

# Attitude and Behavior toward Bilingualism for Chinese Parents and Children

Chien-Huei Wu  
Arizona State University

## 1. Introduction

With an increasing number of immigrants, America has become a multilingual and multicultural society. English is a dominant but not the only language spoken in the U.S. However, the gradual process of assimilation and acculturation leads to language loss of minority languages and language shift to English. Under increasing pressure for Americanization, it becomes a struggle to maintain the mother tongue. Portes and Hao (1998) quote in their article saying “the United States is a veritable cemetery of foreign languages that the mother tongue of hundreds of immigrant groups has rarely lasted past the third generation” (p. 269). In the book *Language Loyalty in the United States*, Fishman (1966) describes the process of three-generation language shift. The first generation (foreign born) immigrated to the U.S. and spoke mostly the mother tongue while learning English; the second generation (native born of foreign or mixed parentage) may speak little mother tongue at home but use English at school and at work; For the third generation (native born of native parentage), English becomes the only language they are fluent in, and they have lost the knowledge of the mother tongue (pp. 35-47).

Although America is a multilingual society where people from different backgrounds move to stay, many minority language groups are facing the problem of losing their ethnic language and shifting to only English-speaking. As Krashen (1998) states, most people think that immigrants still speak their heritage language and are reluctant to give it up. But quite contradictorily, the truth is that “heritage languages are typically not maintained and are rarely developed” (p. 3). The younger generations of the minority groups are losing the knowledge of their ethnic language and are becoming victims of language shift in the process of assimilation. They are not aware that what they lose is not only the language itself, but also the culture and heritage. This language loss situation might influence the family relationships and family attachments that originally bound parents and children. It is urgent for immigrant parents to find out about the problem, and solve the issue of the younger generation losing their heritage language by preserving it.

### 1.1 Rationale

The rationale of the study is to understand more about what Chinese parents and children have been experiencing while living in mainstream U.S. society, especially in regard to the development of bilingualism, and how children learn and maintain Chinese as well as learn English. My inspiration for this study comes from raising my son in the U.S. and teaching him Chinese in order for him to maintain it. Originally I came to the U.S. like a ‘pilgrim’ looking for English teaching methodology in order to teach my Chinese students back in Taiwan. Besides being involved in graduate study, I taught Chinese to six graders in a local Sunday private school. My Chinese students are what we called in Taiwan “ABC kids” as “American Born Chinese”. A slang term ‘banana’ also has been used to describe these children because they think in an Anglo-American way even though they have yellow skin like Asians. Gradually I found out that these ABC kids are different from my students in Taiwan in the way they were raised and have learned in American public schools and in the multicultural society of the U.S. For Chinese students in Taiwan, reading texts about classic moral stories or lectures on traditional scholars, and memorizing them is a common method for learning Chinese. In contrast, to the American-born Chinese children, these readings are simply meaningless words written by some old people in China not relevant to their lives. I do not know what values are important to

teach these children here because I did not grow up here. Why don't they want to learn Chinese in my way? In what ways do they grow up here? How do Chinese parents raise their children here? Do they want their children to maintain their bilingual ability or not?

Later I encountered more problems when I tried to preserve the heritage language for my son by speaking to him mostly in Chinese. First, I felt like a two-headed monster as Kouritzin (2000) describes when I speak Chinese to my son on the playground with other American kids around. My neighbor asks, "What is the language again you guys speak?" like we are aliens from another planet. When my son cries and cannot communicate with his teacher in the daycare center, all the other people ask me why I do not teach him English at home. It is not only the problem of speaking English or not. It is the problem of being afraid of losing the heritage language ability once I, the only source, stops speaking Chinese to him. I want to be selfish to speak only Chinese to my son in order for him to preserve his Chinese ability and delay his exposure to English. But at the same time, my son faces the problem of not being able to communicate with others in the outside world. I have more questions regarding the issue of heritage language preservation. What happens in real life situations when immigrant parents want to help their children maintain their bilingual ability? Is it really easy to teach them both languages here in the U.S. context?

