not all participants were able to find work at the same level after migration. In short, the families in the study are a group of well-educated middle-class Chinese migrants to Australia.

Table 3. 2 An overview of parents' educational & professional experiences & interview status

Family	Participants	Year of arrival	Age of arrival (long stay)	Visa / migration type	Education level M (mother) F (father)	Pre-migration employment	Post-migration employment	Age at the time of interview	Language of interview
1	Mother 1	1992		Citizen / Immigrant when father finished Phd in Australia	M: TAFE F: Doctor of Molecular Biology	M: Pathologist F: Student	M: Housewife F: CEO of a Bio detection company	M: 50+ F: 50+	Mandarin
	Daughter 1	1992	3	Citizen	Bachelor	N/A	Lawyer	28	N/A
2	Mother 2	2012		TR	M: High school F: High school	M: Unknown F: Unknown	M: Unknown F: Unknown	M: 40-50 F: 40-50	Mandarin
	Daughter 2	2014	4	TR	Year 2	N/A	N/A	7	Mandarin
3	Mother 3	2010		Citizen / Skilled migration	M: Bachelor	M: Nurse	M: Nurse	M: 30-40	Mandarin
	Father 3	2010		Citizen	F: Bachelor	F: Lawyer	F: Laborer	F: 30-40	Mandarin
	Son 3	2012	4	Citizen	Year 3	N/A	N/A	9	English
4	Mother 4	2012		PR / Immigrant based on work visa	M: Bachelor F: Bachelor	M: Manager in a foreign company F: Manager in a state-owned company	M: Educator F: self-employed	M: 40-50 F: 40-50	Mandarin
	Daughter 4	2012	4	PR	Year 4	N/A	N/A	9	Mandarin
5	Mother 5	2010		PR / skilled migration	M: Bachelor F: High school	M: Programmer F: Programmer	M: Housewife F: Programmer	M: 30-40 F: 30-40	Mandarin
	Son 5	2010	4	PR	Year 5	N/A	N/A	11	English
6	Mother 6	2015		PR / Skilled migration	M: Master F: Bachelor	M: Financier F: Banker	M: Housewife F: Banker (mostly working in China) ⁷	M: 30-40 F: 30-40	Mandarin

	Son 6	2015	5	PR	Year 2	N/A	N/A	7	Mandarin
7	Mother 7	2013	N/A	PR	M: Bachelor F: Bachelor	M: Accountant F: Manager	M: Accountant F: Manager (Working in China)	M: 40-50 F: Unknown	Mandarin
	Daughter 7	2013	5	PR	Year 5	N/A	N/A	10	English
8	Mother 8	2007	N/A	Citizen / Skilled migration	M: Bachelor F: Bachelor	M: Accountant F: Engineer	M: Accountant F: Engineer	M: 40-50 F: 40-50	Mandarin
	Son 8	2007	5					15	English
9	Mother 9	2005		PR / Skilled migration	M: Bachelor F: Bachelor	M: Internal Auditor F: Technician	M: Community support worker F: Technician	M: 40-50 F: 40-50	Mandarin
	Daughter 9	2007	5	PR	Year 9	N/A	N/A	15	Mandarin (first interview) English (second interview)
10	Mother 10	2004		Citizen / Skilled migration	M: Bachelor F: Bachelor	M: Purchasing officer F: Sales manager	M: Settlement coordinator F: Self-employed	M: 40-50 F: 40-50	Mandarin
	Daughter 10		5	Citizen	First Year Uni	N/A	N/A	18	English
11	Mother 11	2013		M: PR F: PR / full skilled migration	M: Master F: Master	M: Educational consultant F: IT engineer	M: Migration advisor F: IT engineer	M: 40-50 F: 40-50	Mandarin
	Son 11	2013	6	PR	Year 4	N/A	N/A	10	English
12	Mother 12	2013		M: PR F: Citizen / Immigrate on work visa	M: Bachelor F: Master	M: working in Export & Import Company F: Law consultant	M: Housewife F: Law consultant (working in Hongkong)	M: 30-40 F: 40-50	Mandarin
	Daughter 12	2013	6	citizen		N/A	N/A	10	Mandarin
13	Mother 13	2016		PR / Skilled migration	M: Master F: Master	M: IT engineer F: IT engineer	M: Housewife F: IT engineer	M: 40-50 F: 40-50	Mandarin
	Son 13	2016	7	PR	Year 2	N/A	N/A	8	Mandarin (50%) English (50%)
14	Mother 14	2000		Citizen	M: Doctor of Medicine F: Bachelor	M: Professor F: Architecture	M: TCM Practitioner F: Commercial designer	M: 50+ F: 50+	Mandarin
	Daughter 14	2000	6	Citizen	Uni Graduate	N/A	N/A	24	English

15	Father 15	2012		TR/Graduate visa	M: Master F: Doctor of Education	M: Lawyer F: University lecturer	M: Massage Therapist F: Childcare educator	M: 30-40 F: 30-40	English (80%) Mandarin (20%)
	Daughter 15	2012	7	TR	Year 6	N/A	N/A	12	English
	Son 15	2012	5	TR	Year 5	N/A	N/A	10	English
16	Mother 16	2009		PR / Skilled migration	M: Bachelor F: Master	M: Salesperson F: IT engineer	M: Housewife F: IT engineer	M: 40-50 F: 40-50	Mandarin
	Son 16	2009	7	PR	Year 9	N/A	N/A	15	Mandarin
17	Mother 17	2015		M: PR	M: Master F: Bachelor	M: Chinese medicine doctor F: Engineer	M: doctor in a Chinese clinic F: Engineer (working in China)	M: 40-50 F: 40-50	Mandarin
	Daughter 17	2015	8	PR	Year 4	N/A	N/A	10	Mandarin
18	Mother 18	2016		PR	M: Bachelor (mother)	M: Social worker	M: Housewife	M: 40-50	Mandarin
	Father 18	1989		Citizen / Immigrate after finishing Bachelor in Australia	F: Bachelor	F: University Student	F: Self-employed and job-seeking	F: 40-50	Mandarin
	Daughter 18	2011 (Childcare for three months) 2016 (long stay)	8	Citizen	Year 4	N/A	N/A	9	Mandarin
19	Mother 19	2002(doin master) 2014 (long stay)		PR / Migrate after completing master in Australia	M: Master	M: University Lecturer	M: Housewife	M: 40-50	Mandarin
	Son 19	2014	8		Year 5	N/A	N/A	11	Mandarin
20	Mother 20	2006 (first arrival) 2016 (long stay)		M: PR F: Citizen / Family reunion migration	M: High school F: High school	M: Real estate agent F: Real estate agent	M: Cashier F: Real estate agent (working in China)	M: 30-40 F: 30-40	Mandarin
	Son 20	2010 (Childcare for half a year) 2016 (long stay)	9	citizen	Year 4	N/A	N/A	10	Mandarin
21	Mother 21	2010			M: PhD on Medicine	M: Doctor	M: Histologist	M: 40-50	Mandarin

				PR / Skilled migration	F: Bachelor	F: Journalist	F: Journalist (Working in China)	F: 40-50	
	Daughter 21	Feb 2011- Dec 2011 (in Australia n school) July 2013 (long stay)	9	PR	Year 7	N/A	N/A	13	English
2 2	N/A	M: 2003 F: 1988		citizen	M: Bachelor F: Bachelor	M: Teacher F: Student	M: Teacher F: Business	M: 40-50 F: 40-50	N/A
	Daughter 22	2004	9	citizen	5th year Uni	N/A	N/A	23	Mandari n
	Mother 23	2015		PR / Skilled migration	M: Master	M: Sales supporter	M: Pathology collector	M: 40-50	Mandari n
2 3	Father 23	2015		PR	F: Master	F: Doctor	F: Pathology collector	F: 40-50	Mandari n
	Son 23	2015	10	PR	Year 6	N/A	N/A	12	Mandari n
2 4	N/A	M: 2003 F: 2003		citizen	M: TAFE F: High school	M: Nurse F: Unknown	M: Nurse F: Chef	M: 50+ F: 50+	N/A
	Daughter 24	2005	10	citizen	Uni Graduate	N/A	N/A	23	Mandari n
2 5	Mother 25	2003		Citizen	M: Postgradu ate	M: University lecturer	M: Business Owner	M: 50+	English (80%) Mandari n (20%)
	Son 25	2003	10	Citizen	Uni Graduate	N/A	N/A	25	N/A
2 6	Mother 26	2015			M: Bachelor	M: Sales	M: Waitress	M: 30- 40	Mandari n
	Son 26	2016	10	TR	Year 6	N/A	N/A	12	Mandari n
2 7	N/A	M: Overseas F:2001 (Overseas now)		Citizen / Investment migration	M: High school F: High school	Unknown	M: Business F: Business	M: 40-50 F: 40-50	N/A
	Daughter 27	2008	11 / Year 7	Citizen	University student	N/A	N/A	21	Mandari n
2 8	N/A	M: 2008 F: 2007		Citizen / Skilled migration	M: Bachelor F: Bachelor	M: Teacher F: Banker	M: Stockperson F: Self- employed	M: 40-50 F: 40-50	N/A
	Daughter 28	2008	13 / Year 7 Semest er 1 (2008)	Citizen	Uni graduate	N/A	N/A	23	Mandari n
2 9	N/A	M: 1999 F: 1999		Citizen / Skilled migration	M: Bachelor F: Bachelor	M: Insurer F: Engineer	M: Housewife F: Self- employed	M: 40-50 F: 40-50	N/A

Daughter 29	2007	13 / Year 8 (term 3)	Citizen	Third year university student	N/A	N/A		Mandarin
N/A	M: Overseas		PR	M: Primary school	M: Business manager	M: Business manager	M: 40-50	N/A
30	F: 2012			F: Primary school	F: Business manager	F: Business manager	F: 40-50	
Daughter 30	2012	13 / Year 8 (term 2)	PR	Second year university student	N/A	N/A	19	Mandarin
N/A	M: Overseas		N/A	M: Postgraduate	M: Government servant	N/A	M: 40-50	N/A
31	F: Overseas			F: Postgraduate	F: Government servant	N/A	F: 40-50	
Son 31	2013	13 / Year 9 (term 4)	Student visa	Second year university student	N/A	N/A	18	Mandarin

In addition to the parents, there were 32 participating children (18 girls and 14 boys) from 31 families. At the time of data collection, children ranged in age from seven to 28 and they had arrived in Australia at different ages between three and 13 years old. They had been in Australia for various lengths of time, ranging from one to 25 years (see Table 3. 3 for details). In terms of their school experiences in China and Australia, 13 children came to Australia at pre-school/kindergarten age, 14 children at primary school age, between Year 1 and Year 5, and five children at secondary school age, between Year 7 and Year 9. This also means that they had different years of school education in China.

As data collection proceeds, age of arrival emerges as a significant factor in the heritage language development trajectories of migrant children, this study divides these children into early arrival and late arrival groups for convenience of analysis. ‘Early arrival children’ in the research refer to those who migrated before age 9 when their Chinese language proficiency is not yet solid and stable. These children typically have less than three years of primary schooling in China. ‘Late arrival children’ refer to those who migrated at or after age 9. All of them have had at least three years of primary schooling in China and they can generally be considered to have formed a solid foundation in Chinese language proficiency prior to their migration.

Table 3. 3 An overview of children's general educational experiences (sorted by age of arrival)

Name	Age / year of arrival	Age at data collection	School year started in Australia	School year at data collection	Years of residence	Interview language
From Preschool to Kindergarten						
Daughter 1	3yrs /1992	28	Preschool	N/A	25	N/A

Daughter 2	4.5yrs /2014	7	Kindergarten	Year 2	3	Mandarin
Son 3	4.5yrs /2012	9	Kindergarten	Year 3	5	English
Daughter 4	4.5yrs /2012	9	Kindergarten	Year 4	5	Mandarin
Son 5	4yrs /2010	11	Preschool	Year 5	7	English
Son 6	5yrs /2015	7	Kindergarten	Year 2	2	Mandarin
Daughter 7	5yrs /2013	10	Kindergarten	Year 5	5	English
Son 15	5yrs /2012	10	Kindergarten	Year 5	5	English
Son 8	5yrs /2007	15	Kindergarten	Year 9	10	English
Daughter 9	5yrs /2007	15	Kindergarten	Year 9	10	English & Mandarin
Daughter 10	5yrs /2004	18	Kindergarten	1 st year of Uni	13	English
Son 11	6yrs /2013	10	Kindergarten	Year 4	4	English
Daughter 12	6yrs /2013	10	Kindergarten	Year 4	4	Mandarin

From Year 1 - 6 in Primary school

Son 13	7yrs /2016	8	Year 1	Year 2	1.5	English & Mandarin
Daughter 14	6yrs /2000	24	Year 1	Uni graduate	18	English
Daughter 15	7yrs /2012	12	Year 1	Year 6	5	English
Son 16	7yrs /2009	15	Year 2	Year 9	8	Mandarin
Daughter 17	8yrs /2015	10	Year 2	Year 4	2	Mandarin
Daughter 18	8yrs /2016	9	Year 3	Year 4	1.5	Mandarin
Son 19	8yrs /2014	11	Year 2	Year 5	3	Mandarin
Son 20	9yrs /2016	10	Year 3	Year 4	1.5	Mandarin
Daughter 21	8yrs /2012	13	Year 3	Year 7	5	English
Daughter 22	9yrs /2004	23	Year 3	5 th year of Uni	14	Mandarin

Son 23	10yrs /2015	12	Year 4	Year 6	2	Mandarin
Daughter 24	10yrs /2005	23	Year 4	Uni graduate	13	Mandarin
Son 25	10yrs /2003	25	Year 4	Uni graduate	15	N/A
Son 26	10yrs /2016	12	Year 5	Year 6	2	Mandarin
From Year 7 - 9 in high school						
Daughter 27	11yrs /2008	21	Year 7	3 rd year of Uni	10	Mandarin
Daughter 28	13yrs /2008	23	Year 7	Uni graduate	10	Mandarin
Daughter 29	13yrs /2007	24	Year 8	3 rd year of Uni	11	Mandarin
Daughter 30	13yrs /2012	19	Year 8	2 nd year of Uni	6	Mandarin
Son 31	13yrs /2013	18	Year 9	2 nd year of Uni	5	Mandarin
Total	32 children					

3.5 Data collection

3.5.1 Introduction

My data collection comprised two distinct phases: an initial period of intensive interviewing in June and July 2017 and a subsequent period of more varied data collection from August 2017 to May 2019.

During the initial period, which started immediately after my ethics approval was granted, I recruited 15 families, mostly through my pre-existing networks. The experience I gained from the initial intensive interviewing period greatly reduced the pressure I felt related to participant recruitment and allowed me to conduct the ensuing data collection more reflexively, and with greater piece of mind. In the subsequent period, spanning from August 2017 to May 2019, besides ongoing data analysis and thesis writing, I interviewed 16 further families, returned to previously interviewed families, collected evidence of literacy practice, kept follow-up contacts with all the interviewed families for data clarification, and conducted numerous conversations and observations with the families I became increasingly close to. In sum, the data collection methods include interviews, informal conversations, participant observation, evidence of literacy practices, WeChat posts, and background questionnaires (see Table 3. 4). Each data type will be described in detail in the following.

Table 3. 4 An overview of data collection methods

Interviews	Section 3.5.2
Informal conversations	Section 3.5.3
Participant observation	Section 3.5.4
Collection of literacy practices	Section 3.5.5
WeChat posts	Section 3.5.6
Background questionnaires	Section 3.5.7

3.5.2 Interviews

Open-ended qualitative interviews constitute the main part of my data collection and were conducted with both parents and children. In total, 27 parents and 30 children, from 31 families, attended at least one interview.

Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' permission. All the interview sites were chosen or decided by parents and/or children, normally in libraries, cafes, and participants' homes. With the permission of both children and their parents, children's interviews were conducted without the presence of parents because I assumed that children might feel freer to share their stories if their parents were not present. In terms of interview languages, Mandarin was tacitly adopted as the interview language with all the adults, except Father 15 and Mother 25, who chose to switch to English a few minutes after the start of interview. As to the interview languages of the 30 children, I asked for their preference and encouraged them to use their dominant language. Eighteen children were interviewed in Mandarin, ten children in English, and two children in both English and Mandarin (Table 3. 3).

Before every interview, the topics relevant to my research questions were drafted to guide my interview and to make sure our discussions were on track. In all interviews, I asked them to tell me about their Chinese language experiences prior to migration, Chinese language practices and socialization after migration, language attitudes, and expectations vis a vis the heritage language. With parents, we normally expanded on the drafted topics and our interviews generally lasted between one to three hours. With the children, topics and interview format depended somewhat on their age. With children below age 10, I encouraged them to share their stories about language learning and practices both at home and in schools and the interview normally lasted for around 30 minutes, but with teenagers and young adults, we explored broader topics in relation to bilingual development, identity

perceptions, language policies and education systems, and the interview normally lasted between one to two hours.

During interview sessions with parents, I found that pre-established intimacy did not necessarily generate the anticipated productivity, while the interviews with the participants with whom I had no previous communication sometimes gave me a pleasant surprise. My experiences of multiple data collection methods often confirmed the view that interviews are “not *more* important than the other kinds of materials... People tend to perceive them as slightly threatening, formal and abnormal speech situations” (Blommaert & Jie, 2010, pp. 44-45). In a formal interview situation, parents with whom I had pre-established intimacy were more likely to avoid or downplay the difficulties and struggles that they had elaborated on in personal communications. In the children’s interviews, I experienced significant struggles with language choices in the initial period of data collection. On the one hand, I felt unsure which language the children preferred to speak to me in – a Chinese background researcher who speaks Chinese with their parents. On the other, I strongly desired to interview children in their dominant language(s). Because some English-dominant children felt obliged to speak Chinese to me, even if they struggled to express themselves in the language, I tried to encourage them choose their stronger language but not discourage them to use their heritage language. Interviews in a child’s stronger language tended to be much more spontaneous and productive.

3.5.3 Informal conversations

The informal conversations include all personal communications relevant to Chinese language maintenance carried out between the participants and myself, and occasionally those between other Chinese people and myself on various occasions in Australia. Most of the informal conversations took place between me and the twelve researched families with which I had established intimate rapport before or during data collection, with eleven parents and twelve children involved intensively.

As an extension of my interviews, the voices of “an ethnographic nature” (B. J. Lee, 2014, p. 101) from private communications over such a lengthy period of time reflected participants’ divergent and dynamic thoughts, ideologies and circumstances, many of which might not have been heard at all if I had only conducted interviews. For example, some of my close participating parents seemed reluctant to share some parts of their life stories in formal interviews, yet they felt comfortable revealing these stories to me in our personal chats. After these naturally occurring conversations, I took notes in Chinese on points which were relevant to my research or which struck me as salient and interesting. The bits and pieces revealed through casual chatting made me gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of my child participants’ Chinese learning experiences, both in China and in Australia, their identity constructions and perceptions, their language outcomes and bilingual abilities, their home language environment and practice, and of the parent participants’ linguistic and educational

backgrounds, their expectation for their child's bilingualism and education, and their ideologies with regard to their child's heritage language and identities.

3.5.4 Participant observation

Similar to informal conversations, observation spanned a lengthy period of time, from my initial concern with children's education in the Chinese diaspora from the time I embarked on my PhD research to the completion of my data analysis. On various occasions, I observed parent-child language interactions, children's language use with peers, home literacy practices, and the books and movies children read and watched.

All the observations were recorded in my field notes as soon as was practical after they occurred. The observation with families in my routine network was more intense, particularly with the Chinese families in my daughter's school. In other words, I intensively observed nine families with eight primary school aged children and one university student. The intensive observation occurred naturally as it suited our routines. It took place at different sites, either in public places such as libraries, ice rinks and community plazas, or in private homes to which I was invited.

Participant observation, coming from the researcher's ethnographic involvement, yields detailed data on participants' dynamic language ideologies and circumstances, language activities and strategies, which complements the data from interviews and private conversations and allows for the analysis of children's holistic language development.

3.5.5 Evidence of literacy practices

A large amount of evidence regarding Chinese literacy practices was collected and photographed with the permission of participants. The collected artifacts mainly consisted of the textbooks and workbooks used at home and in Chinese schools, children's writing samples, school reports from Chinese courses and exams, literature books children read at home, as well as Chinese language competition certificates.

I normally photographed documents such as these at participants' home. Before each collection, I made a list in advance of the types of materials that I thought might be most meaningful for my research, and also invited parents and children to prepare any documents they thought constituted evidence of their children's Chinese language growth. These artefacts not only testify to children's Chinese language development but also illustrate the language ideologies and practices families engaged in.

3.5.6 WeChat

WeChat (Weixin or “微信” in Chinese) is “an instant messaging (IM) and social network site (SNS) platform, enabling interactive exchange through mobile devices, so-called mobile social media” (J. Xu,

Kang, Song, & Clarke, 2015, p. 22). WeChat users can “transmit real-time voice intercom, video calls, group chat, and post pictures on the WeChat activity timeline (Moments), which, like Facebook, allows users to share photos and updates with their contacts, publish status updates with illustrations, or other content such as comments and retweets or forwarding” (J. Xu et al., 2015, p. 21). WeChat acts as the major tool for social interaction and friendship maintenance not only in China but in the Chinese diaspora, including in Australia. Through WeChat, I interacted with participant parents and adult children via text or voice, read their posts, updates and shared articles, and made my comments whenever I browsed their ‘moments’.

The postings and exchanges on WeChat provide another set of naturally occurring data which were not elicited by interview questions or by researcher’s requests. Altogether I collected 81 posts, covering parents’ reflections on children’s Chinese language learning, pictures of children’s awards and certificates, photos of children’s language activities, and discussions and links to articles about heritage language issues.

In contrast to the other data collection methods, which were planned from the outset, the inclusion of WeChat data was not part of the original research design and did not begin until four months into the data collection process. WeChat offers a valuable source as it keeps me updated on my participating families’ lives in relation to language and education. WeChat serves to extend my communication with the participating families and allows me to keep in touch more intensively. Furthermore, WeChat data constitutes valuable supplementary data on Chinese heritage language maintenance discourses and practices.

3.5.7 Background questionnaires

A questionnaire was designed to elicit basic demographic information about participant families before each interview. Questionnaires were printed out to be completed at the beginning of the first interview with each parent. In this way, jointly filling in the questionnaire also serves as an icebreaker and has helped us ease into the interview.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections (See Appendix IV): Section 1 elicited the general information on family background, including parents’ age range, year of arrival, educational qualifications and occupational status prior to and after migration. Section 2 dealt with the language and migration experiences of the participating families, such as their language use at home and reasons for migration. Section 3 focussed on general information about the focal children, such as their year of birth and arrival, their brief educational history, and their heritage tutoring history.

As a method of data collection, this background questionnaire, as anticipated, provides participants’ demographic information, which has enabled the researcher to elicit interview questions based on

individual circumstances. Besides, this background knowledge on participating families has greatly helped me to establish the profiles of participating families and focal children. However, beside this anticipated advantage, this English questionnaire also has helped me to have a rough understanding of parents' English proficiencies, which were found to be relevant to their home language use with their children.

3.5.8 Summary

Janesick (2003) describes the beauty of qualitative methodologies and highlights their ability to make the research design adaptable to the subject and participants being studied:

Qualitative research design has an elastic quality, much like the elasticity of the dancer's spine. Just as dance mirrors and adapts to life, qualitative design is adapted, changed, and redesigned as the study proceeds, due to the social realities of doing research among and with the living (p. 73).

As the research proceeded, I needed, at times, to adapt my data collection methods according to which source was available and which approach could generate more naturalistic data. For example, as mentioned in Section 3.5.5 and Section 3.5.6, both the collection of evidence of literacy practices and WeChat data was not originally planned. The decision to collect such data was an adaptation to my research needs and the actual situation during data collection. Data collection throughout was a dynamic process. For instance, after I had established more intimacy with participating families through the interviews and the research process generally, I had more opportunities to carry out data collection in the family milieu. Actually, the home milieu turned out to be the ideal setting to collect rich evidence of literacy practices, observe family language and literacy practices, and better understand parents' immigration situations and language ideologies. Evidence of literacy practices was hard to obtain through interviews but easily accessible in the home milieu. Although home literacy practices were discussed as part of the formal interview, I only got a clearer and more visual understanding of parents' commitment to children's literacy practice when I, in the homes of my participants, saw the collection of Chinese books for children or was able to observe family activities being carried out in everyday interactions. For example, I gasped in admiration when I was shown, at the home of one participant, various sets of Chinese books on history and maths prepared for the child, which had not come up during the interview. In other cases, observations confirmed interview statements that I found difficult to believe, such as when I saw the large collection of Chinese books on broad topics read by a 9-year-old boy who had no formal schooling in China prior to migration. As these examples demonstrate, my data collection is significantly shaped by my own identity, and the next section will reflect on my researcher positionality and describe how it shaped data collection.

3.6 Researcher positionality

Our interpretation of the world and people are established on the basis of our own experiences, lifeworld, beliefs, and values, and “we need to acknowledge how our perspectives and assumptions are engaged in the research processes” (B. J. Lee, 2014, p. 120). So, in the data collection and analysis a researcher needs to be aware of his positionality and acknowledge his own roles which are “dynamic and multiple, highly contextualized in the specific space-time of interactions” (Motaghi-Tabari, 2016, p. 64). “The researcher and the researched constantly negotiate their positions” (Motaghi-Tabari, 2016, p. 65) and pure objectivity can never be obtained. Therefore, an ethnographic researcher should “acknowledge what we ourselves bring to our research in terms of our lived experience, certainly, but also our politics and our intellectual frameworks” (Gray, 2003, p. 63). Therefore, subjectivity is embedded in researchers’ “objective factual accounts of events” (Blommaert & Jie, 2010, p. 67). As Blommaert & Jie (2010) point out, “in order to be objective one must be subjective [...] and it is your task now to start using that subjectivity, that particular situatedness of the knowledge you have gathered, and convert it into an ‘objective’ account” (p. 67).

My identity as a Chinese migrant parent myself acted as a strong bond which connected me with all the participating families. Meanwhile, my identity as a linguistics researcher greatly facilitated my data collection. During data collection, I saw myself enacting different roles in the interaction with parents of children of different ages, and with children of different age groups speaking different languages. This adjustment to different roles centred on the tensions between a fellow parent and a researcher, between an expert and a novice, and between an insider and outsider.

I was mostly regarded as a fellow parent and researcher when I interacted with parents of primary-school-aged children, with whom I had varying levels of intimacy. Parents with children in my daughter’s primary school regarded me as a fellow parent in private interactions, and they were mostly willing to share their worries, concerns and expectations with me. However, in formal interviews, they regarded me more as a researcher. This role change seemed to create an invisible awkwardness between us, which somewhat hindered them from voicing their views in formal interviews (see also Section 3.5.2). Other parents with primary-school-aged children regarded me more as a researcher. They were likely to elaborate their stories and anxiously expected that the stories they shared would meet my research needs. For example, before the interview, Son 3’s mother said, “I think Son 3 performs very well in school and he has achieved a lot during these years in Australia, so I come here to bring his stories because I thought this is what you need” (Fieldnotes, 07/2017).

In interactions with parents of secondary-school-aged children and above, I was positioned differently, and regarded as either a researcher or as a novice migrant parent. On the one hand, they were willing

to address in detail the topics I elicited in the interview, with the earnest hope of meeting my research needs. For example, some parents asked me, at times during the interviews, whether or not their answers were what I wanted, or whether or not their answers were of help to me with my research. On the other hand, I could sense their pride that their experiences might be helpful to me as a novice migrant parent who could learn from them to gain a better understanding about Australian schooling. For example, Mother 5 commented in interview, “你做这个调查真的是很明智啊，你的收获也很大” (“You are so wise to do this research, and this can also benefit your daughter”). Similarly, Mother 16 said, “我也算是过来人了，我给你普及一下这个 OC 考试跟学校的排名关系有多大” (“I am an experienced parent now. Let me give you the knowledge of the relationship between the OC test and the ranking of different public schools”).

In fact, the tension between my roles as a linguistics researcher and as a novice home language maintainer, constituted a source of struggle for me throughout my research. I knew that I had a sound theoretical foundation in bilingual education, and also a firm belief in the importance of heritage language maintenance. In fact, I had naively expected that my professional background would facilitate my child’s Chinese language maintenance. However, in reality, I frequently felt my impotence in the face of my daughter’s heritage language attrition. Sometimes, I compared the language maintenance practices in my own family with those of my participants. Seeing how successfully some parents maintained and developed their children’s Chinese language made me feel extremely ashamed of myself. I felt frustrated that, as a linguistics PhD student in the field of bilingualism, I was not as successful with my own daughter’s Chinese language learning and use as some of my participants were.

In contrast with their parents, children seemed to see me more singularly as a researcher. Furthermore, my identity as a Chinese researcher helped me to establish easy familiarity with Chinese-speaking adult children but made it difficult for me to gain access to English-dominant young adults. For example, all the Chinese-speaking young adults showed great interest in my research, and regarded it as meaningful, while English-dominant ones hardly even wanted to meet with me. For instance, Mother 25 said, “no, Son 25 wouldn’t accept your interview, he doesn’t like mingling with Chinese people” (Fieldnotes, 05/2018). Similarly, Mother 14 said, “generally no, but if you say you are a researcher, she will accept you because she is serious about research” (Fieldnotes, 11/2018).

Overall, I found I constantly needed to balance my roles as an insider, with individual perspectives and assumptions, with my roles as an outsider who needs to “unpack our researcher baggage” (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p. 49). On the one hand, I enjoyed the advantages deriving from my insider identity as a migrant parent. Being of a similar demographic, in that I am also middle-class, well-educated, and held a prestigious position as a university lecturer prior to migration, also helped. In spite of the

differences between us, I saw myself reflected in the experiences of my participating parents, with similar educational ideologies, identity constructions, language desires for our children and experiences prior to and after migration. The importance of this active involvement as an insider has been emphasized by some ethnographic researchers because “the ethnographer’s personal experiences, especially those of participation and empathy, are recognized as central to the research process” and “our shared cultural and linguistic nuances could afford a deeper understanding ...and an authentic reflection of their accounts” (Motaghi-Tabari, 2016, p. 65). On the other hand, I kept reminding myself of my accountability as a researcher who was coming to explore my participants’ experiences and worldviews and needed to “minimise the extent that the data became hostage to my own interpretations of reality” (Butorac, 2011, p. 45). The procedures employed in data analysis serves to further guard against this danger, and I will now describe these procedures.

3.7 Data analysis

As explained above, various methods of data collection have been employed within an overall qualitative and sociolinguistic ethnographic approach. Thus, data for analysis includes a diverse set comprising audio-recorded semi-structured, open-ended interviews, fieldnotes about observed conversations and my participant observations, photographic evidence of literacy resources and practice, digitally saved WeChat posts, and hard copies of the background questionnaires.

Transcription of the interviews constitutes the first step in making my data amenable to analysis. At the beginning of transcription, I undertook transcription in both Chinese and English myself. After I had established the transcription conventions and challenges, transcription of audio-recordings in Chinese was outsourced to a typing agency in China and those in English to one in Australia. After they had completed the initial transcription, I proofread all of them by listening to each interview multiple times.

Data was stored electronically, separately for each family, and each family profile dataset includes audio interviews and their transcripts, fieldnotes, images and WeChat posts. Additionally, I stored fieldnotes and media data that are not specific to a particular family in a separate folder.

Qualitative data collection and analysis is a recursive and dynamic process (Merriam, 1998). Coding and analysis, aligned with some ethnographies I used as models (G. Li, 2006a, 2007; D. Zhang, 2008), were ongoing, starting from the initial stage of data collection and continuing throughout the period of thesis writing. Ongoing analysis was intended to help identify and clarify emerging patterns and themes (see also G. Li, 2006a, pp. 362-363). This is in keeping with data analysis being the process of “taking the data apart” from the wide range of data sources, “making sense of categories, themes, trends, patterns and deviations” and condensing them into specific domains (Tetteh, 2015, p. 106).

Following the thematic analysis proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006), I used inductive thematic analysis as the major analytical method in the research. On the one hand, based on the collected rich and diverse data, thematic analysis can “provide a more detailed and nuanced account of one particular theme, or group of themes, within the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 11). On the other hand, inductive analysis, which “works from empirical evidence towards theory” (Blommaert & Jie, 2010, p. 14), can make researchers less confined to their analytic preconceptions and the pre-existing theoretical frames (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As recurrent themes and salient issues were identified throughout data treatment, this also allowed for the adjustment of further data collection procedures and the revision of the interview questions. As new themes emerged, I also went back to my participants and sought further information, if necessary. During this cyclical process of data analysis, I focussed on family profile datasets as the major unit of data analysis. I only referred to the media data when seeking supplementary evidence to exemplify particular themes.

The way I proceeded was to highlight any content in transcripts related to language attitudes, heritage language experiences and language proficiencies. Then, each interview transcript was segmented with concrete thematic titles such as “Chinese as investment”, “Chinese language demotivation”, “Chinese literacy practice at home”, “language socialization in mainstream schools”, “language development/bilinguality”, or “contributing factors” (see Table 3. 5). The codes were catalogued to make them easily searchable in the later analysis. The codes later became the subheadings in the analysis chapters. On the basis of this coding, I will address the research questions relating to the language attitudes of parents and children, Chinese language maintenance strategies and practices in and outside the home, as well as Chinese language proficiency outcomes and contributing factors, before moving on to present the findings in the subsequent chapters.

Table 3. 5 An overview of codes used for data analysis

Categories		Codes
Language attitudes	parents	Chinese as investment
		Chinese and identity
		Chinese and family relations
	children	Chinese language demotivation
		Chinese as investment
		Chinese and identity
Language practice	In the home	Speaking Chinese at home
		Chinese literacy practice at home
		Chinese media entertainment

	Outside the home	Chinese learning in community schools
		Chinese learning in mainstream schools
		Language socialization in mainstream schools
Language outcome		Chinese language loss and attrition
		Chinese language development

3.8 Summary

This chapter started by presenting the rationale for this qualitative ethnographic research. The suitability of adopting a sociolinguistic ethnographic approach in the research is the features of ethnography, such as situatedness, contextualization, partiality, and subjectivity. Following this research paradigm, the data description and interpretation in the study is a result of “the co-construction of meaning between researcher and participants” (Butorac, 2011, p. 73) employing multiple data collection methods and contexts.

The Chinese families participating in the research represent a group of well-educated middle-class Chinese migrants to Australia. At the time of data collection, the children were above seven years old, had come to Australia at different ages between three and 13 years old and had been in Australian schools for at least one year. The data collection process included two distinct phases: an initial period of intensive interviewing, and a subsequent period of more varied data collection. To collect data, various methods were employed, including open-ended qualitative interviews with both parents and children, informal conversations mainly between the participants and myself, participant observation, collection of evidence of Chinese literacy practices, use of WeChat posts and hard copies of the background questionnaires.

During data collection, I enacted different roles in my interactions with parents of children of different ages, and with children of different ages who spoke different dominant languages. In my different roles, I navigated as best I could the tensions between being a fellow parent and a researcher, an expert and a novice, and an insider and an outsider. With regard to data analysis, an inductive thematic approach was employed as the major analytical method. Thematic analysis was used in order to provide a detailed and nuanced account of particular themes within the rich and diverse data. The salient themes identified related to parents’ and children’s language attitudes, children’s Chinese language experiences before and after migration, parents’ perceptions of their children’s identity and children’s own identity reflections, parents’ evaluations of their children’s bilingual proficiencies or children’s self-evaluated bilingualities. On this basis, an inductive analysis was employed with the aim of integrating the emerging evidence into theoretical findings.

As is the case with all methodologies, some strengths and weaknesses can be identified. The diverse age range of the focal children and the rich data sources constitute the major advantages of the research. Specifically, these children of different ages came to Australia at different points in their lives, had been in Australian schools for different lengths of time, and had varied experiences of Chinese language contact and learning prior to and after migration. The diversity and variety of their language experiences delineate a holistic map of their heritage language loss, attrition and development, particularly as they are associated with age factors. Therefore, an analysis of their heritage language trajectories yields a deep and comprehensive understanding of the different language attitudes and personal identifications, various language policies and practices, and varied language outcomes and contributing factors. Meanwhile, the richness of the data provides solid evidence of language ideologies and activities, and then allows for a thick description of key themes in relation to heritage language learning and identities. However, since the participants are from well-educated middle-class Chinese families, this study, does not portray the heritage language experiences and ideologies of diverse background families, especially the lower-class and/or poorly educated families.

With the aim of providing a thick, contextualised account of the trajectory of the Chinese heritage language learning attitudes and practices of a group of migrant children from similar socio-economic backgrounds, the following data analysis chapters will address in detail the research questions guiding the present study.

Chapter 4: Parents' perspectives and attitudes towards Chinese

4.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to explore parents' language maintenance desires and hopes in the context of the broader valorisation of Chinese that is emerging in diasporic discourses in Australia. Based on the interview with 27 parents, all but one (Mother 10) has invested in varying degrees in their children's Chinese heritage language maintenance. Three key themes emerged from the analysis and these will be explored in detail below. The chapter first shows how Chinese is most frequently constructed as an investment in children's futures (Section 4.2). The importance of Chinese for ethnic identity is another central theme (Section 4.3), as is the role of Chinese for family cohesion (Section 4.4). Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the findings (Section 4.5).

Table 4. 1 An overview of parental attitudes towards Chinese as a heritage language

	Chinese as an investment	Chinese as identity	Chinese as family tie
Mother 1		✓	✓
Mother 2	✓	✓	✓
Mother 3	✓		
Father 3	✓		
Mother 4	✓	✓	
Mother 5	✓	✓	✓
Mother 6	✓		
Mother 7	✓		
Mother 8		✓	
Mother 9	✓	✓	
Mother 10			
Mother 11			
Mother 12	✓	✓	✓
Mother 13	✓		
Mother 14		✓	✓
Father 15	✓		
Mother 16	✓		
Mother 17		✓	
Mother 18		✓	
Father 18	✓	✓	
Mother 19	✓	✓	
Mother 20	✓		
Mother 21	✓	✓	✓
Mother 23	✓	✓	
Father 23		✓	
Mother 25			✓
Mother 26	✓		

4.2 Chinese as an investment in children's futures

As mentioned above, the majority of the interviewed parents (26 out of 27) expressed their desire for, and have invested, in varying degrees, in their children's Chinese maintenance. Among them, 18 parents strongly associate their motivations for Chinese language maintenance with economic, career and educational benefits and see the Chinese language as an investment in their children's economic and professional futures (Table 4. 1). This materialistic motivation for Chinese language maintenance can also be found in wider public discourses and constitutes the most prominent theme related to heritage language ideology across the data.

China's economic rise seems to be a key trigger for parents' affective attitudes towards Chinese language and their desires for their children's Chinese language proficiency. Among the 18 parents who see Chinese language as an investment, there is a constant linking of the economic and career capital of Chinese language with the socio-economic prospects of China in the global world. For instance, when I admired the Chinese language proficiency of 9-year-old Son 3, who is a prolific reader, his father explained that Chinese was important because of China's economic and political position in the world and he sees "Chinese as quite useful" (Fieldnotes, 12/2007). His wife then expanded on this, saying that the utility of Chinese was now such that even foreigners learned Chinese. On this basis, the importance of their own children learning the language was considered to be even greater.

What the parents' sentiments show is that the political and economic status of a country empowers its social agents in migration contexts to preserve their heritage languages and cultures. Throughout the data, the idea of learning Chinese for better job prospects because of China's economic prominence is a frequent recurrence. For example, when asked about the reasons for the consistent commitment to Daughter 9's Chinese language learning, Mother 9 stated:

Excerpt 4.1

Mother 9: 因为现在中国什么，他们说经济什么是世界第二，世界经济第二大经济体，跟每个国家都有生意上的往来，那从我女儿的角度来说，其实她是有两大任务我觉得。就是说她就两个肩膀都要担，她英文也不能掉下，她中文也不能掉下...所以我就说你如果要回国发展的话，你是要跟人家比英文，你如果要在这里发展的话，你就跟人家比中文。所以她这两块她都不能落下。

Mother 9: Now people say China is the second largest economy in the world. China has business with every country in the world. With regard to my daughter, she actually has two major tasks to complete, and she needs to carry the two tasks on her two shoulders; that is, she needs to take care of both her Chinese and her English. So, I said to her "if you want to develop your future in China, what you can use to compete with people is your English; but if you want to stay here, what you must have to compete is your Chinese". That's why neither her Chinese nor her English can be allowed to drag behind. (Interview, 09/2017)

The idea of maintaining a heritage language in order to build children's occupational capital is evidently constructed on the economic power of the country or countries where the language is spoken. In the above excerpt, the socio-political and economic prominence of China on the global stage has motivated and strengthened parents' convictions regarding the economic value of the Chinese language and reinforces parents' desire for their children's Chinese language competence. This is consistent with Francis, Mau, & Archer's (2014) research where participants saw Mandarin as "a key to access the growing Chinese market" and "a possible asset in the job market in the future" (p. 215) due to "China's meteoric rise as a global economic power" (p. 213). In fact, due to the increasing capital of the Chinese language and the socio-political significance of China, Chinese heritage language is prominently viewed as an investment or commodity which is expected to produce good returns in the employment market (Curdtt-Christiansen, 2014; Francis et al., 2009; Francis et al., 2014; Hancock, 2006; Wen, 2011; H. L. Xu & Moloney, 2014)

The idea of investing in children's Chinese to prepare them for future possibilities brought about by the rising influence of China comes naturally for these interviewed parents, and also seems pervasive in wider Chinese social discourses, as stated by a fellow PhD student, the mother of two children: "Definitely my daughters should learn Chinese, because China is on the rise." (Fieldnotes, 04/2017).

Due to the prospect of China's political and economic status, Chinese is regarded as a 'world' language or a useful language with global importance and wide applicability. Furthermore, the practice of Chinese language by well-known public figures or celebrities seems to enhance the cachet and perceived pragmatic utility of this world language and further strengthens parents' desire for Chinese heritage language maintenance, as shown in Excerpt 4.2:

Excerpt 4.2

Mother 19: 我觉得中文很有用, 将来超级有用。这已经不是一个什么 heritage 的问题了。你看现在特朗普的孙女啊, 之前澳大利亚总理陆克文都能说汉语, 什么金融大鳄的孩子都在学, 而且都学到那个程度了, 我们还有什么理由不学呢?

Mother 19: I feel Chinese is very useful and will even be super-useful in the future. This is more than a heritage issue. You see, Trump's granddaughter is learning Chinese, the former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd can speak Chinese, and children of lots of financial CEOs are learning Chinese, and even they have learned Chinese to a high degree. What reason have our children not to learn Chinese? (Interview, 11/2017)

This celebrity effect may serve to enhance parental desires for Chinese language learning and maintenance. It can also create a sense of competition in Chinese language learning, as suggested in this advertisement by a Sydney Chinese school: 难道华裔家长愿意看到非华裔的澳洲人 (像陆克文这样) 中文呱呱叫, 而自己的孩子说不出或看不懂他们的'母语'吗? (Are Chinese parents willing to see that your own children cannot speak or read your 'mother' language while non-Chinese Australians

(like Kevin Rudd) speak super Chinese?) (Y. Xu, 2013).

