

**TRANSNATIONAL PARENT KNOWLEDGE
IN HERITAGE LANGUAGE EDUCATION:
A NARRATIVE INQUIRY WITH THREE CHINESE IMMIGRANT MOTHERS**

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By

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I explore the perspectives of transnational parents in bilingual education, particularly how they maintain connections to their home countries while adapting to the new country. Through my research, I investigate their strategies and practices for supporting heritage language development amidst transnational life complexities. The focus of my research is on how these parents navigate language decisions, bridge cultural divides, and weave multiple languages into their family dynamics, all while embracing their transnational identities.

Using narrative inquiry, I emphasize the interplay of personal, social, and material environments in shaping human experiences. This research approach goes beyond merely representing experiences; it involves engaging with them to forge new connections between individuals and their surroundings. I collaborated with three Chinese immigrant mothers in Saskatoon, Canada. Our interactions, including recorded conversations, shared observations, and family artifact analysis, revealed their ways of supporting their children's language learning. The collected field text of diverse moments and conversations across both English and Chinese languages, reflects the authentic language practices of these families.

In this dissertation, I present a compassionate inquiry into these mothers' journeys in heritage language education for their bi/multilingual children. Central to this exploration is "transnational parent knowledge," encompassing the mothers' deep insights and experiences. Through this research, I intertwine my personal narrative as an immigrant parent with the challenges of preserving Chinese heritage language in an English-dominated context, providing an empathetic lens to understand similar experiences of other immigrant mothers. Using this collective portrait, I illuminate the daily language practices of these families, showcasing how the mothers, living in transnational and translingual realities, nurture their children's bilingualism. I showcase their stories to highlight the dynamic facets of language teaching and learning within transnational families. The narratives, developed collaboratively, spotlight the mothers' strategies in maintaining heritage language, their resilience against raciolinguistic

challenges, and their efforts against linguistic discrimination, emphasizing their pivotal role in fostering their children's bilingual identities and cultural connections.

I extend the narrative to emphasize the significance of transnational parent knowledge in heritage language education. Challenging deficit narratives, I use this dissertation to advocate for an inclusive, strength-based approach to education that recognizes and celebrates the linguistic and cultural diversity of immigrant families. By foregrounding transnational parents' voices and experiences, I call for a reimagined heritage language education that fully integrates immigrant families' insights, enriching the educational experiences of bi/multilingual children.

keywords: transnational parent knowledge; heritage language education; multilingual children; narrative inquiry

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DEDICATION

To you, and your unconditional love.
送你，小宝，谢谢你爱我。

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CHAPTER ONE

Igniting Inquiry: A Research Sparked by Personal Experiences

"What is most personal is most universal."

- Carl R. Rogers

Narrative Beginnings

My name is Molly.

It is my English name.

My mom, dad, and grandma call my name in Chinese.

It is very similar to my English name: sounds like Mao Li.

In Chinese, 猫力 means Cat Power.

I love my name because I love puppies and kittens.

(Molly's conversation with friends, 5 years old, 2019)

Telling the Story: Home Language Discouraged at Daycare

Language and identity often intertwine, a lesson I learned when our family first moved to Canada from China. Our older daughter Molly, just two-and-a-half years old and our only child, stepped out of her Mandarin-Chinese-speaking home and into an English-speaking daycare for the first time. I remember Molly's fear of daycare, which, through gentle conversations, we discovered stemmed from the intimidating prospect of encountering "English." The memory of Molly sitting alone under a bunk bed in the daycare classroom, clutching a damp tissue and murmuring "Daddy and Mommy" (the only English words she knew), will forever be etched in my heart.

Then one day, Molly excitedly introduced us to her new best friend at daycare—a little girl who also spoke Chinese! Their laughter and chatter in their heritage language filled the room with joy and excitement. From that day on, daycare became less daunting and more intriguing for Molly. With her friend by her side, she blossomed, regaining her confident, cheerful, and talkative self. Her English skills grew daily, as she learned to make sense of her

surroundings using her heritage language and then transfer that understanding into English. By year's end, Molly was an emergent bilingual, communicating well in both languages. This ability to express herself in Chinese with her best friend bridged not only the languages of Chinese and English but also her Chinese and Canadian identities.

Yet, challenges remained. One day, Linda, a daycare staff member, shared her "concerns" about Molly's behavior. It seemed Molly and her friend would sometimes speak Chinese during circle time, which bothered the other children who could not understand them. Despite warnings, the girls continued to form their "closed group," inaccessible to both peers and teachers. Linda said their actions disrupted group activities, leading her to ask Molly and her friend to leave the circle and sit in the reading corner (Personal communication with Linda, November 16, 2017).

I left that conversation with a heavy heart and many questions. The daycare staff member who had spent months teaching, playing, and caring for Molly was a dedicated educator who genuinely cared for the children. Why, then, did she struggle to comprehend the challenges faced by a child navigating two languages and cultures? What would it take for the educators at this daycare to recognize the importance of allowing children to speak their heritage language not only at home but also in inclusive environments? As a parent, how can I foster a positive language environment for my child, develop her heritage language skills, and nurture her love and confidence for the language spoken by her family and ancestors? How can I apply the knowledge I gained from my own experiences as an immigrant parent to help my child thrive in both worlds?

Retelling the Story: What Can I Do?

My memory of that moment in Molly's daycare classroom lingered with me long after living through it. Slipping backward and forward in time, I "walked alongside" (Pushor, 2015) my children to explore the maintenance of our heritage language in an English-dominated society. Pushor (2015) conceptualized "walking alongside" as a metaphorical understanding of a

pedagogy of accompanying and of working side by side with someone. When I was walking alongside my children in our language learning, I was "with them" as we all engaged in the challenging and meaningful work together, reflecting as a mother "more of a state of mind than a set of skills" (Green & Christian, 1998, p. 3). I purposefully used our heritage language with the girls, sharing my love for our language and promoting our identity as both Chinese and Canadian. Inquiring into our language experiences afforded me the opportunity to "dwell within" (Polanyi, 1958, p. 195) these experiences in our community, family, and relationships, "neither to observe nor to handle them, but to live in them" (p. 196). As Polanyi stated, "[T]his indwelling can be consciously experienced" (p. 195) thus creating an understanding that includes the capacity to "intelligently contemplate" (p. 196) what I was coming to know about heritage language development in the home and community. It is through dwelling in whereby I can continue to shape and reshape my understandings of what it means for immigrant parents and immigrant children to maintain heritage language.

Understanding my children's linguistic needs, I began a shared journey with my children of maintaining and developing Chinese—the language I inherited from my parents, and they from theirs; the language through which I feel a connection with thousands of years of my motherland's history and with billions of people who share traits similar to us. I spent time with Molly and Luna, alongside other close and extended family members—talking, playing, reading, writing, creating, laughing and sometimes crying—in the home and community. During the process, I kept a daily digital journal on social media, as a field text to track and document my observations and experiences about our home language learning. I am in the midst of living, telling, retelling, and reliving (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) our stories at home and in the community, co-composing field texts with my children in a relational way, for "relationships are a central way of making sense of the temporal and contextual aspects of narrative inquiry" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 34). As our natural learning process unfolds, I reflect on our lived experiences everyday as a process of field text analysis.

Awakening to the Knowledge I Hold as an Immigrant Parent

Every human being is a holder of "funds of knowledge," defined through a sociocultural lens as the "historically-accumulated and culturally-developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (Moll et al., 1992, p. 133). It is the knowing that becomes part of who we are as we engage with the world and are changed by it (Polanyi, 1958). Elbaz (1981) conceptualized knowledge as "directed toward making sense of, and responding to, the various situations of" (p. 49) a particular role. In the role of an immigrant parent to bilingual children, Molly and her Canadian-born sister, Luna, I was called to be attentive to my understandings of "parent knowledge" (Pushor, 2015) through the conversation with Molly's daycare teacher. I came to understand, as I struggled and explored our ways of teaching, learning, and playing at home, that "only parents possess parent knowledge, the particular knowledge held and used by someone who nurtures children in the complex act of raising a child and in the complex context of a home and family" (Pushor, 2015, p. 15). This nuanced understanding of "knowledge" reflects not only the factual or procedural aspects of knowledge but also encompasses the deeply held beliefs, ideologies, and practical applications unique to the context of each family. These elements collectively shape the perspectives and practices that define the intricate process of nurturing bilingual children in a multicultural context.

I know my children differently and more profoundly than anyone else in the world because of the uniqueness of our relationship—a relationship that is inextricably intertwined, in physical and emotional ways (Pushor, 2015). My particular fund of knowledge as a parent is grounded in and shaped by the foundational living experience of my personal journey; it is situated in time and space, enveloped within a broader social context, and shaped by my personal lived experiences and the insights derived from those experiences. The parent knowledge I possess demonstrates temporal dimensions because it resides in "the person's past experience, in the person's present mind and body, and in the person's future plans and actions"

(Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 25). I was awakened to the realization that in our home, in our family, and in our lives, there are no other people who hold more knowledge of my daughters than me. I am the mother, the insider, the one who holds the parent knowledge gained from my lived experience with my daughters as I care for them, engage with them in play, interact with them with family and friends, transition my family to this new country, and, in all of this, explore with them languages and identities.

As I walked into the midst of my life in a new country, and I gained a new identity as an immigrant parent of bilingual children, I gradually accumulated an additional aspect to my existing parent knowledge—immigrant parent knowledge (Guo, 2012). This immigrant parent knowledge arises out of my own educational background, my professional and personal experiences of interacting with schools in my country of origin, my current understanding of the host country's education system, and my struggles as an immigrant parent. It combines with my parent knowledge growing from both my past and present lived experiences with my daughters and my future aspirations for my children (Pushor, 2008).

My efforts in my children's language education in the home context begins at birth, continues on a day-to-day basis, and probably will never end. By spending time living out a pedagogy in which parent knowledge shapes the teaching and learning of heritage language, I came to an understanding of my relational, intuitive, intimate, bodied and embodied knowledge (Pushor, 2015) I hold as a parent. I extended and expanded my children's heritage language knowledge through moments of intimate teaching, learning, and playing when we were engaged in conversations, story reading and acting, and emergent writing. As an immigrant parent, I intentionally brought my own parent knowledge of language and identity into my pedagogical language practices and made apparent to my children the values of maintaining our home language. Contemporary research on family and home literacy underscores the strengths and assets that immigrant families bring to their children's education (Curd-Christiansen & Iwaniec, 2023; Guardado, 2010; Li et al., 2023). However, there remains a notable gap in how schools

and some educators perceive these contributions, often overlooking the rich knowledge and resources immigrant parents possess (Guo, 2009). This disconnect can lead to a deficit-based view of immigrant families within educational settings, hindering the recognition and appreciation of their valuable insights into their children's learning and cultural experiences (Jones, 2003). Non-recognition of immigrant parents can be attributed to misperceptions and ignorance of different cultures and languages (Guo, 2012; Honneth, 1996). Differences are seen as deficits that bring about the belief that the knowledge of others is incompatible, inferior, and hence invalid (Abdi, 2007; Dei, 1996). In reality, regardless of whether it is recognized or not, immigrant parents offer unique values, languages, cultures, religions, and educational backgrounds to school, making them a valuable asset to educational systems (Guo, 2012). Therefore, I aim to tell a different story—a story that is capacity-based, a story that reflects the reality of our family, a story that I co-composed with my children.

Research Puzzle

Research Puzzle Emerges

I recognize that, although there is a significant amount of research on bilingual education from the perspective of educators, as well as studies exploring the viewpoints of parents (Dixon & Wu, 2014; Kang, 2013; Pham & Tipton, 2018), the nuanced experiences and perspectives of parents living transnationally deserve additional academic focus. Transnational living, characteristic of families like mine, entails sustaining strong ties to one's country of origin while adapting to a new host country. This adaptation often involves engaging in communication, travel, cultural practices, and maintaining relationships across borders. Despite existing research on children's language education from parents' perspectives in transnational contexts (Babae, 2014; Brooksbank, 2022; Du, 2015; Li, 2000, 2002; Li et al., 2022; Song, 2022), a more detailed examination of the distinct strategies and practices immigrant parents employ is necessary. Specifically, how these parents manage resources within their homes to support heritage language development amidst the complexities of transnational living is ripe for deeper

exploration. The methods by which these parents make language choices, bridge cultural divides, and apply languages in both teaching and daily practices within immigrant households, all while upholding their transnational identities, are crucial areas that demand further academic investigation.

Addressing the identified need for further research, this study seeks to explore the lived experiences of immigrant parents with the goals of: a) examining the daily language practices of immigrant families in both home and community settings, and b) unveiling how immigrant parents engage both formally and informally, consciously and unconsciously, with their bi/multilingual children in order to preserve their heritage language within an English-dominated society. With this in mind, my research question is:

How do immigrant parents utilize their unique transnational parent knowledge in their children's heritage language education?

Justifications at the Outset

For researchers, particularly social scientists, justifying the purpose of specific research is a constant prompt. This requires justifying what we hope we will learn, or understand differently, after undertaking particular research studies. Responding to these questions of justification and purpose is crucial. Our studies should enable us to answer the questions, "So what?" and "Who cares?" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 35). Therefore, I consider it very important to justify my study at the outset in three ways: 1) Socially, by considering the implications of these findings for theoretical understandings or social justice; 2) Practically, by considering what difference the research might make to practice; and 3) Personally, as to why the research matters to me and where I position myself in the study.

Social Justification: Longing for Educational Equity

Language is the center of my research. Language is deeply tied to culture, identity, and experience because it is the medium individuals use to determine their continuous being in relation to others and society (Maturana & Varela, 1998). It is beyond a mere means of communication. It is part of who we are. For our family, Chinese and English are the two languages used to compose our daily narratives. Although immigrant families strive for their children's language development, the opportunities are limited in an English-dominated society (Valdes, 2005). Like many immigrant families living in Canada, English exists in a much larger world (e.g. schools, workplaces, grocery stores, media, etc.) while our heritage language lives within our community and mainly within our home settings.

Roessingh (2012) highlighted the challenge many immigrant children face in retaining proficiency in their heritage languages. A significant issue is that heritage languages are often relegated to the realm of basic oral communication within the confines of family and a small community of friends. This limitation in usage contributes to a gradual, and sometimes complete, loss of language proficiency as these languages are not engaged within a comprehensive or academically enriching context. Moreover, the way in which children lose language proficiency can vary widely. Polinsky and Kagan (2007) noted that many children tend to retain comprehension abilities longer than production capabilities. This means that while they might still understand the language when it is spoken or written, their ability to speak or write it themselves diminishes much more quickly. Furthermore, when these children do produce the language, it is often altered in some way. The loss of production skills can occur faster and earlier than one might expect, highlighting the nuanced ways in which language attrition can manifest. Together, these insights underscore the complexities surrounding heritage language retention among immigrant children. They not only face the challenge of maintaining proficiency in a language that is limited to informal settings but also navigate the uneven terrain of comprehension and production skills.

In my years of observation within Saskatoon's Chinese immigrant community, it is evident that many children lean towards using English when speaking with their parents, even if the parents start the conversation in Chinese. This behavior points to a potential disconnect between the domestic setting and the wider social environment, a gap that might not be solely geographic in nature but also encompasses cultural, linguistic, and social differences. Saskatoon, where the research participants reside, offers a distinctive scenario in this regard. Unlike regions characterized by immigrant neighborhoods with a prevalent use of heritage languages in public spheres, Saskatoon does not feature such concentrated linguistic enclaves. The lack of these communities implies that the disparity between the language spoken at home and the language predominantly used outside is not as marked. This particular aspect of the environmental context is essential for understanding the complexities of heritage language retention among Chinese immigrant children. It underscores how the specific location can play a significant role in influencing language practices and maintenance, revealing the intricate ways in which the setting impacts language usage and preservation.

Valdés (2001) defined heritage language learners as students who have grown up hearing or speaking a language other than English, who have a competency in that language, and a certain level of bilingualism in both languages. Even so, immigrant children whose heritage language is not English are often regarded as linguistically incapable in schools (Flores & Rosa, 2015). Various heritage languages are excluded from the school's cultural repertoire, whereas colonial languages such as English and French are highly valued (Agirdag, 2010). "[A]mong the children of immigrants, English emerged as an unequivocal winner in the struggle for their linguistic souls" (Suárez-Orozco, 2001, p. 136). The enduring mismatch between traditional language education theories and practices, and the actual experiences of immigrant children, as identified by García et al. (2021), primarily stems from these educational approaches not focusing on the genuine languaging experiences of bilingual children beyond the school environment. Traditional methods often overlook the complex, dynamic nature of bilingualism

in everyday life, failing to integrate or value the rich linguistic and cultural practices that immigrant children engage in outside of school. Therefore, it is crucial to shift instructional and pedagogical strategies towards preserving and enhancing an immigrant child's heritage language and culture, acknowledging and building upon their unique bilingual experiences across all contexts of their lives.

While the importance of immigrant children's bi/multilingual language practices has gradually been recognized, research on how immigrant parents support their children's heritage linguistic sustainability is limited, thus the knowledge these parents hold is not yet commonly acknowledged or valued. This research will address the gaps in both academic literature and its practical application in educational and social contexts, by demonstrating the dynamic interplay between knowledge systems and languages. The findings of this study will provide new perspectives on seeing immigrant parents—a historically marginalized and ignored group in education—as knowledge holders who bring valuable resources to the school landscape. My research intends to contribute to broader and stronger benefits for minoritized bilinguals that lead to a "serpentine movement toward possibilities of other modes of being, thinking, knowing, sensing and living, that is, an otherwise in plural" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 8). My effort to bring immigrant parent knowledge to the center of the stage seeks to open up a space of possibility for bi/multilingual children's language education, where they can access educational resources and opportunities based on their true potentials and needs.

Practical Justification: Opportunities for Educators

Canada's Pre-Kindergarten (PreK) to Grade 12 education system, characterized by Eurocentric perspectives, standards, and values, does not reflect the unique knowledge and experiences of our culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse students and parents (Guo, 2012). A significant educational challenge in such context is the "difference as deficit" perspective (Dei, 1996). Many of the immigrant parents who participated in Guo's (2012) study reported that, despite the promotion of multilingualism in Canadian schools, their children

continued to experience demeaning treatment because of their different linguistic and cultural practices. The "difference as deficit" model in education overlooks the potential enrichment that the diverse strengths, experiences, knowledge, and perspectives of students and parents from various cultural groups can bring to the learning environment. Instead of leveraging this diversity as a resource to enhance learning, this approach either ignores, minimizes, or views diversity as a hurdle in the educational process (Cummins, 2003; Dei, 1996). This stance can lead to several negative outcomes, including the assumption that students who struggle to express themselves in English lack knowledge in certain areas, potentially due to implicit biases or racism from educators. It might also reflect an overarching goal within schools to assimilate students into a dominant cultural norm, disregarding the value of maintaining one's cultural identity. This model fails to recognize that students' ability to bring different perspectives and skills to the classroom can significantly enrich the learning experience for everyone.

In the meantime, teachers are eager to learn, yet they are not provided with adequate opportunities or resources. During a lecture I gave about immigrant families' heritage language learning at home, 30 attendees who are inservice PreK-Grade12 teachers in Saskatchewan expressed enthusiasm to learn about diverse students' language practices off the school landscape in order to provide support (ECUR 485, University of Saskatchewan, October 6, 2021). Teachers recognized and reinforced the importance of the heritage language of their students as an integral part of the student's identity, a valuable tool for thinking and learning, and a medium for communication between family members and the community. They were also worried about the limited access they have to valuable information and knowledge, which is in line with research findings that many educators are underprepared for working effectively with immigrant parents (Malatest & Associates, 2003; Turner, 2007). Teachers still encounter many challenges in their daily interactions with cultural and linguistic diversity. Using Hoerder et al. (2006) as an example, the extent to which parents share knowledge with their children may be modeled as "transcultural knowledge construction," whereby individuals in immigrant societies

adapt to the new world through integrating diverse cultural ways of life into dynamic new ones. This may include aspects of culture, language, ethnicity, religion, and so forth. In the absence of appropriate transcultural knowledge, teachers may misinterpret students' behaviors, thus inadvertently impacting immigrants and their families in negative ways.

It is important to understand that knowledge is socially constructed, culturally mediated, and historically situated (McLaren, 2003). Adapting to the Eurocentric model of educating children in Canada, immigrant parents add new knowledge gained from interactions with Canadian schools to their existing knowledge. Blending forms may lead to cultural, linguistic, and societal creativity and the integration of new knowledge (Hoerder et al., 2006). As with socially mediated forms of knowledge, parents' personal knowledge is also important for school relations. Personal knowledge comes from parents' lived experiences in all aspects of their daily lives, at work, at play, with family and friends, so on and so forth. When educators understand the valuable knowledge their immigrant parents possess, including their knowledge of their children's cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds and their experiences living in multicultural environments, they are better equipped to support their immigrant students.

In acknowledging immigrant parent knowledge, educators have a lens through which to view bi/multilingualism as the norm, and to construct their thoughts about language learning within a broader frame of educational equity, hence enabling immigrant children to learn and be educated on their own terms and on the basis of their own language practices (García et al., 2021).

Personal Justification: A Parent-Researcher

Who am I then, in the research? The researcher, of course. In the meantime, I am also a parent who has been working with my daughters to promote heritage language learning at home. Santos (2007) argued that the heritage aspect of language knowledge that is derived from the daily linguistic and social exchanges in immigrant families cannot be acquired elsewhere, but "from the inside out" (p. 54). My experiences and positioning provide a valuable "insider"

perspective to the research. In our everyday language practice, new knowings emerged from the fragmented pieces of my old knowings (Anzaldúa, 1987/1999). My experiences alongside my children during their language-learning journey challenged me to explore a range of philosophical, theoretical, and practical considerations relating to my role as an immigrant parent and as the first and most important teacher in my daughters' heritage language education. Shaped by these experiences, I composed a new life narrative alongside my daughters in our home setting, and generated new puzzles and wonderings about the possibilities of immigrant children's heritage language education.

Parent engagement has been identified as one of the most important factors in the successful learning of heritage languages, largely because heritage language learning traditionally begins with parents and at home (Arriagada, 2005; Oh & Fuligini, 2007; Suarez, 2002; Suarez, 2007). Home is a very private place, often the place in which family members are able to be their most authentic selves (Pushor, 2015). The intimate nature of home enables learning to happen in the most natural ways, particularly with children. I saw the relationship between the girls and me as fertile soil from which their learning would grow. Therefore, the first initiative I took to promote Chinese language learning was to create a home literacy environment, including daily conversations, inter-generational communications, book shelves filled with picturebooks written in Chinese, multimedia resources in Chinese language, and fun ways of integrating their names into songs and lullabies.

Research Methodology

Narrative Inquiry

The methodological approach for my research is narrative inquiry, which focuses on personal lives and how they are lived (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) conceptualized narrative inquiry as "the study of the ways humans experience the world" (p. 2). Human experience is the center of narrative inquiry—the sometimes messy and chaotic, but authentic experience. Narrative inquiry "is both a view of and a methodology for studying

experience" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 11). Clandinin and Connelly's perspective on experience, and the cornerstone of narrative inquiry, was inspired by John Dewey's (1938) pragmatic philosophy. By claiming a Deweyan theory, narrative inquirers delineate the distinct differences between narrative inquiry and other research methodologies. According to Dewey (1934), experience is characterized by the constant interaction of human thought with our personal, social, and material environments: "In an experience, things and events belonging to the world, physical and social, are transformed through the human context they enter, while the live creature is changed and developed through its intercourse with things previously external to it" (p. 247).

Dewey's ontology is transactional rather than transcendental. An inquiry cannot be satisfied simply by generating the most faithful representation of reality, because knowledge cannot be decoupled from the knower and the context. It is the ideal of inquiry to create a new relationship between the person and their environment that "makes possible a new way of dealing with them, and thus eventually creates a new kind of experienced objects, not more real than those which preceded but more significant, and less overwhelming and oppressive" (Dewey, 1981, p. 175). In this pragmatic understanding of knowledge, narrative inquiry represents experience and validates that experience by returning to it.

Stories Embedded in Context

Experiences are expressed, shared, held, and understood in the form of stories. Throughout their lives, people tell themselves and others stories about who they are, how they are, and how they interpret their past through these stories. An individual's experience of a story gives them a profound understanding of the world and transforms them as a result. Therefore, studying experience as story is, first and foremost, an attempt to comprehend the meaning of experience. The use of narrative inquiry methodology requires a distinct perspective on how we think about experience as a phenomenon. Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) did well to point out narrative inquiry's focus within the framework of studying experience:

Framed within this view of experience, the focus of narrative inquiry is not only on individuals' experience but also on the social, cultural, and institutional narratives within which individuals' experiences are constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted. Narrative inquirers study the individual's experience in the world, an experience that is storied both in the living and telling and that can be studied by listening, observing, living alongside another, and writing, and interpreting texts. (pp. 42-43)

Taking a step back and paying attention to the contextual narratives enable narrative inquirers to further deepen the complexity of participants' storied experiences. Each story is embedded in its own context (Mishler, 1979; Ochberg, 1994). In other words, the interpretation and representation of stories are meaningless without considering the context of lives (Ayres & Poirier, 1996). Narrative inquiry examines individual's storied experience on a personal level and beyond. Narrative inquirers take into consideration "the social, cultural and institutional narratives within which individuals' experiences are constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 42).

In my research, I "think with stories" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 31) rather than thinking about the stories of the participants, both within and outside narrative inquiry. By thinking with stories, I mean that, primarily, I think relationally, considering experiences and contexts. My narrative inquiry with immigrant parents requires me to think with their, and my, stories in multiple ways: thinking with my own stories in my children's language learning; thinking with the other's stories of multilingual practices; thinking with all the cultural, social, and institutional narratives in which we are embedded; thinking with what emerges from our shared identities, cultures, languages, ethnicity, and parenting experiences; thinking with the diverse personal encounters; and, thinking with societal environments in which our stories differentiate from each other's. I ask myself the following questions: What are the roles of the country of Canada and the city of Saskatoon in these immigrant families' language choices and decisions? How might immigrant parents' transnational lived experiences, from one country to another, influence their language

ideologies? What kinds of impact do their children's schools and teachers have on these families' language practices? This exploration is crucial for grounding my investigation within its specific context, as understanding the lived experiences of participants through narrative inquiry necessitates a deep engagement with the environments that shape these experiences (Clandinin & Caine, 2013). This methodological approach, rooted in narrative inquiry, fosters a collaborative exploration of experience that evolves gradually, marked by interactions across various spaces and social contexts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). By situating my research questions within this complex interplay of individual and collective narratives, I seek to illuminate how contextual factors—both macro and micro—enrich our comprehension of language choices and ideologies among immigrant families. This deeper contextualization will not only enhance the richness of my findings but also contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play, thereby addressing the core of my research question with a comprehensive lens that acknowledges the influence of multiple layers of context.

Attending to the Three Commonplaces

In his theory of experience, Dewey (1938) introduced two criteria of experience that resonate deeply with me as I explore the family stories woven by the participants—Jin, Shan, and Wen¹: interaction and continuity, both enacted in situations. When it comes to narrative inquiry, continuity is time, interaction is social, and place always matters because of context. As the most frequently cited philosophical source for narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), Dewey's theory of experience serves to underpin the three dimensions of the narrative inquiry space with regard to temporality, place, and sociality (Clandinin et al., 2007). An inquiry's dimensions, and the supporting conceptual framework, are specified by these commonplaces that require simultaneous attention. In this research, I seek to attend to these commonplaces simultaneously, honoring the unique contexts of these three mothers.

¹ Pseudonyms are being used for the mothers and their family members to protect their anonymity.

In my journey with Jin, Wen, and Shan, I focus on the temporal aspects of their experiences to gain a comprehensive understanding of their past, present, and imagined futures. This exploration is deeply personal, touching on each mother's life history rather than abstract concepts. I delve into Shan's childhood in China, Wen's migration journey, and Jin's navigation of raising bilingual children, observing the significant role time plays in their engagement with language education. The emphasis of this research is particularly on mothers due to their pivotal role in their children's daily lives and heritage language education, among other educational responsibilities. Mothers, in these narratives, emerge as primary caregivers, possessing a wealth of experiences and insights. While fathers do feature in these stories, they do so in a supporting capacity, enriching the mothers' narratives with their perspectives, albeit in a more auxiliary manner. This approach aligns with Pushor's (2015) definition of parenting as an act or series of actions fulfilled by individuals responsible for caregiving, whether solely or jointly. The term "to parent" thus encompasses the myriad acts carried out by those in this role, with a focus on those who directly influence the child's upbringing and education.

In attending to the social commonplace, I am drawn into the context within which these mothers' experiences are created and developed. I delve into the social, cultural, institutional, linguistic, and family narratives that shape their lives. I learn about Jin's connection to her heritage language, Wen's efforts to navigate a new educational system, and Shan's role as a bridge between her children and their cultural roots. As I explore the social dimension, I appreciate the inward reflections and outward interactions that shape their stories, revealing how sociality moves in both directions.

I also immerse myself in the narrative inquiry commonplace of place, recognizing that "all events take place some place" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 481), for place is "the specific concrete, physical, and topological boundaries of place or sequences of places where the inquiry and events take place" (p. 480). Clandinin (2013) claimed that narrative inquiry differs from other methodologies in part by ensuring that all three commonplaces are considered

without neglecting, ignoring, or omitting any. I step into the homes, communities, schools, and broader societal contexts of Jin, Wen, and Shan, appreciating the significance of these places in their narratives. I feel the warmth of Jin's family home, where her heritage language fills the air; I stand with Wen as she navigates unfamiliar school hallways, seeking the best education for her children; and I walk the streets of Shan's neighborhood, where the interplay of languages and cultures come to life.

Through this exploration, I strive to honor the three dimensions of narrative inquiry, weaving together the temporal, social, and place-specific experiences of Jin, Wen, and Shan. By attending to these commonplaces, I aim to create a vivid, authentic portrayal of their journeys within the realm of language education, uncovering the complexities that lie beneath the surface.

Where It All Began: Me as the First Participant

We are, as narrative inquirers, always studying ourselves in relation to the participants. Each narrative inquiry begins with an autobiographical story, whether it is included in the final research text or not. Sarris (1993) reminded us that in understanding another person we must simultaneously understand ourselves. My inquiry is "ongoing, an endeavour not aimed at a final and transparent understanding of the other or of the self, but of continued communication, at an ever-widening understanding of both" (p. 6). Therefore, I enter the inquiry as both the inquirer and the first participant, and bring forward, as an immigrant parent, my autobiographical stories of heritage language learning with my children in our home.

Conversations are a significant marker of our home literacy environment. Shneidman and Goldin-Meadow's (2012) cross-cultural study reinforced the staggering importance of daily oral input to a child's language development. As we go about our daily business together, engaged in getting dressed, taking baths, having meals, playing games, taking walks and so forth, I try to elaborate, explain, and encourage detailed conversations. Especially after Molly gradually mastered the art of the English language, I felt it was important to make Chinese visible as the language she was encouraged to use in our home context. During a bumpy flight to

Vancouver last year, Molly sought comfort in my arms and said: "妈妈，我的耳朵里在刮风呢。" The sentence can be roughly translated as, "Mommy, there is wind blowing in my ears." I instantly understood that she had clogged ears due to the pressure shift in the plane. I could not help but be amazed and touched by her extraordinarily poetic expression in our heritage language. Li (2006) showed us that when parents enforce a heritage-language-only policy at home, children tend to develop a more positive attitude toward and higher levels of proficiency in their heritage language. Such a "policy" was never forced on my children, for I wanted to keep their passion for speaking the Chinese language alive. The balance between encouragement and enforcement is indeed fine, but what a delight it is to hear the surprisingly charming phrases coming from the young ones, as they master the beauty of this ancient language. Every night before bed, I say, "我爱你, I love you," to Luna. Instead of saying "我爱你" back to me, she claims, with her innocent yet frank voice, "爱我！" which means, "Love me!" For a one-and-half-year-old child, the conversion of personal pronouns in Chinese is a major achievement, a reflection of her engagement in our day-to-day language exchanges of speaking Chinese.

Inter-generational communications play a crucial role in Molly and Luna's heritage language development, both within their immediate family and across transnational lines. Everyday interactions with their Nainai, their paternal grandmother and one of the primary caregivers living with us, help reinforce the Chinese-only language commitment at home. Molly and Luna are well aware that "Nainai doesn't speak English," prompting them to "consciously experience" (Polanyi, 1958, p. 195) the switch of languages when they talk to her. Moreover, the girls also maintain regular online communications with their Laolao, their maternal granny, who still resides in China. These digital interactions with Laolao serve to further strengthen their linguistic and cultural connections to their heritage. In addition to language, Nainai shares her knowledge of culture through cooking and food-related activities. When Nainai cooks and shares authentic Chinese cuisine with the children, they participate in the process and converse

about the experience. On the other hand, Laolao engages with the girls in a different way to promote their cultural connection. Laolao is a member of a cultural dance group where seniors gather to practice traditional Chinese dances and perform in various cultural festivals in China. She often shares these experiences as stories with the girls, showcasing pictures and videos of the performances, which serves as another great way to maintain intergenerational communications and foster the children's heritage language learning.

Books can be found everywhere in our house, including adult's and children's books, written in English and in Chinese. I intentionally make it visible that books are an important and normal part of our lives and purposefully model reading myself. The importance of repeated story reading and storytelling in both first and second languages has been highlighted in many studies (Avalos et al., 2007; Coyle & Mora, 2018; Fuller Collins, 2005; Nunez, 2019; Roessingh, 2014; Strekalova-Hughes & Wang, 2019). Uccelli and Pérez (2007) showed a striking finding in their study examining Spanish-English bilingual children: "If children hear, engage and tell stories in Spanish with friends, family, or at school, the learned set of skills required to structure a story in Spanish could positively contribute to children's English narrative quality" (p. 234). Cummins (2017) also suggested that skills learned in a child's heritage language will transfer to the learning of a second language. Therefore, strengthening, supporting, and fostering a positive heritage language environment for immigrant children will create a solid foundation for their language development in English (Goldenberg et al., 2013). As an immigrant parent, I am attentive to the balance between the dominant language and heritage language. Like many immigrant parents, I hold a palpable desire for my young children to learn English. I intuitively and consciously recognize English as the power code (Delpit, 1995) that my children need to crack for their success in school and in life. Therefore, books and multimedia resources in both languages are introduced and encouraged.

Children's picturebooks are my favorite, among the many means of introducing language. I love picturebooks because they contain sophisticated real-life topics, short, simple, and child-friendly text, and visual information to help children convey ideas. Because I am also keenly aware of the fact that storybook exposure promotes language acquisition (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002; Sénéchal et al., 1998), I intentionally make picture book reading a part of our language practice at home. For Molly and Luna, though, shared reading is never a "learning activity"; rather, it is a fun family time during which the three of us cuddle closely, sometimes under a warm blanket, sharing in our home language a book with lively pictures and vibrant colors. When I read those appealing stories that happened in ancient China, the modern Western world, or the magic imagination land, I can hear the beautiful Chinese sentences flowing in the air and then into my young children's ears and minds. I witness how they absorb the language and knowledge passed through me from a large community, a rich culture, and the long history of our homeland. . Molly, who is three years older than Luna, often takes the responsibility of "teaching her little sister" by holding the book and reading to her—and by reading, I mean telling the stories imprinted in her tiny head after many story times with us. Pictures help link the content and the words. I deliberately point to the Chinese characters after I have read the same book a few times and know the girls are familiar with the story lines in order to introduce print in our home language. Given the complicated nature of Chinese print, I prefer this more natural way of gradually familiarizing them with the written language.

Following the young ones' lead, we extend and expand our existing story reading language practice while engaging in picturebooks. The two sisters freely take initiative. Molly and Luna often apply their "wild imagination" (Conversation with Molly, 2019) to comprehend the stories and utilize the languages in the most creative ways. They show me the transformative power of drawing, painting, crafting, music, dance, and performance, not only as a way of shaping new and deeper understandings of the stories, but also as a way of forming spaces with potential for traveling smoothly in and out of the webbed and interwoven Chinese and English

language worlds. During roleplaying, after adopting the plots and characters in the stories, Molly and Luna tend to use both languages spontaneously and pragmatically.

Creating songs and lullabies with their names is another way I make learning heritage language fun. Lyrics with their own names draw their attention to listening and singing in Chinese. Ever since they were babies, each of them had an exclusive lullaby composed of Chinese sentences that rhymed with their names.

这只小乖猫呀 (*Hi dear baby cat*)

现在要睡觉 (*Now it's time to go to bed*)

闭上眼睛 (*Close your big eyes*)

一会儿就睡着 (*Fall asleep really fast*)

- Molly's lullaby, 2014

妈妈的小露露 (*Mommy's little Lulu*)

不哭不哭哭 (*Please don't cry*)

妈妈的小露娜 (*Mommy's little Luna*)

睡觉睡觉啦 (*Let's go to sleep*)

- Luna's lullaby, 2018

Many researchers have drawn our attention to the fact that parents who demonstrate positive attitudes toward heritage language pose a strong influence on their children's attitudes and language proficiency (Hinton, 2001; Kondo-Brown, 2010; Luo & Wiseman, 2000; Mills, 2001; Oh, 2003). Immigrant parents who attach importance to maintaining and developing heritage language and emphasize the need to continue using the language foster a positive environment for children to grow a passion for that language (Li, 2006). Children in a positive language environment have a higher chance of continued use of their heritage language, even after exposure to English, as compared with children living with parents who do not make these language efforts (Oh, 2003). It is apparent to me that the intimate moments I share with Molly and Luna singing lullabies in Chinese every night are ones that evoke interest in learning

heritage language, and these moments also link their sense of being loved to the language we share within our home setting. Attentive language practices like this trace pieces of our distinct and specific home language learning pedagogy.

Real-life stories are the most beloved type of story-telling by Molly and Luna, given the very personal and particular nature of the home landscape. Among those real-life stories, one theme remained most popular: the days they were born. Many researchers have foregrounded the important link between heritage language and family literacy practices. Wong Fillmore (2000), and Scheele et al. (2010) emphasized the importance of developing social capital by sharing past experiences and telling real-life stories to children. Gradually introducing increasingly more difficult vocabulary and complex expressions helps with heritage language development (Vaish, 2019). We must have told, retold, and acted out their birth stories hundreds of times during the course of three years. From the moment mom felt a tummy ache, to the time doctors and nurses took mom in; from how to breathe during labor, to cutting the umbilical cord; from holding the baby in mom's arms for the first time, to feeding and rocking the crying baby to calm her down, we lived and relived those moments through repeated story-telling and acting. It was in these times that they learned to listen to, participate in, and understand narrative discourse. Enacting their birth stories created a path to more sophisticated use of the Chinese language, and contributed to deeply bonding relationships with me and with each other. Engaging in real-life story-telling and story-acting results in positive effects in intellectual, social, emotional, and linguistic development (Hasni-Mokhtar et al., 2011) for Molly and Luna. The process of telling and acting true stories that involves memory and social skills (Glonek & King, 2014) employs physical as well as narrative aspects that provide a significant foundation for language development.

Nurturing passion for early writing is a fun part of our language practices at home. Play often motivates children to expand their language knowledge and practice their literacy skills (Ewing et al., 2016). One of our favorite language games is "composing" stories using Chinese character blocks. Each of us takes a few blocks, arranges them in a row, and tells a story based on the words (or pictures in Molly and Luna's case) on the blocks. It is a magical time filled with imagination, silliness, and laughter, as well as free exploration and navigation of the language, both orally and visually. Games like this help the girls open the door to the wonderful world of Chinese characters, which leads to a playful start of early writing.

Research revealed that, "Emergent writing is young children's first attempts at the writing process" (Byington & Kim, 2017, p. 74). By making sketches and symbolic marks that reflect their thoughts and ideas, children as young as two years old start imitating the act of writing (Rowe & Neitzel, 2010; Dennis & Votteler, 2013). The big blackboard wall in the living room is our shared writing board. I enjoy making "to-do" lists and leaving notes on it while Molly and Luna turn the blackboard into their canvas for scribbling, drawing, and early writing. We exchange ideas and messages in written Chinese. Some are easy to read, and some are not, but every word written down is encouraged and appreciated. In addition to the blackboard notes, Molly and I also keep two journals—a happy journal for cherishing joyful memories and a crying journal for expressing her negative emotions in a healthy way—written in Chinese. Sometimes I help write down poems that Molly composes in her journal. Her innocent child's world can be seen through her playful way of using her heritage language:

放屁，是臭臭的哭哭 (*Fart is the crying of poop*).

雾，就是草地上的云彩 (*Fog is cloud flowing on the grass*).

- Molly's poems, 2019

The purpose of practicing writing in their heritage language goes beyond mastery of composing the correct characters and/or phrases. I also engage Molly and Luna in emergent writing in our home to introduce the knowledge of sound/symbol connections, the conventions

of print, and accessing and conveying meaning through print mode in the heritage language system. Drawing on my knowledge as an immigrant parent, I intend to help the children construct meaning by making relevant cultural and linguistic connections with print (Goodman & Goodman, 2014) in Chinese and with their own lived experiences.

Research Design

Recognizing the significance of our home language practices has illuminated for me their potential as a foundational element from which immigrant children can cultivate a lifelong appreciation for their heritage language. These practices act as pivotal links, connecting them to their familial roots, cultural heritage, historical narratives, and community, thereby fostering a profound sense of belonging and identity. Drawing inspiration from Monteagudo (2011), who highlights the transformative power of narratives in shaping our selves and our social environments, I have come to understand the value of sharing and exploring the diverse stories of immigrant families. Through my engagement in teaching and learning practices at home, focused on heritage language education with my children, the design of my research inherently incorporates a narrative approach. This approach seeks to capture the rich, lived experiences of immigrant families engaging in similar practices, emphasizing the role of narrative in constructing meaning and fostering educational and societal change.

Moreover, these home-based educational activities align with certain Canadian educational practices, reflecting my professional background in literacy, language education, and early childhood education, situated within an advanced educational studies context. This alignment suggests a unique intersection between my personal experiences as an immigrant parent and my professional expertise. However, it is important to acknowledge that other families may not possess this specific parent knowledge, intricately linked to my professional domain. This distinction underlines the diversity of experiences and resources among immigrant families and underscores the importance of research designs that are inclusive and representative of this diversity.

In reflecting on my own parent knowledge in a transnational context, it becomes evident that this knowledge encompasses a blend of cultural, linguistic, and educational insights gained from navigating between my heritage and the Canadian context. It involves an ongoing process of adaptation and integration, where maintaining and transmitting the heritage language to my children is not just about linguistic proficiency but is deeply intertwined with cultural identity, values, and connections to a broader transnational community. This nuanced understanding of parent knowledge in a transnational context informs the research design, guiding the exploration of how immigrant families utilize their unique backgrounds and experiences in support of heritage language development and cultural continuity.

