

Early Re-exposure to a 'Lost' Heritage Language: Goals, Variables, and Observed Use

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This study examined the heritage language learning situation of three Chinese-origin adopted children who were in their second year of attending a private Mandarin-language preschool on a weekly basis.

Increasing attention is being devoted to the situation of heritage language maintenance and development in North America and elsewhere. It has been suggested that a child's self-esteem and self-identity are strengthened when the heritage language is given value through exposure to heritage language instruction at school or elsewhere in the community. The term "heritage language" has various definitions, one of which is that it refers to any ancestral language that may, or may not, be spoken in the home and the community (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2000).

Our study sought to investigate the unique situation faced by the parents of children adopted at an early age from China, who desire to expose their children to the language of their ethnic and cultural origin, while the parents themselves are not native speakers of their child's heritage language. This unique situation experienced by adopted children who lose their birth or heritage language has been referred to as "arrested language development" (Glennen, 2002a; Schiff-Meyers, 1992).

1. Review of the literature

There are few published studies that have examined the specific situation of heritage language re-exposure for internationally adopted children. Given the increasingly large numbers of adopted children, close attention to the particular variables at play in such a language learning situation is largely warranted.

The number of international adoptions by parents in North America has dramatically increased in the last decade. In particular, the number of adoptions from certain countries, such as China, has undergone a rapid increase. In the U.S alone, the number of Chinese children (the vast majority of which are girls) adopted has risen to over 4,000 annually since 1998. In Canada, there have been approximately 7,000 adoptions of Chinese children between 1990 and 2003, and 771 adoptions from China in 2002; over 40% of all international adoptions in 2002 in Canada were from China. The adoption community for parents and their Chinese-origin children is a particularly well organized and highly active one and there is a strong post adoption support network. There are a number of organizations to which parents can belong, such as Families of Children from China (FCC) which organize activities based on traditional Chinese cultural themes, as well as other activities, to allow parents and their children to keep in contact with the adoptive community. There are also large numbers of subscribers to Internet mailing lists, some on general adoption topics (PAC "Post Adoption China") and others dealing with more specific topics (WaitingChildrenChina: adoption for children with special needs) and still others reuniting parents who have adopted children from specific orphanages (e.g., Chuzhou orphanage in Anhui province).

Given the very young ages at which some children are adopted, it is difficult to ascertain to what extent a child may have possessed an expressive or receptive knowledge of the heritage language prior to adoption. It is likely that children adopted at approximately 8 months or older have acquired at least some receptive knowledge of their heritage language, words or phrases referring to food, toys, body parts and body functions. Still it is widely acknowledged that children raised in institutional settings experience at least some language delay. Glennen (2002b) reports from her visit to a Russian orphanage that little language interaction occurred between caregivers and the group of 14-month-old to 23-month-old toddlers that she observed over an 8-day period. She observed that due to groupings according to age, children were rarely allowed to interact with older children who might have served

as language models. Children were rarely spoken to by caregivers, except for simple commands such as "come here" or "sit down". She reported to have observed only three to four instances of interactions in which caregivers actually verbally described objects or actions. Her informal evaluation of the 10 toddlers observed is that all children were "language delayed". It is likely that the low frequency of caregiver-children interactions that she observed in Russia is typical of institutional settings in other countries in which international adoption frequently occurs.

The situation of non-adopted children learning heritage languages in a minority language setting has been widely researched. Heritage language learning has been examined from various perspectives. For instance, studies have examined pedagogical "scaffolding" to enable children's language learning (e.g., Peregoy & Boyle, 1999), caregiving in bilingual settings (e.g., Garcia, 1991; Montague & Meza-Zaragoza, 1999) and the importance of acquiring first language (L1) skills in order to provide the foundation for acquiring second language (L2) skills (Cummins, 1984; 1991; Gutierrez-Clellen, 1999). Cummins (1991) has proposed that the L1 acts as a scaffold in the acquisition of an L2. Establishing a strong foundation in the L1 can be viewed as promoting "additive" bilingualism in which minority language children receive respect and validation for their home language, at the same time as they acquire the language of the wider community. Promoting respect for the L1 is likely to lead to a more positive self-image and stronger feelings of self-identity for children growing up in an environment in which their L1 has minority language status. Fishman (1979, p. 18) points out that "a minority student who is confident of and recognized in his more intimate primary group membership relates more positively both to school and to society and, as a result, profits more from schooling."

The language learning situation in the case of international adoptees is of course quite different from that of minority language children learning their L1 at home and their L2 in the wider community and in school. In most cases, the heritage language of internationally adopted children is not spoken in the home or in the community. In this situation, it is very unlikely that the heritage language will be retained, unless a concerted effort is made to promote learning.

The rapid loss of the L1 in the case of international adoptees has been pointed out by Gindis (1999; n.d.). His personal clinical experience suggests children adopted between 4 and 8 years old lose most of their expressive language ability within 3 to 6 months of adoption and virtually all functional language use within one year when the child is adopted into another language community. He also signals the negative emotional reactions that some school-aged adoptees manifest toward their L1 once integrated into a new linguistic community.

Despite the difficulties posed by a language learning situation of this type, there appears to be strong interest on the part of a number of parents of internationally adopted children to provide their children with the opportunity to learn their language of origin.

One study which has examined the unique situation faced by parents of internationally adopted children, is Manning's (2001) case study of Chinese children attending a Chinese cultural preschool. Manning's observations focused on identifying the means by which parents sought to instill a sense of Chinese cultural identity in their children. Based on her text transcriptions from six of the Saturday morning sessions, she found that three conceptual categories (Language, Interaction, and Chinese Culture) accounted for the majority of transcriptions and therefore constituted the dominant ways in which this Chinese cultural school emphasized the development of a sense of cultural identity.

Our study was designed to examine the various factors that are involved when parents choose to expose their adopted children to their heritage language. The more specific objectives of our study were to identify the reasons that led parents of adopted children to place their children in a Mandarin preschool; to identify parents' expectations from the preschool, as well as their degree of involvement in the children's learning process; to identify the children's attitudes toward the preschool and evaluate their exposure to Mandarin outside the preschool. We also sought to obtain parental and instructor estimates of the children's use and abilities in Mandarin. A final goal was to describe the children's spontaneous Mandarin use outside the preschool over a 7-week period.

2. Method

This research was conducted as a descriptive case study carried out during the second year of a weekly Mandarin preschool attended by three children adopted from China, living in Quebec City, Canada. Observations were gathered from questionnaires distributed to parents and the instructor, as

well as from informal interviews. Parents were also asked to record their child's spontaneous Mandarin use outside the preschool, over a 7-week period.

2.1.1 Participants

Three female Chinese-origin children (aged 4; 8, 4; 10, and 4; 11, at time of questionnaires, during the second year of preschool instruction), adopted at early ages (8 months, 11 months, and 15 months), living in families in Quebec, Canada, that do not speak Mandarin as their L1. All three children were exposed to French in the larger community and were rated by their parents as having French skills in the normal range for their age group. The home language for two of the children was French and was English for one of the children (Child 3), daughter of the author of this study. Parents had requested that the preschool be carried out as much as possible in a Mandarin immersion format. Child 1 was being raised in a two-parent family and Child 2 and Child 3 were being raised in one-parent families (mother only).

Parents were asked to identify their child's estimated competence in Mandarin at the time of adoption, along with any evidence of their L1 Mandarin competence.

Pre-existing heritage language knowledge :

Child 1, adopted at 8 months : Capable of understanding some words and short sentences, as evidenced by observed interactions with caregiver at time of adoption.

Child 2, adopted at 11 months : No recognizable language understanding.