In fact, the idea of learning Chinese to become a competitive global citizen and achieve occupational mobility is gaining increasing currency in the Chinese diaspora, as evident in the following advertisement of a Sydney-based Chinese language school:

Excerpt 4.3

学习中国传统文化美德，做有中国文化底蕴的世界公民。

Learn the traditional Chinese culture and be a global citizen with the foundation of Chinese culture. (Source: WeChat)

Excerpt 4.4

学习中国文化，抓住世界的未来

汉语是一个美丽的语言，学汉语和学英语一样是对未来的前瞻。中国是世界每一个人的未来，汉语能力（和对中国文化的了解）对孩子们将来的职业流动性的重要性越发明显。

Learn Chinese Culture, Hold the Future of the World

Chinese is a beautiful language, and learning Chinese, much like learning English, is a foresighted strategy for one's long-term development. China constitutes the future of every citizen in the world, and Chinese proficiency (as well as the knowledge of Chinese culture) will enhance children's career mobility in the future. (Source: WeChat)

In the above advertisements, Chinese language proficiency and knowledge of Chinese culture are presented as contributing towards a promising prospect for children's achievement of global mobility and world citizenship in their later life. Furthermore, since Chinese is placed on a par with English, the undisputed global lingua franca, the prestigious status of Chinese as a world language seems to be upgraded and the importance of Chinese to children's future is highlighted. In fact, "with increasing job opportunities in China and other parts of Asia, economic advantage and social prestige have become major incentives for language maintenance" (Man, 2006, p. 214) and key grounds for Chinese language promotion.

The global standing of Chinese is envisaged to bring children global mobility and better career pathways which are convertible into economic profits:

Excerpt 4.5

Father 18: 我是希望她到中国去发展。希望去中国国内或者香港啊，看看哪里更多机会，即使留澳洲这边的话也是需要中文的，且这个是我觉得这个今后是一个优势，你如果说得非常漂亮的英文，英文非常好，而中文又非常扎实非常好，这个优势就非常非常明显，在两边都能讨好。

Father 18: I hope she will go back to China for her career development, whether on the mainland or in Hongkong, depending on where she has more opportunities. But even if she stays in Australia, she still needs Chinese. Moreover, I think Chinese language skill will be an advantage in the future. See, if you have a good command of English, speak beautiful

English, and have a profound knowledge of Chinese, you are obviously advantaged, and you get the best of both worlds. (Interview, 12/2017)

As is evident from Excerpt 4.5, career orientation for these children is not confined to the Australian job market but includes the possibility of returning to China. In fact, in the migration context, where the children's English-language education is secure, Chinese comes to be seen, within parental and broader diasporic discourses, as the most important world language which can enhance children's global mobility and optimise their international careers.

Since return migration has become a realistic option in the parents' considerations of their children's future trajectories, proficiency in Chinese constitutes the key factor in keeping open the option of returning to China and pursuing a career there, as the following excerpts show:

Excerpt 4.6

Mother 18: 我本来说我很早就要把她弄过来，幼儿园什么的就把她送过来，她爸说，你中国人不会说中国话像什么样子，不行，一定要说中国话。而且中国现在经济发展得这么好，不知道你长大了，万一你以后想回国发展呢？不行，一定要会说。

Mother 18: In fact, I planned to bring daughter 18 here as early as when she was in kindergarten, but her dad refused and said: "it doesn't make any sense if a Chinese person can't speak Chinese. She should speak Chinese. Besides, China's economy is growing so quickly, and how can we predict whether or not she wants to develop her career in China after she grows up. So, no, she needs to speak Chinese." (Interview, 06/2017)

Excerpt 4.7

Mother 20: 中文当然很重要了，他老爸总是想着他回中国发展。其实我们想这样一些办法还是想多一条路给小孩选择。当然到他那个年龄，我们不可以逼他。到时候如果他喜欢在澳洲就在澳洲，但他如果喜欢在中国，我们也帮他铺了一条路。

Mother 20: Chinese is of course important, because his dad always wants him to develop his career in China. In fact, the reason why we tried to help him learn Chinese is to provide another pathway for him. Of course, when he grows up, we can't force him. If he wants to stay in Australia, he can. But if he likes China, we have already paved a way for him to do well in China. (Interview, 06/2017)

As evidenced in Excerpts 4.6 and 4.7, due to the prominence of China's economy, Australia is not necessarily the intended destination for children's education or career development, but more like a stepping stone. However, the possibility of a return to China is contingent on children's proficiency in Chinese in their later lives. In this respect, proficiency in Chinese constitutes the foundation for children's career and education possibilities in China. At the same time, stunted development or even loss of children's Chinese language proficiency in Australia is seen as a strong threat to the desired global mobility of return migration. For instance, a mother I happened to meet in a tutoring school felt anxious that her daughter's Chinese language attrition might jeopardise her daughter's opportunity for transnational employability related to the option of 'being back in China':

Excerpt 4.8

Now I do feel a little regretful about coming here (Australia) too early. Now her Chinese is receding swiftly but going back to China is still within our consideration. You see, China is increasingly developing. The average income of Australians is not high, unless you are particularly outstanding. There were many Hongkongese who came to Australia before but who have since gone back to work in transnational corporations in Hongkong and Singapore, and it is all good. But to handle that you need enough Chinese, at least you must be able to speak, listen, and know the culture, although English writing is common in these places; but being able to write in Chinese is a bonus. (Fieldnotes, 04/2018)

As China becomes one intended destination of envisaged international careers, children whose Chinese is lacking or underdeveloped, are regarded as losing the edge one needs in career or education opportunities in the growing Chinese market. For example, it is Daughter 12's attrition in Chinese that made her family give up their original plan of Daughter 12 returning to study in China:

Excerpt 4.9

Mother 12: 但是住完两年以后，我们家孩子就真的回不去了，汉语跟不上了，她即使英语好，但就英语好是没有竞争力的，香港的小孩汉语英语都会，所以我们家女儿一点优势都没有的，我们家就只会一个英文，所以就是因为这样我们就回不去啊。

Mother 12: But when we did stay here for two years, our child really couldn't return, and her Chinese really couldn't catch up. Even though she is good at English, she is not competitive enough just depending on her English, because Children in Hongkong know both Chinese and English. Daughter 12 does not have any advantage because she can only speak English. That's why we have no way back. (Interview, 06/2017)

The frustration at the assumed impossibility of accessing the growing Chinese market or returning to China arising from heritage language attrition is frequently expressed by parents, as Mother 7 also lamented:

Excerpt 4.10

Mother 8: For me, Australia is not the only option. China continues to develop, and there are increasing opportunities there. But if Daughter 7's Chinese keeps deteriorating, we can go nowhere but stay in Australia. (Fieldnotes, 04/2018).

Within parental and diasporic discourses, Chinese proficiency is seen as a profitable skill facilitating transnational mobility or international careers. This view of Chinese as a form of economic capital in relation to global mobility is consistent with D. Zhang's (2008) research on Chinese students and their families in America, where she claimed:

Being immigrants themselves, they are keeping a constant eye to both sides of the globe, their country of origin and the host country. In terms of career development, they are not confined to the American domestic job market. Rather, they seem more international in the scope of vision (p. 106).

In sum, throughout the data, parents expressed their belief that their heritage language is an important and valuable world language which promises global employability and mobility. Success or

failure in maintaining children's Chinese heritage language thus determines the (im)possibility of tapping into these economic, educational and career advantages between east and west or in transnational worlds.

Besides its use as a language of global mobility, Chinese is also frequently described as a language widely used in Australia, so a command of Chinese might increase job opportunities even without return migration, as reflected in the following:

Excerpt 4.11

Mother 5: 我觉得现在全世界都在比较重视这个汉语，你看就业的话机会就会多，你即使在一个药店你会不会说普通话都不一样的。

Mother 5: Now I feel our whole world attaches a lot of importance to Chinese... If they have Chinese, they will have more opportunities in the employment market; even working in a pharmacy, being able to speak Mandarin or not makes a difference. (Interview, 10/2017)

The usefulness of Chinese in relation to career possibilities within the Australian context or English-speaking countries is concurrently addressed by parents (also see Excerpt 4.5 and Excerpt 4.11). For example, Mother 16 in Excerpt 4.12 talked about the importance of learning Chinese in Australia:

Excerpt 4.12

Mother 16: 我跟他说，你要知道，中国人是怎么想的，因为你长大了，你很可能跟中国人打交道，这个比率非常大，如果你是个公司的高层的话，你要知道中国人是怎么想的，这一点很重要。

Mother 16: I said to Son 16 "you should know what Chinese people think, because when you grow up, it's highly possible that you have to work with Chinese people. If you are a top manager in a corporation, you should know what Chinese people think. That is so important". (Interview, 07/2018)

This motivation to maintain Chinese as a heritage language is evidently reinforced when the Chinese language is recognised, accepted and legitimised by institutions. For example, Mother 2 noticed on Daughter 2's school open day that all English speeches were interpreted into Chinese but not into any other language. Witnessing the school's use of Chinese in this way felt empowering to her and as she posted: 学校开放日，看到了中文的强大，以后必须让孩子把中文学好。(In the school open day, I saw the power of Chinese, and from now on, I should start to prepare my child to have a good mastery of Chinese.) (Source: WeChat). For Mother 2, "CHL proficiency became a recognised asset with legitimised value" (Mu, 2014b, p. 487), which is convertible into pragmatic forms of capital in children's later lives.

Besides career opportunities, the Chinese language is also valued for its emergent academic capital in Australia, particularly the advantage it offers as a subject which can enhance children's performance in the Higher School Certificate (HSC, the high school graduation examination in New South Wales)

examination, and especially for children who already have a good foundation in Chinese literacy, as Mother 26 remarked:

Excerpt 4.13

Mother 26: 我是希望什么呢，他既然都已经有这样中文基础了，我还是希望将来高考的时候考汉语，能够把这个分数拿到，因为比你在其他方面，从零去努力容易一些。而且我们想拿到加分，他有一个分数线标准，满分一百，七十分可以加分，七十分以上都可以加分。

Mother 26: What I hope is that he would take HSC Chinese in the future since he already has a good foundation in Chinese, and this is much easier than if he starts to learn a new subject. We also hope he could get bonus marks in HSC Chinese. The full credit is 100 points, and 70 points is the score line. In other words, if you score beyond 70, you get extra marks. (Interview, 07/2018)

Getting good marks or bonus marks in HSC is a strong motivation for Mother 26's desire for Son 26's Chinese improvement. Meanwhile, the academic benefit represented in HSC constitutes a sound argument that Chinese schools employ to promote the importance of Chinese language, as posted in the website article of a Chinese community school in Sydney:

Excerpt 4.14

这门课程自从 2011 年开始第一次高考之后，引起了很多家长、学生的重视。最吸引人的是 ATAR 的平均值，从上面的图表可以看出，HSC 中文继承语课程 2015 和 2016 年 ATAR 的平均值与物理、化学、经济等科目不相上下。我们完全有理由相信 HSC Heritage 中文课程能有效帮助华裔学生在 HSC 考试中取得优势，为了孩子们的美好前程，请家长们重视对孩子的中文教育。

This course (HSC Heritage Chinese), since it became an option in the HSC from 2011, has attracted attention from many parents and students. The most attractive factor is the scaled mean represented in the ATAR. From the above charts, the scaled means of HSC Heritage Chinese in 2015 and 2016 ATAR are on a par with other subjects like Physics, Chemistry and Economics. This shows that HSC Heritage Chinese courses can effectively advantage overseas Chinese students in HSC. For the sake of the children's future, we ask parents to give importance to their children's Chinese language education. (Source: (Y. Xu, 2017))

[Note: ATAR stands for Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank. It is a number based on HSC results between 0.00 and 99.95 that indicates a student's position in their year group and determines their entry into university.]

In sum, due to the rising influence of China as a global economy, Chinese is perceived to possess increasing economic value and socio-political significance which can enhance children's global mobility, employability and educational success. Firstly, Chinese is regarded as a world language and Chinese (non)-proficiency is seen to directly relate to (non)-achievable prospects regarding children's future mobility and international careers. In other words, as return migration becomes a realistic part of parents' future plans for their children's career mobility, children, equipped with high levels of Chinese proficiency, are seen to have the potential to navigate global futures. In contrast, with limited Chinese skills, children are seen to lose the edge in achieving career betterment in both worlds,

particularly within the context of China, and parents may fear their children being stranded in Australia. Secondly, Chinese is viewed as one of the key languages in Australia which can broaden and optimise children's occupational opportunities in the country. This is also related to the fact that the Chinese language is seen as a subject that can bring the advantage of helping to improve children's performance in the HSC, and HSC results are widely viewed as a proxy for future career success.

4.3 Chinese as a marker of ethnic identity

Among the majority of parents who showed positive attitudes towards their children's Chinese maintenance, at least 15 parents explicitly stated that their Chinese ethnic and/or cultural heritage is one important reason for their aspirations regarding their children's Chinese language maintenance (Table 4. 1). This view of language as indexing identity is also present within wider Chinese diaspora discourses. Thus, the integrative motivation related to heritage identity constitutes another important dimension generating parents' heritage language commitment, with the focus on embodied ethnicity (see Section 4.3.1) and cultural heritage (see Section 4.3.2).

4.3.1 Chinese as the language of embodied ethnicity

Language as identity seems to be a 'taken-for-granted' view among parents. Throughout the parents' interview data, more than half of these parents expressed their desire for their children's Chinese learning with clear reference to their ethnic identity. These parents' perceptions of children's Chinese identity are mostly associated with their embodied racial identity, and learning Chinese seems to be the key to activating and correctly expressing this racial embodiment, as in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 4.15

Mother 21: 学中文是必须的, 我觉得, 就是咱们对于中国人来讲, 这是根, 是你的 identity。因为如果说你是欧洲人, 欧洲人一看你就是亚洲人, 你的黑头发、黄皮肤是定位的, 你是改变不了的对不对?

Mother 21: Learning Chinese is a must, I think, for our Chineseness. This is the root; our identity. For example, if you say you are European, you are still defined as Asian whenever and wherever you are present, because your black hair and yellow skin are fixed and unchangeable, right? (Interview, 10/2017)

In the above excerpt, proficiency in Chinese is regarded as the essence of one's heritage and is seen as crucial in grounding children's embodied ethnic identity. This view of the language-identity link is in line with Francis et al.'s (2014) observation that "the 'raced' body, marked as 'Chinese', is expected to perform 'Chineseness' as constructed within the imagined community", particularly by means of the "re/production of Chinese language" (p. 213).

This social assumption that sees speaking Chinese as the correct expression of being Chinese is another impetus for parents' commitment to Chinese language maintenance:

Excerpt 4.16

Mother 8: 我们的思想很纯粹的，因为我们是中国人，我就觉得首先，就是你虽然你是在外国长大的，还是给人一张中国人的脸。就好像他们回中国，你跟人家说英文？谁知道你是什么人，别人会觉得很怪异的。

Mother 8: Our consideration is very simple. I think we are Chinese. Though you grow up in a foreign country, you still have a Chinese face. For example, if you go back to China and speak English to people, who can tell who you are? People will think you are so weird. (Interview, 04/2018)

As envisioned by Mother 8, ‘not speaking Chinese’ within the children’s ethnic homeland, China, is considered a breach of the language-identity link and would mark the child as an outsider (‘觉得很怪异的’, ‘so weird, very strange’). This envisaged ‘weirdness’, arising from the dissonance between language and embodied identity resonates with Ang’s (2001) experiences of her identity predicament on her first trip to China, where her Chineseness was problematized because she did not speak Chinese. Curdt-Christiansen (2014) argued that “[the symbiotic relationship between language and ethnic identity is a deeply rooted conviction – a socially constructed ‘positional concept’ marking the boundaries between ethnic groups” (p. 46). Thus, any breach of this social belief in the language-identity link may be seen as abnormal within imagined communities. This social assumption of the language-identity bond imposes on parents an obligation to ensure their children’s Chinese learning. “It appears assumed that being racially embodied as ‘Chinese’ somehow should give one... an obligation to learn or speak Chinese” (Francis et al., 2014, p. 214).

Furthermore, the children’s ethnic authenticity is to be validated by speaking proper Chinese; in other words, being unable to speak authentic Chinese or speaking ‘Australian’ Chinese is perceived as an inauthentic expression of their ethnicity, as one mother commented to me:

Excerpt 4.17

Mother 18: I think daughter 17, daughter 18 and your daughter still speak good Chinese and they still look like Chinese girls. Only daughter 12 doesn’t look like a Chinese girl, and you see, she speaks Chinese like a foreigner. Even Emily [who is not a participant in this study] speaks better than her, and she still looks like a Chinese girl even though she was born here. Only daughter 12 doesn’t look like a Chinese girl. (Fieldnote, 28/11/2017)

In this excerpt, a perceived break in the language-identity link changed the visual perception of embodiment and Daughter 12 was no longer even seen as Chinese. Here, accent emerges as a key identifier of ethnic authenticity. Accented Chinese is seen to convey children’s ‘incorrect’ racial embodiment. For instance, speaking Chinese with an Australian accent is regarded as a yardstick of alienation which jeopardizes the legitimacy of the children’s racial identity or embodiment, as Daughter 12 was perceived not to look like a Chinese girl because “she speaks Chinese like a foreigner”.

Besides, the use of English or the loss of Chinese becomes a cause for mourning as it fails to convey Chinese ethnicity, or evidently damages the image of being Chinese:

Excerpt 4.18

Mother 21: 但是我的 department 里头有三个中国的后裔，他们都不会说 Mandarin，但是我们之间沟通，只能用英文，你知道吗？真的只能用英文哪，但我们都是中国人，所以也不好说这是悲哀？

Mother 21: But in my department, I have three colleagues of Chinese descent, but none of them can speak Mandarin. So, we can only use English for communication. Oh, only English! But we are Chinese. Isn't it sad? (Interview, 11/2018)

In addition, the attrition of Chinese is also seen as an indicator of disidentification with the ethnic homeland, on which parents build their rootedness, and this perceived disidentification evidently adds to the parents' sense of frustration and uneasiness:

Excerpt 4.19

Mother 21: 就是汉语对于咱们中国人来讲，这是根。但是孩子也许真是游离出去了，她想到中国会想到家里的亲人，好吃的东西，但是她对祖国的概念不是那么清晰，像咱们有烙印的感觉。

Mother 21: To us Chinese, the Chinese language is our root, but our children might be really drifting away. When they think of China, they just associate it with our families and delicious food. And they don't really regard China as their home country. But China is imprinted in our mind. (Interview, 11/2017)

Excerpt 4.20

[This sentiment is echoed in the published and widely circulated biographical article of a Chinese sojourner about her life in America]

看着她与中文渐行渐远，我总有失落之感。只有她开始弹古筝、习书法时，我才觉得她与中国仍有连结，心里感觉好受多了。

I felt lost seeing her go further and further away from our Chinese language. Only when she started to play *Guzheng* [a Chinese instrument] and practice Chinese calligraphy did I begin to feel consoled and thought she was still linked to China. (Lin, 2018)

As evidenced in Excerpt 4.19 and Excerpt 4.20, for most first-generation immigrants, China is still their home, and the Chinese culture is regarded as the foundation of their identity. On the grounds of their home country and heritage culture, they construct their identity and build up their sense of rootedness. However, parents perceive that their children, with the loss of Chinese, seem to 'be drifting away'. Accordingly, children's cultural practices such as engaging in Chinese calligraphy and playing Chinese musical instruments may greatly console parents and make them feel their children are still 'linked to China', the home country that parents identify with. As Francis et al. stated (2014), "the physical, 'raced' body often remains the vehicle around which discourses on ethnicity and culture can be targeted and re/produced" (p. 206). "Languages, in a similar manner to cultural practices, can be used to draw

boundaries and mark differences in 'culture' and 'values' in other ethnic/linguistic communities" (Francis et al., 2014, p. 206).

Their embodied identity constantly reminds parents of their ethnic identity and constitutes a significant motivation for committing to their children's Chinese Heritage Language Maintenance. In return, learning and using Chinese is believed to build up a positive racial identity which can prepare children for any discrimination they might encounter:

Excerpt 4.21

Father 18: 即使留澳洲这边的话也是需要中文的。我始终认为如果是中国出生孩子的话，中国的文化还是不能丢，这是我个人啊，个人的想法。因为你在这边长大的话，无论你英语说得再好，你跟人家就是不一样，那你人家不可能觉得你就是他们一份子一样。

Father 18: She also needs Chinese even though she stays in Australia. I always think those Chinese-born children shouldn't lose their Chinese culture, and this is my personal opinion. Even though you might be brought up here, there definitely exists differences between you and them, no matter how well you speak English. And it is impossible for you to be regarded as one of them. (Interview, 12/2017)

As expressed in Excerpt 4.21, looking Chinese will make it impossible for children to be fully included in Australian society. Against this expected exclusion, Chinese language and culture are perceived to provide children with a "protective shield of a sort to rely upon when dealing with racial identity issues" (Jacobson, 2008, p. 75). This language attitude also resonates with the motivation for studying Korean in Shin's research (2013), in which "the mothers in this study wanted their children to develop a positive racial identity, which, they predicted, would prepare their children for encounters with racism" (p. 170).

Throughout the data, Chinese identity is seen to be distinctly embodied in 'Chinese looks', but, at the same time, virtually achieved by Chinese language learning and maintenance of Chinese culture. Since it is assumed that the Chinese 'look' should give one expertise in using the Chinese language and an understanding of Chinese culture, failing to make the language-identity link is feared to generate undesirable disadvantages in employment, as remarked on below:

Excerpt 4.22

Father 18: 现在我在国内看到就是这种海归也好，那个在这边的也好，如果是这种情况的话（长着中国人的脸不会说中文），要么你是绝对是公司高层，那还 ok。但是如果是下面一般普通白领这种的话，你会非常吃亏。因为你长中国人脸，如果在国内找到一个好的工作，然后你又不会中文，这样的话，在公司也好，在客户啊，生意上，都会非常很吃亏。

Father 18: Based on what I have seen, you are disadvantaged if unable to speak Chinese but with a Chinese face, whether you are overseas returnees in China or Chinese in Australia, unless you are a senior manager in the corporation. These ordinary white-

collar workers just take a beating. For example, if you find a good job in China, but you can't speak Chinese, but look Chinese, you will stand to lose your business and your clients. (Interview, 06/2017)

The use of English by a Chinese-looking employee cannot be normalized and becomes detrimental to imagined future work contexts. "The 'raced' body, marked as 'Chinese'", (Francis et al., 2014, p. 213) is expected to produce Chinese. As stated by Mu (2016), the stereotypical perception of the necessary link between looking Chinese and being able to speak Chinese becomes legitimized, the breach of which can never be normalized (p. 301).

In sum, the stereotypical perception of the race-identity-language link is in line with Mu's (2016) research which indicated that "the Chinese body acquired from birth is a physical trait of Chinese identity that helps to generate their integrative motivation to learn CHL" (p. 300). The Chinese identity, visibly marked by Chinese looks, is constructed and expressed by children's use and study of the Chinese language. Chinese is seen as fundamental in representing children's ethnic identity. However, being unable to speak unaccented or authentic Chinese is conceived of as hindering the full expression of children's ethnic identity; being unable to speak Chinese is considered a faulty representation of children's ethnicity, and attrition in Chinese as a signifier of children's disidentification with their ethnic homeland. Moreover, the proper expression of, and identification with, being Chinese, which is achieved through the use of the Chinese language, is considered essential in protecting children from possible encounters with racism, in terms of their identity as authentic Australians and employment.

4.3.2 Chinese as the language of cultural heritage

With regard to identity-related aspirations for Chinese language maintenance, throughout the data the reasons given for learning Chinese also emphasize the retention of heritage culture. Learning Chinese for the sake of the heritage or cultural 'root' is constantly referred to when parents are asked about the reasons for their maintenance aspirations and efforts:

Excerpt 4.23

Mother 19: 你是个中国人，你自己的根，文化根基，怎么说呢？我们做父母的都是中国人，我们的文化根基都是在中文上，那你说你作为我们的孩子，肯定要学汉语，了解中国文化。

Mother 19: We are Chinese. That's our root, our cultural root. Oh, how shall I put it? We as parents are Chinese, and our cultural foundation is based on the Chinese language. So, you know, as our children, they should learn Chinese and know Chinese culture. (Interview, 10/2017)

Learning the Chinese language and culture to seek ethnic roots and cultural identity is also underlined within the wider Chinese diaspora, as emphasized in the Chinese language promotion of one Chinese community school:

Excerpt 4.24

其实，我们每一个中国人，无论海外还是国内，都要在经典中，在文化中，寻找我们的根。

如果有那个根，那个本，你就是一个可以随处生根、随时立本的人，否则去到哪里都是浮萍。

In fact, we, every Chinese, whether in China or abroad, need to find our root in Chinese classic culture.

With the cultural base and root, you can build on your own foundation and grow your own roots anywhere in the world. Alternatively, you are floating duckweeds wherever you go.

(Source: WeChat)

In this excerpt, the practice of Chinese language and culture is associated with an ethnic foundation which can prevent children from being rootless like “floating duckweeds” or ‘wandering between two cultures’ as stated by the Chinese school: 学习中国文化，避免游离在两种文化之间 (learn Chinese culture to avoid wandering between two cultures). (Source: WeChat)

Since learning Chinese means acquiring the heritage ‘root’, the loss of Chinese language and culture is seen as the primary cause of rootlessness and lack of belonging in migration contexts, as explained by a Chinese school:

Excerpt 4.25

近期在悉尼中国传统文化推广的讲座：其中有一句话触动了很多家长的心弦，大家听后都纷纷抹眼泪。“来到西方，来到海外，我获得了蓝天，却失去了大地！都多少游子，且感觉自己成为东西方之间无依无靠的游魂。”

In the recent lectures in Sydney which promote Chinese traditional culture, there was a touching line that moved parents to tears: *We went abroad, came to the west. We got the blue sky but lost the earth.* How many overseas Chinese on earth feel they have become wandering souls without a root either in the East or West! (Source: WeChat)

As promoted in this advertisement, the retention of heritage culture is of unique importance in promoting positive cultural identification and in preparing children for encounters with identity confusions and dilemmas, which also resonates with voices from parents like Mother 4:

Excerpt 4.26

Mother 4: 我们之所以办这个汉语学校，主要是为了她学习汉语和汉语文化。我们的关注点是她的 Chinese identity。不然，她不知道自己是谁，她找不到自己。在西方和小孩子一起玩，找不到自己，中国的小孩子不一定找得到自己，如果你没有自己的这种民族意识，不自豪，感觉没有 identity...我之前一直在跨国公司工作，在多元化的文化里你的 identity 非常重要。你得清楚知道你是谁，你来自于哪里，你的价值观是什么，你能接受自己，能包容自己，你才能成为你自己。

Mother 4: The main reason for us running this Chinese school is for the convenience of my daughter, for her to learn Chinese and Chinese culture. The key issue is her identity, her Chinese identity. Without this identity, she wouldn't know who she is, and she cannot find herself, like a lot of Chinese children who cannot find themselves when they play

with western children. If you are not conscious of your race, nor proud of it, you will not have an identity. I used to work for transnational corporations, and I know identity is very important in a multicultural environment, because you need to be aware of who you are, where you come from, and what your values are. Only with this awareness, you can accept and tolerate yourself and then become yourself. (Interview, 01/2018)

When asked about the reasons behind learning Chinese, Mother 4 repeatedly related them to the issue of ‘identity’ and ethnic culture. She emphasized that knowledge of Chinese language and culture constituted a sound foundation for children’s identification and ethnic pride, which helped to facilitate their proper positioning in the diaspora.

Despite the consideration of identity and belonging, Chinese is also seen as a valuable cultural heritage that is in itself worthy of being inherited and owned:

Excerpt 4.27

Mother 21: 我觉得母语是很美好的，我很喜欢中文，我觉得是一种 enjoy，是一种享受的，我认为它应该被传承下去的。

Mother 21: I think our mother tongue is so beautiful, and I love Chinese. I think speaking Chinese is a joy. A joy indeed! I think it needs to be handed down. (Interview, 11/2017)

Excerpt 4.28

Mother 6: 中国我觉得五千年的文化然后太多好的东西了，所以我就希望他一定要深入地去学习。

Mother 6: There are so many good things in the 5000-year-old Chinese culture, so I hope he can learn Chinese in depth. (Interview, 07/2017)

Excerpt 4.29

Mother 8: 而且我老公就说中国的文字，就是现在世界上好像最难的就是这种中国文字，象形文字，所以他说就是希望我的孩子们能够就是懂这个中文，懂一点也好。

Mother 8: Besides, my husband said Chinese language, the Chinese characters, the hieroglyphic writing system, is the most difficult language in the world. So, he hopes our children can know Chinese, even a little is better than nothing. (Interview, 07/2017)

Excerpt 4.30

Mother 1: 她没有接受过中国文化，她如果接受中国文化的话，她就如虎添翼，我就觉得中国文化给你这性格很好的一个那啥。

Mother 1: Daughter 1 was not educated in the Chinese culture. If she could accept Chinese culture, she would be like a tiger who has grown wings. I do think Chinese culture is nourishing to her personality. (Interview, 12/2017)

The reasons for learning Chinese pertain to parents’ admiration for and pride in the aesthetic, cultural and linguistic value of Chinese. For example, the “beautiful language”, “5000-year-long” history and “the writing system ... the most difficult language” make Chinese worthy of being owned and

inherited. However, loss of this cultural capital is perceived to hamper children's full development, as lamented by Mother 1.

These parents' view of Chinese as a valuable treasure to pass on to the next generation resonates with discourses from the wider Chinese diaspora:

Excerpt 4.31

[A fellow PhD student reasoned about her dedication to her daughters' Chinese learning].

I think what we can best help our children with is not our English, but our Chinese. (Fieldnotes, 04/2017)

Excerpt 4.32

从今年开始，她迷上了中文歌，一天，她唱到一句“风轻扬，夏未央”时，突然扭头对我说：妈妈，我觉得这句好美啊！我心头一热：小样，你总算知道中文之美了！咱们大中华的宝贝，可多去了！

From this year, she has become addicted to Chinese songs. One day when singing 'The breeze gently smoothed me in the summer heat', she suddenly turned to me and said: mom, I feel how beautiful these words are. I was moved straight away and said: "my baby, you have eventually discovered the beauty of Chinese!". The treasures of our greater China are innumerable. (Lin, 2018)

In Excerpt 4.31, Chinese was considered as the best gift parents can give to their children. Similarly, in J. Zhang's (2010) research in the North American context, a parent, when asked about her devotion to Chinese language maintenance, also reasoned that "she had nothing to pass on to her daughters but the knowledge of Chinese language and culture" (p. 256). Excerpt 4.32 is a biographical article of a Chinese mother's sojourn in America. Based on her account, anything representative of Chinese culture, such as Chinese songs with poetic rhymes as above, are considered as great treasures which should be transmitted across generations. Meanwhile, children's appreciation and knowledge of Chinese greatly heartens parents and makes them feel their children are still nurtured by their heritage language and culture.

In sum, learning Chinese in order to seek and maintain cultural roots is widely emphasized throughout this data. Above all, Chinese language and culture is seen as the 'root' of being Chinese within the migration context. The loss of Chinese, by contrast, is conceived as the primary cause of rootlessness and lack of belonging. Besides, knowledge of Chinese language and culture is perceived to promote children's ethnic pride and prepare them for potential encounters with identity confusions or racial dilemmas later in life. In addition, Chinese is also seen as a valuable heritage with aesthetic, cultural and linguistic value.

4.3.3 Summary

As to the reasons behind Chinese language maintenance, the retention of ethnic and cultural identity is highlighted in both parental and public discourses within the Chinese diaspora.

‘Chinese looks, Chinese identity, and Chinese language are interwoven and entangled’ (Mu, 2016, p. 300). Above all, looking Chinese is considered the primary indicator of children’s ethnicity, and the use and study of Chinese is seen as essential to children’s ethnic identity. Against the stereotypical perception of ‘Looking Chinese, speaking Chinese’, the production of accented Chinese, particularly Australian Chinese is considered an expression of inauthentic Chineseness or a signifier of alienation. The production of English, or the inability to speak Chinese, is considered an incorrect or faulty representation of children’s ethnicity and Chinese language attrition a signifier of children’s disconnection with their ethnic homeland. Moreover, correct expression of, and identification with, Chinese identity, which is facilitated by proficiency in Chinese and knowledge of Chinese culture, is considered essential in preparing children for encounters with racism.

Learning Chinese for the sake of heritage culture is also highlighted throughout the data. Firstly, Chinese language and culture, which is seen as the ‘root’ or foundation of identity, is essential to being Chinese within migration contexts, while the loss of Chinese is conceived as being an indicator of rootlessness in diaspora contexts. Secondly, Chinese culture is seen as the primary element strengthening children’s Chinese self and ethnic pride, which helps them with identity confusion they might experience later in life. In addition, due to its aesthetic, cultural and linguistic value, Chinese is regarded as a valuable heritage language worthy of being owned and inherited in its own right.

4.4 Chinese as a bridge to family cohesion

In the data collected from the 27 interviewed parents, learning Chinese for the benefit of family cohesion was mentioned by seven of the parents ().

Since both parents in at least 22 families among the 31 participating families have a bachelor’s degree or above, it can be assumed that parents have functional or even high proficiency in English within their work and living environments. However, Chinese is still considered as the language which gives parents a sense of familiarity and comfort. Interviews with 25 parents were conducted in Chinese and only two interviews were conducted mostly in English. Thus, they regard proficiency and knowledge of Chinese as fundamental in facilitating parent-child in-depth communication, as the following example shows:

Excerpt 4.33

Mother 21: 在 中 国 人 过 来 的 人 里 头 ， 你 应 该 算 很 好 的 英 文 了 ， 你 知 道 吧 。 但 是 我 们 说 我 们 第 一 代 移 民 ， 第 二 代 你 根 本 就 跟 他 比 不 了 ， 但 是 我 的 感 觉 是 什 么 呢 ， 我 认 为 我 正 在 努 力 的 提 高 我 的 英 文 ， 我 和 别 人 说 话 的 时 候 ， 仍 然 有 一 种 隔 膜 ， 你 明 白 吗 ？

Researcher: 明白，我怎么可能不明白。

Mother 21: 这个东西你如果不用自己的母语，你是表达不了的，所以我觉得女儿要懂这些东西，她懂得越多，她越自由。而我们之间的沟通也越自由。

Mother 21: Compared with most Chinese migrants, your English is quite good, but English spoken by us, the first-generation immigrants, is not at all comparable with them – the second generation. What do I feel? I think I do try to improve my English, but whenever I speak English with people, I feel there is always the estrangement in between. Can you understand?

Researcher: I completely understand.

Mother 21: There are always things you can't express unless resorting to your mother tongue. That's why I think my daughter needs to know our language. The more proficient she is in Chinese, the more freely she could express herself with it. So, there will be fewer misunderstandings when we communicate. (Interview, 11/2017)

Parents such as Mother 21 generally perceive that English does not really allow them freedom to express themselves as fully as they can in their social world and believe that the English language proficiency gap between parents and children can only be closed if the second-generation knows Chinese. In this vein, development of children's Chinese proficiency is seen as crucial in facilitating smooth parent-child communication and, implicitly, strengthening intergenerational ties.

Learning Chinese for the reason of family cohesion is also a pervasive discourse in the wider Chinese diaspora, as in this advertisement of the heritage language promotion by a Chinese school in Sydney:

Excerpt 4.34

学习中国文化，搭建亲子沟通基础

分享相同的文化是父母与子女沟通的基础，父母理解孩子说的每一个单词，孩子也可以听懂父母说的每一句话。

Learn Chinese culture to build up the foundation of parent-child communication

Shared culture is the foundation of communication between parent and child. Parents shall understand every word the child says, and the child shall understand every sentence the parent utters. (Source: WeChat)

For parents, Chinese is considered as their dominant language, with which they can 'talk deeply' both within the family domain as well as in the social domains. However, most of these early-arrived children have experienced varying degrees of Chinese language loss and lack of further development, and they generally lack the sophisticated Chinese vocabulary with which to express themselves thoroughly or have not developed age-appropriate literacy skills in Chinese (see Chapter 7). Children's Chinese underdevelopment or attrition is seen as impinging on deep communication between parents and children. For instance, when Mother 12 admired a widely circulated WeChat correspondence featuring the sophisticated use of Chinese between a parent and her child, who called themselves, humorously, 'empress' and 'prince', Mother 12 lamented:

Excerpt 4.35

中文是何等的博大精深!可惜我家“公主”已无法与“额娘”我进行如此层次的沟通了。

How broad and profound the Chinese language is! What a pity ‘my princess’ is unable to have such an in-depth communication with her ‘Empress’. (Source: WeChat)

Based on Mother 12’s reports and my own observations, Chinese was the habitual language used between Mother 12 and Daughter 12, but Daughter 12 still lacked the sophisticated skills to express herself in Chinese at the level desired by her mother. That is why Mother 12 lamented about her unachievable desire for in-depth communication with Daughter 12 while admiring the ideal intergenerational communication displayed in the correspondence. In this case, Mother 12’s sentiments about the relationship between children’s Chinese heritage language proficiency and family relations echoes with Mother 21 in Excerpt 4.33. This communication barrier related to language ability also resonates with the findings in D. Zhang’s (2008) research, where children’s lack of sophisticated Chinese vocabulary reduced their communication with their parents to a surface level and ‘communicating deeply’ become more and more difficult.

As language and culture are intrinsically linked, children’s language situation indicates their knowledge of the culture that is associated with the language. For parents with limited English skills, children’s Chinese attrition or loss reduces their shared beliefs, values and behaviours, which seems particularly detrimental to mutual understandings and family relations. For example, Mother 1 provided many examples of how Daughter 1’s limited knowledge of Chinese language and culture hampered her understanding of Mother 1’s well-intentioned suggestions, undermined intergenerational relationships, and also contributed to Daughter 1’s estrangement from her late-arrived cousin and other Chinese children. It seems that the erosion or loss of Chinese becomes the root of parent-child conflicts and of disconnection between the child and other extended family members, and between English-speaking Chinese children such as Daughter 1 and other Chinese-speaking peers, as Mother 1 commented:

Excerpt 4.36

Mother 1: 你不知道我心里头的苦啊，她就是一个老外。她受的是西方教育，她没有中国的价值观，动不动就炸锅了，就那种文化你知道吧。很多时候我们不能尽情深层地交谈，她也不能理解我，这并不完全是语言的问题，还有深层的那种，语言背后的东西很多东西...现在我跟你说，就是说我们是受中国文化长大的，跟她在这受外国文化长大的，我们还是有些代沟的，就有些东西融不在一起，但是我们选择的都是谦让，大部分是我们谦让。

Mother 1: You don’t know how depressed I am. Daughter 1 is indeed a foreigner to me. She was educated in western culture. She doesn’t have any Chinese values, and she is constantly on the edge. For a lot of times, you know, we couldn’t talk deeply, and she couldn’t understand me. This is not only an issue of language. There exists something deeper behind language. You know, there is the generation gap between us - who are

wired with Chinese culture, and she – who has been raised in western culture. A lot of things are out of tune, but we parents chose to compromise, and mostly it is us who compromised. (Interview, 12/2017)

Daughter 1, coming to Australia at age 3, is the youngest arrived child across the data. In the interview, Mother 1 repeatedly stated that she lacked English skills while her daughter had limited orality in Chinese for their communication. Meanwhile, Mother 1 deeply lamented Daughter 1's heritage language loss. When she associated the existing parent-child clashes and misunderstandings with the language and culture barriers between them, she constantly expressed how painful she was in the face of the failures in parent-child communications. Mother 1, in the interview, regarded her limited English skills and Daughter 1's limited Chinese skills as the primary causes of their frequent conflicts and deteriorating relationship. In fact, many researchers have observed that heritage language loss by children can be highly disruptive of family relations, due to communication barriers (Fillmore, 1991, 2000; X. Li, 1999; Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002; D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009; J. Zhang, 2009). Mu (2015b) found that language barriers contribute to intergenerational conflict within family milieus and impinge negatively on socialization as children become frustrated when they are unable to communicate effectively with their family members, heritage peers, and heritage communities. Chinese (in)competence can undermine/facilitate parent-child communication and, according to Mu, "was particularly important when some family members did not have, or did not have enough, English competence" (Mu, 2014b, p. 486). The rifts caused by language-related communication barriers are significantly detrimental to the cohesion of Family 1, leading to Daughter 1's alienation from Mother 1 and adding to her parents' anxiety and sorrows. As Fillmore (1991) concluded:

Talk is a crucial link between parents and children: It is how parents impart their cultures to their children and enable them to become the kind of men and women they want them to be. When parents lose the means for socializing and influencing their children, rifts develop and families lose the intimacy that comes from shared beliefs and understandings. (p. 343).

The disruption of intergenerational transmission that results from a failure to maintain the heritage language is also observed in communities as different as Yiddish (Fishman, 1991) and Arabic (Sehlaoui, 2008). For language-minority children, any program that emphasizes English at the expense of the primary language is a potential disaster (Fillmore, 1991, p. 325).

Besides being a bridge to parent-child talk, children's heritage language is also seen as a tie that connects them with non-English-speaking grandparents and other family members back in China:

Excerpt 4.37

Mother 5: 除了要求跟我们父母要说母语，他跟爷爷奶奶他们的那个沟通是一定要用我们本来的语言。

Mother 5: He is required to speak Chinese with us parents. Besides, the language to communicate with grandparents should only be our original language because his grandparents don't know any English. (Interview, 10/2017)

Excerpt 4.38

Mother 14: 我跟她说为了姥姥姥爷你也要学汉语，要不然他们听不懂你讲话。

Mother 14: I said even for the sake of your grandpa and grandma, you need to learn Chinese, or they can't understand you. (Interview, 05/2018)

Where the heritage language has atrophied or been lost, conversations with non-English speaking grandparents might be reduced to the superficial level:

Excerpt 4.39

Daughter 10's grandmother: Every time we came here, we found Daughter 10's Chinese was worse than last time. We don't really talk to each other. (Fieldnotes, 04/2017)

In sum, children's retention of Chinese language, and knowledge of Chinese culture, are considered fundamental to parent-child in-depth communication, and children's connection with grandparents, other family members and their heritage peers. Where Chinese has not been successfully maintained, this is seen as a real barrier to in-depth communication with parents and may disconnect them from other family members and their ethnic community. Furthermore, the children's heritage language loss, or their limited knowledge of Chinese culture, may be considered as the root of parent-child conflicts and lack of family harmony.

4.5 Summary and conclusion

Throughout the data, aspirations regarding Chinese language learning are strongly voiced by participating parents and can also be readily found in public discourses that circulate widely in the Chinese diaspora. This chapter explores the factors that undergird the strong enthusiasm and desire for children's heritage language learning. The motivation for Chinese heritage language learning centres on investment in the children's futures, retention of children's ethnic and cultural heritage, and maintenance of family relationships.

Investment in children's economic, career and educational future becomes the pivotal impetus for strong heritage language motivation and commitment. Parents' materialistic motivation, founded on their perception of the rising influence of China, sees proficiency in Chinese as an investment in children's global mobility, employability and educational success. Firstly, since Chinese is regarded as a world language, children's global employability and mobility are seen to be facilitated by a good mastery of Chinese. In other words, if equipped with this language of global importance, children's educational and career orientations could be targeted at any transnational world, particularly in Chinese-speaking and English-speaking countries, which are envisaged to provide a promising space for children's future career development. In contrast, limited Chinese proficiency is seen to constitute

a barrier to desired global mobility and it is feared that children may become stranded in Australia, from a career point of view. Secondly, Chinese is recognized as a language that is widely used in Australia, too. Therefore, a command of Chinese is expected to broaden and maximise children's occupational choices, even within the national context of Australia. Furthermore, investing in Chinese language proficiency also promises educational profits, as the subject can contribute to children's HSC success.

