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Family Language Policy among Chinese Labor Immigrants in the Netherlands: A Multiple-Case Study in the Rotterdam Region

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Linguistics MA

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**Family language policy among Chinese labor immigrants
in the Netherlands**

A Multiple-Case Study in the Rotterdam Region

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Abstract

This qualitative case study investigates the family language policy among Chinese immigrants in the Rotterdam region, focusing on the first-generation labor workers who migrated to the Netherlands after 2000. Drawing on a framework of heritage language maintenance and family language policy, I report and interpret interview data from seven families. Findings show that the participants show a positive attitude toward maintaining their children's heritage language, Mandarin Chinese. However, various language management and practice have been done based on their social-economic status and language ideology. Also, challenges the parents face to help their next generation fight against heritage language loss are revealed.

Keywords: Family language policy, Chinese labor immigrants, Chinese as a heritage language.

1. Introduction

在海外的孩子还要学中文到底为了什么？ 在他们的眼里，也许是一趟文化寻根之旅，或许是一个提升知识涵养台阶？ 是看成一项业余爱好，还是当成一种言语技能？

是为了追随父母的意愿， 被动而为； 还是展望未来的前景， 运筹帷幄？ 不管如何，会中文都将成为通向你未来的铺路石， 敲门砖， 一个梯子， 一座桥梁。（中文学校的招生广告）

“Why do Chinese children living overseas have to learn Chinese? Is it, in their opinion, a trip to discover cultural origins or a step toward knowledge cultivation? Is it considered a passion or a talent in effective communication? Are they obliged to accept their parents’ wishes or to look into the future? Speaking Chinese will become a stepping stone, a ladder, and a bridge to your future no matter what. “ (An advertisement for a Chinese school)

The statement above is an advertisement for a complementary Chinese school in the Netherlands to encourage Chinese immigrant parents to enroll their children in the Saturday complementary school. As elsewhere, heritage language schools have served as a perfect place to provide unique opportunities for maintaining and learning heritage languages (Compton, 2001). However, this Chinese school’s advertising reminds us that not every child in the Chinese diaspora learns or maintains Chinese, the language and culture of their parents, and not every migrant Chinese parent tends to help their children maintain their heritage language.

Indeed, there has been an increase in the number of people interested in learning Chinese as a heritage language or a second language as a result of China’s rise as a global power and a potential cooperative economic partner. For example, Chinese has in recent years entered the high school curriculum of many Dutch public and private international schools and became a foreign language course. In addition, the number of Chinese weekend complementary schools has increased significantly in the Netherlands, which are all supported by the Chinese ethnic community. Many children and adolescents of Chinese heritage attend Chinese language schools in the Netherlands on weekends, mostly on Saturday mornings. They are community-run and non-profitable schools operating outside the mainstream education system and offering a community-specific curriculum complementary to the mainstream educational contents (Li & Juffermans, 2014). According to Li and Juffermans, the first officially registered Chinese school in the Netherlands was established in the late 1970s. In the present day, every large city in the Netherlands has at least one Chinese school providing complementary education in the

Chinese language and culture for children with Chinese backgrounds (Li & Juffermans, 2014). The *Stichting Chinees Onderwijs Nederland* [Foundation Chinese Education The Netherlands] lists around forty schools {www.chinesesonderwijs.nl} (accessed June 2022). As Spolsky (2012) points out, this supplementary education, such as Saturday heritage schools, depends mainly on the efforts of parents and children. It is well known that Chinese parents have an ambitious and determined desire to invest in their next-generation's education. Heritage language maintenance among Chinese immigrants is also not a new topic.

In recent decades, various researchers have steadily researched the maintenance of heritage language among Chinese immigrants worldwide, and the parents' role in the family should be further explored. Chinese heritage language maintenance, related to how Chinese parents and their children have negotiated ethnolinguistic and national identities, language practices, and ideologies, has attracted the most attention recently (McDonald, 2011). Chinese communities have a long, complex, and fluid history of transnational migration, multilingualism, and cultural hybridity in response to both needs and opportunities on most continents (Duff, 2015). Previous studies show that despite the pressures to assimilate or to adopt a socially dominant language such as English, many immigrant Chinese families have been very successful at maintaining their ancestral language or one closely related to it, at least in their homes and communities for generations (Duff, 2014), such as in anglophone settings like the United States of America, Canada, and the United Kingdom (Curdt-Christiansen, 2018; Lao, 2004; Leung & Uchikoshi 2012; Li, 2006; Luo & Wiseman, 2000; Zhang, 2010;). The studies reveal that families and parents are mostly responsible for passing on their heritage language to the next generations (Fishman, 1991). Otherwise, the heritage language may be lost (Fishman, 2001a). Among others, Curdt-Christiansen is a pioneer in studying Chinese heritage language maintenance and Chinese FLP (family language policy). She points out that a few studies have explored Family Language Policy within a bilingual family context (King 2000; King and Fogle 2006; Piller 2001); these studies include Curdt-Christiansen self focus on the middle-class family of parents, who are mostly well-educated and have knowledge of bilingual child development. Those studies make essential contributions to the field of FLP, but immigrant families with lower SES (social, economic status) also need more attention. In other settings, lower SES Chinese American immigrant families may regard heritage language maintenance as a barrier to social mobility or English acquisition, whereas higher-SES American immigrants promote their next generation's Chinese maintenance in order to obtain the heritage language as a profitable professional resource (Li, 2006a; Zhang, 2012)