Child 3, adopted at 15 months : Capable of understanding some words and short sentences, based on observations at the time of adoption and observations of interactions with native Mandarin speakers during the first few months following the adoption.

2.1.2 Instructor

The preschool instructor was a Mandarin native speaker, who had extensive experience in teaching young children.

2.2 Materials and procedure

Parents were asked to complete questionnaires in which they were asked diverse questions about their own goals and expectations for the Mandarin preschool, their own experience with Mandarin, to report on their child's attitude toward the preschool, as well as to estimate Mandarin use at home. In addition, they were asked to fill out observation charts reporting observations of their child's spontaneous Mandarin use outside the preschool over a 7-week period. They were also asked to participate in informal interviews. The instructor was asked to report estimates of children's comprehension and production at the end of the observation period.

3. Results and discussion

The results were divided into 8 general categories : 1) Parents' Reasons for Mandarin Instruction, 2) Parental Expectations from Mandarin Preschool, 3) Children's Attitudes towards Mandarin Preschool, 4) Mandarin Preschool Interaction, 5) Preschool Situations and Spontaneous Mandarin, 6) Home Support for Mandarin, 7) Estimated Mandarin Home Use, 8) Spontaneous Home Use of Mandarin over 7 Week Period.

3.1 Parents' reasons for Mandarin instruction

Results from the various questions posed in this section revealed that parents considered it very important that their child learn some words and sentences in Mandarin; most parents also considered it very important that their children learn to speak the language very well. Interestingly, parents also considered it "fairly important" (2 parents) or "very important" (1 parent) that their child learn to speak as well as native speakers of Mandarin. Parents were united in attaching strong importance for their

child's maintaining contact with her cultural roots and her heritage language through the Mandarin instruction. A majority of parents considered it to be very important that their children learn Mandarin in order to use it in future trips to China. Learning Mandarin due to its global importance was considered to be "fairly important" for all four parents. Supportive attitudes towards a heritage language on the part of parents has been found (e.g., Hamers, 1994) to be linked to a valorisation of the heritage language by their children. It is likely that the children involved in this study will similarly develop a strong sense of value associated with their heritage language.

Why have you decided to have your child taught Mandarin?

So that my child will :

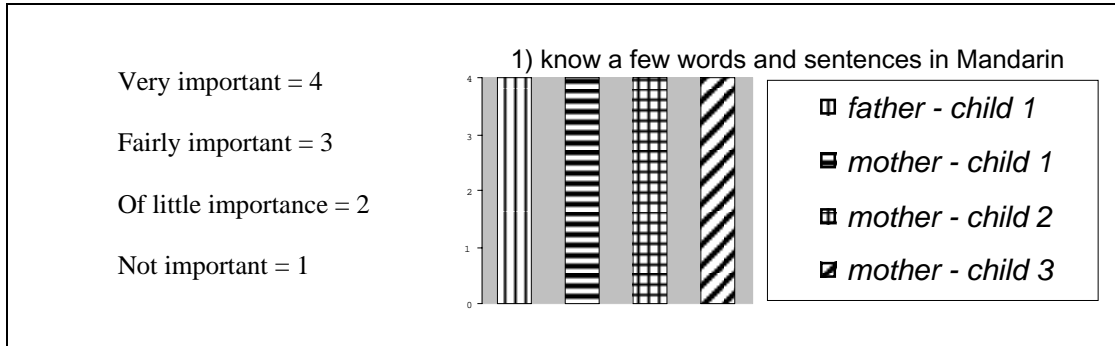


Figure 1.1. Importance of knowing a few words and sentences in Mandarin

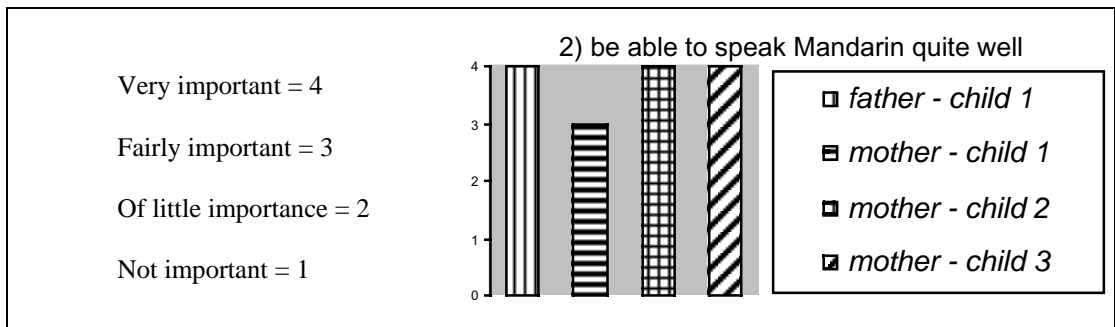


Figure 1.2. Importance of being able to speak Mandarin quite well

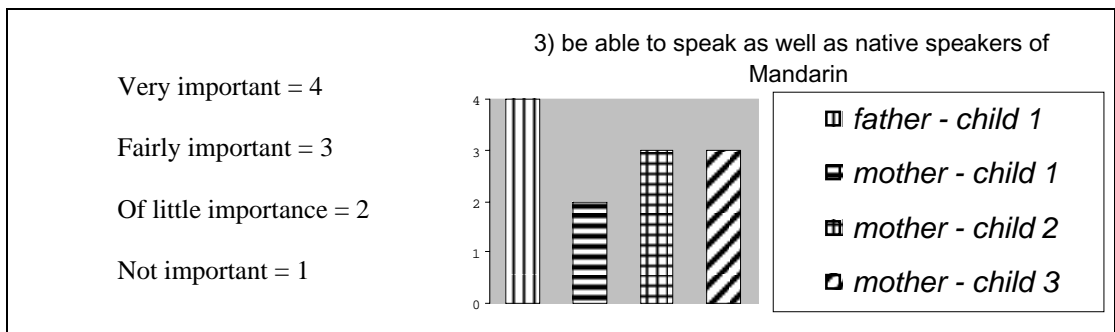


Figure 1.3. Importance of being able to speak as well as native speakers of Mandarin