Due to the unfamiliarity with the new culture and environment, minority language parents have come across many obstacles in bringing up their children bilingually. At the same time, bilingual children confront some problems when they enter the American public schools. As a minority language (Chinese) mother, I want to know what conflicts, both linguistic and cultural aspects, parents have encountered and how they deal with those issues. As an education major graduate student, I would like to study difficulties bilingual children have for maintaining heritage language in order to make a contribution when I graduate. Starting with Chinese children of similar cultural background to me is the easiest place for me to begin. That is the reason why I am interested in learning more about Chinese children and what their parents have done to support them in their education. Doing this study is helpful for me to gain practical experience and explicit examples of immigrant parents and their children's language learning in the U.S.

## *1.2 Research questions*

- (a) What are parents' attitudes and beliefs about children's language and literacy learning in Chinese and English in the U.S. context?
- (b) What do the parents think of their children's abilities in Chinese and English?
- (c) How do parents act or what have they done based on their attitudes and beliefs to support their children's bilingual development?
- (d) What are some factors parents think influence children's Chinese maintenance?

## **2. Literature review**

This study is based on the perspective of sociolinguistics. Sociolinguistics describes the interaction between language and the society and how people use language as a social phenomenon. Researchers in sociolinguistics may either study the social aspects of language or concentrate on the linguistic aspects. This study will focus on how people use language under the influence of social variables. It will also be examining the attitudes of Chinese parents and children toward the learning and maintenance of Chinese, and the use of specific languages – Chinese and English- in particular contexts.

### *2.1 Diglossia*

In many speech communities, speakers may use two or more varieties of the same language, such as a standard language and a regional dialect, under different conditions. Ferguson (1959) proposed a term "diglossia", originally a Greek word for two languages, for the condition of two varieties of a language existing side by side throughout the community (p. 325). Usually diglossia is quite stable since it has existed through several centuries. Members of the speech community are aware of when to use the "superposed" high variety (H) and low variety (L) respectively. Different varieties are used for

different purposes and functions at different situations. For example, H is used as written or classical content in formal institutions and L is used as vernacular informal one at home. Fishman (1980) states that diglossia can maintain its stability only in connection with classical. It is hard to detect such conditions of “social compartmentalization”, i.e. on the maintenance of strict boundaries between the societal functions associated with H and L respectively, in the modern society (p. 5).

So Fishman extended the idea of diglossia to two languages existing side by side within an area. The original distinction between a high (H) and a low (L) variety of language becomes the one between a majority and a minority language within a country. Each language serves distinct purpose and function in different context. For example, the two major languages in Taiwan, Taiwanese and Mandarin Chinese, can be said in a diglossic situation. Mandarin Chinese is the High variety used as the spoken and written language for formal institutions, such as government office, school and newspapers. On the contrary, Taiwanese is the low variety. When I was little, I spoke Taiwanese only at home because students were forbidden to speak Taiwanese at school. Recently the Taiwan government has began to value Taiwanese and other aboriginal tribe language by implementing so-called mother tongue maintenance and revival policies, such as adding language courses into elementary school curriculum. But because Mandarin Chinese is still the language for most instruction and media purpose, most people are monolingual Chinese. Not everyone in Taiwan can speak Taiwanese. So the term “diglossia” applies to a situation on a community level. How about an individual that can speak different languages?