The importance of Chinese for children's ethnic and cultural identity is also foregrounded throughout the data. On one hand, looking Chinese is considered as the primary attribute of children's racial identity, and the use and study of Chinese is believed to activate and promote children's ethnic identity. However, being unable to speak proper or authentic Chinese is conceived of as hindering the full expression of children's ethnic identity. Being unable to speak Chinese is widely considered as an incorrect expression or misrepresentation of children's ethnicity. Furthermore, the attrition of Chinese is taken to signify children's disconnection from their ethnic homeland. Thus, the correct alignment of ethnic identity is assumed to be achieved through proficiency in the Chinese language and knowledge of Chinese culture. The latter are seen to constitute the essential elements in preparing children for encounters with racism in employment and other daily contexts. On the other hand, the use and study of Chinese is for the sake of retention of the heritage culture, which constitutes the foundation of Chinese rootedness and belonging. Instilling ethnic pride in children is widely considered as a solid basis from which to confront challenges that they may have to face in later life. The aesthetic, cultural and linguistic value of Chinese is also regarded as a value in itself that is worthy of being owned and passed on to the next generation. The maintenance of Chinese is also considered important for family cohesion. Children's retention of Chinese and their knowledge of Chinese culture is regarded as fundamental to facilitating parent-child in-depth communication and connecting children with other family members. In contrast, children's Chinese loss, or their ignorance of Chinese culture, is considered as a major cause of parent-child conflicts and family problems.

In sum, aspirations for children's Chinese language maintenance and continued learning are strongly voiced throughout my data. When the reasons behind these Chinese language desires are explored, economic and career advantages are foregrounded, along with benefits related to ethnic identity and culture, and, finally, benefits to family cohesion. Against this background of pervasive aspirations regarding children's Chinese learning in parental and public discourses, the next chapter will investigate the attitudes children hold towards Chinese.

Chapter 5: Children's attitudes towards Chinese

5.1 Introduction

While parents place a premium on their children's Chinese language maintenance and learning, as demonstrated in Chapter 4, children are more conflicted about their Chinese language and identity. This chapter shifts focus from the parents to the children and explores children's attitudes towards Chinese. It also examines children's conceptions of ethnic identity in relation to their heritage language.

In my research, all the 32 focal children had at least some experience of learning Chinese in Australia, whether at home or in school. At the same time, these children demonstrated dynamic, relational, and at times conflicted attitudes towards Chinese. In this chapter, children's attitudes to Chinese are not only drawn from their own accounts, but at times complemented with data from parents (see Excerpt 5.7, Excerpt 5.23, Excerpt 5.24, Excerpt 5.25, Excerpt 5.48, Excerpt 5.49 and Excerpt 5.50). The latter is justified by the parents' greater insight into their children's attitudes than could be elicited during an interview. In particular, some children obviously stated attitudes to the Chinese language which they considered matched the imagined preference of the researcher. This chapter firstly explores the complexity of attitudes among these children, for whom learning Chinese may be considered as being a chore (Section 5.2), or as being difficult (Section 5.3), (ir)relevant (Section 5.4), an investment (Section 5.5), or as a marker of ethnic identity (Section 5.6). The chapter concludes with a summary of findings (Section 5.7).

Table 5.1 An overview of the relationship between the age factor and language attitudes

	Age at interview	Age on arrival	Chinese as chore	Chinese as difficult	Chinese as irrelevant	Chinese as relevant	Chinese as investment	Chinese as identity marker
Daughter 1	28	3						
Daughter 2	7	4						
Son 3	9	4						
Daughter 4	9	4	√					
Son 5	11	4	√	√				
Son 6	7	5	√	√	√			√
Daughter 7	10	5	√					
Son 8	15	5		√				
Daughter 9	15	5				√	√	
Daughter 10	18	5		√				
Son 15	10	5	√	√				
Son 11	10	6	√					
Daughter 12	10	6						
Daughter 14	24	6			√		√	

Son 13	8	7						
Daughter 15	12	7	√		√			
Son 16	15	7	√				√	
Daughter 17	10	8		√				√
Daughter 18	9	8					√	
Son 19	11	8			√			
Son 20	10	9		√				
Daughter 21	13	9	√					
Daughter 22	23	9				√	√	√
Son 23	12	10				√	√	
Daughter 24	23	10				√	√	√
Son 25	25	10						
Son 26	12	10	√		√	√	√	√
Daughter 27	21	11					√	
Daughter 28	23	13					√	√
Daughter 29	24	13				√	√	√
Daughter 30	19	13					√	√
Son 31	18	13					√	√

5.2 Chinese as a chore

Many children expressed a lack of interest in learning Chinese and regarded it as a chore. This is particularly true of early arrival children (i.e. arrival before age 9, see Section 3.4) (Table 5. 1). As mentioned in Section 3.4, early or late arrival is typically associated with less than, or at least, three years of primary school education in China. Ten such children described Chinese learning as an additional task outside of school which was boring and tedious. For instance, when talking about her parents' expectation for her Chinese proficiency, Daughter 21 considered the Chinese homework given by her parents as an extra burden from which she wanted to free herself:

Excerpt 5.1

Daughter 21: Because it just doesn't come naturally to me anymore, so I have to like to put in like extra effort and sometimes I get confused and my parents are like oh why you don't know this? [...]

Researcher: Do you know why your parents want you to learn Chinese?

Daughter 21: Oh heritage. Yeah, heritage and also because you know how China's becoming a superpower and everything, and like stuff, there's going to be opportunities in China. Also, because lots of my Chinese relatives like cousins, aunties, uncles, grandma, grandpa, they don't know how to speak English, so I have to like talk to them. It's a necessary like thing.

Researcher: If you think of the heritage and think of all these benefits you could get from learning Chinese, do you have more motivations to learn Chinese?

Daughter 21: No, it's just because I'm just not bothered. I should, I know I should, but I'm just not bothered. (Interview, 11/2017)

As in Excerpt 5.1, Daughter 21 described any Chinese homework assigned by their parents as an extra burden which they would like to shake off. Actually, a wide gulf between parents' and children's attitudes to the learning of Chinese could be observed across the data. When children described their disinclination to undertake Chinese assignments, they often said, "I don't like learning Chinese" or "Learning Chinese is boring":

Excerpt 5.2

Son 11: My dad wants me to speak Mandarin to him, like I didn't choose to speak Mandarin to him. He just wants me to do it, but I don't like it. (Interview, 06/2017)

Excerpt 5.3

Daughter 7: Sometimes I just really don't want to do it [Chinese homework]. It's boring. (Interview, 04/2018)

Excerpt 5.4

Son 5: [Chinese homework] A lot more boring than learning English.

Researcher: Why do you think it is more boring than learning English?

Son 5: Chinese videos I have to copy every word of it, and... (Interview, 10/2017)

Excerpt 5.5

[Son 26 even cut in repeatedly during the interview with his mother to express his distaste for having to practise Chinese]

Son 26 : 你还别说呢, 那写字就是地狱...你自己都不写, 还要我写。

Son 26: My goodness, writing characters is like going to hell ... you (Mother 26) didn't write them on your own, but you required me to write. (Interview with Mother 26, 07/2018)

Excerpt 5.6

[Son 26 repeated his negative assessment of Chinese writing practice in the individual interview I did with him separately without the presence of his mother.]

Son 26: 不愿意, 特别累手...所以说我周末的时间也被我妈霸占了...她叫我抄, 还叫我抄的特别好, 我说我把字练会了就得, 不忘就得, 还非嫌我写的字不好看。

Son 26: No, I don't want. It makes my hands sore... so my weekends are also taken by my mother... She asks me to copy, and even asks me to do it beautifully; but I say it is enough if I can remember how to write them; but she says the words I copied are ugly. (Interview with Son 26, 07/2018)

As is evident from these excerpts, many of the children considered their Chinese learning, particularly literacy practice pushed by their parents, as an extra burden and unpleasant experience. The children's unfavorable attitudes or antipathy towards learning Chinese have formed a distinctive contrast with their parents' desire for, and commitment, to their Chinese heritage language maintenance:

Excerpt 5.7

Father 15: Yeah, that's why they hate Chinese because I pushed them to learn Chinese. If you push someone for something, they will hate that thing. We always say: Chinese, Chinese, where's your Chinese? Speak Chinese.

Researcher: So, they are angry with you? (smile)

Father 15: I think they feel upset... and then they hate that ...

Researcher: How about let them read more Chinese novels? -

Father 15: That's a torture to them. They can't... Yeah, I asked them to read some short stories, quite interesting, they found oh so boring, so boring. They kept saying this. (Interview, 10/2017)

In sum, irrespective of parents' enthusiasm and aspirations, the children constantly display a disinclination and resistance to the learning of Chinese, especially when it comes to the Chinese homework given by their parents. Their lack of interest accounts for one main reason for their negative attitudes towards Chinese learning. Chinese learning, especially literacy practice, is seen as an extra tedious burden which they dislike within their migration contexts. This view of Chinese as a chore seems strongly held by early-arrival children.

5.3 Chinese as difficult

Across the data, seven children explicitly associated their dislike of Chinese (literacy) learning with the difficulty of Chinese. The view of Chinese as difficult is also related to early arrival age. "Chinese is hard" is a comment constantly expressed by the early arrivals. Literacy skills, in particular, present an obstacle, and children spoke about their difficulties with reading, writing and memorizing Chinese characters, as the excerpts below show.

Excerpt 5.8

Son 15: It's harder than English.

Researcher: Which part is hard for you?

Son 15: The reading part. (Interview, 10/2017)

Excerpt 5.9

Daughter 17: 我就不想写，太难了。比英文难的多，英文只是拼，可是中文你还要记笔画。一些田字格里面你还要想，那个要交叉过来还是不要交叉。

Daughter 17: I don't want to write. It's too difficult, much more difficult than English. When writing English words, you just need to spell; but writing Chinese words, you need to remember the strokes... if you put the characters in the *Tianzige* [田字格, the worksheet with square boxes], you need to struggle about how to keep every part of the characters in place. (Interview, 06/2017)

[Note: *Tianzige* (田字格) is the worksheet with square boxes, which is used in lower grades in Chinese primary schools, aiming to train children to lay out different parts of the characters.]

Excerpt 5.10

Daughter 10: Yeah, I think talking is fine, I can understand everything. I know I will not be able to learn how to write, it's way too hard, like too many things to remember. I don't want to have too much in my mind. If I do want to learn a language, I don't want to learn Mandarin. I want to learn French. (Interview, 11/2017)

Excerpt 5.11

Son 8: Hum, I think it's very hard.

Researcher: What kind of things are hard for you? (smile)

Son 8: It's just memorizing the characters.

Researcher: Is Chinese harder than those other languages [French and Italian] you have and are learning?

Son 8: Yeah. I think so. (Interview, 07/2017)

Across the data, the majority of the early arrivals such as Son 15, Daughter 17, Daughter 10 and Son 8 in the above excerpts thought Chinese was a very difficult language, particularly the literacy skills related to characters. As Chen & Zhang (2014) pointed out, “the characteristics of Chinese as a logographic language, which has little indication of pronunciation of characters, tend to slow down the learning process for English-speaking students” (p. 194). Actually, Chinese is objectively rated as a difficult foreign language to learn: “Chinese was rated by the ACFTL [Sic. American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages] guidelines as one of the most difficult languages” (Hadley, 2001, as cited in Lu & Li, 2008, p. 90) and learning Chinese characters is seen as hugely demanding and labour-intensive (Everson, 1998, p. 194). For children such as Daughter 10 (Excerpt 5.10) and Son 8 (Excerpt 5.11), Chinese compared negatively with English or other European languages and thus reduced their motivation. This demotivation arising from the perceived difficulty with Chinese language learning aligns with the findings in Chen & Zhang’s (2014) research where many students dropped Chinese and focussed on other more promising subjects when they felt frustrated at the slow progress of Chinese learning.

The children’s difficulties with learning Chinese were not lost on their parents, as Mother 7 lamented: “I don’t know why these children have such difficulties in learning Chinese.” (Fieldnotes, 2018)

In fact, the children’s view of Chinese as difficult is related to, and contingent upon, the specific area of Chinese literacy, and their attitudes towards different aspects of Chinese literacy practice are frequently at odds with each other. For instance, while Daughter 17 (see Excerpt 5.9) and Son 26 (see Excerpt 5.6) voiced their difficulties with, or displeasure in, writing Chinese characters, they also expressed their fondness for reading Chinese literature.

These children’s difficulties with learning Chinese or English pertain not only to specific literacy skills, but also to their belief in language competition and in the idea of a key learning period in language acquisition. There emerged from the data conceptions which dichotomise Chinese and English language learning, which led these children to consider their English development as a hindrance to their Chinese maintenance, or vice versa:

Excerpt 5.12

Son 20: 但是如果我学好英语的话，那学中文又是一些问题。

Researcher: 为什么学好英文学中文又是个问题呢？

Son 20: 因为如果你英语学好的话，你会忘记中文。

Son 20: But if I learn English well, I might have problems in learning Chinese.

Researcher: Why will you have problems in learning Chinese if you learn English well?

Son 20: Because learning English well will make me forget my Chinese. (Interview, 06/2017)

Excerpt 5.13

Son 26: 像我同学的妹妹，她来得早嘛，英语说得比我和我同学都好得多，所以有汉语底子为难学英文的那种。

Son 26: Like my friend's younger sister, she speaks much better English than my friend and I because she came here younger than us, so people who are good at Chinese [like me] normally have difficulties in learning English. (Interview, 07/2018).

Besides, the children's apprehension in Chinese language learning and advancement also results from their belief in a 'key learning period' which is seen as another threat to their Chinese achievements:

Excerpt 5.14

Researcher: Do you want to learn how to write Chinese and read Chinese books in the future?

Son 5: I do, but there is only one year left before the end of my key learning period.

Researcher: It's ok, you already started it. Don't need to worry about your key learning period.

Mother 5: [speaking to Son 5] The key learning period which I mentioned, 那个关键期是指开始的时候，那个写字和认字是没有这个期限的 (The key learning period refers to the start time of learning a language. Writing and memorizing words don't have those time restrictions). (Interview, 10/2017)

It is worth mentioning that Son 5's conception of the 'key learning period' may be influenced by Mother 5's language learning ideology. In the interview, Mother 5 constantly stated that the key period for language learning ended at age 12 and she expressed the urgency to push Son 5 to learn more Chinese before this 'deadline'. As evident from Excerpt 5.14, 11-year-old Son 5 was concerned that he might not have enough time left to develop his Chinese writing and reading or to develop them well because his key learning period was about to run out. Thus, Son 5's understanding of the key learning period seems to add a sense of uncertainty about his Chinese learning potential.

In sum, quite a few children have spoken about the difficulty of the Chinese language at some point. The children's difficulties in learning Chinese mostly centre on its writing system, particularly reading, writing and memorising characters, which is constantly claimed to be harder than English or other European languages. At the same time, the children's belief in language competition and the key learning period add another dimension to their sense of difficulty with heritage language maintenance and development. Besides viewing Chinese as a chore and as difficult, children's views of Chinese are also related to the perceived relevance of Chinese, as shown in the next section.

5.4 Chinese as (ir)relevant

Across the data, children also associated their motivation to learn Chinese with the perceived relevance of Chinese to their current and future lives in Australia. Many children saw Chinese as

irrelevant. Those who felt that Chinese was highly relevant were all older, both in terms of age of arrival and age at interview.

Children frequently pointed out that their being 'in Australia' was the reason why they did not feel like continuing their Chinese learning:

Excerpt 5.15

Researcher: 你自己学汉语的打算吗?

Son 26: 没有, 我自己汉语我会说, 我寻思我会说, 看的懂字就得了。

Researcher: 会不会写没关系是吧?

Son 26: 嗯, 因为以后我有可能, 我也不会回中国工作。

Researcher: Do you want to continue improving your Chinese?

Son 26: No, I don't think so. For my Chinese, I could speak and recognize the words. Um, that's enough.

Researcher: So, it doesn't matter if you could write them or not?

Son 26: Because I think it's quite possible that I wouldn't go back to China to work. (Interview, 08/2018)

As evident from Excerpt 5.15, children such as Son 26 felt that learning Chinese was an unprofitable task in Australia, or that high levels of Chinese literacy were irrelevant in their current and future worlds, as Son 26 considered his basic skills in Chinese as sufficient for his life in Australia because he "wouldn't go back to China to work". An observation such as this is similar to findings by Mu (2015a) that "Chinese Australians may not engage in CHL learning when and where their CHL does not accrue any recognised value within their migration contexts" (p. 61). However, the children's view of the relevance of Chinese is conflictual and contradictory. For instance, Son 26 regarded high-level proficiency in Chinese as useless in Australia, but at the same time, he appreciated his Chinese language skills, which enabled him to be a language broker (see Excerpt 5.19), and desired a high level of Chinese literacy skills as an investment for the future HSC (see Excerpt 5.27).

Children who see Chinese as irrelevant normally do not aim high in their heritage language attainment because for them a high-level of Chinese literacy is of no use within an English-dominant society such as Australia:

Excerpt 5.16

Researcher: 你现在还看中文书吗?

Son 19: 不看。

Researcher: 你不看中文书, 那你怎么学好中文呢?

Son 19: 我主要语言是英文的。

Researcher: 所以你不打算看中文小说了?

Son 19: 不看中文小说, 会读中文, 会写中文, 会说中文就够了。

Researcher: Are you still reading Chinese books?

Son 19: No.

Researcher: But how can you learn Chinese well without reading Chinese books?

Son 19: My main language is English.

Researcher: So, you don't want to read more Chinese books? (Smile)

Son 19: I won't read Chinese novels. It is enough so long as I can recognize Chinese characters, write Chinese characters, and speak Chinese. (Interview, 11/2017)

Children's de-valorisation of Chinese is strongly influenced by the dominant status of English, which overshadows its importance. In the above excerpt, Son 19, recognizing the power relation between Chinese and English, identifies English as his main language. He also sets up English and Chinese as competing with each other and his declaration that his "main language is English" seems to provide sufficient reason against pursuing a higher level of Chinese literacy skills (see also Excerpt 5.12 and Excerpt 5.13). The children's linguistic identity is significantly related to their perception of the relative status and value of different languages. Besides, "[l]anguage competence becomes a linguistic capital only when it is valued and recognised in a specific language market" (Mu, 2015a, p. 61). In a situation where languages other than English are not well recognized or become "optional 'nice to have' rather than a firm commitment" (Piller & Gerber, 2018, p. 7), functional skills of Chinese are seen as adequate within children's everyday social worlds. These functional skills pertain to daily communication skills and basic literacy skills such as recognising and writing everyday characters, as shown in Excerpt 5.15 and Excerpt 5.16.

Furthermore, given that schools are children's main and immediate social environment, the lack of institutional support, or the schools' unfavourable attitude, strongly contributes to children's belief in the illegitimacy of the use of languages other than English outside of the home domain, as Son 19 claims:

Excerpt 5.17

Son 19 : 我们班级几乎 90%都是中国人。

Researcher : 你在学校有机会说中文吗？

Son 19 : 学校老师不让说中文，其实学校说中文也不好，要习惯说英文。

Researcher : 为什么这么说呢？

Son 19 : 在学校有的时候说中文，老师会说有哪个孩子完全只会中文，不会英文的，老师就会告诉这个的孩子，老师是什么意思。

Researcher : 所以你觉得在学校说中文不大好，老师会不大高兴？

Son 19 : 校长不让。

Researcher : 哦？

Son 19 : 校长说这是澳洲，所以不要说其他的语言。

Son 19: 90% of my classmates are Chinese.

Researcher: Do you have chances to speak Chinese at school?

Son 19: Teachers in my school don't allow us to speak Chinese. In fact, it is not good to speak Chinese at school, and we need to be accustomed to speaking English.

Researcher: Why do you say that?

Son 19: When we sometimes spoke Chinese at school, the teacher would comment that we only know Chinese and don't know any English. And the teacher would also inform the class of the language that he expects his students to use.

Researcher: So, do you think speaking Chinese is not acceptable in schools and using it would make the teacher unhappy?

Son 19: Our principal wouldn't allow us to speak Chinese.

Researcher: Oh-?

Son 19: Our principal says this is Australia, so don't speak languages other than English. (Interview, 11/2017)

Children's heritage language attitudes are significantly shaped by their social environment, especially their school environment. As evident in Excerpt 5.17, the teacher's and the principal's voices, as representatives of school authority, seems to convey and reinforce the inferior status of languages other than English. Shaped by the 'invisible language policy' in school, Son 19 considered speaking English as legitimate and other languages as illegitimate. Sentiments like this are echoed by Motaghi-Tabari (2016) who postulated that "in this process of unification, the dominant language and culture are imposed and inscribed as 'legitimate' while other languages are devalued" (p. 205). This is also confirmed by D. Zhang (2008), who observed that in the US context "Children's perception of the heritage language being 'useless' reveals a lack of support for heritage language learning in an English-dominant US society" (p. 123). This confirms the dialectical relationship between heritage language and dominant language: "When schools devalue students' first language and enforce English-only policy it often results in students' negative attitudes toward their first language and culture and their rapid language shift to English" (G. Li, 2006b, p. 19)

The English-dominant environment largely shapes the children's perception of Chinese as irrelevant and useless in Australia. However, children's actual language use in their immediate social environment fosters their positive attitudes towards their heritage language. In my data, children's experiences of being a language broker positively contribute to their awareness of the usefulness of the Chinese language and of the importance of maintaining their Chinese language skills, as evidenced in Excerpt 5.18 and Excerpt 5.19 below:

Excerpt 5.18

Researcher : 你为什么觉得中文对你很重要？

Son 23 : 以前小学有一个中文小朋友，他是来上七年级的，他不知道干啥，然后呢他只会中文，然后老师就找个中国人，我就来叫他，他藏厕所里，他啥都不会，我把他叫过来跟他说。

Researcher : 所以你觉得中文很重要，也挺有用的，因为你还可以帮助更多中国的小孩。

Father 23 : 他倒的确帮助过好多人，我们家附近他路过，然后一个中国的阿姨来买 pizza 第一看不懂，第二没法说，那会儿很早，那会儿我们才来了半年还是一年多，他就给那个阿姨翻译，那个阿姨可好了，每次见到他可亲了，就说要是没有你我买不了什么 pizza.

Researcher: Why do you think Chinese is important to you?

Son 23: I once met a Chinese-speaking child who started Year 7 in Australia. He could only speak Chinese and didn't know what he could do in school. Then one day the teacher was looking for a Chinese student to help him and I came to help the teacher. He hid in the toilet because he didn't know any English, so I translated for him.

Researcher: So, you think Chinese is important and useful because you could help more Chinese children?

Father 23: Son 23 did help quite a few people. One early morning, a Chinese auntie came to buy pizza near our home. She couldn't read the menu or speak any English. He went to translate for that auntie. That happened around half a year or one year after we arrived in Australia. After that, that auntie was very nice to him every time she saw Son 23, saying repeatedly: Without you, I couldn't buy a pizza. (Interview, 07/2018)

Excerpt 5.19

Researcher : 你觉得汉语很重要吗？

Son 26 : 挺重要的 ... 还有有一些，我在有的时候，遇到那个中国人了，看到那些老叔叔，老太太他们不会说，我还可以帮一下忙。

Researcher: Do you think Chinese is important?

Son 26: Very important ... And, sometimes when I meet some Chinese grandpas and grandmas, I can be a translator and help a little. (Interview, 07/2018)

Both Son 23 and Son 26 argued for the value of their Chinese skills because these enabled them to help their community. The sense of pride in being language brokers is also observed by Motaghi-Tabari (2016), who found that children's experiences of language brokering in many situations could instil in them a sense of being needed and appreciated.

In fact, my data shows that the experience of being language brokers is associated with late arrival age (i.e. arrival at and after age 9, see Section 3.4). The two children (Son 23 and Son 26) who associated their positive attitude with language brokering experiences both arrived in Australia after age 10 (see Table 5. 1). This may suggest that late arrivals tend to have better proficiency, which, in turn, opens up more opportunities to engage in language brokering and similar practice opportunities. This active language use creates a virtuous cycle with the added element that late arrivals display greater awareness of the value of their heritage language.

In sum, the children's perceptions of the relevance of learning Chinese (well) is significantly shaped by their social environment and their experiences of language use. A few children feel learning Chinese is an unprofitable task in Australia and that high levels of Chinese literacy are irrelevant in this English dominant society. This view of Chinese literacy skills as being useless is largely due to lack of institutional support. As Motaghi-Tabari stated (2017), "[i]n circumstances where communicative

norms are constituted into a homogenised form, it comes as no surprise that children who do care about belonging and acceptance, internalise and reproduce the underlying message that ‘to be an Australian, one must speak English’”. However, there are children who appreciate their Chinese language skills and their positive view is largely established upon their experiences of language use in their immediate environment, particularly as language brokers. Children’s age of arrival is positively associated with the view of Chinese as being relevant in their future worlds. Age is also relevant when it comes to children’s view of learning Chinese as being an investment, as shown in the next Section.

5.5 Chinese as an investment

The view of Chinese as an investment is strongly correlated with late arrival age. Thirteen out of 32 focal children see Chinese as a profitable investment. Eight of these came to Australia after age 10 and ten were above age 15 at the time of interview. These children have associated the importance of Chinese with their career, economic and academic futures in Australia, both in China and in the global world. This materialistic motivation for Chinese language learning constitutes the key impetus behind these children’s desires for Chinese language learning.

Above all, Chinese is valued as a useful language in Australia, whether from the point of view of career development, economic benefits, or academic advantages. For these children, the Chinese language is valorized for the currency it holds in the envisaged future job market, and is seen as a rewarding investment with desired economic returns and/or career opportunities later in life, as Son 23 indicated below:

Excerpt 5.20

Son 23 : 我以后还想当一个translator, 就是中文翻译成英文 ...当translator是妈妈建议的... 因为这里有很多人需要这个translator, 所以就可以赚很多钱。

Son 23: I also want to be a translator in the future, that is to translate Chinese into English ... My mother advised me to be a translator...Here many people need a translator, so, I could make a lot of money. (Interview, 07/2017)

Across the data, quite a few children such as Son 23 above constructed their Chinese language desires upon the envisaged economic and/or career returns, or regarded their efforts expended on learning Chinese as rewarding when their acquired proficiency had translated into extra job opportunities or school credits. “CHL proficiency has been explicitly associated with extra job opportunities, and is ultimately convertible into economic capital” (Mu, 2014b, p. 485). The importance of Chinese for future career possibilities in Australia is also associated with the rising power of China:

Excerpt 5.21

Son 16: 对, 我认为汉语挺重要的, 因为以后的工作场合, 你可能会用到另外一门语言... 而且我爸爸妈妈和中文老师都跟我们讲, 中国越来越强大了, 以后汉语用处会越来越大。

Son 16: Yeah, I think Chinese is quite important because I might use another language like Chinese in my future work... Besides, both my parents and my Chinese teacher told us that China is to be more powerful, so the Chinese language will be more useful. (Interview, 07/2017)

In Excerpt 5.21, learning Chinese is seen as key to accessing broader employment markets, and the prospect of Chinese proficiency seems to be promised by the increasing influence of China. This view of maintaining the heritage language relative to the power of a country resonates with the prevalent language ideology held by participating parents, who frequently valorize the capital of Chinese based on the socio-economic power of China (see Section 4.2). Meanwhile, with respect to the view of Chinese as an investable asset, children such as Son 23 in Excerpt 5.20 and Son 16 in Excerpt 5.21 seem to be influenced by the pragmatic language attitudes of their intimate and immediate social circles, such as their parents and/or teachers. In this regard, “motivation to learn, use, and retain HLs, therefore, is highly mediated, by one’s social networks (family and peers) [...] and by the ideologies surrounding those languages in learners’ worlds” (D. Li & Duff, 2014, p. 233).

Given the current maturity in the age of most of these children, the value of Chinese seems to be more tangible in their immediate job environment rather than in the distant future:

Excerpt 5.22

Daughter 28 : 但我觉得以后汉语对我的职业,肯定有帮助的,虽然现在还看不到实惠的。因为我现在做的一个 project,我那个大老板他针对的是 Asian market 嘛,他有我们做的一个客户在香港...但是看中文的话,肯定也是会有帮助的,比如我去香港出差之类的。

Daughter 28: I think Chinese must be beneficial for my career one day, though it is not clear how at the moment. For example, my boss targets the project I am working on at the Asian market and one of our clients is in Hong Kong... so the ability to read Chinese will definitely be helpful if I am on a business trip to Hong Kong. (Interview, 06/2018)

In fact, job opportunities emerged as a strong incentive to (re)shape children’s heritage language attitudes and modify their language practice, as they grow older. Some of the young adults I spoke to confessed that when they were small, they had not seen much use for Chinese in their social networks and had not appreciated their parents’ efforts regarding Chinese heritage language maintenance either. However, they had started to take an agentic role in learning Chinese in their young adulthood, when they perceived the currency of Chinese emerging within their immediate employment market in Australia:

Excerpt 5.23

Mother 14 : 基本上没有什么机会在外头说汉语。她很 proud 会讲汉语是因为她在做兽医实习,去一个农场实习,好象有一个中国客人想买人家的牛奶什么的,打电话过去,那个农场主很着急就问谁会讲中文,她说我会讲中文。那次回来她说,哎

呀，我终于意识到你让我学中文原来这么有用，我问，你帮人家谈生意了？她说，是啊，我帮着人家谈成一个生意。

Researcher : 自从上一次工作给了她这种 proud 以后，有没有萌发过想学汉语念头？

Mother 14 : 有啊，有啊，突然就开始，哎，又把以前那些«读者»翻出来了，她又开始读了，读了以后不懂开始来问我，噢，这个是什么意思？为什么要这样讲？为什么不这样讲？这个是她发自内心的想去的。

Researcher : 她觉得可能汉语还是有用的？

Mother 14 : 对。

Researcher : 跟家长小时候逼她的不一样？（笑）

Mother 14 : 有点是这样，很有意思。（笑）

Mother 14: Daughter 14 rarely had opportunities to speak Chinese outside home. The first time she was proud of her ability to speak Chinese was during her veterinary internship on a farm. There was a Chinese client who wanted to buy their milk and called on the phone. That farm owner asked anxiously: "Who can speak Chinese?" She said she could. When she came back home, she said to me: "I now realise how sensible you are to have made me learn Chinese." I asked: "Did you help the farm to deal with some business?" she said: "Yeah, I helped our farm to successfully negotiate some business."

Researcher: Since she experienced that sense of pride from work, did she ever feel like wanting to learn more Chinese?

Mother 14: Yeah, yeah, she did. After that, she dug out those magazines, *Reader*, I bought before and started to read again. When she got some words that she didn't understand, she came to ask me the meanings, like "Why is it said in that way, why not another way?" This time she did Chinese from her own will.

Researcher: She might think Chinese might be useful for her.

Mother 14: Right.

Researcher: This is different from being pushed by you when she was small? (Smile)

Mother 14: Sort of like that. Very interesting. (Interview, 05/2018)

In the interview, Mother 14 recalled the hardships she faced in encouraging Daughter 14's Chinese language maintenance and Daughter 14's objection when she was sent back to China to learn Chinese for a period of six months. It was not until Daughter 14's internship in Sydney that she began to appreciate her parents' previous efforts. Now, her mother is proud to report that she has been offered a continuing position after her internship, in part due to her ability to speak Chinese. She enjoyed her daughter's belated sense of gratitude for having been made to study Chinese when she was small (Fieldnotes, 11/2017).

Chinese heritage language learners' motivation to learn Chinese is not fixed but shifts over time (Mu, 2015a, p. 55) and the transformation of heritage language attitudes is significantly facilitated by the "perceived usefulness of the language career-wise" (Mu, 2015a, p. 54). Many heritage learners reported that learning Chinese was once an unpleasant activity forced on them by their parents, while later they considered Chinese learning a wise and worthwhile investment (Wong & Xiao,

2010). Career opportunities accessible to children in Australia may reverse their previous unfavorable attitudes towards the heritage language and this is also present in wider diasporic discourses, as remarked on by a parent I happened to meet in a café:

Excerpt 5.24

Parent: Our first child's Chinese is a little better (than the other children's). He can speak Chinese but doesn't really know how to write. It is not until now that our first child realizes how important Chinese is.

Researcher: Why?

Parent: He studied law and works in a firm. They have a lot of Chinese clients. Now he thinks Chinese language is important, and he works hard to learn Chinese. (Fieldnotes, 06/2017)

Across the data, it is often the young adult children or high school children rather than the primary school children who associated their motivation of learning Chinese with the pragmatic benefits such as economic returns and career prospect. As Little (2017) pointed out, "[a]t primary age, children may struggle to identify with a pragmatic need to learn the heritage language (e.g. future employment opportunities)" (p. 12). However, the possibilities for career advancement connected with the development of Chinese, which become more apparent in adulthood, and which had been strongly highlighted by their parents, activate their agentive desire to invest in the learning of Chinese, as shown in Excerpt 5.23 and Excerpt 5.24. Thus, language learning motivation is always dynamic, situated in "changes in language behaviour of subjects" (Puigdevall, Walsh, Amorrrortu, & Ortega, 2018; Pujolar & Puigdevall, 2015, p. 168), and thus is subject to "changes as new visions of oneself and one's future possibilities in the world unfold across time and space"(D. Li & Duff, 2014, p. 233).

Besides career opportunities and economic benefits, academic benefits, such as children earning credit for Chinese within mainstream schools, may also contribute to (re)shaping children's Chinese heritage language attitudes and reinforce their commitment to the learning of Chinese (see Section 7.3 for details):

Excerpt 5.25

Mother 16: 后来他就一直不愿意上中文学校，一直到他初中，他在学校又选中文课之后，他倒是自己愿意上中文课了，他也好像感觉自己中文还行，然后也到了那个中文班里头，稍微给他测试一下就在好的那个班，他就在高一级的那个班。他中文在学校的考试中，他想拿 HD 你知道吗？就是一门的 HD 就能把他总体分提上去。他在上个 term，他就跟我说，他有想去上这个中文补习班了，他就想拿这个 HD。他现在就会主动要求，哎，妈，你给我测一下中文的词或字吧，我们要考试了。

Mother 16: After that, he didn't want to go to Chinese language schools until he was in high school, when he chose Chinese courses. This time, he wanted to learn Chinese on his own. He felt his Chinese was good in high school and he was allocated to a higher-level class after a small assessment. You know, he wanted to get that HD [high distinction] in the Chinese course. You know, even only getting HD in one subject could improve the final mark a lot. Last term, he said to me that he wanted to have Chinese language

tutoring in Chinese language schools. He really wanted to get HD in the Chinese course. Now he voluntarily asks me to test his Chinese language, saying, 'mom, can you test my Chinese vocabulary, we are having an assessment soon'. (Interview, 07/2017)

As the Chinese course is embedded in the school/university curriculum of Australia, children's Chinese competence becomes "a recognised asset with legitimised value" (Mu, 2014b, p. 487). For children with a certain level or good foundation in Chinese, such as Son 16 in Excerpt 5.25, when they see their heritage language competence is recognized by schools and can be translated into credits, the value of their heritage language seems to be enhanced, and in order to maximise the cultural capital embodied in credits, their motivation to learn Chinese is significantly strengthened. As Mu (2014b) stated, "[t]hese credits symbolise a cultural competence and confer participants a conventional, constant, and legally guaranteed value with respect to Chinese language or 'institutionalised cultural capital' in Bourdieu's (1986) term" (p. 485). For school-aged children, favourable language attitudes and policies adopted by schools/institutions with regard to their heritage languages play a crucial role in facilitating their commitment to heritage language learning (Chen & Zhang, 2014; D. Li & Duff, 2014; Lü, 2014; Mu, 2014b, 2015a).

Academic benefits, particularly those embodied in school credits or bonus marks, concurrently hold a strong appeal for school-age children and it is generally their acquired/prior knowledge of Chinese that makes them see Chinese as a promising subject for enhancing their academic performance:

Excerpt 5.26

Daughter 22 : 我中学里头有汉语课了, 我汉语一直挺好的, 可能就是因为我成绩好激励了我去学。

Daughter 22: In high school, we have Chinese subject and my Chinese is always good. It might be my good Chinese performance that inspired me to continuously learn Chinese. (Interview, 05/2018)

Excerpt 5.27

Son 26 : 然后还有考大学能加分, 很多东西都能加分。

Son 26: With Chinese competence, I could get bonus marks in HSC and I might get extra marks in many other things. (Interview, 07/2017)

Excerpt 5.28

Daughter 27 : 其实我读这门课主要是为了拉分, 不是因为我真的喜欢上那个中文课, 因为那个 Chinese background speaker 是 supposed to be 一个很难的科目, 就很难。

Daughter 27: [When in the high school] I chose the subject [Chinese] for the purpose of increasing my overall marks, not because I like the Chinese language course. This is because the 'Chinese background course' is supposed to be a difficult subject, very difficult. (Interview, 05/2015)

The "reciprocal relationship between 'capital' and Chinese heritage language proficiency" found in Mu's research (2014b, p. 477) is also evident in my research. Firstly, it is this accessible cultural capital represented in credits that provides the platform for children to make use of their prior proficiency in

Chinese. Children's improved proficiency in Chinese, in turn, makes it possible to produce more academic capital. Mu (2014b) found that "cultural, social, and symbolic capital positively contributes to Chinese Australians' Chinese heritage language proficiency, which, in return, produces profits in different forms of capital" (p. 477). Thus, these children's acquired proficiency in Chinese, which may be initially encouraged by academic advantages in schools, constitutes a sound foundation and a vital motivation for their sustained learning of Chinese at the university level for the purpose of their career planning:

Excerpt 5.29

Daughter 22 : 我中学的时候就对我未来有规划, 那时候选课就是说高考要做老师方面的, 然后要教哪门课我都想好了, 我学中学教育, 一个是要教中文, 一个教经济。我在大学还修很多中文的科目, 中文古文啊什么的, 然后还学了...

Daughter 22: As early as I was in high school, I had a plan for my future. I wanted to be a teacher, teaching Chinese and economics. So, the courses I chose in my high school were based on my HSC subjects... now I take many Chinese courses in my university like classical Chinese literature and ... (Interview, 05/2018)

Excerpt 5.30

Daughter 29 : 汉语对我未来工作很重要, 我在大学里头本来选的是 Pharmacy, 但是我发现那个对我很难, 我现在转成教育专业了, 其中一个 major 就是汉语教育, 我以后想教汉语。

Daughter 29: Chinese is quite important for me. In the university, I majored in Pharmacy, but this was too difficult for me. Now I have shifted to education, and one of my majors is Chinese education, because I want to teach Chinese. (Interview, 07/2018)

Excerpt 5.31

Son 31 : 汉语还是很重要,我对未来规划很清晰, 在澳洲做中文老师, 数学老师, 就是这样的, 我参加活动就是尽量往这方面去做。

Son 31: Chinese is still very important for me. I have a very clear plan for my future: to be a Chinese and math teacher in Australia. So, the activities I choose to participate are mostly related to the Chinese language. (Interview, 05/2018)

Across the data, the majority of these children who consider Chinese as an investment can be considered as high-level users of the Chinese language, as indicated both by their age of arrival and also their experiences of Chinese learning in Australia. All the children in the above excerpts (between Excerpt 5.26 and Excerpt 5.31) came to Australia at/after age 9, had been learning Chinese through their high school age in their migration context, and then chose Chinese language as one major in the university. These children's active role in learning Chinese, besides their affection to Chinese, is largely prompted by the easy marks and/or perceived utility of the language career-wise. Children's agentive force, though spurred on by "institutionalized" cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243), such as credits and credentials, is founded on their prior knowledge of Chinese and strengthened by their current or continuous achievements. A person's current effort and achievement is always the foundation upon which further

improvement can be made (J. Wang, 2012, p. 72). Children's prior knowledge of Chinese and Chinese learning experiences in Australia significantly contribute to the prospect of being long-term language users and then of a good mastery of Chinese in professional and vocational domains. Thus, Chinese language proficiency, particularly high levels of proficiency, is no longer considered as a bonus that is nice to have, but as the requisite that they should have for their career orientation.

Chinese is not only a useful language in Australia but is also valued as a profitable language for career pursuits in potential return migration or in the global world. For these young adults, the value of Chinese as an investment is no longer confined to the Australian job market, but extends to the growing market of China and the broader global space that Chinese offers:

Excerpt 5.32

Researcher : 汉语有用吗？

Daughter 27 : 汉语当然有用...我以后要回国。我读这个专业就是为了以后能回国，我是认真的。现在不是开放二胎了嘛！就是我是朝着开幼儿园这个方向的。因为在澳洲这个领域，就我读的这个专业这个领域，已经太 *stable* 了，而且你竞争也太大，而且你没有 *sparkling* 的那个理念。但是可能你的理念到国内，你就变成了闪的那颗星了。而且我有这里身份，回国后我是 *international teachers*，然后我又会说中文。在这里觉得就很普通，但是回国可能就不一样了，国内发展机会比较多。

Researcher: Is Chinese useful?

Daughter 27: It is of course...I will go back to China. Why I choose this [childhood education] as my major is for the consideration of my future development in China, and I am serious about it. Now China has released the two-child policy! I plan to set up kindergartens in China. Because in the field of childhood education of Australia, everything has gone *stable*, it is very competitive, and it is hard to produce new and bright ideas. But your idea in Australia might become the shiny star in China. Also, I am already an Australian citizen, and I will be considered as an international teacher when I am in China. In addition, I can speak Chinese. I am an ordinary person in Australia, but that might be different if I return to China because there are a lot more chances for career development in China. (Interview, 05/2018)

Excerpt 5.33

Daughter 30 : 汉语有用的，我也有想到回中国发展，尽管我现在还是更偏向于国际这一块，但是中文肯定也会有一些好处的。

Daughter 30: Chinese is useful because going back to China to develop my career is still within my consideration. Even though I might prioritize international careers, Chinese is also definitely beneficial. (Interview, 05/2018)

In the Excerpt 5.32 and Excerpt 5.33, China constitutes the intended or possible destination for children's own career development, so proficiency in Chinese is of vital importance to keep the option of their return migration for career pursuit open and/or optimise their envisaged international careers in broader global world. In fact, most of these children who strongly desire to avail themselves of their Chinese skills as a profitable investment are young adults who are university students or graduates and migrated late. These children, compared to a number of younger children who emphasize the

irrelevance or uselessness of Chinese in Australian contexts, are more aware that their Chinese language proficiency will translate into valuable currency in their future education and careers. In this vein, they are more likely to identify with their parents' heritage language ideology and global vision, which sees the benefits of the material value of Chinese for children's future trajectories on both sides of the world, China and the western world, particularly Australia.

Throughout the data, it is not surprising to find that children's instrumental motivation, which sees the heritage language as an investment, is strongly associated with their age of interview and age of arrival. The latter in turn is strongly associated with their Chinese proficiency, whether it be orality or literacy skills. In other words, given the necessary skills needed for these emergent career opportunities and academic betterment, the job opportunities, school credits and credentials become realistic, 'visible', accessible and meaningful for children with certain levels of acquired expertise in Chinese, which may be predicted by the duration of their stay in China. Thus, these children's instrumental motivation, though facilitated by pragmatic factors such as job opportunities and school credits, is grounded in their prior knowledge of Chinese.

