

Invisible and visible language planning: ideological factors in the family language policy of Chinese immigrant families in Quebec

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Abstract This ethnographic inquiry examines how family languages policies are planned and developed in ten Chinese immigrant families in Quebec, Canada, with regard to their children's language and literacy education in three languages, Chinese, English, and French. The focus is on how multilingualism is perceived and valued, and how these three languages are linked to particular linguistic markets. The parental ideology that underpins the family language policy, the invisible language planning, is the central focus of analysis. The results suggest that family language policies are strongly influenced by socio-political and economical factors. In addition, the study confirms that the parents' educational background, their immigration experiences and their cultural disposition, in this case pervaded by Confucian thinking, contribute significantly to parental expectations and aspirations and thus to the family language policies.

Keywords Language ideology · Multilingualism · Family language policy · Chinese language · Immigrant families

Introduction

[语言] 就像一扇门一样, 能帮你认识世界。当你学一门语言时, 你认识了世界的这一部分。当你学另一门语言时, 你又认识了世界的另一部分。那等于是一个又一个的窗口在打开。你可以学到很多东西。通过语言, 你就能够学到很多知识。

[Language] is like a door that enables you to reach the world. When you learn one language, you get to know one part of the world. When you learn other languages, you'll get an opportunity to know other parts of the world. It is like windows opening up to you one by one. You can learn many things and obtain knowledge through languages.

(Mrs. Qi, a Chinese immigrant parent in Montreal)

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Mrs. Qi's insightful statement is a powerful illustration of how much some immigrant parents believe in languages and how important they consider the role of languages in education and social life in general. This powerful belief can be, and is often, transformed into active language practices, explicitly and implicitly. Mrs. Qi's statement provides a window into parents' language ideologies and indicates why parents emphasize intervention in their children's bi/multilingual development within family domains.

The focus of this article is to locate language policy as a field of inquiry within the study of multilingual literacy practices and language maintenance in private domains and home contexts. This paper explores how family language policies are explicitly (Shohamy 2006) and overtly (Schiffman 1996, 2006), but also implicitly and covertly, planned in ten Chinese immigrant families in Montréal with regard to their children's language and literacy education in three languages: Chinese, English, and French. It focuses on how multilingualism is perceived and which languages are valued and linked to particular linguistic markets in a given context. In particular, it explores how parental language ideologies act as visible and invisible language planning for their children's language education. "Invisible language planning" refers to non-governmental and spontaneous language 'planning' for acquisition and use of a language (Pakir 1994, 2003). The invisible language policies are sometimes contrary to the visible policies espoused by the state or other organized agencies (Seidlhofer 2003). The invisible language planning is to an extent determined by the attitude of parents toward a certain language; but also the media, societal pressure and the children's peers play important roles. In this article, the primary focus is on the "invisible" role of parents as shaped by their aspirations and expectations for their children's future. Inevitably, this exploration will involve the broader issues of multilingual development, minority and majority language status, heritage language support, home-school continuities, and linguistic identity.

Family language policy

A language policy is a political decision and a deliberate attempt to change/influence/affect the various aspects of language practices and the status of one or more languages in a given society. Language policies are made explicitly, or are implicitly acknowledged and practiced, in all societal domains including family domains (Ricento 2006; King, et al. 2008; Shohamy 2006). Thus, family language policy (FLP) can be defined as a deliberate attempt at practicing a particular language use pattern and particular literacy practices within home domains and among family members. While language policies at macro level tend to be established and implemented to change or influence social structures and processes, FLP tends to be based on the individual family's perception of social structures and social changes. In particular, FLP is shaped by what the family believes will strengthen the family's social standing and best serve and support the family members' goals in life. The formation of FLP includes many variables that relate to "*linguistic culture*—the sum total of ideas, values, beliefs, attitudes, prejudices,

myths, religious strictures, and all the other cultural “baggage” that speakers bring to their dealings with language from their culture” (Schiffman 2006:112). Like all other language policies, FLP includes three components: language beliefs, language practices, and language management (Spolsky 2004; Shohamy 2006). Language beliefs refer to ideologies behind each language policy. Language practices refer to the ecology of language and emphasize the actual language use in different contexts and for various reasons. Language management refers to specific actions undertaken to intervene or influence language practices (Spolsky 2004, 2009).

The study of FLP seeks to ascertain, *inter alia*, why certain languages are prestigious to a particular immigrant group. Why do members of some immigrant groups maintain their languages, while members of other groups lose their language? Why do some children, growing up in a monolingual environment, become bilinguals while other children, growing up in a bilingual environment, become monolinguals? To what extent do language policies at governmental and institutional levels impede and prevent or support and promote family language policies? And what is the overarching role of the society at large? As King et al. (2008) point out, the study of FLP can provide windows into parental language ideologies that reflect and refract broader societal attitudes and ideologies about both languages(s) and parenting. They suggest that FLP is best viewed within the frameworks of language policy and child language acquisition (King and Fogle 2006; King et al. 2008). They argue that child language acquisition, viewed as a subfield of psychology, is insufficient to explain the socio-cultural issues that influence how children become bi/triliterate. Child language acquisition deals with the types of exposure to languages that are needed for achieving balanced bilingualism and the mechanisms and conditions that must be in place for language acquisition to occur. Researchers in this field often focus on micro-analysis of the interactions between caretaker and child in isolated settings (King et al. 2008; De Houwer 2009). However, much less attention is given to what particular languages should be acquired and why different values are ascribed to different languages and, in particular, what kind of family environment and what forms of parental “capital” are likely to promote bilingualism. The social factors that influence bilingualism are rarely in focus. For example, there are various forces and contexts in society that will exert influence on family language ideologies and practices and may give rise to different language agendas. Immigrant families often encounter problems when establishing their “language rules” at home. Intergenerational language shift within three generations, for example, is often the norm of immigrant language behaviors (Fishman 1991; Clyne 2003; Clyne and Kipp 1997). Competing with mainstream ideologies, children’s popular culture and peer influence on children’s social values, resisting mainstream imposition, fighting for economic survival and struggling for legal status are the challenges that immigrant families face in combating language loss (Spolsky 2004; Canagarajah 2008; Clyne 2003; Maguire and Curdt-Christiansen 2007; Gibbons and Ramirez 2004). Thus, the complexity of ideas about language underlying the formation of FLP compels us to develop a multi-faceted perspective on this process.