To my knowledge, relatively few studies have looked into the maintenance of Chinese as a heritage language in the context of the Netherlands. According to Gijsbert et al. (2011), most Chinese immigrants in the Netherlands are still working in the catering business, despite the fact that this proportion is already lower than in the past. Furthermore, Gijsbert et al. discovered in their research that one in five of the second-generation Chinese migrants had completely lost their mother tongue. However, there has been very little research in this regard is still unknown what caused language loss. This study is going to take a step toward shedding light on the situation of Chinese immigrant's heritage language maintenance by looking at how FLP interacts with Chinese immigrants families in the Netherlands, with a particular focus on what shapes the family language policy among Chinese immigrants who come to the country as labor workers.

In this study, adopting the framework of family language policy and heritage language maintenance, I will explore language ideologies and practices within Chinese immigrant labor worker families in the Rotterdam region. To be specific, the study addresses the following questions:

- (1) What are Chinese immigrant parents' attitudes and beliefs toward their heritage languages, focusing on labor worker families?
- (2) How do they manage their language maintenance?
- (3) What are their challenges and obstacles?

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Following this introduction in chapter 1, chapter 2 offers a history of Chinese immigrants in the Netherlands and their language background. It is followed by chapter 3, which presents an overview of key theoretical frameworks, including family language policy and heritage language maintenance. The methodology of this study is presented in Chapter 4, emphasizing the research design and how the data of this qualitative study were collected. Finally, the study's findings will be reported in Chapter 5, followed by a discussion and conclusion.

2. The Chinese community in the Netherlands

2.1. History of the Chinese communities in the Netherlands

The Netherlands's Chinese immigrants are considered a diversified ethnic minority in terms of spoken language, migration history, and socioeconomic situation (Pieke & Bento, 1998). Speaking of numbers, according to Sybesma Rint (2017), the Netherlands has also been among the European countries with the largest Chinese communities (following the UK, France, Russia, and, recently, Italy) and the fifth. Meanwhile, it is difficult to provide precise numbers, not only because illegal immigrants are invisible in official statistics but also because only people from China, Taiwan, Hongkong, and Macau are easily recognized as “Chinese,” as contrasted to the Chinese of different national origins, such as Indonesia, Vietnam, Singapore, and Malaysia, and of course, Suriname. The official statistics in the Netherlands only count those who are born in China and their children as Chinese. At the same time, another definition of 4th generation immigrants from Suriname with Chinese roots may also count. In any case, the newest statistical data in 2019 (CBS, 2019) showed 92644 people originating from the People’s Republic of China (PRC) (including Hongkong) and Taiwan, or people with at least one such parent. However, the Chinese Embassy estimated 150,000 in 2017 (Pieke,2017).

Regarding the migration history, compared to other immigration groups in the Netherland, Chinese immigration seems to have had more diverse purposes, such as labor migration, migration linked with decolonization, and asylum seeking (Mandin&Gsir, 2015/16). The history of Chinese immigrants can be traced back to the beginning of the 20th century. The first Chinese immigrants, who came to the Netherlands before World War II, were mainly engaged as sailors by Dutch navigation companies. Moreover, they originally came from the Guangdong province, close to the former British territory of Hongkong (Pieke,2017). Also, the other important district group among early Chinese immigrants in the Netherlands came from Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province (Li, 1999). These two groups expanded rapidly after World War II primarily because of the popularity of Chinese food among Dutch people(Pieke, 2017). When the Chinese catering business went excellent, Chinese immigrants and their children started opening new restaurants all over the country (Li, 2016). As a result, the entrepreneurs had a shortage of cooks and workers. Due to China’s shut-down policy from 1955-1978, however, immigration from mainland China was restricted, and the Chinese restaurateurs had to recruit

labor workers from Hongkong instead of from their home provinces in mainland China (Li, 1999). Until 1990, Hong Kong people were the largest immigrant group within the Chinese community (CBS, 2010:6). The majority of Hongkong citizens originated from southern China, mainly Guangdong province, where Cantonese was spoken. Therefore, Cantonese became the dominant language of the Dutch Chinese diaspora (Pieke, 2017).