In sum, job opportunities, economic benefits and academic advantages are a key impetus which drives children's own desire for Chinese language investment. Above all, children, particularly young adults who migrated late, see proficiency in Chinese as opening up career possibilities, which are convertible into economic capital, and promised by the increasing influence of China. They believe Chinese is a useful language to advance their careers both in Australia and in the global market that Chinese offers. They also, at times, orient their career and economic futures in the growing market of China. Children's view of Chinese as an investment is closely associated with their age of arrival, age of interview and their language proficiency. Besides, children's favourable attitudes and engagement with the learning of Chinese are significantly based in their recognition of 'institutionalized' cultural capital such as credits and credentials which can be acquired by the attainment of certain levels of proficiency in Chinese. On the basis of these, their sustained learning of Chinese is further spurred by the necessity and perceived usefulness of Chinese career-wise. At the same time, "[l]anguage learning motivation is also temporal and situated, and thus subject to change as new visions of oneself and one's future possibilities in the world unfold across time and space" (D. Li & Duff, 2014, p. 233). In other words, children's previous unfavourable attitudes towards the heritage language may be reversed when the instrumental value of Chinese emerges in their institution and/or work environment. In short, language learning motivation is constructed on children's prior experiences with Chinese learning, mediated by the ideologies and resources in learners' intimate and immediate worlds, and significantly empowered by economic possibilities in the future world.

5.6 Chinese as a marker of ethnic identity

Another theme in the data is the association between Chinese maintenance and ethnic identity. Similar to the findings described so far, there emerged a noticeable difference in identity perception related to age of arrival. Most children who regard Chinese as a marker of ethnic identity are late arrivals, while early arrivals generally do not associate their ethnic identity with the Chinese language. The children who view the Chinese language as an intrinsic part of their Chinese identity speak Chinese habitually and have high levels of Chinese proficiency, while the children who do not see a strong connection between Chinese and ethnic identity habitually speak English and have limited skills in Chinese.

The idea of a language-identity link is strongly voiced by late arrivals. These children have constructed fluency in Chinese as fundamental and essential to their Chinese identity:

Excerpt 5.34

Son 26 : 但是这边（悉尼）中国小孩，几乎都是不会说中文。

Researcher : 你说这边中国小孩不会说中文？

Son 26 : 嗯，几乎跟我谈话的时候都说英文。我说中文的时候，他们还说请你说英文，我说你还是不是中国人。

Son 26: But Chinese children in Sydney can hardly speak Chinese.

Researcher: Oh, you mean Chinese children here don't know how to speak Chinese?

Son 26: Yeah, when they spoke to me, they spoke almost all English. I spoke Chinese to them, but they said, "Please speak English"; so, I retorted "Aren't you Chinese?" (Interview, 07/2018)

Excerpt 5.35

Daughter 29 : 像那种他们中文已经说得不是那么溜的，然后也比较能融入这边的文化了，可能他们就已经偏离更多了。但是我一直就是还是接受的中国的文化，还有一直有 keep 住这个汉语，也学汉语的话，我还是会感觉自己是中国人。

Daughter 29: Those who couldn't speak Chinese fluently and have fitted more into Australian culture might have drifted away further, but I still feel I am Chinese because I am attached to Chinese culture, have maintained the skills of Chinese, and I keep learning Chinese. (Interview, 07/2018)

In Excerpt 5.34 and Excerpt 5.35, Chinese language and culture are foregrounded as the fundamental and central constituents of being Chinese. Daughter 29's sense of being Chinese is largely based on her proficiency in Chinese, her favourable attitude to Chinese culture and her continuous Chinese language practice. Both Son 26 and Daughter 29 problematized the legitimate Chinese identity of their peers who could not speak fluent Chinese. This strong sense of language as identity is consistent with Francis, Mau, & Archer's research (2014) on students from Chinese complementary schools, where "speaking Chinese was ... intimately related to their ethnic identities" (p. 209) and "identity emerged as a key motivation for learning Chinese" (p. 208).

Furthermore, non-fluency in Chinese or an English-speaking habitus attracts the label 'ABC', and authentic Chinese identities are frequently challenged and problematized. Among these children who reported that Chinese was one of their habitual language(s), or their only language, 'ABCs' were the 'other': Chinese children who had migrated early, lacked Chinese language skills and spoke English habitually with co-ethnic peers:

Excerpt 5.36

Researcher : 你刚刚讲的 ABC，你是怎么定义的呢？

Daughter 24 : 在这出生一直到大概五岁过来之前都算 ABC。

Researcher : 像你这种小学四年级过来的？（笑）

Daughter 24 : 我不是 ABC，我当不了 ABC，我这种人真的是外面黄里面也是黄的。（笑）我里头不是白的。

Researcher : ABC 也是黄种人。

Daughter 24 : 但是大部分 ABC 是不讲中文，中文不是很好，很多人会叫他们香蕉人，外面黄，里面白，像我们这些外面看着是黄的，里面也是黄的。都说中文的。... 我以前的小学绝大部分都是 ABC，他们交流是不说汉语的，他们在家可能会说汉语，但是他们到学校不说汉语。小学时候有时也会碰到一两个 ABC 愿意跟你讲汉语的。

Researcher: How do you define 'ABC' you just mentioned? Do you mean the Australian born or?

Daughter 24: Those who were born here and came around age five are both ABCs.

Researcher: So how about children who came here in year 4, like you? (Smile)

Daughter 24: I am not ABC. I am not qualified. People like me are yellow both on the outside and the inside. (Smile) My inside is not white.

Researcher: ABCs also have yellow skin.

Daughter 24: But most of them don't speak Chinese or can't speak Chinese well, so they are called banana people. That means they are yellow on the outside but white on the inside. But people like me look yellow on the outside and are also yellow on the inside. We speak Chinese.... When I was in the primary school, most of the students were ABCs. They didn't speak Chinese to each other. Hum, they might speak Chinese at home, but they never spoke Chinese in school. In the primary school, there were occasionally one or two classmates who could speak Chinese. (Interview, 06/2018)

In Excerpt 5.36, besides age of arrival, Chinese language fluency and language habitus are constructed as key markers of ethnic authenticity and the concept of 'ABC' further illustrates the symbolic power of the Chinese language as a measure of Chinese authenticity and legitimacy. From Daughter 24's perspective, besides age of arrival, 'not speaking enough/good Chinese' with co-ethnic peers attracted the ABC label. They are not seen as authentic or full Chinese and are rather seen as 'bananas' ('yellow on the outside and white on the inside' as defined by Daughter 24). This metaphor echoes the application of "the concept of the 'banana'" to describe the "BBC", the Chinese-British who do not speak Chinese (Francis et al., 2009, p. 530; Francis et al., 2014, p. 211). In my interviews, the group of Chinese-speaking young adults constantly referred those English-speaking Chinese children as 'ABC'. It is interesting to note that ABC is never mentioned by young children or children who are habitual

English speakers. In other words, those children, who habitually speak English to their ethnic peers, seem not to be sensitive about the term 'ABC', as shown from the private conversation between Son 31, my daughter and I:

Excerpt 5.37

Researcher: Who is this ABC you referred to?

Son 31: Like your Daughter, come here at about her age [My daughter came to Australia at age nine], so she is an ABC. (Smile)

Researcher: Are you an ABC? (Turning to my daughter)

My daughter: What? (Confused)

Researcher: Do you know what is called an ABC?

My daughter: Do you mean the ABC Kids ['ABC' also stands for 'Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and has a children's channel names 'ABC Kids']? (Confused) (Fieldnotes, 09/2018)

In addition to ethnic embodiment, the importance of Chinese as identity also centres on the value of Chinese as valuable heritage:

Excerpt 5.38

Researcher : 你为什么不想把汉语忘记啊？

Daughter 17 : 不想。因为这是我的母语。而且中国的那个汉字也是挺伟大的吧。

Researcher: Why don't you want to lose your Chinese?

Daughter 17: No, I don't want to because it's my mother tongue. Besides, the Chinese character is a great thing. (Interview, 06/2017)

Excerpt 5.39

Researcher : 你为什么觉得汉语挺重要的？

Son 26 : 一是它是我母语，我不能忘了，我回中国连个字都看不懂了，去饭店点个菜也不知道点啥了，那就不好了。

Researcher: Why is Chinese important for you?

Son 26: One is that Chinese is my mother tongue, and I shouldn't forget it. If I can't recognize any words when I go back to China, if I can't read the menu in a restaurant, that is so bad. (Interview, 07/2017)

In particular, the linguistic, cultural and aesthetic value— the beauty of Chinese is referred to as a constituent of children's heritage language learning motives:

Excerpt 5.40

Researcher: 这么多年以来你跟汉语接触还是很密切的，是你心目中一直认为汉语很重要吗？还是别的？

Daughter 22: 我就很喜欢，因为我觉得汉语非常的美，尤其是古文。他有些情感啊什么的，我觉得英文表达不出来，嗯，而且英文就是高等的英文课嘛，在中学的时候也就学莎士比亚那些，我觉得没什么意思，而且英文的诗呀我也觉得没什么意思。

Researcher: You had a very close contact with Chinese language all through these years. Is it because Chinese is very important to you or?

Daughter 22: I just love it because I think Chinese is a very beautiful language, especially the classical texts. There is something like your subtle emotion, which I think, is beyond the

expression of English. Even the advanced English, like in Shakespeare stuff I learned in high school, is not interesting. And English poems are not interesting, either. (Interview, 06/2018)

In fact, the degree of appreciation of Chinese is dependent on children's proficiency in Chinese. Given Daughter 22's sophisticated knowledge of Chinese, her desire for Chinese language maintenance is largely associated with its perceived linguistic, cultural and aesthetic value, viewed as "a very beautiful language, especially the classical texts" to convey "subtle emotion". With a comparison to Shakespeare's work and English poems, the linguistic-cultural value of Chinese is highlighted as a reason for the appreciation and maintenance of Chinese.

Moreover, Chinese heritage culture is valued because it has given children a sense of worth which nourishes and shapes their philosophy of life:

Excerpt 5.41

Researcher: 你为什么说汉语对于你的人生很重要呢？

Daughter 29: 我觉得汉语跟英文不一样，它里面包含的东西更多更广，里头有比较多的道理在读 high school 的时候，Year 11、Year 12 的 syllabus 设计的内容就会对我有很大的帮助，因为它也讲到很多价值观、人生观这方面的，还有个人的 belonging，就归属感这种东西，这个对我有很大的帮助。因为在英语就是这里 English 学的内容它就没有学这么多道理。

Researcher: Why did you say Chinese is very important to your life?

Daughter 29: I think Chinese, different from English, teaches us more and broader philosophy. For example, when I took a Chinese course in Year 11 and Year 12, the content in the syllabus was of great help to me because it refers a lot to life attitudes and values as well as the sense of belonging, which benefited me a lot, but I didn't learn such things from the English courses. (Interview, 07/2018)

For those young adults, Chinese is also seen as a valuable heritage that should be passed on to future generations:

Excerpt 5.42

Daughter 29: 我妈跟我妹说 Mandarin，我爸跟她说 Cantonese，所以我以后也想这样的方式教我孩子，他就两种语言都会嘛。我也想我以后也可以采取这个，因为我未婚夫他是北方人。

Daughter 29: My mother speaks Mandarin to my sister and my father speaks Cantonese to her, so in the future I also want to teach my own child that way, so he/she can speak two languages. I think I am able to adopt this strategy because my fiancé is from northern China [People from northern China are generally considered as Mandarin speakers with standard or desired accents. Daughter 29 is from Southern China and can speak Cantonese]. (Interview, 07/2018)

Excerpt 5.43

Daughter 28: 我觉得以后对我未来的孩子，中文也是很重要，我甚至会想让他回国读书几年这样子。

Daughter 28: I think for my future children, Chinese is also very important. I even thought of sending him back to a school in China for a few years. (Interview, 07/2018)

As mentioned above, for the children who migrated late and/or have high levels of Chinese proficiency, the Chinese language is foregrounded as being undeniably essential to being Chinese. Limited Chinese skills and English-speaking habitus are problematized by them for their 'inauthentic' representation of Chinese identity. However, the early arrivals, who normally have shown limited proficiency in Chinese, tend to demonstrate a differentiated perception about Chinese identity and Chinese language. It should be admitted that the issue of identity had not been put into the agenda for all the early-arrived children in my research because many of them were still of primary school age at the time of interview. Across the data, though, quite a few early arrivals still displayed a favourable attitude towards their Chinese identity and admitted that Chineseness is a part of their identities, but that their construction of Chineseness is not necessarily built on the Chinese language:

Excerpt 5.44

Researcher: I found you girls have more Chinese friends than white friends or friends from other countries?

Daughter 7: Because I feel more accepted for who I am when I'm hanging around with like Chinese friends because if they say something in Chinese like oh I had 饺子 (dumplings) last night then I understand oh okay, you had 饺子 (dumplings) last night. But if I'm talking to like someone that was born here and I said oh I had 包子 (Chinese steamed buns) last night they'd say what's 包子? What's this? What's that? I'm like I have to explain it and sometimes they would judge me for my looks and for my traditions because how like Chinese people are different to Australian people and like how Chinese people don't celebrate Christmas or like they think that we take New Year too seriously. But when I'm with like Daughter 12 and Celia [her Chinese classmate], I feel understood [Sic] for who I am, and they would understand my problems better than like Australian people would. So yeah. (Interview, 05/2018)

Excerpt 5.45

Researcher: Oh, why do you like Chinese festivals more than western festivals?

Son 8: I feel more belonging.

Researcher: Is it because you still feel you are more Chinese?

Son 8: Yeah. (Interview, 07/2017)

I observed that whenever Daughter 7 spoke to her mother, she frequently needed to resort to English to articulate her thoughts. Son 8 told me that he dropped Chinese class in high school because it was too difficult. For the English-speaking children such as Daughter 7 and Son 8, their limited Chinese skills did not preclude their identification as being (partly) Chinese. However, when they talked about their Chinese side, these English-speaking children rarely referred to their heritage language, but frequently resorted to a range of other things such as the sense of being accepted, consumption of food and celebration of festivals, as shown in Excerpt 5.44 and Excerpt 5.45. This identity representation resonates with Mau's (2013) research on British-Chinese children who couldn't speak much Chinese. In Mau's research, many children with limited Chinese fluency frequently constructed their sense of Chineseness through a range of cultural practices, such as the habit of eating Chinese food, the celebration of Chinese

holidays and festivals, Chinese home background, and the viewing of Chinese movies. Following Bourdieu's concept of habitus, Mu (2014a) interpreted that "[t]his habitus of Chineseness represents a system of dispositions embodied in Chinese Australians' shared tastes, behaviours, values, and way of life (p. 500).

Though without fluency in Chinese, these children still display varying forms of attachment to their Chinese identity. However, their multi-layered sense of Chinese identity is not necessarily related to the Chinese heritage language, nor is it related to China as their ethnic homeland, but more to their state of mind:

Excerpt 5.46

Daughter 10: I think- um - I am still Chinese (hesitating). But I don't have a strong attachment to China, I don't think China is my home, but I still want to visit China, there are good food and restaurants there, and fun activities, but I don't want to live there. (Interview, 10/2017)

In the interview, it was noticeable that when Daughter 10 was asked about her identity, she demonstrated an evident hesitation and uncertainty, though she ultimately identified herself as being Chinese. Meanwhile, Daughter 10's identification with being Chinese draws on her childhood memories back in China, such as there being "good food and restaurant" and "fun activities" there, rather than on the fluency of Chinese and attachment to China - the core elements of being Chinese for the late arrivals. In fact, Daughter 10 had limited experience of learning Chinese and I observed that her Chinese skills were not sufficient to conduct her daily communication with her parents. Daughter 10 also told me that she had only been brought back in China once during the 13 years of her stay in Australia.

In sum, many of these English-speaking children, most of whose education has been in Australia, still identify themselves as Chinese or partly Chinese, but display a multilayered sense of Chineseness or claim their Chineseness with a sense of uncertainty. For them, "to be or not to be a Chinese" becomes "a state of mind, a self-perception" (Shen, 2001, p. 125). This resonates with the hybrid Chineseness of Chinese migrants from South East Asia in Shen's (2001) research, where their sense of being Chinese mostly related to reminiscences of childhood, family members, festivals and food, and transcended the conventional notions of Chineseness which centred on the ethnic language and homeland.

In effect, the identity expressions of early arrival migrant Chinese children in Australia seem to be relational and contradictory. That is, on the one hand they embrace their Chinese identity and on the other hand they tend to ignore, or are reported to ignore, their Chinese identity:

Daughter 7: If they [my parents] weren't Chinese and my family weren't Chinese they wouldn't exactly mind if I don't want to learn Chinese because they wouldn't get the point of me learning Chinese and I'm pretty much just – I'm Australian. (Interview, 05/2018)

Researcher : 那你觉得, 孩子从四岁半过来, 但现在已经快 15 岁了, 他自己心里面觉得他的归属感是更是 Chinese 一些, 还是更是 Australian 一些呢?

Mother 8 : 那我告诉你, 好像那个奥运会的时候, 他加油的是 Australian, 是为澳洲队加油的, 不是中国队, 但是好了, 澳洲队怎么了, 等中国队了, 他也会说中国队加油, 其实他会认为他是一个澳洲人, 但是他知道他的根是中国。

Researcher: Son 14 came here at age four and a half and now he is going to be 15 years old. So, do you think he feels he is more Chinese belonging or Australian belonging now?

Mother 8: Let me tell you, when watching Olympic games, he cheers for Australia, not for China. But when the Australian team is not there, he cheers for the Chinese team. Actually, he thinks he is Australian, but his root is in China. (Interview, 07/2017)

Children's diasporic identities are contradictorily constructed and contextually negotiated, as evidenced by Daughter 7, who actually articulated and favoured her Chinese identity with regard to the food culture (see Excerpt 5.44), while identifying with her Australian identity as far as the home duty of learning Chinese was concerned (see Excerpt 5.47). Daughter 7 might consider her Australian identity as a legitimate reason for her not to learn Chinese. With reference to home cultural practice like festival celebrations, Son 8 claimed he was more Chinese (see Excerpt 5.45), but watching Olympic games seemed to activate his pride as Australian more than as Chinese (see Excerpt 5.48)¹²⁸. In this respect, diasporic identities, such as the sense of Chineseness among these Australians, are never static or fixed.

In addition, compared with Chinese speaking peers, the English-speaking children, most of whom arrived earlier, are more likely to exclude their Chinese identity:

[Son 25 finished year 4 in China and had been in Australia for 15 years]

Mother 25: He has one Chinese friend and they can both speak Mandarin and English. Son 25 basically doesn't really enjoy being with Chinese(D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe)(D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe)(D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe)(D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe)(D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe)(D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe)(D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe)(D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe)(D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe)(D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe)(D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe)... they don't share the same culture because his culture is Australian culture, the American culture, the western culture. He doesn't really enjoy Chinese culture. (Interview, 05/2018)

[Daughter 14 came to Australia at six.]

Mother 14 : 来的晚一点和来的早一点的孩子是隔着一层的， 他们都认同他们是 Australian， 他们不认为他们是 Chinese。

Mother 14: There is an invisible barrier between children who migrated earlier and later. They [early arrivals] all think they are Australian and not Chinese. (Interview, 05/2018)

Actually, as an age-10 arrival, Son 25's exclusion of Chinese identity is exceptional in my study. Though lacking advanced literacy skills, both Son 25 and Daughter 14 were reported to be dominant and habitual English speakers but have maintained smooth communicative skills in Chinese at home, as Mother 14 also said: 她讲汉语就一点口音都没有, 偶尔会给你丢个成语, 好惊艳啊 (She speaks Chinese without any accent. At times, she blurted out some idioms and that struck me). (Interview, 05/2018). However, both Son 25 and Daughter 14 were reported to be de-socializing with their Chinese-speaking heritage peers and also rejecting their Chinese identity. The above two excerpts have shown that their fluency in Chinese did not strengthen their sense of being Chinese. It might be their resistance to Chinese culture and lack of literacy skills that largely contributed to their rejection of Chinese identity.

In sum, this section has compared the identity representation and perceptions between late-arrived and early-arrived Chinese migrant children in Australia. The late arrivals tend to see Chinese as the undeniable embodiment of their Chinese identity and value Chinese as their cultural heritage. Firstly, proficiency in Chinese, the nuanced use of Chinese and the habitus of speaking Chinese are seen as key identifiers of authentic Chinese identity. By contrast, lacking or limited Chinese skills and the habitus of speaking English are seen as the markers of 'ABCs', whose authentic Chinese identity is challenged and problematized. It is noted that the concept of ABC is not fixed but positional and the concept of Chinese authenticity is also dynamic, relatable and contextualized. Secondly, children's positive sentiments about being Chinese are also attributed to their appreciation of Chinese as their linguistic and cultural heritage, which they hope to pass on to their children. Overall, the children who strongly link Chinese to ethnic identity generally demonstrate a high-level proficiency in Chinese.

However, the early arrived children rarely regard proficiency of Chinese as a marker of their Chinese identity. First, their Chineseness is multilayered and constructed on a range of other things such as the sense of being accepted, consumption of food, celebration of festivals and childhood memories. Their views, which see heritage language as unessential to ethnic identity, resonates with Ang (2001). Ang (2001) questioned "global Chineseness in the era of globalization" (p. 75) and insisted that "'not speaking Chinese' will stop being a problem for overseas Chinese people" and "'China', [...], will then stop being the absolute norm for 'Chineseness'" (p. 35). It is a fact that the children who detach Chinese from their Chinese identity predominantly speak English and are highly likely to have limited Chinese skills. Secondly, for the early arrivals, the representation of their Chinese identity, or diasporic identities, is contradictory, relational and contingent on various diasporic scenarios and contexts.

Thirdly, compared to the fluent Chinese speakers, the English-speaking children, most of whom are early arrivals, are more likely to reject their identity as Chinese.

The section has indicated that Chinese language proficiency, which is predicted by age of arrival, is evidently associated with specific views on language and identity. In my study, perceptions of being Chinese and the constructions of Chinese Identity, for late arrivals or habitual Chinese speakers, evidently stand in opposition to the perceptions and constructions of early arrivals or habitual English speakers. All the children who see Chinese as an undeniable part of their ethnic identity migrated at or after age 9 and have higher levels of Chinese, while all the children who see Chinese as non-essential to the Chinese identity or who reject the Chinese identity generally have limited Chinese skills especially literacy proficiency and mostly came to Australia early in their lives. This finding is consistent with Francis et al's (2014) identity analysis comparing young British-Chinese who have certain proficiency in Chinese and those with limited or no proficiency in Chinese. They found that among those with a higher level of Chinese proficiency, the skill of Chinese was overwhelmingly considered as a taken-for-granted delineator of Chinese identity or being a 'proper' and 'full' Chinese person, while among those who had limited Chinese, the lack of Chinese skills did not preclude them from identifying with their Chinese side, and their Chineseness was constructed upon a 'package' of cultural practices, such as the celebration of Chinese festivals, maintenance of customs, and the viewing of Chinese/Asian drama series.

It has also been indicated that proficiency in Chinese, is evidently associated with the strength of Chinese identity. As demonstrated in Section 5.6, the proficient Chinese users are more ready to articulate their solid sense of Chinese identity and elaborate on their sense of being 'authentic' Chinese. However, for the limited Chinese speakers, inability to speak Chinese might not preclude their identification as being Chinese, but they generally do not exhibit the same level of connection to, and passion for, the Chinese identity. For example, though both Daughters 7 and 10 admitted their Chinese side, Daughter 7 used her Australian identity as a reason for not wanting to learn Chinese and Daughter 10 was ambivalent about her Chineseness by hesitantly saying "Hum, I think I am still Chinese". Further, the children who have rejected their Chinese identity are less likely to possess high-level proficiency in Chinese. The positive relationship between Chinese heritage language proficiency and Chinese identity in this study match the findings of most existing research on language and identity: The more proficient one's heritage language is, the more affiliated one feels with the ethnic group (Joseph, 2004; Oh & Fuligni, 2010; Yu, 2015).

It has also been shown in this section that for both late and early arrivals, the balance or transformation between their Chineseness and their Australianness is dynamic, relational and

contextually constructed. As Ang (2001) argued, “central to the diasporic paradigm is the theoretical axiom that Chineseness is not a category with a fixed content – be it racial, cultural or geographical – but operates as an open and indeterminate signifier whose meanings are constantly renegotiated and rearticulated in different sections of the Chinese diaspora” (Ang, 2001, p. 38). However, the identity dynamicity of proficient and limited Chinese users is differentiated. That is, for most older arrivals, or habitual Chinese speakers, Chinese identity tends to remain a solid part of their diasporic identities, though they are nevertheless ready also to embrace their Australian identities; while for most earlier arrivals, or the limited Chinese speakers, Chinese identity is more likely to be weakened and replaced by the Australian identity.

5.7 Summary

With respect to Chinese heritage language attitudes, the 32 focal children have displayed various attitudes towards the Chinese heritage language, viewing Chinese as a chore, as difficult, as (ir)relevant, as an investment, or as a marker of identity. Children’s complexity of attitudes is dynamic, constantly evolving, contextualized and conflictual across time and space. This chapter has shown that children may display multiple attitudes towards Chinese, but these individual attitudes are generally associated with children’s age of arrival. The view of Chinese as being difficult and a chore is evidently associated with early arrival age, while the view of Chinese as being relevant, as being an investment, and as being an identity marker is associated with later arrival age.

The view of Chinese as a chore is mostly voiced by early arrivals. These children frequently regarded their literacy work as tedious, boring and an extra burden. Besides, Chinese is perceived as a difficult language to learn, especially writing and memorizing characters, and this idea is exclusively expressed by early arrived children who had limited or no formal education in China. Meanwhile, their sense of difficulty with heritage language maintenance and development is also associated with their belief in language competition and the key learning period they are in. In addition, children’s motivation to learn Chinese is also constructed on their perception of the relevance of Chinese in their immediate and future worlds. The view of Chinese as irrelevant is not necessarily associated with arrival age, while the view of Chinese as being relevant is closely associated with the late arrival children. Moreover, children frequently associated their dislike of learning Chinese with the perceived irrelevance or uselessness of Chinese, particularly in respect of high-level literacy skills in their immediate and future lives in Australia. This chapter has shown that lack of institutional and society support leads them to devalue the Chinese language. However, children’s perception of the relevance of Chinese may also be associated with their positive experiences of being language brokers. Additionally, Chinese is seen as an investment in their career, economic and academic futures. In other words, many children believe that their Chinese proficiency can open up career possibilities, which are

convertible into economic benefits. This proficiency is also seen as something that can improve their academic performance, represented by school credits. The view of language as investment is more likely to be embraced by late arrival children. Lastly, there emerged noticeable differences in identity perceptions between early and late arrived children. For late arrivals who frequently speak Chinese, Chinese language proficiency, Chinese-speaking habitus and the nuanced knowledge of Chinese are seen as fundamental to the constitution of being Chinese. Further, limited Chinese skills or lack of habitus in speaking Chinese are seen as markers of ABCs, the inauthentic embodiment of being Chinese. However, for early arrivals who predominantly speak English, inability to speak Chinese does not necessarily preclude their identification as Chinese. Their Chineseness may be constructed upon a 'package' of cultural practices related to Chinese food, festivals and customs.

This chapter has focused on the complexity of attitudes towards Chinese displayed among these focal children who arrived in Australia between age 3 and 13. The next chapter will look at their Chinese language maintenance practices during their post-migration period in the home domain.

Chapter 6: Language maintenance practices in the home

6.1 Introduction

As can be seen from Chapters 4 and 5, a wide gulf exists between parents' desire for their children's Chinese proficiency and the children's attitudes towards Chinese language learning and maintenance. This chapter shifts focus from attitudes to practices. It explores the various ways that parents adopted for their children's heritage language maintenance as well as these children's actual Chinese language practices in the home. It also examines the difficulties that these families have encountered in the implementation of their family language policies. In this chapter, 'practices' refer to the actual language use and learning that takes place, such as speaking Chinese, practising Chinese writing, and watching Chinese media entertainment.

Given parents' strong desire for Chinese language proficiency for their children, most of the families have made great efforts in maintaining and developing the children's heritage language. Based on interviews and my observations, all 32 focal children practiced Chinese at home to some extent, whether speaking or writing, whether at their parents' insistence or of their own volition. Three key themes emerged from the data analysis, and these are explored in detail below. The chapter starts with an examination of the children's language use (orality) at home (Section 6.2). It then explores the children's literacy practices at home (Section 6.3). This is then followed by a focus on the viewing of entertainment programs (Section 6.4). Finally, the chapter presents a summary of the findings (Section 6.5).

6.2 Speaking Chinese in the family

A Chinese-only family language policy at home is implemented, explicitly or implicitly, by the majority of participating families. Across the data, all interviewed parents reported that they mainly speak Chinese to their children although the children do not necessarily respond in Chinese. Nineteen children reported using Chinese with their parents, eight a mix of Chinese and English, and five children reported using English (Table 6. 1). As Table 6. 1 shows, children's preferred language with their parents is closely related to their arrival age. Their preference for Chinese correlates with later arrival age. At the same time, the majority of children – but not all – who preferred to speak English or to mix languages are early arrivals.

Among the 14 children who have siblings, only three expressed a preference for Chinese in speaking with their siblings. Seven reported speaking English only with their siblings and four reported mixing Chinese and English. In contrast to their language preference with parents which has been found to be closely related to age-on-arrival, there is no clear age pattern when it comes to language choice with siblings.

Table 6. 1 An overview of the age factor and children's language use

	Age at interview	Age on arrival	Preferred language with parents			Preferred language with siblings		
			Chinese	Chinese & English	English	Chinese	Chinese & English	English
Daughter 1	28	3			√			
Daughter 2	7	4	√				√	
Son 3	9	4			√			√
Daughter 4	9	4			√			
Son 5	11	4		√			√	
Son 6	7	5		√				
Daughter 7	10	5			√			√
Son 8	15	5	√					√
Daughter 9	15	5		√				√
Daughter 10	18	5			√			√
Son 15	10	5	√					√
Son 11	10	6		√				√
Daughter 12	10	6	√					
Daughter 14	24	6		√				
Son 13	8	7	√					
Daughter 15	12	7		√				√
Son 16	15	7	√				√	
Daughter 17	10	8	√					
Daughter 18	9	8		√				
Son 19	11	8	√					
Son 20	10	9	√			√		
Daughter 21	13	9		√				
Daughter 22	23	9	√					√
Son 23	12	10	√					

	Age at interview	Age on arrival	Preferred language with parents			Preferred language with siblings		
			Chinese	Chinese & English	English	Chinese	Chinese & English	English
Daughter 24	23	10	√					
Son 25	25	10	√					
Son 26	12	10	√					
Daughter 27	21	11	√					
Daughter 28	23	13	√					
Daughter 29	24	13	√					√
Daughter 30	19	13	√			√		
Son 31	18	13	√				√	

From the perspective of the parents, speaking Chinese at home constitutes their primary strategy in their efforts to help their children maintain their communicative skills in Chinese. All the interviewed parents stated that they predominantly spoke Chinese to their children. To ensure their children only speak Chinese at home, these families adopted different family policies, as the following excerpts show:

Excerpt 6.1

Mother 11 : 我在家没有给他们制定规矩，我只是在家里就不说英文，他跟我说英文我不回答他呀，就听不到。

Mother 11: I didn't make an explicit rule that they should speak Chinese at home, but I just don't speak English at home. When he spoke English to me, I didn't reply, as if I didn't hear. (Interview, 06/2017)

Excerpt 6.2

Father 15: They [Daughter 15 and Son 15] have to [speak Chinese]. I always say, 'no English at home'. They are not allowed to speak English to each other. When they speak English, I say 'stop'.

Researcher: Will Mother 15 say 'stop'?

Father 15: Mum says 'stop' too. We always say 'speak Chinese, Chinese, where's your Chinese? You need to speak Chinese'. (Interview, 10/2017)

Excerpt 6.3

Mother 3: Now he is required to only speak Chinese at home. We said that you should make a good model for your younger brother, so your younger brother can also improve his Chinese. (Fieldnotes, 12/2017)

Excerpt 6.1, Excerpt 6.2 and Excerpt 6.3 are typical in terms of the tension between family language policy and the actual language, or languages, used. Almost all participating parents stated that they made a rule of only speaking Chinese at home, particularly in communicating with their children, but children such as Son 11 at times replied to his parents in English, and they (Son 11, Daughter 15, Son 15 and Son 3) predominantly spoke to their siblings in English (Table 6. 1). Across the data, eleven children reported using a mix of Chinese and English, and five children used English only when speaking to their parents (Table 6. 1). This means that the patterns of actual language use of many children may deviate from their parents' expectations and plans. As these children started school, a noticeable increase in the use of English occurred, at the expense of Chinese. For the children who came to Australia before they reached school age, English may noticeably take the place of Chinese within one or two years of schooling in Australia, despite the parents' best efforts:

Excerpt 6.4

Mother 10 : 刚来时学校基本都是中国孩子和印度孩子，基本上小孩在学校里用汉语交流。后来，小孩交流时候，就夹杂着英语在一起，都是开始很慢的英文，就中文，英文这样夹杂着，半年以后，小孩都基本用英语可以交流了，他们自己之间用英文交流了。后来到她三、四年级的时候吧，她回给我们的都是英文了。

Mother 10: When we first came here, her school was full of Chinese and Indian kids. Daughter 10 spoke Chinese to other children in school. Gradually they spoke Chinese with English words slowly; and then they used a mixture of both Chinese and English. Half a year later, the children communicated with each other in English and they could do that. When she was in Year 3 and 4, she replied to us all in English. (Interview, 07/2017)

Excerpt 6.5

Mother 3 : 我觉得就慢慢就发现他，我即使跟他说中文，他回答我也是英文，大概是二年级的时候他基本上用英文回我的，因为他好像认定这个是他的语言。

Mother 3: Gradually I found that even though I spoke Chinese to him, he replied to me in English. I think from year 2 he almost always replied to me in English because he seemed to regard English as his language. (Interview, 7/2017)

There is a noticeable tension between the children's actual language use and the parents' language policy at home. Children such as Daughter 10 and Son 3 who arrived at age 5, are more likely to reply to their parents partly or completely in English, irrespective of their parent's stated requirement that they speak Chinese. Furthermore, English seems to become the only, or the main, language between the children and their siblings once these children have a command of spoken English. Across my data, for most of the 14 children who have siblings in Australia, English is reported to be largely, or

habitually, used between siblings within one or two years of arrival in Australia, as shown in the following example:

Excerpt 6.6

Mother 7 : 基本过了一年, 她说很多英语了, 而且因为她默认为, 她姐姐应该说英语。所以她就跟她姐, 从来跟她姐说话都是英语。

Mother 7: One year after we came to Australia, she could speak lots of English. What's more, she tacitly considered English as her elder sister's language; and so, they just spoke English to each other from then on. (Interview, 05/2018)

Excerpt 6.7

Researcher: Oh, from when did you start speaking English with your sister [elder sister]?

Daughter 7: Ever since I knew how to speak English.

Researcher: So, does your sister like talking with you in English?

Daughter 7: Yeah. But if she's angry at me, then she'll shout at me in Chinese and be really serious and stuff. But if we're just playing and she's being nice to me then we will talk English. (Interview, 05/2018)

Excerpt 6.8

Daughter 22 : 在家里头跟我的兄弟姐妹说英文比较多, 他们不太会说汉语的, 我弟弟呢是在这边出生的, 我哥哥和我一样是差不多中学过来的, 但他不跟我说汉语的, 因为我哥哥已经完全西方化了。

Daughter 22: I mostly speak English to my sisters and brothers because they couldn't really speak Chinese. My younger brother was born here. My elder brother came here around late primary age like me, but he doesn't speak Chinese to me because he is completely westernized. (Interview, 05/2018)

Many of these children, within one or two years of their arrival in Australian schools, consider English as 'their language' (see Excerpt 6.5, Excerpt 6.6, and Excerpt 6.7), or as the 'main language' (cf. Excerpt 5.16). This swift language shift is in line with Zhang's (2008) findings regarding Chinese children in the US, where "after one or two years at American schools, they not only overcome the language barrier, though not without difficulty, but also show a clear inclination to treat English as their dominant language" (p. 88). In fact, the increased use of English at home is found to be the major sign of Chinese language attrition:

Excerpt 6.9

Researcher: You don't speak Chinese to your parents?

Daughter 10: Because I can't, I can't speak a full sentence.

Researcher: You can't speak a full sentence?

Daughter 10: I think I can, but sometimes I just don't know the right words, and I would put English words into my sentence.

Researcher: How old were you when you began to speak more English to your parents?

Daughter 10: I think it was year 2.

Researcher: Was it at that time, your English was more fluent than your Chinese?

Daughter 10: Yeah. (Interview, 11/2017)

Excerpt 6.10

Father 15: They understand why parents push them [to speak Chinese]; but they, of course, they got into habit of speaking English. I think in their mind, their mind is wired in English, not in Chinese. (Interview, 10/2017)

Actually, children's deteriorating Chinese skills present significant obstacles to parents' attempts to enforce a Chinese-only policy in the family:

Excerpt 6.11

Mother 7 : 开始的时候, 我们鼓励她在家里多说英语, 慢慢发觉她英语上去了, 汉语不行了, 所以就说, 别在家里再说英语了, 在家里说汉语, 后来规定也不好用了, 就是她已经不能用汉语来解释了。就是, 有的时候你会问她, 在学校里学了什么东西。她用汉语很费劲。

Mother 7: At the very beginning, we encouraged her to speak English at home. Gradually when her English got better, I noticed that her Chinese got worse. So, I asked her to speak Chinese rather than English at home, but later this rule didn't work well, because she couldn't explain herself in Chinese. For example, when I at times asked her what she learned at school, she had significant difficulties in using Chinese. (Interview, 05/2018)

Excerpt 6.12

Researcher : 很小的时候, 有试着让她讲中文吗?

Mother 1 : 我们原来做过, 就说她不说中国话, 不准她吃饭, 第一天不吃你第二天总不能还不吃吧, 所以就放弃了。她就跟我讲了一下, 她说妈妈我不知道怎么讲, 说得很有道理, 我不能不让她吃饭。

Researcher: Did you ever try to let her speak Chinese when she was small?

Mother 1: We did it. We didn't allow her to eat if she didn't speak Chinese. The first day she was not allowed to eat, but we couldn't do that the second day; so, we gave up. Daughter 1 said to me: mom, I don't know how to express it in Chinese. I thought she was reasonable, because I couldn't starve her for not speaking Chinese. (Interview, 12/2017)

In addition to this, children's vocabulary repertoires, resulting from their transnational experiences, constitute another cause of children's language shift, or increased use of English at home.

Excerpt 6.13

Daughter 21: To my mum, I sometimes speak English, sometimes Chinese, sometimes I speak Chinglish so like you speak English and something that you can't translate into English you speak in Chinese. Sometimes you're speaking in Chinese and then there's something – say like someone's name you have to say in English for something that you don't know what it's called in Chinese, you speak English so yeah, it's a mixture of both for my mum. (Interview, 11/2017)

While early-arrival children favour English despite their parents' insistence on Chinese, late arrivals are likely to maintain the habit of speaking Chinese to their parents (Table 6. 1). Admittedly, even among those children who reported speaking Chinese to their parents, I observed a few who frequently

resorted to English at home to express themselves. Just as a preference for English in the family correlates with early arrival in Australia, the maintenance of a Chinese-speaking habitus correlates with late arrival. In other words, their prior skills and habits of speaking Chinese play a significant role in enabling them to withstand the assimilative force of the English dominant society.

Excerpt 6.14

Son 19 : 在学校基本上就不讲中文了在, 家里那肯定讲中文, 而且他甚至不愿意跟我讲英文, 我要跟他讲英文, 他说, 哎, 你不要讲英文, 讲中文, 我们俩之间说中文就好了。嗨, Son 19, 你为什么要跟妈妈讲中文, 不讲英文?

Son 19 : 习惯了。

Mother 19 : 他就说他习惯了, 他看着我自然就会讲中文, 跟别人讲英文。

Mother 19: There is almost no chance of speaking Chinese in school, so he is required to speak Chinese at home. Actually, he is not willing to speak English with me. Sometimes I spoke English to him, he said, "Hey, please don't speak English, speak Chinese and we speak Chinese." Hi, Son 19, why do you speak Chinese to me rather than English? [Son 19 is in another room at home]

Son 19: I got used to it.

Mother 19: He said he got used to it. Whenever he saw me, Chinese jumped out. He speaks English to other people. (Interview with Mother 19, 10/2017)

Children's Chinese speaking habitus with their parents might also be related to children's negative views of the 'limited' English skills or 'inauthentic' accent of their parents, as these excerpts show:

Excerpt 6.15

Mother 12 : 我们在这边说汉语, 我不跟她说英语的, 她也嫌弃我的英语发音不好, 我一张嘴说英语她就说, 你不要说了。她就觉得我说英文很丢脸嘛, 真的。现在我和他老爸一说英语她就鄙视我们。

Mother 12: We speak Chinese. I don't speak English with her as she also despises my English pronunciation. Whenever I opened my mouth to speak English, she would say, "Don't speak English." She really thinks my spoken English would disgrace her. Now whenever her father and I speak English, she despises us. (Interview with Mother 12, 06/2017)

Excerpt 6.16

Researcher : 你在家跟你妈说英文还是中文?

Daughter 12 : Usually 说中文的。

Researcher : 跟妈妈说过英文吗?

Daughter 12 : 有时候说英文(笑)只是她英文说得不那么好。她帮我听写的时候, 她说一个字, 我不知道是什么, 后面说清楚了, 我才知道, 那个噢。她很多时候说话都会让我在那里笑得要命。

Researcher : 那你跟你爸是说英语还是说汉语呀?

Daughter 12 : 汉语吧, 他英语也没那么好。他们知道很多字, 但是他们的 pronunciation 不好。

Researcher: Do you speak English or Chinese to your mother?

Daughter 12: I usually speak Chinese to her.

Researcher: Did you ever speak English to your mother?

Daughter 12: Occasionally, but she doesn't speak good English. When she helped me to do dictation, she sometimes uttered a word, and I didn't know what it was. When she finally made herself understood, I, oh, my! There are many times that her English made me laugh my head off.

Researcher: Do you speak English or Chinese to your dad?

Daughter 12: Chinese. My dad's English is not good either. They know a lot of words, but their pronunciation is not good. (Interview with Daughter 12, 06/2017)

In sum, Chinese is identified, whether explicitly or implicitly, by these parents as the home language that children should speak with their family members. Children's compliance with parental family language policy, in turn, is closely associated with their age of arrival. For early-arrival children, there is a noticeable tension between children's actual language use and parents' language policy at home. For these children, English may be used increasingly or may even take the place of Chinese, becoming the dominant language children use at home. The increased use of English at home may be a factor contributing to children's rapid heritage language attrition. Most children who arrived late have a firmer grasp of Chinese, can withstand the pressures against language shift and can mostly maintain the habitus of speaking Chinese with their parents, irrespective of how long they stay in Australia. Children's language use with their siblings, however, seems to have little to do with their age of arrival. Across the data, English predominates between siblings once these children have a sufficient command of English.

6.3 Practising Chinese writing at home

Twenty-seven of the 32 focal children engaged in some Chinese literacy practice at home: 23 children practised Chinese reading and writing under their parents' supervision and four children did so of their own volition.

Parents in the study have a strong desire for their children to be able to read and write in Chinese and they regard Chinese literacy skills as crucial for the success or failure of their heritage language maintenance efforts. Thus, parents invest significant efforts to support their children's Chinese literacy study through practice at home (for Chinese literacy learning outside the home, see Chapter 7). To systematically enforce their family language policy, parents use a variety of linguistic resources, such as Chinese textbooks and reading materials, to promote the development of their children's literacy skills. Children's home literacy practice mainly includes writing Chinese characters, copying Chinese texts, working on math problems in Chinese and reading Chinese literature. Setting homework for their children is an important method that parents employ to facilitate home literacy practice.

In addition, Chinese textbooks especially Chinese language textbooks brought from China, are commonly used by parents as resources for teaching, and to supplement homework tasks.

Excerpt 6.17

Researcher: So, what kind of Chinese work do you ask them to do at home?