In this article the study of FLP is informed by two theoretical orientations: language policy and home literacy. While both theoretical orientations are

concerned with the conditions of bilingual language acquisition and literacy practices, their foci are on distinctively different levels of concern. Language policy scholars tend to focus on macro level issues, such as political ideology and economic implications of language intervention. Home literacy scholars tend to focus on micro issues such as home literacy environment and how various forms of family capital, including physical, human and social capitals, can be transformed into educational attainment of children (Coleman 1988; Li 2007). Literacy from this perspective is viewed as a language socialization process and a social practice involving not only the ability to decode and encode printed texts, but also the ideologically shaped ways of reading and writing that reflect values, beliefs, attitudes, culture and individuals' life worlds (Street 2001; Gee 2005). Recent research has evidenced that influence on children's multiliteracy development goes far beyond the school context (Gregory 1997; Heath 1983; Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines 1988; Gregory and Kenner 2003). Families and communities as resources and funds of knowledge (Moll 1992) can contribute greatly to children's language and literacy development. Recent studies of FLP have drawn on the theory of child language acquisition (King et al. 2008; King and Fogle 2006; De Houwer 2007; Piller 2001, 2002). However, scholars in the field of child language acquisition tend to focus narrowly on the oral side of children's language development in two languages. This field of study does not provide a broader understanding of how multilingual literacies are practiced and used in family domains, or how bilingual children are influenced by their environments and interact with their worlds through various mediational means. There are a few studies that have explored FLP within bilingual family context (Piller 2001, 2002; King and Fogle 2006; King 2000; Okita 2002); these studies explore the role of parenting, in particular parental knowledge of child bilingual development, as basis for FLP formation. Although these studies make important contributions to the field of FLP, contextualized, socio-cultural research into how immigrant families construct their FLP is scant. There is a lack of attention on the multiple forces and conditions that shape the formation of FLP. Recognizing that language policy co-exists with geographic, historical, political and socio-economic environments, this study, from an ecological perspective, looks at how FLP interacts with "a wide range of linguistic and non-linguistic elements, variables and factors" (Spolsky 2004:41). The following section provides a discussion of the sociolinguistic and non-linguistic variables that influence language ideologies and FLP planning.

Language ideology

Language ideology has been defined by van Dijk (1998: 8) as the "shared framework(s) of social beliefs that organize and coordinate the social interpretations and practices of groups and their members". It is the subconscious beliefs and assumptions about the social utility of a particular language in a given society that reflect values and patterns rooted in a society's linguistic culture (Schiffman 2006). Language ideologies are often seen as the driving force of language policy as language ideologies are based on the perceived value, power and utility of various

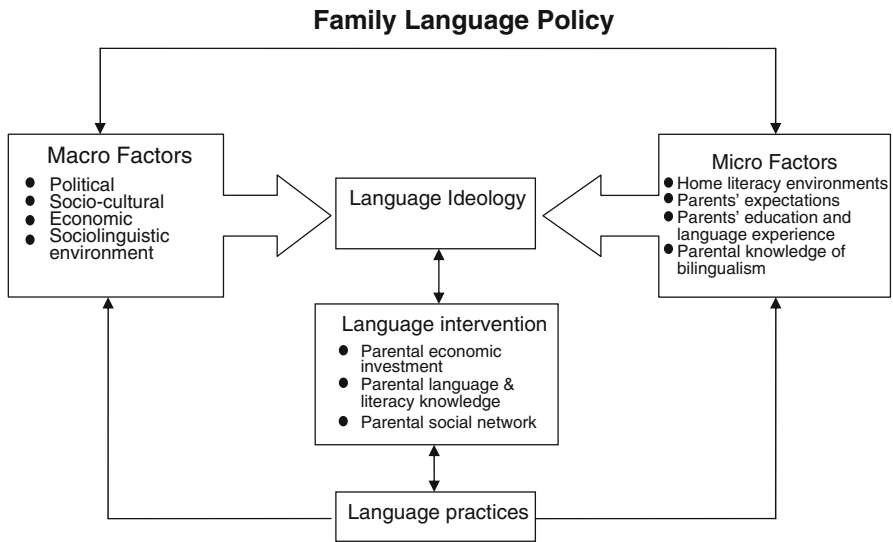


Fig. 1 Family language policy

languages. King (2000:169) succinctly puts forth the pivotal position of ideology as “the mediating link between language use and social organization”. Consequently, the process of realizing any language policy entails closer analysis of ideology formation and the sources of ideology formation. While ideology formation can be multidimensional and complex, my understanding is based on the two theoretical traditions: language policy and home literacy. To illustrate the complex relationship between ideology, interventions and language practices within a FLP, Fig. 1 provides a graphic representation of the interactive and bidirectional processes at work.

There are four major linguistic and non-linguistic contexts or conditions (Spolsky 2004): sociolinguistic context; socio-cultural context (the symbolic values associated with language/languages); socio-economic context (instrumental (economic) values ascribed to a language); and socio-political context (national educational/ language policy; language choice as a right). These contexts can be perceived as providing sources of ideology that motivate language policy decisions. Therefore, language ideology as the major component of language policy reflects the socio-political and economic interests of the policy makers (*in casu* parents); and a language policy at any level has sociological, linguistic, political, and economic dimensions (Grin 2006, 2007). In addition, language ideology is context specific and related to and interwoven with economic, political, socio-cultural and linguistic factors as well as parental educational experiences and expectations. It should be noted that these factors are interrelated and may simultaneously exert influence on individual persons’ belief systems. In addition, they may or may not be congruent with the state policy in terms of what language should be maintained, what language provides access to advanced economic development, and what language serves political interests and should be allowed in public domains. In Québec, for example, the state language ideology is unilingual French, serving political interests; English,

viewed as a major threat to the French language, is kept invisible in public domains as are the various minority languages.

Political factors concern individuals' equal rights and opportunities to education, civil activities, and political decisions. These factors reflect the dynamic relationship between social structure and individual agency, where institution provides or constrains access to individual actions (Tollefson 2006). One of the factors affecting the language policy of immigrant families is their linguistic optimism, expressed in attitudes and beliefs that the new language is an obstacle to be overcome, and once overcome it will provide equal opportunity to education and a better life (Ogbu 1995). Some immigrant families see access to and provision of heritage language education as their "human right" while others consider the maintenance of a minority language a "problem" as it may prevent them from participating in socio-political activities (Pennycook 2002; Phillipson 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas 2000; Wong-Fillmore 1991).

Economic factors refer to the economic forces that a particular language evokes or vice versa. In other words, they are the interconnections between languages and the economy (Grin 2006). Language economics is a field of study that seeks to address whether and to what degree language variables affect economic variables, such as earnings and salaries. Tollefson (1991) argues that economic forces are central in most language policies.

Cultural factors refer to the symbolic values that particular languages represent. In this perspective, languages are viewed as manifestations of culture; they provide links to the richness and wealth of a shared past and to shared meanings, beliefs, values and understandings (Baker 2006; Emmitt et al. 2006). As cultural tools, languages convey our social experiences, origins, history, gender, age, ethnicity, nationality and race, and thus express our identities (Norton 2000). Languages contain not only culturally defined human communication, but also a wealth of organized human knowledge including art, poetry, music, and science.