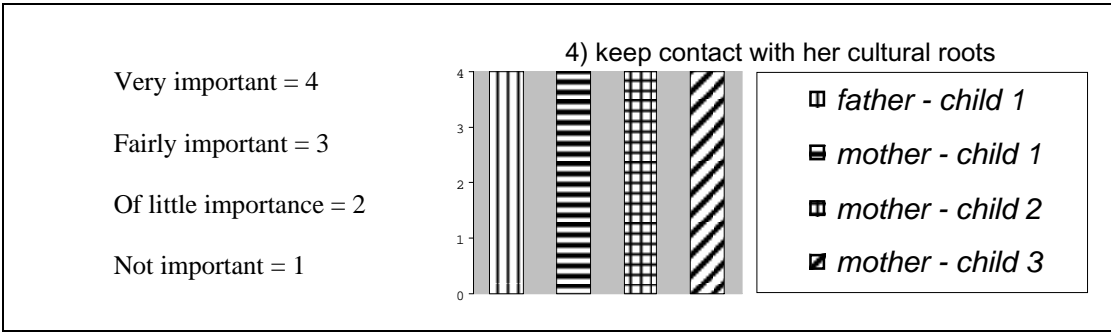


Figure 1.4. Importance of keeping contact with child's cultural roots

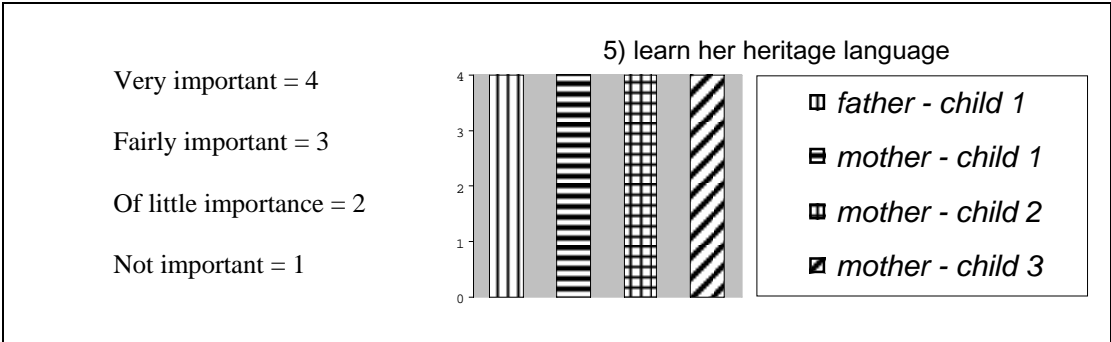


Figure 1.5. Importance for child to learn her heritage language

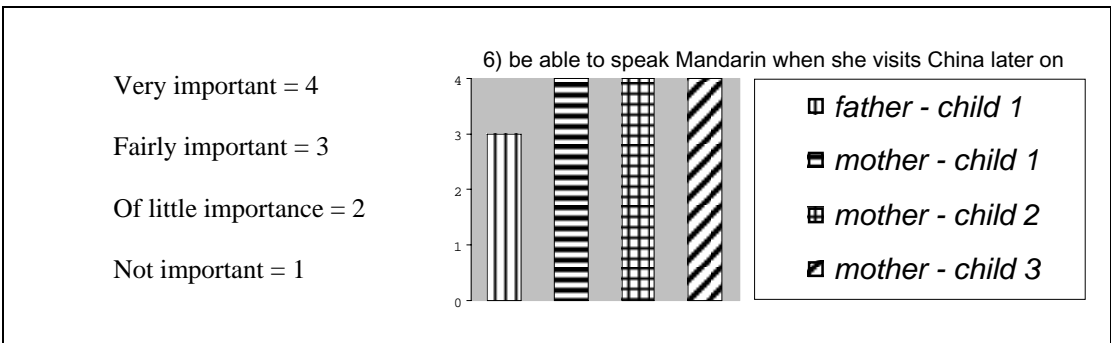


Figure 1.6. Importance of being able to speak Mandarin when child later visits China

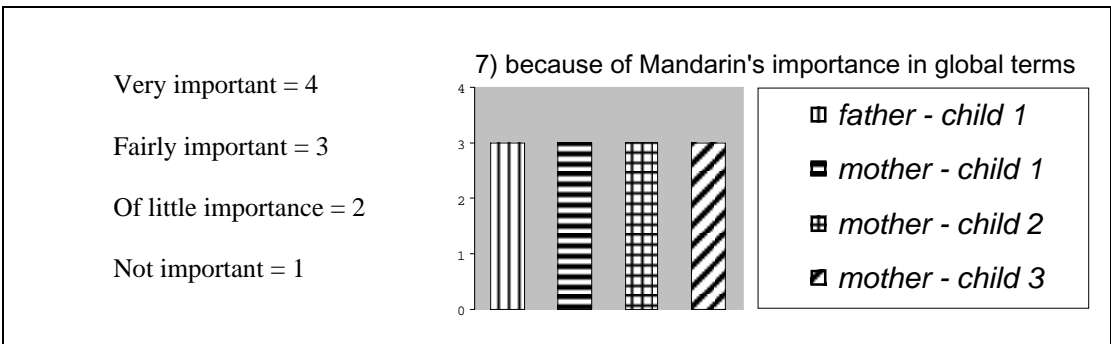


Figure 1.7. Importance due to Mandarin's global presence

3.2 Parents' expectations from Chinese preschool

Results in this section revealed, consistent with parents' reasons for choosing to place their children in a Mandarin preschool, that they indeed attributed strong importance to their expectation that their children learn some basic words and, to a lesser extent, some phrases in Mandarin. Parents generally considered important the expectation that their children learn to carry on a conversation and to play games and sing songs in Mandarin. Parents expressed some diverse expectations concerning learning to read and write Chinese script. While two parents considered this expectation very important, one parent considered it "fairly important", and a fourth parent judged it "of little importance." Parents were united in considering as "very important" their expectation that the children would develop a desire to speak in Mandarin and their expectation that the children would develop a bond with their cultural roots. These results reinforce the importance these parents attribute to both linguistic and cultural aspects of their children's participation in the Chinese preschool.

What are your expectations from this year's Chinese preschool?

I expect that my child :

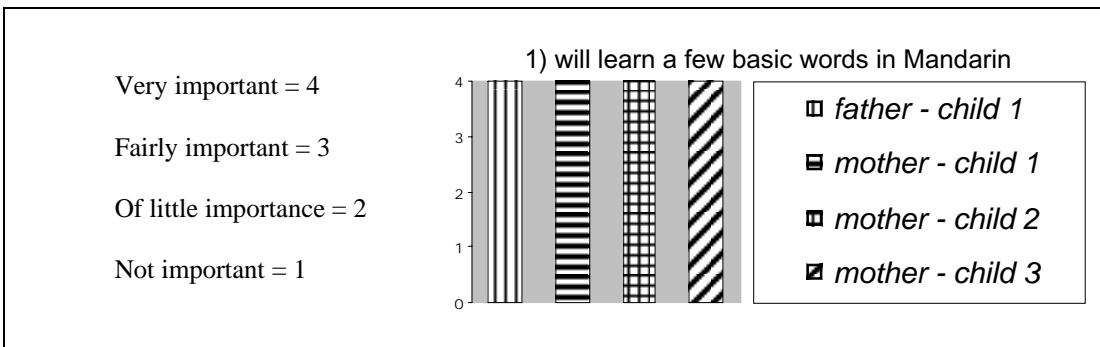


Figure 2.1. Importance of expectation that child will learn a few basic words in Mandarin

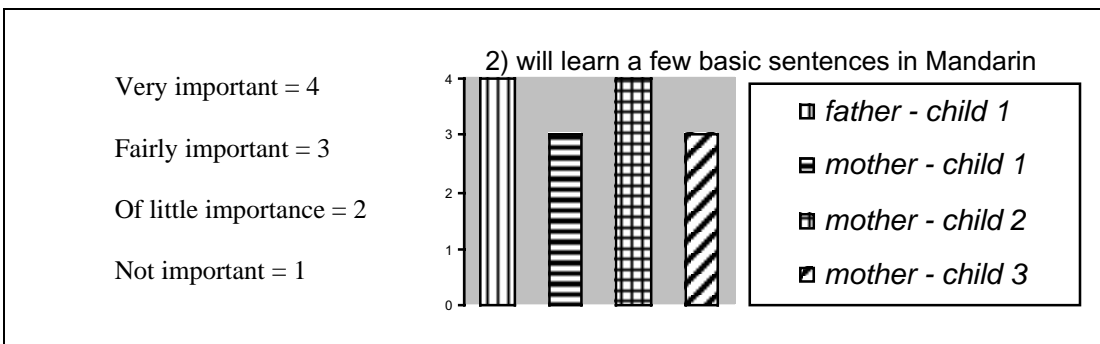


Figure 2.2. Importance of expectation that child will learn a few basic sentences in Mandarin