## *2.2 Bilingualism*

The term diglossia is used to refer to “two languages in a society”, but a new term bilingualism refers to “two languages of an individual”. Bilingualism refers to an individual’s ability to use more than one language. Wallace Lambert was the person that originally proposed two kinds of bilingualism- additive and subtractive. Additive bilingualism is when a child learns to speak a second language fluently and still retains the first language. A famous example of additive bilingualism is the Canadian French immersion programs that is designed to enhance second language learning by promoting meaningful interpersonal communication skills. Students in immersion programs enable to retain language proficiency in both languages because their primary language is still treated prestigiously and those children belong to the majority language group. On the contrary, subtractive bilingualism is when a child loses the first language and only speaks the dominant language (Portes & Hao, 1998, p. 290). Usually learning a second language does not result in losing the first language. But in a society like the U.S. with English monolingualism policy, other ethnic diversity is not valued and it is hard for those languages to survive.

## *2.3 Process of language shift*

Many immigrants face the decision-making process of whether to speaking only English or speaking their heritage language. If those minority language groups want to be accepted and live in the U.S., they have no choice but to learn English because Americans will not learn each of their languages. Most schools in the U.S. offer subtractive education because they want minority language children to be proficient in English quickly in order to be transferred to the mainstream regular class. So when English replaces the primary language in young immigrant children, few of them become bilingual today (Wong Fillmore, 2000, p. 203). They do not even want to speak their heritage language because the minority language is devalued and treated with low, inferior status by the society. Gradually under such subtractive programs, Wong Fillmore concluded that individuals lose the first language ability and the whole community has language shift to English phenomenon over time.

I have a sense that this kind of language shift to English situation is happening to Chinese children here in the U.S. As Fishman (1966) describes in the process of three-generation language shift, it is at the second generation – the immigrant children, that begins to use more English than their heritage language. Gradually, because of other factors, such as lack of practice or instruction, and lower motivation, those immigrant children stop using the heritage language. On the surface, parents may think that proficient English ability means high school achievement for their children. However, the

truth is not that simple as what those parents expect. Most Chinese parents are not even aware that their children's loss of Chinese ability may cause miscommunication or family problems in the future.

## *2.4 Attitude and language*

Other than social policy and language programs, attitude is another influence on individual's language use or choice. An attitude can be viewed from various dimensions and its relation with language can also be measured in many ways. Ladegaard (2000) points out three components of an attitude. They are knowledge, emotion, and behavior. Each component has different recognizable features and experiment to elicit language attitude results (p. 216). Researchers may use tests to assess one's knowledge of a language and use questionnaire to evaluate one's effective aspect of a language. They can tape or use video to record the actual behavior or language use of people in different contexts, topics with other speakers. Another method is to ask subjects to report on how they feel about languages, for the emotional aspect survey. However, self-reported attitude on survey is not exactly congruous to one's covert attitude. Applying various techniques together can retrieve more information regarding to an individual's attitude toward language and his actual behavior.

## *2.5 Ethnic identity formation*

Because of personal attitude, a bilingual person may choose to speak one or the other language based on different factors. That links to the emotion and behavior aspects together as Ladegaard (2000) indicates in the previous section. The minority language or immigrant students choose to speak English or their ethnic language because they want to belong to a certain group. The psychological aspect of belonging is related to the nature of ethnic identity formation. Both Tse (1998) and Phinney (1989) describe the process of ethnic identity formation among some cultural minority groups in the U.S. Tse (1998) proposed a model of ethnic identity development as follows. It consists of four major stages as Stage 1: ethnic unawareness, Stage 2: ethnic ambivalence/evasion, Stage 3: ethnic emergence and Stage 4: ethnic incorporation. This process describes how most language minority individuals pass through a developmental process of ethnic identity formation, from unawareness, feeling negative and preferring English, to exploring and discovering their own ethnic minority American groups. However, there are some limitations regarding to this model. For example, not all minority children go through this developmental process or go through the same four stages. There is no indication or clear-cut for relating age to the stages. Phinney (1989) also provided similar stages for three ethnic groups in his study. Even though those three ethnic groups (Asian, Black and Hispanic) perceived different issues in the developmental process, Phinney concluded that "regardless of the specific group, those youth face a similar need to deal with the fact of their membership in an ethnic minority group in a predominantly White society" (p. 45).