Participants

I collaborated with three Chinese immigrant mothers, Jin, Wen, and Shan, from three different families with young bi/multilingual children in the city of Saskatoon, Canada. I delved into their journey of knowledge construction and enactment concerning heritage language education in both the home and community context. Narrative inquiry considers participants to be seen as holders and co-constructors of knowledge (Clandinin, 2013), rather than mere research subjects. As I engaged with their lived experiences, the stories of how these immigrant mothers supported their children's language learning were "lived out, composed, told and retold, and then relived" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 28). Considering living alongside Jin, Wen, and Shan as a starting point, I carefully designed my research process as follows.

Recruitment

Before the inquiry, I posted a participant recruitment message on various social media platforms, including the university forum PAWS, Facebook, and WeChat. These platforms had the potential to reach parents through the aspects of academic, social, and everyday life of Chinese immigrant parents in the city of Saskatoon. They also provided potential participants with diverse linguistic portals in English (PAWS), Chinese (WeChat), and the mixture and combination of both languages (Facebook). In consideration of the parent participants' language

repertoire, I wrote the recruitment message in both English and Chinese. I specified that my preference was for the participating families to have resided in Canada for a minimum of one year, enabling them to have engaged with various avenues for heritage language learning within the host country's context. This included structured opportunities such as heritage language schools, community programs, and informal settings like home teaching facilitated by parents. I also specified that it was important that at least one of the children in each family fell in the age range between Pre-Kindergarten and Grade 3, as this inquiry investigated immigrant parents' experiences with young bi/multilingual children. I also sought to find out if the parents who contacted me had made concerted efforts on, or spent time thinking about, the issue of heritage language maintenance and sustainability. This exploration was conducted through initial conversations with prospective participants.

After the recruitment process, I received expressions of interest from several families who met the basic selection criteria. Ultimately, I chose to work with the families of Jin, Wen, and Shan, as they best met these criteria. These families reflect similarities to me in terms of our shared commitment to heritage language maintenance and the ways we integrate our cultural practices into daily life. For instance, like my family, each of these families has shown a dedication to creating a bilingual home environment, actively seeking resources and community connections to support their children's bilingual development. However, there are notable differences in our approaches to heritage language education and the resources we utilize. These distinctions will be elaborated upon in the forthcoming chapters of the dissertation. Such variations provide a valuable framework for my research, underscoring the array of strategies immigrant families use to pursue similar objectives. By delving into these dynamics, I aim to uncover broader insights into the challenges and opportunities immigrant families encounter in preserving their heritage languages. These differences in approach enhance the study, offering nuanced views on the efficacy of different language maintenance strategies, and they hold potential to guide recommendations for support services and educational policies designed to

accommodate the varied needs of immigrant communities. Once recruitment was complete, I had an initial brief conversation with each family, explained the research purpose and processes in more detail, learned about their backgrounds, and made mutual decisions about the mothers' participation in the research. The selected participants provided valuable insights into the heritage language education in their homes, which greatly enriched this narrative inquiry.

Gathering Field Text

As I moved into the field and began collecting field text, I facilitated recorded conversations with the families of Jin, Wen, and Shan. These meetings were a combination of in-person and online conversations, taking into consideration each family's concerns over safety and health during the unprecedented global pandemic. In addition to video chats on Zoom and WeChat, I joined the parents in their home and community settings. During our conversations, we chatted, shared stories and experiences, laughed, and sometimes even sat in reflective silence in our shared heritage language, Mandarin-Chinese. Conversing in Chinese helped me capture a thorough understanding of the parents' thoughts, feelings, and language efforts; communicate more effectively; and, most of all, develop a deep sense of connection. The exchange of ideas and storied experiences between the participating parents and myself led our interactions organically and spontaneously. I did not use predetermined scripts to drive our conversations, and the discussions unfolded naturally, focusing on each family's unique experiences with heritage language education and inter-generational communication.

During the summer break of 2022, I conducted fieldwork over three months, during which time I met with each mother on four occasions. The duration of each visit ranged from one hour to three hours, with the variation based on the mothers' schedules and the natural flow of our conversations. This comprehensive engagement enabled in-depth collection of field texts, and facilitated a nuanced understanding of their experiences and perspectives. The flexibility in the timing of our conversations ensured that discussions were thorough and not rushed, providing valuable insights into the daily lives, challenges, and aspirations of the participants.

This methodical approach to gathering field text was instrumental in building trust and rapport with the mothers, further enriching the quality and depth of the information collected. The summer period provided the mothers with more flexibility to schedule meetings with me, as their children did not need to follow a strict schooling routine.

I intentionally designed the meetings to be scattered across the entire summer, enabling some breathing room between the meetings with each mother. This approach invited reflections, recollections, and the generation of new ideas, sparked by our previous conversations. The spaced-out meetings enabled the mothers to engage more deeply with their thoughts and experiences, contributing to a richer and more nuanced understanding of their family's heritage language education and inter-generational communication. The ongoing communication with the mothers throughout the summer encouraged a more comprehensive narrative inquiry, capturing the evolving nature of their experiences.

After the initial intensive meetings, I returned to them for clarification and further discussion when I encountered questions during field text analysis. The communications continued throughout the composition of the dissertation. My field text was comprised of recorded conversations, intentional observations, and relevant artifacts. I sought parents' permission to take photos to capture their authentic and meaningful learning moments and to keep children's artwork and learning records in all of the languages they had access to and utilized in their lives. I eagerly anticipated the familiarity, surprise, and strangeness that emerged through the analysis of the artifacts. I learned from the parents as I composed the research text, telling and re-telling the stories embedded in them. The ongoing communication with the mothers invited a more nuanced understanding of their experiences, adding depth and richness to the narrative inquiry.

After each meeting, I transcribed the recorded conversation in Chinese and shared the transcript with the parents for them to verify or revise. Then, I took time to translate the Chinese transcript into English and I again shared the transcripts with the participants. The back and

forth language exchange was labor-intensive for both the participants and me. However, opening space to both languages enabled a trusting relationship to form and grow, it helped the participants feel comfortable and at ease, it facilitated better expression and thorough understanding, and it came with an existing shared fund of linguistic and cultural knowledge. The transnational aspect of the data was intricately woven into the participants' life stories and the rich details they shared about their storied experiences. In capturing this dimension, my approach was to attentively follow their narratives, maintaining an open mind and inviting their stories to unfold organically, often leading to unexpected discoveries. In this way, I was able to enter the remarkable space of uncovering new perspectives and untapped knowledge deeply embedded within individual experiences. Such a narrative inquiry method provided me the opportunity to explore the transnational experiences of parents, highlighting their unique ways of navigating between cultures and languages.

Determining when field text collection was saturated involved recognizing when the stories shared were sufficiently rich and comprehensive and when the various forms of field texts were sufficiently diversified to enable deep analysis and the discovery of significant research. Using the field texts as a guiding star, eschewing any preconceived notions or agendas, I committed to staying open to what the field texts offered in terms of insights and educative possibility, following the direction set by participants' contributions, and learning from their life events and the contextual reconstructions of these events. Assuming this methodological stance, the field text led me in the analysis and interpretation processes.

Analysis and Interpretation

Specific to my analysis and interpretation of my field texts was attention to the importance of contextual and relational considerations (Clandinin et al., 2007). I stayed awake to each participant's individual, social, cultural, and linguistic contexts as I engaged in these processes. Further, I found it was essential to make note of the commonplaces in the inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). I used the three dimensional narrative inquiry

commonplaces—temporality (movement backward and forward in time in participants' stories), sociality (movement inward to a place of reflection and remembrance, as well as outward to places of discussion and engagement), and place (both immediate and recalled) (Clandinin et al., 2007)—as I examined field texts and identified connections and insights throughout this stage of my research.

The process of analysis and interpretation in narrative inquiry keeps stories whole, as large units of meaning, maintaining the uniqueness and specificity of their context. The aim of the narrative inquirer then is to pull out resonant threads, focused on the "richness of the narratives of experience" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 142). With each story, I asked myself, "What can be learned from this narrative of experience?" Instead of aiming to create a "generalizable document, in which the threads constitute generalizations and participants fade into support roles" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 143), my commitment as a narrative inquirer was to show the resonances and educative potential within different participants' experiences through their stories. As you reach the end of my dissertation, you may find that I do not provide definitive answers. This choice of action is because, in line with narrative inquiry, I approached my research with puzzles and wonders, rather than straightforward questions (Clandinin, 2013). Throughout the writing process, my aim was to engage you in a journey of rethinking and reimagining how you practice and relate to transnational others as you navigate through the chapters. Guided by the participants' family stories, the conversations I had with them, and the artifacts they shared, I encouraged their voices to take the lead. My writing aims to be a thoughtful inquiry into their experiences, foregrounding the rich learning opportunities their stories offer.

In this narrative, I explore the intricate world of transnational motherhood within the Chinese diaspora, illuminating the specific challenges and joys these mothers experience. Painting a collective portrait of transnational parents, I weave together their diverse experiences and journeys in heritage language education, capturing the essence of their shared stories.

Delving into the family language policies of transnational parents, I examine the impacts of raciolinguistic ideology and linguistic bullying on their decisions and actions. As the story progresses, I discuss how transnational parents serve as translingual bridges, supporting their children's heritage language learning and fostering connections to their cultural roots. Ultimately, I concentrate on the conceptualization and enactment of transnational parent knowledge in heritage language education, emphasizing the crucial role these parents play in nurturing their children's linguistic and cultural identities. Throughout these chapters, the narrative unfolds, organically, inviting you, the reader, to engage in resonant remembering. My hope is that you will lay your experiences alongside the inquiry experiences and wonder alongside the participants and me as a researcher. In doing so, you will enrich your understanding of the multifaceted lives of transnational parents and their significant roles in heritage language education.

Positionality

My positionality in this inquiry reflected who I was in relation to my research and to the families who participated in this research. Like many of the parents in this research and in the Chinese community in Canada, I was also an immigrant. I also moved across oceans and mountains with my family to a new country. I also pulled up my roots and replanted myself in a new land. I also received questions because of the color of my skin and the way I spoke English. I also invested my time, energy, knowledge, and mind in my children's bi/multilingual learning and living. It was likely that I shopped in the same Chinese grocery stores, attended the same cultural celebrations in the city, enrolled my children in the same Chinese language camps and events, and acquired information using the same social media platforms. The participants and I share a similar linguistic and cultural background. Most significantly, we are all immigrant parents.

Despite our commonalities, however, the list did not absolve me from bias. Commonalities between the participants and myself might have obscured the fact that we could

have had very different immigration experiences, language learning beliefs, and/or parenting ideologies. I was aware that there might be tensions, discord, and even divergence of thoughts and practices. While I was certain that we all faced similar marginalization and micro-aggression, compared to many parents in the Chinese immigrant community, I had access to significant privilege. I was more familiar with the school systems of the English-dominated host society as a parent who completed graduate coursework in education in Canada, including aspects related to language education and early literacy practices. Further, I was well able to navigate two languages. As I endeavored to identify and mitigate my own biases throughout this research, I also invite you, the reader, to contemplate your own positionality and bias. I encourage you to consider how you view immigrant parents and their language practices. I challenge you to perceive immigrant parents from a new angle. I urge you to recognize and learn from the knowledge that immigrant parents possess, as well as the new insights they contribute each day in the realm of heritage language education.

Considering Relational Ethics

Narrative inquiry, as described by Clandinin (2013), is about people in relation studying people in relation. This method, rooted in a relational framework, embraces the directions participants' stories take the research. It can be challenging and even risky, as the researcher must let go of control and agendas. The intimidation of this approach must be confronted, creating space for a more relational way of conducting research.

As a narrative inquirer, I delved deeply into the unfolding lives of the participants—Jin, Wen, and Shan—Chinese immigrant mothers sharing their experiences of supporting their children's heritage language development. Together, we embarked on a journey of wonder, memory, celebration, and growth. The essence of narrative inquiry lies in enriching and transforming people's experiences through investigation. Participants grow to see the inquirer as a person in relation to them, regardless of the researcher's intentions. Remaining conscious of this role required me to uphold my ethical responsibilities in both the short and long term.

Spending time with participants is crucial in relational narrative inquiry. The lives and experiences of Jin, Wen, and Shan became important to me, and I eagerly engaged when they invited me into their worlds. During another recent inquiry into immigrant parents' experiences of supporting their young children's remote schooling amid COVID-19 (Chen, 2021), our conversations as mothers naturally led us to share our thoughts on schooling, communication with teachers, language practice at home, and more. Although my thoughts were not part of the official research, what I learned through my willingness to share my experiences and vulnerability as a fellow mother helped to deepen my connection with Jin, Wen, and Shan in this inquiry. This trusting relationship fostered authentic conversations and invaluable field texts.

In a narrative inquiry, both the researcher and participants undergo transformation. The process of telling and retelling stories creates a relational space where stories are relived and shared, from the beginning of the inquiry to its conclusion and even beyond. As a researcher, I observed how our lives changed throughout the study, as many of my efforts shifted towards understanding the practical and social implications of our shared experiences. By taking the time to examine our individual and collective stories, and by deeply listening to each other, I had the opportunity to interact differently, influence practices, and impact the social-political landscape that shaped our journey into the inquiry (Clandinin, 2013). For me, this inquiry helped me grow in empathy and understanding of the challenges faced by immigrant parents, while Jin, Wen, and Shan gained insights and confidence in their roles as transnational mothers. They shared that our conversations led them to reflect on their heritage language education approaches and the importance of intergenerational communication. As we journeyed together, I witnessed the mothers embracing their children's bilingualism more fully, and saw the growing pride they took in their children's accomplishments. Meanwhile, my own perspective broadened, enabling me to better appreciate the complexities and nuances of heritage language education and family dynamics in immigrant families.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) emphasized that relational ethics are at the core of narrative inquiry. This insight underscored the significance of my focus on relational ethics throughout my research, guiding me to view my ethical actions as intertwined with and crucial to my relationships with my participants. I was reminded of the ongoing nature of relational ethics by the words of Clandinin & Connelly (2000), who wrote:

Ethical matters need to be narrated over the entire narrative inquiry process. They are not dealt with once and for all, as might seem to happen, when ethical review forms are filled out and university approval is sought for our inquiries. Ethical matters shift and change as we move through an inquiry. They are never far from the heart of our inquiries no matter where we are in the inquiry process. (p. 170)

During my narrative inquiry, I found that there were five intertwined aspects of relational ethics (Clandinin et al., 2018), which served as the pillars of my research journey with Jin, Shan, and Wen, the three Chinese immigrant mothers, and their families. As I sought to deeply understand and respect their experiences, these elements guided me and shaped our interactions:

The first dimension was "engaging with imagination, improvisation, playfulness, and world-traveling" (Clandinin et al., 2018, p. 199). At the intersection of language, culture, identity, and family, I conducted my research with Jin, Wen, and Shan. In the context of my research, the relationship between imagination, improvisation, playfulness, and "world-traveling" (Lugones, 1987) was essential. I recognized myself as an insider within the Chinese immigrant community, but I was also aware of myself as an outsider in each family's home environment. The insider position helped me understand the participants based on my experiences and perceptions, but I also needed to use my imagination and improvisation to travel in their worlds. For instance, when I first visited Jin's home, I felt the warmth of her living room, filled with the aroma of traditional Chinese cooking. I imagined the many family dinners and conversations that took place there, where language and culture intertwined. Through these moments, I began to explore the interconnected movements and actions involved in negotiating

relational ethics within a narrative inquiry, and saw how they are interconnected. Similarly, when I engaged in conversations with Wen about her struggles in navigating a new country and educational system, I drew from my own experiences as an immigrant, but also had to imagine the challenges she faced in her particular circumstances. This improvisation and world-traveling enabled me to better understand her perspective, while still acknowledging the differences in our experiences. In Shan's case, I was able to playfully engage with her child, observing their interactions and language use. By immersing myself in their world, I gained insights into Shan's efforts to maintain her child's connection to their heritage language and culture. By traveling to other worlds and engaging with the lives of Jin, Wen, and Shan, I explored the interconnected movements and actions involved in negotiating relational ethics within a narrative inquiry. Through my imagination, improvisation, and playfulness, I was able to connect with these mothers and their families on a deeper level, while still respecting the individual aspects of their experiences. This approach opened me to see the interconnectedness of their stories and to better understand the complexities of their lives within the realm of language education.

The second dimension was "moving slowly in ways that allow[ed] for listening and living" (Clandinin et al., 2018, p. 151). As I worked with immigrant families like Jin, Wen, and Shan, I entered their lives in order to understand the experiences embedded within their linguistic, cultural, and institutional narratives as they engaged in diverse language practices every day with their bi/multilingual children. When I listened to, told, and retold their stories, I explored the intermingling, dissonances, silences, and vacancies in their narratives. Relational ethics emphasizes coming alongside participants slowly and paying attention to their lifeways. For me, "moving slowly" (Clandinin et al., 2018, p. 26) meant taking more time to build connections with Jin, Wen, and Shan. I used our shared heritage language—Mandarin Chinese—in the conversations with these mothers. It tripled the time of the field text collection because I needed to translate our conversations to English before analyzing them. Nonetheless, it was both necessary and beneficial for me to take that time. In a previous research project

(Chen, 2021), one mother told me that she would never agree to participate if the conversations were conducted in English. I understood her reasons, which were way more complicated than language barriers, and I was eager to learn more about this in my research. Therefore, I took the time, conducted the inquiry slowly, and listened not only to the stories that were told, but also to the stories that were not told. For example, during a conversation with Shan, I noticed her hesitation to share certain experiences about her son being linguistically and physically bullied at school (See Chapter 4). By moving slowly and attentively, I was able to provide a safe space for her to open up about her struggles and successes. I listened to the stories that were lived, but also to the stories that were part of the narrative context of the participants and of myself. Through this slow and deliberate approach, I was able to create a deeper, more meaningful understanding of the experiences of these three mothers in the realm of language education.

The third dimension of relational ethics was "attending with wide-awakeness to the ongoingness of experience" (Clandinin et al., 2018, p. 103). As a mother, a transnational mother, and a researcher conducting research with transnational families, I have experience learning with my children at home and many years of experience working with newcomer children and their parents. However, engaging in a narrative inquiry with participants like Jin, Wen, and Shan challenged me to pay attention to the ways that lives are shifted and shaped over time, space, and multiple relationships. The more I came into relationships with transnational parents, the more my wonders and ways of being shifted. In paying close attention, I was drawn into a reflective space, into a space that called forth my "wide-awakeness" (Schutz, 1967, p. 213) as I heard, saw, and learned their stories. For instance, I was deeply drawn to the translanguaging practice (García & Li, 2014) of transnational families who engaged in multiple languages. It was fascinating to see how adults and children used their full linguistic repertoire to make meaning in everyday life. Through active observation, I noted that almost every transnational family I encountered utilized this linguistic strategy. While they may not have been aware of its formal designation as a language pedagogy, they were certainly deliberate in adopting this approach to

ensure optimal communication. Labeling it as a "pedagogy" rather than merely a "practice" underscores the systematic and educational nature of these activities, highlighting their purposeful use in teaching and learning within the context of family interactions, rather than being casual or incidental habits. In one conversation with Wen, she shared her experience of utilizing all languages in the family's linguistic repertoire (Chinese and English) to support her son's homework and daily reading. This not only enabled them to communicate effectively but also reinforced their connection to their cultural heritage. I believe that wakeful observation shaped the direction of my doctoral research, the emergence of new questions, and the development of new perspectives in the inquiry. Through my ongoing wide-awakeness, I was better able to capture the nuances and complexities of Jin, Wen, and Shan's lives as they navigated the world of language education.

The fourth dimension of relational ethics was "always engaging with a sense of uncertainty and not knowing" (Clandinin et al., 2018, p. 235). As I engaged with Jin, Wen, and Shan, I found that transnational parents are constantly negotiating life transitions for themselves and their children, with heritage language education playing a significant role in that transnational identity negotiation. Navigating simultaneously through dual cultural and linguistic realms, the stories of these families frequently intersected with, and were shaped by, broader cultural, social, linguistic, and institutional narratives. These intersections often highlighted the contrast and conflict between their personal experiences and the dominant narratives present in both their home and host societies, underscoring the complex interplay between individual identities and larger societal structures. These bumping places influenced their identities and had a profound impact on their language policies. My aim was to bring attention to their complex experiences and the relational ethics involved in attending to the diversity of experiences within what is too often considered a singular narrative of transnational families. I also reminded myself that my insider position did not make me a knower, as each family had their own different economic, educational, cultural, and linguistic background. As I engaged with Jin, Wen,

and Shan, I continually attended to the uncertainty I felt when working with Chinese immigrant families, acknowledging the liminal spaces created by being in relation and in transition. For example, when discussing language policies with Shan, I discovered her approach differed from mine. While my children attend a community Chinese language school, Shan believes she has adequate time and knowledge to teach her son Chinese at home. This revelation led me to reflect on the variety of experiences within the transnational community. These conversations invited me "to draw attention to the relational ethics around living within spaces of uncertainty or liminality" (Clandinin et al., 2018, p. 27). The dis-ease I felt as a researcher surrounded by such uncertainty and liminality reminded me that there was no simple answer to people's lived experiences. Acknowledging the "not knowing" (Clandinin et al., 2018, p. 235) was a crucial part of living ethically alongside the participants, enabling me to better understand and appreciate the intricacies of Jin, Wen, and Shan's lives as they navigated the world of language education.

The fifth dimension of relational ethics was understanding "ethical relations as lived embodiments that require[d] us to be still and to attend to, and with, silence and contemplation" (Clandinin et al., 2018, p. 263). During my earlier COVID inquiry (Chen, 2021), a significant encounter with one of the mothers deeply echoed throughout my subsequent research with Jin, Wen, and Shan. In a conversation about communication with teachers, she shared her apprehension: "Is it silly for me, a grown-up, to feel terrified to speak with the teacher? It's not that the teacher herself is scary. She is very nice, actually. Just sometimes, I hesitate, wondering if my question is too trivial, something everyone else knows—just common sense. And here I am, asking it like I'm some kind of stranger or outsider" (Translated recorded conversation, October 8, 2020). This moment of vulnerability struck a chord with me, reminding me of similar experiences in my own life. I found myself without a direct answer to her question, as I had been grappling with the same doubts for years. In the silence that followed, we both reflected on our

shared feelings of being outsiders, a moment that was rich in relational ethics, manifesting through "silence, contemplation, and stillness" (Clandinin et al., 2018, p. 30).

This encounter from my COVID inquiry beautifully sets the stage for my current research with Jin, Wen, and Shan, highlighting a continuity of themes around vulnerability, communication barriers, and the quest for understanding within the school system. As I delved deeply into the stories of Jin, Wen, and Shan, I found that each of these transnational mothers recounted similar episodes of uncertainty and hesitance, which not only enriched my comprehension of their journeys but also strengthened our connection. These shared narratives of vulnerability and the quest for voice within educational contexts link my earlier and current inquiries, underscoring the significance of exploring these experiences through a social justice lens and examining how institutional narratives impact personal stories within the broader societal framework.

Throughout my doctoral journey, engaging with the dimensions of relational ethics has been a transformative and humbling experience. While I have presented each dimension individually, they are, in reality, deeply interconnected and inseparable from one another. These dimensions have guided my research with Jin, Wen, and Shan, shaping my understanding of their experiences as transnational mothers, and profoundly influencing my approach to inquiry. The relationships I cultivated with these three mothers were invaluable, teaching me to be mindful, reflective, and open to the ever-evolving landscape of transnational experiences. The lessons I learned during my doctoral years will undoubtedly continue to influence my research and relationships in the future, as I strive to embody the essence of relational ethics in all aspects of my life.

Closing (and Beginning) Thoughts

Throughout the course of my research, I have discovered my research signature. I have established personal, practical, and social justifications for my inquiry and tried to make meaningful connections between these justifications and the questions of "So what?" and "Who cares?" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 5). I have utilized my linguistic, cultural, educational, and parent knowledge to explore the complexity and particularity of language practices of transnational families, presenting them in the most authentic and meaningful way possible. I have made a case for strength-based heritage language education and transnational parent knowledge while addressing existing inequity in the current education system. These wonderings served as guiding stars throughout my journey of doctoral research with transnational parents, like Jin, Wen, and Shan. They marked the research significance that narrative inquirers before me have emphasized, and I have been drawn to follow in their footsteps. I have seen how my inquiry unfolded in the overlapping space of knowing, unknowing, curiosity, and uncertainty.

Developing proficiency in narrative inquiry involves cultivating a deep understanding of others and oneself, which, alongside growing maturity and experience, typically unfolds over many years. As I embarked on this journey, I committed myself to understanding lives in motion, including the participants' and my own. I devoted a conscious and deliberate commitment to see and represent lives that are always in the making (Greene, 1995). Lives in motion enabled me to establish new relationships with Jin, Wen, and Shan, attend to their lives as they unfolded in unexpected ways, and as they presented surprises, while acknowledging that there is no definitive ending, conclusion, or single story to tell (Clandinin & Caine, 2013). In this spirit, I will continue to inquire about the narrative inquiry methodology itself, transnational families' lived experiences, heritage language learning in various contexts, and the knowledge that transnational parents hold and develop in language education and in life. The experiences I have shared with these mothers have not only shaped my research but have also touched my heart, leaving a lasting impact on my personal and professional life.

As I now conclude this particular research journey, I am excited to share with the world the invaluable insights gained from these extraordinary transnational parents. Through their personal stories, I have been able to delve deeply into their wealth of knowledge on heritage language education, and I feel privileged to have the opportunity to incorporate these learnings into the realms of research, teaching, and society.

In Chapter 2, I introduce you to Jin, Shan, and Wen, each with their distinct experiences of transnational motherhood in the Chinese diaspora. Chapter 3 offers a collective portrait of transnational parents, exploring their funds of knowledge and the educational challenges they face. In Chapter 4, I share stories of linguistic bullying and the impact of raciolinguistic ideologies on transnational family language policies. In Chapter 5, I recount how transnational parents act as translingual bridges, supporting their children's heritage language learning and fostering connections to their cultural roots. Finally, in Chapter 6, I present the crucial role of transnational parents in nurturing their children's linguistic and cultural identities, reflecting on themes such as bicultural competence, bilingualism, transnational educational expertise, and adaptability.

Though this marks the end of this specific research endeavor, it also signifies the beginning of a more expansive exploration of recognizing and valuing transnational parent knowledge in heritage language education. The stories of these families endure, even when we are not actively sharing them, and I am sincerely thankful for the opportunity to add to the ongoing richness of their experiences and wisdom. This research not only broadens our understanding but also fosters a deeper appreciation for the resilience and resourcefulness of transnational families navigating the complexities of heritage language education.

CHAPTER TWO

Meeting the Three Focal Parents: Transnational Motherhood in Chinese Diaspora

"A mother always has to think twice, once for herself and once for her child."

- Sophia Loren

Opening Story: Mooncakes and Dual Lives

Ever since I was a child, the Mid-Autumn Festival (中秋节) has been one of my favorite traditional celebrations. Typically falling on the 15th day of the 8th month of the lunar calendar, between mid-September and early October, the festival is a time when families gather under the enchanting full moon, symbolizing unity and togetherness. As the youngest in the family, I would eagerly await the arrival of my relatives, each carrying their homemade mooncakes filled with various sweet or savory fillings, including my favorites: jujube paste and five kernels. The anticipation in the air was tangible as we gathered around the table, sharing stories and laughter while indulging in the delectable pastries. I fondly remember sitting on my beloved grandma's lap, her warm embrace and gentle voice filling my heart with love as she told me stories about the importance of the festival and the bonds of family. We would then step outside, our eyes drawn to the glowing moon, its beauty captivating us as we stood in awe, marveling at the lunar landscape. It was a moment of togetherness that transcended our daily lives, reminding us of the importance of family and gratitude for the bounties of life.

Nowadays, one does not have to wait a whole year to get mooncakes, as online shopping makes festive foods accessible all year round with just a click. But I have stuck to the tradition—mooncakes only on Mid-Autumn Festival. That is what makes it special to the little Chinese girl that lives inside me, and that is the way I will keep it.

I lived in a small city in Northeastern China for almost two decades and now I have lived in Canada for over five years. The Mid-Autumn Festival has grown more and more important to me over the years as I traveled further away from home. What can I do to celebrate on a day when close and extended families are supposed to gather around a table, laughing, eating, and

drinking, while I am oceans and mountains away from my mother and dear grandmother, whom I have not seen or hugged for years and only get to video chat with occasionally? My beloved grandmother passed away during my years in Canada, and I did not even get to say goodbye to her in person. How can I share my love for family and longing for reunion with my young children who have never had the opportunity to travel back to their mother's home country and hometown? In moments like these, I look up at the moon, which shines over us and provides a shared moment for me to express my homesickness and my love for my grandmother.

Mooncakes. That is all I have. These small, round, sweet Chinese pastries symbolize more than just food for me; they serve as vessels that carry the weight of my diaspora. They link my childhood in China to my children's childhood in Canada, connecting our current experiences in our new home with the rich history of my past, my family's, and my ancestors' in our homeland. So when Mid-Autumn Festival night arrived, I brought out mooncakes to share with my young daughters and I taught them the famous Mid-Autumn Festival poem:

海上生明月，天涯共此时。

The sea mirrors the rising moon bright; Miles apart, our hearts share tonight.

I never really understood the poem until I found myself "miles apart" from home and family. When the full moon rose in the night sky, I knew that it was spreading the same gentle light on the people I love. As I took a bite of the jujube paste mooncake, while telling my daughters all about Chang'e the Goddess and the Jade Rabbit on the moon in the Mid-Autumn Festival tale, I knew that my mother and grandmother were tasting the same delicacy. There is a home that I cannot reach; yet, there is a home I am in right this moment with my most loved ones in the world—my husband and my two girls.

It has always been, and perhaps always will be, like this for me—an immigrant who left a home and built a new one, who feels at home yet homesick, who is familiar with both cultures but also feels like an outsider in both places, who is a bit of "both" and a bit of "neither," who travels across the borders of two cultures, two countries, two languages all the time, who is

"maintaining connections to their country of origin and using a dual frame of reference to evaluate their experiences and outcomes in the country in which they have settled" (Louie, 2006, p. 363). Yes, "a dual frame." That was the phrase that came to mind when I saw my daughters giggling and comparing mooncakes to donuts and cheesecakes—treats they are more familiar with, growing up in Canadian culture. That is the accurate description of the life status of my transnational family.

Meet the Three Focal Parents

From this personal understanding, I was ready to embark on the journey of meeting Jin, Wen, and Shan, who were about to become more than just participants in my research. They were about to become my partners in a shared journey of exploring heritage language education and their vibrant lives. Their transformation from names on paper into crucial collaborators was just the beginning of our shared narrative journey. This process of selection, with its unpredictability and profound richness, served as a mirror to the research endeavor itself. Looking through my lens as the researcher, I offer you a deep look into the lives of these three parents. They form the backbone of this narrative exploration, the lifeblood of our shared quest. I walked a path into their lives, marked by patience, mutual respect, and a shared vision. It was the families of Jin, Wen, and Shan who resonated with me. Their stories chimed in harmony with the research criteria. But it was more than that. It was their honesty, their willingness to share their lives that lit the way ahead. So, come with me. Let us step into the particularity of their homes, their lives, their stories.

The dance of the researcher-participant relationship is a gentle waltz. Together we moved, learning each other's steps, speaking in our shared language, Mandarin-Chinese. It became more than just a way to communicate; it was the bridge that brought us together, enabling the parents' thoughts and feelings to flow freely. It was in these moments, filled with laughter, quiet reflection, and spontaneous conversation that our narrative started to take form. The summer of 2022 stretched ahead, a blank page waiting to be filled. As the sun warmed the

world around us, our discussions bloomed, sometimes interrupted by quiet pauses for reflection. The time between our meetings offered the mothers a chance to think deeply about our conversations. These pauses gave birth to new ideas, enriching our narrative. As the threads of this research come together, I ask you to journey with me. Let us walk with Jin, Wen, and Shan. We will journey through the complexities, the joys, the struggles, the achievements of their family's heritage language education. Let us step forward, hand in hand, into their lived experiences.

Meet Jin and Her Family

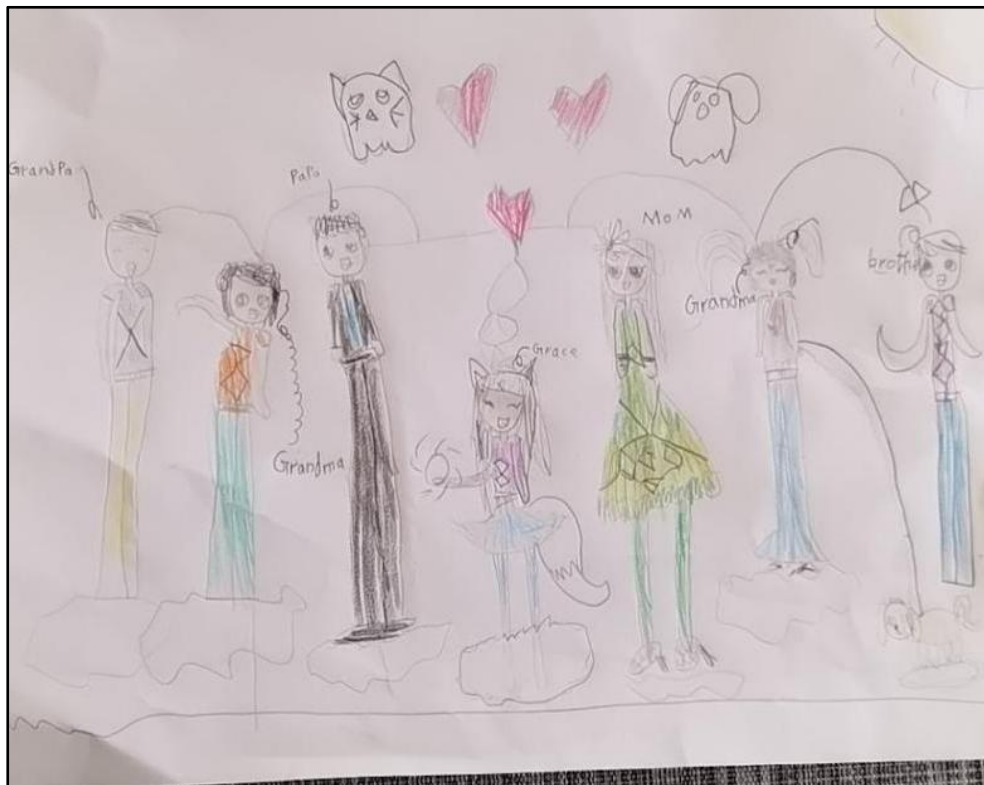


Figure 1.1. Jin's family portrait, drawn by her daughter, November 2022.

The first time I met Jin, her life seemed like a dance with constant change. As I was finding my way to her townhouse, tucked away in a secure neighborhood, I ended up on a surprise adventure, kind of like life has done with Jin—full of twists, turns, and sudden adaptations. Because of a recent move, their house number got mixed up, which was kind of a symbol of Jin's life, always rearranging, always adjusting, always striving for the right balance.

When I finally found the right house, I was welcomed by Jin, dressed in cozy home clothes, sleep still clinging to her eyes. It was already after 10 am, when the rest of the world is usually bustling with activity. My first impression of Jin was of a mom who chose calm over rushing. But the reality I discovered was different. Her late morning start was not a choice of leisure, but a necessity after staying up until 3 am handling the never-ending tasks of their upcoming move to Toronto. The household was buzzing with life, a symphony of demands from her children, hinting at a life marked by relentless responsibilities.

As I entered the second-floor kitchen, what greeted me was not a neat arrangement, but an organized mess—a physical reflection of a life constantly juggling a million tasks. Pots, pans, and various household items were scattered across the kitchen island. Boxes were stacked in corners, books were spread out everywhere, giving the space a lived-in feel. I managed to find a spot on a lawn chair—a peculiar choice for an indoor environment, but a comprehensible circumstance in the chaos of moving. There was a sense of anticipation in the air. This was a home, a reflection of its resident's life—unpredictable, a bit chaotic, but filled with surprises. Jin, despite the apparent disarray, proved to be a captivating conversationalist, drawing me into the world of her family's immigrant journey.

In the fall of 2020, Jin and her family found themselves on the brink of a life-changing leap. The decision to leave their home in China and step into the unknown of Saskatoon, Canada, came with an invisible burden of loneliness—an often overlooked aspect of the immigrant experience. This decision was not made on a whim. It was the result of heartfelt conversations, careful considerations, and was ultimately driven by the desire for a better education for their children. Every discussion added another layer of worry to the already complicated narrative of their life.

Jin and her husband, Dajun, have two energetic children. Their adolescent son, Qiyong, is navigating the stormy seas of high school, wrestling daily with challenges and successes. Meanwhile, their youngest, Qixin, a fireball of lively energy, is just beginning her educational

journey, stepping with a sparkle in her eye into a kindergarten classroom. While Jin's story mainly focuses on her experiences with Qixin, it is also punctuated with glimpses into Qiyong's journey. Qiyong and Qixin, each with their own dreams and aspirations, bring out the many facets of Jin's role as an immigrant mother. Qixin is a bundle of joy, excited about joining a French Immersion program, while Qiyong quietly grapples with the unfamiliar terrain of a new school environment, wrestling with unfamiliar language and cultural nuances. These diverse strands of experiences make up the fabric of Jin's daily life, painting a vivid picture of the challenges she faces.

In the midst of all these narratives, Dajun, Jin's husband, seems to be more absent than present. His role, though crucial as the financial provider of the family, is largely distant from the daily intricacies of his children's lives and education. His work, based in China, requires him to be physically distant, leaving Jin to shoulder the responsibility of raising their children in a land unfamiliar to them. This geographical divide casts long, lonely shadows onto Jin's daily life. Despite his absence, Dajun's role is integral to the family narrative. It mirrors the intricate realities of many immigrant families. His role presents a multifaceted picture—of a family's story punctuated by absence and presence, distance and connection, struggles and opportunities. It demonstrates the complexities of creating a new life in a foreign land. In Dajun's absence, the pressing weight of responsibility takes an even more daunting form. The silent strain of being the sole caretaker, the only decision-maker, adds a thick layer of loneliness to the visible disorder. Parenting alone, managing the move, the children, and the countless associated tasks—Jin is navigating all of this single-handedly.

The family's upcoming move to Toronto adds another layer of chaos—each scattered box, each displaced item, a tangible representation of a life in constant flux, filled with uncertainties and hopes. Ordinary tasks—selling old furniture, hunting for a new house, enrolling the kids in new schools—become symbolic of the monumental responsibility Jin carries. Dajun's absence amplifies the enormity of this task, casting an unspoken strain that seems to hang in the air, an

invisible fog permeating the tangible disarray of their home. Jin's mothering life, filled with stresses and punctuated by moments of frustration and loneliness, bears the mark of a spirit that refuses to surrender, tirelessly chasing a better future for her children. In the middle of the scattered boxes and the cluttered kitchen, Jin remains a beacon in the swirling chaos of relocation. The whirlwind of moving—with its myriad tasks—seems like, in reality, a metaphor for Jin's life. Each task, though seemingly ordinary, echoes the symphony of Jin's unyielding resolve.

Remaining near me, Jin applied skincare lotion to her face and neck during our conversation. Shan confided in me that she scarcely had time for skincare due to her relentless schedule. She did not voice the extent of her fatigue, projecting an image of strength, resilience, and capability, perhaps as a form of self-assurance. Yet, her weariness was visibly etched across her face and betrayed in her hurried movements as she spoke. It was a quiet tribute to motherhood, a scene so familiar that I recognized it immediately. Despite the sheen of strength she wore, I could see the messiness, the frustration, the overwhelming sense of responsibility that punctuated her existence as a mother. This life was hers—beautiful and chaotic, filled with strength and exhaustion, with heartening moments of joy and inevitable bouts of loneliness. Jin did not have to say a word for me to understand. Her life was a narrative, and I, privileged to bear witness, found myself entrenched in the depth of its truth. As our dialogue unfolded, the initial image I had of Jin began to disassemble. I recognized the inaccuracy of my quiet assumptions, the queries born from the dissonance between my observations and the stereotypical notions of motherhood. This morning spent in Jin's company served as a poignant indication that the outward facade can mislead, and the complexities of motherhood resist simplistic classifications.

Astronaut Mother and Life in Chinese Diaspora

After finding their footing in their new Saskatoon home, Jin's husband was compelled to return to China, fueled by a resolute dedication to financially uphold their family in Canada. This geographical split, paired with the singular weight of raising their children on unfamiliar soil, thrust Jin into the lived reality of being an "astronaut parent" (Li, 2018). The evocative term, "astronaut parent," encapsulates the immense gaps they must bridge—both tangible and intangible—as they embark on their personal space voyage in pursuit of familial prosperity. This way of life, though not rare, is a deliberate decision made by many families of middle to upper-middle-class status, especially in Chinese and Korean communities. It involves sending their children to the Western world for a superior education, escorted by one parent, while the remaining parent stays rooted in their homeland, committed to maintaining their professional trajectory. This arrangement facilitates the generation of an elevated income to support their international lifestyle and their children's learning experiences across both countries (Ley, 2010; Tsong & Liu, 2009).

Positioned in Jin's living room, I tuned in as she introduced herself and her family to me. Her introductions were temporarily interrupted when she slipped out to the kitchen. An expectant hush fell over the house. Shortly thereafter, she returned, gingerly bearing a hot bowl of tremella soup with lotus seeds. Renowned among Chinese women for its wellness and beauty benefits, this soup held profound symbolism. Jin insisted that I savor it while it remained hot, underlining its nourishing properties. The comforting warmth of the porcelain bowl in my grasp, the aroma permeating the air, and the gentle sweetness of the soup ushered me back to the memory of my mother's kitchen in China. In that ephemeral moment, seated on an unpretentious lawn chair, sharing this simple bowl of soup with Jin, I was enveloped by a deep sense of affinity and understanding.

The importance of food within our community seemed to shine even brighter—a treasured connection to our origins and an essential fragment of our diasporic culture (Khun Eng,

2006). Food possesses the ability to encapsulate memories, respect traditions, and nurture an intense feeling of belonging. The known spices and tastes of homemade dishes serve as carriers, holding the spirit of our heritage, providing comfort amidst the novelty of foreign surroundings. Within the modest space of Jin's kitchen, surrounded by the honest aromas of simmering pots and shared narratives, I observed the realities of the diasporic journey. The act of preparing and sharing a meal became a medium for experiencing the Chinese diaspora's cultural fabric, one bowl of soup at a time. Each spoonful and every conversation revealed not just the vibrant cultural heritage but also the resilience and challenges faced by the Chinese diaspora community.

However, Jin's account extended beyond just food and family. It served as a vivid illustration of the tenacity and strength displayed by individuals navigating the complex maze of transnationalism, wrestling with the challenges of identity and integration. Perspectives from diaspora scholars shed light on the transformative journey undertaken by Jin and her family—a journey marked by efforts to bridge the chasms between their ethnic roots and the demands of assimilating into a new society. With poise and determination, they charted these unfamiliar waters, establishing bonds with fellow transnationals who shared their roots, fostering a sense of commonality, and nurturing a diasporic imagination—a beacon of optimism and fresh starts that drove them onward (Zhu & Li, 2018; Cohen, 2008).