However, the number of immigrants from mainland China has increased enormously since 1990 due to the political and economic changes in China (Li, 2016). Between 1991-2000, the number of immigrants arriving from mainland China, mainly from Zhejiang province, rose dramatically (Li, 2016). Also, they were mainly labor migrants and migrants who came to the Netherlands for family reasons (Gijsberts et al., 2011). However, Chinese immigrants after 2000 consisted mainly of highly educated immigrants who came to the Netherlands either as students or skilled workers (Li, 2016). Chinese immigrants from throughout China started at this time. With the increase of diversity in the Chinese diasporic population as well as the promotion of Mandarin in China, the status of Cantonese has dramatically changed from being the primary language of the diaspora to only one of the dialects. Mandarin Chinese, also known as Putonghua, has continuously gained importance both inside China (Dong, 2013) and in the diaspora (Li & Juffermans, 2011)

2.2. Chinese language situation

According to Li & Juffermans (2013), Chinese is an extreme case of polycentric language. A polycentrically organized language, for example, has multiple centers. “It is a dynamic, socially ordered system of resources and norms strongly or weakly associated with one or more centers” (Li & Juffermans, 2013). Likely, the Ethnologue (2009) recognizes Chinese in its list of languages of China not as a language but as a macrolanguage. It describes Chinese as ‘*multiple, closely related individual languages that are deemed in some usage contexts to be a single language.*’ As a macrolanguage, the Chinese language consists of seven major members but “is unified by a homogeneous writing system that enables communications across a wide geographical area and among speakers of widely varying and mutually largely unintelligible vernaculars” (Li & Juffermans, 2013). The seven major Chinese languages include Mandarin, Gan, Hakka, Min, Wu, Xiang, and Cantonese. However, a native speaker of Mandarin and a native speaker of Cantonese, for instance, cannot comprehend a word of each other’s speech. Mandarin, the regional speech spoken in the northern, northwestern, and southwestern parts of China, historically had been spoken by the politically more influential and socioeconomically well-educated elite groups (Li, 2006). Additionally, since 1949,

Mandarin, named *Putonghua* (common speech) in China, which is mainly based on the pronunciation of the Beijing dialect, has become the official national language in China (Li,2006). As a result, according to China's official discourse, only one Chinese language comprises a variation in the form of many *fang yan* (regional speech) or dialects at the level of informal, spoken languages (Li& Juffermans, 2013).

3. Theoretical Framework

This chapter lays out a brief literature review and the theoretical framework of this thesis. In order to gain a deeper insight into the family language policy of Chinese immigrants in the Netherlands, this chapter consists of three sub-sections. The first part introduces the heritage language and Chinese as a heritage language, and the second part discusses language maintenance and shift; the last part concentrates mainly on the definition of FLP and the various components.

3.1. Heritage Language and Chinese as a heritage language

There are several definitions of ‘Heritage language’ (HL) and ‘HL speaker’ in the literature. In 1983, Cummins described it as “the community ethnocultural language.” Since then, other scholars have adopted similar definitions, such as “the language associated with one’s cultural background, and it may or may not be spoken in the home”(Cho et al., 1997). Also, Fishman (2001a) distinguishes between three types of heritage languages in the United States, each with its own historical and social context : (1) immigrant languages, such as Chinese and Korean; (2) indigenous heritage languages, such as Amerindians ; (3) colonial heritage languages, which refer to language were already established before the founding of the United States, such as Dutch, Swedish. To some researchers, “any language that is not the dominant language of the country count as an HL, even if it is the dominant language for a specific individual” (Aalberse et al., 2019)

In addition, Polinsky and Kagan (2007) proposed a broad and narrow definition of the heritage language. According to them, a narrowly defined HL “was first in the order of acquisition but was not entirely acquired because of an individual’s shift to another dominant language.” On the other hand, a broadly defined HL is “part of one’s family and cultural heritage, the language may not be spoken at home. One has no functional proficiency in the language, and most likely have to study that language as a second language (L2) learner” (Polinsky & Kagan, 2007). In this thesis, the broadly defined HL is adopted.

It is commonly agreed that Chinese is the most spoken language in the world with regard to the size of its native-speaking population. However, Chinese is also the most common “heritage language” used in the context of immigration and migration globally by people having a cultural and ethnic connection to it(He, 2016). According to Wiley (2005), “Chinese” is an umbrella term that covers different linguistic varieties and dialects that differ from the standard

Mandarin Chinese used for education and media in China. As a result, in terms of heritage language, “Chinese” is an ambiguous and problematic label when referring to ethnic or national origin. They can be referred to as speakers of any Chinese language. For example, several studies (Wong & Xiao, 2010; Wiley, 2005) discover that many Chinese immigrants who speak a regional variety of Chinese chose Mandarin as an HL to be maintained in their second-generation children, even though it might not be their primary home language due to the superior prestige of Mandarin compared to the other Chinese varieties. This is also the case in this study; regardless of their dialect background (Cantonese, Fujianese, Wenzhounese), the Chinese parents in this study all use the umbrella word ‘Chinese’ to refer to their HL in both oral and written. When it comes to heritage language maintenance, the parents refer to Chinese Mandarin as their heritage language rather than their own first language or home language. Therefore, the “Heritage language” I am discussing in this thesis refers to Mandarin Chinese.