In summary, an individual's attitude toward a language is related to his ethnic identity formation and language choice. When he is in favor of a certain culture and its people, he chooses to be identified as a part of the group members, and speaks its language. His language ability becomes more proficient after more practices in using it. If we view this consequence from the perspective of parent-child relation, we can assume that children are more likely to be influenced by their parents' attitude and behavior toward heritage languages.

## *2.6 Parent-child relation*

Many studies have indicated that parents play an important role in maintaining their children's ethnic language ability as well as in participating for the success of school and learning. Luo & Wiseman (2000) found out that parents, especially mothers, serve as important language model for shaping children's language behavior when they have good family relation (p. 320). When children saw their parents and other family members attach importance or encouragement to maintain the ethnic language, they showed favor in it as well. The conclusion from their study stated that maintenance of proficiency in an ethnic language was principally associated with adult language practice in the home.

On the other hand, children's ethnic language maintenance affects the closeness among family members. If children do not understand the ethnic language spoken by their parents and the parents

cannot speak English, there would be alienation in relationship and communication breakdown among them. Wong Fillmore (1991) illustrated in her article some examples of misunderstanding and conflict caused by the language barrier between parents and children. “Talk is a very crucial link between parents and children because parents impart their cultures to their children.” (p. 343) When children have close relation with their parents, they see parents as their language model. They see what language their parents use and make decisions about their use of language based on what they perceive.

## *2.7 Parental attitude*

Both how parents behave and feel influence their children’s language learning development. In Kuo’s (1974) findings, the family variables that found to have significant relationships with the bilingual pattern of a child can be classified into two –behavioral and attitude- categories. The first behavioral category means that the child is more proficient in an ethnic language when the parents use it more between themselves and in conversation with the child, and when they read stories to the child (p. 189). The other category, attitude, associates with personal characteristics of the parents. Parents’ birthplace, national identity, length of residence in the U.S., educational level, and socioeconomic status (SES) lead to consequences of their attitudes to a language, and the use of it. When parents think of a language in a certain way and choose to speak it, such behavior and attitude will affect how their children think and choose to speak as well.

Parental behavior and insistence in attitude are important in affecting children’s language choice. Parents can raise their children successfully as bilinguals if they themselves are “clear about their own values and preferences, developing models which best support their children through the developmental process” (Fantini, 1987, p. 36). When parents respond to their children in English other than the ethnic language at home, they give children a signal that it is all right to use English. “A parental code-switch to English almost always leads to the child using English.” (Pan, 1995, p. 323). Then it would be difficult to maintain the ethnic language later since children do not use it often when they were young.

## *2.8 Definition of terms*

I choose to use the term “heritage language” in this study as the language spoken by immigrants in the family or associated with the heritage culture. Krashen (1998) has defined heritage language as the one not spoken by the dominant culture, but by the minority language groups (p. 3). I will use Fishman’s term of “first generation” to identify those parents that immigrated to the U.S. as the first generation living here. Their children are identified as the “second generation” in this study.

# **3. Methodology**

## *3.1 Participants*

For this study, I collected information on how Chinese parents and children feel and behave toward learning Chinese and English. Participants for this study are fifteen Chinese families in the Phoenix metropolitan area in Arizona. They are mainly immigrants from Taiwan (11), with 3 from Mainland China and one from Hong Kong. Even though participants’ countries of origin are not the same, the mutual heritage language they use is Mandarin Chinese. The choice of Mandarin Chinese as the official language for people from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong is related to the issue of language policy and planning that will not be discussed in this paper. Taiwanese or Cantonese spoken at home is considered a dialect in this study and Mandarin Chinese is the official language taught in all Chinese schools.