Walking alongside Jin and her family, their experiences offered snapshots into the nuanced dance between the center and the fringe, the past, present, and future. Their stories were shaped not only by personal encounters but also by the context they found themselves in and the aspirations they cherished for themselves and their loved ones. It was a narrative of ceaseless adaptation, of clinging to treasured customs while fearlessly welcoming the opportunities that beckoned. Jin's role as an astronaut parent, grappling with the trials of raising their children single-handedly in a foreign land while her husband pursued his profession in their home country, added another layer of intricacy to their voyage. Like astronauts exploring uncharted

territories, Jin spanned immense distances, both tangible and intangible, in pursuit of their family's prosperity.

Against their journey's backdrop, the bright diversity within the Chinese diaspora sharpened into focus—a patchwork of stories that defied homogenization (Miles, 2020). Chinese migration, spanning centuries, is a silent witness to individuals who have crossed China's borders, fueled by an array of motives, settling in diverse corners of the globe (Li, 2016). Their collective experiences have interwoven a fabric of cultural exchange, resilience, and shared dreams. Jin's family, as part of this wider diasporic fabric, exemplifies the strength and adaptability needed to flourish in a transnational context. Language, too, plays a central role within this intricate weave. The Chinese writing system, teeming with ancient characters, is a crucial element carrying within it a profound sense of unity and identity. Because of this, Jin earnestly desires that her children learn their heritage language well. Language is a bridge that connects generations, preserving cultural heritage, and facilitating the exchange of ideas in this new epoch of Chinese transnationalism and diasporic imagination.

In my initial encounter with Jin in her home, the shared warmth in a modest bowl of soup evolved into a symbol of the deep connections and mutual experiences within the Chinese diaspora. It signified more than just a nourishing meal; it embodied the preservation of traditions, the link to our heritage, and the resilience of a community scattered across borders. As Jin and her family traversed the complexities of forming their identity in a foreign territory, they discovered comfort in the familiar tastes and rituals of their home-cooked meals. These shared experiences, rooted in their cultural heritage, served as a reminder of their collective strength and adaptability amid challenges.

Parenting Alone with "Digital Nannies"

Stepping into Jin's intimate circle, I was swiftly enveloped in the complex network of relationships characteristic of the Chinese diaspora—a community spanning across nations, united by common heritage and cultural connections. In this new environment, Jin's life has evolved into a dynamic array of roles, prominently featuring her experience as a mother. This experience is shaped by the universal challenges of parenting, intertwined with the distinctive complexities encountered by immigrants (Liu & Chen, 2022). She is a chauffeur, each day navigating city streets unfamiliar to her, ferrying her young daughter to a French Immersion kindergarten program. She values the rewards of this education so highly that the inconvenience of distance seems trivial. In her house, Jin assumes the role of a master chef, pouring love into three meals meticulously crafted from scratch daily. One such meal, a warm lunch, is personally delivered to her son at school. Each dish, reverberating with the flavors of their homeland, serves a dual purpose. Not merely to satiate hunger, but to remind her children of home, softening the sharp edges of their alien surroundings. Amid the organized chaos of their imminent move to Toronto, her house brims with furniture and boxes. Each one, meticulously labeled, stands as a silent witness to her careful planning. Acting as the project manager of her family's life, her calendar brims with family activities, property investments, grocery shopping lists, and reminders to connect with friends for her sanity and cultural tether. In the midst of this whirlwind, Jin is also a student. Despite a schedule already bursting at the seams, she carves out time for English classes twice a day—a LINC course and a conversational English class organized by a non-profit organization. This relentless quest to better her English proficiency is evidence of her determination to adapt and thrive in her new homeland.

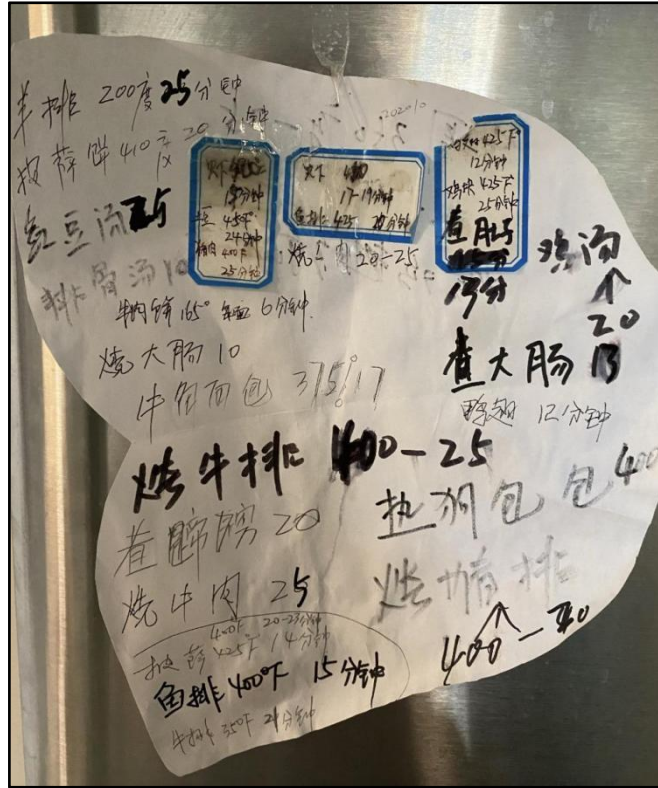


Figure 1.2. Jin's note on a variety of baking/roasting tips.

Peering into Jin's daily life, I was awestruck by her resilience. It was humbling to witness her adaptability, her courage. Amidst the sheer volume of her daily tasks, I could not help but ask, "How do you manage all of this? Alone?" Her response painted a bittersweet portrait of her journey. She shared with me that she was once a vice president of a large real estate company, leading hundreds of employees. But, she confessed, leading her current team of two [kids] was a challenge of a different nature, a challenge she had not quite anticipated (Recorded conversation, July 07, 2022). For Jin, back in China, she was cocooned in the comforting familiarity of extended family, a support network that understood the nuances of her culture and life. Here in Canada, she embarks on a solitary journey. She navigates unfamiliar terrains and cultures, while shouldering the immense responsibility of guiding her children. At night, when her children are sleeping, Jin's façade of strength sometimes cracks. There have been nights, Jin confided, when she has felt the heavy weight of her new life overwhelming her. Nights when she has hidden

herself away in the quiet corners of her home, away from the prying eyes of her children, and allowed herself to cry.

This raw vulnerability is a poignant reminder that behind the resilient "astronaut parent," there is a human navigating uncharted waters. It is not just about leading her family in a new country; it is about constantly learning, adapting, and overcoming. It is about carrying the weight of her world on her shoulders while putting on a brave face for her children. This is not a journey for the faint-hearted. This is a journey that requires the courage and tenacity of mothers, like Jin, who brave unfamiliar lands, cultures, and responsibilities, all for the sake of their children's futures. It is a narrative of strength, of sacrifice, and of an indomitable spirit. This is the less talked about side of motherhood—beautiful, indeed, but filled with challenges and hardships, as integral to the journey as the victories and successes.

Adapting to this new environment, Jin leans on the digital world for support. She showed me a myriad of digital learning tools that her children use as part of their learning. She affectionately refers to these tools as her "digital nannies," attributing them as lifesavers in her multitasking endeavors. For many mothers, particularly those who juggle the roles of transnational parenting, mastering time management and productivity becomes akin to learning to breathe underwater—a survival strategy that Jin has masterfully adopted. Through Jin's lens, the reality of being an "astronaut parent" becomes stark. The constant juggling of roles, the unwavering effort to seize every moment, and the innovative use of digital tools in education. Technology's role in Jin's life was a revelation, providing a helping hand in a complex world. Her journey highlights the resilience and ingenuity of mothers who, like Jin, shoulder the daunting task of raising their children in a foreign land.

In my own experiences as a researcher and a parent, I had not initially focused on integrating digital literacy into my children's language education at home. However, witnessing Jin's adept utilization of digital tools has significantly broadened my perspective and motivated me to explore this new domain more deeply. It underscored the potential of digital literacy as a

vital component of language learning, especially within the transnational context that Jin navigates. Her experiences illuminate how digital resources can bridge the gap between traditional heritage language education and the demands of a modern, globalized environment. This insight into Jin's digital literacy journey not only enhances the narrative of transnational parenting but also prompts a reevaluation of my own practices, encouraging the integration of digital tools into the linguistic and cultural mosaic we create for our children.

Meet Wen and Her Family



Figure 1.3. Wen's portrait, drawn by her son, November 2022.

When our digital paths crossed for the first time on a Zoom call on July 6th, 2022, Wen's first appearance struck me. Her self-cut hair, defiantly non-conformist, offered a glimpse into the intertwining realities of motherhood and pandemic life. The haircut was spontaneous, not reflecting current fashion trends, showcasing her preference for practicality over concern with

appearance. These little details, these concessions, underscored the beautifully imperfect journey of motherhood. Wen was the only mother among the three I interviewed entirely through online means, a choice motivated by her continued wariness towards the lingering pandemic. As another mother, I could relate to the protective instinct that drove her decision—the inherent drive to offer our children the safest and healthiest possible environment.

With the onset of the Covid-19 outbreak in March 2020, Wen's family had adopted a lifestyle of restrained caution. They became a tight-knit bubble, limiting interactions to the confines of their home. Family outings were scarce and limited to off-peak hours at the neighborhood park. At the heart of this protective cocoon were Wen's third-grade son, Maomao, and her husband, Lifeng, a programmer by profession. Their home in Saskatoon, Canada, evolved into a sanctuary of work, learning, and love. Lifeng, enjoying the flexibility of working from home, aided Maomao with his online schooling—a necessary adaptation in light of the global health crisis. This arrangement was facilitated by the Saskatoon Public School Division, who provided the option for fully interactive online classes following the initial closure of schools in March 2020 (Modjeski, 2020). As a result, Maomao experienced his entire second and third grades through the innovative platform of digital education, allowing him to continue his schooling online without the necessity of returning to in-person classrooms. Amid the rhythm of clicks, muted mics, and shared screens, their home became the hub of Maomao's education. Wen, a freelance piano and violin teacher, taught her students from home, creating a symphony of melodies that echoed through their daily lives, adding a special harmony to the cacophony of homeschooling.

Surprisingly, the trials of isolation and homeschooling incited by the pandemic did not bring the anticipated stress and anxiety into Wen's family life. Quite the opposite. Their house, blessed with a backyard, offered generous space for indoor and outdoor activities. It became a haven of peace amid the turbulence outside. It was within these walls, amidst the clutter of everyday life, the sound of music lessons, and the incessant hum of Lifeng's keystrokes, that

their home became more than just a building. It transformed into a sanctuary, a small but potent stronghold of sanity amidst a world in chaos. In the beautiful messiness of their daily routines, in the sacrifice of haircuts, and the vulnerability of self-doubt, it offered them the control they so desired during these uncertain times.

From Immigrant Family to Transnational Family

In the quiet sanctity of quarantine, Wen's family found an unexpected tranquility, a different rhythm of life, a contrast so stark from their past in the bustling heartbeat of Beijing. This quietude was not merely a product of circumstance but an active choice, echoing the intricate ballet as described by Lam and Warriner (2012). It was a dance of transnational lives, where verbs such as "negotiate," "take up," "mobilize," and "mediate" were given flesh and blood in the form of Wen (pp. 191-193). She, like countless others, found herself teetering between borders, navigating unfamiliar identities, adjusting to the tempo of a life in a new land.

There was something about Wen's narrative that felt familiar. Perhaps it was our shared roots in China's exacting education system or the unspoken understanding of an immigrant's journey. I found a piece of myself in Wen's hopes for her son—a hope to free him from the cut-throat competition and relentless pressure we once faced. "I just do not want my kid to be that tired," she admitted, a statement that hung heavy in the air, revealing the sacrifice and aspirations that shaped their immigration narrative (Recorded conversation, July 06, 2022). In Canada, they sought simplicity. A life distant from the frenzied chase for resources and the relentless leveraging of intellect and wealth. They found solace in Saskatoon's slower pace, and amidst the global crisis, they discovered a quiet resilience.

Looking at Wen's family, I saw the dance of immigrant and transnational family concepts unfold before me. Their transition from a life teeming with competition to a simpler existence, their continuous connection to China despite geographical distance, painted a vivid portrait of cultural exchange. But it was more than just an exchange—it was an active sculpting of their sense of self. Their life in Canada reflected their immigrant identity, and yet, they clung

to a psychological connection to China, indicative of transnational families. Their story, though uniquely their own, mirrors the ebb and flow of people, language, culture, and ideas that shape the identities of countless other immigrant and transnational families (Jiménez et al., 2009, p. 17).

Academic Family Environment and Intergenerational Teaching

During our night-time conversation, bridging distances through the internet, I saw a spark of happiness in Wen's eyes. The unexpected turn of staying at home during the global crisis brought a surprising benefit—her son Maomao's improved mastery of Mandarin-Chinese, their heritage language. The soft light from the computer screen highlighted her face as she shared, with evident pride, the progress Maomao had made in speaking Mandarin-Chinese. Their home had become a place where Chinese language and culture were a constant presence. Dinner table chats, bedtime stories, and simple questions were all expressed in their heritage language, details I learned through Wen's vivid descriptions in our Zoom conversations. Maomao, who used to mix English and Chinese, now embraced his heritage language with confidence, a significant shift from the casual use during weekend classes and family talks. The pandemic, unexpectedly, transformed their home into a vibrant center of cultural heritage, illustrating how families like Wen's have creatively and effectively preserved their linguistic heritage amidst challenging circumstances.

There was a special character in this remarkable language-acquisition journey. Wen's mother, a retired schoolteacher, armed with her experience in Chinese language and literature, played the role of a nurturing catalyst. Ever since Maomao's earliest days, his grandma had been his tireless companion in Beijing, imparting her wisdom and turning everyday occurrences into educational escapades. Wen recalled fondly, "My son absolutely loves learning Chinese with my mom" (Recorded conversation, July 06, 2022). A quiet admiration seeped through her words, laced with gratitude. The affectionate bond between grandma and Maomao remained undiminished by distance, bridged beautifully by the magic of technology.

However, in the middle of these heartwarming recollections, I could not ignore the undercurrent of melancholy that ran through their narrative. The pandemic that had strengthened the linguistic bond had also created a chasm between Maomao and his grandma. A screen could never replicate the warmth of a hug, the loving touch, the shared laughter echoing in a room. "My son is always excited to see his grandma on the screen," Wen's words reflected a wistful yearning, a longing to break free from the shackles of the situation (Recorded conversation, July 06, 2022). The joy of learning was momentarily marred by the reality of their physical separation.

From the bustling heart of Beijing to the serene spaces of Saskatoon, Wen's family wove a narrative of resilience, adaptation, and preservation of cultural heritage. This story, blending a focus on academics with traditions of teaching across generations, offered an insightful view into the broader experiences of transnational families. The pandemic, with all its difficulties, created a special chance for learning languages, highlighting the role of family resources and relationships in guiding learning at home.

Meet Shan and Her Family

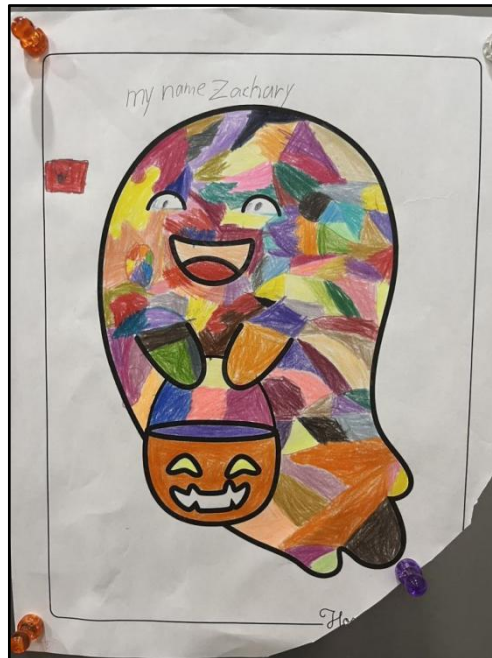


Figure 1.4. Shan's portrait, drawn by her son, November 2022.

The night before our initial meeting, a message from Shan popped up on my WeChat, "I am preparing wonton (馄饨) for breakfast tomorrow! Would you prefer it with seaweed soup?" This inquiry, familiar and warm, was distinctly Chinese in its essence. Food, as many would agree, is an integral part of social life amongst the Chinese people; it serves as a link, a comforting reminder of home in foreign lands. As I read her message, a gentle warmth unfurled in my belly. Visions of seaweed wonton soup, adorned with egg slices and a hint of sesame oil, danced in my mind. This particular meal had been a favorite during my college days, a fact I had almost forgotten until I found myself sitting by Shan's kitchen counter. As I inhaled the aroma of the sesame oil, I was transported back to the early morning street food stands in Beijing. Those memories, dormant until now, were rekindled by the warm steam wafting from the soup. That was how our conversations began—over a bowl of comforting wonton soup, a culinary link to our shared heritage. Shan was candid and receptive, generously sharing her experiences and insights into education. Our conversation flowed naturally, as if we were long-time friends catching up in her living room. The only reminder of our professional relationship was a recorder, silent yet attentive, on the table. A *deja vu* moment washed over me, reminiscent of the tale of the Autumn Festival and mooncakes that I shared in earlier pages. The integral role of food in our culture, its power as a social lubricant, and its capacity to summon nostalgic comfort came to the forefront. The wonton soup mirrored the mooncakes, serving as a bridge, connecting our shared past to the present context of our research. It transcended the realm of mere sustenance, blooming into a symbol of our shared roots, a culinary conduit to the world we left behind.

Then I began my conversations with Shan, in which she shared that she was a newcomer to Canada, having arrived in Saskatoon only six months prior to our meeting, in the chilly depths of December 2021. Alongside her, making this significant life transition, were her husband Guo and their four-year-old son Lele. Working in the investment field, Guo enjoys the flexibility to work from home, and he has been a steady presence in their family life since their son's birth. He

is an engaged husband and father, fully supportive of Shan's decisions regarding their son's education and daily life. Moreover, he takes an active role in teaching and playing with their son. I met Guo when I first visited their home for a conversation with Shan. Even though he was not a participant in this research, his presence was palpable. During the course of the study, Guo had to return to China due to his father's illness. But even in his absence, he continued to offer his support to Shan and their son, demonstrating the family's resilience and the strength of their bond. The quiet assertiveness of Shan, the curiosity of their son, and the supportive presence of Guo paint a vivid picture of a family striving for simplicity in their new life.

Motherhood in Transnational Context

In the landscape of Shan's life, the decision to migrate was not a fleeting thought, but a meticulously nurtured seed planted back in 2018. This seed eventually blossomed, shifting the trajectory of their existence forever. Unfolding this part of her narrative, I discovered an unexpected twist: Shan found herself embarking on a momentous journey to the United States, heavily pregnant. It was far from a capricious endeavor; it was grounded in the practice of "birth tourism" (Wolan, 2011), a carefully devised plan for her unborn son. To navigate this ambitious expedition, Shan and her husband partnered with a birth tourism agency back in their homeland. Agencies such as these, as characterized by Ji and Bates (2018), offer a myriad of services, handling everything from visa procurement to arranging prenatal, hospital, and postpartum services, and even sorting out accommodation for the expectant mothers. During her stay in America, Shan resided in a specialized "maternity hotel," places designed to cater to birth tourists and offer comfort and support before and after childbirth (Wang, 2017). Once their son arrived, gifting them the joy of parenthood and the privilege of American citizenship, and after receiving the green signal to travel—usually granted within the first few months postpartum—they returned to China (Ji & Bates, 2018). The desire to secure American citizenship for their child acted as the compass guiding their journey, as Shan recounted to me. However, their dreams of establishing a life in the United States were challenged by the

drawn-out process of obtaining US status. A growing itch to leave China, coupled with an agonizing wait, nudged them to pivot their course towards Canada. Their journey ultimately led them to Saskatoon, where our conversations, brimming with honesty and introspection, took place over bowls of comforting wonton soup.

"Canada, turned out, is our place," Shan confided during our dialogue on July 5, 2022. "We enjoy a simpler lifestyle here." Her emphasis on leading a "simpler life" was a constant motif throughout her narrative. She underscored it as the driving force behind their departure from China, aiming to offer her son a serene environment that would foster learning. I found myself echoing her sentiments, understanding the overwhelming variety of options in China from my own experiences as an immigrant. Making the deliberate choice to shift from China to Canada was more than just a decision for Shan's family; it was a bold proclamation of their values. This move illuminated their belief in the virtues of simplicity, tranquility, and focus—the guiding principles of life and learning. However, I could not shake off the feeling that there were more layers to this story, waiting to be discovered, as we continued to explore Shan's experiences.

Shan, when she speaks, radiates an aura of steadfastness and resolve. It is abundantly clear that she has spent countless hours ruminating over her family's life, her son's education, and his future trajectory. Shan's son, a young boy brimming with curiosity, would intermittently join us, eager to be part of our conversations or to flaunt a cherished toy. Their exchanges were marked by calmness and positivity, indicating a deep-seated respect in their relationship. Observing these interactions, I felt the resonance of Shan's philosophy of maintaining a tranquil and straightforward lifestyle.

As I read through Shan's story, I became deeply immersed in the complex web of her life. Each day, she carves out her existence against the backdrop of her transnational journey, embodying the role of a mother on an international stage. Through Shan's gaze, I got a glimpse of how her local existence is delicately intertwined with global influences (Suurmond, 2010).

Every aspect of Shan's life, as well as her son's, is scrutinized through the lens of both her native and adopted homelands. As she views her local life from a global standpoint, she offered me a fresh perspective on the world.

With Shan, there was never a dull moment; our conversations were always a journey. Every story and experience she shared acted as a thread that wove together to create a comprehensive picture of her life. With her narratives came the realization that her life was not confined within the walls of her Saskatoon home. Instead, it stretched out, reaching far beyond national boundaries, connecting her to a global network of people and institutions (Suurmond, 2010). I recall an afternoon we spent in her kitchen. The aroma of brewing tea mingled with our laughter as Shan revealed how she used WeChat to consult Chinese friends on her son's curriculum. There, thousands of miles away from China, she was tapping into resources from her homeland, incorporating them into her son's Canadian upbringing. It was in these moments I realized that Shan was dancing a sophisticated dance of negotiation. Each step, each pirouette, was a balance of different geographies, societal expectations, and familial roles.

In the center of this dance floor stood Shan, a mother. I saw the influence of Chinese cultural norms in her meticulous care for her son's diet. I heard echoes of gender roles in her stories about delegating tasks with her husband. Biological responsibilities came through in the physical aspect of her motherhood, from pregnancy to nursing. Socio-economic conditions manifested as she navigated the best resources for her child's education. Yet, it was clear that it was not just these elements shaping her. A distinct flavor of globalization permeated her motherhood, the way she incorporated the Western education system into her son's upbringing, or how she referred to parenting advice from both Eastern and Western sources. Such global influences did more than shape her, they echoed in her local life. They were apparent in the way she chose a Canadian school based on its globally recognized curriculum (Maher, 2010). Her motherhood then, was a fascinating fusion of her personal experiences and global realities, local and global existing in harmony.

As we continued our conversations over cups of tea and shared moments, I came to see Shan's motherhood as a beautiful journey, navigating the delicate nuances of life in her new home while staying true to her roots. Here was a woman who was defining motherhood on her own terms, skillfully blending the personal and the universal, the local and the global in a transnational context. This was Shan's personal story, showing her strength, ability to adapt, and above all, her endless love as a mother.

Life-Long Planning Driven by Love

Shan's openness about her childhood and personal experiences was both heart-wrenching and illuminating. It shaped her perspective on life and the aspirations she held for her son. Shan was born and raised in a family where an overt preference for boys was not only evident, but actively practiced. This harsh reality, unfortunately, is not uncommon in China, a society where deep-rooted cultural and traditional beliefs often favor males. In Shan's household, this bias manifested as a stark deprivation of love and care for her, a stark contrast to the attention and affection often lavished on boys. This poignant circumstance left a lasting imprint on Shan, shaping her perspectives and motivations later in life. Gender inequality in China is a pervasive issue that extends far beyond individual households, penetrating institutional, social, and family structures. As elaborated by Li and Tsang (2003), it is a societal fabric woven with threads of bias and discrimination, affecting a multitude of areas from education and employment opportunities to healthcare and family dynamics. In educational institutions, it is not uncommon to find preferences for males in certain academic disciplines, subtly encouraging the perpetuation of gender-stereotyped roles. At the social level, this bias is often manifested in the form of higher expectations for males and the relegation of women to traditional roles. Within families, the deep-seated preference for sons often translates into unequal distribution of resources, with sons receiving more attention, care, and investment. This systemic and pervasive gender inequality formed the somber backdrop of Shan's upbringing, setting the stage for her life

journey. The experiences of her childhood, marred by neglect and bias, would come to greatly influence her aspirations for her son and the kind of life she sought to provide for him.

Unable to tolerate the neglect and harsh treatment from her parents, Shan fled home at an early age. She found herself working as a child laborer in a factory to support herself. While she did not delve into the specifics of her traumatic upbringing, the courage and resilience radiating from her was palpable. I was moved by her strength and equally appreciative of her willingness to show vulnerability. It is in this vulnerability that I saw her true strength. This vulnerability gave me a deeper understanding of her meticulous life-long planning for her son's education and future. Shan's experiences drove her to make the mother-son relationship a pivotal aspect of her life. She understood the profound impact a loving family environment and supportive parents could have on a child, and she was determined that her son would never lack this. This understanding also fueled her detailed educational plan for her son, aimed at leading him to a stable, self-sufficient, and financially secure adult life. She had outlined a daily schedule covering diverse subjects—languages (English and Chinese), art, music, mathematics, and physical activities. These subjects required her active supervision and involvement, reflecting her deep commitment to her son's development. Specifically, she hoped he would master mathematics, following in his father's footsteps to become a freelance investor who could lead a comfortable life without needing to engage in a hectic world if he chose to cherish a simpler, peaceful lifestyle.

Shan's meticulous planning was her insurance, her gift to her son, the option of choice in life. If he wished to step into the world and embrace the buzz, she would be his biggest cheerleader. But if he, like his parents, preferred a life away from the crowd, his mother's carefully crafted educational plan would be there, ready to offer him that choice. As I listened to Shan, I marveled at the depth of a mother's love—a love that pushed her to ensure that her child would never have to endure the trauma she had experienced. Her story demonstrates how far a mother will go to safeguard her child, a tale of resilience and intense love. It offers insight into

the experiences of many parents living across borders, underscoring the bravery, persistence, and strong will that shape their path.

In sharing Shan's story, I find myself deeply moved by the breadth of her strength and resilience. Born into a world that showed a clear preference for boys, Shan experienced the harsh realities of gender inequality firsthand. Yet, she did not let this define her. Rather, she used it as a catalyst, fueling her relentless pursuit of a better life for her son. Shan's life-long educational plan for her son is more than an academic blueprint; it is a beacon of hope, guiding him towards a future filled with choices and opportunities she never had. This plan is a labor of love, meticulously crafted and executed, reflecting her unyielding determination to nurture her son's potential. It is more than just teaching at home; it is a reflection of a mother's steadfast dedication to her child's future. Throughout this journey with Shan, a transnational parent, I have witnessed her transformation. From a past marked by struggle, she has emerged as a force for positive change, challenging societal norms and daring to redefine the future for her son. In this process, she has also redefined what it means to be both a mother and an educator. Her story paints a vivid picture of the transformative power of education, not just in the life of a child, but also in the life of a parent. It is a humbling reminder of the lengths a parent will go to ensure a better life for their child. As I conclude this section on Shan, I am left with an overwhelming sense of admiration for her unwavering commitment and strength. Her story is a poignant reminder of the power of a mother's love, and it is one that will remain with me as I continue this exploration into the world of transnational parenting.

Closing Thoughts: Welcome to Our World

As I sit in silence, pondering the narratives of Jin, Wen, and Shan, their voices resonate in my thoughts. Their words have orchestrated a symphony of love, resilience, and courage—each note harmonizing with the next to craft a powerful melody that encapsulates their lives.

Jin, a mother balancing the worlds of two continents, serves as a beacon of innovation. Her unending quest to nourish her children's minds has led her to embrace digital tools, or "digital nannies," as she likes to call them. Her home, charmingly chaotic, reflects her tireless work to merge two worlds. After all, a mother's influence knows no boundaries.

Wen, serenity personified, has created a sanctuary out of her home. In the quiet corners of her house, her son Maomao finds solace in his mother tongue, guided by the wisdom of his grandmother, the chords of familial love crossing oceans and time zones.

Shan, ever the visionary, plans meticulously for her son's future, weaving together threads from East and West. She is not merely a mother; she is a strategist, an architect of her child's future. Her journey, although filled with daunting trials, reflects her unwavering commitment to her child.

Their voices, distinct and yet harmonious, take me on an odyssey across continents, cultures, and languages. Through their stories, we catch glimpses of transnational motherhood in the Chinese diaspora. These narratives are like pieces of a puzzle, each essential to constructing the complete picture of their lives. They have generously shared their experiences that are one-of-a-kind, providing a window into their world.

In this chapter, I have introduced you to these three remarkable mothers. You have pictured their faces, heard their voices, and learned about their families and experiences. Yet, this is only the beginning. There is much more to discover, to understand, to appreciate. In the chapters that follow, together as researcher and reader, we will explore the depths of their stories. We will learn about the unimaginable challenges they face, the incredible practices they

undertake every day to support their children's heritage language learning, and the richness of their knowledge as transnational parents. These stories, these journeys, demonstrate the resilience of the human spirit. Studying them is not just for academic purposes; it is a deep dive into understanding the essence of love, protection, support, and hope.

Each word I write, each story I share, is a step forward on this journey. As I delve deeper into the parents' narratives, I am constantly amazed by their courage, their strength, and their determination. They are Jin, Wen, and Shan. They are transnational mothers. They are the embodiment of love and resilience. As I pause here, I am reminded of the Mid-Autumn Festival, a time of unity and connection. Just like the mooncakes that symbolize this bond, these stories connect us, reminding us of our shared human journey. As we move forward, let us carry these stories with us, reminding us of the strength, the courage, and the love that binds us all.

As we journey together into the heart of these narratives, let us remember that the mothers' stories are not just stories; they are an invitation to comprehend, to empathize, and to celebrate the diverse range of human experiences. In these narratives, we find a shared narrative of human resilience and adaptability. In the shared laughter of Jin's bustling home, the quiet conversations of Wen's sanctuary, and the hopeful plans etched into Shan's heart, we discover the shared language of motherhood, a language that transcends national boundaries and cultural differences. It is a language of love, sacrifice, and resilience. This is not just about each of the three as an individual, but about what can be drawn from all three together. It is about understanding the experiences. It is about us. It is about understanding the experiences of those who live among us but whose journeys are remarkably different. It is about appreciating the strength it takes to forge a new life in a foreign land while clinging onto the roots of one's heritage.

And so it begins, as we embark together, diving into their narratives with open hearts. As the chapters unfold, their voices will serve as our guiding light, leading us deeper into their experiences. These are not just mere words; they are the intricately woven threads of their lives.

The challenges they faced? Unimaginable. Their strategies? Remarkable. Their wisdom as transnational parents? Profound, full of depth. These stories revolve around transnational motherhood, the Chinese diaspora, and the stories of Jin, Wen, and Shan. However, these narratives transcend boundaries; they are your stories and our stories alike. These stories are eager to be shared, and I invite you to join me on this journey.

Welcome to their world.

Welcome to our world.

CHAPTER THREE

Painting a Collective Portrait of Transnational Parents

"In diversity there is beauty and there is strength."

- Maya Angelou

Opening Story: Embracing Dual Identities through Festive Celebrations

In my opening story in Chapter 2, I shared a heartfelt tale of celebrating the Mid-Autumn Festival with my young children in Canada, a cherished memory that symbolizes the melding of cultures in our lives. As the days went by, the festive season continued. Within less than a month and right after the mooncake days had passed, Canadian Thanksgiving, which takes place on the second Monday of October, arrived. My spirited Third-Grade daughter, Molly, eagerly anticipated the celebration. "It is part of my culture too because I'm also Canadian," Molly declared with a sense of pride. Indeed, the story of Thanksgiving might not have intersected with our past experiences, but it resonated with our present lives—lives steeped in Western Canada, enveloped by Canadian culture, and as Molly astutely observed, "being Canadian" ourselves.

Contemplating Falicov's (2005) thought-provoking question, "If home is where the heart is, and one's heart is with one's family, language, and country, what happens when your family, language, and culture occupy two different worlds?" (p. 399), we responded with our own unique Thanksgiving celebration. We gathered around the table adorned with our finest tableware, warm smiles, and heartfelt gratitude. The centerpiece was a 14-pound turkey, seasoned with Chinese BBQ spices that filled the air with an intoxicating aroma, blending our two worlds in a single dish. This extraordinary feast, right after the Mid-Autumn Festival, exemplified how we cherish and embrace both Chinese and Canadian identities. As we navigate the borders of two cultures daily, we forge our distinctive path in life.

The day after Thanksgiving, I sat at the kitchen table, savoring the aroma of Chinese cabbage soup made from the leftover turkey bones, and my thoughts turned to the participating

mothers in this inquiry. Their transnational lived experiences, akin to ours, speak of a diverse and complex narrative. Instead of simply stating that these experiences include daily choices, acquired knowledge, and distinct challenges, I delve into their personal stories. Each mother in this inquiry navigates a transnational and transcultural context, accumulating intricate experiences influenced by their lives in both home and host countries, migration histories, linguistic abilities, and cultural backgrounds. These transnational lived experiences shape their knowledge and ideologies concerning their children's education.

What Have I Learned from/about These Mothers?

As the participating mothers migrated and adapted to their new life environments, they developed a deep understanding of the educational systems in both their home countries and their host countries. This experience positioned them as comparative education experts within the unique contexts of their children's lives. Their stories revealed how they navigated the challenges of adjusting to a new country while striving to maintain their cultural heritage. Notably, they managed to engage their children in the educational systems of both China and Canada, enabling their children to excel in both environments.

In the course of examining the mothers' narratives, it became evident that they assess their children's educational paths and future prospects from a global viewpoint, often wrestling with educational anxiety. This anxiety affects their day-to-day decisions regarding both formal and informal education for their children. My goal in delving into their stories is to conduct a thorough analysis of these discussions, linking concepts and/or highlighting the uniquenesses of their experiences. I spent countless hours reading and re-reading field texts to summarize the diverse field text collected. This led to narrative coding, where recurring themes, intertwined or unique storylines, and emerging tensions were identified as potential coding categories. Transitioning from field texts to research texts required framing the study against the broader spectrum of academic discourse, incorporating relevant theories, research findings, and ideological perspectives. Although direct engagement with these academic contexts was

secondary during my fieldwork, it became a focal point again as I transitioned to writing the research texts. I contemplated the scholarly conversations I wished to contribute to and pinpointed resonant threads that emerged from the integration of scholarly literature with the field texts. This approach highlighted the significance of merging insights from the field with ongoing academic discussions, thus enriching the narrative inquiry with both a wider context and a deeper understanding.

By exploring their stories, I aim to provide an in-depth analysis that not only connects ideas but also uncovers the richness of lived experiences, showing how these mothers, as comparative education experts, navigate and influence the educational trajectories of their children against the backdrop of their transnational experiences.

"Contradictions exist"—Transnational Parents Being Comparative Education Experts

During the conversations I had with the three focal mothers, a common theme emerged—a comparison of the educational systems and teaching styles between China and Canada. Researchers have argued that immigrant families gradually lose relationships with their homelands on social, cultural, or emotional levels, as parents in these families try to provide a "local context" for their second-generation immigrant children to "fit in" the cultural, linguistic, educational, and professional environment in the new country (Portess, 2001; Zhou, 1997). That may have been the case in the past few decades. However, it appears that contemporary immigrant families no longer abandon their original ways of life or perspective. After spending a period of time in the new country, some families gradually adopt "transnational ways of being" (Levitt & Schiller, 2004), embodying a consciousness that encompasses diverse identifications (Vertovec, 2009). This transition reflects an evaluation of their experiences and time spent in the new environment, indicating how their transnational identities evolve with their duration of stay.

Parents in this study frequently referenced their own educational experiences growing up in the Chinese public school systems, as well as the current schooling experiences of the children in their families' or friends' homes who attend public education in China. Their

"multiple senses of identification" (Cho et al., 2022), including being a student in China themselves, a parent whose child attended school in China before the migration, an observer of others' Chinese education experiences, a newcomer parent in Canada, and an English language learner in Canadian programs all play significant roles in their newly formed understandings of their children's education. These complex, interwoven perspectives reflect transnational parents' bodies of knowledge and lived realities, which span geographical distances and are shaped by border-crossing experiences. The comparative perspectives that stem out of lived experience with the education systems in both their original and new countries grant them expertise in comparative education.

Jin's Comparative Perspective of Teaching and Learning

Given that Jin's now teenage son had been attending formal schooling in China for almost a decade before he moved to Canada with his mother and younger sister, she stated, "这个我非常具有发言权 (*I'm very qualified to speak on this*).". Jin, in referring to "this," was speaking of the difference between the teaching methods of Chinese and Canadian teachers. The following conversation excerpt between Jin and me shows how she compared the teaching methods in the two countries she has lived in, from the perspective of a parent who had the opportunity to closely observe teachers in formal and informal educational settings:

我家儿子小时候接受的教育是在中国老师的指导下，他们的教学方法和加拿大老师完全不一样。加拿大的老师讲究趣味性，比如教孩子打网球时，中国教练通常是口头讲解动作，让孩子们自己去做；在游泳课上，中国教练会在岸上向孩子示范动作。而这里的老师则不同，他们会和孩子们一起去完成每一个动作。这让我意识到，中国老师与加拿大老师在教学方法上有很大的不同。中国老师更注重整齐划一和标准化。

When my son was little, he was taught by Chinese teachers whose teaching methods were completely different from those of Canadian teachers. The Canadian teachers focus on making learning interesting. For example, when teaching kids to play tennis, Chinese

coaches usually provide oral instructions and let the kids do it themselves; in swimming lessons, Chinese coaches demonstrate the movements on the shore. Teachers here, however, do everything with the kids. This made me realize that there is a significant difference in the teaching methods between Chinese and Canadian teachers. Chinese teachers emphasize uniformity and standardization. (Recorded conversation, July 07, 2022)

At the end of this conversation, Jin let out a long sigh and added:

我儿子为什么会厌学? 就是因为这个。我们来晚了, 其实他很适合这边的环境。 Why does my son become tired and sick of school? This (his teachers' ways of teaching in China—researcher's note) is the reason. We came here too late. In fact, he is very suitable for the environment here. (Recorded conversation, July 07, 2022)

In the context of transnational parents emerging as comparative education experts, the insights offered by Appadurai (1995) become pertinent. He discussed the challenges for individuals in adapting to local cultures, due to "the growing disjuncture between territory, subjectivity and collective social movement" (p. 213). This disjuncture is keenly felt by transnational parents like Jin, who are faced with the task of assessing the educational environments in different countries to make the best choices for their children. It is clear that Jin was able to pinpoint specific aspects of the Chinese teaching methods that were not conducive to her son's learning style, and that led to detrimental effects on his well-being and enthusiasm for education. What Jin's experience exemplifies is the sort of practical, on-the-ground knowledge that transnational parents acquire. Through their lived experiences, they develop expertise in comparative education, understanding the nuances of different educational systems and how these might align or clash with their children's needs and personalities.

In Jin's case, she assessed that the educational environment in China was not compatible with her son's needs, which, she believed, might have been better addressed if they had moved earlier or to a different place. Her insights reflect the dexterity with which transnational parents

navigate complex educational landscapes, making decisions that are rooted in an intricate understanding of culture, pedagogy, and child development in their family's particular situation. This navigation can be viewed as a manifestation of Appadurai's (1995) concept of "disjuncture," where the incongruence between different facets of life in different territories, such as education, can be a source of challenge, but also expertise. Transnational parents like Jin become inadvertent experts in comparative education, as they critically evaluate and adapt to this disjuncture for the sake of their children's education.

Shan's Classroom Observations and Contradictions

Another mother, Shan, shared with me the unexpectedly strong impact that a one time observation of her son's classroom behaviors brought to her psychologically. It was when their family first landed in Canada and her son had not yet started formal schooling. Shan signed her son up for a half-day summer camp. On the first day, she stayed after the class started, and made her secret observations outside the classroom window. Shan made an emotional conclusion, "我很受冲击！I was shocked!"

因为他听不懂老师说什么，就跟别的小朋友学。这边的小朋友上课的状态，以中国人的习惯不太能理解—上课不听指令，到处疯到处走，小动作不断。我们在家里管得比较严，规矩比较多。我觉得这会是他上学的一个主要问题：学校的规则没有家里那么强。整个的家庭氛围跟主流的价值有冲突。我们熟悉的中国的那种教育模式和这边的学校的行为模式差别很大，所以我觉得我自己也是矛盾的。我喜欢中国的那种学霸型的好孩子，比较守规矩的。

Because he couldn't understand what the teacher said, he learned from other children. The state of the children here in class is not easy to understand with the habits of Chinese people—they don't listen to instructions in class, they go crazy everywhere, and they keep making small movements. We are stricter at home and have more rules. I think this will be a major problem with his schooling: the rules at school are not as strong as at home. The whole family atmosphere conflicts with mainstream values. The education

model we are familiar with in China is very different from the behavior model of schools here, so I feel conflicted. I like the kind of good kids in China who are good learners and are more disciplined. (Recorded conversation, July 19, 2022)

Shan's comparison demonstrates another dimension of the challenge transnational parents face when it comes to the difference between the two countries' education systems—their children behave totally differently in two sets of educational value systems. Parents have their own preference of ways of teaching and learning, as well as expectations of their children's behaviors in educational settings. The harsh reality is that the larger Canadian educational environment conveys a different set of values and protocols to their children, which contradicts the values and protocols they want to reinforce with their children at home. I proposed a follow-up question after her shared story, asking Shan how she plans to deal with the conflicts and contradictions between her own preference for education methods and the external environment, to which she does not have an answer yet:

冲突是客观存在的。但是我还不知道怎么做，我很矛盾。

The contradictions exist objectively. But I don't know what to do yet. I'm conflicted.

(Recorded conversation, July 19, 2022)

This contradiction may be a dilemma faced by many Chinese parents because we can compare the education systems and education methods of China and Canada. Such a knowledge system is born only through transnational ways of living and being. In a transnational context, it is necessary to acknowledge the variety of value systems embedded within lived experience, as well as the ties and relationships that connect immigrants to societies of both origin and settlement (Basch et al., 1994). For Shan, it is an automatic mechanism to take into consideration her personal preference of teaching methods and classroom behaviors when making observations of her son's learning environment. Where does her personal preference come from then? Years and years of living and learning in the Chinese educational system and Chinese history, society, and culture. However, Shan's deep belief of "the right way to learn and

behave" is severely challenged by the local educational culture in her new country and community, where she and her son geographically practice their everyday life.