Social factors are about the access to social mobility that a particular language provides. They are closely connected to the economic value of certain languages. Although languages seem to be equal and neutral, there are differences between actual and potential equality among languages for social reasons (Hymes 1992; Hornberger 2003). English, for example, as an international language, provides access to positions of high social prestige in many developing countries.

Parental expectations, among the most important micro predictors for a successful FLP, refer to the beliefs and goals that parents have for their children's multilingual development and educational outcomes. These expectations are often shaped by the parents' socio-cultural-historical backgrounds through both primary and secondary socializations in and out of their home country (Gee 2005; Curdt-Christiansen 2008). Reflected in home literacy practices, they are based on the parents' cultural dispositions towards education, their own educational experiences and beliefs, their immigration experiences, and feelings of missed opportunities.

Informed by the studies of language policy and home literacy, I see FLP as a mediational tool interacting with the existing educational framework, social structure, political agenda and personal interests and ambitions. In order to understand what is behind decisions on FLP, I ask the following two questions:

1. What are the contexts that shape parental beliefs, choices and aspirations for their children's multilingual development and their education in general?
2. How do parents describe the beliefs and contexts which shape their family language policy?

Methodology

Data collection and researcher stance

In order to provide an authentic “observation” of the “live” data (Spindler and Spindler 1987), I use ethnographic tools of inquiry: semi-structured interviews with each family, and participant observations in the home and heritage language school contexts. I examine parents' perceptions of and expectations for their children's education by exploring their experiences, attitudes and beliefs about language and literacy learning and teaching, and by obtaining information about the literacy activities and practices in which families engage with their children.

As I am a member of the community being investigated, the ethnographic tool allows me to share my insider view on the families' cultural positioning and language practices, providing a better understanding of the families' language policies, and of how socio-cultural literacy practices are carried out in the Chinese community in Montréal. As an immigrant and a parent, I share experiences with my participants of the linguistic and political complexities inherent in the English/French/Chinese, majority/minority backdrop of Québec society. Having grown up in China during the infamous Cultural Revolution, my experiences of immigration to the West provide me with an understanding of the Chinese parents' perspectives on languages and literacy, their persistence in promoting Chinese culture, and insistence on maintaining their children's Chinese language. Thus, not only are linguistic and cultural positionings shared, but also many of the educational expectations, experiences and language practices are shared. As this study is part of a larger study on heritage language students' literacy practices in multiple languages, data collection involves multiple means including regular weekly home visits, participant observations and extensive interviews. Some families are interviewed more than twice as interviews are carried out when most convenient for the families, and at times it is easier to fit in two or three shorter interviews during the weekly observational visits than making a separate appointment for one more lengthy interview. At times, some of the interviews became more of a conversation between peers than a researcher-interviewee situation. All interviews are conducted in the language of the participants' home, Putonghua, and are mostly held in their homes with both parents (sometimes also grandparents) present. Most of the interviews are audio-tape recorded and subsequently transcribed by the author. Field notes are taken at the time of the interviews, to record the different literacy activities and contexts. The different sets of data are then triangulated to complement the analysis. As the focus of this article is on how different values, beliefs and practices as well as power issues between minority and majority contexts shape the parents'

ideologies of multiple languages, the following issues are explored: language(s) spoken in the home; language profiles of participants; length of residence in Québec; opinions about language policies in Québec; importance of maintaining heritage language; value of multilingualism; and expectations and aspirations for their children's multiliteracy development.

Participants

The participants in this inquiry are the parents in ten Chinese immigrant families, all recruited from the Chinese community in Montréal through the heritage language school that their children attend. The heritage language school, Zhonguo School (pseudonym), is the largest of eight Chinese heritage languages schools in Montréal. With over 1,000 students, the school was founded in 1994 as a private school in response to the Chinese parents' needs for language affiliation and cultural maintenance. As a discursive space, the school has no formal connection to Québec school boards and government, and has no legal voice in the public discourse of schooling (Maguire and Curdt-Christiansen 2007). Nevertheless, the school offers a rich curriculum and broad selection of courses including Chinese language arts, math, music, art, and martial arts. For newcomers, English and French classes are also available.

My selection of participants takes into consideration the range of ages and grade levels in both the children's Chinese class and public schools. The selection, recommended by the principal, reflects the recent immigrant Chinese population at the heritage language school and the diversity of their backgrounds, their social class, years of residence, in Québec and parents' professions and economic situations. The participating families' language and residence profiles are presented below in Table 1.

Among the interviewees, nine fathers were competent English language speakers; seven of the mothers were able to communicate in English; the remaining three had only rudimentary English. In terms of French proficiency, with the exception of two fathers, none of the Chinese parents were able to converse in French, although a few of the parents could read a little French. All children, except one who attended a private English–French bilingual school, went to French public schools as required by Québec's language law—commonly known as Bill 101. As mentioned earlier, all of them also attended the Zhonguo Chinese heritage language school on Saturdays. While the older children started attending the heritage language school following their arrival in Québec, the younger children started at the time they began schooling, usually at age 5. The families' residence in Canada varied from two to more than 10 years. Four families lived in single-family dwellings in the suburban area of Montréal. The rest lived in apartments within the downtown area. Most would be considered middle class by their educational level, but lower middle class by their income level, as so many first generation immigrants are, but with aspirations of upward social mobility for their children. While the high level of education of the parents in this study may not represent that of the general immigrant population in Canada, it represents the general educational background of the immigrant population from Mainland China, especially of those arriving in recent years. These immigrants constitute the majority of the parents who send their children to the Zhonguo heritage

Table 1 Parental language background and Québec residence

Focal child	Age Mother			Father						
	L1	Years of residence in Québec	Education	Abilities in English	Abilities in French	L1	Years of residence in Québec	Education	Abilities in English	Abilities in French
Dan Zhang	Chinese	2	BA, China	Functional	Minimal	Chinese	2	MA, North America	Functional	Functional
Dodo Qi	Chinese	16	MA, North America	Proficient	Minimal	Chinese	15	MA, North America	Functional	None
Feng Dong	Chinese	6	BA, China	Minimal	None	Chinese	7	MA North America	Functional	None
Ling Wong	Chinese	16	PhD, North America	Proficient	Minimal	Chinese	16	PhD, North America	Proficient	Minimal
Mindy Chen	Chinese	14	BA, China, Computer Dipl., North America	Functional	None	Chinese	15	PhD, North America	Proficient	Minimal
Qiuqiu Xu	Chinese	5	BA, China	Minimal	None	Chinese	4	MA, North America	Functional	None
Xiaoan Gray	Chinese	16	MA, North America	Proficient	Minimal	English	Born in Québec	MA, North America	Native	Functional
Yang Yang	Chinese	2	Cégep, China	Minimal	None	Chinese	NA	NA	NA	NA
Yida Pan	Chinese	5	BA, China, Computer Dipl., North America	Functional	None	Chinese	5	PhD, Germany	Proficient	None
Yuzhou Zhou	Chinese	3	Pursuing PhD	Proficient	None	Chinese	2	MA, China	Minimal	None

NA not applicable

language school (Jiahua School 2003; Curdt-Christiansen 2004). The level of education of recent immigrants also reflects the current immigration law in Canada, which favours immigrants with higher education. The education factor is one of the most important factors for which points are awarded by Canadian immigration legislation in determining whether a skilled worker/professional applicant will be accepted or refused (Cohen 2009).