Because recruiting participants for this study was voluntary, it is hard to maintain balanced sampling and homogeneity among participant characteristics, such as age, birthplace and children’s grade level. However, the purpose of the study is to find out narrative immigrant stories instead of number figure data. The parents’ age range was around 30 to 40 years old, and they all have at least a bachelor degrees in their native countries. All fathers have masters or Ph.D. degrees in computer or engineering-related fields. Each family has one to three children that were born in the U.S. or immigrated before school age. Those children are all within the K-8 grade level.

### *3.2 Data collection*

The design for this study is qualitative methodology. This method is chosen because the main purpose of the study is to retrieve descriptive profiles and information from participants and the qualitative method is suitable for this. The main resource for data collection is through interviews and the researcher's observation. First, for the parents, the interview is in semi-structured format including 15 questions about family immigration background, attitudes toward bilingualism, and children's Chinese learning experiences (see Appendix A). I was only able to interview mostly mothers because they are the ones that are accessible most of the time and spend more time with the children. I interviewed the participants at least two times, and recorded their answers. Each interview was about 30 to 45 minutes long and it was all in Chinese. For children, I used a brief 10-question statement and asked them to make comments on it (see Appendix B). I also encouraged the children to share with me their language learning experiences freely even though there was no specific question on it. Most of them replied to me in English though I asked them in Chinese.

### *3.3 Data analysis*

For data analysis, I transcribed the interview data and coded it to find similar patterns from the content using Strauss & Corbin's method (1990). All of the process of transcribing the data is in Chinese because it is easier for the researcher to analyze the data in her native language and because of the length of the information from tape transcription. Some examples of quotations from the interviewing content were translated into English if they were necessary for data sorting. Besides interviewing, I also took fieldnotes and kept research logs on family setting observations of language use, and interaction between parents and children. Those notes supplement what I have found from interview data. The interview results report what I have learned about parents' opinions toward children's Chinese English learning and their concerns on whether children are maintaining or losing Chinese.

## **4. Findings**

Chinese parents from this study share similar positive attitudes toward maintaining heritage language but feel hopeless in some ways. They think it is important for their children to maintain Chinese as well as to learn English well for academic purposes. However, because of pressure from the mainstream society, they all agree that it is hard for their children to maintain Chinese proficiency. The only thing they could do is send their children to weekend Chinese schools or speak more Chinese to their children at home.

Another finding is the prevalent English language use among Chinese children. When children stayed longer and grew older in the U.S. context, they tended to shift to English more. English has gradually replaced Chinese because it is used at school and social settings outside the family. In contrast, Chinese is only a minor language with no power or status and is used by only a small amount of people. The following section contains factors that I conclude influence heritage language maintenance and excerpts from interviews divided into three perspectives.

### *4.1 Family life*

The first perspective is family life. Factors under this include language use at home, literary environment, parental attitudes toward two languages, how much time spent in learning two languages and whether the mother is the main caregiver. Also, birth order, kids' age, numbers of siblings and whether grandparents live with the family, or whether the family visits the home country often, influence how well a child can maintain his/her native language and stay bilingual. Examples of quotations are as follows.

(1) Language use at home

“I think it is important for my kids to maintain Chinese ability. So I try to force him to speak as much Chinese as he can. If they speak English at dinner time, I ask them to stand in the garage for a while.”

(2) Living with grandparents

“Their grandmother came to live with us recently and she does not understand English. So the two children have to speak Chinese to her.”

(3) Mother as the main caregiver or not

“I have to work, so I sent my daughter to daycare when she was two. Before that, she had a nanny that spoke Cantonese. So my daughter did not know much Chinese.”

(4) Family visiting the home country

“Last summer our family had a trip back to Taiwan and China. My two daughters loved to go shopping with their cousins and they had to speak to the cousins in Chinese. Also, they got excited when they could recognize the sign or price tags on the products when we went to traditional markets outside.”

(5) Time spent on learning Chinese

“I set up one hour everyday for my son to write his Chinese homework. He has to finish his workbook because it is designed to write two-page assignment each day. It is impossible for him to write everything on Friday evening and then go to Chinese school next day.”