3.2. Language Maintenance

Fishman (1996) defines language maintenance as a speech community that maintains its native language despite external pressures to change. Language shift, on the other hand, typically refers to a speech community’s native language being challenged by decreasing intergenerational continuity (Fishman, 1991). These two phenomena might affect the entire community, a sub-group, or an individual.

In recent years, many researchers in the field of language maintenance have argued that heritage languages should be preserved and developed for a linguistically and culturally diverse world. For instance, they believe that developing one’s heritage language and cultural knowledge to an advanced level is essential not only to individuals, their families, and communities but it also helps heritage speakers connect themselves to the sense of personal identity and their extended families and society as a whole (Fishman, 1991; Hornberger, 2003b).

While other researchers argue that a variety of factors, such as personal motivation and determination (Krashen, 1998) and identity and culture (Brown, 2011), influence the maintenance of heritage language, Curdt-Christiansen (2005) concludes that government, educational and cultural communities as well as parents all have responsibilities with respect to the maintenance of heritage languages of the migrant children. Likewise, several studies have indicated parental engagement and support as the most crucial aspect of migrant children’s heritage language development (; Suarez, 2002, 2007). This is primarily due to the fact that the

use of heritage language begins at home (Brown, 2011). Moreover, according to Fishman (1991), “*the family contains a natural boundary that serves as a bulwark against outside pressure.*” That is to say; the family is a private domain in which the contact between the primary caregiver and the child is the center of language maintenance and transmission. As a result, studies on language maintenance might benefit from concentrating on parents with children in the family and their interaction in terms of their heritage language socialization. Over the past two decades, there have been increasing studies on family language policy. This is because it has been proven that families play a critical role in processes such as language maintenance or language shift (Curdt-Christiansen 2009; King & Folge 2006; King & Folge, 2013; Spolsky 2012; Tannenbaum& Howie 2002;). The following section will give a brief overview of the phenomenon of family language policy.

3.3. Family language policy

In order to answer the research questions, we need to look at what is the family language policy. Family language policy (hereafter FLP) has been developed as a field of study in light of the field of Language Policy and Planning (LPP) in the last two decades. The researchers, such as King, Fogle, and Logan-Terry (2008) and, Spolsky (2004,2007), Curdt-Christiansen (2009), established the core work of family language policy, which combined concepts from research on child language acquisition, socialization, and language maintenance, with the goal of understanding and investigating the questions: why and how some transnational families’ children preserve their heritage language while others lose their; how some children grow up in a predominantly monolingual setting become multilingual, while others grow up in a bilingual environment being monolingual; what language planning and decision-making parents use to encourage or discourage the use and practice of specific language; and how these decisions and practices relate with “broader language ideologies and educational policies” (Curdt-Christiansen, 2013; Fishman, 1991; Spolsky,2012)

According to Spolsky (2004, 2009), family language policy is based on the notion that, in the same way that macro-level domains and institutions have their own policies, the micro-level, that is, household, also has its own policies, as “explicit and overt planning in relation to language use within the home among family members.” More specifically, Curdt-Christiansen (2012) has expanded this definition, claiming that “family language policy refers to explicit and

overt decisions parents make about language use and language learning as well as implicit processes that legitimize certain language and literacy practices over others in the home”.

These policies adhere to a similar tripartite language policy model, consisting of “language ideologies, language practices, and language management” (Spolsky, 2004). To illustrate, parents’ language ideologies, which can be understood as what they believe about languages and language use; second, family language practices, which can be interpreted as what they do with languages; and third, language management is any kind of effort and intervention to effect actual language practice. Moreover, Spolsky (2004, 2007) argues that families carry out their language policies through their ideologies and beliefs about how to use a particular language, how they use that language, and how they make an effort to affect language practice. Finally, Spolsky (2009) claims that language practices are observable behaviors that show what individuals do with languages. In contrast, language management is the visible effort made by caregivers to change the language behaviors of family members.

On the other hand, Curdt-Christiansen (2017) believes that while the line between language management and language practice may be evident at macro-level language policy, it is less clear in a setting of family language policy. Based on the framework of Curdt-Christiansen, this study will discuss language management and language practice as a whole. Below I present how these language components are contextualized in FLP research.