These parents' earlier educational experiences were similar in that their schooling took place in China during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), a time when most literature was viewed as counter-revolutionary and knowledge was condemned by Chairman Mao, and where literacy acquisition was achieved primarily through political dogmas. In spite of enjoying little parental literacy guidance and limited access to written materials, most of these parents embrace traditional Confucian values, considering education the path to wealth and social esteem. Confucian core values with regard to education are primarily that effort rather than ability is the key to academic success; that all persons can be educated; and that education is the single most important aspect of life (Lee 1999; Legge 1971). Confucius also emphasized in his writings that all knowledge can be attained by reading, and that devotion to study is the path to wisdom (Taylor and Taylor 1995). The self-reported data reveal that the Cultural Revolution affected the process of literacy acquisition not only indirectly through the patterns of parent–child interactions, but also directly in its treatment of different kinds of written texts. Only two parents remembered seeing books in their homes. For the rest of them, although some of the participants' parents were university professors, only Mao's little red book was on the book shelf. Nevertheless, all participants confirm that they have been taught by their parents to work diligently and acquire knowledge through education at the tender age before formal schooling; the traditional values of literacy and the ideals of learning were never entirely forgotten or abandoned. They seem to have carried these educational values with them throughout their lives together with their immigrant experiences of “blocked opportunities”. It is upon these values and experiences they have based their beliefs and expectations for their children's future education.

Analysis

By means of grounded theory (Glaser 1998), the interview transcripts were reviewed, coded and thematically analysed according to the common issues and patterns that emerged. Four general areas were identified: Education in general, Chinese, English and French. Within each area, themes were noted and the number of times they appeared was counted. The common emerging themes were then divided into categories, allowing the conscious and unconscious “lived culture” of the Chinese community in Montréal to be unravelled. Field notes were carefully studied and examined to support and elaborate upon the interview data. From these analyses, two main categories presented themselves: the parental beliefs and ideologies about the three languages; and their expectations of and aspirations for their children's literacy and multilingual development and education in general. Within the ideology category, factors influencing and shaping the decision making process were explored to present a *thick description* of the parents' narratives,

allowing readers to understand the divergent values and privilege patterns of competing languages (Canagarajah 2006). Through the thick description, parents' accounts not only reveal their attitudes towards different languages, but also divulge their desired goals of being 'good parents' (King and Fogle 2006). Different from parents with a clear goal to raise their children fully bilingual, these parents, in their daily parenting practices, may not consciously reflect on their theories and practices of child rearing, but nevertheless their expectations and aspirations are evidently the result of their subconscious perception of what it means to be 'a good parent'.

Findings: parental language ideologies and beliefs in education

The data in this study show that all parents have clear and unambiguous beliefs and expectations (goals) with regard to how multilingualism and cultural knowledge can benefit their children in terms of self identity and self confidence, as well as in terms of providing overt opportunities and multiple pathways in life. Perceptions about educational opportunity and language and literacy learning are clearly rooted in convictions shaped by the parents' own culture and experience, and these beliefs are visibly played out in interactions with the existing educational framework and government mandates. These parents act upon their beliefs by setting up their parenting goals, by establishing an FLP, and by providing the educational support they believe will ensure their children's educational success.

Parental language ideologies

With regard to the underlying forces of FLP of the ten families, the data indicate that political, cultural and economic factors are most significant in motivating their decisions. In the following sections, I illustrate how parents perceive multilingualism and the different values attached to the languages with regard to the above mentioned factors.

Political factors

The political motivation for the participating families' language decisions is directly related to their situated historical position and immigrant experiences. While scholars have observed that many immigrants experience immigration optimism towards education (Ogbu 1995; Kao 1995; Louie 2001), there is also a hint of pessimism underlying immigrants' view on education and the socio-political power attached to certain languages. Their concerns about "equality" and "inequality", and their attitudes of xenophilia and xenophobia toward political powerful languages, act out "invisibly" in the planning of their FLP. Reflecting on their immigrant experiences, some parents acknowledge the discrimination they have suffered during their years of immigration. While having obtained university degrees, some even post-graduate degrees, in China, they still need to pursue additional degrees or diplomas in order to find a suitable job in Canada. During the interview, Mr. Pan elaborates on his conflicting xenophilia and xenophobia sentiments,

怎么说呢,不管你有什么文凭,什么学历,也不论你出了多少论文,你一张口人家就否定你的能力。你的英语就是不一样,表达能力跟当地人比,那是明摆的。一听就完了。只好改行!所以,这个语言的重要性不能忽略。学有的上,工作有的做。一定要有语言,否则你没法跟人家比。

How should I put it? It doesn't matter what kind of degrees you have, neither how many articles you have published, you are doomed once you open your mouth. Your English is obviously not the same [as the natives'], your presentation skills and oral ability just can't come to par with that of the native speakers. The only choice left is to change your career. That's why the importance of language can't be overestimated. [With English language] you have schools to go to, and careers to pursue. You have to have THE language; otherwise, there is no way you can compete with others.

While the sense of inequality seems related to English language ability, in other words, it is a language problem, the implications of this language problem are more complex. The embedded language belief here is the coerced assimilation, which implies that the key to equal opportunity for minority language speakers is to shift language and adopt the majority language. The implicit message is that speaking a minority language cannot provide access to equal opportunity for education and social mobility; on the contrary, it may actually be “hindering their chances of achieving social equality” (Ricento 2006:7). Mr. Pan's elaboration is based on his several high educational achievements and many disappointments. Although he has obtained his PhD in Germany, completed two postdoctoral studies, one in USA and one in Canada, he has been forced to change his career to become a computer programmer, a job which is less demanding of English language skills. Operating within this political context, languages become simultaneously both “problems” and “resources”. As a problem, a minority language can block the “equal opportunities” for social mobility. As a resource, a majority language such as English can create “equal opportunities” for obtaining high income and social prestige (Schmidt 2006). This view on language extends also to the racial problems associated with ethnicity and language. Warning her children of possible racial discrimination, Mrs. Chen, for example, acknowledges her frequent admonition to her daughter:

你一定要好过你的同学,因为你是中国人。如果你和别人一样好,人家就不会选你,所以你一定要好过别人。

You have to be better than your fellow students, because you are Chinese. If you are only as good as the local [white] people, you will not be chosen [for a task or job]. Therefore, you have to be better.