Ties between societies of origin and those in a receiving country are forged and maintained as immigrants and transnationals simultaneously engage in communities across borders of their country of origin and receiving country (Basch et al., 1994; Vertovec, 2009). Such ties connect different worlds, and challenge different ways of living, all at once. The knowledge system of comparative education that transnational parents possess, because of their lived experience in multiple locations, now also brings about interrogation of and reflection on their own educational philosophy. It also creates a sense of feeling conflicted when faced with real contradictions between familial and societal values.

Wen's Effort to Balance Different Values

The comparison of two educational systems after the migration also brings a shift of mindset. In our conversation, Wen shared how she changed her focus in terms of her child's education, from a utilitarian position to a more individualized perspective:

在加拿大，作为家长的压力小了很多。因为大环境没有在中国那么 *competitive*，所以可能更有机会关注孩子本身的个人发展。可能在中国的时候，作为家长想得会比较功利一点，比如上好大学，找好工作。在这边可能中国家长也是比较功利的，但心态会调整得更好一些。可能更希望他有个快乐的童年，快乐的人生。希望孩子有自己的自我价值的体现，而不是说非得为了工作或者成功来干扰自己的兴趣。

Being a parent is a lot less stressful in Canada. Because the general environment is not as competitive as in China, there may be more opportunities to pay attention to the personal development of the children themselves. Maybe when I was in China, as a parent, I would think more utilitarianly, such as going to a good university and finding a good job. Here, Chinese parents may also be more utilitarian, but their mentality will be adjusted better. Maybe I hope he has a happy childhood and a happy life. I hope that my

child can live out his own self-worth, rather than having to sacrifice their interests for work or success. (Recorded conversation, July 06, 2022)

Wen's heartfelt sharing reveals that individual priorities are not merely a product of personal choices, but are deeply interwoven with the broader society and culture in which we live. In Canada, the abundant resources and less competitive societal environment provide parents with the opportunity to pay closer attention to their children's individual interests and emotional needs, nurturing aspects of their development that might be overshadowed in more competitive settings. In this Canadian context, parents can focus on their children's well-being and personal development, taking advantage of a well-funded and inclusive education system that values student growth and exploration and not just standardized test results. This more relaxed atmosphere encourages parents to make choices that align with their children's individual needs and aspirations, rather than simply conforming to societal pressures.

It is crucial to recognize that this emphasis on individual interests and emotional needs does not always stem from a conscious decision made by parents. Rather, it is an unconscious privilege that arises from living in a society like Canada, where educational resources are more readily available and there is less pressure to adhere to rigid societal expectations or compete in an intense educational system. This environment affords parents the opportunity to foster their children's growth in a more comprehensive and supportive manner, an experience that might be less achievable in other cultural contexts.

Warner (2007) argued that schooling (and learning in general) should be situated in places where different worlds intersect, namely, "crossroads, cross-cultural zones, points of interchange" (p. 17). The shift of mindset of the transnational parents about learning and schooling occurred in the intersection of various worlds, from their past, current, and even future lives in different locations of the world. Wen compared the educational environments in China and Canada, given her experience crossing national and cultural borders, and such comparisons shaped her perspectives on parenting, learning, and living. Her words caused me to wonder,

What does this mean that Wen is going to live and parent in the more relaxed and more privileged "Canadian" ways? The following conversation excerpt powerfully responded to my question:

但是我个人认为还不能让孩子完全的放松，完全由着他自己。每个人都是有惰性的，不可能说让他自己放开了，就可以学得很好。我觉得还是有要求的，只不过换个鼓励的方式。然后强度也有很大变化。如果在中国的话，像这种写字写得不好，肯定使劲逼着写，没办法对不对？但现在优先级会有所转变，学术不再是第一位了，孩子的感受也很重要。

But I personally think that it is not possible to let the child relax completely and let him do whatever he wants. Everyone has inertia, and it is impossible to say that he can learn well if we let him go. I think there should still be requirements, but we need to change the way of encouragement. Then the intensity also varies a lot. If you are in China, if you can't write well, you must force yourself to practice, there is no other way, right? But now the priorities have changed, academic achievements no longer come first, the child's feelings are also very important. (Recorded conversation, July 06, 2022)

Wen's answer to my question about whether she would adopt "Canadian" parenting styles is a resolute "No." It is worth noting that, in the context of this conversation, "Canadian" parenting styles were referred to in a more common sense, everyday understanding, rather than through a robust, academic definition. This emerged from a dialogue between two Chinese immigrant mothers sharing stories and everyday educational experiences with their children, living in Canada. Wen's observations of local parents, who do not come from an immigrant background, shaped her perceptions of Canadian parenting. However, to truly understand her perspective, it is essential to explore her thoughts and experiences more closely. As shared earlier, Wen is not willing to abandon the "Chinese" way of parenting, learning, and living. Instead, she aspires to merge the best of both worlds, embracing a balanced approach to raising her children. Her approach echoes the concept of "encountering," as described by Stengers (2011). In the context

of learning, encountering implies engaging with new ideas, perspectives, and cultures, fostering comparison-based learning. As parents like Wen navigate life in a new country, they continually encounter new ways of thinking, parenting, and living. These encounters offer them the opportunity to reflect on their own beliefs and values, ultimately shaping their approach to parenting. In Wen's case, her experiences in Canada have invited her to compare and contrast Chinese and Canadian parenting styles. She values the unique aspects of both cultures and chooses to integrate them into her own parenting philosophy. Rather than fully embracing one way or the other, she creates a harmonious blend that reflects her identity as a transnational parent.

Emphasizing encountering and comparison-based learning highlights the importance of being open to new ideas and experiences. As parents face the challenges of raising children in a multicultural and globalized world, they must continuously learn and adapt, drawing on the best aspects of the different cultures that they encounter. By doing so, they can establish a special and enriching environment for their children, nurturing growth and development that respects their cultural roots while embracing the new cultural context in which they live. Wen learned new ways of supporting her child in her transnational ways of life by encountering new challenges and new perspectives, and by comparing the various, often contradicting encounters. The result of encountering, comparing, and learning two different ways of education in China and Canada led Wen to extract the advantageous elements in each country's educational system respectively, and integrate the respective advantages together according to her son's actual situation.

When comparing two educational systems, it is crucial to treat both sides of the comparison as equals. Encounters must occur in their "full force" and without any foul play, meaning that neither side should be weakened, nor should one be favored over the other (Stengers, 2011). Maintaining this balance is key to avoiding biased comparisons and the tendency of "Othering," which refers to how a dominant group negatively and stereotypically

perceives a minority as inferior, threatening, or as an entity to be excluded (Modood, 2019, p. 78).

In Wen's experiences of living, learning, and parenting, the "Chinese way" is just as important and valid as the "Canadian way," regardless of how each country is perceived economically, culturally, or politically by the rest of the world. In her personal journey, comparisons only hold meaning when she can evaluate her own interpretation of the contrasts while avoiding the irrelevant criteria and categories that others might impose on her (Stengers, 2011). In these instances, irrelevant criteria and categories may refer to stereotypes or misconceptions about a particular culture or education system.

For example, some people might assume that Chinese education is only about rote learning and memorization, while Canadian education is more creative and student-centered. Nevertheless, these broad generalizations may not precisely capture the distinct features of each system or Wen's experiences with them. An authentic comparison encourages individuals to engage, question, negotiate, and challenge both aspects of the equation. Consequently, instead of discarding the competitive mentality and pursuit of success inherent in Chinese values, Wen aims to consider Canadian values and adapt her approach to competition and hard work by adjusting the priorities and intensity of education.

By connecting the concept of "othering" (Modood, 2019) to Wen's experience, we can see how she avoids marginalizing one culture over the other. Instead, she embraces the distinctive strengths of both Chinese and Canadian educational systems, creating a more comprehensive and balanced approach to her children's education. By doing so, she effectively navigates the complexities of transnational parenting and fosters an enriching environment for her children's growth and development.

"His Chinese skills are not bad, even in China": Parallel Engagement in Two Countries' Educational Systems

The journey through the educational landscapes of transnational families uncovers a nuanced balance between diverse educational systems. As these families navigate their new life in Canada, they blend educational experiences from their home country with those of their new environment. This section explores how such a blend shapes their overall educational framework, revealing a commitment to a comprehensive, culturally-rich education. This approach not only reflects the mothers' efforts to integrate Chinese and Canadian teaching pedagogies but also prepares children to thrive in a diverse and globalized context.

Shan's Strategic Approach to Heritage Language Education

Many immigrant parents enroll their children into community-based heritage language schools, which provide systematic heritage language education and learning resources to second-generation immigrant children. Being a very hands-on mother who supports her son's education as a full time job, Shan, to my surprise, has no intention for her child to attend Chinese language school in Canada. She has her reasons for this decision:

在家里的学习就足够，网上的中文教学资源非常丰富。我有时间，有计划，有教材。在家教中文可以操作起来。

Learning at home is enough, and the Chinese teaching resources on the Internet are very rich. I have time, a plan, and teaching materials. Teaching Chinese at home is manageable for us. (Recorded conversation, July 05, 2022)

Shan's decision against enrolling her son in a Chinese language school in Canada does not imply that she has compromised the language learning standards for her son. Rather, she has higher expectations, for her child, and for herself. Shouldering the formal teaching responsibility at home, rather than outsourcing it to community-based heritage language schools as most families do, is not an easy task. Assisting the teachers to support the child's homework is one thing; becoming the teacher while parenting is another story. It means the constant switch between

parenting and teaching role, a very time-consuming, emotionally demanding job for a parent. Yet Shan is determined to meet the challenge. Even when she now lives with her son in Canada, she is able to flexibly utilize the teaching and learning resources online in the Chinese educational system, both in public and private sectors. Shan has taken tremendous time to conduct thorough research on the current educational system in China, including the full set of digital textbooks and exercise materials.

资料都是免费的，只要有这个意识，随便一搜就出来了。

The information is free, as long as you have this awareness, you can find it with just a search. (Recorded conversation, July 05, 2022)

Not only does Shan have the awareness, she also aims to engage her son in parallel educational systems, both in Canada and China, beyond language learning and into all subjects. It is fair to say that her expectation of her son's education is to finish and excel in both countries' education systems, at the same time.

因为我们对他的要求是，对标国内的小学课程，也得吃透。所以这边你有能力把英语提上来，同时国内的课程要到中等偏上这样的水平。包括所有科目，不止是中文。

Because our requirement for him is to have a thorough understanding of the domestic primary school curriculum in China. So here you have the ability to improve your English, and at the same time, you must achieve an above-average level in the domestic courses in China. Including all subjects, not just Chinese language. (Recorded conversation, July 05, 2022)

Shan adopts a strategic approach towards her child's education that emphasizes mastery and competence in both the local curriculum of the country they reside in as well as the Chinese primary school curriculum. This highlights Shan's determination to provide a robust educational foundation for her child, integrating the benefits of multicultural learning. She aims for her child to excel in English and, simultaneously, to maintain an above-average competence in all subjects within the Chinese curriculum. This reveals Shan's dedication to not only ensuring her

child's adaptability and success in their current environment but also preserving strong ties to their Chinese cultural and educational roots. Her approach signifies a thoughtful blending of educational standards and expectations from different cultural contexts, epitomizing the dual-focused adaptability that many transnational parents employ.

Wen's Assessment of Language Skills and Informal Educational Practices

Although Wen has not engaged her son in the formal Chinese educational system as Shan has, she too assesses her son's language ability with the standard in China. Wen expressed her confidence in her child's Chinese language capacity in our conversation:

他的中文表达能力在中国应该也不算差了，和普通家庭比较的话，应该还算至少中等，甚至还能稍微偏上一点。

His Chinese expression ability should not be bad even in China. Compared with other ordinary families, his language ability should at least be average, or even a little bit higher. (Recorded conversation, July 06, 2022)

Similar to Shan in certain respects, Wen's attention to her child's language skills indicates the value she places on cultural heritage. Unlike Shan, Wen seems to focus more specifically on language as a connection to culture, without necessarily engaging in the entirety of the Chinese educational curriculum. This difference in emphasis between Wen and Shan exemplifies the varied strategies that transnational parents employ to navigate the educational development of their children across cultures.

The Internet gives Wen the opportunity to put her son on the map of learning achievement among other same-aged children in China. With technology and social media, physical borders and distances do not pose the same degree of constraint over travel and communication that they did decades ago (Lam, 2008). Seeing the photos and comments on WeChat of personal life and learning moments of their children posted by friends in China, transnational parents like Wen can and will compare the academic achievements between their own child in Canada and their friends' children in China. The boundary between here and there,

China and Canada, blurs on the Internet. Digital technologies provide the means and spaces for transnational parents to explore parallel educational resources in both countries and evaluate within duo-frameworks. Wen also acquires information and inspiration for learning activities on Chinese social media, such as WeChat Moment and group chats:

比如说之前看到朋友发的朋友圈，几个家庭一起去北京郊区玩，带着孩子进行一些生物的考察。我觉得这个活动挺好的，所以我也在这里进行了实践，带着孩子去户外抓蝴蝶，在放生，然后观察昆虫。平时我就会留意一下国内的家长们在做什么教育活动，然后学习学习，条件合适的话也和孩子试一试。

For example, I saw a post on WeChat by a friend: Several families went to a suburb neighborhood in Beijing to play together. They took their kids to conduct some biological investigations. I thought this activity was very good, so I also practiced here. I took my son to catch butterflies outdoors, released them, and then observed some insects. I usually pay attention to what educational activities parents in China are doing, and learn from them. If the conditions permit, I will try it with my son here. (Recorded conversation, July 06, 2022)

This conversation excerpt captures a perfect example of informal education in transnational families, in which the parents obtain information in a transnational context and forge transnational parenting knowledge online where different worlds interact, and where parents co-exist co-relationally as they communicate with each other (Tlostanova et al., 2016). The ability to engage in parallel educational systems in their original and current countries and communities showcases the rich transnational funds of knowledge (Kwon et al., 2019) these parents have, and the potential opportunities they can provide to their children's education.

"I look at the whole world!": A Global Perspective on Education Beyond Original and Receiving Countries

Currently, the majority of academic research positions transnational individuals within both their original and receiving societal contexts. This positioning by researchers reflects how immigrant parents' desire to belong to two different places simultaneously manifests in their efforts to support their children's education across both educational systems. I was particularly struck by the insights the focal mothers shared on the comparative education between China and Canada. What surprised me even more was that these mothers did not limit themselves to understanding the educational systems of their homeland and the country they currently reside in.

Shan's Global-Minded Decision Making in Education

Conversations with Shan shed light on the depth and breadth of transnational parents' knowledge construction, which goes beyond my personal experience and transcends the scope of what is commonly found in academic literature. Shan, in particular, illustrated how some transnational parents adopt a global perspective when making major decisions regarding their children's education, including the choice of destination for family migration. This global perspective highlights the proactive and extensive measures that transnational parents take in assessing educational options, which is an aspect that warrants further attention in academic research. The following excerpt from a conversation with Shan elucidates the global-mindedness that some transnational parents exhibit in their decision-making process concerning their children's education:

而且我发现一个问题，因为中国人做移民的决定时，其实比较过很多国家。不仅是加拿大，也考虑过美国，澳洲，甚至一些亚洲发达国家，比如新加坡和日本。其实中国家长是比较在乎教育的，所以每个国家的教育体系多少都知道一些。有一个整个世界的图景在脑子里面。我知道我是谁，什么东西适合我，然后选择对自己最有利的。比如我来加拿大，我为什么不去美国或者其它地方？因为我从非常实际的角

度出发，做了最利于自己的选择，最有利于孩子未来规划的选择。在这个选择的过程中，我不是只看某一个国家，我是放眼全球的。

I noticed that when Chinese people make immigration decisions they actually compare many countries. Not only Canada, but also the United States, Australia, and even some developed countries in Asia, such as Singapore and Japan. In fact, Chinese parents care a lot about education, so they know more or less about the educational systems in each country. There is a picture of the whole world in our minds. I know who I am, what works for me, and choose what's best for me. For example, if I can come to Canada, why don't I go to the United States or other places? Because from a very practical point of view, I made the choice that is most beneficial to myself and to my child's future planning. In this selection process, I don't just look at a certain country, I look at the whole world. (Recorded conversation, July 19, 2022)

Transnationalism has a significant impact on individuals' border-crossing experiences, transforming both their lived and imagined realities. Therefore, a multifaceted framework is indispensable for immigrant parents and their children's current participation and future trajectories in transnational engagements across borders. Initially, the term "dual frame" (Louie, 2006, p. 363) may suggest a dual focus on the original and receiving societal contexts. However, what has emerged from conversations with individuals like Shan is that transnational parents are often navigating a more complex landscape. In this regard, the "duo-framework" can be reconceptualized as a multi-dimensional framework where immigrant parents are not only negotiating between their experiences in their homeland and their understanding of the receiving country, but also incorporating a global perspective that takes into account multiple countries and cultures. Such a global way of thinking is essential in understanding the diverse considerations that transnational parents undertake for their children's education.

Shan's insights unveil a less explored aspect of the challenges faced by transnational families in supporting their children's education, highlighting the multifaceted nature of these

challenges. These include not only the families' past experiences in their countries of origin and their current understanding of the host country but also their aspirations for their children's future roles as members of a transnational community. This dynamic requires a seamless engagement across international borders, embodying the fluidity and adaptability essential in our interconnected world. Past research has provided critical perspectives on this subject. For example, Waters' (2005) examination of transnational students and their educational migrations, along with Ong's (1999) analysis of flexible citizenship, shed light on the negotiation of transnational identities. Their work underscores that the intricacies of heritage language education encompass more than linguistic and cultural differences; they are also shaped by the transnational visions parents have for their offspring. These parents aspire for their children to become global citizens, adept at navigating and bridging multiple cultural contexts. Thus, heritage language education is intricately linked with cultivating a transnational identity, emphasizing cultural hybridity and global connectivity. Recognizing the envisioned futures of transnational families necessitates an expanded educational framework that embraces the diverse factors and viewpoints these parents consider within the globalizing milieu of education and cultural integration. Such a global way of thinking is essential in understanding the diverse considerations that transnational parents undertake for their children's education.

"我是放眼全球的。I look at the whole world." I could not help but revisit this sentence again and again, after that afternoon conversation with Shan sitting in her parked car in the garage. We had to move our talk to the vehicle because her son was studying in the living room, to prevent the sound of our conversation disturbing his concentration. I remember that I was drinking a bottle of chocolate milk that Shan brought to me while she apologized about the hot and stuffy air in the garage and the uncomfortable seats in the car. I did not even notice the uncomfortableness.

My mind was on her words—a short sentence that contains only seven Chinese characters—"我是放眼全球的。"All of a sudden, the plain drywall of the garage disappeared.

Instead, I could see the global map spreading behind Shan, who was sitting in the passenger seat. "Transnationalism," the academic terminology that has been explained by countless scholars and researchers, was becoming alive in this person, this mother, sitting right beside me. For the sake of her child's education and future in general, she chose a complex life that is stimulated by physical and virtual mobility of people, ideas, and imagination; a life that travels beyond physical borders of nation-states, around the globe; a life that both causes challenges and creates opportunities which might surpass her personal lived experience and are difficult for her to process and understand. Yet, she made the choice because it was the most beneficial option for her child's future. According to Jacquemet (2005), transnational individuals engage in global-local communication to maintain their simultaneous presence across multiple transnational locations. Now we can add an additional point of view to Jacquemet's statement—that the multiple transnational locations include all experienced *and imagined* places around the world.

"The environment is not rich enough": Educational Anxiety in Transnational Space

Language development of their children is a common concern that immigrant parents share. The journey from China to Canada for immigrant families involves much more than a geographical transition; it represents a significant shift in the linguistic landscape that their children must navigate. This sudden transition from a primarily Chinese-speaking environment to one where English is dominant outside the home poses special challenges in language development for our children. Immigrant parents often grapple with the dual challenge of maintaining their heritage language and ensuring their children's proficiency in the major societal languages of their new country, alongside adapting themselves to these tasks.

Jin's Challenge: Balancing Multiple Languages and Limited Time

Jin did not try to hide her anxiety level when it came to her children's language development—and that includes both their heritage language (Mandarin-Chinese) and the majoritized societal languages (English and French). In our conversation on this topic, Jin repeatedly emphasized the pressure she was under, and she blamed herself (Recorded conversation, July 07, 2022):

我实在没有时间。

I don't have enough time.

Being an astronaut mother who solely shoulders the responsibilities of taking care of her children's everyday life and supporting their education, including learning multiple languages, Jin's exhaustion was obvious. She revealed to me that the limitation of her own time and her children's time, compared to the number of tasks they faced, caused her severe anxiety. Her newcomer Kindergarten daughter is enrolled in a French immersion program, which means learning the language from the beginning without any linguistic knowledge from her mother. Jin managed to find resources and support from outside of the family, such as a French tutor and online learning programs. All learning activities require Jin to devote a certain amount of time each day for transportation and/or assistance.

Because the young girl is in a French immersion program, English is not part of her formal schooling subjects. That is not to say that Jin can relax and set aside English language learning for her daughter. Compared to most local families whose home environments are in English and in which the children have been receiving and communicating in the English language since birth, Jin does not have that default, privileged linguistic environment. Instead, she has to make extra efforts to create such an environment for her children, with extracurricular activities, social interactions with other children who speak English, and again, online digital resources in English language—all requiring her to invest massive amounts of time and energy.

Finally, the most important language in Jin's family life is Mandarin-Chinese. Without the larger language environment in schools or in society, learning Chinese is a more difficult and time-consuming job, not only for the children, but also for the parents. Jin spends a lot of time researching online and having conversations with other immigrant parents and friends in China to learn about the opportunities and practical ways to help her child learn Chinese. After the research, she also has to put in hours of time sitting with her daughter, and learning with her. It is not hard to see that multiple learning tasks, especially the daily to-dos of learning and maintaining each language, compete for the limited family learning time, and result in an inadequate amount of time for all language learning activities.

Shan's Linguistic Insecurity and Educational Approach

Shan shared her anxiety with language learning as well, starting with the strong frustration brought by the setback of her son's heritage language learning. The small and limited Chinese language environment—only the communication and parental teaching at home in Shan's case—caused visible obstacles for her child to develop his heritage language steadily. Seeing the learning achievements of other families' on social media was another source of Shan's educational anxiety:

这两天特别的丧。陪孩子复习中文给我的挫败感特别强，前无仅有的强。因为我觉得他并没有稳步地在提高，完全没有提高。在 WeChat 朋友圈看到别人 share 自己家孩子学了什么东西的时候，也很焦虑。

I have been especially frustrated in the past two days. Reviewing Chinese language homework with my son gave me a particularly strong sense of frustration, which was unprecedented. Because I didn't think he was improving steadily, not at all. I was also very anxious when I saw others sharing what their children had learned on WeChat Moments. (Recorded conversation, July 26, 2022)

Shan's anxiety about heritage language learning reflects the linguistic insecurity coined by Meyehoff (2018), which in the immigrant context, is associated with the sense of "inferior, ugly

or bad" use of the language (p. 292). In Shan's story, she was comparing her son's Chinese language development with the standards of other families who are immersed in the formal Chinese public education system, and with the supposed level in her mind that is based on her own languaging and language learning experiences. As Labov (2006) stated, it is often the perception of speech styles that contributes to this linguistic insecurity in people who strive to adopt a standard of correctness in their own language.

However, the reality is that Shan's son now lives in a very different language environment, compared to Shan's upbringing and to Shan's friend circle in China. As a result of moving across borders and living in a transnational framework (Basch et al., 1994), languages, cultures, and countries flow and are interconnected; it also poses the challenge of balancing the multiple perspectives and expectations of transnational parents and children across cultures and societies. Language anxiety also includes learning the majority language (i.e., English). Shan expressed how she felt about her son's English language learning:

一开始（对于学英语）我是焦虑的，我觉得你赶紧融入英文环境，快点弄下来。

At the beginning (of learning English), I was anxious. I think you should quickly fit into the English environment and get it done quickly. (Recorded conversation, July 05, 2022)

Transnational experiences of immigrant families drive them to value bilingualism and biliteracy. However, receiving countries' monolingual orientation may hinder their efforts. "[F]it into the English environment" has been and will forever be the top priority of immigrant parents' expectations for their children. As the child enters school, transnational parents' majority language anxiety will likely increase since interactions with the mainstream community will highlight the disparities in linguistic and social status (Hudson, 1996). This explains why Shan wants her son to "get it [learning English] done quickly"—the language inequality is particularly anxiety-provoking for children and parents with immigrant and/or linguistically minority status when they speak the majority language (English) to mainstream community members in schools and other public settings (Garcia de Blakeley et al., 2017; Pappamihiel, 2001; Woodrow, 2006).

After hearing Shan speak, I was struck by the clarity with which she recognized and articulated the educational anxieties she experiences as a transnational parent. Contrary to what one might expect, these parents are acutely aware of the anxieties they face. What is remarkable is how composedly they accept this reality. Shan, for instance, communicated a readiness to coexist with this anxiety and to diligently pursue both formal and informal educational paths for her child, albeit at a measured pace:

可能我比较焦虑，反正就是你（孩子）得学。你天天最好都能养成学习的习惯，不管学多少你得学。

I may be very anxious, but you (the child) have to learn anyway. You'd better develop the habit of learning every day, no matter how much you learn, you have to learn. (Recorded conversation, July 05, 2022)

However, her anxiety was not solely rooted in educational concerns. Shan's narrative revealed an additional dimension. She initially migrated to the City of Saskatoon to escape the pressures of urban life in China in favor of a simpler and more peaceful existence. However, over time, she discovered that the simplicity she sought also had its downsides. She described this lifestyle as monotonous and lacking diversity, and expressed concerns about its impact on her child. Specifically, she worried that the limited environment might restrict her child's development and narrow his perspectives:

会非常担心他没有足够的机会。我觉得现在的他（5岁）就像一个被动的容器，来接收生活的刺激。当环境不够丰富，就像花盆里没有足够营养的土，种子没有办法发芽，开花，茁壮成长。

I'm very concerned that he's not getting enough opportunities. I think the current him (five years old) is like a passive container to receive the stimuli of life. When the environment is not rich enough, just like there is not enough nutrient soil in the flowerpot, the seeds cannot germinate, bloom, or thrive. (Recorded conversation, July 19, 2022)

Shan's account serves as a lens. Through it, we gain insight into the complexities that transnational parents face. A plethora of factors come into play. Educational systems matter. Personal anxieties are real. Environmental aspects cannot be overlooked. Shan, with her carefully chosen words, reflects a sense of balance. Transnational parents, it seems, don a measured approach to navigate the sea of challenges before them, especially when it comes to supporting their children's education and development across diverse cultural landscapes.

Wen's Comparative Assessment of Cultural and Educational Environments

Wen, another mother, echoes Shan's sentiments. However, she draws her comparisons from a different canvas. Beijing, the bustling metropolis where her family's roots were originally planted, versus Saskatoon, their new tranquil abode. The two cities are worlds apart, and this does not escape Wen's keen observations. She evaluates cultural and informal educational environments. She weighs them and patterns emerge:

其实在国内（给孩子提供的教育环境）我觉得更好一些。比如北京有很丰富的文化生活，各种博物馆，艺术展，话剧，公园，选择很多；在这儿的话，活动比较少，也比较小型，而且中文活动就更少了。

In fact, I think it (the educational environment provided to children) is better in China.

For example, Beijing has a very rich cultural life, with a variety of museums, art exhibitions, dramas, and parks to choose from; here (in the City of Saskatoon, Canada), there are fewer and smaller activities, and Chinese-language activities are even rarer to find. (Recorded conversation, July 16, 2022)

Shan and Wen, though distinct in their experiences, are bound by shared threads of reflection and discernment. Their stories represent the myriad considerations that form the bedrock of transnational parenting decisions. Their anxiety over the change of environment and the limitations that come with the change is not uncommon among transnational families. The lived experiences in multiple locations and the various cultures in these locations grant transnational individuals the ability of comparison, and in turn, bring about challenges within the comparison.

They are more likely to notice the differences in multiple societies and cultures, and naturally desire to embrace the advantages in different lifestyles. As Vertovec (1999) mentioned, it appears that immigrants' awareness of being simultaneously "home away from home," and "here and there" facilitates their desire to connect "here" and "there" (p. 450). Anxiety, therefore, exists in and emerges from the attempt to connect both worlds.

"My English is not good"—The Marginalization of the Privileged

The three focal families in this study all have a strong financial foundation, allowing them to provide their children with various learning resources and platforms. The three mothers are highly educated, capable of developing deep understandings of their social status and their children's education. They have the ability and opportunity to conduct in-depth research on their children's education, and can afford to choose where they live, the kind of life they want to lead, and the educational opportunities they want to provide for their children.

The Privileged Background Breakdown of the Focal Families

Jin, with her abundant resources and educational opportunities in China, had the financial means and time to create a platform for her children. A tutor visited their house daily to read children's picturebooks in Chinese with her children for an hour; another tutor focused on art and took the children to practice drawing for an hour every day; a third tutor worked with her son on building Lego because he expressed an interest in building blocks. Once Jin and her children decided to move across oceans, she enrolled them in a skating class in China three times a week to help them "fit in" with the local sports culture when they arrived in Canada. Skating lessons in their hometown were extremely expensive due to the warm weather and high maintenance costs of skating rinks. Additionally, the children engaged in one-on-one instruction for swimming, ballet, badminton, fencing, and art. In China, Jin had a team responsible for her children's formal schooling, extracurricular activities, and daily life, consisting of tutors, a nanny, and grandparents who took turns caring for the children.

Shan's family had the privilege of staying together daily, even before moving to Canada, which was uncommon for a young, working family in Chinese society. Fathers in China typically are not involved in household work or children's education. However, Shan's husband worked from home and had a flexible schedule, allowing him ample time to be with his son. Their family traveled every month during the first three years of her son's life, sometimes internationally and sometimes domestically, exploring various cultures and places together. They frequented Shanghai Disneyland Park, and Shan shared how their son eventually found it "unappealing" after so many visits. Shan candidly admitted that their family was very privileged in many ways, compared to most families in China or within their friend circle.

Wen's family, while not as financially well-off as the other two, possessed a different set of privileges: a highly educated family environment, academic traditions passed down through generations in their close and extended family, and inter-generational teaching and learning, both in-person and online. Wen valued education and focused on creating a nurturing environment for her son, drawing on her family's traditions and resources. In her journey as a parent, she sought to balance her cultural heritage with the new opportunities and challenges presented by their life in Canada. By doing so, she managed to provide her son with an exceptional and enriching educational experience that integrated the strengths of both approaches, despite not having the same financial resources as the other two families.

The Lingual Struggle and Self-Perception of Immigrant Mothers

Although these families enjoyed privileges, including financial and academic advantages, which afforded them a comfortable lifestyle in China and aided their transitions to life in Canada, it is crucial to emphasize that transnational parent knowledge encompasses a much broader spectrum than just the experiences of the elite or privileged. As these families entered their new society, they found themselves as newcomers who looked different from the mainstream residents (i.e., primarily White people) and spoke a different language than the majority (i.e., English). This change in environment and social context caused their previously privileged

status to be profoundly challenged, as they assumed a new identity as culturally, racially, and linguistically minoritized others.

The concept of "border thinking," introduced by Anzaldúa (1999) and further developed by various decolonial scholars (e.g., Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006), offers insights into the experiences of these families, as well as other transnational parents who may not come from privileged backgrounds. According to the philosophy of "border thinking," alternative worlds and worldviews may remain invisible as long as they are viewed through the lens of Western categories of thought and experience, which effectively obscure other perspectives and experiences. The stories of the three focal transnational mothers resonate with the notion of being "othered" (Modood & Thompson, 2022) within the framework of "border thinking." These experiences highlight the fact that transnational parent knowledge is not exclusive to the elite or privileged, but rather a shared understanding that emerges from diverse backgrounds and life experiences. Throughout the numerous conversations I had with the mothers, one sentence was repeatedly and spontaneously expressed by all three parents:

我的英语不好。

My English is not good.

It came up when they talked about interaction with principals and teachers in their children's school; it came up when they shared their experience attending social events, such as their children's friends' birthday parties; it came up when they shared their various efforts to support their children's school work at home; it came up when they expressed frustration at adult language classes for newcomers; it came up when they disclosed their expectations and hopes for their own career options in Canada; it came up all the time and almost in every topic. "But my English is not good.", "Too bad my English is not good.", "What can I do? My English is not good."

All three mothers were so deeply convinced that their English was not good, was bad, and was not adequate to communicate effectively with "native speakers," even though my

observations told a different story. When I was in Jin's home conducting research conversations with her, I witnessed several times that she was on the phone communicating in English, with the utility department of the city, and with her son's school. I saw how she managed to understand the conversation and convey her message to the other party, in English! I also knew that Jin was in a Level Four LINC class—Level Four is the language requirement for the Canadian citizenship exam, and equivalent to most entry-job employment requirements of the English language. Shan passionately shared with me the research she conducted on how to choose schools in the private and public sectors in multiple cities in Canada. How did she research the topic? She went on all these schools' official websites and read closely every relevant comment on the parent forums, also in English! Wen in fact obtained a Doctor of Philosophy degree from a Chinese university; and the entry exam required a very highly scored English language test, in four areas including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. When I pointed out this evidence to contradict their statement of "bad English," all three mothers responded with a smile, and repeated again:

"Still, my English is not good enough."

Raciolinguistic Ideologies and the Immigrant Experience

It almost felt like an unshakable perception. No matter what I said, they were convinced that their English was not good, at least not good enough. My mind could not help but go to "raciolinguistic ideologies" (Flores & Rosa, 2015), a perspective that seeks to understand how people of color are marginalized vis-à-vis Whiteness and the use of so-called standard languages. The White gaze is attached to the languaging experience of racialized people, in the case of this study, the transnational parents and their children. When the mothers speak in English, they are engaged in the idealized linguistic practices of Whiteness, that is, the way in which "local, White, native speakers" use the language (Flores & Rosa, 2015).

The immigrant mothers, who are perfectly capable of communicating in English yet so firmly believe in their linguistic deficiency, demonstrate the transnational community's

internalization of widely-existing raciolinguistic ideologies in the English-dominant society. A fundamental reason for their internalized language deficit is the external monoglossic language ideologies, which promote "monolingualism" in a standardized national language as the ideal (Flores, 2013, p. 508). In their personal lived experience in the receiving country (i.e., Canada), they were subject to negative feedback again and again, in formal and informal, oral and written, and conscious and unconscious forms, in regard to how they use the English language.

The audience or the other party who engaged in English conversation with the parents often heard and interpreted the linguistic practices of these linguistically minoritized individuals as deviant. This was not based on the objective characteristics of their language use, but on their racial positioning in society. Over time, the "White gaze" became their internal gaze of themselves, and the marginalization became a normalized phenomenon; the notion that 'it was because of me being not good enough, that I was marginalized by the mainstream.' The once very privileged group could not help but process their current marginalized status through such a lens, and hope to work hard enough and become good enough to be included and equalized.

Closing Thoughts: Portrait in a Shattered Mirror

I must admit that even a deep examination of our conversations cannot fully portray the transnational parents in this research. In my efforts to present pieces of their lived experiences and profound thoughts, I can only reveal a tiny tip of the iceberg— what I intend to be an honest, authentic, and respectful glimpse nonetheless. I borrow the shattered mirror metaphor from narrative inquirers Downey and Clandinin (2010) to emphasize that my narrative inquiry attends to the pattern in which the mirror has shattered, attempting to see the myriad bits as a life, as stories lived and told in specific times and places (p. 391).

Throughout numerous conversations in shared languages, at kitchen counters and living rooms, in garages and near children practicing Chinese characters, I approached each transnational parent's life from a relational viewpoint. I attended to what I could understand within the contexts of parenting and teaching in transnational and diasporic spaces, as well as

their ongoing lived experiences across physical and cultural borders. As a result, I learned from the particularities of each "bit" to compose multiple retellings of the story, piecing the bits together in authentic ways. My interpretation and analysis followed the data as presented to me, in the participants' own voices and perspectives.

Transnational parents are not perfect, nor professional experts. They face challenges, doubts, and uncertainties. Often, they are marginalized and ignored in schools and society. Their stories are frequently silent or silenced, their faces at the edge of the main picture. That is why I aim to paint a collective portrait, showcasing their faces, stories, and knowledge on the main canvas.

Downey and Clandinin (2010) described a double movement occurring between pushing uncertainty and incompleteness in a positive direction and creating narratively coherent lives. This double movement captures the privileges and disadvantages that transnational parents face, and their attempts to live through contradictions in order to pursue a coherent narrative of their life. Transnational families live their lives in motion, enabling new relationships to emerge, lives to unfold unexpectedly, and surprise and uncertainty to be ever-present. In conclusion, there is no final or singular story that I can tell. As Downey and Clandinin (2010) wrote,

Narrative inquirers less try to drain the "swamp" of experience through a systematic analysis of particular aspects of situations than try to make its muddiness, if anything, even more generative in the sense of opening up possibilities for it to be otherwise, for different stories to be lived and told. (p. 395)

What I can offer is a portrait in a shattered mirror, inviting the reader to piece together a full picture, blending their own experiences and interpretations to connect the storied bits. This shattered portrait does not provide definite answers; instead, it opens up possibilities to see, hear, and learn from "other" stories. Jin's words aptly capture the emotions of these transnational mothers and the source of their courage to traverse oceans and mountains. With these raw yet powerful words, I conclude this chapter:

所以就是说移民真的是很辛苦，真的我感觉日子真的过的苦哈哈的，但是你没有办法。孩子是我的责任，对不对？我说我为了你，我可以一次次的放弃自己，我可以回炉重造。我们到这边不就是从零开始吗？我连语言都不会。但为了孩子的教育，我不怕吃苦。

So immigrant is really hard, I really feel that life is really hard, but there is nothing you can do. Children are my responsibility, right? I said to them: for you, I can give up myself again and again, and I can throw myself back into the fire and rebuild myself. Aren't we starting from scratch here? I don't even know the (English) language. But for the sake of my children's education, I am not afraid of suffering. (Recorded conversation, July 07, 2022)

CHAPTER FOUR

Tracing Transnational Family Language Policy through Raciolinguistic Ideologies and Linguistic Bullying

"Language exerts hidden power, like a moon on the tides."

- Rita Mae Brown

Opening Story: That Big Bad (No)Thing

The first time I encountered whispers of the incident, it was veiled in secrecy and referred to only as "that thing" (那件事). It was a balmy June afternoon when I first met Shan, her husband Guo, and their young son Lele. Our purpose was to discuss my research in greater detail and to extend an invitation for Shan to participate. We gathered around the kitchen counter, sunlight streaming through the windows as Shan and I carefully reviewed the Participant Consent Form. Meanwhile, Guo and Lele were engrossed in a learning game on the computer nearby.

One of the "potential risks" listed on the form warned that parents might experience strong emotions when recounting their daily experiences with language practice involving their child. As I explained this risk, using examples like racism or discrimination connected to Chinese or English language use, Shan dismissed the idea with a quick shake of her head. But before we could move on, Guo, having overheard our conversation, swiveled his head towards Shan and asked, "Isn't there that thing? That thing that happened at school? 不是有那件事吗? 学校发生的那件事? "

"Oh, right," Shan replied, as if the memory had been buried and only just resurfaced. "That happened. But it was nothing. 是有那件事。但也不算什么。" She cast a glance at her son while adding this hasty comment.

I found myself quietly pondering the nature of this mysterious event. It was clear that something had transpired at school involving their child and language use, something so

distressing that it could not be spoken of in front of the young boy. It was a memory without a name, an experience so painful that the mere mention of it seemed to unsettle Shan.

For a fleeting moment, time seemed to freeze as the room's occupants were ensnared by their own thoughts: I, wrestling with the dilemma of whether to press further; Shan and Guo, haunted by the memories they had hoped to forget. Meanwhile, their son remained blissfully unaware, his eyes fixed on the computer screen, his laughter a sweet melody of innocence.

A gentle June breeze drifted through the window, carrying with it the scent of fresh-cut grass. The heavy silence that enveloped us was finally broken when Shan released a soft sigh. She placed her hand atop mine and whispered, "I will tell you the story next time."

Tell the Story: Bullied at School Due to Ways of Languaging

It was not until our third encounter, nearly a month after "that thing" had been alluded to, that Shan found the courage and opportunity to share her story with me. On the 19th of July, I visited her home where young Lele was absorbed in a Chinese video upstairs. Shan and I sought refuge in the sanctuary of their garage, nestled within the family car—a cocoon of privacy where Lele's ears would remain untouched by our words.

What follows is a retelling of the heartfelt conversation that unfolded between Shan and me about that fateful day. Endeavoring to preserve the authenticity of her language and phrasing as she recounted the harrowing incident, Shan delved into her innermost thoughts. In order to maintain the narrative's fidelity, I shared my paraphrased account with Shan as I drafted this text. With great generosity and a sense of trust, she verified the accuracy and truthfulness of the story, granting me permission to share her family's experience within the pages of this dissertation.

Harassment of the Newly Arrived

When we first arrived in Canada, it was December, and my son was set to start school in March. However, there was a big problem - he couldn't speak English. He had no way of communicating with the other children and didn't understand what they were saying. If someone gave him something, he would respond based on his interpretation of their body language,

which sometimes led to miscommunication. Unfortunately, my son was the only Chinese student in his first school, and he quickly realized that he couldn't communicate with anyone in Chinese.

Later we moved to a new home and transferred him to a new school, where he was thrilled to discover another Chinese boy in his kindergarten class. He eagerly wanted to talk and play with him, but to his disappointment, the other boy insisted that they only speak English at school, leaving my son sad for a few days. Several days later, my son came home and told me that the other boy threatened to punish him because he tried to speak Chinese again in the classroom. I was taken aback and asked my son if he had any issues with the boy. My son said that he didn't have any conflicts with him, but to the contrary, he had been avoiding him since he took toys away from my son's hands several times and was being mean. It was disappointing to hear, but my son was playing with other kids who were kind to him. My son tried to tell the boy that they didn't have to play together, but he threatened again to punish him for not speaking English. It was frustrating because we knew that the boy could speak Chinese perfectly fine, but he chose not to and wouldn't allow my son to speak it either.

Escalation to Physical Violence

After a few days of my son avoiding the other boy who was being mean, something terrible happened. I told my son not to play with him anymore, and things were calm for about two days because they had alternate days off from school. However, two weeks later, the boy hit my son. It didn't happen all at once; it happened gradually. In the first week of school, my son only attended three out of seven days. After three days of school, my son stopped playing with the other boy and started playing with another kid instead. When they were outside, the boy would still come and provoke my son, taking his things without warning. For example, when my son was playing with LEGO or blocks with another kid, the boy would come and push everything down. I asked my son if he had done anything to provoke him, like taking too many toys or wanting to take some of my son's when he ran out. My son said no, the boy just pushed everything down. When I asked about the other kid, my son said he was playing with him too,

and the boy pushed down both of their creations. After that, my son stopped playing with him, and I told him to stay away from that kid. My son agreed, but when they were outside and the teacher couldn't see them, the boy would come and push my son around. My son told him to stop, but he called another kid over to hold my son while he hit him.