3.3.1. Language Ideology

Researchers define language ideologies as “the beliefs and attitudes held by individuals towards a certain language, based on their perspectives and assumptions regarding the usefulness, power, and values of that language in a particular community” (Blommaert, 2006; Curdt-Christiansen, 2009). Take Mandarin Chinese as an example; it has been accepted as the heritage language to maintain among Chinese diaspora communities worldwide, even though many families might speak another Chinese language as their home language.

Furthermore, “language ideologies are the driving forces behind language practice”(Spolsky,2004). Various factors, such as the power or the value of a specific language(Curdt-Christiansen, 2009), or practical reasons such as communication with family and friends (Bezcioglu-Goktolga,2019), might impact the driving forces. Fishman (1991) placed a strong emphasis on the relationship that exists between heritage language ideologies

and the maintenance/shift of language. Also, Curdt-Christiansen (2016) states that FLP studies have investigated language ideology because it reflects “language users’ evaluative perceptions and conceptions of language and language practices.”

In her study about the language ideologies of Chinese parents, Curdt-Christiansen (2013) revealed that Chinese immigrant's parents’ attitudes and beliefs toward the maintenance of Chinese are primarily focused on 1) Chinese language is viewed as an ethnic marker; 2) the Chinese language is viewed as a communication tool for maintaining ties with family members in and outside China; 3) the Chinese language is perceived as a cultural tool necessary for accessing knowledge and culture; 4) the Chinese language is seen as a tool for social advancement. In addition, Curdt-Christiansen (2009) has found that parents’ educational experiences, beliefs, and immigration experiences can also influence an immigrant’s family language policy. Therefore, based on their belief, the parents in the study carried out various language practices to support their children’s language maintenance. This is consistent with De Houwer’s (1999) interpretation of the term ‘impact belief,’ which refers to the belief that parents influence their children’s linguistic practices.

3.3.2. Language management and Language practice

Language management is defined by Spolsky (2009) as “the explicit and observable efforts by a person or a group that either has or claims authority over the participants in a domain to modify their language practices or beliefs.” When it comes to a family domain, researchers consider Spolsky’s model needs to account for the specific measures parents take to manage their home language (Curdt-Christiansen, 2014; Ren & Hu, 2013). As a result, Curdt-Christiansen (2012) redefined language management as “the implicit/ explicit and subconscious/deliberate parental involvement and investment in providing linguistic conditions and context for language learning and literacy development.”

Studies have identified ways in which parents involve in home language management. Explicit language management refers to deliberate attempts by the parents (Curdt-Christiansen, 2012). For example, the primary stage in family language management is the parents’ explicit decision on what language to use with the children at home. This decision is critical for heritage language maintenance (Schwartz, 2010; Spolsky, 2007). For example, some families may decide to purposefully both parents to speak only the heritage language at home. In contrast, some families decide that each parent may speak one language with children, known as one parent-

one language (OPOL). On the other hand, in implicit language management, families provide their children with language tools, such as sending them to complementary school, providing them with rich literacy resources, homework assistance, media, or games in their heritage language, and conveying intimate emotions in a specific language (Curd-Christiansen & Wang, 2018). Both quantitative and qualitative studies on language maintenance have shown a strong correlation between home literacy environment and children's literacy development (Schwartz et al., 2010, 2013;).

4. Methodology

4.1. Research Design

This multiple-case thesis adopts a qualitative research approach to explore the family language policy among Chinese immigrant families with a lower socioeconomic and educational background; in other words, I focus mainly on unskilled Chinese labor workers in the Netherlands. Yin (2014) states that qualitative case study research is a “linear but iterative process” that “involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation” (Miriam, 1998). Moreover, this research method is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context” (Yin, 2014). Also, Creswell (2013) claims that case study design can be used to “provide an in-depth understanding of the cases or a comparison of several cases. The main goal of this design, which includes a thorough description of participants, is to convey a unique environment (Bloomberg&Volpe, 2012). Those kinds of study features support my objective of investigating and interpreting the uniqueness of each family’s language policy through in-depth narratives built on their own family background and experience.

4.2. Data collection and the participants

This research is based mainly on ethnographic data (Table 1) gathered from seven Chinese immigrant families participating in a complimentary Saturday Chinese school in Rotterdam. Rotterdam is an appropriate setting for this study. First of all, according to Gijsberts et al. (2011), the most prominent Dutch Chinese community is in Rotterdam. Also, Rotterdam has the biggest ‘Chinatown-like ‘ residential community in the city center. Moreover, Danhua Culture and Education Centre in Rotterdam is the largest Chinese complementary school in the Netherlands. It was founded in 1990 and currently includes between 25 and 27 classes, the number of pupils is from 550 to 620. Like many other Chinese complementary schools, the Chinese school in Rotterdam rents classrooms from a Dutch mainstream secondary school. The school has classes starting from kindergarten to 12th grade and one Chinese language class for adults. Danhua also offers Chinese culture and art lessons, such as Wushu (a type of Chinese martial Arts), Chinese Calligraphy, and sometimes Dutch language classes for Chinese immigrants. After revealing my study aim, I obtained the principal’s approval. She allowed me

to conduct interviews with the parents who remain in the school cafeteria or other sites on Saturdays from 11:00 to 14:20 while their children attend Mandarin courses.