(6) Positive parental attitude

“Speaking both Chinese and English is beneficial later to find a job at Asian market. It is like an extra skill one can have. Besides, they are Chinese and they look like Chinese. So I want my kids to learn two languages.”

(7) Literary learning environment

“We have a lot of children’s books, comic books, poems, videos and tapes in Chinese. I bought those when I went back to Taiwan or my family back home sent them to us. These days we even rent classical soap operas in Chinese and our whole family loves to watch them. It is interesting and has an attractive plot to arouse children’s motivation in practicing Chinese. My younger daughter even learns a few phrases and theme songs from the programs. She thinks it is more fun than those textbooks at school.”

## 4.2 Social life

On the aspect of social life outside the family, American school instruction and the mainstream society play an important role in determining whether a child maintains his native language. English is the major language spoken in this big environment and children receive up to eight long hours of English instruction everyday during the daytime. That causes them to have better English proficiency compared to two-hours of weekend Chinese instruction. Another variable is the difference in the instructional styles that leads to lower proficiency level in Chinese than English. In Chinese, one has to learn the thirty-seven phonic symbols and memorize the exact strokes of handwritten characters before they can make phrases or even sentences. Some children are in gifted programs in public school while they are just starting to learn how to make short sentences in Chinese. The literacy environment of weekend Chinese school is also a big lose to English instruction. Most Chinese schools rent classrooms from local churches or community colleges and do not have their own building. Teachers cannot set up displays or decorate the classroom in their style to encourage learning. That makes children think that Chinese is not a major language but it is devalued and treated with lower or inferior social status. Besides, peers/ friends children have also influenced how they identify themselves and cause negative or positive attitudes toward a language. Examples of quotations are as follows.

(1) Heavy workload from English school

“They (my children) have too many assignments already from the public school, like art or science project. They do not have much time left for studying Chinese or writing homework. Often they have to finish the Chinese homework in a rush on Saturday evening before the Sunday school. And they really do not like to do it.”

(2) English as the mainstream language

“Who cares if you can speak Chinese? Here majority people speak English in this big society and I want my children to learn English to communicate with the majority people here.”

(3) Differences in instructional styles

“I am in the gifted program for my American school and I learn how to write a research report in English. But for my Chinese class, I can only write some simple characters and learn to make phrases. Chinese is harder to learn.”

(4) American peers

“I have many American friends at school. They do not know Chinese, so I have to speak English to them.”

#### 4.3 Children's characteristics

The third category is children's individual's characteristics. Their personality, motivation, self-identify and age affect how they feel toward Chinese and English. Age three and four is a critical point because children go to preschool and begin to get more exposure to English. Most parents respond that their children speak more English and gradually lose their Chinese ability when they start to go to American schools. A child's attitude or ethnic identity influences his/her motivation in learning a particular language as well. When a child is more outgoing and motivated to learn a language or meet new friends, he/she will use the language more and have better language proficiency. At this time, proficiency in both languages is not balanced. The children in this study speak more English than Chinese at home or at school with parents and peers as they grow older.

(1) Social attitude

“I concentrate on English more now because it gets more important for my school work. I live and stay in the U.S. now, so I have to learn English.”

(2) Birth order of the children

“My second son's Chinese is worse than the first one. He learns a lot of English words from his brother even before he goes to preschool. He learns words like ‘fireman’, ‘soldier’ in English first when he plays with his elder brother.”

(3) Motivation

“It is not that I do not like Chinese. I just hope the class could be more fun.”

(4) Age

“I used to be very good in Chinese when I was little, but now I am not anymore.”

(5) Differences in language proficiency level

“When I want to say something, I think in English first and I can speak really fast in order to express my opinion. However, I do not have enough vocabulary in Chinese and I have to think for a long time in order to say it. I give up speaking in Chinese because I want to express my idea in a hurry. Speaking Chinese is too slow for me.”