Father 15: Read textbook, yeah. Have you seen those Chinese textbooks for Year 3? They need to read them every day. Sometimes I ask them to write a short paragraph like 100 words and read for me... And for math we give them like maybe one unit a day. (Interview, 10/2017)

Excerpt 6.18

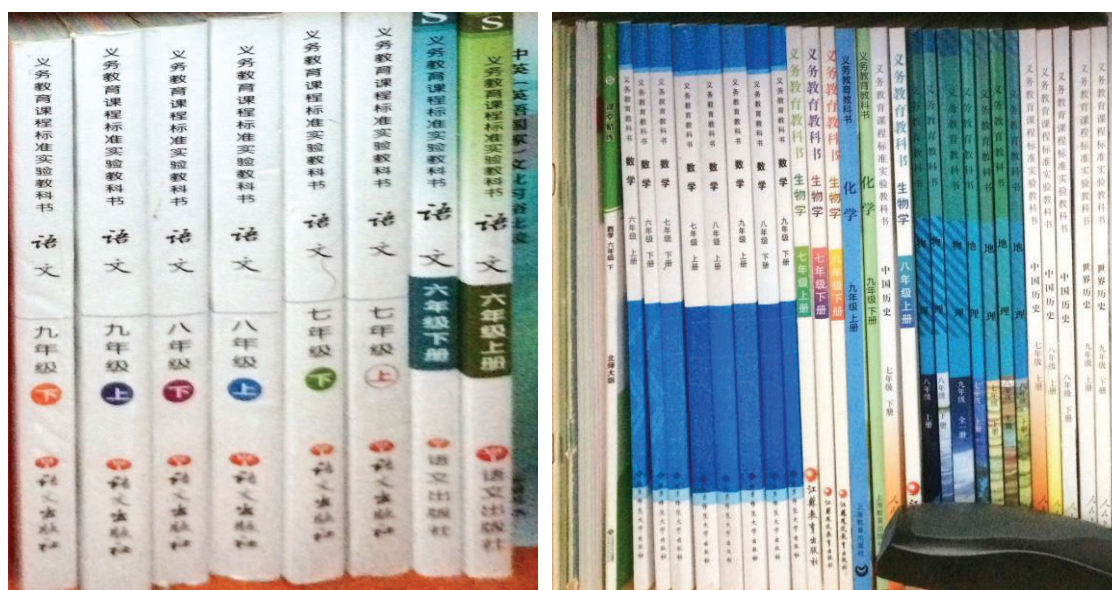
Researcher: 哇，你们书柜里有这么汉语书，还有中国的教材，哇，还有八、九年级的呢。

Mother 21: 这是给她未来的嘛。这都没有看，这是后备来的。

Researcher: Wow, you had so many Chinese books on the shelf, and also many Chinese textbooks! Wow, the textbooks of year 8 and year 9! (Surprised)

Mother 21: These are for her future reading. She has not read them so far. They are just prepared in advance. (Interview, 11/2017)

Figure 6. 1 Photo of Daughter 21's high-school Chinese textbooks covering different subject areas



Actually, many parents in my study reported that they used Chinese textbooks to maintain and develop their children's heritage language. During the interview conducted at Daughter 21's home, what impressed me the most was the number of Chinese books, including Chinese textbooks and literature, on the family's bookshelves. The richness of this library of Chinese books evidenced Parent 21's strong aspiration for her child's Chinese language learning and knowledge building, and her considerable efforts in that regard. As evident from the above figure (Figure 6. 1), Daughter 21's Chinese textbooks cover quite a few subjects, such as Chinese language, math, biology, chemistry, physics, geography and history. This observation is similar to previous research, where it was found

that the use of Chinese textbooks is regarded by parents as an important teaching resource which can facilitate their home tutoring of Chinese (G. Li, 2006a, 2007; D. Zhang, 2008; D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009).

Besides Chinese language textbooks, Chinese textbooks and workbooks in math are also foregrounded as important resources to advance children's math performance as well as maintain their Chinese language ability.

Excerpt 6.19

Mother 13: 他的学习这一块，我们想了一个比较笨的办法，就是买的那个国内的同年龄层的那个数学的这个黄冈小状元练习册，这个《黄冈小状元》也是很系统的一套东西。每天写半面，让他养成一个学习的习惯，然后又可以练中文的阅读，而且我们也要求他用汉语写、答题，他不会写我会告诉他因。为我老公就很怕她，就跟你们一样，怕她将来不懂中文，那我说你把这个东西啃下来，你中文阅读没有问题呀。

Mother 13: As to his academic performance, we adopted a silly method – that is we bought the age-appropriate math workbook named *Wonder Kid of Huanggang* used in China. That set of math workbooks is systematically compiled. Son 13 is required to finish half a page every day because we want him to form a good study habit. At the same time, he can practise his Chinese reading and writing because he is also required to answer the questions in Chinese. If he has some words he doesn't know how to write, we would tell him. My husband, just like you, was very afraid that our child will forget his Chinese; so, I think if he could read all of these books, he wouldn't have a reading problem. (Interview, 06/2017)

[Note: *Wonder Kid in Huanggang* (《黄冈小状元》) is one of the series of popular workbooks named after the Chinese city of *Huanggang* which is well-known for having the top scorers in *Gaokao*.]

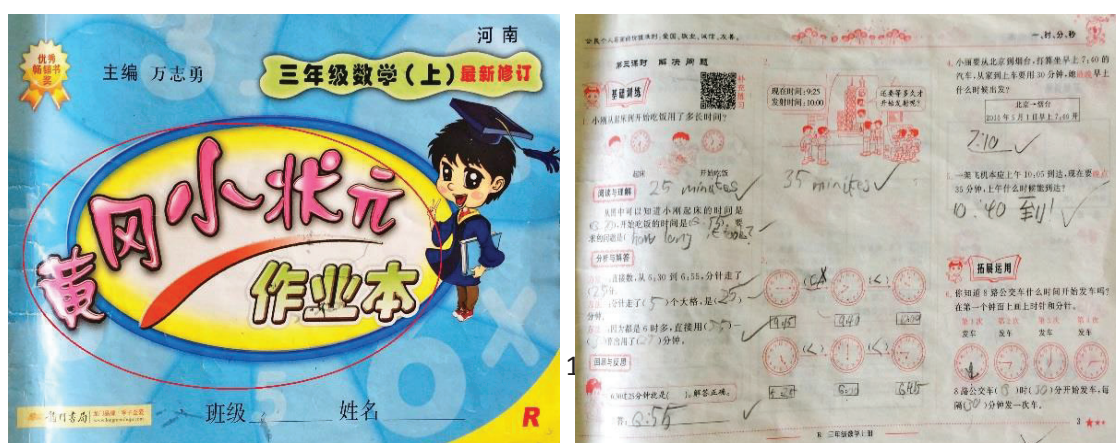
Excerpt 6.20

Mother 7: 我们在淘宝上买的数学卷子，中文的，我自己认为可以一举两得的。既可以学点汉语，让她看明白那个题意，又可以做数学题。

Mother 7: We bought these Chinese math papers in Taobao, and I think it could kill two birds with one stone; so, she could learn some Chinese by reading and practicing her math problems. (Interview, 04/2018)

[Note: *Taobao* (淘宝网), owned by Alibaba, is the most popular Chinese online shopping website in China and also the world's biggest e-commerce website.]

Figure 6. 2 Photo of Son 13's *Wonder Kid of Huanggang* textbook and his worksheet



Chinese math textbooks are used by parents as good resources, both for their children's Chinese learning and for their math practice in Australia. These parents' expectation that math books will serve a dual function is also reported by previous research conducted in America (D. Zhang, 2008, p. 119; D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009, p. 87). In fact, the various strategies and resources used by parents in maintaining Chinese heritage language resonate with G. Li's (G. Li, 2002, 2006a, 2006b, 2007) research, where parents mainly used various textbooks and other print materials they bought from China to develop their children's Chinese literacy and numeracy as well as to build up their general knowledge.

Having their children do additional homework is an important method parents employ to enforce home literacy practice. Family language practice typically focusses on reading story books, copying Chinese texts and practising calligraphy.

Excerpt 6.21

Daughter 27 : 我能看得懂《围城》。因为我来这边之后，刚过来那个两年，我妈一直不停让我看一些书，我妈 force 我抄写一些作文，都是她逼我抄。然后让我自己写一些看了这个的读后感之类的。我肯定不愿意，但是，因为她会看，所以我就要写，所以我的汉语来了这后还有进步的。

Daughter 27: I can read the novel *Fortress Besieged* because during the first two years after I came here my mother kept making me read books. My mother forced me to copy some articles and made me write reviews of the books. These are all forced by her and I definitely didn't want to do them, but she would check, so, I had to write. That's why my Chinese is still progressing even after I came here. (Interview, 05/2018)

Excerpt 6.22

Daughter 7: In Year 2 she would just make me do some *pinyin* work like read it or something but like later on she made me write Chinese like she would give me a story and then she would make me copy the words onto a booklet and then she would make me read the words on the book. And they'd also have *pinyin* on them so if there was a word I didn't know she would make me sound it out with the *pinyin*. (Interview, 05/2018)

[Note: *Pinyin* (拼音) is the pronunciation system of Chinese characters.]

Across the data, and also evidenced in Excerpt 6.21 and Excerpt 6.22, Chinese parents are keen on homework assignments as a strategy to develop their children's Chinese language. However, it is widely reported that these homework tasks, especially writing, cause tension in the family. Parents' insistence is constantly resisted by children, as shown above. Setting homework is a widely adopted method employed by Chinese parents to foster and maintain family language practice. However, the tension between parents' maintenance efforts and the children's resistance to these efforts has

constituted a major hindrance to the success of family language policy (see Curdt-Christiansen, 2013; G. Li, 2002, 2006b; D. Zhang, 2008; D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009; J. Zhang, 2009). For example, most Chinese children in D. Zhang's (2008) ethnographic research felt that Chinese was something they had to learn to obey their parents, yet they themselves considered it as a useless language in the US. This tension will be further illustrated in Excerpt 6.24 and Excerpt 6.25.

Besides the textbooks, print materials such as story books are used by parents to strengthen their children's literacy skills, but these are mostly utilized by parents whose children have a good foundation of Chinese. These reading materials present meaningful resources to arouse children's interest and then advance their Chinese proficiency.

Excerpt 6.23

Mother 26 : 基本上每次知道谁要回国我们都要买一些中文书拖人带过来, 他第一年来的时候就把四大名著看完了, 这边中文书太少了, 我当时就把四大名著给他带了。我鼓励他看小说, 先从兴趣开始, 他喜欢金庸小说, 来之后看了有好几套了吧。他在这边中文也是有在提高, 在理解上来说, 还有所谓知识面来说, 还是比以前有所提高, 但是写作不行。

Mother 26: Every time I know my friends go back to China I ask them to bring Chinese books. Son 26 read all the Four Great Classic Novels during the first year in Australia. I brought the Four Great Classic Novels when I first came here. There are too few Chinese books available in Australia. I encourage him to read novels, from the books he likes. He likes *Gongfu* [功夫, Chinese martial arts] novels written by *Jinyong* [金庸] and has read quite a few sets since he came to Australia. So, his Chinese still improves in Australia from the aspect of comprehension proficiency and knowledge structure, but not in his essay writing. (Interview, 07/2018)

[Note: *Jinyong* 金庸 is a well-known *Gongfu* novelist in Hongkong and his novels are top-selling products among teenagers and young adults in mainland China.]

Across the data, most parents evidently consider their children's literacy proficiency the crucial marker of the success or failure of their family language policy. These parents such as Mother 26 related the reading and writing skills to their children's language proficiency and displayed a strong desire for developing their children's literacy skills. Specifically, they constantly correlated the high-level proficiency with the ability to read the Chinese classics, children's literatures or popular *Gongfu* novels as shown in Excerpt 6.23 and elsewhere (see Chapter 4). At the same time, they were keen on their children's writing skills and many parents took great efforts in pushing their children to write small essays and practise calligraphy, but widely reported poor results (see Excerpt 6.23, Excerpt 6.24 and Excerpt 6.28). There are 14 parents who reportedly used Chinese literature to facilitate their children's Chinese learning. As evidenced in Excerpt 6.23, literature greatly facilitates the further development of Son 26's Chinese language proficiency and fosters in him positive attitudes towards Chinese reading.

For the four children who practised Chinese literacy of their own volition, reading Chinese literature constitute the main strategy to improve their heritage language (see details at the end of the section).

However, the four children who enjoyed reading Chinese literature, and who did so of their own accord, are the exception. Typically, children's literacy practice is pushed by their parents. This frequently results in tensions between children's resistance and parents' aspirations. Parents' enforcement of home literacy practice has encountered significant obstacles, which include not only children's resistance but also lack of societal support and parents' own dual expectations. Most noticeable is the distinctive tension between parents' literacy requirements and children's resistance (see also Excerpt 6.21). Across the data, children clearly displayed unfavorable or resistant attitudes towards the literacy homework assigned by their parents (see also Chapter 5):

Excerpt 6.24

Mother 13: 不愿意呀，我儿子又不爱学习的嘛，他爸爸会说你的字写的太难看，你给我写写...会这样，爸爸比较强调这个。

Mother 13: Of course not, my son doesn't like studying and his dad at times got annoyed and said: Oh, your handwriting looks so ugly, you must write, write and write...like this, his dad attaches more importance to this. (Interview, 06/2017)

Excerpt 6.25

Son 26 : 差不多抄一篇就一个点，就按我妈的要求。最近有两天，我妈忘了检查，但是我就瞒着我妈。我就没提这事，不知道我妈会不会发现。(笑)

Son 26: If I do it as my mother requires, I need an hour every day to finish copying one article. I did a little bit of cheating recently. There were two days when my mother forgot to check my work and I didn't remind her of course. Um, I don't know if she will remember or not? (Smile) (Interview, 07/2018)

Excerpt 6.26

Daughter 21: I think that I would spend maybe an hour doing that even though I –

Researcher: An hour a day doing the diary?

Daughter 21: Yeah, even though it was 200 words, that diary, I would do that diary because one, because I procrastinate a lot, two, because I didn't want to do it so I would just write a few words and look around, play some games. (Interview, 10/2017)

As evident from Excerpt 6.24, Excerpt 6.25 and Excerpt 6.26, the parents' desire for, and efforts in fostering, their children's Chinese language learning are constantly met with the children's resistance or deliberate procrastination. Children's objection seems to present a big challenge for parents in their attempts to implement home literacy practice. This tension pervasive in my research echoes Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe's (2009) observation that "HL maintenance has become a subject of heated argument between parents and children in some Chinese immigrant families (p. 90). In fact, despite parental efforts, children's refusal to speak Chinese hinders the enactment of family language policy and accelerates their language attrition (see G. Li, 2006b; J. Zhang, 2009).

Another factor that poses a challenge for individual families is the lack of societal support, which constitutes another significant difficulty with regard to their language maintenance efforts. Across the data, though most parents have the intention, and are willing to make efforts to pass on the heritage language to their children, the English dominant context is a strong assimilative force that imposes on individual parents huge difficulties and makes it hard to implement their well-laid plans for heritage language maintenance.

Excerpt 6.27

Mother 19: 刚来时，一开始我就说，你就好好的，反正你就别落下啊，看国内怎么样，我们也那个。但是后来就坚持不下去了。

Researcher: 那你是怎么教他的？

Mother 19 : 就正常，比如说国内学什么，你就跟着往下学就是了呗。

Researcher: 那你们过来坚持有多长时间？

Mother 19: 有坚持有一年。其实起初是每天的都要学点汉语。那慢慢慢慢由每天做变成有两天做一次喽，然后变成三天做一次，又变成一周做了一次了，再后来，现在就没有了。

Mother 19: When we came here, at the very beginning, I said, “We need to take care of your Chinese and stop it lagging behind; we just do Chinese as children in China do.” But in the end, I couldn’t stick to it any longer.

Researcher: How did you teach him ?

Mother 19: Just the normal way as children are taught in China. Just learn the materials children used in China.

Researcher: How long did you do that?

Mother 19: I kept doing this for around a year. Actually, at the very beginning, we did it every day, then once every two days, then every three days, and then every week. And in the end, we did nothing. (Interview, 10/2017)

Excerpt 6.28

Mother 8: Child 8 其实他从 kindergarten 的时候，他放学回到家我会教，每天教他 2 个汉字。我要他记住了，要会念，要会写，要会组词。然后我们坚持了两年，两年，但是后来就发现就是说好像学到后面，前面的好像不记得了，然后后来我就觉得是，因为后来我们就只要认字其实那是不够的，你要不停的写，还要读相关的那些什么的书，所以我后来就觉得，哎，坚持不住了。然后我家里人就说算了，他会说汉语，然后能认一点就好了... 这个方面的标准又降低了... 我觉得语言还是要讲环境的，我跟他说汉语可以，要教会他读和写是很难的，就是你教会他写个什么的，没有这个环境，他一回到学校，又是讲英文了，所以很难的，所以呢，我现在不奢求他能读，能写多少，但是最少要能讲。

Mother 8: When Child 8 was in kindergarten, I taught him two Chinese characters every day after school. I required him to remember them, to know how to read, write and make phrases with them. We kept doing that for two years, two years; but at the end, I found when he learned the new characters, he forgot the old ones and I was increasingly disappointed. I realized that learning the characters alone is far from enough. He should keep writing a lot and reading related books. In the end, I felt I couldn’t hold on any longer. Then my family said, “It’s ok to let it go, at least he can

speak Chinese and knows a few characters”. So, the standard had to be lowered... I think language needs environment. I can speak Chinese to him but, you know, to teach him how to write and read is very difficult, because there is no environment. Even if you have taught them some, they switch to English once they go to school; so, it is very difficult. That’s why I won’t dream of them [Son 8 and his younger brother] reading and writing much, but at least they should know how to speak. (Interview, 07/2017)

As evident from Excerpt 6.27 and Excerpt 6.28, both Mother 19 and Mother 8, despite their efforts in Chinese maintenance, feel overwhelmed by the assimilative force of the mainstream school and wider English society. As Mother 8 said, “I felt I couldn’t hold on any longer... it is very difficult...there is no environment”. As J. Wang (2012) stated, “Individual parents often find themselves overpowered by the challenging task or succumb to the English-Only language ideology prevalent in the host country” (p. 187). Therefore, due to lack of institutional and societal support, Mother 8 succumbed to the English dominant society by giving up on their literacy work, just like Mother 19, or at least lowered her expectations regarding her children’s Chinese language attainment. As Mother 8 said, “I won’t dream of them reading and writing much, but at least they can speak”. This sense of helplessness in relation to English assimilation and heritage language attrition is also echoed in Shin’s (2006) research, where “parents would like their children to grow up fluent in both Korean and English, but often feel powerless to change the ‘natural’ course of language shift in their children”(p. 141). As D. Zhang (2008) stated, “[t]he consequence is that although they might still hold values to [Sic] their heritage language, they cannot keep up the maintenance efforts when fighting against the countercurrent by themselves” (p. 187). This is also consistent with G. Li’s (2006b) research, where parents’ actions often did not match their beliefs when they encountered different barriers, due to the lack of mainstream school and societal support.

Despite the good intentions and great efforts regarding children’s heritage language proficiency, the onus of Chinese heritage language maintenance solely rests on families, and this becomes a laborious task which is hardly carried out consistently:

Excerpt 6.29

Mother 7 : 二年级的时候, 我跟 Mother 12 两个, 我们两个教。因为在家里教她不听。所以我们就把她们两个人放在一块, 教她们写字, 效果还行。然后, 后来那个 Daughter 4 她姥爷从中国来了, 他姥爷就把这个活全部拿过过去了。然后, 她姥爷就组织这四个中文孩子, 坚持了半年, 每周学一个小时, 那老爷子教他们背那个《弟子规》。就他们四个在那学得还挺好的。后来他姥爷走了就没人教了...后来人家 Daughter 12 有一段时间坚持得挺好的, 她妈妈让她抄课文 ...过了一阵大家都停了, 汉语又都不行了。

Mother 7: When they were in grade 2, Mother 12 and I taught both of them. Because they didn’t listen when we taught them respectively at home, we grouped them together and taught them how to write characters and it worked well. Later, when Daughter 4’s grandpa came from China, he took this job and grouped four children together for Chinese learning, an hour per week. The grandpa taught them to recite 弟子规

(*Dizigui*) and they learned a lot. We stuck to this activity for half a year until the grandpa went back to China, then nobody could teach them ... Daughter 12's mother kept teaching Daughter 12 for quite a while and asked her to copy texts...but later on, we all stopped and their Chinese got worse again. (Interview, 05/2018)

Note: *Dizigui* (弟子规), a Chinese classic (written in Qing Dynasty in the form of rhyming three-character verses) based on Confucius philosophy, teaches the basic moral values and virtues of being a good person. The verses of *Dizigui* have been requested to recite for young of China for thousands of years and is also taught in many primary schools in China today.

Besides maintenance efforts by individual families, the concerted efforts among different families are also emergent in the data. Though grouping children together seems to boost their learning interests and positively contribute to their Chinese learning, this informal alliance is vulnerable to various difficulties and obstacles emergent in migration contexts, and it is difficult to sustain on a long-term basis. In fact, “[h]eritage language development for language minority children in an English-dominant environment requires tremendous effort and perseverance” (J. Wang, 2012, p. 187). Thus, “in a context where the onus essentially rests on the family, raising children bilingually can be a laborious task” (Motaghi-Tabari, 2016, p. 201).

Furthermore, parents’ dual expectations, that is, their aspirations regarding their children’s Chinese language proficiency and school success, present a barrier which can hinder their continued maintenance efforts. Across my data, though parents value Chinese greatly, they frequently suspended children’s heritage language learning activities to make way for their English learning or high-stakes assessments.

Excerpt 6.30

Researcher: So, do you still do it [learning Chinese] now?

Daughter 7: No, not really.

Researcher: Why not?

Daughter 7: My mum mainly wants me to focus on my NAPLAN, my selective school right now. (Interview with Daughter 7, 05/2017)

Excerpt 6.31

Mother 7 : 汉语肯定还得继续。但是，我目前来说，主要是备战 Selective school.

Mother 7: Of course, we will continue learning Chinese, but now we need to fully concentrate on the Selective School test. (Interview with Mother 7, 05/2017)

Excerpt 6.32

Researcher : 学中文我以前有在学，我妈说精英考试不考中文只考英文，让我多学点英文，不用学中文。考试之后她再让我学中文。

Son 19: I did learn Chinese, but my mother said the Selective Test is all in English rather than Chinese, so she asked me to learn more English and stops learning Chinese. She said she will let me learn Chinese again after the test. (Interview, 10/2017)

As evident from Excerpt 6.31 and Excerpt 6.32, parents generally attach importance to their children's Chinese learning, but they fear that the time spent on Chinese language learning will jeopardise children's academic success in more immediate high-stakes assessments such as NAPLAN and/or the Selective High School test. NAPLAN (The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy) is a series of academic assessment focussing on basic skills such as reading, writing, language (spelling, grammar and punctuation) and numeracy. This assessment is administered annually to Australian students of grade 3, 5, 7, and 9. The Selective High School Placement Test is a test for admission into highly competitive public schools for high-achieving and gifted students. The dual expectations of Chinese language maintenance and school success constitute a significant hindrance to parents' consistent efforts (also see G. Li, 2006b; J. Wang, 2012). In my data, what seems to dominate is the desire to excel in English-dominant schools, and this results in the compromise with respect to the continued learning of Chinese. As Son 19 claimed, "I did learn Chinese... she will let me learn it again after the test". As J. Wang stated, "One side of such a dual expectation (usually the side that leads to achievement in the dominant society) may often, if not always, prevail over the other" (J. Wang, 2012, p. 18). Actually, in the formative years of children's heritage language development, parental preference for, or choice of, English further contributes to the inferior status of the Chinese language, and this is detrimental to children's motivation to maintain and develop their heritage language. Parental pressure for children to succeed on standardized tests that are built on English-only principles contributes to accelerating the rate of heritage language loss in immigrant children (Shin, 2006).

The data in this study frequently shows that if parents conclude that learning Chinese is at odds with learning English, English will be prioritized. In other words, learning Chinese is only sustained if it is done at no cost to children's academic success in schools, as shown in my two interviews with Mother 3 at an interval of six months:

Excerpt 6.33

Researcher : 你在汉语这块有没有给他做过什么计划？

Mother 3 : 之前我们也都有花时间在教他...我现在因为有准备让他冲刺 OC 班，考比较好的 OC 班，所以我现在可能各方面的材料做的也都是往 OC 班这方向的，然后中文这块稍微就是时间上，又收了一些。因为时间不允许，我觉得很多时候就很多东西有分主次的。

Researcher: Did you make a plan for his Chinese development?

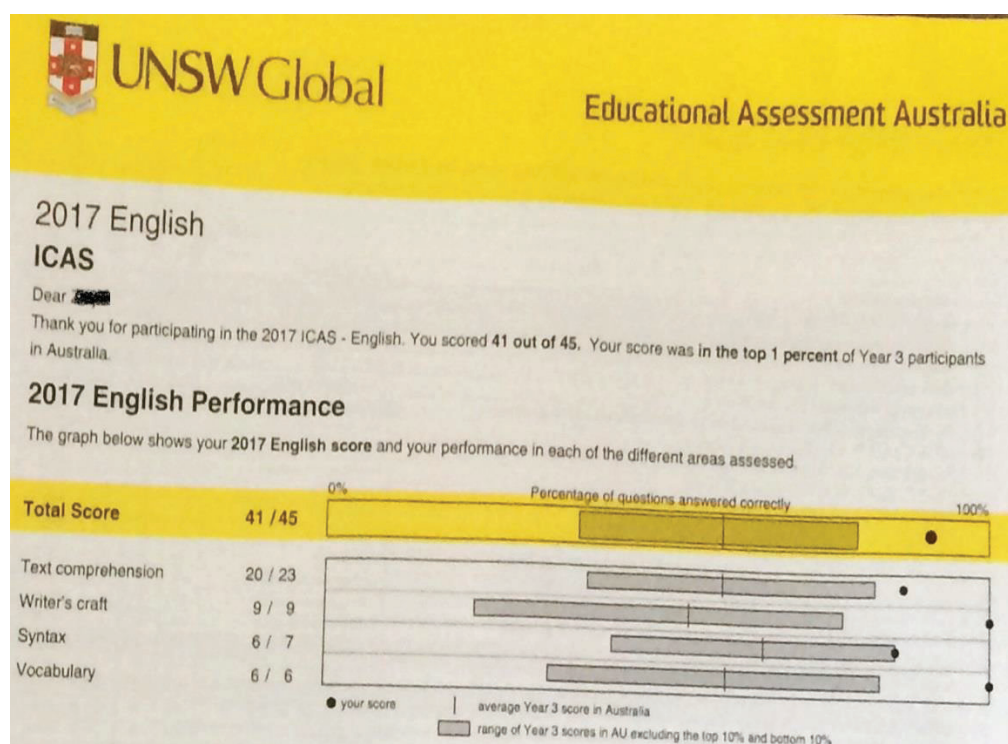
Mother 3: We did spend a lot of time teaching him Chinese... but now what I am focusing on is letting him aim for OC [Opportunity Classes], the better OC class, so all the materials we are preparing are oriented at OC. Of course, Chinese learning is reduced because time doesn't permit, and I do think we need to prioritize the most important things on many occasions. (Interview, 06 /2017)

[**Note:** OC stands for Opportunity Classes, which cater for academically gifted and talented students in year 5 and 6 across NSW.]

Excerpt 6.34

Mother 3: We are aiming at [names of two public schools], the best two OC schools, and all children from these two schools go to [the most highly ranked high school in NSW] or get the full scholarship... the subject that I feel most satisfied with is his English, see, all high distinction, and we don't need to worry about his English ... So, now besides English learning, one of the main tasks is to shore up his Chinese at home. (Fieldnotes, 12/2017)

Figure 6. 3 The ICAS performance of Son 3 in Year 3



[**Note:** ICAS stands for International Competitions and Assessments for Schools. It is a skill-based assessment of six subjects designed for primary and secondary students.]

In the data, parents perceived that English-related school success in Australia is paramount and prioritized over any other language learning. Thus, they frequently compromise the value of Chinese by focusing on English learning, as with Mother 3 in Excerpt 6.33. Chinese heritage language maintenance is still a significant issue for most migrant parents, but they feel that Chinese learning should only be restarted when the advantage of English proficiency is secured, or not jeopardized. As evident in the dynamic language policy adopted by Mother 3 (Excerpt 6.33), when this mother felt secure about Son 3's high achievements in English (Excerpt 6.34), she resumed Son 3's Chinese learning schedule.

Despite the pervasive resistance to Chinese literacy homework, there are a few children who endorse their parents' expectations and see the importance of literacy skills in their heritage language

maintenance:

Excerpt 6.35

Mother 3: Son 3 is very reasonable. He regularly practises calligraphy, and he did that 'magic copybook'. (Fieldnotes, 12/2017).

Excerpt 6.36

Researcher : OK。那现在你还继续学中文吗？

Son 23 : 我都没有补习中文，就是在家我写中文字。

Researcher : 在家是不是妈妈爸爸要求你要练一下中文字？

Son 23 : 对，他们要求我也挺喜欢写的，我觉得挺好的。我也自己看中文书。

Researcher : 你自己看中文书？

Son 23 : 对，《三国》我全都会看，四大名著我都能看。

Researcher: Ok, do you still continue learning Chinese now?

Son 23: I didn't have Chinese language tutoring, but I write Chinese characters at home.

Researcher: Is it required by your parents?

Son 23: Yeah, they asked me to do it, but I also like doing that. It is all good and I also liked reading Chinese books.

Researcher: You read Chinese books on your own?

Son 23: Yeah, I can read these *Four Great Classical Novels* such as *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. (proud) (Interview, 07/2018)

In the interview, Son 23 displayed obvious pride when he referred to his ability in reading the four great Chinese classics as an evidence of his Chinese proficiency. Actually, in the data, the children who showed confidence in their Chinese language proficiency in the migration context frequently associated the high-level proficiency in Chinese with the ability to read sophisticated Chinese books, particularly Chinese classics and literatures. This link between being able to read Chinese classics/literature and Chinese language proficiency is also shared by many parents such as Mother 26 (Excerpt 6.23), who also related Son 26's improvement in Chinese to the four classics and *Jinyong's Gongfu* novels he read in Australia. Actually, children's active literacy practice is also based on their prior knowledge of Chinese, and further constructed on their own desire for Chinese language proficiency:

Excerpt 6.37

Daughter 22 : 现在有练字，练毛笔字，但是我有写日记的习惯，而且用中文写日记。

Researcher : 写日记的习惯是父母？

Daughter 22 : 不是啊，是我自己。一直到现在还有。我现在每天都会写日记。

Researcher : 你为什么日记要用汉语写，是因为汉语能表达你内心的想法吗？

Daughter 22 : 刚开始来澳大利亚肯定是汉语更能表达我内心的想法，之后就觉得我汉语越来越汉语不行了，再不写我字都不会写了，还是练一练吧，因为在学校里你写什么全都是用英文，高考考 heritage 很多都是英文答题的。

Daughter 22: Now I practice writing characters with a brush. I also have the habit of writing diaries in Chinese.

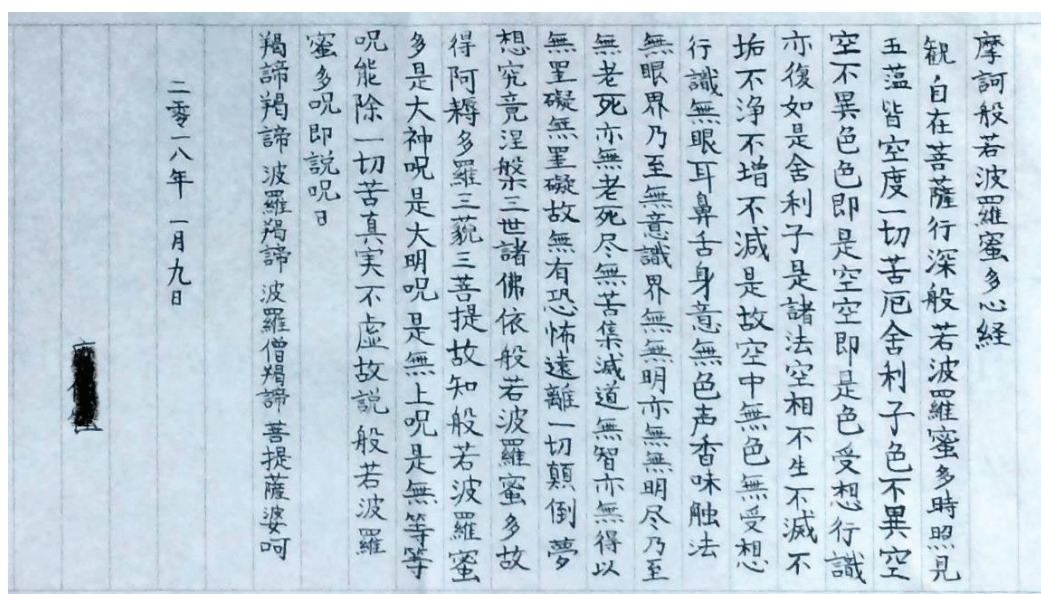
Researcher: Is it pushed by your parents?

Daughter 22: No, I want to do it. I keep writing my diary until now and I write it every day.

Researcher: Why do you write your diary in Chinese? Is it because you can express your deep thoughts in Chinese more?

Daughter 22: When I first came to Australia, it was definitely through Chinese that I could express my thoughts more. Later I found my Chinese was getting worse. If I didn't do it, I would forget how to write characters, so I need to, because in the school all you write is in English and most of the questions in HSC Chinese heritage exam were answered in English. (Interview, 05/2018)

Figure 6. 4 Daughter 22's brush calligraphy



Admittedly, only a minority of children showed affection for Chinese literacy work and engaged willingly with the learning of Chinese. They consider Chinese literacy skills as essential for their Chinese language proficiency (see Excerpt 6.36) and their success in maintaining Chinese largely depends on the level of their literacy proficiency (see Excerpt 6.37). The affection for Chinese literacy practice that was observed generally correlates with a later age of arrival. For example, Both Son 23 (Excerpt 6.36) and Daughter 22 (Excerpt 6.37) came to Australia late (age 10 and age 9 respectively) and they showed themselves to be avid readers of Chinese literature.

In sum, to develop children's literacy skills, parents resort to various resources, mainly Chinese textbooks and literature, and different strategies, including writing characters, copying articles and reading story books. However, parents have encountered significant difficulties in their efforts to transmit the heritage language, such as children's resistance, the assimilative force of mainstream schooling, and their own dual expectations that led to clashes between Chinese language maintenance and school success. Firstly, parents' desires and efforts run counter to their children's

indifferent attitudes, or even resistance, and this tension between parents and children in relation to heritage language learning has also been well documented by other researchers (G. Li, 2006a, 2007; Little, 2017; Motaghi-Tabari, 2016, 2017; J. Wang, 2012; D. Zhang, 2008; D. Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). Secondly, the assimilative force of the English dominant environment renders individual parents helpless to withstand children's actual heritage language attrition, and it also makes them unable to keep their well-laid language maintenance plans. Thirdly, parents' dual expectations and the dominant role of English for children's academic success present a huge challenge in maintaining bilingualism and leads to them compromising the value of Chinese in favour of promoting the development of English for school success. Despite the pervasive resistance to Chinese literacy homework, there are also contrasting cases where children take an active role in their own literacy studies. Actually, as to the standards measuring children's heritage language proficiency, both parents and some children consider the literacy skills related to reading and writing the crucial element. When exemplifying the successful or unsuccessful heritage language maintenance, both parents and children frequently refer to the (in)ability to read Chinese classics and literatures, to write Chinese essays, and/or to do beautiful Chinese calligraphy as important evidence. They particularly link a high-level of Chinese proficiency with the ability to read sophisticated books. Besides the practice of reading and writing, the use of media programs constitutes another means of maintaining the children's Chinese language, as illustrated in the next section.

6.4 Developing Chinese through media entertainment

Chinese entertainment programs, such as television shows or YouTube videos, are also used by both parents and children, whether purposefully or not, as important supplementary resources to develop children's heritage language fluency and facilitate their literacy studies.

Excerpt 6.38

Mother 5 : 汉语学习，都是从最近 home school 的时候开始的。Home school 之前，他基本听不懂什么的...home school 后，他的中文才变好了。

Researcher : 你们是怎么弄的？

Mother 5 : 我主要给他看这些片子，《科学与圣经》就是这一个。

Researcher : 他看得懂吗？

Mother 5 : 他就觉得好难，好难，那我就在他旁边，给他解释...也不只有这个，也给他看动画片，那个《彼得兔》...因为这个汉语学习一开始比较难，那就先让他看动画片，所以他很高兴。

Mother 5: We started learning Chinese after we home-schooled them. Before, he almost didn't know Chinese ... and after home schooling, his Chinese started to get better.

Researcher: What did you do?

Mother 5: We mainly let him watch some videos such as this *Science and Bible*.

Researcher: Could he understand?

Mother 5: He thought it was very difficult, so difficult. I sat with him and explained it to him... Not only this, he also watched *Peter Rabbit*... Because at the start of learning Chinese is difficult, so I let him start by watching the cartoons first and he was happy with that. (Interview, 10/2017)

Excerpt 6.39

Daughter 7: When I was little, I liked this channel, I think it was, I don't know why, it's called – it was 喜羊羊和灰太狼 (*Pleasant goat and grey wolf*) ...Yeah, that one. I watched it all day and night and then that's where I mainly learnt my Chinese, yeah because they have these Chinese subtitles at the bottom and if they said a new word I don't understand I would look down at the words and see which one it was. (Interview, 05/2018)

As evidenced in Excerpt 6.38 and Excerpt 6.39, different from the language-only policy (see Section 6.2) or home literacy practice (see Section 6.3), which frequently caused parent-child tensions, watching entertainment programs was reported as being a joyful activity which fosters children's interest in Chinese language. Meanwhile, children's affection for these ethnic programs is significantly influenced by their intimate social networks:

Excerpt 6.40

Mother 17: Before, Daughter 17 liked watching *Running Man China* and it was recommended by daughter 18. Now she likes *Home with Kids*, because she said she watched that at your home with your daughter. (Fieldnotes, 05/2018)

Excerpt 6.41

Daughter 7: I like *Running Man*. That show with lots of pop stars, that one... And then there were these shows that my sister liked when I was little that she would like make me watch 'cause I had nothing better to do and like if I watch a lot of them I'll get used to and I'll like it. And then just a few years before I think I discovered this TV series in Chinese, it's called *Apartment of love*.

Researcher: It's for bigger girls, not for you? (Smile)

Daughter 7: Yeah but that's what my sister was watching so I had no choice but like – and that's where I mainly started watching other Chinese shows. (Interview, 05/2018)

Children's favourable attitudes towards these ethnic programs seems to be influenced by their social circles, such as their peer groups and family members. Furthermore, children's knowledge of these Chinese popular programs facilitates their socialization with more Chinese-speaking peers and builds up their ties with other Chinese students living in Australia.

Excerpt 6.42

Researcher : 你是说跟这样一些国际学生, 或高中阶段过来的学生也是能交朋友 ?

Daughter 22 : 对, 因为我也有看中国一些电视剧。

Researcher : 什么电视剧 ?

Daughter 22 : 网上什么都有, 什么流行看什么, 《三生三世》、《十里桃花》都看, 《我的前半生》什么都看...然后也看中国的一些综艺节目。反正我跟他们挺多可以聊得啊。

Researcher: Do you mean you could make friends with Chinese international students or students who came to Australia in secondary high school?

Daughter 22: Yeah, because I also watch quite a few Chinese TV series.

Researcher: What kind of programs?

Daughter 22: Oh, a lot online and I watched whatever was popular such as *Three lives ten peach blossoms* and *The first half of my life*...I also watched some variety shows. Anyway, I have a lot to talk with them about. (Interview, 05/2018)

Though the shared knowledge of the popular ethnic programs can draw the young arrivals closer to the newly arrived Chinese peers, it is worth mentioning that children's affection for, and appreciation of, ethnic media is closely associated with their prior knowledge of Chinese, as well as their dynamic Chinese language proficiency. For children with limited skills in Chinese, these programs may be too difficult for them to remain attractive:

Excerpt 6.43

Mother 1 : 带她回去过一次, 她电视什么也看不懂, 又不会跟人说话, 她就闷在房子里面不出来。那你怎么办。

Mother 1: I took her back to China once. She couldn't understand anything on TV, and she couldn't speak to people. She cooped herself up at home and didn't go outside. I could not do anything! (Interview, 12/2017)

Excerpt 6.44

Mother 12: I think I have more common talk with my nephew. You see, when we watched TV together, both of us at times laughed our heads off, but Daughter 12 couldn't understand the humour, though she could speak Mandarin with us. The same thing happened during the spring festival, you know, we got a lot of funny texts circulated in WeChat. My nephew and I at times burst into laughter, but Daughter 12 said the texts were so boring. (Fieldnotes, 02/2018)

As evidenced in Excerpt 6.43, children's language loss, such as that experienced by Daughter 1, significantly limited their activity in a Chinese-speaking environment and caused emotional discomfort; in Excerpt 6.44 children's insufficient skills in Chinese also limited her understanding of Chinese insights and reduced the interaction between her and her family members. Thus, "the consequences of losing a primary language are far reaching, and it does affect the social, emotional, cognitive, and educational development of language-minority children, as well as the integrity of their families and the society they live in" (Fillmore, 1991, p. 343).

Meanwhile, children's Chinese proficiency, or language situation, in migration contexts also shapes their taste for, or interest in, these ethnic programs. For many early arrival children, if without

continuing active Chinese language input, their affection for and appreciation of ethnic programs will diminish or fade away once their English takes over Chinese and becomes their dominant language:

Excerpt 6.45

Mother 19 : 就包括他现在我们看电视, 他更喜欢听英文的, 比如说同样一个动画片, 你有中文配音的, 有英文配音的, 他会选英文配音的... 他现在也才来了三年... 今年我记得有一次我们看了一个动画片, 我们看一个什么大解密什么的, 当时就有中文版的出来了, 然后他说中文的我不看, 我要看英文配音的。

Mother 19: Now when we watch TV programs, he likes English programs more. For example, if we watch a cartoon which is dubbed into both Chinese and English, he will choose English...but he has only been here for three years ...I remembered when we watched a cartoon about decryption this year and we had the Chinese version, but he said he wouldn't watch the Chinese one and he wanted the English one. (Interview, 10/2017)

In sum, Chinese entertainment programs such as TV episodes or YouTube videos are used by both parents and children as supplementary heritage language resources. These entertainment programs play a positive role in developing children's Chinese fluency, facilitating their literacy development, building up their knowledge about Chinese popular culture and helping to build relationships with newly arrived children from China. "Ethnic media has the greatest unexplored potential" in promoting heritage language maintenance (J. Zhang, 2009, p. 208), and appropriate viewing of TV and video media is a crucial part of children's literacy practices (G. Li, 2002). However, children's affection for, and appreciation of, ethnic media is closely associated with their prior knowledge of Chinese, as well as their dynamic Chinese language proficiency. In other words, once children's Chinese language proficiency has slipped, their appreciation of ethnic programs is also diminished. Therefore, enjoyment of Chinese media entertainment and Chinese language proficiency are mutually constituted. Since the various strategies of heritage language management have been examined and analysed, the next section will summarize the analysis and draw conclusions.

6.5 Summary

In sum, to maintain and develop children's Chinese language, most of the families participating in my research made significant efforts to facilitate their children's use and learning of Chinese, including speaking only Chinese, literacy practice and viewing of entertainment programs. To achieve these, they referred to various resources such as Chinese textbooks and literatures, and television and video media.