When I asked my son how he was hit, he initially didn't say he was slapped. He said the boy pushed him. I asked him to show me how it happened, and he acted himself while I played the other kid. He hit me, but my son just lightly touched me. I asked if it was just a light touch, and my son said no, it hurt a lot. It was painful to hear about my son being physically hurt by someone else, especially since he was just trying to make friends and communicate in his own language.

Reaching Out to the Classroom Teacher

That night, I wrote an email to the teacher expressing my concern about the situation. To my relief, I received a positive response the next day. The teacher had asked the children and confirmed the incident. The teacher acknowledged what had happened and apologized on behalf of the child. When the teacher asked the child about the situation, the child admitted to everything, including the second incident.

However, I was still concerned about my son's classmate's behavior, and I approached the teacher again to discuss the matter further. Since my language skills were limited, I had the school social worker help me translate and communicate. I explained that my son's language skills were limited, and suggested that we try to separate the two children. The translator asked how I wanted to resolve the situation, and although I initially considered letting it go, I knew that the offender might be aware of the gravity of his actions and that an apology was necessary.

Despite the teacher's assurance that the classmate would apologize the next day, my son had not received any apology after a week had passed. When I asked my son if the teacher had spoken to him regarding the situation, he said that the teacher had not mentioned anything to

him. Feeling frustrated, I emailed the teacher again, expressing my concerns and insisting that an apology was necessary.

But to my shock and horror, the following day, the classmate hit my son again. This time, he even asked another child to push my son at the playground, drag him from the grass to the concrete floor, and hit him hard. My five-year-old son was dragged on the ground in such a terrible manner.

Communicating with the School Principal

I needed to speak with the principal right away. But before communicating with the teacher and the principal, I checked with my son again about what had happened. I asked him, "Did he come to play with you outside? Maybe you both played too rough, and that's why this conflict occurred?" However, my son quickly replied that he wasn't playing with the child who pushed him. Instead, he was playing with some other kids at the top of the slide when the two children came up and tried to push him down.

When my son described what happened, he acted out each move. He mentioned that the two children approached him, and then one of them forcibly pulled him while saying something very quickly in English that my son couldn't understand. Then, the child pointed at him and gestured in his direction before coming over and pushing my son. The second child stood there without moving but then joined in and pushed my son alongside the first child.

I didn't think sending emails was going to clarify the matter, so I decided to make another appointment with the social worker. I also reached out to the class teacher again and explained the situation. The teacher listened carefully and promised to look into it further. I also asked if it was possible to meet with the principal and eventually got an appointment with him. During the meeting with the principal, he stated that he didn't believe this was bullying, as young kids are still learning how to interact with each other. "They were simply in the process of learning how to control their hands" was his original words. I didn't agree. The principal also suggested that instead of focusing on the "so-called bullying," my top priority should be

helping my son learn English as quickly as possible. I interrupted him and said, "Let's just end the conversation here. We will leave."

Transfer for Safety

After that conversation, I decided to transfer my child to a different school. The way the principal handled the situation conveyed a clear message—the school didn't think what happened was a big deal. But it was! Can you imagine how heartbreaking it is to see your five-year-old child sad and physically hurt when he comes home every day? All he did was try to use his own language. Why did he have to be punished for that? It was unacceptable to me that nobody seemed to care about his well-being or identity.

I didn't ask the principal to take sides, but I did tell him that he should separate the two parties to stop the harm. I also asked him about the plan of the school to solve the issue and told him that I needed to ensure my child's safety. I understood that I could not interfere with the school's resolution process, but at the very least, my child should not be threatened in school. I would understand if the school wanted to make this incident an educational issue. However, I made my expectation very clear, which was that my child be kept at a safe distance from the other boy. At that time, there had been two conflicts, including one that had been going on for some time. I just did not want my son to get hurt again, physically or mentally.

The principal said that the top priority was for my son to learn English quickly and well. He didn't think there was anything wrong with the situation. To me, it seemed like he was placing the responsibility for the incidents on us—it was a misunderstanding caused by my son's limited English communication skills. I did not agree. I wanted to find a solution, and I was open to suggestions. Of course, I wanted my son to master English quickly, but that didn't mean he deserved to be bullied. The principal's attitude and words made me feel uncomfortable and disrespected. I saw no point in continuing the conversation.

I decided to have my son switch schools.

Unpacking the Story through the Theoretical Lens of Raciolinguistic Ideologies

In unpacking the experiences of Shan's family, particularly the linguistic bullying faced by her son in school, I delved deeply into the complexities of their life as a transnational family. Their journey, which was already filled with significant challenges, became even more difficult due to the hurtful experiences of bullying. My analysis of their story unfolded in distinct phases, encompassing interactions with a Chinese classmate, a teacher, and the school principal. This process involved applying academic theories and theoretical frameworks to dissect the narrative and identify key themes. Central to my analysis was the concept of raciolinguistic ideologies, through which I explored the intricate relationship between language and race. This analysis was conducted at three levels: social, institutional, and individual. At the social level, I contemplated the various instances of bullying Shan's son experienced, especially those involving his Chinese classmate, thereby bringing the notion of linguistic bullying into focus. Next, at the institutional level, I investigated how raciolinguistic ideologies are ingrained in the hidden curriculum of educational institutions, perpetuating linguistic hierarchies and contributing to racism and discrimination. This part of the analysis included a critical look at the teacher's inaction in the face of these issues. Finally, at the individual level, I explored the impact of linguistic bullying on minoritized individuals, particularly under the influence of the White gaze. Here, I discussed the concept of "internalized linguistic inferiority" and its role in perpetuating negative stereotypes and biases. By dissecting Shan's family's experiences through the lens of raciolinguistic ideologies across these three levels, I gained a nuanced understanding of the profound effects of linguistic discrimination on transnational families and individuals. This exploration highlighted the urgent need for strategies to combat linguistic discrimination and foster linguistic diversity in our communities.

Interactions with Another Chinese Child: What is Linguistic Bullying? And Where Does It Come From?

Listening to the heart-wrenching story of Lele and his family's early experiences in Canada, I was struck by the challenges they faced upon arrival. I could not help but feel their vulnerability as they navigated the unfamiliar terrain of a new language and culture. I imagined the relief and joy Lele must have felt when he discovered another Chinese boy in his kindergarten class, offering a lifeline of connection and understanding in a sea of unfamiliar faces. But, to my dismay, the hope for camaraderie and support quickly turned into a source of pain and disappointment. I am puzzled by the other boy's refusal to speak Chinese and his insistence on using only English, even as Lele desperately sought connection in their shared heritage language. I wonder, why would the other Chinese child so vehemently shun Lele's attempts to communicate? What drove him to not only reject his home language but to escalate the situation into physical violence? I ponder the complexities at play in this interaction, searching for the underlying forces that could lead one child to reject and harm another who shared the same linguistic and cultural background. As Shan made the difficult decision to move her son to another school, I sensed the weight of her responsibility to protect her child from further harm. I empathized with her desperation to find a safe environment for Lele, where he could learn and grow without the burden of harassment and violence. In unpacking this powerful narrative, I am reminded of the resilience and courage of transnational families as they navigate the challenges of adapting to new environments. I feel the importance of exploring the dynamics at play within these families and the broader societal context, seeking understanding and empathy for the experiences of those like Lele and Shan.

Deconstructing the Multilayered Bullying Incidents

A disheartening moment remains etched in my memory, when another Chinese boy, with a heart-wrenching phrase, wounded Lele. Shan recounted the boy's words:

他清清楚楚地用中文说了这句话: "我就欺负你不会讲英文!"

He said this sentence in Chinese, loud and clear, "I pushed you around because you can't speak English!" (Recorded conversation, July 19, 2022)

This poignant recollection forced me to confront the dark side of language, a weapon of oppression and harm. "Linguistic bullying," as I came to understand it, was a form of harassment where language was repeatedly employed to demean, marginalize, or harm others (Bakhtin, 1981; Giltrow, 2003). Lele's tormentor, an English-proficient student, exploited his linguistic advantage to bully and marginalize Lele, who was still learning English. This left me pondering the prevalence of linguistic bullying among recent immigrants in new schools, in foreign lands (Solberg & Olweus, 2003). Worse still, victims of bullying often remain silent, not reporting their experiences to parents or teachers (Olweus, 1993). For students like Lele, the struggle to articulate their suffering to those who should protect them becomes even more challenging.

Lele's experience made visible the complex interplay between language, race, and power. I became awakened to the need for a more inclusive and equitable understanding of language and race in education, scrutinizing the perceptions of those in dominant positions to cultivate empathy and spark change. Shan's words echoed in my mind, reminding me of the hurtful message the bully delivered to her son:

小朋友跟他说, "你只能用英文跟我说话, 不准讲中文。如果你再讲中文, 我就收拾你。"

The boy told him (Shan's son), "You can only speak to me in English, not in Chinese. If you speak Chinese again, I will punish you." (Recorded conversation, July 19, 2022)

Shan's account of her son being bullied for speaking Chinese starkly highlights the issue of linguistic discrimination, reflecting broader racial and power dynamics at play. The bully's insistence that Shan's son speak only English, with threats of punishment for speaking Chinese, signals not just individual hostility but potentially mirrors discriminatory attitudes absorbed from adults, indicating how such biases are learned and propagated. This behavior serves as a

stark illustration of how societal norms and ideologies, particularly those valuing Whiteness and linguistic supremacy, are deeply embedded and maintained. The situation epitomizes linguistic oppression, showcasing society's broader failure to appreciate and honor linguistic diversity. This oppression is anchored in raciolinguistic ideologies that elevate certain languages while marginalizing others (Rosa & Flores, 2017). Lele and Shan's experience emphasizes the critical need to explore the complex relationships between language, race, and power, and to devise approaches that promote a more inclusive and understanding society. Addressing these biases involves challenging the foundational assumptions that fuel discrimination, recognizing that language often serves as a cover for wider discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, education, or socioeconomic class. The societal tolerance for ridiculing accents or dialects further cements these biases, normalizing the diminishment of individuals for their linguistic characteristics.

Engaging with Lele and Shan's narrative deepened my connection to their journey, witnessing firsthand their challenges and perseverance (Solberg & Olweus, 2003; Ross et al., 2009). This connection underscores the importance of confronting and reforming systemic issues to celebrate linguistic diversity and ensure respect and dignity for all, irrespective of the languages they speak. It was during this exploration that Shan recounted a particularly hurtful incident, Shan shared another conversation where the bully called her son's Chinese food lunch "disgusting:"

他走过来，说我儿子带的午餐"恶心"。那天是我第一次，也是唯一的一次，给他带中餐。

He came over and said the lunch my son brought was "disgusting." That day was the first and only time I packed him Chinese food. (Recorded conversation, July 19, 2022)

The bullying boy's comment leads me to ponder if the bully himself might have been a victim of bullying, thereby now mirroring that behavior towards another child, notably one grappling with English. This scenario provokes a deeper inquiry into the cycles of bullying, pondering the influence of adult behavior in imparting these discriminatory tendencies to children. It reflects

on the broader societal dynamics of transmitted ideologies of superiority, suggesting that the bully's actions might mirror societal attitudes towards language and identity. Moreover, this case emphasizes the often-ignored role of language in discrimination, where linguistic variances serve as pretexts for biases linked to ethnicity, education, or social class. The mockery of linguistic traits, alarmingly normalized, conceals underlying prejudices, perpetuating a cycle of discrimination. Simultaneously, this episode unveils the insidious nature of the White gaze, transforming mundane experiences into avenues for discrimination and exclusion for children like Lele. It underscores how Whiteness impacts not only individuals identified as White but also those racialized as "of color" or "non-White," manifesting personally mediated racism and possibly internalized racism (Charity Hudley, 2017). The child's disdainful comment about the Chinese food not only highlights personal biases but also reflects broader societal attitudes towards cultural and linguistic differences, showcasing the critical need to address Whiteness and language discrimination as central to combating racism and the marginalization of diverse cultural and linguistic practices (Solberg & Olweus, 2003; Ross et al., 2009; Rosa & Flores, 2017).

Listening to their story, I empathized with Lele's struggle to fit into a new environment and Shan's pain and frustration as she sought to protect her son. I recognized their determination to overcome these obstacles, and the importance of amplifying their voices and advocating for a more inclusive and compassionate educational environment (Janks et al., 2013; Portes & Rumbaut, 2007; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009). Amidst the adversity, hope emerged through open communication between Lele and his parents, a vital channel for expressing emotions and recounting traumatic experiences. This highlighted the crucial role of communication between parents and children in transnational families, especially in their heritage language, as a valuable source of support for students struggling in new educational environments (Bakhtin, 1981). When we honor their experiences and amplify their voices, we can work towards creating more inclusive and empathetic educational environments that celebrate linguistic diversity and

provide support for students like Lele, who strive to overcome the barriers of language and find their place in a new world.

Interactions with the Teacher: The Hidden, Racialized Curriculum on the School

Landscape

As I continued to listen to Shan's story, I felt the frustration and heartbreak of a mother attempting to protect her child from harm. Confronting the challenges of adapting to a new environment, Shan took the initiative to address the troubling situation with her son's classmate. She courageously reached out to the classroom teacher, sharing her concerns and seeking resolution. Despite the language barrier, Shan enlisted the help of a school social worker to facilitate communication and convey her desire to protect Lele from further harm. As the teacher acknowledged the incidents and promised to address them, hope flickered for a positive outcome. However, when the expected apology did not materialize and the teacher seemed to have taken no meaningful action, Shan's sense of frustration grew. She persisted in her pursuit of justice, advocating for her son's well-being and the necessity of an apology. In the face of the teacher's unfulfilled promises and apparent inaction, I am struck by the resilience and determination displayed by Shan as she continued to advocate for her son's safety and well-being. The distressing image of Lele being dragged and hit on the playground weighs heavily on me, as does the emotional burden borne by Shan and her son. Shan's resilience was tested once again when, to her dismay, the classmate's aggression escalated further. The harrowing image of her young son being dragged and hit on the playground underscores the urgency and gravity of the situation. The heartbreak Shan and Lele experienced is palpable, and their pain is a poignant reminder of the importance of understanding and supporting families like theirs as they navigate the complexities of a new culture. Through this narrative, we are invited to empathize with their struggle for a safe learning environment and to appreciate the emotional toll such experiences can have on transnational families.

The (White) Elephant in the Classroom

As I delved deeper into Shan and Lele's experiences, I felt the pervasive impact of the hidden curriculum in their lives. This concept, introduced by Jackson (1968) and Eisner (1979), refers to the implicit lessons imparted in schools through structures, materials, and everyday practices. For instance, the practice of having children walk in lines or hold a rope during field trips subtly instills ideas of order and compliance. Similarly, the daily ritual of singing 'O Canada' at the start of the school day embeds a sense of national identity and belonging. In Shan and Lele's case, such elements of the hidden curriculum seemed to be shaping their perspectives and experiences, silently perpetuating dominant societal norms and values. These unspoken lessons, while seemingly innocuous, played a significant role in molding their understanding of their place within the school and the broader society.

Reflecting on Lele's experience and the teacher's lack of action, I began to understand how the hidden curriculum influences not just students' socio-moral development and behavior, but also teachers' responses to these behaviors. The teacher's silence and inaction towards Lele's plight might be indicative of her own unconscious adherence to the hidden curriculum, which conveys values like English language dominance and avoidance of discussions about race and cultural differences (DeVries & Zan, 2012; Freiberg, 1999; Kohn, 1996). This silence can inadvertently perpetuate White supremacy and marginalize students like Lele, making them feel inferior and ashamed.

As I empathized with Shan's determination to protect her son, I recognized the urgent need to address the hidden curriculum. Instances like Lele's linguistic bullying can evoke feelings of shame and inferiority, further marginalizing transnational individuals like Shan and reinforcing English language dominance. Matias and Liou (2015) suggested that immigrant students frequently encounter difficulties articulating their experiences with racism, attributing this challenge to a lack of race-related discourse within their educational settings. This issue is not limited to conversations about racism. It also includes scenarios in educational settings

where the culture of the classroom markedly differs from the students' own cultural backgrounds. Such disparities can notably impact learning outcomes, particularly during the initial stages of education. The unfamiliar classroom culture can hinder not only the students' ability to engage with and absorb the curriculum but also impede their language development. This is especially true for students who are simultaneously navigating new linguistic landscapes alongside their academic pursuits. The interaction between an unfamiliar educational culture and the process of language acquisition underscores the need for more inclusive educational practices that recognize and address the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students.

In Giroux's perspective (1981), the "hidden curriculum" refers to the underlying norms, values, and beliefs implicitly conveyed within educational settings, beyond the formal curriculum. These unstated elements of the curriculum often reflect broader social practices and institutional norms. "Social curricula" encompass these implicit messages along with the explicit social education provided in schools, covering teachings about societal norms, cultural values, interpersonal behaviors, and even power dynamics within society. Despite efforts to make educational curricula more explicit and inclusive, the hidden social curriculum continues to exert a significant influence due to its deep entrenchment within educational practices and the broader cultural context. These implicit lessons, which are not always openly acknowledged or contested, profoundly shape students' perceptions of social norms and expectations, potentially contributing to behaviors like those exhibited by the bully in Shan and Lele's experience. For families such as theirs, the impact of their encounters within the educational system is determined not solely by the explicit curriculum but also by these underlying social messages. These can encompass societal views on family roles, cultural standards, or assumptions regarding social status and identity, subtly yet significantly influencing their everyday experiences and outlook as they navigate the educational landscape and wider social environments.

Merely adjusting social rewards or implementing punishments falls short in confronting the dominant cultural forces of White supremacy. White supremacy, while often linked to radical groups, actually signifies a broader systemic issue. In reality, White supremacy denotes a societal structure where norms, values, and power overwhelmingly favor White, Eurocentric standards, often marginalizing other racial and ethnic groups. In this context, hegemony refers to the subtle yet profound way dominant cultural norms and values become the accepted standard. This acceptance is evident in the overrepresentation of Eurocentric perspectives in educational content and the marginalization of non-White histories and achievements. Lele's school experience offers a poignant example of how this hegemonic White supremacy operates. His bullying due to developing English proficiency and Chinese usage is not just individual prejudice; it reveals a symptom of a larger, systemic problem. The curriculum and teaching methods, primarily tailored for native English speakers, often fail to accommodate the needs of linguistically diverse students. This oversight subtly establishes a language and culture hierarchy, with English at its apex. Everyday school routines, interactions, and lesson content subtly enforce the supremacy of certain cultural norms. Literature and history lessons, for instance, predominantly feature Eurocentric views, sidelining other cultural narratives and contributions. Hence, the bullying Lele endured is reflective of a deeper issue: the hidden curriculum in schools subtly yet significantly influences student perceptions of linguistic and cultural norms, perpetuating systemic biases and shaping their understanding of cultural hierarchy.

In the endeavor to foster inclusivity, teachers play a pivotal role by revisiting and reshaping the narratives drawn from their own teaching experiences, as suggested by Connelly & Clandinin (1988). Shan's confusion and support for her son Lele through the linguistic bullying incident illuminate the urgent need to unmask the biases in educational systems, biases that typically favor Eurocentric perspectives and norms. This process of unmasking requires a thorough reevaluation of elements such as classroom literature selections, which often predominantly feature narratives in line with White cultural norms, and history lessons that

primarily concentrate on European events and viewpoints, thereby marginalizing the diverse histories and contributions of other cultures.

Creating a more inclusive, equitable, and compassionate educational environment involves actively addressing the hidden curriculum that perpetuates White supremacy. In practice, this means integrating literature and history lessons that celebrate a wide array of cultures, thereby reflecting the diversity of the student body. For instance, students like Lele, and perhaps also the other boy in this story, would then see their own cultural heritage represented in the stories they read and in the history they learn about, fostering a sense of belonging and validation. Moreover, teachers would receive training to recognize and address their own biases, ensuring that classroom discussions and interactions are respectful and inclusive of all voices. Language learning support would be robust, recognizing the value of multilingualism, and helping students like Lele feel confident in their language skills, both in their mother tongue and in English.

In this environment, families like Shan and Lele's would find that their experiences and cultural backgrounds are not only acknowledged but celebrated as integral parts of the school community. Such a setting empowers them, ensuring they are not marginalized or silenced. Instead, their stories and perspectives become valuable contributions to the learning experience of the entire student body. This shift towards a more inclusive approach ensures that all students, regardless of their background, are given the opportunity to thrive and are equipped with the understanding and empathy to appreciate the diverse world around them.

Heart in Good Place? Marginalization Disguised as Support

As Shan and I explored Lele's experience, I found myself contemplating a question: "Is it wrong to emphasize the importance of learning English well?" While mastering English is undoubtedly crucial for a transnational child's education and daily life in their new country, I could not help but ponder the reasons behind prioritizing "standard English" over other languages and dialects. Could this preference stem from unexamined, White-centered notions

rather than genuine good intentions? Lele's encounter with linguistic bullying brought to light the school's failure to embrace languages other than English in their teaching and daily routines. Without adequate language support in both formal and informal settings, newcomer children like Lele are left vulnerable to linguistic bullying from more proficient peers who use their language skills to assert dominance and make newcomers feel inferior.

Reflecting on Shan's concerns for her son, it becomes evident how the hidden curriculum in English language teaching, with its underlying ideologies and political agendas, significantly affects students like Lele (Hilliard, 2014; Matsuda, 2017). This curriculum, often unspoken, fosters cultural domination and symbolic violence, subtly subjugating marginalized groups through the content and delivery of language education (Bourdieu, 1991). In English language and literacy teaching, the content not only conveys language skills but also imparts a worldview where Eurocentric perspectives and norms are seen as the default (Byram, 2008; Chapelle, 2009). For example, in elementary classrooms, the reading materials often feature stories that predominantly showcase Western lifestyles, such as children enjoying leisure activities or family traditions typical in Western cultures. This portrayal subtly implies that these Western-centric activities are universally standard, inadvertently 'othering' cultures that have different traditions and practices. In classroom discussions, especially those around personal experiences like holiday celebrations, there's an implicit bias towards Western norms. When students like Lele share experiences from non-Western cultural backgrounds, these narratives are often treated as exceptions to the norm, reinforcing a Eurocentric worldview in subtle yet impactful ways.

This hidden curriculum extends beyond the classroom, shaping how students interact and perceive the world. Lele's proficiency in English, for instance, becomes more than a linguistic skill; it is a measure against a cultural standard that undervalues his heritage language and heritage. The emphasis on English fluency in educational settings positions those proficient in it as more knowledgeable, inadvertently perpetuating a form of cultural power and domination. In such environments, non-native English speakers often feel the pressure to conform to these

dominant cultural norms, impacting their identity and self-esteem. This dynamic demonstrates how language teaching, while ostensibly neutral, can perpetuate deep-seated biases and reinforce societal hierarchies.

Expanding educational opportunities for racialized language learners and their communities is crucial. Yet, it is equally important not to depict their home language practices as problematic. Avineri and Johnson (2015) highlighted the dangers of "deficit perspectives toward minoritized groups," which deem the language practices of these groups as inferior to those of the dominant language standards. Adopting such views risks neglecting the richness and complexity of these students' linguistic repertoires. Portraying home languages negatively can inadvertently support race-evasive ideologies that downplay or ignore racial issues. This issue might manifest in classrooms where teachers, striving for "colorblindness," fail to recognize the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of racialized students, overlooking their unique challenges. Many White individuals often assert "I do not see color" or "race doesn't matter to me," implying that race should not matter to anyone, a stance that Bonilla-Silva (2018) identifies as color-blind racism, a neo-racist ideology. His research, along with that of Burke (2012), Jayakumar and Adamian (2017), Lippard (2016), and Mueller (2017), documents the prevalent embrace of color-blind ideology among White individuals in North America, highlighting a critical area for educational and societal reflection and reform.

Irvine and Gal (2000) highlight how a race-evasive approach can diminish the visibility of the struggles faced by diverse ethnoracial language learners, masking the specific needs and challenges they encounter. In concrete terms, this might be seen in educational policies that fail to provide adequate resources or support for students who speak languages other than English at home, or in curricula that do not reflect the linguistic diversity of the student population. Addressing the political, social, and emotional factors that perpetuate oppression in education involves recognizing and challenging systemic biases and inequities. For example, political factors might include policies that prioritize English-only instruction, social factors could be the

stigmatization of certain accents or dialects, and emotional factors might involve the feelings of inadequacy that students experience when their home languages are devalued.

By disrupting the hidden curriculum in language teaching, which often reinforces a narrow view of linguistic competence, educators can foster an environment that values and nurtures the intercultural awareness and communication skills of all learners. This means integrating diverse linguistic and cultural content into teaching materials, recognizing the legitimacy of various English forms globally, and creating classroom spaces where all students feel seen and valued for their backgrounds and experiences. This approach encourages an inclusive and equitable learning environment, where differences are not just acknowledged but fundamentally embedded as vital parts of the educational experience.

Interactions with the Principal: Raciolinguistic Ideologies in Play

Listening to Shan's heartfelt story about trying to protect her child, I was deeply moved by her unwavering determination to address her son's conflict. She hoped for a better outcome and managed to arrange a meeting with the school principal. During the meeting, it was surprising to hear the principal suggest that the situation did not constitute bullying, attributing it instead to young children still learning how to interact. However, it became evident that although each school district may have its own definition and protocol for bullying, the incident involving Lele clearly went beyond what could merely be considered a social learning process for young students. He explained that they were just getting control over their hands. This view made me think about the broader implications of such an approach when dealing with conflicts among young children. Shan disagreed with the principal's assessment, and I could feel her frustration and disbelief when he suggested that her main concern should be helping her son learn English quickly, rather than focusing on the "so-called bullying." I empathized with her disappointment and pain, feeling ignored and misunderstood by those who should have been offering support. Feeling disheartened, Shan interrupted the principal and made the tough decision to end the conversation, ultimately leaving the school. Her story had a lasting impact on

me, prompting me to scrutinize the language used by the principal and delve into the meaning behind his words. It led me to question the institution's approach to addressing such conflicts and whether their stance might inadvertently perpetuate the challenges faced by transnational families. This critical examination of the institutional level highlighted the importance of understanding and empathizing with their experiences in order to provide the necessary support and advocate for change.

The Real Monster Hidden Behind

Walking alongside the family, I considered how language, race, and power are intricately connected across various ethnic and racial contexts (Alim, 2016). Reflecting on Lele's linguistic bullying, I realized the significance of acknowledging the crucial role language plays in shaping, preserving, and adapting racial and ethnic identities. In exploring the intersection of race and language, the concept of raciolinguistic ideologies emerged constantly, illuminating the connection between race and language and their entanglement within societal ideologies (Rosa & Flores, 2017). Analyzing these ideologies offered invaluable insight into how racialized individuals like Lele become associated with racialized voices, making them vulnerable to linguistic bullying. Raciolinguistic ideologies expose how linguistic practices in schools and society unfairly link specific racialized bodies with linguistic deficiency. Flores and Rosa (2015) argued that these ideologies contribute to the social construction of concepts such as linguistic appropriateness, perpetuating the belief that certain racialized groups, like Lele's, are linguistically deficient.

Lele's experience with linguistic bullying and the prevalent raciolinguistic ideologies opened my eyes to how language practices not only create racialized speaking subjects but also perpetuate notions of linguistic deficiency among specific racialized groups. This realization deepened my empathy for Lele and others facing similar challenges. Embracing a raciolinguistic perspective, I recognized the need to shift my focus from scrutinizing the language practices of racially minoritized individuals like Lele to dismantling larger systems of oppression. Racial

capitalism is one such system, where economic exploitation and racial oppression intersect, often disadvantaging racialized individuals based on their linguistic traits, like accents or dialects deemed less 'professional' in global markets (Rosa, 2019). Furthermore, I became aware of the impact of colonial subject formation, a process where identities are shaped within colonial power structures (Rosa, 2019). In educational contexts, this often leads to the underrepresentation or skewed portrayal of colonized peoples' histories, influencing how students from these backgrounds view their identities and cultures. Upon reflecting on this perspective, it became clear to me that students like Lele are often unjustly labeled as deficient language learners. This not only misjudges their actual linguistic capabilities but also reflects a broader ignorance about the cognitive benefits of multilingualism. Such mislabeling is deeply embedded in systemic issues, including White supremacy, which enforces particular language standards while disparaging others.

Language indeed wields significant power in molding our identities and experiences, affecting how we interact and relate with others. As a transnational parent, I have observed firsthand how language can lead to feelings of internalized inferiority among minoritized individuals, including my own children and others like Lele, who face the challenges of living under the pervasive influence of White societal norms. In my interactions with other newcomer parents, a common thread of concern emerges. Many express hesitation to use their heritage language in public spaces, such as accompanying their children at the playground where "local" families are present. They share feelings of embarrassment about sounding different from others, worried about standing out or not fitting in. This self-consciousness often stems from a fear of being judged or not being accepted by the dominant cultural group.

Through my exploration of "raciolinguistic enregisterment," a concept detailed by Flores and Rosa (2015), I have come to understand how our perceptions of language are deeply intertwined with racial identities. This framework reveals that language practices are often seen as symbols of specific racial groups, shaped by historical, political, and economic factors. It is a

realization that language is not just a neutral communication tool; it carries with it an entire spectrum of racial implications and societal biases. Lele's kindergarten experience, where he was singled out for speaking Chinese, serves as a poignant example of how these raciolinguistic ideologies manifest. It is startling to witness such racialized perceptions of language in a young child, suggesting a deep-rooted influence of societal norms on individual attitudes towards language and race. This incident prompts me to reflect on the pervasiveness of these ideologies and the urgency with which they need to be addressed, especially to combat issues like linguistic bullying. In confronting this prevailing ideology, I also find the proposal of a "critical heteroglossic language ideology" by Flores and Rosa (2015) particularly compelling. This ideology celebrates the richness of multilingualism and the complex interactions of different languages within the social practices of language-minoritized individuals. It is not just about recognizing the existence of multiple languages, but deeply understanding and valuing the diverse ways in which these languages intertwine in people's lives.

By adopting a critical heteroglossic language ideology, we—educators, parents, and perhaps all citizens—can recognize the value of diverse linguistic practices and challenge the raciolinguistic ideologies that perpetuate discrimination and exclusion. In doing so, we work towards creating a more just and inclusive educational landscape, where children like Lele can embrace their linguistic and cultural identities without fear of prejudice or marginalization. Through this understanding and empathy, we can create a more equitable world that honors the diverse linguistic and cultural experiences of all individuals, regardless of race or background. Upon further examination of Lele's ordeal, the pervasive influence of English-monolingualism becomes apparent, positioning English—particularly standard or academic varieties—as superior due to the connection with Whiteness in Western society (Flores & Rosa, 2015). Such incidents reveal broader societal attitudes and beliefs about race and language, as well as the enduring legacies of colonialism. As Pennycook (2007) pointed out, the portrayal of English as essential for participation in modern society further reinforces the idea that other languages are

inferior. The conversation between Shan and the school principal exemplified the subtle reinforcement of these norms:

校长给我的回应说，他不觉得这是霸凌，因为他们很小，只是在学着怎么管住自己的手。校长还说，"你（家长）现在应该做的，是让他（新移民小朋友）快一点把英文学会。

The principal said it wasn't bullying because the students were young and learning to control their hands. He also said, "What you (the newcomer parent) should do now is to ask him (the new immigrant child) to learn English faster." (Recorded conversation, July 19, 2022)

This response revealed the subtle reinforcement of raciolinguistic ideologies, shifting the responsibility to Lele, implying that learning English quickly would resolve his issues. Instead of addressing the bullying, the principal placed responsibility on the newcomer mother to help her son learn English quickly. This reinforced the idea that culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse children must adapt to the dominant society, rather than challenge discrimination (García & De Lissoy, 2013). Parents like Shan play a crucial role in supporting their children during trying times. They serve as bridges, helping their children navigate the complexities of language, race, and culture. Providing essential emotional support, guidance, and advocacy, they foster understanding and respect for their children's linguistic and cultural heritage.

Retell the Story: Processing and Rebuilding

As I weave together the experiences of Lele and Shan's family with existing research, I am reminded of the power of storytelling in capturing their genuine emotions, thoughts, and actions, as well as honoring their voices. It strikes me how parents like Shan play a pivotal role in processing and rebuilding their children's linguistic and cultural identities within their circumstances. I found myself drawn to their transnational life, a dynamic blend of worlds, languages, and cultures. Listening to their stories, I witnessed the emotional strength of parents, the rebuilding of their children's linguistic identity, and the complex dance of their family's

language policy. In this journey of retelling the storied experiences of Shan's family, I grappled with the challenge of accurately representing their experiences and viewpoints, while connecting with the broader context of transnational family life. I am inspired by the potential for storytelling to provide individuals with opportunities to connect, empathize, and learn from the lives of others. With a blend of sentence structures and narrative tones, I invite you to join me as we explore the possibilities for processing and rebuilding within the distinct context of Lele and Shan's family, uncovering the hidden depths of their personal narrative.

The Emotional Agency of Transnational Parents

Reflecting upon Shan's journey in supporting her son's emotional well-being amidst a linguistic bullying incident, I see the emotional agency of transnational parents and wonder how many others have faced similar challenges and what steps they may have taken.

Shan's story highlights the struggles transnational parents may encounter when advocating for their children's emotional and academic needs within formal school systems. These challenges lead me to ponder how often children from transnational families experience discrimination or stereotyping due to cultural differences in communication styles and behavior expectations. Such experiences can be stressful for parents who may feel unsupported in advocating for their children's needs. In light of these challenges, I am struck by the importance of recognizing the emotional agency of transnational parents like Shan, who play a crucial role in ensuring their children's emotional and academic well-being as they navigate these challenges and seek out appropriate resources.

For many transnational families like Shan's, striking a balance between their heritage culture and language and the dominant culture of their host society can be a formidable challenge (Fillmore, 1991; Li & Lin, 2023; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Wiley & Valdés, 2000; Yang & Curdt-Christiansen, 2021). Children in these families often acculturate more rapidly than their parents, making it difficult for transnational parents like Shan to convey their values and beliefs (Wang & Curdt-Christiansen, 2021; Wong & Fillmore, 1991). This dynamic can lead

to fears of emotional distance and alienation from their children (Curdt-Christiansen & Iwaniec, 2023; Lawton & Logio, 2009; Luo & Wiseman, 2000).

As a Chinese immigrant mother, Shan understood the importance of English fluency for her son's successful acculturation but also worried about losing their heritage language and cultural identity. Many Chinese immigrant mothers share this concern, hoping for their children to be bilingual in Chinese and English (Lawton & Logio, 2009; Luo & Wiseman, 2000; Qin, 2006; Zhou, 1997). However, striking this delicate balance can be daunting for parents like Shan, who fear that emphasizing English might result in the loss of Chinese language skills and cultural identity, and possibly even detachment from their Chinese community and family. This presents a delicate situation for parents who must navigate the intricacies of helping their children acculturate while maintaining connections to their heritage culture and language (Wong & Fillmore, 1991).

Exploring further the challenges Chinese immigrant parents face when seeking resources to support their children's education, I learned that language barriers, limited knowledge of the formal school system, and social isolation are major obstacles (Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006). Shan's experience in this study exemplifies these challenges. However, I am encouraged to learn that community-based resources can be a vital source of emotional support for immigrant families and their children (Kim, 2011). For parents like Shan, communication with other transnational parents within the same cultural and ethnic community are invaluable for navigating the school system and helping their children maintain a connection to their cultural heritage, especially when conducted in their shared heritage language. This effective communication and these shared experiences create a solid emotional support system, empowering transnational parents to further support their children's emotional well-being. Recognizing the value of community-based resources in meeting the emotional needs of immigrant families and their children is essential, and educators, policymakers, and community leaders can play a significant role in advocating for their accessibility and availability.

Navigating the education system as a transnational parent like Shan is a daunting task. With cultural differences in communication styles and behavior expectations, advocating for a child's emotional and academic needs can be difficult without facing discrimination or stereotyping from teachers and other adults. When Shan reached out to the school principal to voice her concerns, she quickly realized there was a significant understanding gap between the school and her in terms of linguistic rights and power imbalance. This is a common issue faced by transnational families, who may feel unsupported and marginalized within the formal school system. Studies (Birman, 2006) have shown that transnational families may be less likely to seek mental health services for their children due to stigma, insufficient knowledge of available resources, and language barriers. However, Shan was determined to exercise her emotional agency and fully utilize societal and community resources to support her child's rights. She contacted the social worker from the newcomer support organization who resided at the school and started communicating with the classroom teacher and the principal through the translation and interpretation services provided by the social worker. Shan's actions make me realize the importance of cultural sensitivity and support within the formal school system for transnational families. With greater awareness and understanding of linguistic rights and power imbalance, teachers and other adults can better serve the needs of these families and their children. By fully exercising societal and community resources, parents like Shan can advocate for their child's rights and ensure that their emotional and academic needs are met. To fully support transnational families, we must recognize and value the emotional agency of these parents while actively working to dismantle harmful ideologies and behaviors that contribute to their marginalization.

Rebuilding Linguistic Identity

Reflecting on Lele's experience with linguistic bullying and its effects on his identity highlights the crucial role of linguistic identity, alongside the indispensable support from his mother, Shan. As a transnational parent, Shan committed herself to aiding her son in reconstructing his linguistic identity, a process Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) deems vital to averting significant psychological damage. Such parents have a sophisticated grasp of identity as malleable and shaped by various linguistic and cultural experiences. They understand that linguistic identity involves how individuals see themselves and are seen by others through the prism of language—the languages they speak, their usage, and associated cultural connections. Particularly, Chinese immigrant parents like Shan recognize the inevitable transformation of their children's identities over time but maintain that the Chinese and Canadian facets of their identities will continue to play a crucial role in their self-conception (Kanno & Norton, 2003).

The concept of identity as hybrid, complex, and evolving deeply aligns with the fluid nature of transnational experiences. Children start to form their self-identity early, shaped by diverse factors like race, ethnicity, gender, religion, linguistic backgrounds, and migration histories. For immigrant children, identity negotiation is especially intricate as they experience different environments across countries. Their identities, far from being fixed, are constantly evolving through transnational practices, making them dynamic and multifaceted (Compton-Lilly et al., 2019). The bullying incident Lele faced is a poignant example of how such identity challenges manifest. This event is not just a conflict moment but also mirrors societal dynamics around inclusion, exclusion, and the acceptance or rejection based on linguistic and cultural identity markers. These challenges highlight the fluidity and adaptability of immigrant children's identities, serving both as resilience sources and potential vulnerabilities. Bullying instances become critical moments testing their evolving identities' strength and flexibility, enriching their identity narratives with complexity and understanding of their multicultural world roles.

Incorporating the bullying incident into the broader discussion on identity, I also wonder about the linguistic identity development of the bully himself. This child, through his actions, may also be navigating complex layers of his own linguistic identity, influenced by the societal valorization of certain languages over others. His decision to target Lele for speaking a language other than English hints at a possible internal conflict or at external pressures regarding his perceptions of language hierarchy and identity. Such behavior could be indicative of his struggles with understanding and accepting linguistic diversity, reflecting broader societal messages that prioritize English and marginalize other languages. This scenario emphasizes the need for environments that celebrate linguistic diversity and support positive linguistic identity formation for all children, helping them recognize linguistic diversity's value as an essential identity component.

Language learning, as Norton (2013) pointed out, is deeply influenced by societal power dynamics, with access to resources often reflecting the unequal structure of our world. Transnational language learners face unique power dynamics that can affect their ability to assert their right to speak in different contexts (Norton, 2013). To navigate these complexities, learners adopt various dispositions and practices, but they may still face limitations due to their gendered and racialized identities (Kelly, 2012). Understanding the competencies of transnational language learners requires an intersectional approach that acknowledges learners as social actors navigating different and sometimes competing ideologies.

In transnational spaces, the linguistic practices of learners like Lele are often valued differently. As children start school, they begin to develop identities separate from their parents, including their linguistic identity as speakers of one or more languages. Block (2015) highlights this process, emphasizing the significance of how children view and express their language abilities. The concept of linguistic identity can be dissected into three components: "expertise," "affiliation," and "inheritance," as per Leung et al. (1997). "Expertise" pertains to the level of skill and proficiency a child exhibits in a language. For example, Lele's ability to engage in

conversations, read stories, and write essays in both Chinese and English demonstrates his linguistic expertise. This skill set enables him to navigate different cultural contexts, academically excel in diverse environments, and communicate his thoughts and emotions effectively in both languages. "Affiliation" delves into the emotional and cultural connections a child forms with a language, often shaped by personal experiences and social interactions. For Lele, speaking Chinese might evoke feelings of warmth and closeness associated with family gatherings, sharing stories with grandparents, or celebrating traditional festivals. This affiliation fosters a deep sense of identity and belonging, anchoring him in a cultural community that extends beyond geographical boundaries. "Inheritance" focuses on the language's transmission from one generation to the next, serving as a conduit for cultural and historical values. Lele's use of Chinese is not merely a means of communication but a rich inheritance that connects him to his family's past, their journeys, and the collective memories of his ancestors. It is through language that Lele inherits a legacy of resilience, traditions, and cultural narratives, embedding him within a lineage that informs his understanding of the world and his place within it. Together, these three dimensions—expertise, affiliation, and inheritance—interweave to shape Lele's linguistic identity. While expertise highlights his linguistic capabilities, affiliation emphasizes the emotional and cultural significance of these languages in his life. Inheritance, meanwhile, underscores the historical depth and continuity of his linguistic heritage, offering a multifaceted view of how language functions as a cornerstone of identity for bilingual or multilingual individuals.

Shan's position as a transnational parent is paramount in aiding Lele to reconstruct his linguistic identity, particularly following distressing incidents such as linguistic bullying. Shan, with a determined gaze, conveyed to me the essence of her commitment:

英语，或者中文，水平好不好先不说。对我来说更重要的是，我儿子的感情受到伤害了，他对在学校说中文这件事害怕了。我得帮他在感情上重新站起来。说到底，他是个中国人，中国人应该说中文。

English or Chinese, regardless of proficiency level, what matters more to me is that my son's feelings have been hurt, and he is now afraid to speak Chinese at school. I need to help him emotionally stand back up on this matter. At the end of the day, he is Chinese, and a Chinese person should be able to speak Chinese language. (Recorded conversation, July 19, 2022)

Shan's support extends beyond merely enhancing Lele's language skills ("expertise"). It is fundamentally about strengthening his emotional tie ("affiliation") to his heritage language and assisting him in recognizing this language as a key component of his family's legacy ("inheritance"). Under Shan's mentorship, Lele is adept at navigating the complex layers of his linguistic identity within a transnational framework, skillfully melding "expertise," "affiliation," and "inheritance." Such support is indispensable for children within transnational families, as it aids them in forging a confident and comprehensive linguistic identity.