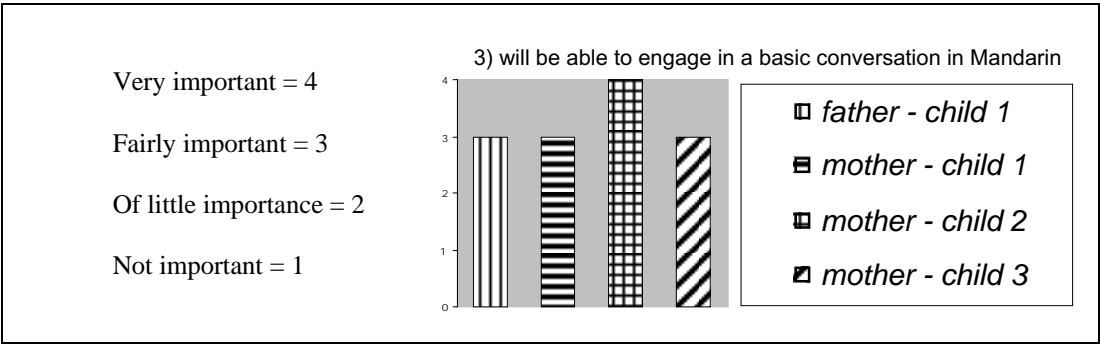


Figure 2.3. Importance of expectation that child will be able to engage in basic conversation

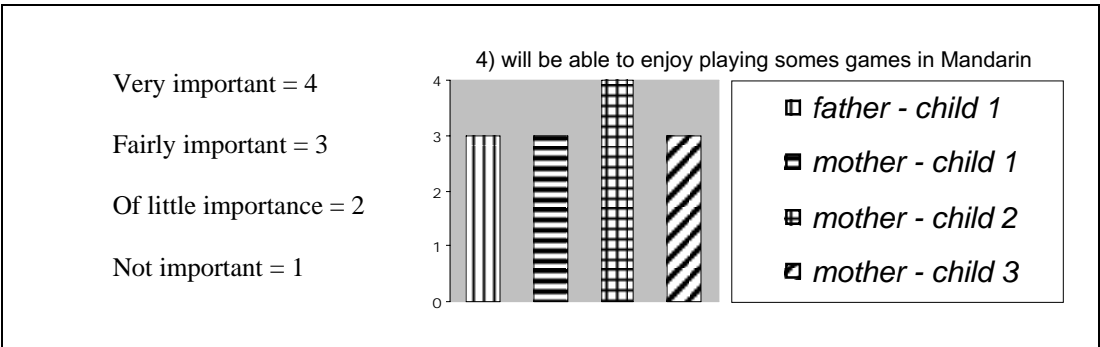


Figure 2.4. Importance of expectation that child will be able to play games in Mandarin

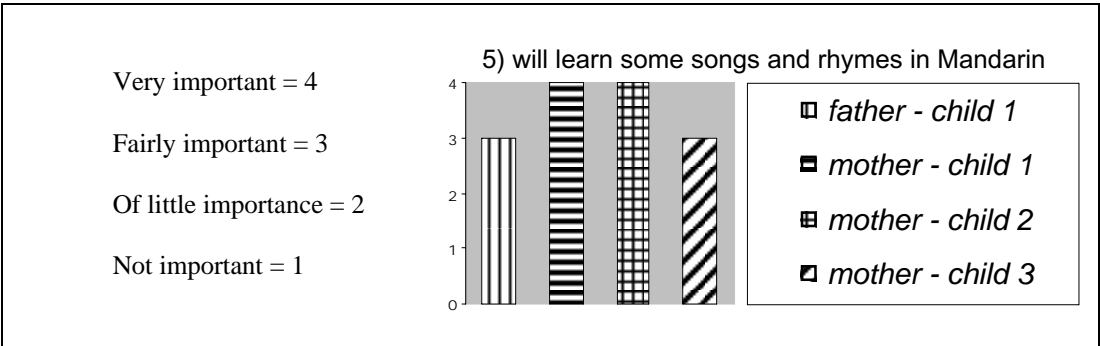


Figure 2.5. Importance of expectation that child will learn songs and rhymes in Mandarin

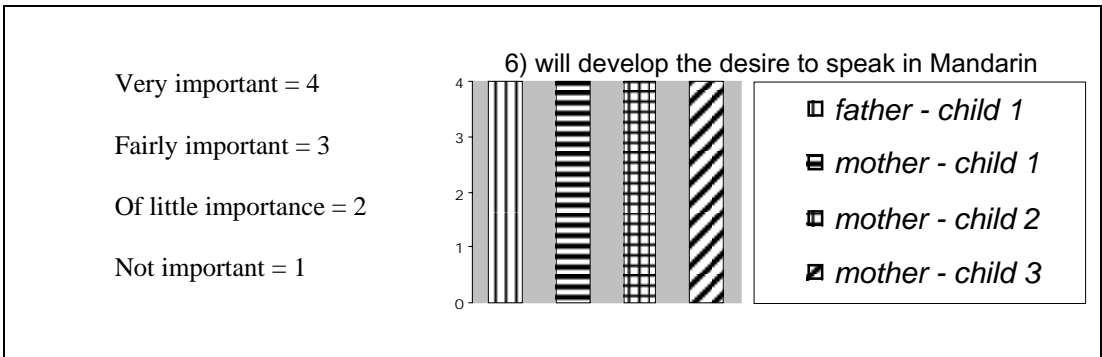


Figure 2.6. Importance of expectation that child will develop the desire to speak in Mandarin

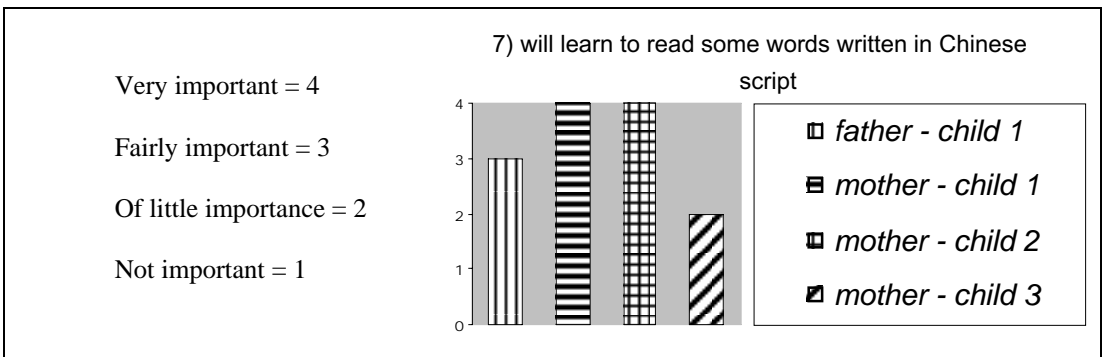


Figure 2.7. Importance of expectation that child will learn to read words written in Chinese script

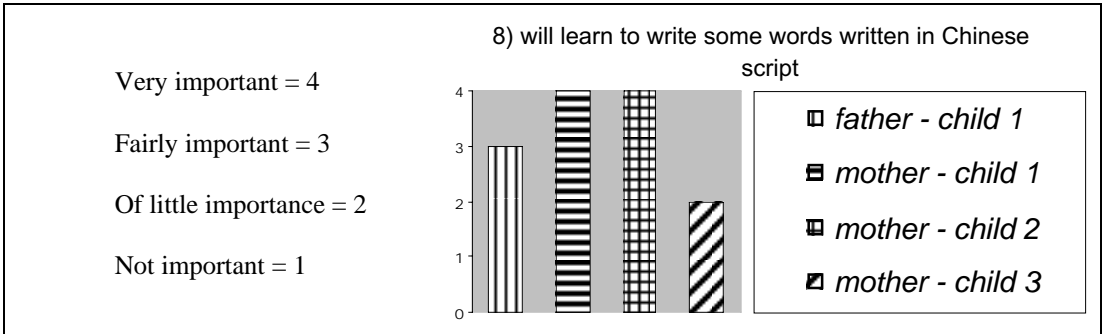


Figure 2.8. Importance of expectation that child will learn to write words in Chinese script