Firstly, speaking Chinese at home constitutes the primary language policy that parents have adopted to maintain their children's orality skills. Children's language use with their parents is closely associated with their age of arrival. For children who arrived early, their swift language shift and bilingual vocabulary repertoires seem to impose difficulties for parents aiming to implement Chinese-only rules within family domains. It may be a common phenomenon that English is used increasingly or

takes the place of Chinese to become the dominant language children used at home. Children who arrive later in Australia mostly maintain the habitus of speaking Chinese with their parents, even in the long run. Children's language use with their siblings, however, is not significantly influenced by their age of arrival. No matter how old children are when they arrive in Australia, English seems to become the only, or main, language these children use to communicate with their siblings.

Secondly, children's Chinese literacy development is desired by many parents and the development of children's literacy is regarded as crucial for Chinese heritage language maintenance. These parents have adopted various strategies and utilised accessible resources to support their children's literacy learning. Chinese textbooks are commonly used resources to facilitate parents' home tutoring of Chinese and strengthen children's Chinese and math skills. Besides, for children who have a good foundation in Chinese, Chinese literature is also used to advance their Chinese literacy ability. Many parents regard the ability to read Chinese classics, Chinese literature and popular novels as a crucial index of the attainment of high-level proficiency.

However, the parents' efforts in their children's literacy learning have encountered significant difficulties and obstacles, such as children's resistance, lack of institutional support and parents' dual expectations. Above all, children's indifferent attitudes or resistance build up tension between children and their parents and challenge the management of the literacy practice at home. Besides, the assimilative force from the English dominant environment seems to render individual parents unable to withstand children's actual heritage language attrition and they then act differently from their maintenance beliefs. In addition, parents' dual expectations present a huge challenge for maintaining bilingualism and result in compromise in the value of Chinese in favour of the learning of English for school success. In fact, besides parents, children, even if they may not object to Chinese literacy homework, have also encountered noticeable challenges such as assimilation pressures from peers and school, inconsistent or unstable family language policies, and their deteriorating Chinese skills. First, the assimilative language policies adopted by schools and the English-speaking peer environment have entrenched the power relations between English and other languages which constitute the primary challenge for the continued use and learning of Chinese. Second, inconsistent and unstable family language policies, largely due to parents' compromise of Chinese learning to favour school success, further legitimise the mainstream language ideology which prioritizes English over Chinese or any other minority languages. Third, with deteriorating Chinese skills, children feel impotent to articulate themselves let alone to write academically, and the Chinese literacy homework becomes an arduous task. Nevertheless, against the pervasive resistance or inactive reactions to Chinese literacy practice, there still emerged a few illuminating cases where children are active agents in their own literacy studies. These children, who generally arrived late, seem to have endorsed their

parents' expectations related to their heritage language development and associate Chinese language proficiency with their literacy skills, particularly their ability to read classics, literature and novels.

Thirdly, television and video media are used as supplementary resources to facilitate children's heritage language learning. These entertainment programs play a positive role in arousing their interests in heritage language, facilitating their literacy development and enlarging their Chinese-speaking social networks. However, children's limited Chinese or English assimilation in their migration contexts may impede their interest in, and appreciation of, these Chinese programs.

In sum, to maintain and develop children's heritage language, parents adopt various language policies and utilize a variety of resources to facilitate their children's Chinese language practices, which mainly include speaking Chinese at home, practising Chinese writing and watching entertainment programs. Parents generally display strong expectations or desires for their children's literacy proficiency which is considered crucial for the success of family language policy and ultimate heritage language attainment. Parental desires for literacy achievement have been endorsed by a few children who play an agentive role in their own literacy studies. However, there emerged a tension between children's actual language use and the home Chinese-only policy specified by parents. Moreover, parents' efforts with their children's literacy learning have encountered great difficulties such as children's resistance, lack of support against English assimilation and parents' dual expectations. In fact, besides parents, children, when trying to maintain the heritage language, have also encountered significant difficulties and challenges mainly in the form of school/peer pressure, parental inconsistency and their own deteriorating Chinese skills. This chapter has explored heritage language maintenance practices in the home, while the next chapter focusses on heritage language maintenance practices outside the home.

Chapter 7: Language maintenance practices outside the home

7.1 Introduction

While the previous chapter examined heritage language maintenance practices employed in the home, this chapter shifts focus from the home domain to the spaces where formal instruction takes place.

Across the data, 21 out of the 32 focal children received formal Chinese instruction outside the home.

This chapter explores the experiences and perceptions with regard to Chinese classes in community schools (Section 7.2), then presents the experiences and perceptions in relation to Chinese learning in mainstream schools (Section 7.3). This is followed by an examination of the children's language use in peer communication in mainstream schools (Section 7.4). The chapter concludes with a summary and discussion of the results (Section 7.5).

Table 7. 1 An overview of children's involvement in Chinese programs outside the home

	Age at interview	Age on arrival	Attended community school	Studied Chinese in primary school	Studied Chinese in secondary school	Took Chinese for HSC/IB exam	Studied Chinese at college level
Daughter 1	28	3	√		√		
Daughter 2	7	4		√			
Son 3	9	4	√	√			
Daughter 4	9	4	√				
Son 5	11	4					
Son 6	7	5					
Daughter 7	10	5	√				
Son 8	15	5		√			
Daughter 9	15	5	√			√	
Daughter 10	18	5		√			
Son 15	10	5		√			
Son 11	10	6					
Daughter 12	10	6	√				
Daughter 14	24	6					
Son 13	8	7					
Daughter 15	12	7		√			
Son 16	15	7	√		√		
Daughter 17	10	8					

Daughter 18	9	8					
Son 19	11	8	√	√			
Son 20	10	9	√				
Daughter 21	13	9					
Daughter 22	23	9			√	√	√
Son 23	12	10					
Daughter 24	23	10			√	√	
Son 25	25	10					
Son 26	12	10					
Daughter 27	21	11				√	
Daughter 28	23	13	√				
Daughter 29	24	13	√			√	√
Daughter 30	19	13					
Son 31	18	13				√	√

7.2 Studying Chinese in community schools

Across my data, 11 children had variable experiences of learning Chinese in community schools (Table 7. 1). When I asked participating parents why they did (or did not) send their children to Chinese community schools, the quality or effectiveness of Chinese classes became the central consideration. Parents' views on the effectiveness of community Chinese classes are dependent on the perceived improvement/advancement of their children's literacy skills and their own expectations towards Chinese, which are also associated with the age of migration and the prior heritage language proficiency. Parents whose children had a few years of formal schooling in China, in particular, felt dissatisfied with the content taught in community schools and had no intention to continue their children's learning of Chinese in community schools:

Excerpt 7.1

Mother 26 : 大同已经算这边好的中文学校了，但是汉语的话，都是教的很基础的，我们不会选。

Researcher : 我看学校的排课表上面分很多级别，还有汉语七级班、八级班，那个怎么样？

Mother 26 : 七级班、八级班这些在国内这些孩子看很基础，但是对于这里的孩子来说已经很难了，因为他们是相当于在学二外，学外语。我觉得即使到那个十级都是很基础的。最多就国内小学生水平。

Researcher : 没有哪个学校适合中国过来的，已经读一些书过来的小孩？

Mother 26 : 没有，像这种他们只能自己在家学，靠家长。

Mother 26: That Chinese school, according to what I know, is one of the best in Sydney, but Chinese taught there is very basic, and we will not choose it.

Researcher: I saw the schedule with various levels of Chinese classes, there are level 7/8 classes. What do you think of the level 7/8?

Mother 26: Level 7 and 8 are very basic for children from China [with formal schooling experiences], but very difficult for children who grow up here because Chinese is their second language, a foreign language to them. I think even the level 10 class is still very basic, at most up to the level of primary school students in China.

Researcher: Do you know if there are any programs suitable for children who had a few years of formal schooling in China?

Mother 26: I don't think so. They can only study at home, with parents' help. (Interview, 07/2018)

Excerpt 7.2

Mother 21: 因为我觉得中文学校它针对的是在这边生活的，没有在国内机会这样的孩子。他们和在国内上过一、两年学的孩子是不一样的。因为她从小在中国长大的，所以说她的中文就在国内的时候也是不错的，你想她能读这种书，她是没有办法和那些，学什么我今天吃饭了吗？写个小句子，那你说她上有什么意义呢！那中文学校，就是她们有高级班，有中级班你知道吧，她去那最高级的班她也觉得没有意思，我觉得那就不要浪费时间了，自己在家读就了，我们就没有让她去。但是没有去她又没有那个氛围，又不认真了嘛。

Mother 21: I think these Chinese schools just target children who have mostly lived in Australia and have had no chance of being schooled in China. They are different from children who have some schooling in China. Daughter 21 grew up in China and her Chinese was all good when she was in China, you see. [pointing at books] She could read such sophisticated books; so, she has no way to stay with children who are learning and writing simple sentences like 'did you eat today'. This is meaningless to her! You know, the Chinese school she went to had intermediate and advanced classes. But even in the top class, she still thought it was meaningless; so, I said, "If it's like this, you don't need to waste your time, and just stay at home to read Chinese books". So, we didn't let her go, but the problem is if she doesn't have that language environment, she doesn't take it seriously. (Interview, 11/2017)

As evident above, Mother 26 and Mother 21 criticized Chinese community schools for only targeting at Australian-born children with low levels of Chinese language proficiency. Son 26 (Excerpt 7.1) and Daughter 21 (Excerpt 7.2) came to Australia at age 10 and 9 and finished Year 4 and 3 in China respectively. Across the data, it is not surprising to find that the critical comments on Chinese community schools are mostly associated with late arrival age and high levels of prior proficiency. However, there emerged a dilemma for parents who had high expectations for their children's heritage language proficiency. On the one hand, parents such as Mother 26 and Mother 21 conceived of the Chinese classes as being useless and a waste of time because they could not advance their children's literacy skills, so they might expect a success in heritage language maintenance through home tutoring; on the other hand, they perceived that in the absence of a peer environment, home

literacy practice was not fully implemented and might result in children's resistance (see details in Section 6.3).

Many parents who have high expectations for their children's Chinese learning regard their current Chinese classes as insufficient to help reach high levels of Chinese language proficiency. For example, Father 15 explicitly stated that community Chinese classes hardly met his expectations:

Excerpt 7.3

Father 15: Because we are teaching them Chinese now. My reason is this, because those children who went to Chinese schools, maybe they were born here, maybe they came to Australia very early. So, parents try to, you know, help them maintain the language. But for us, it's different, because I don't know what my next step is, whether I'll go back to China or not, so that's why I say they have to learn Chinese, they have no choice. For those parents, for them, they are already immigrants; so, whether you learned much doesn't matter. If you just speak English, no problem; if you cannot speak Chinese, not that serious; but for us, it's very serious. (Interview, 10/2017)

Father 15 associated his high expectations for Chinese with their 'sojourner' status in Australia, and he perceived that Chinese community schools lacked quality programs to foster high levels of Chinese to enable them to improve and keep open their option of return migration to China. Similarly, all sojourner parents in J. Zhang's (2010) research reported that what was offered in the community school did not live up to their expectations.

In line with parents' perceptions, children who arrived late in Australia, or who had solid proficiency in Chinese, also said that the Chinese language taught in community schools is too easy:

Excerpt 7.4

Daughter 21: No, I don't go to like a Chinese school. I don't like –

Researcher: Did you ever go to a Chinese school?

Daughter 21: I went once like just once when I was younger, probably about 11 or 10....

Researcher: How about your first time?

Daughter 21: Yeah. It was very easy for me then, probably not now. It might have been like only slightly bit easy, but it was very easy for me then, so I just didn't go again. (Interview, 11/2017)

Excerpt 7.5

Researcher : 中文学校愿意上吗？

Son 19 : 在中国的学校还是澳洲的中文学校？

Researcher : 在澳洲的中文学校。

Son 19 : 不去，我去过，那些学校都学 kindergarten 的东西，跟我们学校的中文课一样，都学幼儿园的东西。

Researcher: Do you want to go to Chinese school?

Son 19: Do you mean Chinese schools in China or Australia?

Researcher: In Australia.

Son 19: No. I went before. Those schools [Community schools], like the Chinese class in my public school, all teach kindergarten stuff and students learn kindergarten things. (Interview, 11/2017)

Both Daughter 21 and Son 19 finished Year 3 in China and they attributed their resistance to Chinese community schools to the easy Chinese taught in the classes. In fact, the lack of high-level Chinese programs was commonly mentioned by parents and children as a reason for their disinterest in community schools, and this was also confirmed by a principal in a Sydney Chinese school as shown in Mother 26's interview:

Excerpt 7.6

Mother 26: 反正我把他带给校长时，校长说：你不用在这学汉语了，你水平太高了，自己回家看书就行了。但是我们这儿有英文写作班，你可以在这儿上，所以我的孩子就在汉语学校补英语了，他们学校的孩子像他这样中文好的确实好像很难找的。

Mother 26: When I took Son 26 to the principal, the principal said, "Oh, you don't need to learn Chinese in our school. Your Chinese level is too high. You can join our English writing class here." So, Son 26 started his English class in this Chinese school. In the school, you can hardly find any children whose Chinese is as good as his. (Interview, 07/2018)

In sum, families with late arrivals, or those who have high expectations for Chinese, felt particularly dissatisfied with the Chinese classes offered in community schools and they frequently criticized them for their inability to foster high proficiency in Chinese. Actually, researchers such as Nordstrom (2015) observed that many community language schools faced significant challenges such as limited funding to find qualified resources and students' decreasing motivation as the students reach their teenage years.

However, despite the critical comments on and the practical problems faced by Chinese community schools in Australia, some families confirmed the importance of Chinese schools in the maintenance of children's heritage language. The perception of Chinese classes as being effective for language maintenance is associated with young arrival age, as in the typical example of Daughter 9:

Excerpt 7.7

Researcher: 你觉得她所有汉语的课程，各有什么不同的作用？

Mother 9: 作用最大的肯定是 community school 的。Community school 的比较系统，老师都是专业的老师。那些 Sunday class 还有 tutoring class，这些老师都是义工，都是 volunteer，还有一些大学生。教的不是很系统，只是给她 keep up，没有帮助她进步，进步的话还是在 community school 有给她进步。

Researcher: What different roles, do you think, have these various types of Chinese classes played?

Mother 9: The most meaningful is of course Chinese classes offered by her community school

because the Chinese teaching there is more systematic and organized and teachers there are more professional. Whereas, most teachers in other Sunday classes and tutoring classes are volunteers, including university students, and their teaching is not systematic or well-organized; so, these classes just keep up her Chinese but do not really improve her Chinese. What benefitted her most is the classes in her community schools. (Interview, 07/2017)

Daughter 9, arriving in Australia at age 5, had no formal education in China. In the interview, Mother 9 reported how her family became actively involved in Daughter 5's Chinese learning by enrolling her in various Chinese programs. Then she concluded that what was offered in Chinese schools was the most effective and rewarding in developing Daughter 9's heritage language. Similarly, in D. Zhang's (2008) research, some Chinese parents believed that children could learn Chinese more formally and consistently in community schools rather than at home.

In sum, the perceptions regarding the effectiveness of Chinese schools varied. Some participants claimed that the classes were useless and a waste of time because they failed to foster high-level proficiency in Chinese. Other participants considered Chinese learning in community schools to be fruitful and rewarding because it systematically developed children's heritage language. It was found that the evaluation of Chinese community schools is closely associated with age of migration and/or parents' expectations. The view of Chinese classes as useless or ineffective mostly relates to late arrival age and higher expectation for Chinese language proficiency, while the view of Chinese classes as being fruitful and rewarding mostly relates to young arrival age and limited literacy skills in Chinese. Besides, it was indicated that Chinese community schools lack high-level programs catering to children who have had a few years of schooling in China. Actually, the existing practical problems such as limited funding and resources as well as diversity of students' language background add up difficulties in heritage language education in community schools. The next section will examine children's experiences of learning Chinese in mainstream schools.

7.3 Studying Chinese in mainstream schools

Seventeen children in my study had undertaken Chinese courses provided by their mainstream schools at different stages in their education (Table 7. 1). This included 11 children who attended Chinese classes in their primary or secondary schools and six children in their senior high schools for HSC or International Baccalaureate [IB, the internationally recognised program] examinations.

With regard to the effectiveness of the Chinese courses in primary and secondary schools, as was the case with community schools, the perceptions are also associated with age of arrival and prior proficiency in Chinese. A sense of dissatisfaction was expressed by parents with late arrival children or parents who had high expectations for Chinese acquisition and maintenance. They regarded the Chinese programs as useless, too simple, and a waste of time, as Mother 19 remarked:

Excerpt 7.8

(Son 19 finished year 3 in China)

Mother 19: 看看他都学了什么，我让他不要去上了，他上了这个汉语课，下降得厉害了，确实就是这样，现在写的那个字真的是惨不忍睹。他也挺无聊，他也觉得这个东西这么简单，为什么我还要坐在这里？

Mother 19: Look at what he learned here. I asked him to drop out of the Chinese class, because I found his Chinese was indeed receding in that class; and it's really like that. The characters he writes now burn my eyes. He also felt very bored. He thought this is so easy but why I should sit there? (Interview, 11/2017)

Excerpt 7.9

Researcher: Daughter 15 and Son 15 told me that they had Chinese classes through their primary school years.

Father 15: Yeah. But actually, I don't think they got anything from their Chinese classes in their public school. Impossible. Impossible.

Researcher: What kind of things are they learning in their public school?

Father 15: Very simple, yeah. Very simple things like '你好' (How do you do), '谢谢' (Thank you) and '再见' (Goodbye). (Interview, 10/2017)

For children who had a few years of formal schooling in China, the Chinese programs in primary and secondary schools were frequently regarded as useless and disappointing. In the interview, Mother 19 (Excerpt 7.8) reiterated that the Chinese class in Son 19's public school was of no benefit, and instead, it sped up the deterioration of his heritage language. Though Daughter 15 and Son 15 arrived in Australia young (aged 7 and 5 respectively), Father 15 (Excerpt 7.9) had a higher expectation for his children's Chinese proficiency (see also Excerpt 7.3) and he perceived that what was taught in schools was too basic. The opinion was reiterated by many parents whose children arrived late, as stated by another parent, whose 11-year-old daughter arrived in Australia at age nine:

Excerpt 7.10

Her school offers Chinese as a second language, but they only learn one character per week. My goodness, the school didn't teach children how to write characters, but how to draw characters. They are not learning Chinese, just playing Chinese for fun. (Fieldnotes, 04/2018)

The view of Chinese class as useless in advancing Chinese literacy, as expressed by the parents above, was also confirmed by the late arrived children themselves:

Excerpt 7.11

Researcher : 在 year 7 的时候，你们汉语课上学的什么？

Daughter 22 : “你好，一、二、三、四、五、六、七、八、九、十”，就是这些。(笑)

Researcher : 你觉得很枯燥吗？(笑)

Daughter 22 : 枯燥啊！初中四年学的都非常简单啊。

Researcher : 你能坚持下去？

Daughter 22 : 这个是 compulsory 的，全校所有人都要学，所以不管外国人中国人还是哪国人都要学。而且我那时候看来这门课算是很轻松的一门课，挺好的。

Researcher: What did you learn in Chinese classes in year 7?

Daughter 22: “How do you do. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten”. Just these. (Smile)

Researcher: Do you feel bored? (Smile)

Daughter 22: Of course! Super easy things through all the four years in junior high school.

Researcher: Were you able to stick to it?

Daughter 22: This is a compulsory course and all students in our school should learn it, no matter if you are foreigner or Chinese and no matter which country you come from. But for me, it is good because I thought it was super easy without any effort. (Interview, 05/2018)

Excerpt 7.12

Daughter 29 : 我 Year 10, Year 9 以前学的很简单，就都是写一些拼音什么笔划，只有那种 ABC 学的 Chinese，跟 local 在一起学，我是在里面唯一一个 native，几乎可以考满分那种。老师有时候会给我额外的 study，后来老师看我在那个班没什么可以学的，当我十年级的时候，他让我跳级跳到十一年级。因为只有到十一年级才开始分这个 background 和 heritage。

Daughter 29: I learned very easy stuff in Year 9 and 10, just writing some *Pinyin* and simple strokes, only those things for ‘ABCs’. I learned Chinese with those local students, I was the only native and I could almost get full marks. The teacher sometimes gave me extra studies, but later he found I could hardly learn anything there, so he let me skip a grade from year 10 to 11. The Year-11 students can choose background or Heritage Chinese course. (Interview, 07/2018)

Figure 7. 1 A worksheet Daughter 29 completed in her Year 9/10 Chinese class

Useful words:		
hē 喝 (to drink)	kāfēi 咖啡 (coffee)	jiāo 教 (to teach)
shùxué 数学 (maths)	xià 下 (to play)	zhōngwén 中文 (Chinese)
xué 学 (to study)	xiàngqí 象棋 (chess)	

37. He drinks coffee. 他喝咖啡。	38. What is he doing? 他在做什么？
39. He is drinking coffee. 他在喝咖啡。	40. He teaches maths. 他教数学。
41. What is she doing? 她在做什么？	42. He is teaching maths. 他在教数学。
43. We study Chinese. 我们学中文。	44. What are you doing? 你们在做什么？
45. We are studying Chinese. 我们在学中文。	46. He plays chess. 他下棋。 (象棋)
47. What is he doing? 他在做什么？	48. He is playing chess. 他在下象棋。

Figure 7. 1 shows a sample worksheet that was given to Daughter 29 in her Year 9/10 Chinese language class. The worksheet, with translation drills of basic sentences, seems to be designed for Chinese language beginners rather than those who had a few years of schooling in China. Participants such as Daughter 22 (Excerpt 7.11) or Daughter 29 (Excerpt 7.12) recognized that the Chinese language taught in their mainstream schools did not do much, if anything, to improve their proficiency. However, they still appreciated these Chinese classes as an easy subject which enabled them to get top marks and thus contributed to their school success. Chinese language learning can thus yield profitable returns, not in terms of language proficiency but in terms of easy marks and school success.

In addition to easy marks, parents of early arrivals may consider Chinese programs in mainstream schools to be valuable in terms of heritage language maintenance. For example, the view of Chinese classes as effective was expressed by Mother 2:

Excerpt 7.13

[Daughter 2 came to Australia at age 4.]

Researcher: 你觉得他那中文课怎么样呢？

Mother 2: 我感觉学得挺好的，也是挺多的，老师教的也挺棒的。

Researcher: 她的中文课都学些什么呢？

Mother 2: 就学一些拼音，从拼音开始学，它也是跟那个教材似的一步一步的深入到汉字。我看他们现在中文课留的那个作业，有拼音跟汉字。

Researcher: 有没有给他们留一些阅读的作业？比如说读个什么书的。

Mother 2: 没有，还没有涉及到那一块。就是汉语拼音跟那个中国字。

Researcher: What do you think of the Chinese class offered in school?

Mother 2: I feel they learn well and a lot in the class and the teacher is great.

Researcher: What have they learnt?

Mother 2: Just some *Pinyin*, starting from *Pinyin*, then they go deeper to characters. They are also given some homework with *Pinyin* and character practice.

Researcher 2: Do they have some reading homework, such as reading a book?

Mother 2: No, just *Pinyin* and Chinese characters. (Interview, 07/2017)

Across the data, it was found that the view of Chinese classes in mainstream schools as being effective is evidently associated with early arrival age. Parents of early arrivals, such as Mother 2, considered the Chinese classes as being helpful in maintaining their children's Chinese language to certain levels. Their views regarding the effectiveness of mainstream Chinese classes is contrasted with those of the late arrivals and their parents (see Excerpt 7.8, Excerpt 7.10, Excerpt 7.11, and Excerpt 7.12).

Six children took Chinese in the senior high school stage for the HSC or IB. All these children were late arrivals and chose the HSC Heritage Chinese, HSC Chinese Background Speakers or IB Chinese A, which were the high level of Chinese courses available. Their views on the effectiveness of these Chinese courses varied. Some saw them as ineffective in improving their proficiency, but profitable in terms of allowing them to get good marks in the HSC:

Excerpt 7.14

[Daughter 22 finished Year 3 in China and studied Heritage Chinese for the HSC exam]

Researcher : 除了高考能够拿高分这样好处外，你觉得对于你个人而言，你在 heritage language 这个课上能学到东西吗？

Daughter 22 : 学不太到东西。学不太到东西（笑）。有学到一点写作能力...

Researcher: Besides getting high marks in HSC Chinese, do you think you learned a lot on the heritage language course?

Daughter 22: No, not really, not really (Smile). I might have learned a little bit of writing skills... (Interview, 06/2018)

Excerpt 7.15

[Daughter 27 finished Year 6 in China and studied Chinese Background Speakers for the HSC exam.]

Daughter 27 : 没有特别大的收获，当时我们学校就只有我一个人学 background 的汉语，课堂上也不会教什么，上课大多数都是在聊天。有时候看看电影，写个读后感这种写作。

Daughter 27: No, didn't benefit me much. At that time, I was the only one who was studying the Chinese Background Speakers course. The teacher didn't really teach me a lot in class, and most of the time we just chatted. Sometimes we watched a movie and then wrote a review. (Interview, 05/2018)

However, others saw Chinese courses in the HSC/IB stage as useful in maintaining or advancing their skills in writing characters, writing Chinese essays, and appreciating Chinese literature, as well as strengthening their ethnic identity:

Excerpt 7.16

[Daughter 24 finished Year 4 in China.]

Daughter 24 : 我们读 Chinese heritage 的时候, 老师是给了我们很多 material 我们去看、去读、去帮助我们的 project 怎么做这样子, 我们还是看了很多资料。高中课上一直写, 就是算保持一种写的能力。

Daughter 24: When we studied the Heritage Chinese course, the teacher let us read many materials which helped us do projects. We did read a lot. We also kept writing in the course and so our writing skills kept improving. (Interview, 06/2018)

Excerpt 7.17

[Son 32 finished Year 7 in China and studies Chinese A for IB.]

Son 31 : 中文之所以没有退步那么多, 因为还是高中时这两年汉语课学了很多文学素养的东西。我们学了很多东西, 包括唐诗、宋词、元曲我们都有学习。而且我们也写很多东西, 当时我们做中文 essay, 写了很多关于近现代小说的文学评论赏析, 《围城》, 还有《骆驼祥子》, 《红高粱》。高中这两年的基础对大学第一年学汉语文学都很有帮助。

Son 31: The reason why my Chinese didn't recede so much is that I read a lot of literature in the final two years of high school. We did learn a lot, such as poems from the Tang dynasty, lyrics from the Song dynasty and verses from the Yuan dynasty. Besides, we wrote a lot of essays, a lot of reviews about Chinese contemporary novels such as *Fortress Besieged*, *the Rickshaw Boy* and *Red Sorghum*. What we learned in high school is even quite helpful for the Chinese literature course we took in the first year of university. (Interview, 05/2018)

In fact, irrespective of the various views on the effectiveness of the HSC/IB Chinese courses, children who undertook either of the heritage or Chinese Background courses are likely to have achieved high levels of Chinese since the two courses are the highest-level Chinese courses for the HSC examination, as Daughter 22 said: 一般人觉得我中文程度没有 heritage 这样, 他会跟老师申请做 continuers, 他不可能挑战这么难的, 如果做不了就不选中文了, 我们 heritage 班上都是三年级以后过来的 (Many other people would apply for Chinese Continuers if they think their Chinese have not reached the level of Heritage Chinese. It is impossible for them to take the heritage Chinese course if they don't have that ability. All students in our Heritage Chinese class came to Australia after Year 3.) (Interview, 06/2018).

In sum, seventeen participating children studied Chinese in their mainstream schools at various stages from primary to senior high school. At primary and secondary levels, a key difference emerged between the perceptions of early and late arrival children and their parents. Late arrivals considered Chinese classes to be useless, a waste of time and even counterproductive to their Chinese language

proficiency. By contrast, some parents of early arrivals expressed appreciation of these Chinese classes and stated that they helped their children maintain their Chinese. Besides, at senior high level, the age factor does not matter since all the children undertaking Chinese courses at this stage were late arrivals. However, at all levels, even if children felt they did not learn much, they view credited Chinese as a profitable subject that has enabled them to get good marks and thus contributed to their overall school success.

7.4 Chinese in peer communication in mainstream schools

In this data, 23 of the 32 focal children said that they preferred to speak English and that they did so habitually with their ethnic peers at school. These 23 children included all the early arrivals and three children who migrated at age 9/10 (Table 7. 2). Nine children said they preferred to speak Chinese with their ethnic peers. All these nine children were late arrivals (Table 7. 2). This section will explore children's heritage language use with peers in mainstream schools and examine the reasons behind their language use, with a focus on age of arrival.

Table 7. 2 An overview of children's preferred languages with their ethnic peers in mainstream schools

	Age at interview	Age on arrival	English as the preferred language	Chinese as the preferred language
Daughter 1	28	3	√	
Daughter 2	7	4	√	
Son 3	9	4	√	
Daughter 4	9	4	√	
Son 5	11	4	√	
Son 6	7	5	√	
Daughter 7	10	5	√	
Son 8	15	5	√	
Daughter 9	15	5	√	
Daughter 10	18	5	√	
Son 15	10	5	√	
Son 11	10	6	√	
Daughter 12	10	6	√	
Daughter 14	24	6	√	
Son 13	8	7	√	
Daughter 15	12	7	√	
Son 16	15	7	√	
Daughter 17	10	8	√	
Daughter 18	9	8	√	
Son 19	11	8	√	
Son 20	10	9		√
Daughter 21	13	9	√	
Daughter 22	23	9		√

Son 23	12	10	√	
Daughter 24	23	10		√
Son 25	25	10	√	
Son 26	12	10		√
Daughter 27	21	11		√
Daughter 28	23	13		√
Daughter 29	24	13		√
Daughter 30	19	13		√
Son 31	18	13		√

When I asked the 23 children why they spoke English with their co-ethnic peers, they mentioned discomfort in speaking Chinese, lack of opportunity to speak Chinese, or a sense of exclusion if they spoke Chinese:

Excerpt 7.18

[Son 5 came to Australia at age four and was 11 at the time of interview.]

Son 5: But my friends, even the Chinese ones, I always speak English. We're used to it. (Interview, 10/2017)

Excerpt 7.19

(Daughter 21 migrated for a long stay at age 9 and was 13 at the time of interview)

Researcher: And during those years in the public school, did you have some Chinese-speaking friends or not?

Daughter 21: Um- yeah, in Year 2 and 3 this – a boy came from China, he couldn't really speak that much so I helped him. And then in Year 5 another girl came, and she couldn't speak English, so I had to help her.

Researcher: So, only when new classmates from China came to Australia, you got chances to speak Chinese in the school?

Daughter 21: Yeah, that was probably the only time I spoke Chinese at school. And eventually they got better at English 'cause we tried to converse in English more than we did in Chinese unless she or he couldn't stand – couldn't understand anything. In school you really don't speak Chinese. (Interview, 11/2017)

As evidenced in Excerpt 7.19, Daughter 21's occasional use of Chinese with newly arrived peers was to facilitate their eventual switch to English rather than the maintenance of Chinese. Across the data, many children, particularly early arrivals, reported that English dominated both their co-ethnic and cross-ethnic peer communications, though quite a few children studied at schools with a large proportion of Chinese students.

In fact, the children's choice of English in their communication may be largely attributed to the pressure of possible exclusion in school. This is particularly true of early arrivals, as shown from the language use of a six-girl group in which four are my participants, namely Daughters 7, 12, 17, and 18. One is an Australia-born girl, and the other is my daughter.

Excerpt 7.20

Mother 12 : 我们家孩子不会像那几个那样，刚来的小孩跟她们说汉语，她们很排斥的，说哎呀，你不会说英文，我们家孩子会迁就人家。

Mother 12: Daughter 12 is nicer to the newcomers and she would accommodate them by speaking Chinese. The other girls tend to exclude them. When the new girls spoke Chinese to them, they would say, “Ah, why can’t you speak English?”. (Interview, 07/2017)

Excerpt 7.21

Daughter 17 : 刚开始时他们不友好，不喜欢我。

Researcher : 开始的时候为什么不喜欢你啊？

Daughter 17 : 就是我不会说英文，他们就排斥我。后来他们觉得其实我没有什么不好，只是英文说的不好，他们就原谅我了。

Daughter 17: At the beginning, they didn’t like me.

Researcher: Why didn’t they like you at first?

Daughter 17: Because I didn’t know how to speak English, so they excluded me. But later, they found I was not a bad girl, just didn’t speak good English, then they forgave me. (Interview, 07/2017)

In fact, this girl group originally started from three girls, with one Australian-born and two 5/6-year-old arrivals (Daughter 7 and 12), since the other girls came to Australia later. As evident from the above excerpts, English was used as a criterion for any newcomer to be accepted as a legitimate member. It seemed that even the early arrivals such as Daughter 17 (arriving at age 8) (Excerpt 7.21) may be vulnerable to discrimination from co-ethnic peers because of their limited English skills, so speaking English to assimilate into peer groups constitutes the pressing task once they started school.

Meanwhile, the early-arrived children tend to identify with the mainstream English-speaking peers, rather than Chinese-speaking peers. In this vein, Chinese speaking peers may exert limited influence on early arrived children, as evident in Daughter 10’s relationship with the Chinese international students in her major course:

Excerpt 7.22

[Daughter 10 came to Australia at age 5 and was a first-year university student at the time of interview.]

Daughter 10: My classes probably have 85% Chinese international students. I usually hang out with the people who don’t hang out with them, because they all speak Chinese. And they even speak Chinese during the class. So, I don’t really, I can’t really communicate with them that well. And when they do speak English, it’s not that good. So that’s why I just hang out with – hum- English people. ...like I have to do presentations, and I try to find the good English speakers, because when they say it, they can’t pronounce words properly like- and you lose marks. (Interview, 10/2017).

Across the data, the early arrival children were more influenced by English-speaking peers and less influenced by Chinese-speaking peers. As in the case of Daughter 10 in Excerpt 7.22, the presence of

Chinese-speaking peers in her class did little to foster her preference for and habitus of speaking Chinese.

As mentioned above, all children who preferred to speak Chinese, or who spoke Chinese habitually to other Chinese peers, were late arrivals. In fact, five of them had been in Australia for over ten years by the time of interview. When I asked them why they still identified with Chinese or spoke Chinese despite being in Australia for such a long time, their reasons varied. Some children said that their initial experiences or perception of being othered, excluded or discriminated established their habitus of grouping with Chinese speaking peers and then formed their Chinese language use habitus with heritage peers:

Excerpt 7.23

[Daughter 22 came to Australia at age 9 and started Year 3 in Australia.]

Daughter 22: 小学那几年我一直感觉自己是一个 outsider，因为我英文不好，跟别人交流就会有困难，人家说什么然后他们在那边很开心，你都不知道发生什么事，所以我那时候我还是比较难过的。那时候像我们班只有另外两个同学是说中文的，所以我整个小学阶段都跟说中文那几个同学一起，那我们就一直说汉语，在一起玩。

Daughter 22: I kept feeling I was an outsider through the years in my primary school because my English was not good, and I had difficulties in communication. When they were talking and laughing, I didn't know what happened, so I did feel upset then. At that time, there were only other two Chinese-speaking classmates, so for those years in primary school, I always hung out with them, playing together and speaking Chinese. (Interview, 06/2018)

Excerpt 7.24

Daughter 29 : 我们中学过来的，跟小学过来的是不一样的，即使小学你在这只读过五年级和六年级，我感觉这里的小学氛围还是比较英语的，有办法跟当地小孩玩在一起，不会分得那么严重，但是到了 high school 以后会分得很严重，中国人只跟中国人玩，当地学生只跟当地学生玩，我们就没有那个机会去跟他们交流，用英文交流，所以就差在这了。这种歧视我觉得从 high school 开始，到了大学也是一样的，大学 groupwork, 只要有两个人中国人，你们就会被分开，自动人家就不会和你组成一队，你们中国人就自己这样。

Daughter 29: People like us coming here in high school are differently treated from those coming in primary school, even from those who started in upper primary years such as Years 5 and 6. I feel there is more of an English atmosphere in primary school than in high school. If you come in primary school, you can play with local kids and will not be picked out, but you will be othered if you come during high school. In high school, Chinese [Chinese speakers] play with Chinese and the locals play with the locals. We don't have chance to communicate with them in English, so that's why our English is not that good. I think this discrimination starts from high school and remains in university. When we do groupwork, if there are two Chinese [Chinese speakers], you will be automatically grouped, and nobody else wants to group with you, they just let the Chinese group with the Chinese. (Interview, 07/2018)

As evident from Excerpt 7.23 and Excerpt 7.24, speaking Chinese within a group instilled in the children a sense of belonging on which they could depend in order to withstand the perceived exclusion and/or

discrimination by their English-speaking peers, and even a small number of Chinese speakers in school could provide them with such a sense of security (Excerpt 7.23). For late arrivals who normally had high levels of Chinese language proficiency, their search for belonging rather than assimilation became the top issue in their initial stay in Australia. Consequently, they ‘naturally’ tended to gravitate towards Chinese-speaking groups.

Another reason for the formation of Chinese-speaking peer groups results from the fact that they were placed together with other Chinese speakers in Intensive English Centers (IEC), HSC English as a Second Language (HSC ESL), and/or HSC Heritage Chinese and Chinese Background speakers’ classes. This is particularly true of high-school arrivals. The intensive English tuition in IECs is specifically designed for newly arrived high-school students with limited English proficiency. All the high school arrivals in my study, and even one upper-primary arrival studied in an IEC, at least for a few months after their arrival. These children reported that they spoke Chinese almost all the time after class:

Excerpt 7.25

[Son 26, coming at age 10, cut in during the interview with his mother to express his pleasure in speaking Chinese in IEC.]

Mother 26 : 因为他们班 90%以上都是中国孩子，学校规定在你们在学校不能说中文，出了教室全是中文，上课时候谁都不说话，磨叽磨叽的，在底下，一下课玩的可happy了，全是说的中文。在语言学校过的很快活，全是中国的孩子。

Son 26: 就让我一辈子呆在语言学校我也愿意。

Mother 26 : 那你英文就永远不会了。

Mother 26: More than 90% children are Chinese in his class. The school prohibits them from speaking Chinese in school, but they all speak Chinese out of class time. In class they didn’t speak loudly but would whisper to each other. Out of class they all speak Chinese happily. Oh, they have a lot of fun in IEC, and all are Chinese kids.

Son 26: I hope I will stay in IEC for my whole life!

Mother 26: So, you will never know how to speak English. (Interview with Mother 26, 07/2018)

Excerpt 7.26

[Daughter 28 came to Australia at age 13.]

Daughter 28: 我很多朋友在别的 IEC 读，那边好多中国人。但是我读的那个 IEC，中国人不算特别多，尤其是后面第三个学期，我们班十个人就只有两个中国人，但是我们下课的时候还是会跟中国的孩子玩，我和别人班中国的学生，下课就坐在一个小区域，就觉得这个可能会让我英语可能还不是特别的好。

Daughter 28: Many of my friends studied in other IECs with lots of Chinese. The IEC I was at didn’t have many Chinese, especially in the third term. There were only two Chinese in my class of ten, but we Chinese children played together after class. I sat with Chinese children from other classes in a small area. I think that’s why my English was not that good. (Interview, 06/2018)

As illustrated above, IEC constitutes an ideal environment invisibly encouraging the use of Chinese in children's initial contacts with English in Australia. Besides IEC programs, HSC ESL and Heritage/Chinese Background classes that are dominated by Chinese students, especially high school arrivals, constitute another small linguistic space invisibly fostering children's Chinese use:

Excerpt 7.27

Daughter 22 : 从 year11 开始, 我就选了 Chinese as a heritage language, 我们那个班一共只有六个人, 我们几个都是读完三年级或更晚过来的。我们班六个人中文程度也差不多, 他们汉语也蛮好的, 我们平时说话也都是说汉语的。像那些特别早过来的, 他们就不会选 heritage, 他们要学汉语就选 continuous。

Daughter 22: I undertook the course of Chinese as a Heritage Language from Year 11. There were six people in my class, all of us came to Australia after Year 3. So, our Chinese language level is around the same and all are good. We speak Chinese together. Those who came here earlier will not choose the course. If they want to learn Chinese, they will choose Chinese Continuers. (Interview, 06/2018)

Excerpt 7.28

[Daughter 28 came to Australia at age 13 and undertook ESL for the HSC examination.]

Daughter 28 : 我其实工作之前在学校基本都是说汉语的...ESL 班的同学从中国高中过来的超多, 因为 ESL 不是从 11 年级才开始嘛, 然后很多中国来的学生很多都是 11 年级来的, 所以那个时候 ESL 突然中国人多了起来, ESL 班上其实好多人中文都很好的。

Daughter 28: Before I started work, I mainly spoke Chinese in school... ESL classes were full of students who started from Senior high school. Because ESL classes were offered from year 11, many Chinese students came here in Year 11, and the number of Chinese students was soaring then in ESL. Many students in ESL had very good Chinese language. (Interview, 06/2018)

In contrast to those early arrivals who are forced to assimilate into their English-dominant schools from the first day, under current education policy, children who arrive in Australia at secondary school age seem to be provided with more spaces to practice Chinese, typically in the Intensive English center (IEC), HSC ESL, and HSC Heritage and Chinese Background classes. Across the data, all high school arrivals attended HSC ESL classes and the majority of late arrivals attended HSC Chinese courses. As evident from Excerpt 7.27 and Excerpt 7.28, the availability of ESL and Chinese classes significantly increase the chances of speaking Chinese and socializing with other Chinese speakers. The language socialization in school largely shapes late arrivals' language use patterns and social circles in schools.

For late arrivals, high school arrivals in particular, their language use in peer communication forms a distinct contrast with that of the early arrived peers. Specifically, even a small number of Chinese speakers in school may facilitate the continued use of Chinese among late arrived children, while a large number of Chinese speakers may not do much to shape the use of Chinese of early arrivals. The language habitus related to arrival age is also described in Luo & Wiseman's (2000) research where it

was found that English-speaking peers were more influential for individuals who migrated at younger ages (i.e. born in the U.S. or migrated to the U.S. before, or at, the age of five) and Chinese-speaking peers were more influential to children who migrated at a later age (i.e. migrated after the age of five).

Though late arrivals as a group present as potential habitual Chinese language speakers, it is noticeable that age 9/10 arrivals also tend to become either habitual English or Chinese language speakers. Among the seven who were aged 9/10 at arrival, three (Daughter 21, Son 23, and Son 25) preferred to speak English and did so predominantly with other Chinese children, two (Son 20 and Son 26) preferred to speak Chinese but had to speak English with other Chinese peers, and the other two (Daughter 22 and Daughter 24) preferred to speak Chinese with their Chinese friends.