The Complexity of Transnational Family Language Policy

As families like Shan's transition between their heritage language and the dominant language of their new home, they constantly make choices about language use, both consciously and unconsciously (Curdtt-Christiansen, 2009; King et al., 2008; Spolsky, 2012). These decisions are not made in isolation; they are deeply influenced by broader societal forces and power dynamics. In my exploration of family language policy and its impact on multilingualism and language acquisition, I find the experiences of families like Shan and Lele's particularly compelling. They epitomize the struggles and resilience of transnational families in preserving their linguistic and cultural identities within a broader societal context (King et al., 2008). Understanding the intersections of family language policy, migration experiences, and power dynamics (Chevalier, 2012; Meyer-Pitton, 2013; Zhu & Li, 2016) offers insights into the multifaceted struggles of transnational families.

Family language policy, a field of research that has grown in response to increasing transnationalism and bi- or multilingualism in families like Shan's, deserves a closer look

(Hirsch & Lee, 2018). This policy encompasses three interconnected components: language ideologies (beliefs and attitudes about language), language management (strategies and efforts to shape language use), and language practices (actual use of language in daily life). Each of these components plays a crucial role in shaping the linguistic and cultural identities of families (Spolsky, 2009).

For instance, the research conducted by Curdt-Christiansen in 2014, and Riches and Curdt-Christiansen in 2010, provides significant observations on multilingualism within transnational families, particularly in Singapore and Canada. Their studies underscore the dynamic interaction between family language policies and the wider national and educational language policies. Consider the example of Shan and Lele: their family language policy likely includes preserving their heritage language, Chinese, at home (language management), while adjusting to the dominant language, English, in their new country. This decision is influenced by their belief in the importance of preserving cultural ties through language (language ideology) and is enacted in their everyday communication (language practice). However, this intersects with the national language policy of Canada, which emphasizes English and French, and the language-in-education policy that prioritizes English. Such intersections can create complexities, particularly when the family's language ideology and management strategies clash with the dominant societal norms.

Language conflicts in transnational families, therefore, are not just about linguistic preference but are deeply tied to ethnic identity and cultural practices. Resolving these conflicts requires navigating the delicate balance between maintaining heritage languages and integrating into the dominant linguistic culture of the new country. In the case of Shan and Lele, this balance involves managing their use of Chinese in a predominantly English-speaking context, a decision that reflects their cultural identity and responds to the linguistic environment they find themselves in.

Amidst this personal narrative of language and identity, the broader context of globalization and superdiversity plays a significant role. Globalization, as defined by Blitvich (2018), refers to the growing interconnectedness and interaction among people, cultures, and economies across the globe. This phenomenon, coupled with superdiversity, which describes the extensive cultural and linguistic diversity in many contemporary societies (Blitvich, 2018), has reshaped family dynamics, particularly in terms of language use. These global shifts have led to an increase in transnationalism, where families maintain ties across national borders. Consequently, as Hirsch and Lee (2018) observe, bi- and multilingualism have become more prevalent within these families, reflecting the changing linguistic landscape shaped by these global trends.

As families navigate this globalized and superdiverse environment, they frequently encounter complex decisions regarding language. They must decide which languages to learn, maintain, and use in their daily lives. This decision-making is not solely about practical communication; it also encompasses deeper reflections on cultural identity, educational opportunities, and social integration. Wang and Curdt-Christiansen (2019) emphasize that these families have to manage multiple languages in their everyday interactions, grappling with which languages to give precedence. In the case of Shan's family, for instance, they might be torn between preserving their native Chinese language to maintain cultural ties and heritage, and prioritizing English, the dominant language in their new country, to aid social integration and educational success. The choices surrounding language use and prioritization are not simply linguistic but are intricately tied to the family's identity and their adaptation to the broader societal context. In today's globalized and superdiverse world, the decisions about language reflect the complex identities and challenges transnational families face.

Closing Thoughts: Building Ladders

In this chapter, I have shared stories and insights that reveal the complex web of power dynamics, cultural expectations, and the challenges that transnational families like Shan's face. Reflecting on these narratives, I am inspired to rethink and reimagine our approaches to language policy, education, and the hidden curriculum that contribute to marginalization and linguistic bullying. In the story of Shan and her son Lele, I have delved into how raciolinguistic ideologies and linguistic bullying are deeply embedded in the educational environment, often subtly and unintentionally shaping the experiences of students from diverse linguistic backgrounds. By closely examining the stories of transnational families and their struggles, alternative narratives emerge, envisioning scenarios where students, teachers, and parents collaborate to foster a more inclusive and equitable learning environment. Shan's wise words deeply resonate:

家长就是要给孩子搭梯子。你不知道他会遇到什么事，但大人要替他考虑到。

Parents just have to build a ladder for their children. You don't know what will happen to him, but adults need to think ahead for him. (Recorded conversation, July 19, 2022)

Shan's insights highlight the crucial role parents play in guiding their children through the complex world of language and identity. Exploring the dynamics of transnational family language policies and raciolinguistic ideologies opens up a vision of a future where linguistic diversity and cultural heritage are deeply appreciated by educators and society. An in-depth look at the assumptions, beliefs, and practices within school landscapes that marginalize students from diverse language backgrounds reveals opportunities for challenging and reshaping the existing narrative, leading to stories of inclusion and equity in educational environments and communities.

Reflecting on interactions with Shan, her call to action stands as a vivid illustration of the resilience of transnational parents who support their children and advocate for their rights and well-being. Adopting an inclusive approach to language policy helps to confront and dismantle

raciolinguistic ideologies, redefining the roles of educators and community members in a culturally diverse society. This shift is crucial for creating educational environments that cater to students from all linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The aim is to establish learning spaces free from linguistic discrimination and marginalization, where the cultural richness of transnational families is not only recognized but also celebrated and supported. Engaging with the lived experiences of these families prompts a reevaluation of roles in education and the community, ensuring that educational landscapes reflect and honor the diversity that adds value to the global community.

I contemplate the moment I first heard whispers of the incident, veiled in secrecy and referred to as "that thing (那件事)." The power of stories moves me, as does the profound importance of giving voice to those silenced. That warm June afternoon, meeting Shan, Guo, and Lele, left an indelible mark on my heart. Unpacking their story changed my understanding of the complex world they navigate. As educators and parents journey through the complex landscape of language, culture, and identity, they carry the experiences of families like Shan's. It is critical for educators and parents to work together to create a more inclusive, supportive world where every voice is heard, valued, and free from pain.

CHAPTER FIVE

Transnational Parents as Translingual Bridges in Their Children's Heritage Language

Learning

"Our language is the reflection of ourselves."

- Cesar Chavez

Opening Story: A Journey into Translingual Bridges

Each night, when the moon's soft light came through the curtains, I would bring my daughters, Molly and Luna, close to me. We would get comfortable in a pile of warm blankets, our heartbeats matching each other. We held three books, each one showing us the secrets of different worlds. Molly, who was good at both French and English, would pick a French book, gently touching the spine of a book from her school library. Luna, with her eyes full of curiosity, would choose an English picturebook, laughing happily in the world of words and pictures. As for me, the keeper of the Chinese language in our home library, I would lovingly pick a Chinese picturebook filled with memories and wisdom. Under the cozy night light, I would read the Chinese book out loud, telling the story in both Chinese and English, explaining new words, and diving into the adventure. Molly would then read the French book to us, her voice sweet and clear. Even though Luna and I could not understand the words, we enjoyed Molly's exciting storytelling and her skillful translation of the story into Chinese and English. Lastly, the English book would be read by either Molly or me, a calming lullaby to send Luna off to sleep. During these quiet moments, we came together, our voices joining in a mix of languages that defined who we were. I cherished the feeling of warmth and togetherness my children and I found in these times, the space where our languages connected us. Night after night, we embraced the languages that made us a family, strengthening our bond. Through the shared experience of stories, we celebrated the special blend of our multilingual and multicultural world.

As we immersed ourselves in these moments, my thoughts often wandered to the three Chinese immigrant mothers, Jin, Shan, and Wen, with whom I had the pleasure of working.

Each one was a symbol of love and resilience, their images vivid in my mind. I saw Jin, the astronaut mother, who relied on technology to nurture her children's heritage language, her eyes glowing with pride as she witnessed their linguistic growth. I imagined Shan, the mother with an unwavering commitment to her child's lifelong education, guiding them with a steady hand. And I pictured Wen, the embodiment of intergenerational teaching, fostering a vibrant linguistic landscape that connected generations. Thinking of these mothers filled my heart with warmth and admiration for the transcultural spaces they had created for their families. Every piece reflected their love and resolve, forming a link between worlds and hearts through the strength of language. In those moments, I felt an unseen bond uniting us, our stories intertwined in a common fabric of love, language, and perseverance.

The beautiful bridges they constructed inspired everyone, showing their unyielding commitment to preserving their children's heritage. Through their stories, I explore the connections, challenges, and gains that defined their linguistic landscapes. In this chapter, I delve into the ways these parents forged paths for their children to navigate the complex world of language and identity. By sharing and unpacking their experiences, I hope to retell their stories in a way that resonates with you as reader, and enables all of us to learn from their stories. My goal is not to capture the essence of their journey but to uncover the educative possibilities that lie at the heart of their shared experiences. In doing so, I aim to shed light on the transformative power of transnational parents as transcultural bridges in the lives of their children.

Telling the Stories: Language and Connection

In this section, I explore the experiences of transnational families as they navigate the complexities of language and identity. Through five interconnected narratives, I provide a comprehensive understanding of how these families maintain linguistic connections between multiple named languages in their lives. The narrative on language environment focuses on spaces created by families to support heritage language learning and cultural connections among

all the spaces they navigate through on a day-to-day basis. This story includes highlighting the commitment of parents in fostering environments abundant in multiple languages, encompassing both home and community settings. I then examine the role of grandparents in language transmission and cultural preservation, underscoring the vital role of older generations in nurturing and passing down linguistic heritage. The adaptability and creativity in managing multiple languages are revealed through narratives of how families engage in linguistic and cultural translation in their daily lives. Another aspect I explore is the impact of language learning on family roles and relationships, particularly the mutual learning between parents and children. This part of the narrative shows how family dynamics evolve in response to the challenges and opportunities presented by bilingualism. Lastly, I consider the impact of digital communication in transcending geographical boundaries. This narrative highlights how digital platforms and tools reshape language and cultural experiences in today's interconnected world.

Language Environment: Crafting Spaces for Heritage Language Learning

In this section, I will explore the theme of heritage language learning within transnational families, focusing on the environments they create to nurture linguistic proficiency and cultural connections. My sharing of the mothers' experiences uncovers distinct approaches and challenges, highlighting the commitment of parents to fostering vibrant, multilingual environments. These narratives extend beyond the home, integrating school and community settings, thus providing a comprehensive linguistic landscape for their children. The telling and retelling of these families' stories serve as an illuminating example, showcasing the diverse ways in which heritage language and culture are maintained and celebrated.

Jin's Story: A Multilingual Weave of Home, School, and Community

In Jin's story, I see a mother dedicated to fostering a varied, multilingual environment for her child, encompassing home, school, and community settings. Jin's child is a young heritage language learner, whose experience differs from those who acquire a second language in a formal classroom setting (Lee & Wright, 2014). Her child's language learning started at home,

from an early age or even birth, through exposure to the heritage language environment and family members who speak it (O'Rourke & Zhou, 2018). Jin's efforts help her child continuously acquire in-depth linguistic and cultural knowledge, as well as comprehension of their family histories and ties to the language in an organic and informal context (Kwon, 2017; Kwon et al., 2019). She often invites Chinese children from neighboring families to play together, creating a lively Chinese social community for her child and others. Living in a community with a significant number of heritage language speakers enables her child to further broaden their linguistic range by interacting with community members, reading multilingual signs, and participating in cultural events (Jiménez et al., 2009; Orellana, 2016). I can imagine the children's laughter and chatter as they communicate in their heritage language, forming bonds and reinforcing their linguistic abilities.

When selecting extracurricular activities for her child, Jin carefully considers not only the content of the classes but also the language environment they provide. She weighs whether the instructors speak English or Chinese, aiming to offer her child an engaging and interactive Chinese learning experience whenever possible:

她现在上了很多课，都是中文的。比如说她上的小熊美术，也是中文版的，她特别喜欢。除此之外，她还上了火花思维课，是一对一授课，一个星期两次，每次两个小时。虽然课程内容是数学，但是老师用中文授课，交流也都是中文。我们家的环境也是纯中文的。还有，她平时都是和邻居家的中国小伙伴们一起玩，在社区里骑自行车。

She is now taking many classes, all of which are in Chinese. For example, the Little Bear Art class she attends is also in Chinese, and she particularly enjoys it. In addition, she is also taking one-on-one Spark Thinking class twice a week, with each session lasting two hours. Although the course content is math, the teacher teaches and communicates in Chinese. Our home environment is also purely Chinese. Furthermore, she usually plays

with Chinese neighbors and rides bikes in the community. (Recorded conversation, July 07, 2022)

In this carefully planned language environment, Jin's child engages in bilingual conversations using a translanguaging approach, as outlined by García and Li (2014). This approach enables the fluid switching between languages and linguistic forms, embodying a dynamic process of linguistic negotiation rather than rigid adherence to separate language systems. Translanguaging recognizes bilingual individuals' ability to draw on their entire linguistic repertoire, blending and switching languages in contextually meaningful ways. This flexibility is crucial for understanding the sociolinguistic realities of bilingual individuals' lives, which are characterized by constant navigation between different linguistic landscapes, cultural norms, and social expectations (García & Li, 2014). In such environments, language use is not just about communication but also about identity, belonging, and cultural connectivity. By fostering a heritage language-rich environment, Jin enables her child to engage deeply with these sociolinguistic realities, empowering them to understand and appreciate the nuances of their cultural heritage and the broader linguistic community they belong to.

Shan's Story: Nurturing a Chinese Language Oasis

In Shan's story, the vibrant sounds of Chinese language envelop every corner of their home, creating an environment rich in linguistic heritage. Listening to her, it was as if I could hear her family's lively exchanges in Mandarin, their home a sanctuary for language learning. This setting underscores the significance of parents' beliefs, family interactions, and a supportive language environment in transmitting minority languages, as highlighted by many researchers (Dumanig et al., 2013; Nakamura, 2020; Okita, 2002; Tsushima & Guardado, 2019). Shan's commitment to nurturing her child's heritage language is evident in the online courses, documentaries, and animated shows she selects, each one a beacon illuminating the path to new Chinese vocabulary. Even as she acknowledged that comprehension might not come immediately, Shan knew that the exposure and context provided by these resources were

invaluable in honing her child's listening skills and cultivating their "communicative competence" (Hymes, 1972, 2001).

Emma: 可以跟我聊一聊你们在家里平时交流的情况吗? (Can you tell me about how you communicate with each other at home?)

Shan: 我们全部都是用中文交流。 (We communicate entirely in Chinese.)

Emma: 那你说你会带孩子学习, 具体学些什么呢? (And you mentioned that you help your child learn, what specifically do you teach him?)

Shan: 我们会学一些识字的网课软件, 包括一些中文笔画和字的讲解, 还有一些纪录片。我们还会看一些动画片, 如果是新的, 里面一些词汇对他来说可能会比较陌生, 比如像"细胞核"、"细胞壁"之类的专业词汇, 有时我也不太理解, 但是他听了之后有时就记住了。 (We use some online courses to learn how to read Chinese characters, including stroke order and explanations of characters. We also watch documentaries and some animated shows. If the show is new, there may be some technical vocabulary that he doesn't understand, like "cell nucleus" or "cell wall." Sometimes I don't fully understand either, but he will remember it after hearing it once.)

Emma: 有上下文和画面, 这可能有助于他理解这个词的意思? (Having context and visuals may help him understand the meaning of the word?)

Shan: 有时候有助于他理解, 但是有些词汇还是有点难。对于动画片, 他可能主要是在锻炼听力, 有时候他会突然问我一些问题, 比如"细胞是什么", 然后我就会讲给他听。最近我们在学一些成语, 有些小成语和小故事, 比如"洗心革面"是什么意思, 我就讲给他听。我会说"妈妈洗心革面, 跟昨天不一样了", 然后他会理解这个意思。我们还会学一些日常用语和造句, 比如"出口"、"入口", 有时候做数学应用题时, 像"钝角"、"锐角"这样的概念, 他也知道。

Sometimes it helps, but some words are still difficult for him. With animated shows, he is mainly practicing his listening skills. Sometimes he will suddenly ask me questions like "What is a cell?" and I will explain it to him. Recently we have been learning idioms,

small stories, and phrases. For example, "Washing one's face and changing one's mind" means changing one's attitude. I would say, "Mom washed her face and changed her mind. I am not the same as yesterday," and he would understand the meaning. We also learn everyday phrases and how to make sentences, such as "entrance" and "exit." Sometimes when doing math problems, he understands concepts like "obtuse angle" and "acute angle." (Recorded conversation, July 05, 2022)

As I delved deeper into Shan's daily routine, I marveled at her dedication to striking a balance between Chinese and English language learning. Family life unfolded in harmony, with breakfast, followed by studies in various subjects, including Chinese and math. Extracurricular activities, predominantly conducted in Chinese, were seamlessly woven into the fabric of their day, a reflection of how family members play a crucial role in shaping the linguistic environment of children (Schalley & Eisenclas, 2020; Melo-Pfeifer, 2015). Shan's connections within local Chinese communities, friendships, and neighborly encounters blossomed into opportunities for her child to access more heritage language-speaking environments and engage with the ethnic community (Nesteruk, 2010; Hulsen et al., 2002). In these spaces, her child's social network and ethnocultural identity grew stronger, nurtured by their parents' supportive attitudes towards heritage language maintenance (Lee, 2013). Throughout our conversation, Shan's conviction about the importance of heritage language learning as a natural part of a child's upbringing shone brightly.

如果你小时候没有建立好语言基础，那么强行给孩子灌输语言会比较难，不自然。就好比孩子还没学会走路，就要开始学跑步了。比如说，如果你想让孩子看一些关于中国文化的纪录片，你得费很大力气跟他解释为什么要看，瓷器是什么之类的东西。而且如果是古代汉语或文言文，对很多人来说就像读天书一样难懂。

If when you were young, you couldn't establish a foundation in language, then it's difficult to force it on them. It's not natural. It's like trying to teach a child to run before they learn to walk. For example, if you want your child to watch documentaries about

Chinese culture, it will take a lot of effort to explain why and what things like porcelain are. When it comes to classical Chinese or ancient Chinese, it's like reading a foreign language. (Recorded conversation, July 05, 2022)

Shan's belief in the power of consistency echoed the findings of researchers who have emphasized the significance of a stable language learning environment in fostering a child's linguistic development (De Houwer, 2011; Swain, 2005; Block, 2003; Mackey, 2012; Gass & Mackey, 2014). Shan's story is a beautiful reminder that maintaining a steady learning rhythm is not only beneficial but also vital in ensuring the preservation of hard-earned progress.

Grandparents as Language Agency: Intergenerational Teaching and Learning

In Wen's family story, I observed the significant role of intergenerational teaching and learning, especially the involvement of grandparents in language development. This aligns with traditional Chinese values, where grandparents play a vital role in nurturing cultural and linguistic heritage. Wen's narrative reveals her mother's active participation in her grandson's education, emphasizing the impact of intergenerational relationships in preserving language and culture across national boundaries.

Wen's Story: A Legacy of Language and Wisdom

The story of Wen's family, set against the backdrop of transnational families and the Chinese diaspora, presents a compelling narrative of the significance of close family ties. This closeness is particularly striking when compared to Western societies, where the husband-wife bond often takes center stage (Thornton & Lin, 1994). Traditional Chinese culture prizes the parent-child relationship, with parents maintaining a strong connection to their married children (Unger, 1993). Even as modern Chinese society embraces nuclear families, the practice of younger generations caring for their elders remains an essential aspect of Chinese tradition.

I found myself captivated by the crucial role Wen's mother played in her grandson's learning journey. Her engagement in childcare embodies the Chinese cultural value of grandparents' contributions (Unger, 1993). As a knowledgeable and experienced educator,

Wen's mother nurtured her grandson's literacy skills from a young age, aligning with research that highlights the positive impact of strong grandparental relationships on heritage language maintenance (Clyne, 1991; Luo, 1993; Luo & Wiseman, 2000; Park, 2006). Wen's mother went beyond fostering her grandson's Chinese language development, passing down cultural traditions and values by providing Chinese books, picturebooks, and introducing him to Chinese poetry and classic texts like *The Three Character Classic* (三字经). Supporting her daughter and son-in-law in their quest for a better life abroad, she embodied the Chinese virtue of caring for the next generation (He, 2008).

When the family relocated overseas, the boy continued his Chinese education through online classes while his grandmother remained a steadfast source of support from afar. She maintained their bond by engaging in conversations, storytelling, and sharing knowledge about Chinese culture and language. Through technology, she created immersive and interactive experiences. One such experience was a virtual zoo visit, during which Wen's mother guided her grandson to express and describe as much as possible about the animals they saw. Wen mentioned that her son even kept a book nearby to refer to during the virtual zoo visit. The boy would look up information for his grandmother in the English book and then translate it into Chinese. This translation process, in itself, was an invaluable language learning experience for the child, enabling him to actively apply his bilingual skills in a real-life context. It reminded me of Tse's (2001) assertion of the importance of access to literacy materials for children's heritage literacy development.

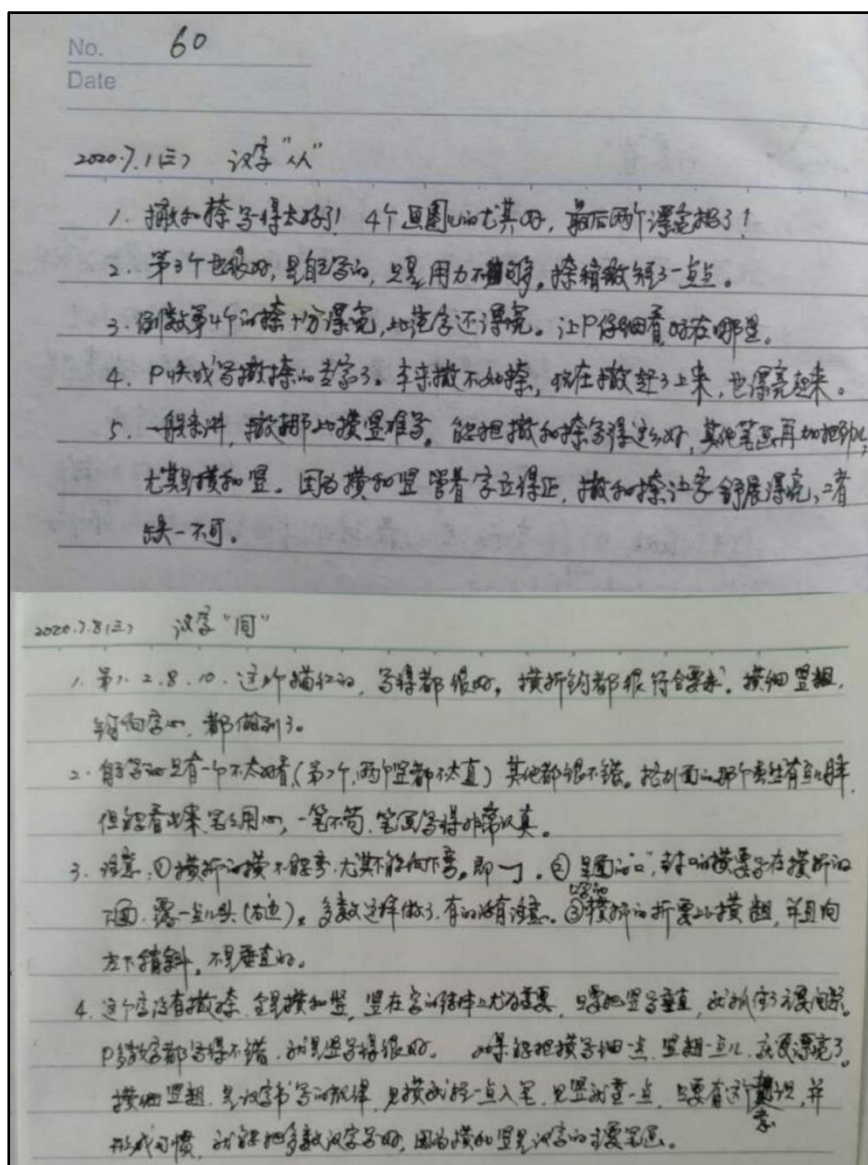


Figure 5.1. Grandma's notes on the child's Chinese character practices.

Wen's mother's approach to teaching, which focuses on interaction and enjoyment, fosters a positive and nurturing learning environment. Employing games, gentle encouragement, and ample praise, she makes the learning process a delight for her grandson. This approach keeps the child's interest and confidence in learning Chinese alive, as he eagerly anticipates conversations with his grandmother. The family's dedication to maintaining a Chinese language environment at home, even in Canada, encourages the child to forge a meaningful connection with his heritage language. Their story showcases the powerful role grandparents can play in

intergenerational language learning. With their wisdom, experience, and one-of-a-kind teaching methods, grandparents can transmit a legacy of language and culture to younger generations, ensuring the preservation and celebration of their heritage for years to come.

Grown in Translation: Supporting Children's Full Linguistic Repertoire

Contrary to the prevalent view that "lost in translation" acts as a barrier, where the challenge is often seen in the need for bilinguals to translate dominant language concepts into their heritage language to make meaning, this analysis reveals the nuanced translation strategies a transnational family employs to foster bilingualism. The perception of "lost in translation" as a barrier stems not from the actual act of translation but from the inherent difficulties in translating complex ideas, emotions, and cultural nuances from one language to another. This challenge is particularly pronounced for bilinguals who navigate between their dominant and heritage languages, as they strive to preserve the depth and richness of their cultural expressions while engaging with a new linguistic context. The struggle lies in the effort to convey meanings that are deeply embedded in the heritage culture within a language that may not have direct equivalents or the same cultural connotations. Through a detailed examination of the strategies this family uses to address these challenges, it becomes evident that "lost in translation" can be reframed not as an insurmountable barrier but as a dynamic space for creative linguistic negotiation and cultural exchange. In this narrative, I observe how Wen, the mother, weaves together Chinese and English, creating a dynamic linguistic environment for her son. Exploring Wen's methods, it is clear how she innovatively blends language diversity and fluidity into their everyday learning, demonstrating the transformative impact of parenting in translingual contexts.

Wen's Story: Embracing Language Diversity and Fluidity

During my time with Wen's family, I witnessed how they effectively utilized their bilingual skills to support their son's linguistic learning through translation. Wen purchased two versions of the same book, one in Chinese and another in English, and they would read together. As they read, Wen would read a passage in Chinese, followed by her son reading the corresponding passage in English. Afterward, they engaged in lively discussions, with Wen assessing her son's understanding through questions mostly in Chinese, but occasionally in English as well.

这本书，我给他买了中文版和英文版，它们内容是一样的。我们一起读这本书，我先读中文的一段，然后他再读英文的一段，就这样交替着读。读完后，我们再互相交流，我可能会问一些问题，比如关于动物迁徙的问题，帮助他理解。这样做是为了帮助他更好地理解他读的文章。

This book, I bought him both the Chinese and English version, and they are the same.

We read the book together, I read a paragraph in Chinese, then he reads a paragraph in English, and so on. After finishing, we discuss it, and I may ask some questions to help him understand better, such as questions about animal migration. This is to help him understand the article he is reading. (Recorded conversation, July 06, 2022)

It is evident that their versatile use of language facilitates an open learning atmosphere (Martin-Jones, 2000), where Wen's son is free to confidently utilize his entire linguistic repertoire to communicate and refine his understanding of the target terms (García, 2018).

Driven by his keen interest in animals, he often employs both Chinese and English resources to explore topics such as prehistoric creatures and dinosaurs. Impressively, he is capable of reading college-level English encyclopedias.



Figure 5.2. Two versions of the same book, in Chinese and in English.

The active engagement in translation between languages with her son not only strengthens his bilingual capabilities but also fosters a profound linguistic awareness (Lanza, 2004), highlighting the nuances between languages, including word choices and grammatical structures. Additionally, this practice contributes significantly to the development of his proficiency in both Chinese and English. Beyond enhancing language skills, it encourages an appreciation for the subtleties and complexities of language, potentially cultivating a lifelong passion for languages. By drawing knowledge from both languages, he experiences a more enriched and multifaceted learning experience. Language is seen as a tool for learning, with the focus on content rather than mere linguistic skill acquisition (Blom et al., 2017). Wen's family often uses their two languages to clarify and refine meanings by indexing a word or an expression in one language with the other (Martin, 2005).

Their translation process is a collaborative effort between Wen and her son, as they engage in translating or paraphrasing English words or expressions into Chinese to negotiate and understand the meaning. This dynamic and engaging approach to language learning is driven by

the son's interests and a diverse range of resources, including bilingual books with content in both Chinese and English. Through Wen's presentation of meanings in a language familiar to the child, Wen's son can develop an understanding of words or expressions in both English and Chinese, as well as become aware of how two different languages can express similar meanings (García, 2018).

Wen's family's experience offers a particular viewpoint on how bilingual families support their children's heritage language learning while also utilizing their children's skills in English (Kabuto, 2014). Translanguaging, including translation practices, is intricately woven into their bilingual literacy practices, as they use both Chinese and English across written and oral texts and various contexts. Moreover, when Wen provides Chinese translations of English words or phrases, her son is able to expand his linguistic repertoire in Chinese, incorporating expressions he may not frequently use in everyday conversations. This compelling narrative highlights the incredible potential of bilingual families to foster their children's heritage language learning, while also leveraging their English skills.

Re-Balanced Family Dynamic: Language Learning with/from the Child

In this exploration, I examine the stories of families where language learning becomes a joint, multigenerational endeavor. Here, the roles of teaching and learning languages are redefined, enabling children and parents to educate each other. This section highlights how these families create a shared space for language teaching and learning, fostering learner autonomy and enhancing the linguistic repertoire of each member.

Jin's Story: Shared Learning and Empowerment of Learner Autonomy

Returning to Jin's family story, I am reminded of the captivating and inspiring narrative that unfolded as she navigated the complexities of language learning alongside her child. Jin's story is a vivid portrayal of a mother who wholeheartedly embraces the opportunity to learn together with her child, fostering their ability to plan and regulate their own behaviors. In doing so, she embodies the principles of autonomy and support as described by Ryan et al. (2006) and

Ryan & Deci (2008). Observing Jin and her child tackle language learning, I was impressed by their skillful approach to the challenges of new words and sentences. Their expressions, bright with the excitement of learning and the warmth of supporting each other, perfectly demonstrate what Chan (2001) describes as the traits of independent learners. They showed great enthusiasm, a focus on goals, organization, diligence, and the ability to adapt. When her child delves into extracurricular activities, such as horseback riding lessons, Jin shared with me how she seizes the opportunity to engage with other parents:

我去送孩子上马术课的时候通常不走，因为那里离我家很远。我会和外国家长聊天来练习口语，如果碰巧遇到合适的人，我会和他们多聊几句，这样可以提高我的听力和口语水平。当孩子在上课外班时，我也会利用这个时间练习自己的英语。因为我很少有机会接触到外国人，所以通常只能和我女儿认识的外国家长简单聊聊。比如说，当她在上钢琴课的时候，我也会和老师聊几句。因此，我所认识的外国人都是通过我女儿认识的。除了购物和银行，我平时接触的大多数人都是中国人，所以我很珍惜这些能够练习交流的机会。

When I go to drop off my child at horse riding lessons, I usually stay and don't leave early because it's far from my home. I chat with foreign parents² to practice my English speaking skills. If I happen to meet someone suitable, I chat with them a bit more, which helps improve my listening and speaking abilities. When my child is attending extracurricular classes, I also use that time to practice my English. Since I don't have many opportunities to meet foreigners, I usually only have brief conversations with foreign parents who know my daughter. For example, when she's at piano lessons, I chat a bit with the teacher too. Therefore, all the foreigners I know are through my daughter. Apart from grocery shopping and banking, I mostly interact with Chinese people. So, I

² The term "外国人" (wàiguórén), meaning "foreigner," is commonly used by Chinese speakers to refer to non-Chinese individuals. This linguistic practice continues among Chinese communities globally.

really value these opportunities to practice my communication skills. (Recorded conversation, July 07, 2022)

As shown in this conversation excerpt, Jin actively seeks out conversations that help her practice her spoken English and listening skills. These moments offer her a precious opportunity to learn and grow simultaneously with her child, even when they are apart. By revisiting Jin's story, we are reminded of the powerful connection between parent and child, and the shared journey of learning and growth that shapes their linguistic landscape.

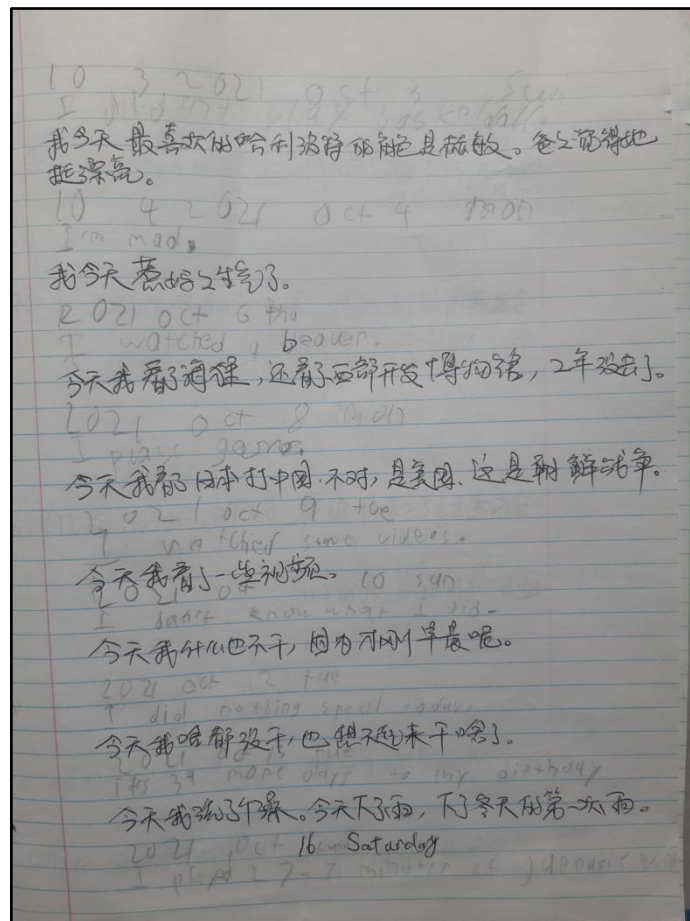


Figure 5.3. Collaborative notes by Jin and her daughter in Chinese and English.

As they annotate their learning materials in Chinese and English, Jin and her child demonstrate the importance of fostering autonomy in teaching practices and its positive impact on educational outcomes (Vasquez et al., 2016). Their collaboration in mastering English serves to strengthen the bond they share, while also contributing significantly to the internalization of

academic motivation (Chirkov & Ryan, 2001). At the same time, Jin ensures that her child stays connected to their Chinese heritage by engaging in regular reading sessions and exploring the depths of Chinese literature, poetry, and culture. These moments serve as a gentle reminder of the importance of maintaining a strong connection to their roots, instilling a deep appreciation for their cultural background.

As they venture together into the world of French, Jin and her child embody the essence of learner autonomy, as described by Dam et al. (1990), Dickinson (1994), and Little (1991), demonstrating their ability to be detached, critically reflective, decisive, and capable of independent action. In this process of learning French, Jin and her daughter employ a collaborative approach. Jin shared that they would sit together, delving into dictionaries to translate French words into both Chinese and English. Jin takes on the task of Chinese translation and narrative explanation, while her daughter manages the English translation and its corresponding narrative. Together, they compare notes, create sentences to deepen their understanding, and practice pronunciation using tools like Google Translate. Far from a conventional teacher-student dynamic, their relationship evolves into that of study partners, each supporting the other equally in the exploration of a new language unfamiliar to both. This approach not only enhances their linguistic skills but also strengthens their bond as they navigate the challenges and joys of learning a new language together.

As I reflect on Jin's journey, I am inspired by her unwavering commitment to her own personal and professional development, as well as her dedication to fostering her child's heritage language learning autonomy. Their combined efforts in mastering English, Chinese, and French further solidify their bond as they support and encourage one another in this new linguistic adventure. As they continue to learn and explore these languages together, Jin and her child weave love, language, and shared experiences together that will undoubtedly shape their lives and strengthen their bond for years to come.

Shan's Story: Following the Child's Lead

During our conversation, Shan emphasized the importance of exposing her child to different experiences and expanding his vocabulary through various activities. She shared that her child was particularly interested in listening to adults talk, as the conversations were more diverse than those with his peers. His friends were often fascinated by virtual content, such as video games featuring zombies. Driven by her child's interest in zombies, Shan took the opportunity to explain the differences between Western and Chinese cultural depictions of zombies. She showed him the video game *Plants vs. Zombies* to help him understand how Western zombies were portrayed. In contrast, she explained that Chinese zombies wore small hats and traditional Chinese attire. This conversation enabled her child to gain a deeper understanding of cultural differences while satisfying his curiosity.



Figure 5.4. Daily Chinese character writing practices by Shan's son.

As a parent and educator, I have found that child-centered and passion-driven learning can be both effective and efficient. I observed this in Shan's family, where informal education at

home involved more personalized attention and customized learning methods, as highlighted by Gray & Riley (2013). This setting frequently fostered learning driven by interests and informal experiences (Thomas & Pattison, 2007), as well as learning through daily life and play (Gray & Riley, 2013). In my interactions with Shan, she shared her child's curiosity about understanding words and their meanings. She noticed how the child examined snack packaging to determine if they were sweet or salty, reflecting the idea of "[child]-guided, non-forceful, enthusiasm-based learning" championed by Holt (1972, p. 12). This curiosity extended to understanding the context of words in the child's daily life.

他希望自己知道这些零食是什么，他不需要你告诉他，因为这些零食的包装看起来都差不多，有些是甜的，有些是咸的，所以他会去挑选。比如说今天他想吃甜的，他就必须研究这个包装上是否有甜的字眼，他是否认识这些字眼，或者是否有辣的字眼。因为我喜欢吃辣的东西，所以他一开始认为红色的东西都是辣的。但我告诉他这不是辣的，只是颜色红而已，然后他会开始看包装上的字，因为他只是想找到他想吃的东西。我们谈的好像是语言，但实际上我们是在聊生活，因为语言就存在于我们的日常生活中。

He wants to know what these snacks are, and he doesn't need you to tell him because the packaging looks similar, some are sweet, and some are salty. So, he will go and pick them by himself. For example, if he wants to eat something sweet today, he has to study the packaging to see if there are any sweet words on it that he recognizes, or if there are any spicy words. Because I like to eat spicy food, he initially thought that red things were spicy. But I told him that it's not spicy, it's just red, and then he will start looking at the words on the packaging because he just wants to find what he wants to eat. We seem to be talking about language, but we are actually talking about life because language exists in our daily lives. (Recorded conversation, July 05, 2022)

Shan observed that language was not a prominent aspect for her child but rather a tool to comprehend his surroundings. She mentioned that her child had difficulty understanding and

memorizing ancient Chinese poetry because the language was too distant from his everyday interactions. The child's attention would quickly shift to other things, making it challenging to integrate these more abstract concepts into his learning. Based on her observations of her son's preferences, Shan believes that a child's learning should be guided by their interests, aligning with the teaching approach described by Mintz (2004, cited in Ricci, 2012). She admires children who have a natural affinity for abstract ideas, as they can easily delve into complex concepts and grasp their essence without much guidance. However, Shan's child is not inclined towards abstract ideas. Instead, he favors tangible experiences that he can see, touch, and interact with before expressing his thoughts and feelings. His learning approach is more experiential, requiring a direct connection to his daily life and surroundings to make sense of the information being presented.

我觉得当我儿子对某件事情没有兴趣时，简单地灌输是没有用的。他只喜欢实际的东西，只有看得见摸得着的东西才能吸引他的注意。他需要先感受到这些东西，才能表达自己的理解和感受。

I think when my son has no interest in something, simply forcing it on him won't work.

He only likes tangible things that he can see and touch, and he must feel them before he can express himself. (Recorded conversation, July 05, 2022)

In adapting to her child's learning preferences, Shan's approach is as much about learning from her child as it is about teaching him. She creates a rich, exploratory environment that encourages him to engage with his surroundings actively. This strategy is fundamentally rooted in the belief that learning is a reciprocal process. As Shan encourages her child to inquire, observe, and experiment, she not only fosters his language development but also gains insights into his natural curiosities and learning style. This mutual learning experience enables Shan to tailor opportunities that resonate with her child's innate interests, making the acquisition of language and vocabulary a more intuitive and meaningful process. By prioritizing hands-on, interest-driven learning, Shan not only supports her child's linguistic growth but also deepens

her understanding of his unique way of experiencing the world. This collaborative approach emphasizes the dynamic interplay of teaching and learning, showcasing how parents can learn with and from their children, thereby enriching the language development process in a deeply personal and effective manner.

Wen's Story: Encouraging Curiosity and Engagement

The daily conversations between Wen and her son, which mostly take place in Chinese to support the child's heritage language learning, are mutually led, with each person posing questions and sharing their thoughts based on their experiences, knowledge, and interests.

One example of this was a discussion about the scarcity of water on the moon. The child recalled a video they had watched about astronauts using their own urine to purify water for drinking. The conversation then evolved into a creative idea of bringing golden needle mushrooms to the moon as a potential solution, inspired by a joke the child had heard. For context, golden needle mushrooms have a playful nickname of "see you tomorrow," because their unique property allows them to maintain their shape even after being consumed. The joke, from the perspective of an eight-year-old boy, was that astronauts could continually reuse the mushrooms for food in space, creating an endless and sustainable food source. This kind of dialogue encouraged knowledge expansion and free-flowing ideas, sparking curiosity and creativity while engaging the child's imagination. The conversation not only entertained but also encouraged the child to think outside the box and consider innovative solutions to real-world challenges.

In the context of language learning at home with parents, interest plays a significant role in fostering motivation for learning beyond the classroom. As Renninger (2000) explained, individuals driven by personal interests are engaged and focused learners, with their learning appearing intentional, continuous, and progressively deepening. Engaging with subjects that genuinely interest them often requires little effort in terms of decision-making. Interest has been demonstrated to result in sustained motivation and increased effort across various learning tasks

(Hannover, 1998; Nenniger, 1987; Schiefele, 1991; Wade, 1992). I appreciated Wen's patience and willingness to engage in such discussions in Chinese, rather than simply relying on textbook knowledge. She believed in going beyond written words and exploring ideas in depth. There is no set framework for these conversations; Wen and her child recall past experiences, videos, or places they have visited to fuel their discussions. This approach encourages the child to develop strong logical thinking and imagination, while also strengthening their heritage language skills.