Although Mrs. Chen's admonition can be viewed as her aspirations for her daughter, it does point to the realities of inequality and sometimes even racism in multilingual and multicultural societies. The sense of inequality is captured through the notion of “blocked opportunities”, where opportunities in the job market and other socio-political situations are not equal between immigrants and mainstreamers because of race and language visibility (Sue and Okzaki 1990; Louie 2001). Similar to Mr. Pan's educational experiences, Mrs. Chen's educational credentials from China were insufficient to enable her to build a career in Canada. Her frustration over her inadequate language ability emerges in her words of disappointment. These parents' reflections on their immigrant experience and lack of language skills not only become the core of their “invisible” FLP, but also provide scholars and researchers with a

deeper understanding of how an FLP is established, whose language counts, what language skills should be promoted, and what language leads to “equality”.

Economic factors

An FLP, like all other language policies, advocates economic advancement. Bourdieu's (1991) invaluable work about linguistic capital captures the language beliefs of these Chinese parents. According to Bourdieu, linguistic capital takes three principal forms, economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital. Although economic capital is the only capital that can be directly converted into money and wealth the other two forms of capital can be indirectly converted into economic capital. For Chinese parents, language is a typical form of economic capital which can create financial opportunities and material wealth and bring economic advantages. In their statements, they emphasize the benefits that multilingualism can provide. As language ideology is context specific and located within the socio-cultural environment, language policy decisions are inextricable from the socio-cultural contexts in which the families are established. In Québec, French language proficiency can facilitate access, and lack of such proficiency can impede access, to further personal economic development. All parents in this study share a belief that English is an international super language through which a great many social and economic goals can be achieved. Furthermore, they recognize the increasing importance of China on the international scene, and the increasingly important role the Chinese language plays in the international political arena. Consequently, languages and multilingualism are considered essential to provide their children with better career opportunities and economic advantages. Moreover, linguistic border crossing for social, cultural, economic and knowledge exchange is seen as valuable. It is worth noting that although Québec is a unilingual French speaking province and all participating children but one in this study attend French public schools, they have all acquired proficiency in English and developed adequate (for their age) literacy abilities without any formal English instruction. The value of English is expressed by Mr. Wong in the following,

怎么可以不懂英语呢? 英语是世界
 通用语。不论你去什么地方, 你都得
 会英语。这个政治, 经济和英语之
 间的关系是很紧密的。贸易语言是
 英语, 电脑语言是英语, 就连你发
 表学术论文, 也得用英语。我们生
 活在加拿大, 不学英语, 不行!

How can you not understand English? English is an
 international language. Wherever you go, you have to
 know English. So, the relationship between politics,
 economy and the English language is very close. The
 commercial language is English, the computer language
 is English, if you want to publish an article in a
 scientific journal, it has to be in English. We live in
 Canada, not learning English, impossible!

Mr. Wong emphasizes the widespread use of the English language as a *lingua franca*, highlights its status as a monetized commodity, and stresses its value as linguistic capital. These values are regarded not only as having a close relationship to politics, but also as being intimately linked to modern technology, economics and knowledge in general. The economic capital of the English language is reflected

through its multiple functions in finance, research, knowledge transfer and public relations. English has become a basic necessity to obtain a job, to pursue an academic career, to surf the ‘Net’, and to travel around the world.

The utility and value of languages are visibly presented in the parental perception of their market values. Most of the parents consider French an indispensable tool when living in Québec. It is a reality they have to face, once they decide to stay in Québec. Mr. Qi makes the following comment on the value of the French language and the realities of the bilingual nature of Québec society:

我们必须得面对现实。在魁北克，你要不会法语能干什么呢？所有的人都是双语。就是去麦当劳工作，你也得会两种语言。你有什么办法呢？你要会两种语言是个 Bonus.

We have to face the reality. In Québec, what are you going to do without French? Everyone is bilingual [English, French], even if you work at MacDonald’s, you have to be bilingual. What can you do? Knowing two languages is a bonus, right?

All parents consider French an important asset to possess in Québec. Financial concepts, such as ‘bonus’ and ‘value’, are used to indicate the potential for economic outcome of bilingual/multilingual education. Mrs. Chen explicates further such economic potential of the three languages in the following comments:

当然，我们也要考虑到现实价值。我常跟我女儿说，中国人口现在是魁北克省的第三大人口。如果你要想当医生，如果你懂中文，法文和英文，那你就可以有中国病人，魁北克病人，还有讲英语的病人。

We, of course, also have to consider the practical values [of the languages]. I often tell my daughter that the Chinese are the third biggest population in Québec; if you want to be a doctor and if you know Chinese, French and English, you will be able to deal with patients from China, Québec and people who speak English.

The economic values placed on multilingual abilities directly reflect their market values. These comments reveal that becoming literate in the three languages is seen as what Piller (2001) refers to as “investment” which will yield a high return. Investment in learning the three languages will enable the children to cross linguistic borders to pursue financially well-awarded careers. Becoming linguistic border crossers, in the eyes of Chinese parents, will not only bring economic advantages but also provide solutions for passing otherwise impenetrable barriers. This view is further exemplified by Mrs. Wong,

目前这种情况，很难说，看中国的这个经济改革，有一种局势，那个经济中心会移向东方。所以那你要是会英文又会中文，你工作上的机会会多很多。现在已经很明显，如果你有一门技术，又懂几门语言，那你就可以跨越很多障碍。

The current situation, hard to tell, look at the economic changes in China, there is a tendency that the centre [of finance] will move to the East. There will be ample opportunities if you know English and Chinese, the job opportunities will be abundant. It is very obvious now, if you have a skill and know a few languages, you can overcome many barriers.

It emerges from these parents' language ideologies that the ability of linguistic border crossing is a form of human capital which is likely to yield a good rate of return. As a human capital, bilingualism/multilingualism is a valuable vehicle for economic empowerment and social advancement, even when the centre of finance shifts its location.