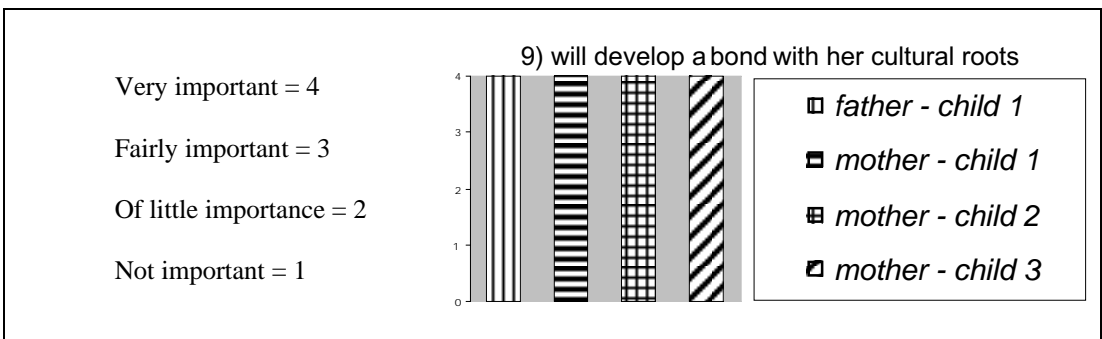


Figure 2.9. Importance of expectation that child will develop a bond with her cultural roots

3.3 Children's attitudes toward Chinese preschool

According to parents' evaluations, children's attitudes toward the Chinese preschool were diverse. Child 1 appeared to hold a negative attitude before attending preschool each week, and her parents considered she would choose not to continue attending, if provided with the choice. Child 2 appeared to be neutral with regard to attending preschool each week, but would have some desire to continue, according to her parent's evaluation. Child 3 appeared to have a very positive attitude both toward attending each week and with regard to continuing preschool if given the choice. All three children were viewed as having positive attitudes following the preschool day each week. These results indicate a fair amount of individual differences characterize the children's attitudes towards attending the preschool. Circumstances associated with each child's family situation, as well as personality preferences are likely to contribute to children's general attitudes toward attendance. For instance, a child who prefers the small group setting found in the preschool, as opposed to attending regular daycare, may well demonstrate a more positive attitude toward the preschool, unrelated to the Mandarin learning aspect of the learning context. The generally positive attitudes that all parents attributed to their children at the end of each preschool day indicates, however, that the children ultimately enjoyed the preschool experience.

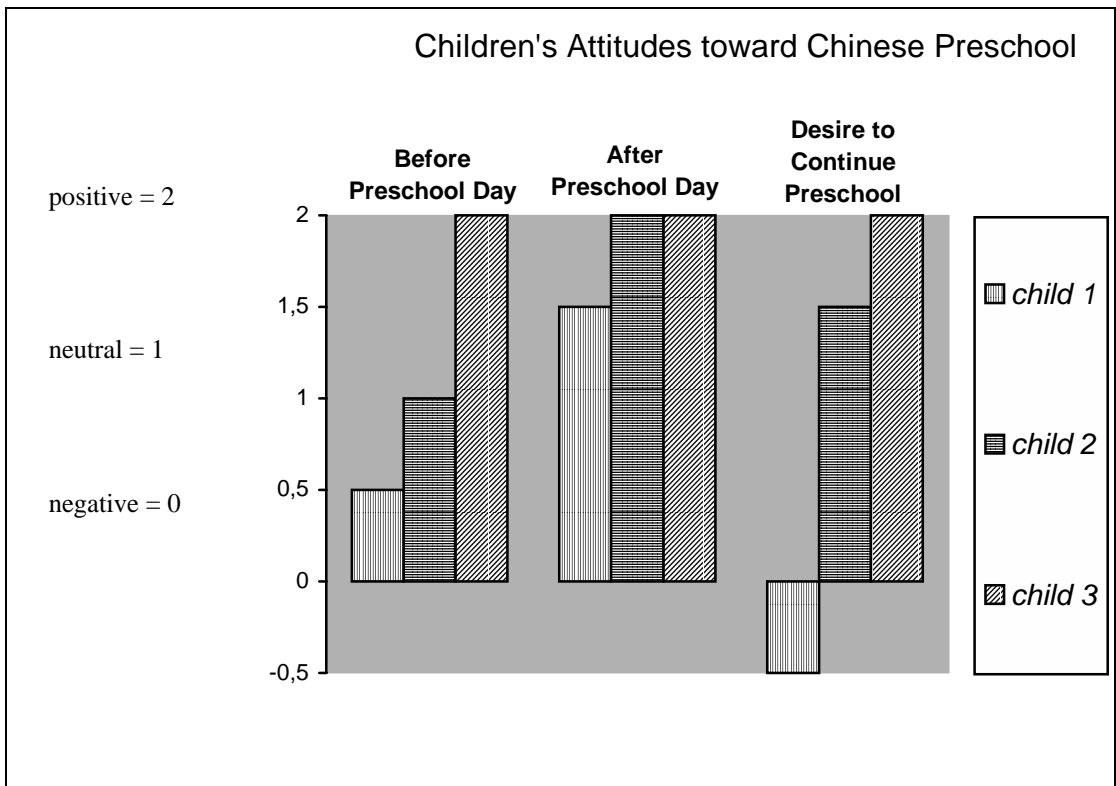


Figure 3. Children's attitudes toward Chinese preschool

3.4 Estimated amounts of Mandarin use in preschool

In this section, the instructor provided estimates of amounts of Mandarin interaction during the preschool. She estimated that 80% of her messages to the children were carried out in Mandarin (the other 20% would have been in French, the language spoken in the Quebec City context). She also estimated that the children appeared to understand approximately 80% of her Mandarin utterances. On the other hand, the instructor estimated that only 30% of the children's utterances to her were formulated in Mandarin. While this latter figure may appear low, it nevertheless indicates that the children made some effort to express themselves in Mandarin. It should be pointed out that the children were aware that the instructor understood French in addition to Mandarin, so they knew they could be understood when they used French.