The variability of the pattern of language use seems to be highly dependent on the type of school the students attend, specifically the availability of Chinese speakers in the school. For example, though Son 23 (age 10 on arrival) was in a Chinese-dominated school, and he had only been in Australia for two years, he reported that he rarely spoke Chinese with his peers because all other children who came earlier or were Australia-born spoke English. In contrast, Daughter 22 and Daughter 24 (age 9 and 10 on arrival respectively) predominantly used Chinese with other Chinese peers during their over-ten-year-stay in Australia. They attributed their successful maintenance of Chinese to the small Chinese-speaking network they formed at school. The significance of school environment to the pattern of language use is further seen in Son 26's experiences in two different schools:

Excerpt 7.29

Son 26 : 我在墨尔本的学校里边，我们班有两个中国人，隔壁班也有中国人，中文说的都挺好的，我们都说中文的。但来到悉尼后，学校的中国小孩都不会说中文，他们跟我说话的时候都说英文，我说中文的时候，他们还说请你说英文。

Son 26: In the school in Melbourne where I was, there were two Chinese students in my class and there were also Chinese in the neighbouring class. They all spoke good Chinese and we all spoke Chinese to each other. But in the school in Sydney, the Chinese kids can't speak Chinese. They all spoke English to me. When I spoke Chinese they said, "Please speak English". (Interview, 07/2018)

Son 26 was one of the two children who reportedly preferred to speak Chinese but had no chance to speak Chinese at the time of interview. His language use with Chinese peers in two schools reflects the significance of school environment in shaping (dis)continuous use of Chinese in peer communication. Different from early arrivals who had limited skills in Chinese prior to migration, those 9/10-year-old arrivals such as Daughter 22 and Daughter 24 who had at least three years of primary school in China can be seen as having the ability to be long-term Chinese language speakers if nurtured in Chinese-speaking peer environment. Compared with high school arrivals, those age 9/10 on arrival obviously

have less access to Chinese-speaking spaces such as IEC, HSC ESL and HSC Chinese courses, so they may also become habitual English speakers with their co-ethnic peers, as was the case of Daughter 21 and Son 25. Thus, the availability of Chinese speaking peers in their immediate context is crucial to the formation of a Chinese speaking habitus.

In addition, though those children with later arrival age are more likely to be habitual Chinese speakers, they at the same time demonstrate diversified patterns of language use. That is, their language choice and practice are more likely to be dynamic and contextualized, and this is an ongoing process, which forms a distinct contrast with the exclusive English use of early arrivals. The diversity of late arrivals' language use is highly contingent on the type of school the children attended:

Excerpt 7.30

[Daughter 28 finished the first semester of Year 7 in China and started year 7 in Australia]

Daughter 28 : 后来转到第二所中学的时候，中国孩子就多了，刚进去的时候我们年级十多个吧，到后面就到了三四十个了。反正我跟他们大家都讲汉语，要是我自己突然跟他们讲英文他们也觉得很奇怪。我们一直有在说嘛，所以我们这波人中文还挺好的。

Daughter 28: When I transferred to the second high school, there were many Chinese children. There were only over ten Chinese children (speaking Chinese) when I first came, but later there were more than thirty or forty. Anyway, we spoke Chinese to each other. If I suddenly spoke English with them, they would feel very surprised. We kept speaking Chinese, so all of us are good at Chinese. (Interview, 06/2018)

Excerpt 7.31

[Daughter 30 finished Year 7 in China and started Year 8 in Australia.]

Daughter 30 : 我第一个中学基本都是华人，我说英语汉语一半一半吧，当时我有两组朋友，就是跟那些 ABC，说的是英语。跟以前语言学校一起去是说中文。后来我去了第二个学校，基本都是白人。学校没有 ESL 课，我是唯一一个那种 English as a second language 的。我一开始都不说话的，然后后面口语越来越好了，我花了一年的时间适应了第二个学校。

Daughter 30: Students in my first high school were almost all Chinese, so my chances of speaking Chinese and English were half and half. At that time, I had two groups of friends. I spoke English with the ABCs and I spoke Chinese with those coming from the same IEC. When I transferred to the second high school, my classmates were all white people. My second school didn't offer an ESL class because I was the only one whose English was a second language. I was silent at the beginning until my oral English became better later on. I spent a whole year adjusting to my second school. (Interview, 05/2018)

Excerpt 7.32

[Daughter 27 finished Year 6 in China and started Year 7 in Australia.]

Daughter 27 : 中学时我们年级我是唯一那个 English as a second language 的学生。我 Year11 的时候，开始住校，就是 boarding，我的英文就是从 year 11 之后，立刻上了一个等级，中文就变差了。12 年级之前我的普通话是不怎么好，就是一一直有那个 ability，但是这么多年没有 practice，就没有这么好，就是会很卡。但是，后来

上了大学之后，我们教育系 60%、70%可能都是说中国话的中国人。这样我的普通话反而蹭蹭上去了。

Daughter 27: I was the only English as a second language learner in my grade in my high school. From Year 11 I started boarding at school and I found my English soared to a high level since Year 11, then my Chinese got worse. My Mandarin was not that good by the end of Year 12. I had the ability, but I hadn't practised much all through these high school years. I got stuck frequently when I spoke. But in the education department of my university now, about 60% or 70% are Chinese-speaking Chinese, so my spoken skills in Mandarin soared. (Interview, 05/2018)

As strongly evidenced above, the course of children's language use is significantly shaped by different school environments, i.e. the presence of Chinese speakers in the school. For example, in Excerpt 7.30, the growing number of Chinese-speaking students in Daughter 28's high school provided a comfortable environment for her to practise Chinese. Besides, the change of schools may bring dramatic change in their linguistic practice. For example, Daughter 30 (Excerpt 7.31) was a bilingual user in the first high school but became a habitual English speaker in her second high school, which is dominated by white students. Daughter 27 (Excerpt 7.32) was a habitual English speaker in her high school but turned into a habitual Chinese speaker in the university because her school/class peers changed from white-dominated to Chinese-dominated. As shown above, the change of linguistic habit is triggered by the change of school, specifically the change in the number of Chinese speakers in a school. Meanwhile, compared with the early arrivals who predominantly speak English, the diversity and dynamicity of language use of late arrivals may make them better bilingual speakers, as Daughter 22 said, 中学我的朋友就两头都占了，有时候跟中国人玩，有时候跟外国人玩，看是什么课 (In the high school I have friends from both sides. Sometimes I play with Chinese [Chinese speakers] and sometimes with foreigners, depending on which class. (Interview, 06/2018)

In sum, the patterns of children's language use are largely determined by their age of arrival and also the type of school they attend. It was found that early arrivals unanimously speak English to their ethnic peers, and they are less likely to be influenced by Chinese speaking peers. Age 9/10 arrivals are either English speakers or Chinese speakers in peer communication and their language use is highly dependent on the presence of Chinese speakers in their school. High school arrivals prefer to speak Chinese with their ethnic peers and English with non-Chinese peers. Meanwhile, they demonstrate dynamic and diverse patterns of language use. This dynamicity and diversity are also dependent on the type of school they attended, vis a vis the presence of Chinese speakers. It was found that compared with early arrivals and age 9/10 arrivals, high school arrivals are provided with more Chinese speaking spaces under current education policy.

7.5 Summary and discussion

In sum, most of the focal children attended formal Chinese classes in community schools and/or mainstream schools. Perceptions of the effectiveness of these Chinese classes strongly relate to children's age of arrival. The same is true of the use of the heritage language in peer communication.

Age of migration contributes to the perceptions about the effectiveness of Chinese classes in community schools, as well as in mainstream primary and secondary schools. Late arrivals tend to consider their Chinese courses as useless, ineffective and even detrimental to their heritage language proficiency. This is also true of parents who expect a high proficiency in Chinese. Parents of early arrivals tend to view the Chinese classes as helpful or rewarding in maintaining, or even systematically developing, their children's Chinese language. Even if some children felt that the courses had not improved their Chinese language proficiency, they valued them as subjects that enabled them to get easy marks and contributed to their school success. In addition, the children who took Chinese courses in senior high school aimed to get good marks in the HSC Chinese exam. All of them were late arrivals and had high levels of Chinese, irrespective of their varied views on the effectiveness of the courses.

Age of migration is noticeably associated with children's language use and practise with peers in mainstream schools. Children who migrated early predominantly speak and use English with co-ethnic peers from school. However, children who arrived late are more likely to speak and use Chinese with co-ethnic peers and/or demonstrate diversified patterns of language use. Specifically, age 9/10 arrivals have more potential to be habitual English speakers than high school arrivals. It was found that there are several significant factors contributing to the existing differences.

Above all, school peers of children arriving at different ages greatly influence their language use. That is, English-speaking peers are predominantly influential for children who migrate early, while Chinese-speaking peers are more influential for children who migrate late. Moreover, streamed classes in the current educational system, such as IEC, HSC ESL and HSC Chinese, are another critical factor fostering children's language use in school. The early arrivals who rarely attend those classes, normally find they have no Chinese-speaking spaces in school. However, the IEC, HSC ESL and HSC Chinese classes, dominated by Chinese students, constitute a Chinese-speaking environment where high school arrivals can frequently speak and use Chinese. In addition, the type of school children attended significantly shapes the language use of late arrivals but exerts limited influence on that of early arrivals. That is, for high school arrivals, the dynamicity and diversity of their bilingual use are highly dependent on the presence of Chinese speakers in school. For age 9/10 arrivals, their English-speaking or Chinese-speaking habitus is highly dependent on the availability of Chinese speakers in school. For early arrivals, no matter what school they attended, they generally develop and maintain an English-

speaking habitus. In short, findings indicate that late arrivals are more likely to become more proficient bilingual users than early arrivals.

This chapter has explored children's experiences of learning Chinese outside the home. The next chapter will examine children's actual Chinese language proficiencies as well as factors contributing to their varying levels of proficiency.

Chapter 8: Language proficiency outcomes and contributing factors

8.1 Introduction

The previous chapters (Chapters 4-7) have examined language attitudes from the perspectives of both parents and children, and maintenance practices in and outside the home. Given that the children arrived in Australia at different ages and had diverse experiences in Australian schools, it can be assumed that children may demonstrate complex patterns of language proficiency. This chapter will first explore the perceived language proficiencies and outcomes of these children, based on participants' reported perceptions and my own observations (Section 8.2) and then examine the factors that contributed to differential language proficiency outcomes (Section 8.3). After that, I will conclude the chapter with a summary of the findings.

8.2 Language proficiency outcomes

8.2.1 The typical outcome: language loss and attrition

Most children in the study, no matter what age they migrated to Australia, experienced some heritage language attrition or underdevelopment. Children's risk of language loss or attrition is reversely correlated with their age of arrival. Early arrivals who have little or no formal education in China are highly vulnerable to heritage language attrition or loss in both oral and written proficiency:

Excerpt 8.1

[Daughter 15 and Son 15 came to Australia at age 7 and 5 respectively.]

Father 15: Their thinking language is English, not Chinese, so if they are asked to speak in Chinese, they also struggle in mind within their brain...For those like that – general conversation is very simple, that's easy. They can speak. They have no accent ... if you say something more academic – first maybe they have difficulty understanding you, second, maybe they don't know how they can say in Chinese language to be understood and... (Interview, 10/2017)

Excerpt 8.2

[Daughter 7 came to Australia at age 5.]

Daughter 7: Yeah but like if they say something that I don't know like I never heard of I'll be like what did you just say? And then there was this once my mum went to Aldi [a supermarket chain] and then she bought this thing she called 晚霜 ["Wanshuang", "night cream"]. And then I saw it and I thought she said 碗 ["Wan", "bowl"] like in the bowl so I took a look at the packaging. I was like that isn't a wash bowl and then she started laughing at me and saying I said it's 晚霜 [Wanshuang] so you can put it on your face at night-time. And then that's when she started to think that my Chinese was going down and down and down. So, she was kind of sad about that. (Interview, 05/2018)

[**Note:** 晚 ("Wan", "night") and 碗 ("Wan", "bowl") have identical pronunciation.]

Across the data, early arrivals generally became English dominant one or two years after they started school in Australia (see also, Chapter 6). For these children with no or little formal schooling prior to migration, such as Son 15 and Daughter 7, the development of Chinese literacy skills required

immense nurturing. Their reading and writing abilities started at a lower level to begin with and remained underdeveloped or subject to severe attrition, particularly in comparison to their oral skills (cf. Jia, 2008). Even though Chinese was reported to be the main or the only language spoken by many parents and children (e.g., Father 15 and Son 15), these children's oral Chinese had not developed to the level where they could convey their ideas in a sophisticated manner and understand their parents when it came to complex topics. In some cases, children's underdeveloped Chinese literacy might have presented an obstacle for the development of their orality.

Even those early arrival children who had a few years of education in China and had a certain degree of Chinese reading and writing ability also experienced language attrition, particularly when it came to language use, reading, writing, and calligraphy skills:

Excerpt 8.3

[Daughter 17 started from Year 2 in Australia at age 8.]

Mother 17: Oh, Daughter 17's Chinese is declining sharply, and now what she says even fails to convey her meaning. She made herself the laughingstock of our family in this spring festival. When she talked with her grandparents on the phone, I asked her to say "Gouniandaji" [狗年大吉, Good luck in the Year of the Dog]. Can you guess what she did say? She was anxious, and her words jumped out as "Goujitiaoqiang" [狗急跳墙, a desperate dog tries to jump over the wall]. Oh, our family laughed their heads off. (Fieldnote, 02/2018)

[**Note:** There are two rhyming words in the two four-character idioms of "Gouniandaji 狗年大吉" and "Goujitiaoqiang 狗急跳墙".]

Excerpt 8.4

[Son 19 came to Australia at age 8 and finished Year 3 in China]

Mother 19 : 噢，一日千里的退步哦，尤其是写。哎呀，我的个天啊。我现在相信你让他写个‘大’字，他都不一定写得出来了，真的都不认识那些字了。那天读了一篇文章，什么“眼泪一颗颗掉下来”，他读成什么“眼珠一颗颗掉下来”。

Mother 19: Son 19's Chinese receded at a speed of one thousand miles per day, especially his writing. Oh, my god! Now I believe he couldn't even know how to write '大' (big). He indeed forgot lots of characters. That day, he read an article, and there was a sentence like 'Tears in my eyes dropped one by one', but he read out as 'my eyeballs dropped one by one'. (Interview, 10/2017)

The speed of literacy attrition was observed by many parents, such as Mother 17 (Excerpt 8.3) and Mother 19 (Excerpt 8.4). However, based on my observation, Daughter 17's Chinese reading ability was in fact above her age-group and she was a very avid reader of Chinese literature during her first year in Australia. However, at the end of her second year, Mother 17 complained that as Daughter 17's English was improving, both her oral and written Chinese proficiency were receding sharply. This was despite the fact that Mother 17 claimed she only spoke Chinese to her daughter, a fact confirmed by my observation. Even so, English became Daughter 17's dominant language and always 'jumped out' from

her mouth whenever she was anxious to express herself. In yet another example, Mother 19 reported in the interview that Son 19 had read a lot of Chinese chapter books before he came to Australia. However, after three years in Australia, he had lost his Chinese literacy and was unable to read much Chinese (see also Excerpt 8.5). His Chinese character writing also deteriorated (see Excerpt 8.4).

Despite the obvious attrition of their literacy skills, and also their sophisticated expression in speaking, both Daughter 17 and Son 19 could express themselves in Chinese at age-appropriate levels at the time of interview. This is typical across the data, in that many children especially late arrivals retained a large part of their oral communicative skills, including their ‘native’ accents. However, their literacy skills were at risk of significant attrition or at least stagnation. The wide and severe literacy deterioration observed here is in line with the findings of many studies (Dai & Zhang, 2008; Jia, 2008; Tse, 2001a). Tse (2001a), for instance, described literacy as the first victim of a break in intergenerational language transmission. Children’s deteriorating literacy skills were a constant source of worry for parents and added to their anxiety:

Excerpt 8.5

[Son 19 arrived in Australia at age 8]

Mother 19: 那个时候他在中国其实 chapter 的小说都能看，章回小说他都能看。什么《老鼠记者》、《爱上读书的妖怪》、《窗边的小豆豆》等。他现在读汉语，已经比他读英文要费劲了。

Mother 19: When he was in China, he could read all types of chapter books, such as *Geronimo Stilton*, *A Monster who Loved Books*, and *The Little Girl at the Window*. Now he reads Chinese with more difficulties than English. (Interview, 11/2017)

[**Note:** The Chinese versions of books such as *Geronimo Stilton* 老鼠记者, *A Monster who Loved Books* 爱上读书的妖怪, and *The Little Girl at the Window* 窗边小豆豆 are usually among the recommended booklist for Chinese primary school students.]

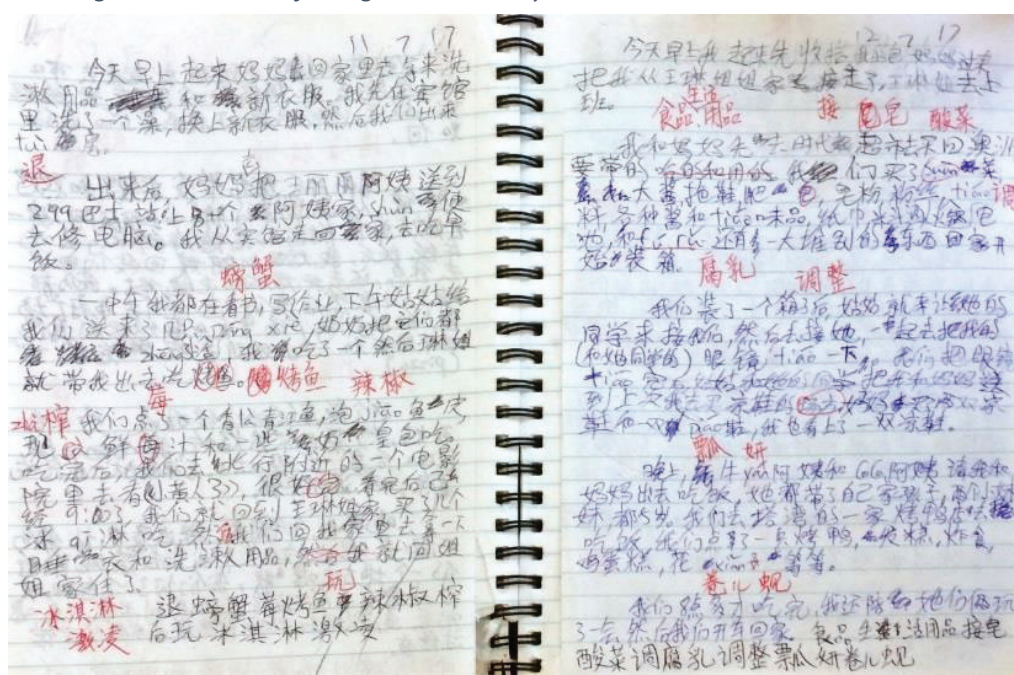
Excerpt 8.6

Mother 21: 你看这个写的这样的，过分吧！你看，写的什么话嘛：今天妈妈早上 8 点钟起床吃饭，然后就去教堂了。哎呀，她在国内的时候学书法的（叹气），字写得相当漂亮的，三年级的时候书法还得银奖呢！但到这来，你瞧这字！都跟狗爬了的一样。（笑）

Mother 21: Look at what she wrote [diary]: Today, my mother got up at 8 o’clock, had breakfast and then went to church. Oh, my, isn’t this intolerable? She learned calligraphy when she was in China. (sigh) She did write so beautifully and got silver medal in Year 3 in China. But now, you look at these characters! Oh, they look as if dogs are crawling. (Interview, 11/2017)

[**Note:** “look as if dogs are crawling” in Chinese means they are crooked, shapeless and twisted.]

Figure 8. 1 Photo of Daughter 21's diary



Across the data, parents repeatedly said they could do little but accept the reality of their children's deteriorating Chinese. Parents felt impotent in the face of a lack of institutional and societal support for minority languages.

For the late arrival children, it can be considered that they had laid a sound foundation of Chinese prior to migration. However, even these children experienced Chinese language attrition in the form of the recession of more sophisticated reading and writing skills:

Excerpt 8.7

[Daughter 27 started Year 7 in Australia at age 11 and was a fourth-year undergraduate at the time of interview]

Daughter 27: 所以我的中文还能，表达能力还是算清晰的，但是我的中文写作能力不太好，太难的书，我就看不懂了。就比如说《围城》我也看不太懂，会理解不了。像《红楼梦》那些，我一句都看不懂。我看的小说比较直白，就难得我就看不懂。就《读者》是直白一点的中文，我能看得懂。比如说这次回国驾照，我考科一，考了两次，我真的看不懂题。就说我能理解他的字，我知道他的字，但是看不懂题。

Daughter 27: My Chinese is ok, and I can express my ideas clearly, but my writing skills are not that good, and I couldn't understand sophisticated books. For example, I couldn't really understand *Fortress Besieged* and not any sentence in *A Dream in Red Mansions*. The sentences in the novels that I could read should be straightforward and not that sophisticated. For example, I could understand the sentences in *Reader* because they are straightforward. I went back to China recently for the driver's licence test, the first part was the written test and I had to do it twice because I couldn't understand the questions. I knew all the words, but I didn't understand the questions. (Interview, 05/2018)

As this example shows, even late arrival children such as Daughter 27 - who seemed to have Chinese fluency - experienced deterioration of their literacy skills. As mentioned in Chapter 6, many late arrivals associated their high-level proficiency with their ability to read Chinese classics and literatures, while the children such as Daughter 27 who perceived their Chinese literacy as not well developed indexed their insufficient performance to their inability in understanding Chinese literatures. For all these children, the concrete literacy skills as reading and writing abilities constitute the essential criterion when they evaluate their heritage language levels.

Across my data, the children who chose Chinese courses for HSC or for undergraduate diplomas were late arrivals who had a good foundation prior to migration. They considered their Chinese as competitive when compared to early-arrived children, but at the same time perceived the insufficiency of Chinese when compared with other later arrivals or high-level Chinese users:

Excerpt 8.8

[Daughter 24 arrived in Australia at the age of ten.]

Daughter 24: 中文能够维持像我这样好的，应该算高的。但是考 HSC 的时候，你可以选 heritage 你就会选 heritage，因为 background 的语文 level 还有那些学生太强了，你不行，你比不过。

Daughter 24: My Chinese is maintained quite well and not many Chinese students could achieve this high level, but if I had a choice between Chinese Heritage and Background in HSC, I definitely chose Chinese Heritage, because those students in the Chinese background class are super strong and I am not any competitive to them at all. (Interview with Daughter 24, 06/2018)

Excerpt 8.9

[Daughter 22, arriving in Australia at the age of nine, was a fifth-year undergraduate majoring in Chinese at the time of interview.]

Daughter 22: 像我说了我汉语不错只是说方面，但是写作的话，不太好。但是我非常希望能够提高我的写作水平，因为以后毕竟要当中文老师，你这个学生写得都比我好，我看了学生的论文我都不知道怎么改，这就不太好了。

Daughter 22: As I said my Chinese is good, but it's just for my speaking. My writing is not really good. So, I am desperate to improve my writing skills, because I am going to be a Chinese teacher. If my students write better than me and I don't know how to correct their essays, it will be embarrassing. (Interview, 02/2018)

For these children who continued their Chinese studies in Australia for quite a few years such as Daughter 22 and 24, they displayed a sense of pride in their heritage language achievements, but they at the same time frequently compared themselves with other higher-level Chinese language users and regarded their insufficient literacy skills as a boundary which set them apart from the desired others. This perceived inferiority instilled in many of them a sense of crisis. Particularly, children who arrived in high-school age constantly claimed that 'neither my Chinese nor my English is good':

Excerpt 8.10

[Daughter 27 started school in Australia from Year 7.]

Researcher : 你觉得哪个语言更能表达你内心的一个情感？

Daughter 27 : 都差不多，两个都不好。

Researcher : 你为什么会说两个都不好？(笑)

Daughter 27 : 就是因为我当时来的时候，11岁嘛，就中文也没有学好。然后，来这边的时候11岁了，就英文也一般。因为我现在21岁，刚好一半一半，都不好。

Researcher: Which languages, you think, could more express your inner thoughts?

Daughter 27: I think no big difference. Neither is good.

Researcher: Why do you say that? (Smile)

Daughter 27: Because I was 11 when I came here, my Chinese had not been well-developed. I came here at age 11, so my English wouldn't be that good. Now I am 21, so, I learned Chinese and English respectively almost half of my life and neither is that good. (Interview, 05/2018)

Excerpt 8.11

[Son 31 came to Australia at age 13 and was a first-year undergraduate majoring in Chinese language at the time of interview.]

Son 31: 我觉得两种语言都不够好。说的话，我中文还是比英文好些，表达的更贴切一点，虽然有时候又觉得拿英文说可能更习惯一点。但是现在跟你这么长时间交流我觉得我中文真的很烂，思维逻辑不太清楚，语言表达也不清楚。

Son 31: I think neither is good enough. For speaking, though, sometimes I feel more accustomed to speaking English, my Chinese is still better than English, and I can express myself more accurately in Chinese. But, when I have this long communication with you now, I do feel my Chinese is so bad and I can't articulate myself, nor organize my ideas logically. (Interview, 05/2018)

Different from early arrivals, who regard themselves - and are regarded by their parents - as English dominant in all aspects of their life (see Chapter 4 & 5), the late arrivals, particularly those who started high school in Australia, frequently compared their Chinese and English with monolingual native speakers. They felt that they fell short in both comparisons, that neither their English nor their Chinese had reached native-like proficiency and that their skills in either language were insufficient to express their ideas fully. The sense of "neither my Chinese nor my English is good" resonates with the findings in Lee's (2014) research in which many of the post-Year 5 arrival Korean students felt that "neither my Korean nor my English is good". As for my participants, their perceived insufficiency in both Chinese and English has resulted in a strong sense of 'inbetweenness'. The sense of 'inbetweenness' is at times referred to by the high school arrivals, as Son 31 said:

Excerpt 8.12

Son 31 : 挺尴尬的，中文中文没学好，英文英文没学好。现在中文会忘词拿英文代替。

Researcher : 这没啥呀，你只是需要时间让两种语言都能达到很高的水平。

Son 31 : 两个都学到顶尖很难, 像我们这种高不高低不低的这种。要不小学过来, 那就是英文特别好, 至少是在一个顶点上面。要不就晚点过来, 中文就特别好。

Son 31: It is indeed embarrassing. You see, we did not learn Chinese well, neither English. Now when I forget Chinese words, I use English words for replacement.

Researcher: It's ok. You will be excellent at both languages and you just need time.

Son 31: It is too hard to achieve the top-level proficiency of both languages. It's really awkward to be like us "neither is good nor bad". We'd better come as early as in primary school or as later, so our English or Chinese would be at a very high-level. (Interview, 05/2018)

For many late arrived children, particularly those starting from high school in Australia, their self-evaluated bilingual ability seemed highly contingent upon particular areas:

Excerpt 8.13

[Daughter 29 started Year 8 in Australia at age 13 and was a third-year undergraduate majoring in Chinese at the time of interview.]

Daughter 29: 口语这一块我还是中文比英文要好, 但汉语写作的话只能写一个基本的意思, 语法可能会不那么通顺, 有时候写的语法会偏向于英文, 就是像英文直接翻译过来的样子这样。

Daughter 29: For speaking, my Chinese is better than English. For Chinese writing I could only express the basic things, my sentences are not that smooth. They are like being translated from English because my grammar is more English. (Interview, 07/2018)

Excerpt 8.14

[Daughter 28 started from Year 7 in Australia at age 13 and has finished her tertiary education.]

Daughter 28 : 电视节目看中文, 中文有什么明星, 侦查片, 我觉得蛮有意思的, 英文我不知道有什么好看的。电影, 我中英文都看。读的话, 比如说小说的话可能还会是中文, 读正式文本或者是课本的话是英文吧。写的话, 我觉得英文比较舒服一点, 比较简单。正式文体的话, 我基本上只会写英文。

Daughter 28: If watching TV, I watch Chinese programs and it is really interesting to watch the detective series or programs with stars; I don't feel any fun to watch English TV programs. If watching movies, I watch both Chinese and English. About reading, I mostly read Chinese novels and English textbooks or formal documents. About writing, I like English and it is simpler. If writing formally, I only know how to do it in English. (Interview, 06/2018)

As evident in the above excerpts, with reference to bilingualism, many of these children who migrated late, such as Daughter 29 and Daughter 28, reported that Chinese was dominant in their leisure life such as daily communication and reading novels, but that English was dominant in the academic areas such as reading academic materials and writing essays. In fact, across the data, it was found that though the late arrived children had a high-level fluency in Chinese, the majority of them admitted that they had very poor skills in Chinese academic reading and writing. Even so, and despite having completed most of their high school in Australia and predominantly using English for academic writing, they all admitted that they could not write English as well as the 'local' people, as Son 31 said, “我们是选不了他们的English A的, 他们讲莎士比亚文学, 能听懂, 但是我们写不出来 (We [high school

arrivals] are not that capable of selecting their English A [IB English A]. They [local children] are taught Shakespeare's literature and we can understand what the teacher said, but we don't know how to write relative articles)". (Interview, 05/2018). Actually 'who is local children' across the data was found to be highly contingent and contextualized and the term can refer to white children, Australian born children, early arrivals or include all primary school arrivals. It is perceived that when evaluating their English skills, the high school arrivals generally other themselves from the Australian born Chinese or primary school arrivals in terms of sophisticated literacy skills. The above excerpts also show that for the late arrivals, their academic Chinese may be at high risk of loss but also that academic skills in English may not fully develop in this context. This is similar to Lee's (2014) ethnographic study, which found that both the academic Korean and the academic English of teenage-arrivals in Australia was at a high risk of not developing satisfactorily.

Overall, poor development or deterioration of literacy skills can be found across all age-on-arrival groups. Oral proficiency, by contrast, seems to be less vulnerable and severe attrition of oral proficiency was only observed in children of early arrival age. Among the complex cases of language attrition, there emerged distinct differences between early and late arrivals in terms of their language development trajectories and bilingual abilities. Early arrivals as a group use English as their stronger and dominant language and Chinese as their weaker language. However, late arrivals as a group use English and Chinese in different domains. They are better bilingual users, but their English orality may lack sophisticated expressions and their academic skills in both English and Chinese may not have been well developed.

8.2.2 Contrasting cases with exceptional outcomes

Against the predominant pattern of language attrition among these migrant children, in some cases, those who arrived at similar ages often experienced quite different language development trajectories and then displayed distinctively different levels of literacy ability. There were seven participating children whose Chinese proficiency outperformed that of their peers who migrated at a similar age.

Though most of the early arrivals were swiftly losing their heritage language (see Section 8.2.1), there were still a few of them who had achieved good results. For example, as age-5 arrivals, both 9-year-old Son 3 and 15-year-old Daughter 9 demonstrated high-level literacy skills. Son 3 was an avid reader of Chinese books and he had read a wide range of age-appropriate books (see Figure 8. 4 in Section 8.3). In addition to being a proficient reader of many sophisticated Chinese books and an accomplished speaker, Daughter 9 won various awards and certificates in different Chinese language competitions in Sydney as shown below:

Figure 8. 2 Competition certificates



Though many late arrivals complained that they did not learn much Chinese in Australia (see Chapter 7), some affirmed their Chinese language achievements and appreciated the Chinese skills they learned in school:

Excerpt 8.15

Son 31: 虽然我很多字不怎么会写，但高中学了挺多东西，比如写论文。我高中的时候就写过三篇这种essay，最多那篇4800字，这些东西对我大学中文课特别有帮助。国内读完高中过来的学生，他们以为他们中文很厉害，他们不知道怎么写essay，但是我们知道。因为在中国高中没写过这种论文的，他们写的都是很general很大框那种，我就觉得很虚，我们写的都是比较实的东西，有逻辑顺序的。

Son 31: Although there are many words I may have forgotten how to write, I did learn a lot in the two years in senior high school, such as how to write essays. I wrote three big essays then and the longest one had 4800 words. This skill helped me a lot in my Chinese courses in the university. For those students who came here after high school, they always think their Chinese is super good, but they don't know how to write essays, and we know. They didn't learn that in high school when they were in China. What they write is very general and too empty, but what we write is solid and logical. (Interview, 05/2018)

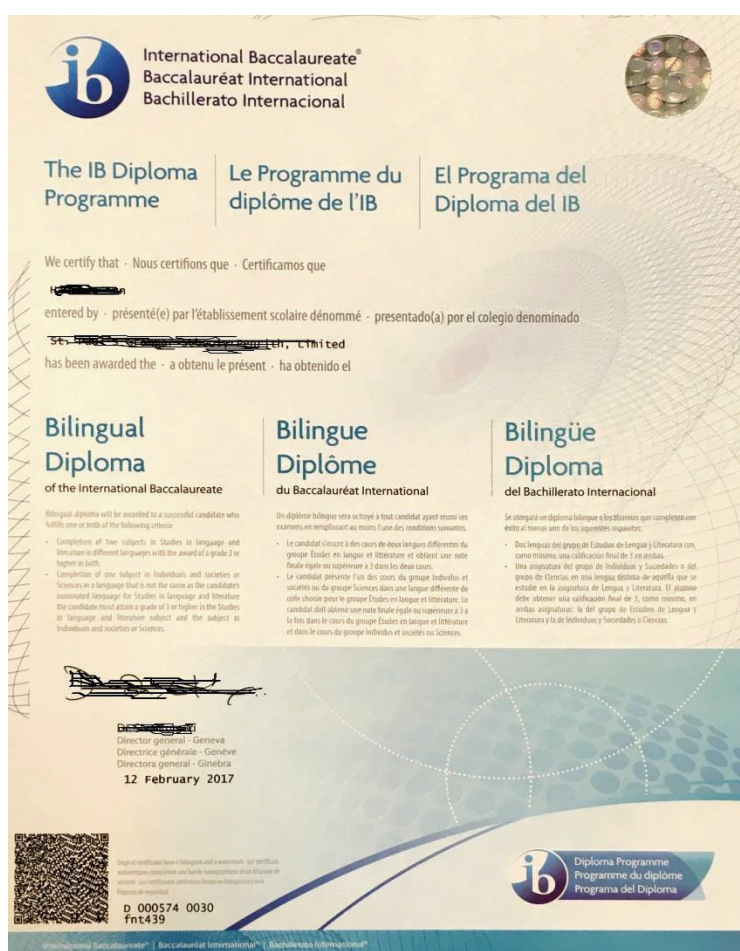
In fact, current achievements tend to beget further success. As many children lay emphasis on the link between languages and capital and see Chinese learning as an investment (see Chapter 5), their commitment to Chinese language studies and their acquired proficiency may produce returns which is considered rewarding in the employment market:

Excerpt 8.16

Son 31 : 当时IB出分之后，我英语和汉语都考得还好，就是你的分到了一定的分数线的话，就会得到一个bilingual的certification，证明你的语言转化是没问题的，这样就可以应聘一些语言工作了，casual或者part-time的。其实挺有用的，这个东西好像是一种很high recognition高认知度的，因为当时我是靠这个找了一个工作。（笑）那个manager问我语言水平怎么样？我说我有bilingual certificate，他就觉得OK，那就可以了。

Son 31: I got good marks on English and Chinese in IB exam. If the marks of our languages go to a certain level, we will get a bilingual certificate which proves that we have no problems in transferring between the two languages. Then with the certificate, we can apply for some casual or part-time jobs related to languages. This is quite useful, and it seems it has a high recognition because I got a job by using this certificate. (smile) That manager asked me about my language proficiencies, and I said I had the bilingual certificate. Then he said ok and I got the job. (Interview, 05/2018)

Figure 8. 3 The bilingual certificate from IB exam



Actually, all the three children who took Chinese language as their major taught Chinese in community schools or other settings, as Daughter 29 introduced me, with a sense of pride, the Chinese work completed by her students:

[illegible]

8.3 Contributing factors

8.3.1 Age on arrival

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English-speaking co-ethnic peers and rarely convey their ideas in Chinese with Chinese-speaking peers, while late arrivals are associated with Chinese-speaking peers in school and frequently use Chinese in various Chinese social networks. Meanwhile, compared with early arrivals, the late arrivals are provided with more opportunities to use Chinese in IEC and HSC ESL classes and to learn Chinese in HSC Chinese classes. In Jia & Aaronson's (2003) three-year-long observation of the linguistic process of Chinese students in the US, younger arrivals (who migrated at or before age 9) "felt socially obliged, as if by 'majority rule', to speak only English in school" (p. 145), whereas older arrivals tended to find Chinese-speaking friends from various social settings.

Therefore, with differential foundation of Chinese prior to migration, early and later arrivals follow different language development trajectories and develop differential bilingual outcomes. Early arrivals as a group are swiftly assimilated into English-speaking peer groups and predominantly use English outside the home in both speaking and writing. If they use Chinese at all, it is normally confined to daily communication with their parents in the home (see Chapter 7). They must be considered as dominant English users and weak Chinese users. However, late arrivals as a group maintain higher numbers of Chinese-speaking friends, they mainly speak Chinese at home and during most co-ethnic socialization, and they are more likely to learn Chinese in the long run (see Chapter 7). At the same time, they use English habitually in academic and other social settings. They must be considered to be better bilingual users, although both their English and their Chinese academic skills may need to be further developed. Thus, timing and conditions of contact with English are crucial to the retention and continued use of the primary language(s) (see also Fillmore, 1991).

8.3.2 Parental commitment

Parental support plays a critical role in the maintenance of children's heritage language, especially when support from society and institutions is lacking. Across the data, children who had high-level literacy skills, compared with those who had limited ability in Chinese reading and writing, generally obtained more support from their families. For example, nine-year-old Son 3, though arriving in Australia as young as age 5, was a prolific reader and his skills in, and knowledge of, Chinese were greater than most of the early-arrived children, irrespective of their current age. When I expressed admiration of Son 3's reading skills, Father 3 showed me the bookshelf fully packed with various types of Chinese books belonging to Son 3 and talked about how he and his wife supported Son 3's Chinese learning. On the spot, Son 3 also confirmed the benefits he got from reading Chinese books:

Excerpt 8.17

Father 3: Look at his bookshelf. We purposefully chose these books. Look at these. They have a lot of interesting examples which can guide children in social communication. These are encyclopedias... And these comics can strengthen his math skills. He also has great

interest in them. I always say to him, “Whenever you meet difficulties, you go to look for some particular books to get help”.

Son 3: These comics teach me math, and English grammar, very interesting. Whenever I got troubles and I didn’t know how to do, I just read sort of particular types of books. For example, last time, I was criticized by the principal-

Father 3: He felt he’d been wronged at that time.

Son 3: When I came back from school, I came here to look for some books which teach me to how to deal with relationships with other people. (Fieldnote, 12/2017)

Figure 8. 5 A selection of Son 3’s Chinese books



Across the data, Son 3 was one of the very few early arrivals who developed high-level proficiency in Chinese and his Chinese ability could be considered as a good model of successful heritage language transmission. As evident from Son 3’s statement in Excerpt 8.17 and the sophisticated books he read (see Figure 8. 5), Son 3’s Chinese reading ability was at a very high level for a nine-year-old. Actually, for most early arrivals, reading Chinese characters presented a huge challenge (see Chapter 5) and they generally displayed very limited skills in characters, let alone reading chapter books (see Section 8.1). Besides, as evidenced in the case of Son 3, his parents’ conscious choice of print resources effectively advanced the literacy growth of his Chinese and enriched his knowledge. These Chinese books covering broad areas showed that Son 3’s parents not only used academic books such as maths books to boost Son 3’s studies, and encyclopedias to build up his general knowledge, but also many other books to improve his social skills. These few children’s excellence in Chinese validated the critical role of parents in heritage language development. Children whose parents actively involve them in everyday conversations are more likely to help their children develop heritage language fluency; children who are exposed to a home environment with rich literature are more likely to develop high-level literacy in Chinese. This echoes G. Li’s (2006b) finding that degree and type of home support play

a vital role in the transmission of heritage language. Effective support includes explicit display of positive attitudes, the enforcement of a heritage language-only policy, and literacy-related activities (G. Li, 2006b). Specifically, “the quality of a positive literacy environment is influenced by the richness of and accessibility to print in the homes” (G. Li, 2002, p. 152).

In contrast, in a situation where minority languages are widely neglected by schools and society, lack of efficient support from parents will exacerbate problems in heritage language learning. For example, though Son 25 arrived in Australia after age 10, his literacy skills were subject to severe attrition or loss:

Excerpt 8.18

[Son 25 finished Year 4 in China and has been in Australia for over ten years.]

Mother 25 : Yes, I still speak Chinese with Son 25 after we came to Australia and he can communicate with me. He can express his ideas in Chinese. But writing and reading, no, he couldn't. He wrote very well when he was in China... I didn't really force him to do so, because if he doesn't have passion, he just doesn't have passion. (interview, 05/2018)

Even for children who had a few years of primary education prior to migration, the continuity of Chinese literacy development still needs to be carefully nurtured or their literacy skills will be severely damaged or even lost. Across the data, Son 25 is the only late arrival who was reported to have lost the ability to read and write in Chinese. As shown in Excerpt 8.18, though, Son 25, ‘could write very well’ prior to migration, but was not able read or write in Chinese at the time of this study. In the interview, Mother 25 also reported that Son 25 rarely spoke Chinese with peers or had Chinese-speaking friends because he had been in white-dominated schools with a low presence of Chinese-origin students. Besides lack of institutional support, Son 25’s inability to read and write in Chinese was also an outcome of his parents’ permissive attitude. As shown in Excerpt 8.18, they held the view that the child should decide his own language destiny. My findings thus mirror those of G. Li (2006b), who pointed out that what parents do or do not do to maintain their children’s heritage language matters, and parents’ active involvement is likely to foster successful learning and development of heritage languages. Thus, the family should be protected as the crucial domain in which to transmit the heritage language before any possible or potential influence from the outside world (J. Wang, 2012).

8.3.3 Print resources

The use of print resources plays a key role in ultimate proficiency in heritage languages. Across the data, the children’s Chinese language proficiency is positively related to their contact with print materials. All the children who had high-level proficiency in Chinese reported that they were exposed to rich print materials. For example, as shown in Excerpt 8.17, Son 3’s achievement in Chinese was largely attributed to the rich Chinese reading materials he read at home. Similarly, when asked about

the reasons behind the heritage language achievements, Daughter 22 referred emphatically to her reading experience after migration:

Excerpt 8.19

[Daughter 22, coming to Australia at age 9, was a fifth-year undergraduate majoring in Chinese language education at the time of interview.]

Daughter 22 : 我喜欢看书, 上学的时候呢, 我家里的网是由我的哥哥掌控, 他不让我上网, 所以我每天没事做, 我只能去图书馆借书看。那时候刚来澳洲呢, 我英文不好, 我只能借中文书看, 社区图书馆有好多中文书, 有很多言情小说, 好多书只有繁体字没有简体字, 我一直借, 一直借, 我现在还会看繁体字。

Daughter 22: I like reading, but when I was in school, the internet at home was controlled by my elder brother and he didn't allow me to use it, so, I had nothing to do except borrowing books from libraries. At that time when I first came here, my English was not good, so I could only borrow Chinese books. In the community library there were many Chinese books, a lot of romantic fiction, and they were written only in traditional characters. I kept borrowing books and now I even can read Chinese books written in traditional characters. (Interview, 05/2018)

Daughter 22, though coming to Australia as young as age 9, displayed unusual oral and literacy proficiency which is rarely observed on children who arrived at similar age. When I interviewed her at her home, she spoke standard Chinese, could clearly articulate any points and organise her thoughts. She also showed me her bookshelf packed with Chinese literatures and the beautiful calligraphy work she has done at home. At the time of interview, she was a university student who chose Chinese language education as one of her majors. As evident in Excerpt 8.19, the availability of large amounts of Chinese literature significantly advanced her Chinese literacy skills and laid a sound foundation for her continued study of Chinese for her future career.