Figure 5.5. The books in different languages Wen and her child use to engage in conversations with at home.

Wen's strategic use of social media groups to acquire affordable second-hand books in Chinese for her child exemplifies a resourceful approach to enriching their home's linguistic and cultural environment. These books introduced a variety of new topics for discussion, broadening her child's knowledge base and stimulating their cognitive development. The practice of sharing

bedtime stories, where both Wen and her child take turns reading to each other and even to their family dog, embodies a reciprocal learning experience that deepens their bond and enhances the child's engagement with their heritage language. This interactive storytelling environment nurtures what Renninger (2000) identified as the "stored knowledge" component of personal interest. "Stored knowledge" refers to the comprehensive knowledge structures that individuals accumulate over time through various learning experiences. It plays a critical role in forming connections between new information and what is already known, thereby facilitating deeper understanding and retention of new concepts. In the context of Wen's child, the diverse topics covered in the Chinese books contribute to their "stored knowledge," making it easier for them to relate new information to existing knowledge. This, in turn, fosters a more robust and interconnected knowledge base that supports ongoing learning and curiosity. A learning goal becomes significantly more relevant and engaging to a learner once they recognize its utility in furthering their interests. Dewey (1913) explored this phenomenon through the concept of indirect interest, suggesting that subjects initially perceived as uninteresting can captivate an individual's attention once they are seen as connected to personal interests or goals. In Wen's case, the act of reading and discussing books in Chinese not only strengthens her child's language skills but also aligns with their broader interest in exploring their cultural heritage. This alignment between learning activities and personal interests underscores the importance of "stored knowledge" in creating meaningful, interest-driven learning experiences.

Wen's method of teaching her child captures attention with its innovative approach. She engages with an English encyclopedia and subsequently translates and interprets its concepts in Chinese for her child. This practice stands in stark contrast to a family featured in Li's (2000) study from Saskatchewan, who, despite owning an encyclopedia, faced challenges in reading it due to the language barrier. This comparison highlights the progression and adaptability of transnational parents across generations, showcasing the evolving skills and strategies they employ to facilitate their children's learning. One example Wen shared involved teaching about

insulators, semiconductors, and conductors. She asked her child to identify these materials in their room and then discussed what to do if someone gets electrocuted. Wen acted out an electrocution scenario, asking her child what they would do to help and where they would touch her to avoid further harm. They also talked about finding the circuit breaker in their home and how to turn it off. Instead of simply teaching about conductive materials, Wen extended the lesson to include real-life applications and safety knowledge, all while using their heritage language. Wen emphasizes the importance of not teaching isolated knowledge, but rather connecting it to her child's daily life and heritage language learning.

Wen shared an example where she turned a bedtime story about a moth into an exercise in problem-solving and divergent thinking. She told her child about an incident where she could not sleep because a moth had flown into her room. The moth was making noise, which kept her awake. She engaged her son by asking what he thought she should have done in this situation. Her son offered various suggestions, such as getting up and trying to swat the moth or letting it go. Wen encouraged her son to think of multiple ways to handle the situation and continued the conversation by asking, with each situation, what he would do next. The boy thought of different actions, like turning on the light or opening the door to let the moth out. Wen praised his creative thinking and continued the dialogue, inviting her son to consider various possibilities. In the end, Wen shared that she let the moth go and asked her son what he would do in a similar situation. The boy came up with ideas like waking up their father to help, which Wen gently discouraged, reminding him that his father also needed rest. The child eventually concluded that he would either turn on the light to guide the moth out or cover his ears with something to block the noise and go back to sleep. He even humorously suggested that he could use a smelly strategy to drive the moth away, which prompted laughter and bonding (Recorded conversation, July 27, 2022). Throughout the conversation, Wen's son practiced thinking creatively and critically about the world around them while strengthening his language skills in Chinese. In this way, Wen is fostering a love of learning and equipping her son with valuable life skills, all while

supporting the development of their heritage language. It is inspiring to see how parents like Wen are engaging their children with both traditional and innovative methods to help them grow and learn.

Blurred Nation-State Borders Online: Utilizing Digital and Multimodal Resources

In this section, I share the creative strategies that transnational families adopt, using digital and multimodal resources to enhance their children's language learning. My focus shifts to the experiences of three families who adeptly leverage technology to transcend conventional nation-state boundaries. Their use of interactive educational apps, online platforms, and personalized YouTube channels illustrates how digital tools can be integrated into language learning practices. This exploration uncovers the dual role of these technologies in facilitating language development and connecting families to a broader global community, thus nurturing their linguistic and cultural heritage.

Jin's Story: Connecting Across Continents

In my conversations with Jin, I discovered how she wove the threads of digital learning across continents to support her child's bilingual education. As we discussed her journey, I could feel the passion and determination she exuded in her quest to provide the best educational opportunities for her daughter. Jin and her daughter engage with a myriad of digital devices, bridging the gaps between languages and cultures.

One such device is a reading pen, also known as 点读笔, an electronic tool that scans and reads aloud printed text, helping learners to understand and practice pronouncing words and characters. With this reading pen in hand, Jin and her daughter explore stories and learn characters together, their voices mingling in a translingual dance that celebrates their connection and heritage. In addition to the reading pen, they use an iPad to access a wealth of educational materials, including interactive language apps and e-books in both English and Chinese. Another innovative tool they use is a smart lamp, which scans and reads picturebooks in both languages, fostering a bilingual learning environment filled with a range of possibilities.

Jin acquired these digital devices from China and gathered information about them from Chinese parent communities on social media, such as WeChat social groups, and in person through the Chinese immigrant community in Saskatoon. She connected with parents both in China and in Canada, exchanging insights and recommendations for effective bilingual learning tools. By leveraging this global network of resources, Jin created learning opportunities for her daughter that transcend borders and nurture their linguistic and cultural growth.



Figure 5.6. Digital learning devices in Jin's home.

Drawing from the concept of "communicative repertoire," which Rymes (2010, p. 528) defined as the range of linguistic and semiotic resources individuals use to communicate across different contexts, I observed how Jin and her child expand and utilize these tools to bridge languages and cultures, often through digital platforms. This concept includes all forms of communication available to an individual, such as languages, dialects, styles, and other forms of non-verbal expression, that enable them to effectively navigate multilingual and multicultural landscapes (Blommaert & Backus, 2011; Vertovec, 2007). In this context, Jin and her child's communicative repertoire encompasses not only their ability to speak and understand multiple languages but also their use of digital technologies to access, share, and create content that connects them to both their heritage culture and their current residence's culture.

Research underscores that transnational parents like Jin engage in a myriad of activities that bridge their lives between their countries of origin and their current countries of residence. This dynamic is often conceptualized through the lens of a "dual frame of reference" (Guarnizo, 1997, p. 311), which signifies the simultaneous orientation towards and integration of two distinct cultures and norms. Such a dual orientation enables individuals to adeptly navigate and amalgamate aspects of both cultural identities into their daily experiences. Similarly, "bifocality" (Vertovec, 2004, p. 974) articulates migrants' capacity to concurrently engage with their native homeland and their current country, cultivating a sense of belonging and identity that transcends geographical borders. In this intricate intercultural landscape, Jin's utilization of digital devices from China plays a pivotal role in supporting her children's language learning in Canada. By incorporating familiar technology from their country of origin, Jin effectively leverages these tools to enrich her children's educational experiences and maintain their connection to their cultural heritage. Through this approach, Jin and her child's communicative repertoire—encompassing both their linguistic capabilities and their adept use of digital resources—becomes a crucial asset in managing their bicultural identity. It enables them to forge and sustain connections with their cultural roots while navigating the linguistic and cultural milieu of their new country, illustrating the transformative power of technology in bridging cultural and linguistic divides.

I listened intently as Jin shared her experiences with a particular teaching software called Zebra App (斑马 App, <https://banmaapp.com/>). Designed for children ages three through eight, this comprehensive learning platform encompasses various aspects of a child's growth, including critical thinking (math), English, Chinese reading and writing, and art. Jin initially chose this app due to its reputation and was impressed by its systematic approach, engaging content, and interactive features. Jin excitedly explained that Zebra App divides its content into five levels of difficulty, offering five 15-minute sessions per week, each containing six segments. These segments include interactive stories featuring original characters like "Lightning" (闪电) to

introduce knowledge points and guide children through pre-set tasks in the animated scenes. Another segment, "Life with Math," presents real-life scenarios to foster logical thinking and problem-solving skills. Moreover, the app provides personalized learning reports and guidance from professional tutors to help children improve their abilities. As Jin described the app, she emphasized how it captivates her child's interest through a vibrant world of ancient poetry, fairy tales, and comics. The app employs immersive, fun formats like stories, songs, and animations to help children develop their thinking skills. Jin appreciates the combination of engaging interactive content and professional tutor support that significantly enhances her child's logical thinking abilities. Though the software has its drawbacks, Jin admits, such as its potential strain on her child's eyes, she feels that the beauty of its comprehensive learning content leaves an indelible mark. As Jin spoke about her child's progress in both Chinese and English, I could feel the pride in her voice. Her dedication to nurturing her child's linguistic roots and wings resonated deeply within me. In her eyes, I saw her unwavering commitment to help her child recognize characters, develop reading comprehension skills, and understand the Chinese cultural background.

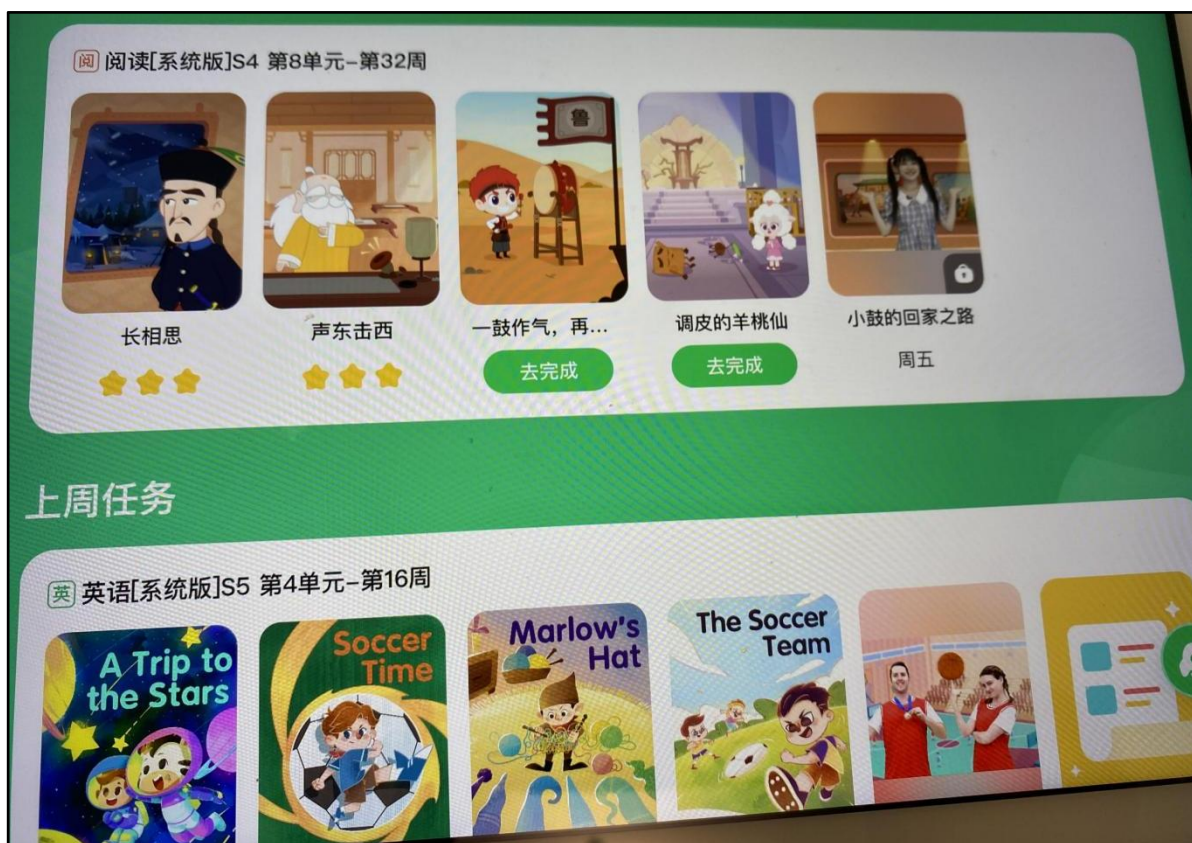


Figure 5.7. Jin's daughter's learning record in Zebra App (斑马 App).

I was particularly struck by how Jin seamlessly integrated technology into her child's learning journey, combining traditional methods with cutting-edge tools like the reading pen and teaching software. The harmonious blend of old and new reflect the translingual ballet that Jin and her child dance together each day, inspiring me to explore similar paths for my own children. Reflecting on my conversations with Jin, I am moved by the invisible thread that connects not just the three participating mothers and me in this study, but many parents worldwide—our shared dedication to fostering love, language, and resilience in our children. The bridges Jin built, connecting different worlds and hearts with the strength of language, are a symbol of her steadfast dedication and a source of inspiration for parents and educators everywhere.

Shan's Story: Harnessing the Power of the Internet

Shan and her child utilize digital and multimodal resources, selecting from a plethora of engaging software and apps that cater to their needs and preferences. Shan's method showcases her ability to adapt and her resourcefulness. The apps and resources they choose often transcend the boundaries of a single language, incorporating both Chinese and English in their content, enriching the learning experience. This approach echoes the findings of recent studies emphasizing the combination of linguistic and textual forms and the interaction between online and offline networks enabled by digital technologies (Gee & Hayes, 2011; Mills, 2010). Together, they explore these digital offerings, with Shan providing guidance and support along the way.

As her child progressed through the levels, Shan remained a steadfast presence, adjusting her engagement to match her child's growing capabilities. I picture them sitting together, exploring various learning apps and games, as Shan guides her child from simple activities focusing on color and shape recognition to more advanced arithmetic tasks. Shan shared with me that sometimes she sits with her son to support his learning and answer questions he has; other times, she works at the kitchen counter preparing meals or managing other family business, all the while keeping an eye on her child, who sits across the kitchen by his desk, working on the learning apps or websites. Regardless of the situation, Shan is always there, providing intellectual or emotional support.

我们一起选学习的 APP，毕竟是他用，他得喜欢才行。他就挺喜欢那个斑马 APP，觉得界面好看。而且不会有人总是唠叨他，小动物还挺有意思的，点一下就有反应，不点就没事。他喜欢那种“你真棒”这类的鼓励，觉得挺有用的，所以就选了。

We chose the learning apps together because he's the one using them, and he needs to like them. He really likes the zebra app because it has a nice interface. Plus, there's no one nagging him all the time, and the little animals are quite interesting—they respond when you touch them and don't when you don't. He enjoys verbal encouragement like,

"You're great," and finds it helpful, so we went with that app. (Recorded conversation, July 05, 2022)

Shan emphasized that the selection of apps was a collaborative process, with she and her child testing various options until they found the perfect match. They favored apps with visually appealing interfaces, engaging content, and minimal human interaction. As they interacted with the apps, Shan observed her child's reactions, taking note of the aspects that caught her child's attention and motivated him to continue learning. Shan's child particularly enjoyed the encouragement and rewards offered by the apps, such as digital stickers and coins he could spend within the app to purchase more books or features he was interested in. These rewards fueled his enthusiasm for learning and growing. Throughout this process, Shan was always there to support her child's success, offering guidance, encouragement, and reassurance. It was heartwarming to see how Shan's dedication and involvement in her child's learning journey helped foster a love for knowledge and personal growth.



Figure 5.8. Screenshot of 国家中小学智慧教育平台 online learning platform.

One valuable APP/website they discovered was Smart Education of China (国家中小学智慧教育平台, <https://www.zxx.edu.cn/>), developed by the Chinese Ministry of Education. This APP/website is specifically designed to provide Chinese parents and students with a comprehensive platform for learning the national curriculum, regardless of their location. The APP/website offers a range of features and resources, including access to Chinese national curriculum materials for all subjects, from primary to secondary school levels, and different versions of textbooks for various regions in China. It also provides high-quality video lessons and teacher explanations, opportunities for students to practice and review their lessons, and a user-friendly interface with visually appealing design. By using the 国家中小学智慧教育平台 APP/website, Shan can provide her child with a well-rounded education in Chinese language and other subjects, despite living in Canada. This APP/website enables her to create a seamless connection between her child's cultural roots and their current learning environment, making the educational experience more effective and fulfilling. This aligns with the concept of connected learning, as proposed by Ito et al. (2013), which aims to leverage various support structures from both online and offline spaces to provide more equitable and personalized learning experiences for students.

In addition to using apps, Shan found custom-made materials on Xianyu (闲鱼, <https://goofish.com/>), a second-hand online marketplace in China, which she used for her child's practice sessions. She believes that regular review of the characters her child has learned is essential for knowledge retention. Throughout their journey, Shan and her child remain closely connected, navigating the digital landscape together. With the internet as their compass, they forge a path towards linguistic proficiency and a deepened understanding of each other. Shan's story demonstrates the magic of technology and the infinite potential of learning when borders are blurred.

Wen's Story: Expanding Horizons through YouTube Channel

I was captivated by Wen's incredible journey in creating a YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/>) channel to support her child's heritage language learning. I discovered that her child's interest in singing and reciting poems, sparked by Chinese language classes and encouragement from teachers, inspired her to start the channel. The primary goal of the channel was to enrich her child's learning experiences while also benefitting others, echoing the shift in communication practices where people increasingly rely on digital devices to share meaning with global audiences (Hull et al., 2013). I observed how Wen carefully designed the videos to include bilingual readings of children's books, additional educational content, and activities, resonating with the notion of combining words, images, sounds, and other elements in online platforms (Jørgensen et al., 2011; Manovich, 2001; Wilson & Peterson, 2002). She chose primarily English books translated into Chinese and ensured both language versions were available for an effective learning experience. For example, Wen acquired both the Chinese and English versions of popular children's books like *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Carle, 1969) (好饿的毛毛虫) and *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* (Martin & Carle, 1967) (棕熊棕熊，你看到了什么?). This approach positively impacts her child's language skills and confidence in reading both Chinese and English texts, highlighting the changing ways people interact with digital environments (Bachmair, 2006; Kress, 2010; Van Leeuwen, 2004).



Figure 5.9. Screenshot of Wen's bilingual YouTube video.

Involving her child in topic selection and content creation helps maintain interest and fosters ownership over the learning process. I was impressed by Wen's dedication to researching

and selecting materials for the knowledge expansion sections, incorporating her child's interests. She sources books online and combines Chinese and English texts to create visually appealing electronic resources, exemplifying the shift in communication practices (Boulter, 2001; Kress, 2010; O'Halloran, 2010). The YouTube channel provides a platform for Wen's child to learn and explore various topics while reaching out to other children in China and abroad. I saw how this online sharing of knowledge blurred nation-state borders and broadened the horizons of everyone involved, as her child retained information from the videos, recalling it later in conversations. Wen, reflecting on the collaborative process behind her social media posts, shared a glimpse into her family's involvement in her creative work. She explained:

有时候我遇到不确定怎么念的中文字，就得问我妈。因为她擅长语文和语言，所以我会让她查一下怎么读。她就像是场外的专家。而且，我妈还会帮我校对文字，看看有没有错，或者是语言表达得不好。她还会管画面的事，因为她画画也挺好。她看过觉得可以发了，我就发了。全家都来帮忙。我老公还会检查我的英语语法。
Sometimes, when I'm not sure how to pronounce a Chinese character, I have to ask my mom. She's good at Chinese and language, so I'd ask her to check the pronunciation for me. She's like an off-field expert. Moreover, she helps me proofread the text, checking if there are any mistakes or if the language isn't well-written. She also takes care of the visuals, as she's pretty good at drawing. Once she thinks it's good to go, I'll post it. It's like a family effort. My husband even checks my English grammar for me. (Recorded conversation, July 20, 2022)

Amazingly, the entire family contributes to the project, with Wen's mother providing language advice and her husband reviewing English content. This insight from Wen highlights the multi-generational support and collaboration in her family, particularly emphasizing the pivotal role her mother plays in her linguistic and artistic endeavors. They have created 14 videos so far, with Wen thoroughly researching content for each one. By harnessing digital and multimodal resources, as well as transnational and translingual materials, Wen crafts educational content

that is both immersive and captivating. This endeavor not only connects her family and others online but also supports her child's heritage language learning in a meaningful way.

Closing Thoughts: The Power of Translingual Bridges

As I reflect on the stories of Jin, Shan, and Wen, I am struck by the deep influence that comes from the intricate interplay of language and culture. The mother's narratives, interwoven with love, dedication, and hope, beckon us to consider the translingual bridges that connect hearts and minds across borders and cultures. What if we, as educators and parents, embraced these bridges as opportunities to cultivate linguistic and cultural understanding in our children? What if we, too, became architects of these bridges, fostering a more inclusive and linguistically diverse world? I imagine the reader, much like a traveler exploring a foreign land, encountering the stories of Jin, Shan, and Wen with curiosity and wonder. In Jin's story, we witness a mother diligently constructing a multilingual environment, intertwining home, school, and community to nurture her child's linguistic roots. In Shan's narrative, we see a mother fostering a delicate balance between Chinese and English, creating a Chinese language oasis in which her child can flourish. And in Wen's tale, we experience the profound impact of intergenerational teaching and learning, as a grandmother shares her wisdom and love for her heritage with her grandson.

In these stories, I gain insight into the complex dynamics of language education as experienced by children and parents, both at home and in schools. Reflecting on their narratives prompts me to consider how educational systems can better engage parents, utilize their knowledge, and genuinely appreciate their diverse linguistic and cultural identities. How might schools create platforms for parent engagement and facilitate the transmission of cultural knowledge and values across generations? Exploring the field of bilingualism, I uncover the potential of fully embracing children's linguistic repertoires in their learning journeys, in both domestic and academic settings. I contemplate how language education in schools can evolve to recognize and nurture bilingual skills, supporting the development of heritage languages alongside mainstream languages.

These stories highlight the significance of learner autonomy, interest-driven learning, and the role of informal experiences in language learning. As educators, how can we design learning environments that empower children to take charge of their educational paths, fostering a lifelong passion for languages and cultures, while effectively bridging the worlds of home, community, school, and society? Accompanying Jin, Shan, and Wen on their journeys, I observe the transformative power of translingual connections that overcome physical and cultural boundaries. Their experiences reveal a world where language harmoniously intertwines, uniting diverse aspects of our humanity within the interconnected spheres of home, community, school, and society.

As I explored these stories, I found myself asking new questions, igniting new possibilities, and ultimately, reimagining the narratives that shape our world. Standing at the crossroads, inspired by Jin, Shan, and Wen, I am filled with hope and determination to build bridges across homes, communities, schools, and societies. I carry their stories with me, and with each step, I am reminded of the transformative power of language and the connections that unite us in our diverse and ever-changing world. When language flows smoothly and gracefully, it enables us to interlace the strands of our shared humanity, crafting a dynamic network that connects us all.

CHAPTER SIX

Conceptualization and Enactment of Transnational Parent Knowledge in Heritage Language Education

*"We must recognize that difference is a reason for celebration and growth,
rather than a reason for destruction."*

- Audre Lorde

Opening Story: Taking Initiatives

As a new school year began, I was always eager to meet with my daughters' teachers. Over cups of warm tea, I shared with them my daughters' personalities, their hobbies, the books they loved, the languages they spoke, and our family's cultural background. My aim was to create a welcoming classroom environment where our heritage language could be appreciated and celebrated. In these meetings, I found the teachers were very open to our heritage. They encouraged my daughters to share our culture with their classmates. Motivated by this, I started bringing Chinese picturebooks to their classrooms. Each book was beautifully illustrated, with striking Chinese characters, like little treasures waiting to be explored. I knew it might be challenging to fit these books into the regular curriculum, but my goal was simple: to make our language visible in their learning environment. These books turned out to be a hit, sparking a curiosity that went beyond language differences and brought magical moments of connection. One day, my daughter excitedly told me about her story time experience. She described how her classmates gathered around her, their eyes wide with excitement, as she read from a Chinese folktale. The colorful pictures and her translation of the story into English seemed to captivate them. The children were so engaged, asking questions about the story and even trying to write some Chinese characters themselves. It was a moment of cultural sharing that brought her world closer to her friends in a beautiful, simple way.

The celebration of Chinese New Year also turned into a much-loved event in my daughters' classrooms, sparking excitement and joy among the children. I put together cultural gift bags for each child in their classes, filled with little treats and items from our heritage. They found things like red envelopes with chocolate coins, beautiful paper cuttings, and adorable tiger stickers—representing the zodiac animal of that year. These tiger stickers were extra special because I had bought them in China and shipped them all the way to Canada, showing the global nature of our family's life. On the day we celebrated Chinese New Year at school, you could feel the excitement in the air. The kids in my daughters' classrooms could not wait to open their gift bags, excitedly comparing the zodiac animals and admiring the detailed designs. Their faces lit up with joy as they explored the contents. The teachers, enthusiastic about this cultural sharing, brought the celebration into their lessons in a lively way. They talked about the 12-year zodiac cycle and shared stories about each zodiac animal and the traditions of the New Year. Not only the children and teachers appreciated it, I saw other parents smiling and asking questions at pick-up time too.



Figure 6.1. The Chinese New Year gift bag.

As I write this final chapter, my mind drifts back to a regular afternoon six years ago, which I talked about in the first chapter. It was a simple conversation with my daughter's daycare staff about her using our heritage language during their English circle time. This talk really changed things for me. That moment was when I realized that her chance to use our language was being limited there. This discovery made me think hard about what it means to be a parent from a different country. At the start, I felt a mix of confusion and frustration. However, as days turned to weeks, then months and years, my curiosity about the exclusion of our language grew into an understanding of the critical role I play in my children's education and a need to connect with other parents experiencing similar challenges. Through this journey, I have gained confidence in my role as a parent who can bridge our heritage language and culture with my children's current public schooling environments. This path has been long, with many challenges along the way, and it continues to evolve daily as our lives progress and my understanding deepens and adapts.

Yet, here, in this final chapter I am sharing my insights as a transnational parent and researcher to encourage you to join me and the three mothers, with whom I have deeply connected, in exploring the meaning of "transnational parent knowledge." This exploration is not just academic but is rooted in everyday life—at home, in the kitchen, by the desk, and alongside our children.

Conceptualizing Transnational Parent Knowledge

I now embark on an exploration into the diverse and layered experiences of parents navigating the intricacies of raising children within the transnational context. This journey delves into the blend of cultural, linguistic, and educational influences that shape their approaches to parenting and education. By examining the lives of transnational families, I seek to unravel the complexities of parent knowledge in a globalized world, where cultural and geographical boundaries are constantly traversed and redefined. The stories of Jin, Wen, and

Shan serve as a compelling case study, unveiling the intricate relationship between parents' transnational experiences, cultural backgrounds, and the parenting strategies and educational choices they make. These narratives offer a window into the multifaceted nature of parent knowledge, highlighting its dynamic evolution in response to the challenges and opportunities presented by a transnational lifestyle.

Funds of Knowledge

Imagine a fabric woven with diverse threads, each representing a distinct kind of knowledge. González et al. (2005) suggested that every individual, regardless of age, gender, or socio-economic background, carries a complex blend of knowledge and skills. This concept, known as "funds of knowledge," comprises historically accumulated and culturally developed knowledge essential for personal and household functioning (Greenberg, 1989; Moll et al., 2005; Tapia, 1991; Vélez-Ibáñez, 1988). This framework forms the backdrop for understanding the narratives of mothers in this study, illuminating how their personal histories and cultural backgrounds intersect with practical knowledge, influencing their life decisions and experiences.

Pushor (2015) expanded on this concept, categorizing "funds of knowledge" into personal, practical, professional, and craft knowledge. This classification aligns with González et al. (2005) definition, which views "funds of knowledge" as a collection of essential skills and knowledge for well-being and functioning. Pushor highlighted that these knowledge types are specific and contextual, shaped by individual life experiences and interactions. Personal knowledge, according to Pushor, is a subjective understanding developed through interaction with the environment, becoming a part of one's self-identity (Polanyi, 1958, p. 64). Practical knowledge builds upon personal knowledge and relates to making sense of and responding to various situations associated with specific roles (Elbaz, 1981, p. 49). This practical knowledge includes guiding principles, practices, images, and metaphors that influence actions in specific contexts. Furthermore, Pushor elaborated on professional and craft knowledge, first identified by Moll et al. (2005) as household knowledge. Professional knowledge stems from formal

education and training, while craft knowledge evolves from life pursuits and hobbies, often serving as social identifiers.

Incorporating these dimensions into the concept of funds of knowledge, Pushor (2015) emphasized the variety and depth of knowledge present in individuals, beyond the constraints of age, background, or formal education. This broader perspective of funds of knowledge highlights the importance of recognizing and valuing the diverse experiences and insights each person brings, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of knowledge formation and cultural heritage.

Picture Jin, for instance, a resilient woman who boldly moved her family from China to Canada, motivated by the desire for better educational opportunities for her children. Her decision was informed by her practical knowledge, as Elbaz (1981) defined it, derived from lived experiences and well-equipped to meet real-world challenges. Delving into Jin's story, we gain insights when we use an understanding of Polanyi's (1958) concept of personal knowledge, to illuminate her narrative. It resides within Jin, inseparable from her being, like the skin that wraps our bodies. Jin's efforts to preserve her cultural heritage, notably through preparing traditional Chinese dishes, offer a glimpse into this personal knowledge, a part of her that remains untouched, regardless of her geographical location.

Adding to this narrative is another thread—Wen's story. Like Jin, Wen embodies practical knowledge (Elbaz, 1981), but hers was shaped under different circumstances—a global pandemic. As a mother and a freelance piano and violin teacher, Wen had to adapt and make crucial decisions to safeguard her family's health and support her son's online schooling. Her personal knowledge, shaped by her experiences and the realities around her (Polanyi, 1958), also played a crucial role in guiding these actions.

Then, the narrative brings forth Shan, who adds yet another layer to the understanding of these concepts. She escaped a neglectful home in China, endured child labor, and ultimately immigrated to Canada. These trials crafted her practical knowledge, guiding her to create a

supportive family environment and stress the importance of education for her son. Her intricate plan for her son's education, anchored in her funds of knowledge, manifests itself as a commitment to foster his well-rounded development.

Through the intertwining narratives of Jin, Wen, and Shan, we glimpse how funds of knowledge evolve and are shaped by lived experiences and cultural contexts. These women, their distinct paths interwoven with their cultural backgrounds, bring to life the funds of knowledge theory. Their knowledge, shaped by their environments and the circumstances they have navigated, creates a ripple effect, touching not only their lives but also those around them. As Polanyi (1958) put it, our personal knowledge becomes like our skin, woven into our very being. The mothers' stories reveal the human capacity for adaptation and the critical role cultural heritage and lived experiences play in shaping knowledge. As parents, the knowledge they bring forward impacts their children, shaping their children's development and well-being.

Moll et al. (2005) underscored the significance of social and economic relationships in shaping funds of knowledge. An exploration into the narratives of Jin, Wen, and Shan reaffirms this perspective. Jin's perseverance in preserving her cultural heritage through food, Wen's pragmatic adjustments amid a global pandemic to safeguard her family and support her son's education, and Shan's resolve to provide her son with the family support she had lacked are all grounded in their individual funds of knowledge. In this discourse, the narratives serve to illustrate the vast depth and diversity of knowledge present in each individual. The concept of "funds of knowledge" extends beyond the scope of mere information storage; it embodies the intertwined strands of experiences, cultures, and interactions that are specific to each person. Therefore, it is essential to understand that funds of knowledge encompass life experiences and cultural interactions, not just an impersonal collection of data. Acknowledging this fact enables us to recognize the depth of these knowledge bases, shaped by the societal and economic contexts of individuals' lives. This perspective is aligned with the scholarship on global flexible citizenship, especially as described in Li's (2006b) research. Li examined the advantages

middle-class Chinese immigrant parents have in literacy learning, homework, and school-home communication, illustrating how social and economic realities influence and enhance the educational strategies of transnational families. The exploration of this foundational concept of "funds of knowledge" in conjunction with the personal narratives of Jin, Wen, and Shan establishes a solid groundwork for the subsequent theoretical frameworks that I present. The examination of the narratives in light of these theoretical perspectives invites a more nuanced and enriched understanding of the interplay between personal experiences and the development of knowledge.

Transnational Funds of Knowledge

Educational discussions are increasingly focusing on the transnational funds of knowledge (Cuero, 2010; Dabach & Fones, 2016; Kwon et al., 2019; Sánchez, 2007) that migrants bring with them. This valuable knowledge, stemming from their experiences of moving between countries and cultures, showcases a diverse array of life encounters. By integrating this idea with the concept of transnationalism, it becomes possible to understand the complex, diverse, and ever-changing ways of life and connections that migrants experience as they navigate the ups and downs of living in different countries (Kwon et al., 2019). At the heart of transnational funds of knowledge lie the distinct insights and lived experiences, either garnered from transnational odysseys or from being embedded in transnational communities (Dabach & Fones, 2016, p. 11). The border-crossings, multilingual backgrounds, transnational connectivities, and a spectrum of belongingness experienced by migrant children, parents, families, and communities result in a diverse array of knowledge.

Expanding on the "funds of knowledge" idea, I put forward the concept of "transnational funds of knowledge" that foregrounds the abundant and diverse knowledge, experiences, and skills specific to those individuals who live transnational lives (Schiller et al., 1995; Vertovec, 2009). The narratives shared by the mothers in this study, replete with tales of mobility and

upheavals, offer a glimpse into the transnational funds of knowledge these mothers hold and use, and how their transnational funds of knowledge have been molded. Their accounts of movement and change provide insights into the development of their distinctive transnational knowledge. Their stories shed light on their views of school systems, language education, and living between countries, offering a window into how varied cultural, social, and linguistic settings influence transnational individuals' understanding of education and their own transnational lives.

As delineated by Basch et al. (1994), transnationalism elucidates the ceaseless interplay and intertwined nature of languages, cultures, and countries that immigrant parents and children actively traverse. This engagement in transnational flows and networks burgeons their horizon of knowledge and resources, embracing a myriad of languages, cultures, histories, and a nuanced worldview (Kwon et al., 2019). Within this framework, the transnational funds of knowledge emerge as a pivotal tool for delving into the experiences amassed by immigrant parents, often through nurturing intergenerational ties across diverse countries, immersing in various cultural milieus, and exchanging messages, goods, and care (Kwon, 2020; Sánchez & Kasun, 2012).

The personal narratives of Shan, Jin, and Wen provide a window into the diverse experiences of transnational parents. Take Shan's approach to language learning, for example. Her dedication to creating a stable environment for her child's language development shows how transnational parents use their knowledge and experiences to support their children's learning, particularly in maintaining their heritage language. Jin's story reveals how she skillfully uses her transnational knowledge to connect her child with their cultural roots. She employs digital tools and platforms, bridging the gap between her child's current world and her own heritage language and culture. This digital usage demonstrates a creative and resourceful approach to parenting across cultures. Then there is Wen, whose story gives us a glimpse into the benefits of bilingualism. Her son uses his full range of language skills to enhance his understanding of the

world. Living in Canada, Wen also offers a refreshed perspective on parenting styles, combining the strengths of both Chinese and Canadian approaches in her own parenting.

The stories of these transnational parents go beyond just teaching their children different languages. They actively take part in activities that cross borders, demonstrating what Levitt and Schiller (2004) called "transnational ways of being." These parents play a key role in keeping and growing connections across countries. In my research, each chapter reveals a new side of these deep and varied experiences, showing the many ways transnational parents enrich their children's education and life. This study demonstrates that transnational parents are deeply committed to keeping their transnational lifestyle alive, thus greatly supporting their children's learning of their heritage language. These parents maintain strong connections with their homelands and engage in practices that keep these ties alive, an important and meaningful part of their everyday lives. This maintenance of connection goes against the common idea that immigrant parents tend to cut ties with their homelands (Levitt, 2009). Instead, these parents actively work to build, nurture, and grow their transnational networks. Their effort not only keeps the transnational spirit alive but also greatly supports their children's learning of their heritage language. Further, their effort enhances the family's blend of experiences and knowledge in their transnational journey.

Parent Knowledge

My intimate interactions with fellow mothers have enabled me to appreciate that everyone carries a wealth of knowledge, gathered through a lifetime of personal experiences and insights. Yet, in the domain of parenthood, a distinctive type of knowledge exists and becomes relevant—"parent knowledge" (Pushor, 2015). This distinctive knowledge is not only held, but it is also put into practice, by individuals nurturing children within the intricate framework of a family and home. Pushor (2015) eloquently encapsulated this concept by emphasizing the distinctive insight a parent holds in their home and family contexts.

My reflections on the narratives of Shan, Jin, and Wen led me to further appreciate the depth of this parent knowledge. As I explored their stories, I recognized elements of my own journey as a transnational mother. Their experiences, echoing with various emotions and challenges, held up a mirror to my own experiences, as if walking through a house of mirrors, each narrative reflecting different aspects of my life in vibrant hues and contrasts. Shan's narrative provides a glimpse into "parent knowledge as relational" as framed by Pushor (2015). This concept captures the distinctive bond and deep understanding between parents and children—a bond that transcends the mere recognition of a child's traits, but instead, immerses a parent into their child's emotional world. Observing Shan's experiences of her child's highs and lows highlights the emotional harmony that defines her parent journey, a powerful manifestation of the bond between a parent and a child. Jin embodies "parent knowledge as intuitive" (Pushor, 2015, p. 17), a concept elucidated for Pushor through Thien's writing (2006). This form of knowledge teeters on the mystical, transcending the spoken word, existing in the subtle shifts of mood and almost imperceptible signals, only discernible to a parent. Jin's comprehension of her child alludes to those abstract aspects of parenthood, challenging verbalization yet firmly rooted in intuition. On the other hand, Wen's journey illuminates "parent knowledge as bodied and embodied" (p. 16), as described by Pushor (2015). Pushor, informed by the work of Pryer (2011), expressed how this form of knowledge emanates from an "intense physicality," a connection based on the shared physical existence with our children. This understanding is built upon shared space, rhythm of daily activities, transcending mere intellectual understanding or emotional connection. In this domain, ordinary routines become extraordinary connections. Unifying these narratives is the thread of "parent knowledge as intimate" (p. 18), as articulated by Pushor (2015), this knowledge blooms in the private realms of our lives, nurtured by shared moments of care and vulnerability. It acts as a binding force in our shared journey as mothers, assuring us that we are not alone in our successes or struggles.

Thinking about Shan, Jin, and Wen's stories, I have come to value even more the immense knowledge that we, as parents, hold and pass on to our children. Their stories make me more aware of how our experiences as transnational mothers shape our children's views of the world. This understanding gives me a sense of strength, inspired by our shared stories, and motivates me to delve deeper into our common experiences. These narratives are not just mere tales; they reflect my own journey, presenting it through the lives of different characters and settings. They draw me into a collective experience that goes beyond geographical borders and cultural differences. Hearing the stories of Shan, Jin, and Wen enables me to see my own experiences in a new light, showing me how common they are among transnational mothers. Each story, with its own specific details, helps me better understand what it means to be a mother across different countries and cultures.

As I listen to their diverse experiences, I see parts of my own journey reflected back at me. As Shan shared her story of an emotional moment when her son struggled and cried during a drum practice session, it took me back to my own experiences with my daughter during her piano lessons. Those challenging and tender moments, filled with frustration and determination, resonated with me deeply. Hearing Jin talk about the support she received from her neighbors and friends as she planned community road trips with her children reminded me of my own early days in a new country. I remembered the kind gentleman next door who helped us navigate our new life. He drove us to the gardening store, patiently showing us how to choose the right lawn care products. His kindness was a beacon of support when everything around us was unfamiliar. Wen's experience of her son learning Chinese online with his grandmother sparked a poignant memory for me. It brought back the days when my daughter had to face a painful separation from her grandmother, who had to return to China due to her visitor visa. Those video chats, bridging distances and keeping family bonds strong, mirrored the efforts I made to maintain the connection between my daughter and her grandma across continents.

Each of these stories, so distinct yet strikingly familiar, not only reflect parts of my own experiences but also bring to light the common emotions, support, and connections that unite us as transnational mothers. These narratives underscore the vital role we play as parents, a role defined not just by our parenting environment but also by the depth of our relationships with our children—the very essence of parent knowledge (Pushor, 2015). This newfound understanding strengthens my sense of empowerment as a transnational mother. It enables me to fully embrace my identity and the knowledge that comes with it. This awareness serves as a powerful reminder of the significant impact our collective parent knowledge has. It motivates me to continue exploring, cherishing, and sharing our invaluable experiences as transnational mothers, recognizing the profound influence we have on our children's lives and our communities.

Transnational Parent Knowledge

Focusing on parent knowledge in the context of transnationalism, I see a distinctive kind of understanding emerge, which I term "transnational parent knowledge." This knowledge is rooted in the real experiences of parents who manage life across different cultures and countries. It is built from the diverse life stories of parents like Shan, Jin, and Wen, who juggle multiple languages and cultural norms while raising their families and guiding their children's education. It is in the daily parenting to help their children learn a new language in a different country; it is in the creative use of digital tools to connect the children with their cultural heritage; it is also in the efforts of balancing Chinese and Canadian teaching and learning styles in a new environment. These real-life examples show how transnational parent knowledge is constantly evolving, influenced by each move, every new community interaction, and the daily realities of parenting in different cultural contexts. Therefore, transnational parent knowledge is a multidimensional concept that reflects the diverse ways transnational parents handle the complexities of raising children in a globalized world. It is a dynamic and evolving set of practices and insights, shaped by the lived experiences of transnational parents. Through the

experiences of these parents, I gain a nuanced understanding of transnational parent knowledge, which aids in viewing parenting and education through a more interconnected and inclusive lens. Next, I explore the specific characteristics of transnational parent knowledge as demonstrated by the narratives of the participants, offering a detailed and personal view of this complex concept.

Knowledge Arising from Transnational Lived Experience

Transnational parents embark on an exceptional expedition that weaves together different cultures, languages, and geographies in their everyday family lives and educational practices. Their experiences include empathetic interactions like listening to diverse stories, observing varied cultural practices, and coexisting with people who have different life perspectives. This wealth of knowledge is special due to these lived experiences. For instance, as transnational parents navigate various educational systems for their children, they gather a wide range of knowledge that shapes their approach to education. This knowledge is dynamic, extending beyond just facts to include lived understanding and practical wisdom gained from adapting to different environments (Boylorn, 2008). The story of transnational parents' experiences encompasses every border crossed, community interaction, and the daily challenges faced in various cultural contexts. It is an individual yet collective experience, enriched by the stories of others they meet, which deepens their perspectives on parenting and education. This concrete, real-life experience forms the foundation of transnational parent knowledge, rather than being merely theoretical concepts.