I approached parents randomly and asked if they would be willing to participate in an interview regarding their views and ideas about their children's Mandarin learning. After three weekend's investigation in the Chinese school, I discovered that the bulk of parents I spoke with were first-generation Chinese migrants who arrived in the Netherlands after 2000 as labor workers. Their background and situation are pretty similar to Gijsbert et al. (2011) report about the Chinese in the Netherlands,

“ The first generation Chinese labor migrants have a good deal of difficulty with the Dutch language. They speak Dutch either poorly or not at all and use it very little in their own family context. Their social distance from the native population is considerable because most Chinese migrants from the first generation are strongly focused on their own ethnic group. Their education level is relatively low; a third have completed no more than primary education ” (Gijsberts et al., 2001)

The data presented in this thesis is based chiefly on semi-structured interviews with 7 Chinese immigrants. An interview guideline was designed (see Appendix 1). Six of them are first-generation labor workers, and only one is regarded as the second generation. As an immigrant and parent whose children attend the same Chinese school, I have certain advantages in conducting this study. For example, during the interview, I shared my inside perspective on my children's language experience and practices, which allowed me to gain the participating parents' trust quickly.

Moreover, they could open their hearts and share their thoughts and concerns with me and their experiences. I interviewed each family at least twice in a short period, either in the Chinese school or at the participant's home. The duration of these interviews varies from 30 minutes to 60 minutes. At the time, several of the interviews evolved into conversations between peers rather than dialogue between researcher and interviewee. All interviews are conducted in Chinese Mandarin. Most of the interviews are recorded with my iPhone and subsequently transcribed and translated into English by me. Additionally, filed notes are taken at the time of the interviews.

Table 1

Participants' Families' Information

Families	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mother's name	Mrs. Wu	Mrs. Lin	Mrs. Yang (nanny)	Mrs. Li	Mrs. Xing	Mrs. Ye	Mrs. Chen
Father's name	Mr. Wu	Mr. Lin	?	Mr. Li	Mr. Xing	Mr. Ye	Mr. Chen
Mother's Age	44	42	50	34	39	38	34
Father's Age	57	45		38	45	39	33
Mother's highest education	Primary school	Middle school	Middle school	Middle school	Middle school	Middle school	Master
Father's highest education	Middle school	Middle school		Middle school	Middle school	Middle school	Bachelor
Native language of mother	Min	Wu	Cantonese	Cantonese	Cantonese	Wu (Wenzhou Dialect)	Mandarin
Native language of the father	Mandarin	Wu		Cantonese	Cantonese	Wu (Wenzhou Dialect)	Cantonese, Dutch
# of years in the Netherlands of Mother	16	+20	15	9	10	7	7
# of years in the Netherlands of father	7	+20	+20	+20	+20	+20	33
Languages spoken at home	Mandarin	Dutch	Cantonese, Mandarin	Cantonese	Cantonese	Mandarin+Dutch	Mandarin, Dutch
Family members in the household	3 (parent + 1 child)	4 (parent + 2 children)	4 (Nanny + 4 children)	4 (parent + 2 children)	4 (parent + 2 children)	3 (parent +1 child)	3 (Parent + 1child)

5. Findings

In this chapter, I present the findings following the framework of family language policy, focusing on three distinct aspects: the families' language ideology, language practice, and the obstacles the families face in maintaining their heritage language. Six cases are discussed for the seven families. That is to say, the within-case findings for five families are presented individually, while the findings for the other two are discussed together because they have strong similarities in terms of background and language use, are discussed together. All the interviewees in this thesis are anonymized.