In contrast, lack of reading experiences significantly impeded the development of children's literacy skills. For example, 15-year-old Son 16 came to Australia in Year 2, had over two years of learning Chinese in a community school and then learned Chinese in his high school at the time of interview. In their separate interviews, both Mother 16 and Son 16 said that Son 16's vocabulary capacity still remained at Year-One level and Son 16 rarely read Chinese outside Chinese classes after he came to Australia. Though Mother 16 had been committed to Son 16's Chinese learning, she still displayed a strong sense of loss at Son 16's deteriorating literacy skills and regretted that she had neglected to develop his reading ability:

Excerpt 8.20

Mother 16 : 但是后来我发现他的英语, 随着英语什么样的速度上升, 中文就什么样的速度下降, 因为整天在学校他就不说中文了, 最重要的就是不写, 读跟写太重要了, 它的下降速度是最快了, 因为可能在家里他说是能够说, 然后他的读和写就差得很远了...有时候在论坛里看他们聊, 有的孩子能达到看小说, 比如说看金庸的小说呀, 能达到那个水平, 我们当时有点失误, 没抓好这一块。

Mother 16: But later I found that his Chinese receded at the same speed as his English accelerated. You know, he didn't speak any Chinese in school. The worst thing is that he didn't write any Chinese. Reading and writing are so important, and the skills of reading and writing recede most quickly. It is possible that he could speak at home, but his reading and writing skills are lagging far behind... Sometimes I read parents' chats in the forum, and I found some children could even read novels like the books written by *Jinyong* (金庸), wow, to that high level! It's our fault as parents, and we ignored his reading. (Interview, 07/2017)

Son 16's heritage language experience and outcome were typical among most early arrivals who were pushed to learn Chinese for a few years but were still left with limited literacy skills in Chinese. As shown in Excerpt 8.20, drawing upon the actual performance of Son 16's Chinese and the success of other children's Chinese performance, Mother 16 realized that the lack of print exposure had severely limited Son 16's literacy growth. Across the data, many parents and quite a few children regard the literacy skills particularly reading proficiency as essential to measure the heritage language proficiency and they constantly associated children's Chinese language proficiency with their ability to read specific Chinese novels. That is, the ability to read sophisticated books such as Chinese classics and children's literature is regarded a symbol of high-proficiency achievement and successful language maintenance, while the inability to read novels or recognize many characters is considered as an index of low-level performance and poor language maintenance. In fact, many researchers have found that inadequate Chinese reading input or a print-poor environment at home constitute an obvious barrier to the further development of children's Chinese heritage language (Lao, 2004; Mu, 2015a; Y. Xiao, 2008b).

8.3.4 Peer influence

Peers exert an increasing influence on children's language attitudes, their language use patterns and their heritage language outcomes. Across the data, the children's bilingual ability is closely associated with the influence of their Chinese and English-speaking friends. For example, though Daughter 27 migrated as late as age 11, she said that that she could not fluently express herself in Chinese two years after she was in high school because she had no chance to speak Chinese in the white-dominated school. However, she found that her Chinese spoken ability was greatly boosted at university, where most of her classmates were international Chinese students or other Chinese speakers who migrated later. Across the data, the proficient Chinese speakers or users normally maintained high numbers of Chinese speaking friends, so they naturally felt more motivated to speak or learn Chinese. For example, many Chinese-speaking children asserted the importance of peer environment to Chinese language use and fluency:

Excerpt 8.21

Researcher : 跟你从小一起长大的中国的同学，你觉得汉语能达到你这个程度的多吗？

Daughter 22 : 我觉得 10 个里面差不多 3 个。

Researcher : 你觉得是什么原因让你们能达到这样一个程度呢？

Daughter 22 : 中学的 heritage 班有两个同学是跟我小学在一起玩，一起说汉语的，中学时候，我们三个还一直在一起，平时说话也用中文什么的，所以主要是周围的环境，例如说跟中国孩子玩，被他们的喜好、习惯影响，喜欢看关于中文方面的事情，比如说喜欢用微信。

Researcher: Among the Chinese children around you, how many people can maintain Chinese as well as you?

Daughter 22: I think 3 out of 10.

Researcher: What do you think is the reason for your Chinese achievement?

Daughter 22: There were two friends with me from my primary school to the Heritage Chinese class in my high school. We played together and spoke Chinese. I think the main reason is the environment. If you played with Chinese-speaking kids, you would be influenced by their likes and habits and we liked reading Chinese stuff such as WeChat. (Interview, 06/2018)

Excerpt 8.22

Daughter 24 : 学校的伙伴对我们的影响太大了，中学我们学校有许多中国学生过来，那我们交的朋友说中文的偏多，学校有这个资源促使了我们去交了更多的中国朋友。如果学校一个会说中文人都没有的话，那就是环境逼迫你去说英文，就去交只说英文的朋友。

Daughter 24: The friends you made in the school hugely influenced our languages. During the years in my high school, there were a lot of new students coming from China, so we made more Chinese-speaking friends. It was the resource in the school that allowed us to make Chinese-speaking friends. If nobody spoke Chinese in school, we would be forced to use English and only make English-speaking friends. (Interview, 06/2018)

It has been widely acknowledged, and also shown in the above excerpts, that as children start school and grow older, their peer networks formed in schools play an increasing role in their language attitudes and practices. Many Chinese-speaking children, including Daughter 22 (Excerpt 8.21) and Daughter 24 (Excerpt 8.22), emphasized the significance of school environment, particularly the availability of Chinese speakers in school for their (dis)continued use of Chinese. Admittedly, children's identification with Chinese-speaking peers was also dependent on their prior proficiency in Chinese, as shown in the above excerpts. Given that children such as Daughter 22 and Daughter 24 came to Australia after age 9, their prior proficiency in, and knowledge of, Chinese provided a platform on which to socialize with other new students from China. This finding echoes that of Man (2006), whose research also revealed that the presence or absence of Chinese peers in the school is an important determiner of the extent of the network of Chinese speakers they come into contact with and the degree of Chinese language used. Further, besides the frequency of speaking Chinese, the network of Chinese peers may facilitate the continued development of children's literacy, as Daughter 24 recalled:

Excerpt 8.23

Daughter 24 : 我其实不是特别爱看书，随便汉语还是英语。但是小学和中学的时候，因为我跟 Daughter 22 是同一个学校，那个时候她喜欢读一些汉语书，她还会说，哎，这个好看，那我就等她看完了，还了，我再去借来看一下。

Daughter 24: I don't really like reading, whether Chinese or English. But I was in the same primary school and high school as Daughter 22. She liked reading Chinese books, and she would often say: Hey, this book is interesting. So, when she read a book and returned it, I would borrow and read it. (Interview, 06/2018)

Actually, peers may not only encourage them to speak their language, but also encourage them to engage in literacy activities in that language, such as reading Chinese novels (e.g. Daughter 24, Excerpt 8.23). At the same time, Daughter 24's identification with Chinese speaking peers is also associated with her late arrival age and her prior Chinese proficiency.

Overall, children's language proficiency outcome is the result of many combined factors. Across my data, the distinct factors contributing to differential language proficiency outcomes are age of migration, parental involvement, print resources, and peer influence.

8.4 Summary

In sum, participating children demonstrated different levels of Chinese language proficiency, which is characterized by the tendency towards language attrition and poor development, but also by some successful heritage language development. The complexity of children's language proficiency can be attributed to multiple factors which exert a combined influence on ultimate language proficiency.

Many children in this study have experienced widespread heritage language loss, attrition and poor development. The chapter has shown that the degree of children's heritage language attrition or development is associated with their age of arrival. Early arrivals are at high risk of losing both oral and written proficiency in their heritage language. That is, they may not be able to communicate effectively in spoken Chinese, nor recognize basic Chinese characters. Late arrivals are likely to retain their spoken communication skills, but their literacy skills may stagnate or even recede. That is, they are unlikely to read at age-appropriate levels, let alone be able to write academic essays.

Even for children who have high levels of Chinese proficiency, the majority of them consider their Chinese as insufficient when compared with even later arrivals or 'native' users. There emerged a sense of "neither my Chinese nor my English is good" among the children who migrated during high school age. These children felt that their Chinese and English, respectively, dominate across different domains, but generally Chinese dominates their leisure lives, such as daily communication, TV watching and novel reading, and English dominates their academic worlds, in terms of essay writing and academic reading, for example. Even so, the high-school arrivals found that their academic

Chinese may not have been developed well prior to their migration and their academic skills in English may not fully develop in Australia.

However, language loss or attrition is not the necessary destiny of children's heritage language outcomes. Against the backdrop of wide language attrition, there still emerged a few illuminating cases where a small number of children outperformed their peers when it came to Chinese proficiency, particularly literacy skills. The differential heritage language outcomes were found to be mainly attributable to four distinct factors: age of migration, parental involvement, print resources, and peer influence. In fact, these factors do not exist independently, but intertwine with each other and make a joint contribution to ultimate language outcomes. Specifically, age of migration largely determines children's prior proficiency in Chinese and may predict their language use patterns and heritage language proficiency after migration. Parental involvement is a critical factor for the maintenance of children's heritage language and significantly determines children's heritage language use in their early childhood. Exposure to print materials can be considered a determining factor in the ultimate attainment of literacy proficiency. That is, children who are exposed to rich literatures tend to demonstrate a high-level of proficiency in Chinese, while lack of print material seem to be associated with children's poor Chinese language performance. Peer networks exert an increasing influence as children grow up. Children with high levels of heritage language proficiency generally maintain active contact with Chinese speaking peers.

Admittedly, the described proficiency outcomes in this chapter are limited by the lack of objective language proficiency measurements. However, as mentioned in the introduction, in keeping with the qualitative approach adopted in this study, participants' own perceptions or researchers' observation are considered more relevant to understanding language proficiency outcomes due to the high level of variability in heritage language proficiencies.

This chapter has examined children's actual Chinese language proficiencies as well factors contributing to these varying proficiency levels. The next chapter revisits the research questions and points out the significance and implications of the study.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

This thesis has explored the Chinese heritage language maintenance trajectories of a group of Chinese migrant children and their families. In order to trace the children's heritage language trajectories at various stages and from different perspectives, five research questions were identified:

1. What are parents' perspectives and attitudes towards Chinese maintenance?
2. What are children's attitudes towards Chinese language and identity?
3. What language maintenance practices are evident in the home context?
4. What language maintenance practices are evident outside the home?
5. What language proficiency outcomes can be observed, and what are the factors contributing to these outcomes?

This chapter will revisit each of the research questions in turn and review the key findings. It will then present implications and suggestions for heritage language maintenance.

9.2 Research questions revisited

9.2.1 Research question 1: What are parents' perspectives and attitudes towards Chinese maintenance?

The analysis in Chapter 4 showed parents' valorisation of Chinese. It was found that parents overwhelmingly desire for the maintenance of their children's Chinese language. Their heritage language aspirations are strongly grounded in their view of Chinese as an investment in their children's economic, career and education futures, as the emblem of their ethnic and cultural identity, and as a bridge to parent-child relationships and family cohesion.

Investment in children's economic, career and educational futures is the most prominent parental motivation. The parents who saw Chinese as an investment spoke about global employability given the increasing currency of Chinese. The material value of Chinese was found to be built on the socio-political and economic significance of China in the world. Firstly, with the rise of China, Chinese has become widely regarded as a 'world' language next to English, so proficiency in, and knowledge of Chinese, is considered a crucial pathway to the achievement of economic betterment, global mobility and world citizenship. In the migration context, where the children's English-language education is secure, Chinese comes to be seen to possess unique importance in optimizing children's future careers across east and west. Thus, for many Chinese families, maintenance and development of Chinese becomes a desirable part of children's education plan as education is a core value whether in Chinese traditional culture or in their current migration contexts (also see Section 1.3). However, despite the increasing significance accorded to Chinese, the English language as linguistic capital still takes precedence over Chinese as 'better education' which is frequently considered to equal education in English. This also explains why some Chinese families gave up their children's Chinese education to

make a way for English learning time or content learning time through the medium of English. Meanwhile, for both parents and children, Mandarin seems to take precedence over any Chinese dialect. Throughout the data collection, when the topic of heritage language was concerned, 'the Chinese language' as a frequent term was widely accepted as the default equivalence of 'Mandarin' and the mention of other dialects was normally addressed specifically to distinguish them from 'the Chinese language', i.e. Mandarin. In other words, any Chinese varieties other than Mandarin were generally considered as dialects rather than 'the Chinese language'. Secondly, Chinese is recognized as a language that is widely used in Australia, too. Therefore, parents believe that investing in Chinese can maximise children's occupational choices, even within the national context of Australia, and also promise educational benefit as a subject contributing to children's HSC success. Thirdly, due to the prominence of China's economy, it was found that Australia is not necessarily the intended destination for children's education or career development but is often regarded as a steppingstone. Return migration becomes a realistic option in the parents' considerations of their children's future trajectories. To keep this option open, proficiency in Chinese is considered fundamental. However, stunted development, or even loss of children's Chinese language proficiency, is seen as a strong threat to desired global mobility and envisaged opportunities in the growing Chinese market.

The retention of children's ethnic and cultural identity is also foregrounded as an important reason of heritage language maintenance. This view of language as indexing identity is closely associated with the perceptions of embodied ethnicity and heritage culture. On the one hand, proficiency in Chinese is seen as crucial in grounding ethnic identity which is distinctly embodied in 'Chinese looks'. That is, the correct conveyance of Chinese identity is assumed to be achieved through proficiency and knowledge of Chinese. Further, proficiency and knowledge of Chinese is believed to build up a positive racial identity, which can prepare children for possible encounters with racism insofar as identity and employment are concerned. In addition, accent emerged as a key identifier of ethnic authenticity. That is, the children's ethnic authenticity is to be validated by speaking proper Chinese. Specifically, speaking accented Chinese, particularly with an Australian accent, is regarded as an expression of illegitimate Chinese identity, being unable to speak Chinese is regarded as a faulty representation of Chinese ethnicity, and attrition in Chinese is seen as a signifier of alienation from the ethnic homeland. On the other hand, learning Chinese is regarded as being important for the sake of the retention of heritage culture. Above all, Chinese language and culture are constantly associated with ethnic and cultural roots, in parental and wider diasporic discourses. The loss of Chinese, by contrast, is regarded as the primary cause of rootlessness and lack of belonging. Chinese language and culture are perceived as essential in enhancing children's ethnic pride and preparing them for identity confusion and dilemmas they may experience in later life. In addition, parents' heritage language desires are also

associated with their admiration for, and pride in, the aesthetic, cultural and linguistic value of Chinese.

The maintenance of Chinese is also considered important for family cohesion. Across the parental discourse, Chinese is still seen as the language which can best facilitate parent-child in-depth communication and foster intimacy between them. For parents with limited English skills, their children's Chinese language skills are considered particularly crucial for mutual understanding and family relations. That is, failure to maintain the heritage language may be disruptive to family cohesion. Besides being a bridge in parent-child talk, the Chinese heritage language is also seen as a tie that connects children with their non-English-speaking grandparents and other family members back in China.

In sum, aspirations for children's Chinese language maintenance and development are pervasive in parental discourse and across the wider Chinese diaspora. When the reasons behind these Chinese language desires were explored, Chinese as an investment in children's economic and educational future is the most prominent, Chinese language and culture as the key to the retention of ethnic identity and heritage culture are also foregrounded, and Chinese as the bridge to family cohesion is constantly referred to.

The findings presented here confirm recent research, where instrumental motivation for Chinese maintenance have gained increasing attention. This is in line with the conceptual transformation of language attitudes, where languages have come to be widely seen as capitals, commodities and language learning as an investment with expected good returns (see Section 2.2.1). My research thus confirms that the socio-economic value of Chinese is a prominent parental motivation for Chinese heritage language transmission. That is, the Chinese heritage language is, to a significant degree, valorised by the economic, political and linguistic capital which is prized in the employment market. It is the perceived exchange value in the job market that largely determines whether the Chinese language should be maintained or to what extent it should be maintained. Thus, situated in the changing situation of the economic and political power of China, traditional cultural and identity motives, though not excluded, tend to yield to a more materialistic calculation.

9.2.2 Research question 2: What are children's attitudes towards Chinese language and identity?

This research question was addressed in Chapter 5, which demonstrated children's variable and conflictual attitudes towards Chinese language and identity. Children's complex and multiple attitudes towards the heritage language centre on Chinese as being a chore, as being difficult and irrelevant, but also as an investment, and as a marker of ethnic identity.

Many children express a lack of interest in learning Chinese and regard it as a chore. They frequently state that their Chinese learning, especially literacy work, is tedious, boring and an extra burden. Besides, Chinese is perceived by many of these children as a difficult language to learn. Some children compare Chinese negatively with English or other European languages and are of the view that Chinese is harder than any other language they have learned. Some children dichotomize Chinese and English language learning and they state that their Chinese development would be at the expense of English acquisition and vice versa.

The view of the relevance of Chinese within the migration context is varied. On the one hand, some children regard the learning of Chinese as an irrelevant practice in Australia. These children associate their lack of motivation with the perceived irrelevance or uselessness of Chinese to their lives in Australia. These children continually state “this is Australia” or “my main language is English” as legitimate reasons for their disinclination to continued Chinese learning. They feel that learning Chinese is an unprofitable task in Australia and that a high level of Chinese literacy is useless in their immediate or future worlds. On the other hand, some other children are actually convinced that their Chinese ability is a practical skill in Australia. These children associate the value of Chinese with their actual language use in their immediate context, particularly their experiences of being language brokers.

Next, quite a few children see Chinese as an investment and construct their heritage language desire upon the perceived job opportunities, economic benefits and academic advantages. Above all, Chinese is valued for the economic benefits in the Australian employment market and for academic benefits in Australian schools. Across the data, the perceived usefulness of Chinese in Australian job market emerged as strong motivation for children’s engagement with Chinese language practice. Besides, for school-aged children, Chinese-related benefits are practically embodied in school credits and bonus marks. So, the value of Chinese seems to be advanced when they see their Chinese language competence recognized by schools and translated into credits. Thus, favourable language policies and attitudes towards heritage languages adopted by schools/institutions play a crucial role in facilitating children’s commitment to heritage language learning. Like their parents, some children also see Chinese as a profitable language which keeps their career options open in the growing Chinese market and in the broader global world that Chinese offers.

In addition, there emerged a distinct conflict about Chinese as a marker of ethnic identity. Some children see the Chinese language as an essential and undeniable part of being Chinese. They regard fluency in Chinese, a Chinese-speaking habitus, and age of migration as marked identifiers of the authenticity of Chinese identity. Based on these standards, they distinguish themselves from other

'inauthentic' Chinese people, whom they refer to as 'ABCs' - those who lack Chinese language skills, speak English habitually with co-ethnic peers, and who migrated young. Meanwhile, their view of Chinese as identity is also constructed upon the linguistic, cultural and aesthetic value of Chinese. They regard Chinese as their linguistic and cultural heritage, which they expect to pass on to their children. However, other children construct their Chineseness not on proficiency in Chinese or their ancestral homeland but on a range of other things, such as the sense of being accepted, consumption of Chinese food, celebration of Chinese festivals, and childhood memories. These children often demonstrate diverse and multi-layered forms of Chineseness, and their identity expressions tend to be relational and contradictory. For example, with regard to traditional festivals or Chinese foods, they may embrace their Chinese identity, while they may emphasize their Australian identity or exclude their Chinese identity in other contexts.

The main contribution made by these findings relates to the attitudinal differences between parents and children and the age effect on children's attitudes to Chinese and identity.

Firstly, previous research has shown that parental and child attitudes to Chinese both conflict and converge (see Section 2.2.2 & Section 2.2.3). Attitudinal tensions result from parents' strong desire for Chinese language maintenance and children's objection to the same. However, both parents and children highlight the economic value of Chinese for career development and the symbolic value of Chinese for identity expression. My research confirms these findings and extends them further with regard to the social value of Chinese for family cohesion. This was valued by parents but widely ignored by children.

Secondly, previous research into children's attitudes to Chinese heritage language pointed out the variability and dynamicity of their attitudes and also associated them with children's age of arrival and age of maturation (see Section 2.2.3). This research supports these studies in that children's late arrival age grounds their desires for advancing Chinese and their psychological maturation tends to reverse their previous objections to learning Chinese. However, it further argues that a virtuous cycle is constructed upon high levels of proficiency and positive attitudes, and children's proficiency in Chinese is predicted by, but not necessarily determined by, their arrival age. For example, there are contrasting cases of early arrivals such as Son 3 and Daughter 9, with high levels of oral and literacy proficiency. This further generates their desire for continued advancement of their literacy skills. By contrast, a vicious cycle exists when low levels of proficiency in Chinese discourage children's motivation for heritage language development.

Thirdly, previous research pointed out the relationship between heritage language proficiency and the perception of the language-identity link (see Section 2.2.3). That is, children who are engaged in

learning Chinese often index the fluency and proficiency in Chinese with their Chinese identity, while those with limited or no proficiency in Chinese are unlikely to link Chinese identity to Chinese language proficiency. My research aligns with these previous findings but further argues that the age of migration is also linked to the strength of Chinese identity. Specifically, late arrivals who are normally fluent and proficient Chinese users often demonstrate and maintain a solid sense of being Chinese or being 'authentic' Chinese, even in the long run. In contrast, early arrivals, though most of them did not exclude themselves from being Chinese, are less likely to articulate a strong sense of being Chinese, but more likely to focus on their Chinese-Australian identity or Australian identity as they grow older.

9.2.3 Research question 3: What language maintenance practices are evident in the home context?

As can be seen from the findings in Section 9.2.1 and 9.2.2, in terms of language attitudes, there exists a distinct gulf between parent's desire for heritage language maintenance and children's varied attitudes towards Chinese language learning. The analysis in Chapter 6 shifted focus from attitudes to maintenance strategies employed by the participating families in the home domain. The maintenance strategies widely adopted by parents are speaking Chinese in the family, having their children practise Chinese writing at home, and exposing them to Chinese through media entertainment.

Speaking Chinese at home constitutes the primary family language policy that is implemented by the majority of the participating parents, but language shift often occurs among the 1.5-generation migrant children. Children's spoken language with parents may be Chinese-oriented, but also has a good representation of English or mixed languages. Besides, there emerged noticeable generational difference in terms of children's language use. That is, though most children, especially late arrivals, still maintain the habit of speaking Chinese to their parents, children, irrespective of their arrival age, predominantly use English with their siblings.

Having their children practise Chinese reading and writing at home is a strategy adopted by the majority of families with the aim of enhancing children's Chinese language skills. Across the data, the majority of parents and quite a few children attached great importance to literacy proficiency and frequently indexed heritage language proficiency with their literacy skills particularly the ability to read Chinese classics and literatures, to write essays and to accomplish beautiful calligraphy. That is, the ability to read sophisticated books is associated with high-level proficiency, while limited ability to comprehend Chinese books and to write characters is associated with poor proficiency. On the basis of this standard, they measured whether their home language maintenance was successful or not. With the hope of systematically improving their children's reading and writing, parents have utilised various accessible resources and adopted a variety of strategies. Specifically, the linguistic resources frequently used are Chinese language and math textbooks, Chinese literature and other reading

materials. With the language materials, parents conducted various forms of literacy practice, typically character writing, story reading and math drills.

Exposing children to Chinese through media entertainment is an important supplementary strategy to develop children's fluency and literacy skills in Chinese. Different from other forms of literacy practice, watching entertainment programs on television or YouTube is reportedly a joyful activity and fosters an affection for the Chinese language in some children.

However, parents' commitment to their children's literacy practice may encounter significant difficulties and obstacles, such as children's resistance, parents' dual expectations and lack of societal support. On the one hand, feeling the marginal status of the heritage language in the Australian education system, the children find it hard to endorse their parents' maintenance efforts and they constantly displayed resistance to the literacy practice assigned by parents. On the other hand, under pressure from the English-only principle for school success, many parents constantly compromise the value of Chinese by prioritising their children's English-related subject learning. Therefore, both children's resistance and parents' dual expectations reveal a lack of heritage language support from institutions and wider society. In fact, besides parents, children, even if they may not object to learning Chinese, have also encountered significant obstacles mainly in the form of school/peer pressures, parents' inconsistent support and their own deteriorating Chinese skills.

The main contribution made by these findings relates to the arrival age effect on children's language use at home. Previous research pointed out children's language shift and the generational differences in children's language use (see Section 2.3.2). That is, children tend to increasingly use English at home. Besides, though children might use Chinese when speaking to parents, they predominantly speak English to siblings. In line with these facts, this research further illustrates how age of migration plays out in children's language preference and use in family communication. Children's language shift or maintenance at home was found to correlate with arrival age. Over half of the early arrivals speak to their parents in English or a mix of English and Chinese while all late arrivals, except one, predominantly speak Chinese to their parents, even in the long run. This indicates that for early arrival children, English tends to be used increasingly, or may take place of Chinese to become the dominant language that children use at home. At the same time, late arrival children tend to be the long-term potential users of Chinese. However, arrival age exerts limited influence on children's spoken language with their siblings since English is their dominant language irrespective of their arrival age. Besides, it was found that media entertainment, though useful in maintaining Chinese, is only entertained by later arrivals or children with certain levels of Chinese skills. However, children with limited or deteriorating skills in Chinese might find these programs too difficult to understand and

consequently lacking in interest. This suggests that Chinese language practice and Chinese language proficiency are mutually constituted. That is, lower levels of language proficiency result in reduced likelihood of speaking and learning the language, while high levels of proficiency increase the likelihood of language use and practice, and vice versa. In fact, the positive relationship between children's arrival age and increasing use of Chinese is also in line with the observed age effect on their language attitudes, where late arrival age underpinned their high motivation for Chinese learning (see Section 9.2.2).

9.2.4 Research question 4: What language maintenance practices are evident outside the home?

Following on from language maintenance practices implemented in the home, children's language maintenance practices outside the home were analysed in Chapter 7. Children's Chinese language experiences outside the home mainly include their language learning in community schools and mainstream schools, as well as their language use in peer communication in mainstream schools.

Chinese community schools are expected by parents to be an important platform for heritage language maintenance, but perceptions of the effectiveness of Chinese schools vary. Some participants feel disappointed by the community Chinese classes. They regard the classes as useless and a waste of time because they fail to foster high-level proficiency in Chinese. However, some other participants value the classes highly. They consider the classes as fruitful and rewarding because they systematically improve children's Chinese proficiency.

In recent decades, more mainstream schools have set up Chinese language programs, but the effect of these programs are highly contentious, and this is particularly true of the programs at primary and secondary school level. Many participants, particularly late arrivals and their parents, claim that these primary and secondary Chinese programs have not done much to improve their children's Chinese, but in fact have had a negative effect on prior Chinese language proficiency. However, a few parents of early arrivals state that the Chinese programs offered by mainstream schools are maintaining their children's Chinese.

Besides, in their senior high school, some children take Chinese courses for the HSC/IB test and all of them were late arrivals in my research. Their perceptions regarding Chinese courses also vary. That is, some children view their HSC/IB Chinese courses as useless or ineffective for learning new things, but others consider these courses as instructive and informative in advancing their literacy skills and Chinese knowledge.

In fact, irrespective of the effect of Chinese learning, all the children appreciate the credited Chinese programs or courses offered by their mainstream schools and view Chinese as a profitable subject which enables them to get good marks and furthers their school success.

These findings align with those of previous research, which found contradictory perceptions of the effect of Chinese community schools. This research not only echoes the existence of different voices but also associates these variable perspectives with age of migration. It reveals that regarding the perception of Chinese classes in both community schools and primary and secondary mainstream schools, low level of satisfaction is generally correlated with late arrival age, while high level of satisfaction is related to early arrival age. This suggests that in order to develop high level Chinese proficiency, community schools need to develop high quality programs to cater for late arrivals and to make full use of class time, and mainstream schools need to provide various level classes for both heritage and non-heritage learners.

In addition, children's language use with their peers in mainstream schools is under-researched, and this research aims to fill this gap by illustrating the language use of children who migrated at various ages during mainstream schooling. It reveals that migrant children's language use with their ethnic peers is significantly shaped by their arrival age and/or by the type of school they attended. Early arrivals predominantly speak and use English with co-ethnic peers, while the presence of Chinese speakers in the school exerts limited influence on their English-speaking habitus. Age 9/10 arrivals are likely to be habitual English speakers or Chinese speakers with their ethnic peers. Their language habitus is dependent on the school they attended, i.e. the availability of Chinese speakers. High school arrivals are more likely to speak and use Chinese with co-ethnic peers and/or demonstrate diversified patterns of language use in different schools. That is, they are generally Chinese language speakers, but if they are without access to other Chinese speakers in school, they will follow the mainstream English-speaking norm in the school context. Overall, with regard to language use, the school type they attend matters to later arrivals rather than to early arrivals.

Moreover, in further exploration of Chinese speaking spaces in school, the study reveals the existence of different school language environments for late arrival and early arrival children. In Australia's current educational system, late arrivals often find that they have many opportunities to speak Chinese in school spaces such as in IECs, or HSC ESL and HSC Chinese classes, which are dominated by Chinese speakers. However, these classes are rarely taken by early arrival students. Thus, the school language environment for late arrivals forms a distinct contrast with that of their early arrival peers. The late arrivals are likely to become entrenched in a Chinese-speaking context, while the early arrivals become entrenched in an English-speaking environment.

9.2.5 Research questions 5: What language proficiency outcomes can be observed and what are the factors contributing to these outcomes?

This research question was addressed in Chapter 8, which examined children's actual Chinese language outcomes across different arrival ages and then identified the key factors contributing to heritage language proficiency outcomes.

Irrespective of children's arrival age, heritage language attrition or underdevelopment is the typical outcome, particularly with regard to literacy, but participating children have experienced different degrees of language attrition. Firstly, a small number of children have lost both their oral and written proficiency to a large degree. Secondly, most children were able to conduct daily oral communications in private contexts but only had limited reading and writing skills. Thirdly, even most of those who were relatively fluent in both spoken and written Chinese lacked proficiency in academic skills. However, the overall trend towards language attrition contrasts with the exceptional cases of some children's excellence in Chinese. Besides oral fluency, these children demonstrated sophisticated reading ability and a solid foundation of writing skills. Besides, they presented themselves as potential long-term Chinese language users and learners.

These differential proficiency outcomes were found to correlate with age of migration, parental involvement, print resources, and peer influence. Above all, age of migration generally determines children's proficiency in Chinese prior to migration, shapes their post-migration preferences for peer networks which are characterized by different linguistic habitus, and influences their choice of school courses and their Chinese language use opportunities in mainstream schools. Next, parental commitment determines the success or failure of family language policy, influences children's motivation to learn Chinese, and also determines the foundation of Chinese language proficiency before any possible or potential maintenance influence from outside. Besides, the use of print resources is presented as strategic in strengthening and advancing children's literacy skills. All the children with high-level proficiency in Chinese were exposed to rich reading materials. Lack of reading experiences hinders the development of Chinese. In addition, the peer group increasingly influences and shapes children's language use outside the home as children get older. Habitual and fluent Chinese users normally maintain a high number of Chinese-speaking friends, while habitual English speakers, and limited Chinese speakers, mostly socialize with English-speaking peers.

The strong language attrition observed in my research also echoes previous research, which also found that heritage languages are rarely maintained and developed across generations, but also that late arrival age may help to minimize children's language shift (see Section 2.4.1). Beyond that, this research further reveals how children's language outcomes or degrees of language attrition is linked to arrival ages.

The children who had no or little formal education in China experienced high risk of language loss in both oral and literacy skills. Specifically, they might be unable to read, write, communicate their ideas or understand complex topics in Chinese. Even those early arrival children who had a few years of schooling in China also experienced severe attrition, particularly in terms of literacy skills. They might be short of sophisticated expressions, experience deteriorating calligraphy skills, and become unable to read and write much Chinese. Furthermore, for the late arrivals, their language attrition was evident in their inability to produce more sophisticated reading and writing. Though they could articulate their 'deep' thoughts and had retained their 'native' accents, many were unlikely to read Chinese classic literatures and write academic essays. Specifically, many high school arrivals felt that "neither their Chinese nor their English is good". They found that their Chinese academic skills had not yet developed in China prior to migration while their English academic skills had not developed well in Australia.

9.3 Significance and implications

In the examination of language attitudes of both Chinese migrant parents and children, as well as their heritage language maintenance strategies, and children's heritage language proficiencies, this thesis has undertaken a cross-sectional inquiry into the trajectory of children's Chinese language development at various ages of migration. The research significantly contributes to the field of heritage language learning of Chinese migrant children (i.e. 1.5 generation) in various aspects, specifically featuring the significance of age factor in the diversity of the children's language proficiency levels, the relationship between the power relations and the participants' language ideologies, the nuances of the children's learning experiences in heritage language classes and community schools. First, the study, by exploring the socio-linguistic environment of broad age groups at migration, provides a thorough understanding of how arrival-age-related sociocultural contexts shape children's language ideologies, their identity constructions, as well as their language maintenance efforts and trajectories; and how the age factor interacts with various other factors leading to children's language outcomes, specifically their heritage language loss, attrition or development. Meanwhile, the study not only depicts the difficulties and challenges that both parents and children have encountered when trying to maintain the heritage language but exposes how these difficulties and challenges relate to and interact with children's ages and age-on-migration. Secondly, the study, situating participants' language attitudes in the socioeconomic contexts of both China and Australia in the twenty-first century, extends existing research by revealing how power relations between countries and between languages influence peoples' language ideologies and Chinese heritage language attitudes, i.e., how the rising socio-economic status of China strengthens participants' aspirations for Chinese language proficiency, how the prestige of English disintegrates

parental consistency of supporting their children's Chinese language learning, and why Mandarin takes precedence over any other Chinese varieties in terms of Chinese heritage language maintenance. These power-related language attitudes foreground the dominance of post-structural language ideologies which feature out language learning as investment, languages as capital and commodities. Thirdly, the study, not only displaying children's heritage language experiences in the home, but in multiple social contexts especially community schools, mainstream schools as well as peer socialization, depicts a realistic picture of language resources available in diasporic contexts, authentically reveals participants' perspectives on these programs as well as the difficulties they have encountered in various contexts when maintaining Chinese, and further underlines the emergent problems in language policies and heritage language education. Thus, the study, situated in the context of the tendency of English language assimilation, the emerging prominence of Chinese, and the increasing parental desires for Chinese language proficiency, have multiple implications for Chinese heritage language maintenance for migrant families, local communities, mainstream schools and policy makers.

The research draws attention to migrant families as to children's general heritage language course in the host country, existing challenges in maintaining Chinese in multiple social contexts across different age groups, and potential ways to developing children's Chinese. As shown in previous sections, parental support is the key factor in successful Chinese language transmission, but family language policy, including the Chinese-only rule and home literacy practice encountered significant obstacles, including parents' inconsistent efforts and children's resistance in the larger assimilative environment. Thus, parental maintenance efforts rarely yield good results. For the development of children's literacy skills, the print materials mainly used by parents are Chinese textbooks, while children's literature, though being a valuable resource to activate children's interest and facilitate their literacy development, is rarely effectively used by parents in children's literacy practice. In addition, as Chapter Seven illustrated children's heritage language experiences in community schools and heritage language classes in mainstream schools, parents may have a better understanding of their children's heritage language education in Australia and reconsider their current language practices that may be additive or subtractive to the children's language and literacy development. Nevertheless, these finding suggests that parents should understand the key role they can play in withstanding assimilative linguistic forces. They need to be strategic and use resources that are effective in maximising their maintenance efforts. For example, parents should actively involve their children in daily conversations and encourage them to speak Chinese with family members and peers. Meanwhile, parents should expose their children to meaningful literacy activities, such as reading Chinese story books and watching appropriate programs.

Besides, deterioration of literacy proficiency tends to occur across all-age groups. In addition to losing Chinese literacy skills, early arrivals are also vulnerable to losing their oral proficiency. The research shows that a solid foundation in Chinese always begets further successful language achievement, and poor or unstable proficiency often results in lack of motivation, few Chinese language practices and deteriorating language skills. This study calls on parents to attend to children's Chinese language learning before it is too late. It is much easier, and more helpful, to give children rich exposure to a Chinese oral and literacy environment at an early age. Parental success in fostering bilingualism in their children depends on the establishment of virtuous language learning cycles rather than vicious cycles.

In addition to the importance of the home domain in language maintenance, the widely unsuccessful heritage language education in the school domain also has implications for schools and policy makers. As shown in the findings, Chinese programs and courses in community schools and mainstream schools rarely produce high levels of Chinese language proficiency. This is particularly true for late arrivals or children with a solid foundation in Chinese. The findings suggest that Chinese courses, both in community schools and mainstream schools, can be redesigned to accommodate students with different levels as well as those with different learning goals and needs. For example, basic language skills with a focus on everyday communication can be provided for limited Chinese language speakers who only want to learn Chinese for family communication. Students with high levels of Chinese proficiency should be provided with more sophisticated reading and writing practice to advance their literacy skills. Admittedly, as mentioned earlier, many community schools are faced with significant practical problems such as lack of sufficient funds and qualified teachers as well as limited instruction time for heritage language teaching, so policy makers and education administration need to consider the situation of language schools and provide them with more practical support such as finding qualified teachers and rich teaching materials as well as designing the format of language programmes.

Across the data, it was found that lack of institutional support presented as a major cause of children's resistance to, and demotivation in, Chinese language learning. This study, along with many previous studies, reveals that individual families and community schools are not sufficient to fight against the assimilative force of English (see Section 2.3), and this is the case even more so for the Chinese programs in some mainstream schools. However, as shown above, with the rising economic and political power of China, the Chinese language is becoming much more desirable for diasporic Chinese families than it was at any previous historical period. Against the conflicting backdrop of poor maintenance outcomes and increasing demands for Chinese, the full effects of these tensions are yet unknown, but policy makers and school administrators should be aware of the high market demands

for high-quality Chinese programs in Australia, the existing problems in current language policies and difficulties in heritage language education, and then adopt methods to make heritage language maintenance easier and more feasible for all learners. In fact, failure to maintain Chinese heritage language might not only be devastating for large numbers of Chinese families but might also cause a great loss in potential national resources. Thus, it is also important for school administrators to convey a positive message to children and society about the importance of their heritage languages and the most effective way is to improve the quality of heritage language programs and include the heritage language in school curriculum. As Shin (2006) stated, “a legitimate status of the minority language in the eyes of the members of the larger community will make it more desirable for young HL speakers to learn and maintain their language” (p. 142). My research suggests that – with regard to Chinese – now is the right time to increase the status of Chinese in Australia.

In addition, the analysis of the children’s language use patterns and proficiency outcomes found that early arrivals were losing their heritage language, but that late arrivals might have weak academic skills in both English and Chinese. Besides, the exploration of children’s peer communication in school revealed that early and late arrivals act as separate two language camps that rarely integrate with each other in schools, and the streamed classes in the current education system seem to entrench this division. This suggests a unique opportunity for schools to create programs that cater to the specific needs of early and late arrivals and help them profit from each other’s linguistic strengths in Chinese and English. In addition, effective measures are needed to systematically maintain and develop early arrivals’ Chinese, as well as advance late arrivals’ academic ability in both English and Chinese.

Overall, this thesis has shown that families, communities, and schools need to work together in order for language maintenance efforts to succeed.

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Appendix I-IV of this thesis have been removed as they may contain sensitive/confidential content

Appendix V Interview Guide (for parents)

Phase 1 Background information (before coming to Australia)

1. Can you tell me about your English learning experiences before coming to Australia and how do you evaluate your English proficiency prior to migration?
2. Can you tell me about your child's English learning and Chinese learning before coming to Australia and how do you evaluate your child's English and Chinese proficiency prior to migration?
3. Can you tell me about your child's education in China generally?
4. What kind of job did you do before moving to Australia? Can you tell me about your life back at home?
5. What made you come to Australia? What were your expectations of your child's education abroad before coming to Australia?

Phase 2 Education and adaptation in Australia

About parents

1. Can you tell me about your experiences of English learning in Australia?
2. What kind of job do you do now?
3. Can you tell me about your social activities and about your social circles?
4. Did you see some changes in your life after moving to Australia in terms of your job opportunities, living standard, education opportunities and social activities?
5. What are your happiest experiences (e.g. in education and life) after moving to Australia?
6. What are some of the problems and difficulties you have experienced in Australia?
7. How much are Chinese values a part of your life (e.g. Chinese language, Chinese books and programs, Chinese food and festivals)?
8. How much are mainstream Australian values a part of your life (e.g. English speaking, English reading and programs, Australian sports, Australian food and festivals)?
9. What do you think of your identity (more Chinese or Australian)?
10. Do you have education goals, career goals and/or other goals for yourself? How do you work towards them?

About child's school education

1. Can you tell me about your child's school? Why do you choose this particular school for your child?
2. Did your child receive any language support from school (e.g. ESL program)? What kind of support did he/she receive and what do you feel about it?
3. Can you tell me about your child's subject learning in Australian schools? Can you tell me about your child's school performance compared with that back home?
4. Does your child go to a tutoring class/coaching college, or have a private tutor or any other support outside school? What's your reason for sending your child to these classes?
5. How satisfied are you with your child's education compared with that back home? / What educational aspects are you satisfied and dissatisfied with?

6. Do you see some changes of your expectations towards your child's education? If so, what kind of changes do you experience and why? What kind of education generally do you want for your child and how do you work towards that?

About child's heritage language practice and bilingual abilities

1. Can you tell me about your child's heritage language proficiency and English language proficiency before and after moving to Australia?
2. How do you view the status of your child's heritage language ability and English language ability?
3. What languages do parents use to the child? What languages does the child use to parents and to siblings? Are there some changes in language use at home and what are those changes? What do you think are the main factors leading to language changes?
4. Do you have a family language policy? What's your family language policy and is it easy or difficult to implement your family language policy?
5. Did you try/Are you trying to maintain your child's heritage language? What's the heritage language education goal for your child?
6. Is English language learning an issue in your family? How do you deal with this issue?
7. What is your expectation of your child's language abilities (bilingual abilities)?

About child's social, emotional, and cultural adaptation

1. In which suburb and/or community do you live? Why did you choose to live there?
2. Can you tell me about your child's socializing activities / after-school activities?
3. How important do you view Chinese friends and mainstream Australian friends respectively to your child? What is your child's social circle?
4. What does your child feel about Australian schools, his/her friends here and his/her host country?
5. How important is Chinese culture and mainstream Australian culture respectively to your child? What did you do for that (e.g. festival celebration, book reading, food choices) and what do you think is your child's cultural identity?
8. Can you tell me about the relationship between you and your child? Have you experienced any changes of your parent-child relationship between pre- and post- migration? If so, what do you think are the main reasons of these changes?
9. What is your expectation of your child's identity formation?

Appendix VI Interview Guide (for child)

Phase 1 Background information (before coming to Australia)

1. Do you still remember what grade you finished in China?
2. What subjects did you like when you were in China? Can you tell me about your school life back in China?
3. Can you tell me about your English learning in China?
4. What did you usually do outside school? What kind of after-school activities did you enjoy?
5. Can you tell me something about your friends and family members back at home?
6. Who looked after you when you were in China?
7. Did you want to come to Australia? What was your expectations of this new country?

Phase 2 Life in Australia

About social life

1. Did you like Australia when you first came here and what do you feel now?
2. Can you tell me about your best/worst experience or some funny / embarrassing experiences since coming to Australia?
3. How do you spend your time outside school? What kind of activities do you like most?
4. Do you have many friends here? What languages do you speak to your friends?
5. Do you miss your friends and family members back in China? How do you keep contact with them?
6. Who is looking after you in Australia? What languages do you speak to them?

About languages

1. Can you tell me about your English learning in Australia? What kind of language support did you get from and outside your school?
2. Do you still learn your first language? Do you want to improve your first language?
3. What languages do your parents speak to you? What languages do you use to parents and to siblings? What languages do you prefer to use?
4. Do you read English and/or Chinese books? Do you watch English and/or Chinese movies or programs?

About subject learning

1. How do you feel about Australian schools? What do you like about them? What do you dislike about them?
2. Do you see some differences between your Australian school and your school back in China?
3. What subjects do you like in Australian schools? Are there some subjects which you find difficult?
4. Do you need to go to a tutoring class or a coaching college? What do you learn there?
5. How much homework do you need to do?

About future plan

1. What do you want to do in the future? / What kind of school do you want to go?
How do you work towards your dream?