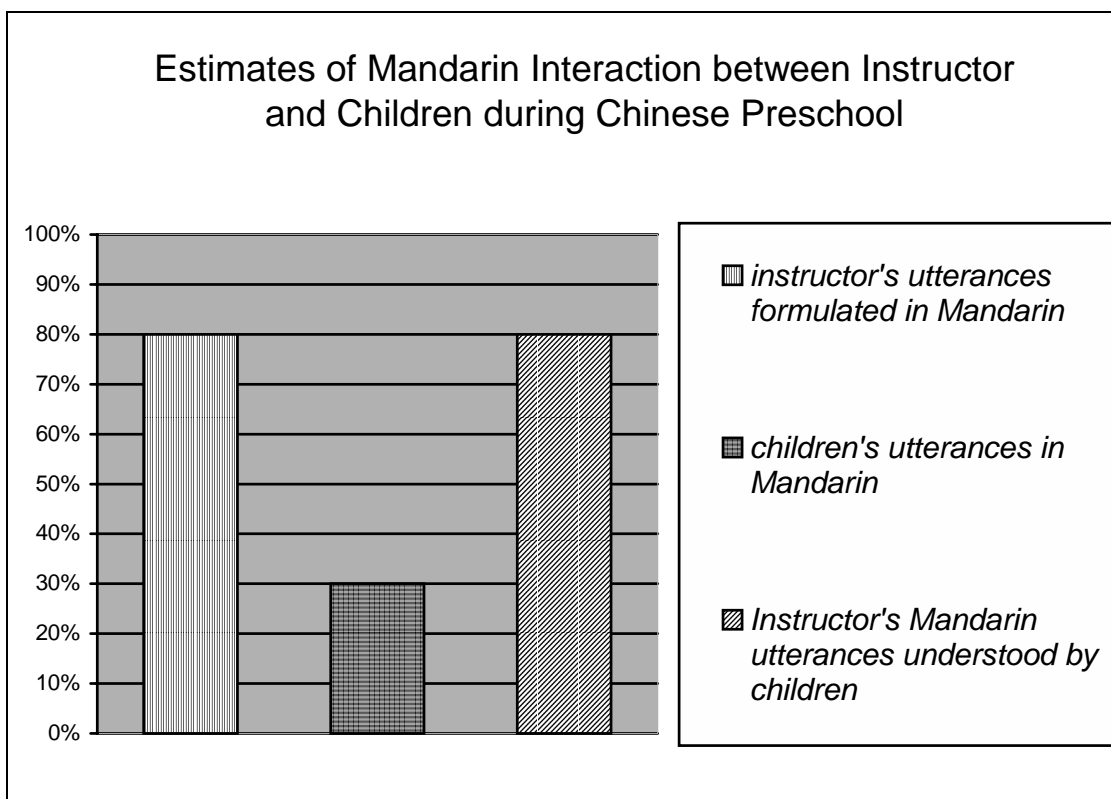


Figure 4. Estimated amounts of Mandarin use in preschool

3.5 Preschool situations and spontaneous Mandarin

The instructor provided estimates of different preschool situations which elicited various degrees of children's spontaneous use of Mandarin. The results reveal that the children's most frequent observed use of Mandarin accompanied requests for something to eat (5) and the use of terms of politeness (e.g., terms for "thank you" and "please") (4). Following in frequency were : "Asking to use the bathroom" (3), "Asking for the instructor's attention" (2), and least of all "Speaking with the other children" (1). When asked during informal interviews, the instructor emphasized that the children rarely used Mandarin in speaking with each other, although they were quite willing to use it in the other situations described in this section.

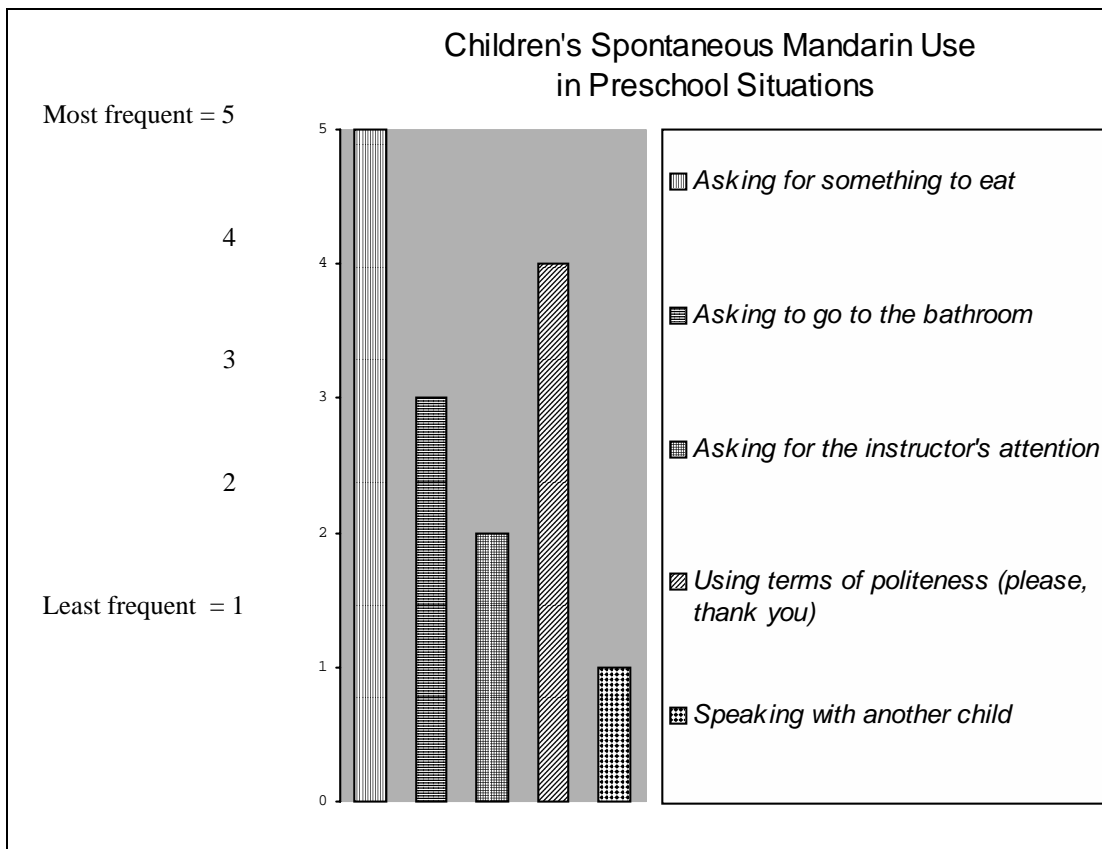


Figure 5. Children's spontaneous Mandarin use in preschool situations

3.6 Home support for Mandarin

These observations were divided into two categories : amount of instruction of Mandarin undertaken by the parents, and use of Mandarin material and/or exposure in the home. The parental Mandarin instruction figure (Figure 6.1) reveals that only one parent (of Child 2) did not undertake any formal instruction in Mandarin. In contrast, both parents of Child 1 had undertaken at least 1.5 years of instruction, while the parent of Child 3 had a half year of instruction. While these are on the whole moderate amounts of formal instruction, they nevertheless indicate an active interest in learning their child’s heritage language on the part of the majority of the parents observed in this study. Interviews with the parents revealed, in addition, that the parents of Child 1 were planning to organize a year abroad in China with their children, in order to more fully experience Chinese culture and learn the language. The parent of Child 3 was also actively planning to arrange to work for a year abroad in China to allow her daughter a fuller exposure to her heritage language and culture.