Cultural factors

Identity marker As a symbolic representation, the language as identity marker is the most significant cultural and ethnic feature indicated in the parental beliefs about language. Their beliefs are in line with those of many language theorists who consider identities as constructed, defined and framed by the language we use, and hold that language provides the most basic capital for membership in communities (Gee 2005; Norton 2000; Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 1982). In literacy studies, identity is viewed as a phenomenon intertwined with the meaning and process of becoming literate and being literate (Curdt-Christiansen and Maguire 2007; Ferdman 1990; Bell 1997). As literacy is defined in part by group boundaries and status, literacy activities and literacy practices embody a person's cultural identity (Ferdman 1990). Therefore, language and literacy are salient markers for in-group identity either as "cultural identity" (Schechter and Bayley 1997), "social identity" (Norton-Peirce 1995), or "socio-cultural identity" (Duff and Uchida 1997). As "linguistic and cultural capital" (Bourdieu 1991) is acquired through primary socialization, the modes of language use, styles of interaction, and cultural dispositions are all part of the important process of collecting "capitals". Recognizing the essential meaning of language indexed in culture, Mrs. Lin substantiates her viewpoint with the following comments:

孩子们为什么要学中文呀,好像就是很自然的事,就好像,孩子是中国人,不学点中文的话,那是很大的遗憾。...等孩子长大了以后,到一定程度,一定会问‘我到底是谁?’。比方说,他们生活在一个有黑人,白人和很多种族社会里,在这边认同这个问题很明显。在中国你不用问这个问题。你是谁就是谁。但是在这边的话你肯定会问,你自己是谁?所以问这个问题的時候,如果你有中文这个工具的话,那你就马上可以有个渠道,可以加深自己对了解自己的了解。

Why the kids have to learn Chinese? It seems such a natural thing, it's like, the children are Chinese, if they don't learn some Chinese, it will be a great pity! ...I think when they grow up to a certain age, they must ask 'who am I?' For instance, they live in a society with black, white and many other different races; it is very obvious here [in Canada]. In China, such a question does not exist, you are who you are. But here, you will definitely ask this [question], who are you yourself? So when this question is asked, if you know Chinese, you have a tool, and a means, then, you can immediately get to the answer, which can deepen your understanding of yourself.

Mrs. Lin's comments point to the central importance of language for identity. Chinese as the children's heritage language not only provides a strong sense of belonging and identity but also a means for furthering self-understanding and self-assurance. Mrs. Zhou holds the same opinion:

[孩子] 他们长大了之后, 就会发现, 他们本人的认同和自身的价值都和他们的黄皮肤, 还有中国人这种文化是割都割不开的。有了根之后, 自己才能静下来, 才能和自己的文化有个认同。

When [children] grow up, they will find that their identities, values and self-esteem cannot be cut off from their yellow skin, from the fact of being Chinese. Only when you find your roots will you be able to settle down, to identify yourself with your own [Chinese] culture.

Mrs. Zhou metaphorically uses the term “yellow skin” to indicate the alignment between identity, self-value and culture. She believes there is an inseparable relationship between language and culture, and between culture and identity. This view illustrates the strong belief that identity is enacted through language; and language with its attendant culture will simultaneously accompany the individual’s development of identity. Likewise, Mrs. Pan and Mrs. Chen also express such strong, although often invisible, sentiments of belonging:

你 [daughter] 什么都可以放弃, 但是不可以放弃中文。为什么? 就是因为你是中国人。

You may give up anything else, but not Chinese [language]. Why? Simply because you are Chinese!

你的孩子长大了以后, 如果和你都没有一种共同的认同感的话, 你心里一定会很难过。

It would be very disheartening, indeed, if your child grows up without identifying himself with you.

These comments reflect the value the parents attach to the Chinese language. Many of them see the potential loss of the heritage language as a personal loss; others view it as a loss of identity. They have all encountered the problem of having to compete with the use of the mainstream languages. However, they still firmly adhere to their FLP and maintain interaction among family members in Chinese. These comments may represent their idealized view of best parenting in that ‘speaking Chinese’ and being aware of ‘having yellow skin’ help the children learn the traditions and the cultural norms they can share with other people of similar Chinese background (Curdt-Christiansen 2008). But my observations indicate that these parents not only firmly believe that culturally significant knowledge enables their children to experience a sense of belonging, they also act accordingly by sending their children to the Zhonguo School.

Mediational means Multilingual children, as part of their socialization, acquire through language not only cultural values and ideologies, but also a rich cultural knowledge of human creations. Language as mediational means can enable them to gain access to culturally significant aspects of knowledge and information (Vygotsky 1986). Illustrating this belief, Mrs. Lin offers her opinions of how Chinese language can provide links to the richness and wealth of human knowledge:

中国文化的博大, 就不要说了, 如果不懂中文的话, 那整个东方的文化就失去了一大部分。...做为一个中国人, 如果不能接触那些丰富的文化和文学原著, 像唐诗, 宋词, 真是很可惜。

Chinese culture is so broad and profound, if you don’t know Chinese, a major part of Oriental culture will be lost to you ... As a Chinese, if you can’t access our rich culture and its literature, such as the great poetry and prose in T’ang-Song period, [it is] a big shame.

In Mrs. Lin's view, language is both part of culture and provides access to culture. As a result, the rich cultural and literary values associated with the Chinese language will become a personal loss. Her view is echoed by Mrs. Zhou:

我认为, 就是说, 中国的文化博大精深, 学中文不仅仅是为了保存自己的文化。当然做为一个中国人, 应该知道自己的文化, 否则的话, 怎么办? 另外一个原因就是, 我觉得中国的传统文化, 它做为世界文明的一部分, 真的很有价值。如果将来他因为说英语或法语把中文丢掉的话, 他就会失去一个接触古代文明的一个机会。...

I believe, Chinese culture is rich and deep. It [learning Chinese] is not just for the sake of maintaining your own culture; of course, as a Chinese, you have to know your own culture, otherwise, what are you going to do? The other important reason is that I think Chinese culture, as part of a civilization, has tremendous value. If he [her son] lost the language because of French or English, he would lose an opportunity to communicate with an ancient civilization...

From Mrs. Zhou's perspective, learning Chinese is not only for maintaining ethnic culture. In essence, literacy acquisition entails accessing the huge sum of cultural wealth, literature and art work created by man in the course of historical development. These thoughtful remarks from Mrs. Lin and Mrs. Zhou reflect Vygotsky's sociocultural theory where language is viewed as a meditational means and a tool for transmission of culture and knowledge from one generation to the next (Vygotsky 1978, 1986). Language is more than a communication tool; it is a powerful tool that provides access to a rich heritage, including history, philosophy, literature and poetry.

It is interesting to note that Mrs. Zhou stresses that learning English and French should not be at the cost of losing Chinese. Her concern about minority language loss indicates a desire of additive trilingualism. This view of additive multilingualism reflects a belief that language has multiple functions, more than just practical utility and being an ethnic identity marker. As articulated by Mrs. Qi in the beginning of the article, it is 'like a door that enables you to reach the world', providing a world of possibilities:

我还是觉得豆豆应该掌握法语。这等于是给她多开了一个窗口。她愿意干什么, 那是她自己的事。那你给她奠定了一个基础, 她想去搞法国文学, 或者想知道那部分世界的事情, 她就有这个可能去搞。

I still think it is [important] that she [her daughter] masters the French language. It is equal to having an extra window to the world. Whatever she wants to do in the future, that's her own business. But if you have already established a basis for her, then she has a possibility to explore, whether she wants to study French literature or to know the French-speaking part of the world.