Jin's transition from China to Canada serves as a profound case study in the development of transnational parent knowledge. In China, she was embedded in a tightly interwoven family structure, where responsibilities and roles were shared, and support was readily available. This family unit provided not just emotional sustenance but also practical assistance in day-to-day tasks. Upon moving to Canada, Jin encountered a drastic shift. The support system she was accustomed to in China was replaced by a sudden independence in Canada. The challenges she

faced were multifaceted: linguistic barriers, unfamiliarity with local systems and practices, and the absence of her immediate support network. Jin well stated the challenges, especially in the initial days:

我家老公 20 天，十几天就走了，就回国了，我一个人带着他们两个（孩子）14 天隔离。我家老公在的时候他还做饭洗碗什么之类的，他走了就只有靠我自己了。我当时来的时候还要注册各种东西，你知道吧？因为我也不懂英文，我这个注册写就很慢，你知道吗？就办这个卡那个证什么之类的，这个东西都得你自己弄，你得自己一个个搞对不对？我家老公走了以后一下子发现什么都不会，什么都要学，首先学买菜。刚开始买菜的时候到超市找不到东南西北什么菜都找不到，我买虾也不知道在哪里买，什么也不知道在哪里对吧？什么都不会买，回来以后还要学怎么做。刚开始那三个月，就忙着适应生活了。

My husband was home for 20 days, and after just about ten days, he left and went back to our country. I was left alone to take care of the two (kids) for 14 days of quarantine. When my husband was here, he would cook and do the dishes and such, but after he left, I had to rely on myself. When I first arrived, I also had to register for various things, you know? Because I don't understand English, it took me a long time to register, you know? I had to deal with getting this card, that certificate, and things like that. You have to do it all by yourself, right? After my husband left, I suddenly realized I didn't know how to do anything and had to learn everything from scratch, starting with grocery shopping. At first, when I went grocery shopping, I couldn't find my way around the supermarket, couldn't find any of the vegetables I was looking for, and didn't even know where to buy shrimp, right? I didn't know how to buy anything, and after coming home, I also had to learn how to cook. Those first three months, I was just busy getting used to life.

(Recorded conversation, June 27, 2022)

Jin's narrative, as she recounts, begins with her husband's brief presence at home for 20 days, which was followed by a period of quarantine and his eventual return to their home country.

This left Jin in a situation of sudden self-reliance, having to navigate the complexities of a new country largely on her own. The tasks that were once shared or taken care of by others, like cooking and household chores, became her sole responsibility. Moreover, Jin faced challenges in navigating bureaucratic processes in a language she was not fluent in. Registering for various services, understanding and acquiring necessary documents like identification cards and certificates, were tasks that became time-consuming and daunting due to the language barrier. The grocery shopping experience highlights her cultural and logistical adaptation. Jin's initial disorientation in Canadian supermarkets—not knowing where to find items, especially specific vegetables and seafood like shrimp—symbolizes her broader journey of acclimatization. Each small task was a learning curve, from understanding product placements to learning new cooking techniques.

Back in China, extended family played a crucial role in Jin's parenting, helping with both simple and complex daily tasks. However, once in Canada, the absence of family meant finding support elsewhere. This absence of family led Jin to discover the importance of community support in Canada, a stark contrast to her experience in China where individual family units were central to daily life. Jin turned to the Chinese immigrant community in Saskatoon for support, connecting with others through a WeChat online group. This virtual space provided practical advice, such as where to find affordable groceries and discussing children's education. The community also organized activities like family hiking and children's playdates, fostering a sense of belonging and easing the integration into new surroundings.

我刚来加拿大那会儿，身边的朋友和邻居都是陌生人。但是，大家真的对我特别好。我们还没来呢，他们就已经帮我买好了床垫、桌子、椅子这些东西。我女儿都觉得很奇怪，问我怎么就有这么多加拿大的朋友了。我自己也觉得好温暖啊。其实这些朋友都是我在网上认识的。因为我刚来的时候还是 COVID 时期，得在家隔离，出不了门，他们每天都帮我送菜，送生活必需品，不管是邻居还是住得远一点的朋友，都开车来送。这些人都是中国人，我们是在微信群里面认识的。我一到这边，邻居

看见我了，就主动说让我先用他们家的网络，还把密码给我了。真是太贴心了。他们有的也是新移民，刚来不久，有的已经在这边住了一两年，都特别好。我女儿看到这些也很有感触。

When I first came to Canada, the friends and neighbors around me were all strangers. But everyone was really good to me. Before we even arrived, they had already bought mattresses, tables, chairs, and such for me. My daughter found it strange and asked me how I had so many Canadian friends already. I felt so warm inside. Actually, I met these friends online. Since it was the COVID period when I first arrived, I had to quarantine at home and couldn't go out, so they helped me by delivering groceries and daily necessities every day, whether they were neighbors or friends living a bit further away, all driving to deliver. These people were all Chinese, and we met in a WeChat group. As soon as I arrived here, the neighbors saw me and proactively offered to let me use their home's internet, even giving me the password. It was so considerate. Some of them are also new immigrants, having arrived not long ago, while others have been living here for a year or two, and they are all very nice. My daughter was also deeply moved by all of this. (Recorded conversation, June 27, 2022)

Jin's experience transcended geographical borders, encompassing cultural, experiential, and transnational aspects. The shift from a family-based to a community-oriented support system, along with adapting to new cultures and norms, enriched her parenting experience with fresh insights. Moreover, the shared experiences within the immigrant community, collective efforts to adapt to new cultural norms, and mutual support in facing the challenges of raising children in a different country further contributed to Jin's transnational parent knowledge. This knowledge, accumulated over time, extended beyond cultural and family boundaries, embracing community and global perspectives. Jin's story highlights the importance of lived experiences in shaping transnational parent knowledge—a living body of understanding formed and tested in the daily practice, cultural exchanges, and mutual support across countries. Jin's diverse experiences

refined her approach to parenting and navigating life in a transnational context. Raymond Williams (1983) noted the universal meaning in experiences, but for transnational parents, this takes on a distinct significance due to their multinational experiences. It gives them a deep understanding of parenting and learning shaped by a variety of cross-cultural, social, and linguistic contexts. The shared knowledge about transnational life experiences among these parents is a journey involving many people sharing their lives and knowledge across different cultural and geographical boundaries. This distinct array of experiences shapes the comprehension of transnational parents regarding matters connected to transnational parenthood and education in an interconnected world, perpetually enhancing their transnational parent knowledge.

Knowledge of Diasporic Imagination

"Home" was an inevitable topic with the mothers. Whether we were seated by the kitchen counter, nestled in the living room, or parked in the garage, we found a special connection. Looking into each other's faces and eyes felt like peering into a mirror, like sensing the warmth of tea amidst a sea of brewed coffee. We knew, in those moments, that the small space of our conversation was a precious shared realm we created just for us. Outside the window lay a different world, where people looked and sounded different from us. Yet in this space, the connections we shared, which often transcended the need for words, brought us "home." Our chats flowed naturally, following the parents' lead, delving into their children's language, immigration experiences, past lives in China, and new lives in Canada. These topics, seemingly distant, were intricately tied together. Here too, was home—a home away from home, but home nonetheless. It was a feeling that transcended language, a sentiment we all felt keenly. The diaspora resonated in our conversations, in the steam rising from the tea, in the Chinese food the mothers graciously served.

Our intimate exploration of "home" and the diaspora echoed through the journey of these transnational parents as they traversed through new linguistic landscapes while cherishing their

heritage language, bringing to light the concept of "diasporic imagination" (Zhu & Li, 2019, p. 2)—a conscious, self-reflective, and creative contemplation emanating from one's dislocated situatedness. This imaginative space burgeons from an acute awareness of the differences between one's place of origin and the current locale, each with their distinctive histories, traditions, values, and languages. Instead of harboring a sense of loss or confusion, the focus pivots towards the multitude of opportunities and new social spheres that migration unveils for individuals, their families, and communities. Shifting the lens from victimization and displacement towards constructing new transnational experiential spaces reveals a paradigm shift (Morley, 2000). In the context of language maintenance and shifts among migrants, this diasporic imagination lays the groundwork for fostering new possibilities (Zhu & Li, 2019). The orientation gravitates significantly towards the future, with imagination playing a critical role in their daily lives. Within heritage language education and everyday language use, this imagination acts as a pivotal compass guiding transnational families (Zhu & Li, 2019). As these parents cross borders, decisions concerning which language(s) to employ, with whom, and when, often morph into a contentious domain within transnational families and communities across different contexts (Zhu & Li, 2019). Instead of only clinging to the past and heritage, current transnational spaces underscore the significance and utility of both the heritage language and the new local language in their daily lives.

Firstly, Li and Zhu (2019) noted that imagination is molded by both individual and familial past experiences alongside present circumstances. For instance, in our conversations, Jin mentioned her son's past schooling experiences in China, which were not pleasant due to the mismatch between the teachers' methods of teaching and interaction with her child, contrasting with her son's personality and preferred ways of learning.

除了搭积木，他还学了画画，还参加了语言班。不过，总的来说，我觉得这些学习经历并不太适合他。尽管我尝试了不同的活动，但似乎都没有达到我预期的效果。他对一些课程不感兴趣，比如搭积木，而且在学校的英语课上也表现得不好，主要

是因为缺乏自信和专注力不足。老师也不知道怎么鼓励他。我们还尝试了游泳、羽毛球和击剑等体育课程，但他也没能坚持下去。在击剑课上，他因为年纪太小和不遵守规矩，所以学得不好。所以，我感觉我儿子在中国的学习经历中遇到了不少挑战，尤其是课外班和语言班，这些教学方式和课程内容好像和他的个性及学习方式不太匹配。

In addition to building blocks, he also learned painting and attended language classes. However, overall, I feel that these learning experiences weren't quite suitable for him. Despite trying various activities, it seems none of them achieved the results I had hoped for. He wasn't interested in some courses, like the building blocks, and he also didn't perform well in his school's English class, mainly due to a lack of confidence and poor concentration. The teachers also didn't know how to encourage him. We tried sports classes like swimming, badminton, and fencing too, but he couldn't stick with them. In fencing, because he was too young and didn't follow the rules, he didn't learn well. So, I feel that my son faced quite a few challenges in his learning experiences in China, particularly in extracurricular and language classes. It seems that the teaching methods and course content didn't quite match his personality and learning style. (Recorded conversation, July 21, 2022)

These past experiences have followed her and their family post-immigration. Now, when choosing schools and teachers, Jin pays extra attention to teaching methods and attitudes, making profound observations and comparisons. This practice has granted her a knowledge of comparative education between these two countries from a personal perspective. Thus, when she envisions and anticipates her children's educational future, these experiences come into play and have a significant impact. The diasporic imagination concept highlighted by Li and Zhu (2019) resonates profoundly with Jin's approach, as it underscores the active, self-reflexive, and creative contemplation derived from one's awareness of the differences between the place of origin and the current locale. Jin's keen observations and discernment in selecting educational

settings for her children embody this diasporic imagination. The act of comparing and contrasting educational methodologies between her home country and her current residence depicts a conscious negotiation and navigation of transnational spaces, rooted in past experiences and present circumstances. This critical contemplation not only deepens her comprehension and approach to her children's education but also enhances her transnational parent knowledge, underscoring the interplay between past experiences, diasporic imagination, and the continual construction of knowledge in transnational contexts.

Secondly, the diasporic imagination manifests in varying coping strategies among different individuals, as noted by Li and Zhu (2019). Wen's actions exemplify a nuanced approach to maintaining her cultural heritage while adapting to a new linguistic environment. Fueled by her diasporic imagination, Wen employs a variety of strategies to balance the nurturing of her heritage language with the practical necessities of adapting to the dominant language in her family's new setting. In particular, Wen's engagement with bilingual education for her son illustrates a deliberate and thoughtful response to the challenges posed by their diasporic situation:

我们主要还是不想放弃中国的语言，因为毕竟从中国过来，而且中国发展还是很不错的，我觉得以后很有可能不一定非得去回国去发展，但是这个趋势，我觉得中文还是非常重要的，所以我不要丢掉。再一个是我的姥爷是北京大学的中文系毕业，而且我妈妈也是搞语文的，所以我就想丢掉中国的传统，所以让他要坚持学中文..... 中文课本，也是我们自己在家教。然后大约是在两年之前，我认识了[中文]学校的刘校长，也参加过图书馆的中文故事会，就开始让我儿子上中文学校学习了。

We mainly didn't want to give up on the Chinese language, since we came from China and considering its good development. I think it's very likely that we may not necessarily have to go back to China for development, but given this trend, I believe Chinese is still very important, so I don't want to lose it. Additionally, my grandfather graduated from the Chinese department at Peking University, and my mother is also involved in

language arts, so I don't want to lose the Chinese tradition. That's why I insist on him continuing to learn Chinese... Chinese textbooks, which we also teach at home. Then, about two years ago, I met Principal Liu from the [Chinese] school and participated in the Chinese story time at the library, and then I started sending my son to the Chinese school for learning. (Recorded conversation, July 06, 2022)

Wen's words clearly show that she recognizes the importance of preserving her cultural and linguistic heritage, as evidenced by her efforts to maintain the Chinese language within her family, a sentiment rooted in her own family history. This personal connection to her cultural roots deeply influences her approach to her son's education. In addition to enrolling her son in a Chinese language school, Wen's approach at home reflects a blend of traditional and innovative methods. The utilization of "Four-Five Rapid Reading 《四五快读》"—a rapid character recognition method for young children, which is very popular in China, is widely used by many parents in home education—and People's Education Edition textbooks (recorded conversation, July 06, 2022) is indicative of her commitment to traditional educational materials. However, Wen also adapts to the new cultural context by creating an online YouTube channel reading picturebooks in Chinese with her son, showcasing an interactive approach to bilingual learning. This modern method not only facilitates language acquisition but also engages her son in an enjoyable and relatable manner, crucial for sustained interest and learning in a young learner. Moreover, Wen's choice of a specific Chinese language school, led by a respected principal, illustrates a strategic decision aimed at providing a structured and immersive learning environment for her son. This decision aligns with her goal of maintaining a strong connection with their Chinese heritage while ensuring that her son acquires the language skills necessary to thrive in their new environment.

On the flip side, Shan navigated a different path of diasporic imagination. While she too acknowledged the importance of the English language in her son's education and life, she relegated that aspect of education to the school. At home, her focus steadfastly remained on

promoting Chinese, their heritage language, albeit not solely for the purpose of cultural preservation. With her son's future constantly in mind, she envisaged the pivotal role the Chinese language would play in the prospective career and life of her child:

我和他爸一直有这么个想法，虽然我们也知道直接帮他规划人生可能不太对，但我们还是很希望他能学会一技之长，将来能靠自己过日子。这不是说要他完全和外面的世界隔绝，而是希望他能在需要的时候，能有选择地和外面的世界保持一定的距离。我们觉得培养个人能力挺重要的。来到这边后，我们不可能完全适应这里的一切，但我们还是希望他有能力做自己喜欢的事，找到适合自己的路……至于学中文，这个当然很重要！毕竟掌握中文，不仅是我们和我们文化根源之间的一个纽带，也是他未来在这个全球化的世界里多一个选择、多一些机会的关键。学中文可以让他更好地了解自己的文化背景，也能在未来的工作中，利用这个语言优势，在多元文化的环境里有所作为。

His dad and I have always had this idea, although we know that planning his life for him might not be entirely right. But still, we really hope he can learn a skill, something that allows him to be self-reliant in the future. This isn't to say that we want him completely cut off from the outside world, but rather that we hope he can choose when to keep some distance from it when necessary. We believe that developing personal abilities is quite important. After coming here, we can't fully adapt to everything, but we still hope he can have the ability to do what he likes and find his own path... As for learning Chinese, that's definitely important! After all, mastering Chinese is not just a link between us and our cultural roots; it's also key to having more options and opportunities in this globalized world. Learning Chinese can help him better understand his cultural background and use this language advantage in his future work to stand out in a multicultural environment. (Recorded conversation, July 26, 2022)

In this conversation with Shan, the importance of her son learning Chinese is connected to her and her husband's broader aspirations for their son's future. Shan expressed that while they know

it might not be entirely positive, they have an idea of planning their son's life in a way that ensures he acquires a skill that can sustain him independently, minimizing the need for extensive interactions with the outside world. This reflects their understanding of the necessity of having personal capabilities that enable adaptation and self-reliance. She acknowledged the complexities and challenges of living in new cultural norms and values after moving to a different country, emphasizing the importance of having the ability to do things that one likes or is suited for. Thus, learning Chinese is not just about language acquisition; it represents a part of a larger plan to equip their son with skills and capabilities for a self-reliant future. These conversations highlight the nuanced ways in which diasporic imagination informs the diverse approaches transnational parents adopt in navigating the linguistic and educational terrains for their children (Li & Zhu, 2019). While driven by a similar imaginative compass, the paths Wen and Shan took epitomize the individualized nature of diasporic imagination and its interplay with personal experiences and aspirations. This difference further emphasizes the diasporic imagination's centrality in crafting personalized educational strategies that resonate with the familial and cultural ethos of transnational families, thereby contributing to the enrichment of discussions on heritage language education and the everyday use of language in transnational contexts.

Lastly, the development of imaginations over time as circumstances change is a shared element among these families (Li & Zhu, 2019). The differences and tensions between the imaginations of individual family members lead to diverse attitudes and behaviors. In the case of Shan, the transformation from a life punctuated by early adversities to a more stable existence in Canada spurred a shift in her imaginative landscape:

我小的时候没有这种稳定的生活，所以现在我很希望能提供这样的生活给他（我儿子）。

When I was young, I didn't have a stable life, so now I really hope to provide such a life for him (my son). (Recorded conversation, July 19, 2022)

This shift mirrored Shan's evolving attitudes towards language education and a broader, more nuanced sense of belonging. The perpetual process of imagining and re-imagining encapsulates a more dynamic comprehension of the notions of "heritage" and "heritage language," alongside a multifaceted understanding of belonging. It underpins the dynamic interactions between past experiences, present circumstances, and future aspirations in shaping the language education pathways chosen by transnational parents. For Shan, the continuous process of imagination and re-imagination fueled her proactive engagement in fostering her heritage language within her son, aligning with her envisioned future for him. This evolving imaginative framework underscores the fluidity and adaptability inherent in the transnational parents' navigational strategies within the linguistic and educational spheres. Moreover, this ongoing process of imaginative evolution reflects the inherent agency and resilience among transnational parents as they negotiate and renegotiate their linguistic and educational goals amidst changing life circumstances. It illustrates the transformative influence of diasporic imagination in enhancing the knowledge and adaptive strategies of transnational parents, thereby contributing to a more robust understanding of the interplay between diasporic imagination, heritage language education, and everyday language use within transnational family contexts.

These narratives unravel the understanding transnational parents, like Jin, Shan, and Wen, have of diasporic imagination, particularly as it relates to their children's heritage language education and daily language use. Through the lens of diasporic imagination, these parents navigate the challenges and opportunities of language education, blending the richness of heritage language with the demands of the new linguistic environment. This imaginative understanding enriches their transnational parent knowledge and creates a pathway for a blended linguistic and cultural experience, enhancing the educational journey of their children in a globalized world. It circles back to our conversations on "home," where the notion of diasporic imagination is not merely a theoretical construct but a complicated lived reality. This imaginative perspective helps transnational parents carve out a sense of home—a linguistic and

cultural space where their heritage and aspirations for their children's future coalesce. It is in these nuanced understandings and actions, driven by a blend of past experiences and future hopes, that the essence of "home" finds its expression. Through nurturing heritage language and navigating the new linguistic landscapes, they create a comforting, familiar space amid the diverse and globalized settings they find themselves in, much like the shared, comforting space filled with the sweet smell of Chinese food and tea we found in our conversations.

Knowledge of Translanguaging

Being a mother and a scholar often results in the merging of academic and personal spheres. On workdays when schools are closed, I occasionally bring my daughters to the university where I am employed. My office becomes their temporary playroom. Fortunately, situated within the College of Education and the Department of Elementary Education, my office is well-stocked with engaging materials such as coloring sheets, a variety of markers, children's books, and snacks. These "bring your kids to work" days are a delight for my daughters. They observe a different facet of their mother: the professional at work. This contrasts with the familiar maternal role they see at home. The experience is so positive that they eagerly anticipate our next office adventure, frequently asking, "When can we go back to your office?" Their inquiry, however, always comes with a humorous twist of mixed languages. In their own words: "When can we go back to your 办公(ban gong) poops?" While not the epitome of sophistication, this expression never fails to elicit giggles from them. To those acquainted with both English and Mandarin, this playful combination of languages is nothing short of clever. The joke centers on the word "office," which in Mandarin is "办公室" (ban gong shi). The amusement arises from the final character "室" (shi), sounding identical to "屎" (shi), meaning "poop." Hence, they end up saying "办公 poops" instead of "office."

Such playful intertwining of languages is a shared aspect in our bilingual household, exemplifying "translanguaging." This concept refers to linguistic practices that blend different linguistic features, which, despite having separate historical developments, now converge within

speakers' interactions, creating an integrated system (García & Li, 2014). As a parent, I have a front-row seat to these linguistic fusions, enabling me to accumulate a wealth of knowledge in the area of translanguaging within our translingual and transnational domestic context. This knowledge is situated beyond academic domains; rather, it roots deeply in the lived experience of a transnational parent. This immersion in daily translanguaging practices enhances academic comprehension with a deep connection to lived experiences. Far from being mere footnotes or quirky side notes, these occurrences deeply resonate with the narratives explored in this study. The exchanges with the three mothers at the heart of this research mirror my own experiences, offering a vivid collage of translanguaging in action. I especially resonate with Wen's narratives, which act as a powerful echo to my own. Wen's teaching strategy at home, where translation becomes an organic pedagogical tool, reflects the essence of translanguaging—the natural embodiment of all linguistic features in the languages bilinguals know. The knowledge of translanguaging that transnational parents possess roots deeply in their lived experience and instincts, which comes before the theorization of the academic terminology:

我用《快乐汉语》这套书来教我儿子学习中文。这本书的独特之处在于，它把汉字巧妙地融入到故事中，故事里偶尔也会出现一些英语单词，但大部分还是中文。每个故事后面都有单词表和英文翻译，这对于英语是母语的孩子来说特别有帮助。书里有个很有意思的部分，它是围绕特定音节的汉字和词汇来设计的。比如，与"ba"音节相关的部分，里面的词汇都和"ba"有关，像"爸爸" (bàba)、"伤疤" (shāngbā) 这样的词。这种方式不仅有趣，而且也帮助孩子更好地理解 and 记忆汉字。

I use the book series "Happy Chinese" to teach my son Chinese. What makes this book unique is that it cleverly incorporates Chinese characters into stories, with occasional English words, though it's mostly in Chinese. Each story is followed by a vocabulary list and English translation, which is particularly helpful for children whose mother tongue is English. An interesting feature of the book is its focus on specific syllables in Chinese characters and vocabulary. For instance, the section related to the "ba" syllable includes

words associated with "ba," like '爸爸' (bàba - father) and '伤疤' (shāngbā - scar). This approach is not only fun but also helps children better understand and memorize Chinese characters. (Recorded conversation, July 27, 2022)

Wen's selection of textbooks and her strategic use of both languages, engaging in the dynamic interplay between them to facilitate understanding and communication, exemplify the integration of translanguaging into the inherent learning process of bilingual language users. This approach moves beyond traditional views of bilingualism that might treat each language as a separate system. Instead, translanguaging embraces the fluid and natural way bilingual individuals use their entire linguistic repertoire, seamlessly moving between languages to enhance comprehension, expression, and learning. This method acknowledges that bilingual speakers do not simply switch from one code to another but rather engage in a sophisticated process of blending linguistic resources. This translanguaging practice is instrumental in reinforcing conceptual understanding, encouraging bilingual learners to draw on their full range of linguistic knowledge to grasp new ideas, solve problems, and express themselves more effectively and authentically.

Using books in both English and Chinese, Wen does more than simply translating the text for her son. She facilitates a vibrant linguistic exchange that is both dynamic and educational. This practice mirrors the academic discourse on translanguaging, where scholars like García et al. (2020) and Li (2011) note that the act of translation in bilingual settings often transcends the conventional boundary-driven approach, becoming a fluid, integrated practice. Wen's adept handling of both languages to deepen her son's understanding of subjects like bat behavior is a lived illustration of this theory. Her extensive knowledge expressed in Chinese coupled with her son's ability to synthesize information from both linguistic worlds in his mind is translanguaging in action. This integration of languages at home not only enhances learning but also nurtures the child's linguistic identities, resonating with the observations of Salaberry (2020) on the emergent nature of translation as part of translanguaging. The child's seamless

navigation from one language to another, combining insights from his mother's Chinese explanations with the English text, is a practical application of what Baynham and Lee (2019) described as a dynamic process of meaning-making that defies traditional separations between languages. Wen's approach reinforces the expanded view of translation that does not confine it to textual transfer but recognizes it as an intrinsic component of translanguaging, malleable and arising in response to communicative needs (García, 2009). Her experiential knowledge as a transnational parent, engaging in these bilingual exchanges, enriches the academic understanding of how heritage language skills are cultivated at home.

Knowledge of Comparative and Global Perspectives

Sometimes I ponder the extent to which life imprints itself on a person, particularly when they dwell in one place before transitioning to another, and yet another. Typically, we remain oblivious to the influence of our physical environment and the intangible cultural "vibes" and "norms" surrounding us. It is often the act of "moving away" that reveals the indelible mark our lives leave behind, making it visible. This thought reminds me of a conversation I overheard at home between my daughter Molly and her grandmother, revolving around a hairpin. Molly, at that time in kindergarten and about five years old, had spent half her life in Canada. As such, she was profoundly "Canadian" in many ways. One day, she returned home, brimming with excitement, eager to show us a craft she made at school—a hairpin fashioned from tissue paper into the shape of a blooming flower. It had that charming, imperfect beauty of a child's handmade craft. However, her grandmother reacted quite differently upon seeing Molly clip the white flower into her hair. "Get it off your head!" she exclaimed sharply. Molly, puzzled, did not understand her grandmother's distress. "In our tradition, white flowers in the hair are for mourning the old," her grandmother explained, her voice laden with emotion. At that moment, I grasped the root of her upset. In China, where we come from, wearing a white flower is a cultural symbol associated with death. However, Molly, raised in a different cultural milieu, could not comprehend this. The conversation between grandmother and granddaughter

culminated with Molly's assertive proclamation: "You have your culture, and I have mine!" Oh my, how do you object to that? As a "third party" who observed that intergenerational conflict, and someone who straddles both Chinese and Canadian cultures, I could empathize with both viewpoints. What intrigued me the most was the realization that this interaction symbolized our family's journey from China to Canada—a lengthy trail traversing borders. With my personal experience of every step in this journey, I had developed the ability to perceive and resonate with different cultures along this path. It provided a transnational perspective—a view afforded to those who navigate and blend multiple cultures.

Such ability to compare cultures, particularly in children's education, was manifested in the participating mothers' narratives in this research. In previous chapters, I shared the conversation with Wen regarding her son's Chinese language ability and how Wen was satisfied with his listening and speaking levels. However, Wen also told me that comparing to many same aged children in China, particularly in those families who are more competitive, she saw the difference:

我孩子可能认识很多汉字，但是他的书写能力比较基础，跟他的认字能力不同步。他在听、说、读方面的能力远远超过了写字的能力。实际上，他在这些方面应该已经超过了同龄人的水平。在加拿大，他肯定超过了大多数同龄人，尤其是在听和说方面。但如果和中国的孩子比，特别是那些学习非常卷的家庭，他可能比不上。在中国，竞争非常激烈，有些孩子的水平实在太高了，简直没法比。

My child might recognize many Chinese characters, but his writing ability is quite basic and not in sync with his character recognition. His skills in listening, speaking, and reading far surpass his writing abilities. In fact, he probably exceeds his peers in these areas. In Canada, he's definitely ahead of most of his peers, especially in listening and speaking. However, if compared with children in China, particularly those from extremely competitive families, he might not measure up. The competition in China is

fierce, and some children's levels are incredibly high, almost incomparable. (Recorded conversation, July 20, 2022)

Exploring Wen's narrative reveals a diverse, transnational landscape of language learning and proficiency, evident in her child's experiences in Canada and China. Wen's reflections provide a compelling comparative perspective, highlighting stark contrasts and nuanced similarities in language acquisition across these different educational and cultural landscapes. Wen's narrative begins by illustrating her child's linguistic journey in Canada. In this context, her child's language skills are nurtured and celebrated for their distinctiveness and fluency compared to local peers. This part of the story is filled with achievement and pride, as Wen observes her child's language abilities flourishing in a Canadian setting, marked by a distinct educational ethos and cultural diversity.

However, the narrative transitions to the Chinese context reveal a contrasting scenario. Wen astutely observes that language proficiency standards in China are exceptionally high, shaped by a highly competitive educational environment. This section of Wen's story brings into focus the rigorous benchmarks set for language learning in China, reflecting the cultural importance placed on academic excellence and linguistic prowess. In this setting, Wen notes, her child's language skills, while impressive in Canada, are juxtaposed against a more advanced linguistic environment in China. Wen's narrative highlights her knowledge of the interplay of global and local dimensions in language learning. Her insights reveal how educational systems and cultural expectations play a crucial role in shaping language skills.

The narrative highlights the influence of cultural factors on language development, with Wen recognizing the different educational ethos of Canada and China. From Wen's knowledgeable viewpoint, her narrative conveys a deep understanding of her child's transnational experiences. She recognizes that language competencies are not fixed entities but are instead dynamic, evolving with exposure to various linguistic and cultural contexts. Wen sees her child's journey not just in terms of mastering language but as an ongoing process shaped

by diverse educational experiences across different geographies. She appreciates how these varied settings contribute uniquely to her child's developing abilities and perceptions. Wen's perspective acknowledges the richness that comes from this transnational educational journey, understanding that each context offers distinct contributions to her child's growth and learning. This narrative, from Wen's perspective, is about more than linguistic skills; it is about understanding the broader implications of transnational experiences on a child's development.

Comparative perspectives continue to influence transnational parents, even after settling in a new country and making educational decisions within its borders. Shan, who was deeply engaged in researching school choices for her son, explored numerous options across various Canadian cities, aided by online social media platforms. Her demeanor became earnest as she passionately shared her experiences of utilizing "big data" in selecting schools:

现在大数据很智能，你一旦在网上搜索几个学校的名字，系统就会推荐相关信息。比如，有些家长在小红书上分享他们的经验，会说他们的房子恰好位于几个学区中间，这些学区内有不同的学校。其中有的学校很轻松，学生几乎没有什么作业，但也有的学校，比如一年级就开始布置很多家庭作业。这些都是公立学校，排名差不多，但教学风格完全不一样。你得知道，通过小红书获取的这些信息并不一定准确。每个人分享的都是他们的个人感受和经验，所以每个人的角度和感受都不同。

Nowadays, big data is very intelligent. Once you search for the names of a few schools online, the system will start recommending relevant information. For example, some parents share their experiences on Xiao Hong Shu (The Little Red Book, a commonly used Chinese social media platform), saying that their house is just in between several school districts, and there are different schools within these districts. Some schools are quite relaxed with hardly any homework for the students, but others, like one school, start giving a lot of homework from the first grade. These are all public schools with similar rankings, but their teaching styles are completely different. You have to know that the information obtained from XiaoHongShu may not always be accurate. Everyone

shares their personal experiences and feelings, so everyone's perspective and feelings are different. (Recorded conversation, July 19, 2022)

Shan's discussion about using big data and Xiao Hong Shu, a social media platform, underscores the globalized nature of information access and its impact on educational choices. Her story demonstrates how parents living across different countries use technology to successfully manage educational systems in a new land. This reflects a broader trend where transnational families utilize digital tools to bridge gaps in their knowledge and understanding of different educational contexts. Her narrative also delves into the concept of comparative perspectives, particularly evident as she compares schools within Canadian school districts. Shan discussed variations in teaching styles, workloads, and educational approaches, highlighting the diversity within a seemingly homogenous group of similarly ranked schools. This aspect of her narrative demonstrates a keen understanding of the global educational landscape, where transnational parents like Shan are not only adapting to a new educational system but also actively engaging in comparative analysis to make informed decisions.

Shan's observation about the subjectivity of information on platforms like Xiao Hong Shu brings to the fore the challenges transnational parents face in discerning accurate and reliable information. It illustrates the complexity of navigating through varied personal accounts and experiences shared online, emphasizing the need for critical evaluation in a global context where information can be diverse and multifaceted. Moreover, Shan's conversation highlights the diversity of parent perspectives and priorities in educational decision-making. This reflects a key aspect of transnational parenting: the need to reconcile differing educational values and expectations from multiple cultural contexts. What is deemed suitable or desirable in one educational setting may differ significantly in another, underscoring the importance of personalized and context-sensitive choices in education.

Enacting Transnational Parent Knowledge in Language Education

In the field of language education, the personal experiences and struggles of transnational families, often overlooked, are central to this narrative inquiry. This study aims to unearth these stories, using the diverse knowledge of transnational parents to enhance equitable access in language education for multilingual children. Incorporating this knowledge in heritage language education is a critical yet largely unexplored pathway to reducing educational disparities and enriching language learning. At the core of this exploration are the experiences of transnational mothers like Jin, Wen, and Shan, whose stories reveal the complex interplay of identity, culture, history, and agency in heritage language education. These narratives illustrate not only their resilience in adapting to cross-cultural experiences but also highlight the need to integrate their knowledge into educational practices, especially in increasingly global and diverse societies. In this section, I delve into how to move from recognizing the importance of this knowledge to implementing it effectively in educational settings. I seek to uncover the nuances of this experiential knowledge and discuss the necessary steps to ensure that transnational parent knowledge is acknowledged, valued, and integrated into the educational system, thereby moving beyond theoretical benefits to actual, impactful change.

In the personal realm, valuing the insights of transnational parents is a significant move toward broadening the educational narrative. These parents, from varied cultural, linguistic, and educational backgrounds, offer perspectives frequently missed in mainstream education. Their diverse experiences, beliefs, and aspirations forge individual linguistic journeys for their families, making a considerable contribution to the vast landscape of linguistic diversity. Recognizing the subjective nature of language education entails seeing each family's narrative as a distinct contribution, shedding light on different cultural intersections and personal stories. Moreover, this perspective emphasizes the need to consider parents who may lack certain socio-economic advantages. It highlights the importance of creating educational policies and

practices that are inclusive and supportive of all families, regardless of their socio-economic status. This awareness not only deepens our understanding of the complexities of language learning but also fosters a greater respect for how differing experiences affect language use and perception. Beyond acknowledging the various languages spoken, it involves a compassionate grasp of the cultural details, historical backgrounds, and personal tales behind each family's linguistic identity. Adopting this viewpoint calls for a more empathetic and holistic approach to language education, treating languages not just as communication tools but as crucial elements of individual and collective identities. This method ensures that all students, especially those from families without extensive socio-economic resources, receive equitable support to develop their linguistic skills and celebrate their cultural heritage, contributing to a more inclusive and enriched educational experience for everyone.

From a professional perspective, integrating transnational parent knowledge with teacher knowledge can significantly enhance the educational landscape, especially in the area of language learning. The lived experiences of transnational parents like Jin, Wen, and Shan offer practical insights that can be instrumental in tailoring heritage language education to the needs of multilingual children. These personal accounts illuminate the diverse ways languages are utilized and valued within transnational families, providing educators with a deeper understanding of how to incorporate these varied linguistic practices into formal education settings. By recognizing and valuing the intricate relationship between language, cultural identity, family dynamics, and personal history, educators can create a learning environment that is both inclusive and reflective of students' diverse linguistic realities. This approach transforms language learning from a mere academic subject into an integral part of a student's identity, deserving of understanding, respect, and nurturing. Moreover, this integration urges educators in public schools to perceive language not merely as a subject to be taught but as an integral part of a student's identity. It challenges them to recognize the emotional and cultural connections

students have with their languages, proposing that these connections serve as a foundation for creating more engaging and effective language education programs. The merging of insights from transnational parents with the expertise of both mainstream and heritage language teachers offers a unique opportunity to cultivate a holistic approach to language education.

Acknowledging the backgrounds and challenges within public school settings, where the needs and experiences of multilingual students might vary greatly, educators are encouraged to refine their teaching strategies. By learning about, and valuing, the experiences and insights of transnational families, teachers can tailor their approaches to more accurately meet the diverse needs of multilingual students. This strategy leads to a learning environment that not only bolsters language proficiency but also enriches students' cultural and emotional connections to their languages, fostering a more profound and resonant educational experience.

On a societal scale, the engagement of transnational parents in advocating for social justice and educational equity is crucial. This extends to challenging prevailing norms of Whiteness and monolingualism, which often dominate societal and educational discourses. By fostering bilingualism and biculturalism within their families and communities, transnational parents actively resist raciolinguistic ideologies that privilege monolingual, monocultural perspectives. These ideologies, which intertwine racial and linguistic biases, can significantly impact transnational families, often marginalizing non-dominant languages and cultures. Through their advocacy and daily practices, transnational parents not only contribute to the linguistic and cultural richness of society but also highlight the value of diverse identities and experiences. Their efforts help dismantle barriers and create more inclusive spaces that recognize and celebrate linguistic and cultural diversity as strengths rather than deviations from the norm. The experiences shared by transnational mothers underscore the importance of recognizing and honoring the diverse linguistic backgrounds that students introduce into the educational environment. Embracing this linguistic diversity paves the way for a more balanced educational setting, where all languages and cultures are recognized and fostered. This strategy

cultivates a society that celebrates linguistic diversity as a core aspect of the educational journey, moving beyond mere tolerance to genuine appreciation and integration. These narratives from transnational families serve as potent reminders of the value in understanding each student's linguistic heritage as a vital component of their identity and learning process. This recognition leads to an education system that not only acknowledges the existence of multiple languages and cultures but actively incorporates them into the learning environment. It shifts the focus from a monolingual and monocultural framework to one that is truly multicultural and multilingual, reflecting the realities of our global society. In such an environment, languages become bridges rather than barriers, facilitating connections and understanding among students from different backgrounds. This approach enhances the educational experience for all students, equipping them with the skills and perspectives needed to navigate and value a world abundant in linguistic and cultural variety. It sets the foundation for a more empathetic and interconnected society, where differences in language and culture are viewed as opportunities for learning and growth rather than obstacles to be conquered.

In the academic sphere, the influence of this research extends significantly into the realms of academia and future language education research. It introduces opportunities for scholars to investigate new methodologies and theoretical frameworks that embrace the extensive diversity of linguistic experiences inherent in transnational families. This research marks a departure from conventional paradigms that frequently neglect transnational viewpoints, advocating instead for a more inclusive approach. It necessitates an academic evolution, one that comprehends the intricate relationships among identity, culture, history, and agency within language education. This understanding is vital for a thorough grasp of language learning and teaching within an increasingly interconnected global context. Such a shift in academic thought encourages researchers to consider the multifaceted nature of language education, viewing it not just through a linguistic lens but also through cultural, historical, and personal perspectives. This approach enables a deeper, more nuanced exploration of how language functions within the lives

of individuals, particularly those navigating multiple cultural identities. It promotes research that not only contributes to theoretical knowledge but also has practical implications for educational practice, ensuring that language education is responsive to the needs of a diverse student population. Moreover, this scholarly pursuit opens the door to interdisciplinary collaboration, drawing from fields such as sociology, anthropology, and psychology to enrich our understanding of language education. It invites a holistic view of language learning, considering how societal, cultural, and individual factors interact to shape language acquisition and use. By embracing this comprehensive approach, academia can play a pivotal role in shaping language education policies and practices that are inclusive, equitable, and reflective of the diverse world in which we live.

Final Thoughts: Keep Telling Stories and Moving Forward

Reflecting on the path this dissertation has charted, I am drawn back to the initial questions that emerged from the complexities of nurturing a child in a linguistically and culturally diverse world. These queries, laid out in Chapter 1, have found their answers through my personal experiences and have been echoed in the experiences shared by Jin, Wen, and Shan. I initially grappled with understanding why an educator might struggle with the nuances of a child living between two languages and cultures. My journey revealed that true comprehension extends beyond observation to encompass lived experiences. The educators' acknowledgement of the significance of heritage language in all settings became apparent as I introduced our language and culture into my daughter's classroom. This initiative of integrating our heritage language not only at home but also in educational environments highlighted the resilience and adaptability of transnational families. The journey also answered how I, as a parent, could cultivate a positive language environment for my child, enhance her heritage language skills, and foster a deep appreciation and confidence for our ancestral language. The introduction of

Chinese picturebooks into her educational experience served as more than just teaching tools; they were a bridge connecting her to her cultural roots and a broader world of understanding.

In addressing the questions I posed in Chapter 5 concerning the role of schools in nurturing parent engagement and creating empowering educational environments, it is important to note that the answers are deeply embedded in the chapters detailing the teaching and learning strategies of transnational parents. The section, *Now What? Enacting Transnational Parent Knowledge in Language Education*, specifically delves into this area, highlighting how the insights and experiences of transnational parents can significantly enrich and transform the current landscape of language education. This segment of the dissertation provides a concrete demonstration of how the knowledge and strategies of transnational parents, when integrated into educational settings, can offer invaluable contributions. These chapters illuminate the ways in which schools can actively facilitate the sharing of cultural knowledge and values, not just across generations, but also within the diverse fabric of the educational community.

By showcasing the practical applications of transnational parent knowledge, this section underscores the immense potential that lies in harnessing these perspectives for the betterment of language education. It reveals how the experiential wisdom of transnational families can serve as a powerful catalyst for creating educational environments that are not only culturally inclusive but also deeply responsive to the needs of a linguistically diverse student body. As a result, the questions posed in Chapter 5 find answers in the practical examples and strategies outlined in these chapters, providing schools with a blueprint to actively connect with and derive benefits from the diverse and multifaceted experiences of transnational families. These strategies include but are not limited to creating inclusive language policies that recognize and value multiple languages, implementing culturally responsive teaching practices that draw on students' backgrounds as assets, and fostering partnerships with transnational families to bring their rich cultural and linguistic knowledge into the classroom. These approaches mark a significant shift

towards an educational landscape that values and incorporates the diverse voices and narratives of all its members, paving the way for a more interconnected and empathetic global community.

In contemplating these insights, I recognize that my role in narrating the experiences of transnational families is just one facet of a larger picture. The stories of Jin, Wen, and Shan exemplify this. Their accounts, characterized by resilience and adaptability, are narratives that deserve to be shared directly by those who live them. Hence, this dissertation is not merely a record of my narrative efforts but also an invitation for others to contribute their voices to this diverse and intricate narrative mosaic.

As I bring this chapter, and this dissertation, to a close, I am filled with both satisfaction and anticipation. Satisfaction from knowing that the journey has responded to its foundational questions, and anticipation for what lies ahead—a future where the narratives of transnational families are not only shared but also heard, acknowledged, and celebrated. This journey marks not an end, but a beginning, a point of departure for more stories to unfold, more voices to be amplified, and greater understanding to be cultivated in language education with transnational families.

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