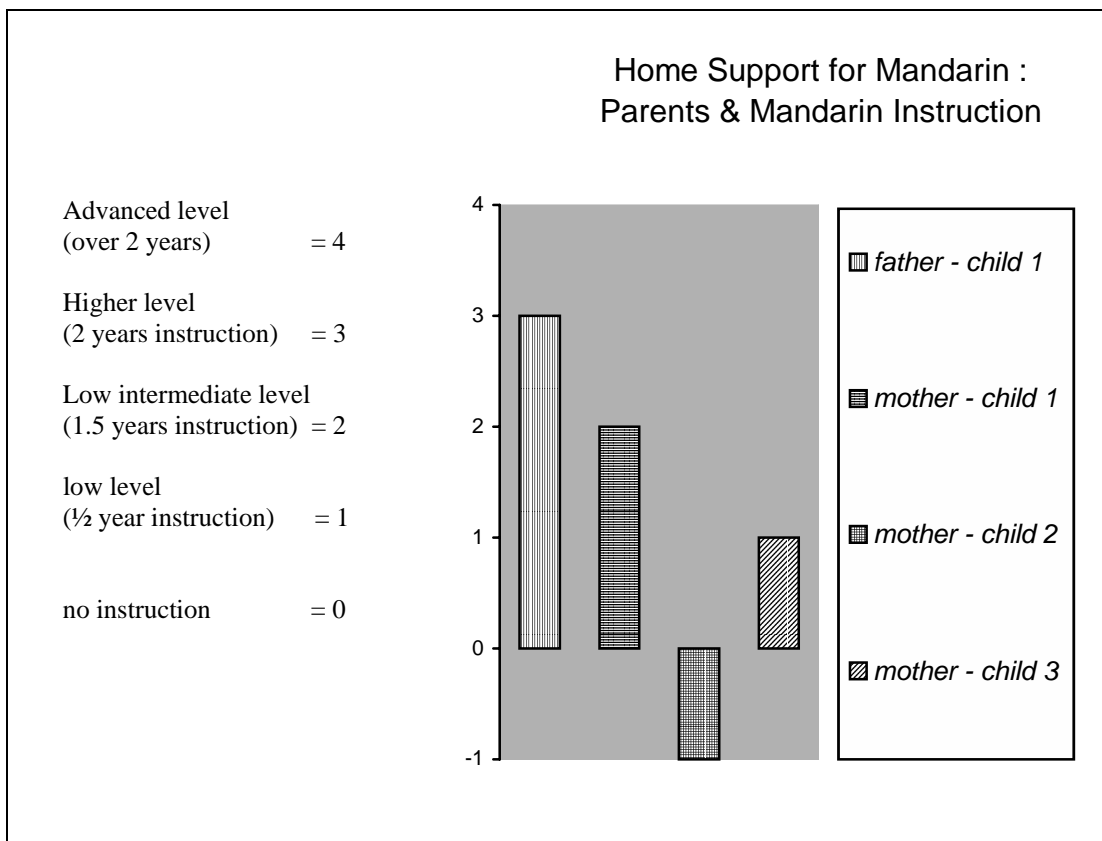


Figure 6.1. Home support for Mandarin : parents and extent of Mandarin instruction

As for observations of active practice and exposure to Mandarin materials outside the preschool, all three children were reported to practice with vocabulary flashcards at least once a week for Child 2 and Child 3, and up to 5 times each week for Child 1. In addition, practice with audio tapes or CD ROMs occurred at least once a week for Child 1 and Child 2, and twice a month for Child 3. Also, Child 2 and Child 3 watched videos once a month, and Child 1 was exposed to Mandarin books at least once a week. Other results from the questionnaires revealed that all three children regularly attended cultural events in the region (e.g., Chinese New Year's celebrations, dragon boat festivals). These results indicate that parents made a concerted effort to reinforce words and phrases learned in the preschool. Similarly, they took steps to expose their children to other Mandarin material (e.g., books, videos, tapes) in the home; they also actively participated in cultural activities in the surrounding community.

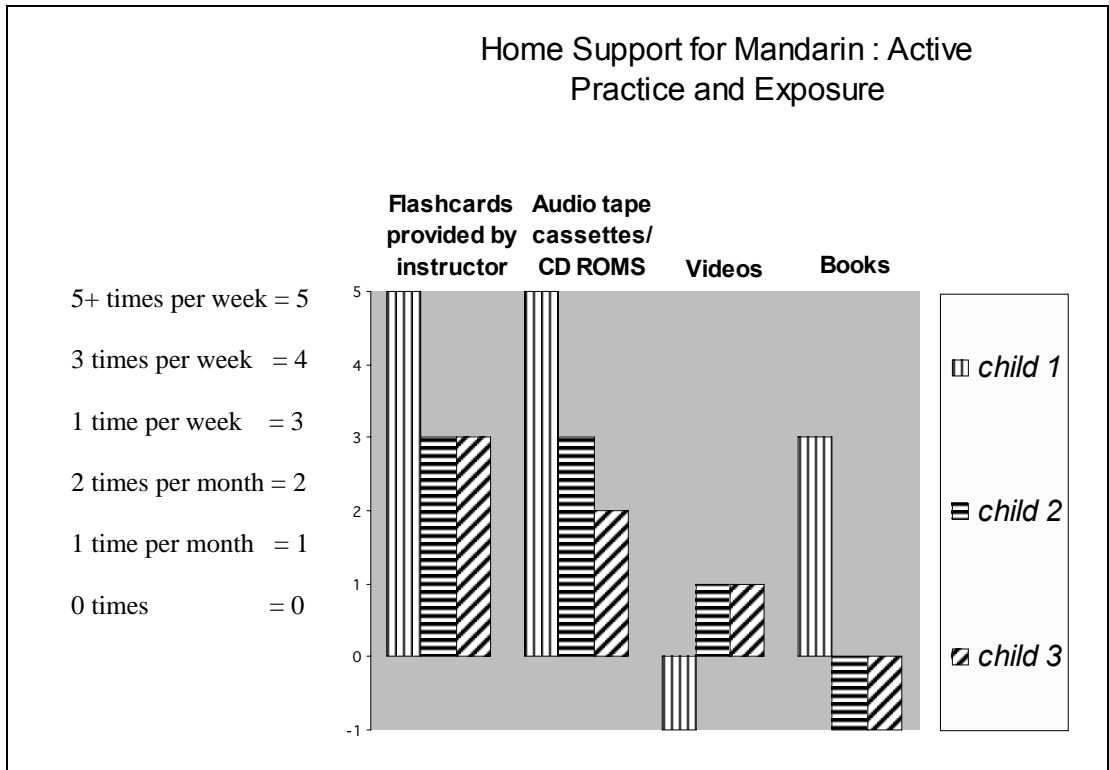


Figure 6.2. Home support for Mandarin : active practice and exposure

3.7 Estimated Mandarin home use

Observations were reported on parents' questionnaires (see Table 1) concerning various verbal activities carried out in Mandarin by the three children. All three children were reported to use some Mandarin words and phrases at home when asked to do so. Similarly, all three children were reported to count from 1 to 10 in Mandarin. Two of the children (Child 1 and Child 3) were observed to sing songs in Mandarin and to use simple 2-word sentences at home. One child (Child 3) was reported to occasionally repeat words learned in the class and to have produced between 5 and 25 words at home.

Table 1
Estimated Mandarin Home Use

(1 = Child 1, 2 = Child 2, 3 = Child 3)

Never speaks Mandarin at home			
Sometimes repeats words learned in the class			3
Can say up to 5 words at home			
Can say between 5 and 25 words at home			3
Sometimes uses 2-word sentences at home	1		3
Often uses 2-word sentences at home			
Sings songs in Mandarin at home	1		3
Uses some words & sentences at home when asked	1	2	3
Spontaneously utters some words and sentences			3
Counts from 1 to 10 in Mandarin	1	2	3
Replies in Mandarin when parents ask a question in Mandarin			
Appears eager to practice words and sentences learned in class			
Is able to tell stories in Mandarin			

3.8 Spontaneous Mandarin use : 7-week observations

Parents were asked to note any spontaneous use of Mandarin that their child made outside of the preschool setting, over a 7-week period. The purpose of this task was to verify if indeed children appeared to be practicing and producing Mandarin on their own initiative.

The parents of Child 1 indicated only 3 instances of spontaneous Mandarin on their observation sheet, but signaled that they lacked the time to systematically note all their child's utterances. They noted that while their daughter would respond to their use of Mandarin, she rarely produced words or phrases spontaneously.

The parent of Child 2 reported that while she didn't observe significant amounts of spontaneous Mandarin use, she noted, to her surprise, that a second, younger (approximately 2-year-old) child in the same family, who at the time did not attend the preschool nor have any other contact with Mandarin, appeared to have learned to count in Mandarin and could only have learned this from his older sister, Child 2. Interestingly, this appears to indicate that at least one of the children in this study passed on some of the Mandarin she had learned to her younger sibling.

As for Child 3, she was observed to produce a number of words and phrases on a fairly regular basis (see Appendix, for full 7-week transcript), particularly on the evening of her return from the preschool. A few words were used with some frequency, such as *dǎ kāi* ('open') when Child 3 requested her mother open something for her. Child 3 was also observed to occasionally make overt remarks about Mandarin, such as pointing out to her mother the Mandarin word or phrase used in certain situations.