The meaningful and expressive metaphor Mrs. Qi used in describing language as a 'window to the world' captures the essence of the powerful roles languages play in our lives. Visibly, it seems that the Qis are adhering to the institutional language policy of Québec in spite of sending their daughter to a private English–French school; invisibly Mrs. Qi considers French language a tool for exploring the world and an essential tool for accessing knowledge. She also acknowledges that the possession of a language equals possessing a piece of art: 法语是一种一种, 艺术, ...你

就可以读原著,而不是翻译过来的东西。那你 对你读的东西就有比较更深更直接的理解。(French is... is a kind of art ... you can read the original language, not the translation. It provides you with a more direct and fuller, deeper understanding of what you read).

Parental expectations and aspirations

In recent years, parental involvement embedded in literacy practices has been given increased attention by various research groups within educational contexts (Gregory 1997; Heath 1983; Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines 1988). The educational discourses about parental involvement as part of home literacy practice recognize parental expectations as a key contributor to their children's educational success. Research on Asian immigrants in North America indicates that the generally high level of academic success of Asian students can be attributed to their parents' high expectations (Li 2006, 2007; Stevenson et al. 1986; Louie 2001; Kao and Tienda 1995). A primary explanation of the parents' high level of expectation focuses both on their educational and immigrant experiences, and on their commonly held, traditional Confucian values and beliefs. The Chinese immigrants' optimism toward education and their language experiences as well as their culturally shaped beliefs provide powerful underlying forces invisibly informing these parents' language policy decisions and practices. The focus on educational excellence reflects their cultural values and is a core element in their FLP. They all unambiguously express high expectations for their children's academic success and stress the importance of having good marks as indicators of good academic performance. All of them presume that their children will pursue university studies; the idea of not completing school is out of the question. While these expectations may be the parents' idealized self presentation or attempts to "construct themselves as 'good parents'" (King and Fogle 2006:697), my observations indicate that these parents, by closely monitoring their children's school work, ensure that the stated goals are reached. Mrs. Chen emphasizes this point:

假如可以得 100 分的话,那么只得 99 分。那怎么行。这说明一个态度问题。对学习的态度一定要认真地去对待,不可以‘马马虎虎’。

If [she] can get 100 points, then 99 is absolutely not acceptable. It's a question of attitude. The attitude to learning has to be serious and conscientious, not 'horse horse tiger tiger' (four-word idiom, meaning careless and slack).

Mrs. Chen's view on academic performance is shared by most of the Chinese parents interviewed. Their comments reveal a belief in academic excellence as the direct way, if not the only way, for their children to obtain upward social mobility in their new country. But in order to achieve academic excellence, a strong language and literacy foundation is a necessity. Commenting on this issue of education and language, Mrs. Lin offers the following viewpoint on the competitive nature of schooling and society:

短见论, 就是眼睛看到短的呢, 就是现在的竞争, 人材竞争很利害。第一, 要重视, 不然要淘汰。还有一个呢, 现在, 目前来讲我们这个社会, 总得来说还是文化成度跟他的收入基本成正比...

因为就我们自己来讲的话, 要想过得更高层次一些吗, 那你就得有个好学历。从人生观来讲, 要是对社会有些贡献, 那还是要有知识, 是吧?

就语言来讲, 知识和语言是有着直接关系的, 没有语言, 哪来的知识呢?

Short-sighted view, that is to look at near [future], we have competition nowadays; the competition among qualified personnel is very fierce. First of all, [you] have to study very seriously; otherwise, [you] can be eliminated [through competition]. Moreover, the fact is that in our society, in general, one's salary is proportional to one's educational level...

Because, from the point of self-improvement, if you want to have a better life, you need to get a good education and a high degree. From the point of outlook on life in general, if you want to contribute to the development of society, then you need to have some knowledge, right?

As to language, knowledge and language are closely associated; if there is no language, where would knowledge come from?

It emerges that what matters most to the participating parents is a good education. Mrs. Lin's viewpoint on competition, shared by most of the other Chinese parents, reflects the strong belief in the high value of education held by Chinese people in general. The factors that influence this belief and the Chinese value system are culturally defined dispositions. On the one hand, these parents possess a high degree of immigrant optimism and characterize themselves as 'model immigrants' (Kao 1995). In their view, competition is the way of life both in China and in Canada. They aim at succeeding, both as immigrants and parents, and they want their children to become successful citizens in this new country. They take competition for granted and want their children to survive the fierce competition that awaits them; therefore, they provide training in competition at an early age. On the other hand, these parents' recognition of education as the path to upward mobility reflects their cultural disposition as well as Confucian influence. Although most parents went to school during the years of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), the centuries-old Confucian tradition maintains its profound influence on their thinking. The later schooling of the parents after the Cultural Revolution was pervaded by Confucian ideology. Confucius' remark "万般皆下品, 唯有读书高—*wanban jie xiapin, weiyou dushu gao*" (the worth of other pursuits is small; the study of books excels them all) permeated their formative years. Learning from their perspective is both a way to gain social status and a way to contribute to the society. It is worth noting from Mrs. Lin's account that in order to make ambitious aspiration come true, languages must be part of the realizing process because "if there is no language, where would knowledge come from?"

Mrs. Lin's perspective on language and knowledge also implies a sense of gloom and regret. Behind this pessimism are their experiences as immigrants and their memories of a childhood in China, deprived of educational experiences, as recounted by Mrs. Yang with regard to language and literacy education:

还有一个原因呢，就是我们这代人没有机会受到这方面的训练。我觉得这是我生活中的很大一个缺陷。我们现在多花一点钱，一点精力，对孩子有利，不管他将来是否用得上。对他的人格，素质都有益。培养一种习惯。一点我们的时间会成为他们终身的受益。不然长大了以后，由于我们的忽视而不能正常地在这个竞争能力强的社会生存，我们将会终身遗憾。我们能做到的要做到，要创造条件。机会人人都有，看你是否有本事。本事是靠学来的，要有真本事和本领才能有职业。我多吃点苦不怕。我要给阳阳创造所有条件，成功的条件。

You know, our generation, we did not have the opportunity to take any classes [language, literacy and art related classes]. I feel like it's a great deficit in my life. It will be very beneficial for the children if we spend a little more money and little more time now. It doesn't matter whether he [her son] can use [extra educational courses]. It will be advantageous for the building and quality of his character. [It] is just to foster a habit of [learning]. A little bit of our time can benefit them lifelong. Otherwise, we would regret forever if they can't survive the competitive society because of our negligence when they grow up. We have to do what we can do. We have to create the conditions and possibilities for success. Everyone has opportunities, but not everyone has skills. Skills come from learning. Therefore, you have to have skills and abilities to obtain a profession. It doesn't matter that I endure all the hardship. I want to create all possible conditions for Yangyang [her son] to become successful.