## 5. Discussions

I have gained many more details than I originally expected from the study design about parents' and children's attitudes toward learning Chinese and English. Parents reflected on ways of raising their children and children shared with me differences in learning Chinese and English. Bringing up children bilingually is not easy in reality because parents confront many obstacles due to unfamiliarity with the new culture and environment when they immigrate here. The fact is that those Chinese children may not be defined as truly bilingual anymore since they can only speak basic daily Chinese conversation and do not have much literacy ability. Parents have lower expectations then because the ideal is too hard to achieve. A father said, “As long as my son knows how to write his name and some ‘big’ Chinese characters, and knows his ancestor is Chinese, that is enough for me. I do not expect him to read and write a composition well.” Even if parents think it is better for their children to become bilingual, they do not do much or behave passively to help children in learning both languages. The definition of bilingualism is thus changed in this sense.

This study has discussed some factors that determine whether a child can maintain his native language ability. Yet no single variable guarantees the total influence of a child's language

proficiency level. That is, we cannot conclude that a child can definitely maintain his native language when he possesses all those factors, like holding a checklist. We also have to consider issues within and outside the environment like school or community to determine whether a child will maintain their language ability. Those factors are inter-related with each other so that no single variable determines the outcome.

Another finding from the study is the discrepancy between opinions of parents and children. Generally speaking, parents think their children have low motivation and interest, or they are too lazy to learn Chinese. They expect them to have higher Chinese proficiency, but children do not try hard. On the contrary, children think of themselves as good Chinese speakers. They feel proud of themselves that they can speak Chinese besides English compared to their American peers. Perhaps the criteria for proficiency levels are different for parents and children.

The findings of this study conclude the same ideas with what the literature review indicates on the importance of parental attitude and the sign of language shift to English for the younger generation. When parents express stronger views on preserving heritage language, their children are more likely to maintain their proficiency. Though this study has temporarily come to an end, the work is not finished. Research on heritage language loss and maintenance goes on as immigrants continue to tell their stories of surviving in a new environment with a new language.

## **Appendix A**

### Semi-structured Interview Questions for parents

#### Section One: General Family Information

- Please describe briefly about your family and the immigration history.
- What is the main language spoken at your home? Do you speak any other dialects?
- What language you speak to your children? What language your children speak to you?
- What language your children speak to other people in different places?

#### Section Two: Attitudes about Bilingualism

- What is your attitude toward learning two languages (bilingual)?
- Do you think it is beneficial or good to be able to speak more than one language? Why?
- How important is it for you to learn English? How about your children?
- Do you want your child (children) to be able to speak both English and Chinese?
- How do you feel about the environment for preserving one's native language here?

#### Section Three: Experiences of Chinese Learning

- What have you done to help them learn Chinese? Please give specific examples.
- Are there any reading, visual/audio materials available in Chinese at your house for your children? Please give some examples.
- What do you think of your children's abilities in Chinese and English?
- What problems or difficulties have you encountered when you teach them Chinese? For example, aspects of time, effort, people, place, resources. What is your solution?
- Do you know any child who has lost his/her Chinese? Why and how did this happen?
- What do you think a child who has lost his/her native language ability? Do you think parents can do anything to prevent language loss in their children? How?

## **Appendix B**

### Questions for Children

For each question, I will check whether children agree or disagree with each statement and encourage them to make comments.

- A.) It is good to know more than one language.
- B.) Learning more than one language is good for my grade.
- C.) Learning more than one language will make me smarter.
- D.) Learning more than one language will help me get a better job later when I grow up.
- E.) Learning more than one language will help me know more people.
- F.) I can speak Chinese very well.
- G.) I can speak English very well.

- H.) I speak English to my friends at public school.
- I.) I speak English to my parents at home.
- J.) I speak English to my brother/ or sister at home.

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