In retrospect, it was perhaps not unexpected that two of the children were not observed to engage in much spontaneous Mandarin use outside of the preschool setting. Since their home and regular

daycare environment were not places where Mandarin was used, the children would have no strong reason to use Mandarin.

On the other hand, the evidence that Child 2 appeared to have actually taught a younger sibling to count in Mandarin, as well as the fact that Child 3 was observed to use Mandarin spontaneously on a regular basis, indicates that in some cases, even in an environment in which the target language is not normally used, children engage in language play or language practice with the target language.

It is interesting to note that quite a few of Child 3's utterances consisted of comments revealing a metalinguistic awareness about Mandarin and how it is used ("Mom, we say *dǎ kāi* when we want something opened;" "Do you know how to count in Chinese? It's *yì, èr. . .* "). This behavior is consistent with a number of studies that report a large degree of metalinguistic awareness on the part of bilingual children compared to monolingual children (e.g., Bialystok & Ryan, 1985, Cummins, 1978; see Bialystok, 2001, for a review). It suggests that children involved in learning a second language also have a heightened awareness of formal aspects of the languages they are exposed to. It should be noted in particular, however, that Child 3, who appeared to demonstrate the greatest amount of spontaneous Mandarin use outside the preschool, and a number of whose utterances consisted of metalinguistic statements about Mandarin, such as pointing out the meaning of her utterances, was the only child in the group that was simultaneously acquiring fluency in two languages in addition to the exposure to Mandarin. Her home language was English, while French was the language at her full-time daycare center; she was essentially equally proficient in both languages. It is possible that her bilingualism allowed her to be particularly sensitive to metalinguistic aspects of the third language, Mandarin, to which she was exposed.

4. Conclusion

This study allows the formulation of a number of observations. First of all, results from interviews and questionnaires indicated that all parents expressed a strong desire for both linguistic and cultural exposure for their children's language and country of origin. Similarly, parents held high expectations from the Mandarin preschool. These supportive attitudes towards the heritage language, along with the parents' high expectations, are likely to allow the children involved in this study to develop a strong sense of value associated with their heritage language and culture.

On the other hand, the children's attitudes toward the preschool, as reported by their parents, were revealed to be quite diverse from one child to another: one child appeared to manifest a negative attitude prior to each week's class, while the other children demonstrated neutral or positive attitudes. Still, all the children appeared to enjoy the preschool since their attitudes were generally positive at the end of the preschool day. The preschool instructor indicated that the children manifested a high degree of comprehension although, in terms of utterances, they produced modest amounts of Mandarin in their immersion-situation preschool. They were most likely to spontaneously use Mandarin in the classroom in requests for food and in terms of politeness. Children appeared to receive strong support for Mandarin in the home: most of the parents had undertaken to learn at least some Mandarin themselves. All parents engaged in some practice with Mandarin materials with their children and sought out opportunities to expose their children to Chinese cultural activities. The observations that one child appeared to have taught elements of Mandarin to a younger sibling, as well as another child's spontaneous Mandarin use and metalinguistic statements about Mandarin made outside the preschool, provide evidence that, to some extent, Mandarin was indeed attended to and learned during the preschool.

In sum, our observations indicate that these internationally adopted children appear to be receiving strong support for and validation of their heritage language and culture. Similarly, there are indications that the children are retaining some of their Mandarin instruction as attested by preschool and home observations. It will be of interest to examine whether these families manage to maintain the same level of Mandarin exposure as the children grow older and to what extent the children succeed in acquiring the language of their country of origin. It may be considered unlikely that as little as one day's exposure a week will allow any significant proficiency to develop. On the other hand, the parents of two of the children were actively engaged in finding ways to spend a year-long stay in China. A long-term stay in a Mandarin-speaking environment would no doubt result in significant amounts of learning. While our results cannot be generalized beyond the individual cases examined here, our observations suggest that although increasing numbers of internationally adopted children are being

raised in families and communities in which the heritage language is not widely spoken, deliberate support and validation for a child's heritage language and culture may indeed lead to an eventual re-appropriation of significant parts of that heritage.

Appendix

Spontaneous Home Use of Mandarin Observations of Child no. 3

Week 1, Feb. 24-March 2, 2003

Monday, Feb. 24 :

Zàijiàn (goodbye) Says goodbye on leaving Chinese class
Bǐng gān (cookie) "Mom, we say 'bing gan' for cookie."
Dǎ kāi (open) "Mom, when we want the teacher to open a bottle, we say 'da kai'"

Saturday, March 1 :

Nǐ hǎo "This is what Maggie says in China; she lives in China."

Week 2, March 3-9 2003

Monday, March 3 :

Chuan zi fu (get dressed) Corrects mother with proper phrase on leaving class
Zàijiàn (goodbye) Says goodbye on leaving Chinese class
Bǐng gān (cookie) Asks for cookie at home
Yī, èr, . . . etc. (counts 1 to 10) "Mom, you know how to count in *Chinois*? *Yī, èr, san, si, . . .*"

Saturday, March 8 :

Nǐ hǎo (hello) "That's what I'll say to my baby sister"
Bízi (nose) Points to nose

Week 3, March 10-16

Monday, March 10 :

Zàijiàn (goodbye) Says goodbye on leaving Chinese class
Chinese song Sings on way home from class
Xièxie (thank you) After brushing teeth.
Xièxie (thank you) "He (doll) says 'xièxie'."
Mèimei (little sister) Addressing her teddy bear
Dǎ kāi (open) Hands mother yogurt container to open.
Mǎ (horse) "Did you know that 'mǎ' it's a horse" (informs mother)
Fēi, fēi (flies) "A bird, it's *fēi, fēi*...."

Week 4, March 17-23

Monday, March 17 :

Zàijiàn (goodbye) Says goodbye on leaving Chinese class
Mǎ (horse) Recites words learned in class
Māo (cat)
Yú (fish)
Wǒ ài mama (I love Momma) Recites sentences learned in class
Wǒ ài bàba (I love Papa)
Nǐ de (yours) "Nide, it means it belongs to you".
Shǒu (hands) Recites word learned in class

<i>Tāngchí</i> (spoon)	Dinnertime, labeling spoon
<i>Méi yǒu</i> (gone, finished)	Says after finished eating
<i>Wǒ jiào māma</i> (my name is Momma)	Says after dinner
<i>"Tài yáng, tiān shàn yǒu tài yáng"</i> (song)	Sings, saying "I'm just singing by myself, Mom"
Tuesday, March 18 : <i>dǎ kāi</i> (open)	"We say 'dǎ kāi' " (when we need something opened)
Friday, March 21 : <i>yī, èr, ...</i> (counts 1 to 10)	Counts pictures in book
Saturday, March 22 : Sings song in Mandarin	Waiting to go to car.
Week 5, March 24-30	
Monday, March 24 : <i>Zàijiàn</i> (goodbye)	Says goodbye on leaving Chinese class
Thursday, March 27 : <i>Yī, èr...</i> Counts 1 to 10	Explains to mother how to count in Mandarin
Week 6, March 31-April 6	
Monday, March 31 : <i>Zàijiàn</i> (goodbye) Sings Mandarin song <i>Dǎ kāi</i> (open)	Says goodbye on leaving Chinese class On way home from Chinese class Asks mother to open chocolate
Friday, April 4 : <i>Dǎ kāi</i> (open)	Asks mother to open straw
Week 7, April 7-13	
Monday, April 7 : <i>Zàijiàn</i> (goodbye) <i>Dǎ kāi</i> (open) <i>Xiǎo xiǎo shǒu</i> (song : "The Little Hands")	Says goodbye on leaving Chinese class Says " <i>dǎ kāi</i> means 'open'" Sings song

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