Despite the sentiment of “what we didn't have when we were children”, the ‘lost opportunities’ are not forever lost. The parents believe that making conditions, creating possibilities and providing resources will bring back their ‘lost opportunities’ through investment in language education and academic training for their children. The self-reported data indicate that the Chinese immigrant parents are willing to make sacrifices, both in economic terms and in time and energy to support their children's multilingual education. Mrs. Yang views such invisible sacrifices as her duty, an obligation and a responsibility she has toward her son. In doing so, she transforms her ‘sacrifices’ into higher expectations and aspirations for her child. The underlying beliefs about parental responsibilities and high expectations for their children's education are derived from the ancient Confucian notion of educability. In “Great Learning” Confucius said: “虽有至圣，不生而知；虽有至材，不生而能。(Even the wisest man did not know anything when he was born; even the most intelligent person did not know how to do anything when he was born)”. It is effort, willpower and endurance that are decisive for academic success (Curdt-Christiansen 2006, 2008; Watkins and Biggs 2001). Confucius also emphasized that all knowledge can be attained by reading and that devotion to study is the path to wisdom. Mrs. Yang's perception of ‘skills, ability and learning’ is a direct reflection of Confucian ideology. Confucius believed that “by nature men are nearly alike, but through education they grow wide apart” (Analects, XVII.2). Therefore, all can learn regardless of social class and intelligence. Thus, Chinese parents tend to hold a deeply rooted belief that their children will excel if they study hard enough and that education is the gateway to success in life, leading to social position, power and high income. In China and in Chinese diasporan communities around the world, these beliefs are reflected in Chinese parents' commitment to providing their children with the best possible education, their constant pushing their children to perform better, their high expectations of their children's academic proficiency and success, and their deep respect for teachers (Curdt-Christiansen 2008; Louie 2001).

Conclusion

This article documents how a group of Chinese immigrant parents in Québec develop their theoretical positions with regard to a FLP for their children's education in the Chinese, English and French languages. In particular, this study has explored language ideologies as an analytical tool in understanding how immigrant families establish and implement their family policies. As language ideologies are context specific and related to cultural, political, economic and linguistic aspects of the social structure, the distinctive characteristics of language ideologies are examined in terms of how languages are valued, practiced, maintained and linked to particular linguistic markets in a given context.

The results of this study indicate that parents' high educational expectations and aspirations, embedded in their daily home literacy practices, are among the major contributing factors that visibly and invisibly inform family language policies with regard to children's academic success and multilingual development. These strong beliefs, attitudes, expectations and aspirations about the importance of multilingual education and high academic standards can be translated into active involvement and investment in the children's school and educational lives. The findings also suggest that Chinese parents endeavor to impart the value of hard work and perseverance to their children. Influenced by culturally shaped Confucianism and their educational and immigrant experiences, these parents hold an optimistic view on education, which strongly influences their expectations and aspirations for their children's multilingual development and high academic achievements.

Evidence from this inquiry also indicates that these Chinese parents believe positively in multilingualism and consider languages to be an important socio-political-linguistic capital for social advancement. Their perceptions of the value of multilingual proficiency are clearly related to the market values of different languages. For example, although restricted by Québec law to select only French schools, they all believe that English is an important language for advancement in our global society and, equally, that French is indispensable in the socio-political-linguistic context of Québec primarily, but also in Canada at large. The perspective, articulated by these Chinese parents, echoes an instrumental motivation for the attainment of Chinese, French and English trilingualism, considered necessary for socio-economical advancement.

However, practical and pragmatic motivations are not the only informing guidance for these parents' family language policies; the more aesthetic and individual benefits of multilingualism are also part of the decisive factors. For example, the parents express their beliefs that language use frames and defines socio-cultural identity, and that language is a cultural tool for their children to gain access to culturally significant aspects of knowledge and information. Underlying this is an understanding of the importance of fostering a sense of identity with the Chinese culture. They believe that identity can be validated through the development of the L1, and that the Chinese language serves as a mediator for Chinese culture and values. Consequently, these parents take overt steps to provide access to their cultural heritage through institutionalized Chinese schooling on weekends.

This inquiry also addresses the significance of political characteristics that affect the politics of language ideologies. It highlights the often unequal power relations between minority and majority languages with regard to educational, social and political equality (Ricento 2007) as demonstrated by some parents' critical views on the different languages. The Chinese parents' accounts and narratives of past educational, language and immigration experiences powerfully illustrate the "unsuccessful" and "successful" stories of education and upward social mobility, implying that some languages provide access to "equality" and political power, and that some languages block opportunities.

This ethnographic inquiry, based on a comparatively small sample of only ten families, has inevitably some limitations. The sampling, for instance, is confined to the recently established Mainland Chinese immigrant community and so does not reveal the ideological differences that may be found between the various Chinese immigrant communities, nor those that may exist between the Chinese and other immigrant communities with regard to the sources of FLP formation. The fact that the higher educational background of these recent immigrants is not representative of the general immigrant population in Canada may strongly affect the ideological positions that underlie different FLPs. While the interviews explored various aspects of FLP, they are restricted to the parental perspectives on what happens in home domains. Future studies may include exploring parental perspectives on what happens in various institutions outside the home with regard to their children's and other minority students' multilingual development.

In spite of the limitations, the study provides a complex view on the formation of FLP in relation to other socio-cultural-political-linguistic forces. Canagarajah (2008:170) points out that "the family is not a self-contained institution", the establishment of FLP has to take into consideration the various social and economic pressures and institutional impositions. In this regard, immigrant families may face various challenges and difficulties in putting FLP into practice, particularly with regard to heritage language maintenance as they have to negotiate linguistic loyalty with other socio-cultural, political and economic forces and compete with mainstream values.

While this inquiry has explored the ideological factors informing FLP decision making, it would be useful for future research to investigate the language interventions that parents adopt, and how their choice of intervention, revealed through home literacy practices, reflects their ideologies. While language ideologies and beliefs may be the underlying forces in FLP, these beliefs are not always translated into practices (Gibbons and Ramirez 2004). Spolsky (2004:222) maintains that "the potential success of language management will depend on its congruity with the language situation, the consensual ideology or language beliefs". As such consensual ideology is largely influenced by the social place of a language within a society, it will be educationally informative to understand how family language policies combat and resist the macro level institutional impositions. As a language can grant access to social power, employment and prestige, and therefore receives recognition and obtains status, it will be theoretically and practically enlightening to contextualize how language status affects multilingual development, and how institutional policies and the power issues between majority and minority

languages support or undermine multilingualism, thereby influencing parental ideologies and family language policies.

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