5.1. Case 1 Family Wu

Language attitude and beliefs

Mrs. Wu was the first person I interviewed. I met her in front of her son's Chinese classroom. I informed her about my intention, and she seemed eager and delighted to share her thoughts and concerns about her only child learning Chinese Mandarin. Mrs. Wu is 44 years old, her husband is 57, and they have been residents of the Netherlands for more than 15 years. Mrs. Wu and her husband trace their roots in Fujian and Zhejiang provinces in China. In fact, in addition to Guangdong Province, the majority of unskilled Chinese immigrants are from either of these two regions. Both provinces share the distinction of being those in China with the most incredible language diversity. Even if they live in the same province, people from various cities in those provinces do not understand each other linguistically. Not unexpectedly, Mandarin had become Mrs. Wu and her husband's lingua franca from the moment they met. Most immigrants from Zhejiang and Fujian speak Mandarin as a second language, while they acquired their regional dialects as their first languages. They learned Mandarin mostly when they entered primary school. Mrs. Wu completed only primary school in China; her husband's highest education was secondary school. Like most labor workers with less education in China, Mrs. Wu has minimal Mandarin proficiency, although Mandarin has become her dominant language in place of her mother tongue. On the other hand, she made the following comment about her language skills:

"Because I have been speaking Chinese Mandarin for more than 20 years, my Mandarin is now better than my dialect. Here (in the Netherlands), I almost only speak Mandarin. With

my husband, my son, and other Chinese people, I speak Mandarin. I have practically lost my native tongue. (Mrs. Wu, translation from Chinese)

Mrs. Wu has obviously undergone a language shift, which is relatively typical among Chinese immigrants who share her background. This is mainly due to the social superiority of Mandarin over her native tongue (Fujianese) as the national, standard language of power in China and among Chinese immigrants abroad during the past several decades (Zhang&Slaughter-Defoe 2009).

Her seven-year-old son began attending Mandarin school in Rotterdam two years ago. When I asked her if it was important for her kid to join a Chinese school, she emphasized her unwavering support for his enrolment in a Mandarin school:

"This is, of course, very important. Otherwise, our son would not be able to speak in Mandarin in the future if he does not attend Chinese school. We have seen many Chinese children speak exclusively with their parents in Dutch. I barely speak a bit of Dutch; my husband does not speak either Dutch or English. We need to communicate with our son; how will we be able to do so if he does not speak Mandarin? If we do not communicate, we will not be able to operate as a single family." (Mrs. Wu)

Mrs. Wu expressed her attitude and belief toward their son's Mandarin maintenance and recognized the significance of Mandarin to them. To put it another way, Mandarin Chinese is their only means of communication, and it is their only family language. Apart from that, she views it as a necessary family link that enhances family ties and contributes to family cohesion. The case of Mrs. Wu is in accordance with earlier research demonstrating that parents are pushing children's heritage language maintenance to enhance communication among family members and strengthen the family relationship (Hashimoto & Lee, 2011; Park & Sarkar, 2007).

Language practice and management

Mrs. Wu's language practice and management of her son's Chinese rely primarily on the Saturday Chinese school. Curdt-Christiansen (2012) discovers that many parents turn to external language professional institutions for their children's heritage learning because they have limited time to focus on language transmission and management or have insufficient linguistic knowledge. The son of Mrs. Wu began attending the Saturday Chinese school two years ago. Due to the pandemic, the Chinese lesson was conducted online throughout the year.

Every Saturday's three and a half hour's intensive Mandarin language immersion and a significant amount of homework was, to some extent, helpful for the boy to improve his Mandarin. He also learned to read Chinese characters, which was a crucial aspect of the Chinese lesson. During this time, Mrs. Wu also stayed home to accompany her son's online course. In addition, Mrs. Wu had to urge and assist her son in doing his Chinese homework after each Chinese lesson. Fortunately, Mrs. Wu's effort has to some extent, paid off; now, her son has begun to interact more with his parents in Chinese at home.

Mrs. Wu was happy to see the outcome of her son's Mandarin improvement; this also motivated her to continue the Saturday school last September when the school returned to the regular campus schedule despite one hour's driving from the village where they live. She revealed her firm decision about the continuity of her son's Mandarin learning at the Saturday school when I told her research indeed shows that attending language plays an essential role in the maintenance of heritage language (DfES, 2003; Shibata, 2000) ;)

Challenges

Regarding the challenges of their son's language maintenance, she explains them to me :

"We speak Mandarin with him at home but do not have much time to talk to him because we work every day, including weekends."

Mrs. Wu and her husband own and run a small business serving French fries and other snacks. According to her, most of their time is spent working at their small restaurant from morning until late evening. In particular, they have no time outside work, no social life, and no leisure time. Indeed, their son was routinely placed in front of the television before attending kindergarten at two and a half years old. According to Mrs. Wu, his son's primary source of language input during his first two years was various English songs and cartoons from television (somehow, Mrs. Wu indicated she had limited access to Chinese television programming), the young boy began speaking later than his peers, and his first words in kindergarten were in English. As a result, he could only speak elementary words in Mandarin with his parents though he understood their language. Although the situation has been changed a bit when the son started attending the Chinese school, Mrs. Wu states that the lack of time is still a problem for them,

"Because of the busy working schedule, we do not have much contact with other Chinese families. No other Chinese family lives close to us. I do not have access to Chinese TV shows or books. The Chinese school is about three hours long and just once a week; I wish it were more frequent and longer. Moreover, my son prefers to watch English television and play video games in English; he does not watch Dutch television. He has a school friend in our neighborhood whose parents are Thai. When they play together, they communicate in English. I told my son not to speak English with his friend and that he should practice his Dutch. Because his class teacher says, my son's Dutch has to be improved. But he refuses to listen to me."

In his book << The Chinese in the Netherlands >>, Gijsberts et al. (2011) point out that the first generation of Chinese immigrants usually speaks poor Dutch, and those who live outside of Chinese communities do not have frequent social contact either with the native Dutch population or with their group. The reasons may be a lack of time due to their long hours working in the restaurant sector. Mrs. Wu's family appears to reflect this pattern, which may also more or less explain why one in five second-generation Chinese migrants have entirely lost their mother tongue (Gijsberts et al., 2011). However, Mrs. Wu's son may not be among those who have experienced language loss if their family language practices continue to work out.

5.2. Case 2 Mr. Lin's family

Language attitude and beliefs

Mr. Lin is 45 years old and has been living in Europe since 1999. Before moving to the Netherlands in 2001, his first European residence was Italy. Since ancient times, residents of his homeland, an area in Wenzhou, Zhejiang, have engaged in international trade and traveled abroad to make a living. Consequently, people from this area are one of the largest Chinese labor immigrants in Europe and North America (Li, 1999) . Following his sister's illegal migration to Italy, Mr. Lin also traveled to Europe illegally with the help of international smuggling networks. Like most Chinese immigrants without proper residence permits, he worked in the Chinese catering sector during his first few years in the Netherlands. However, his life had changed when Mr.Lin became a Christian and began attending a Dutch church while Mr.Lin already received a valid resident permit in the Netherlands. Encouraged by a church member, he took around three years to learn Dutch to master the language properly. His

dedication to language learning benefited him a lot. Mr. Lin was lucky enough to have his own restaurant when their first child was born, according to him. Yet, he and his wife had to operate the restaurant in a remoted region with little competition from other Chinese caterings, and his family has been residing there until now.

It was his first day bringing his 12-year-old son to Chinese class when I met Mr. Lin at the Chinese school. However, his son could not speak either Mandarin Chinese or Mr. Lin and his wife's dialect, one of a variety of Wu languages in China. Mr. Lin has two sons, the older of whom is 15 years old and does not speak Chinese. Ironically, the older son used to speak fluent Mandarin Chinese since his primary caregiver while he was one to five years old was a nanny from a Chinese province where one of the Mandarin variants is spoken. However, due to the economic crisis, Mr. Lin's family could not afford a full-time stay-at-home nanny when their oldest son turned 5 years old, the second year after starting primary school. At the same time, the second son was around two and a half years old. Alternatively, they hired a Dutch babysitter to pick up the boys from school and day care until the parents arrived home from their restaurant late in the evening.

Furthermore, if the parents could not take time off from their hectic weekend work schedule, the boys had to spend the weekend with the Dutch nanny at some point. Since then, the boys have been speaking more and more Dutch since they were almost exclusively exposed to Dutch around them and have had little chance to hear their parent's language and Mandarin. Mr. Lin's wife shared to me the story again when I had a chance to visit their home, and she appeared helpless while she was telling the story:

"Weekends are traditionally the busiest time for Chinese restaurant workers. We had no choice but to leave our children with a babysitter. We already felt bad for our children and did not want to waste time discussing which language we should use at home with them. We just followed them and talked Dutch when we had little time at home. They gradually stopped speaking Chinese to us. We tried to say something to them in Chinese that we could not express in Dutch, but they did not understand. They must have forgotten their Chinese"

Mr. Lin's wife's narrative indicates that in order to maintain family relationships, they must use Dutch rather than Chinese; in other words, Dutch has become their family language. As the family domain proved to play a critical role in the process such as language maintenance or language shift (King and Fogle, 2006; King & Folge, 2013; Spolsky, 2012; Tannenbaum &

Howei, 2002), the outcome of their children's language shift from Chinese to Dutch should not be unexpected.

Apart from this, Mr. Lin claims that his Christian faith has given him a new perspective on his identity. Mr. Lin explains:

"The religion has completely transformed me; I no longer care about Chinese culture or identity anymore. Religion can change a person. Therefore it is acceptable to me that my children only speak Dutch to me. I frequently take them to a Dutch church, where we listen to Dutch sermons and sing Dutch worship songs. We are the only Chinese family in the village, so speaking Dutch comes naturally to us."

In this statement, Mr. Lin reveals his attitude toward the heritage language; unlike Mrs. Wu in case one, Mr. Lin's family place more value on Dutch than Chinese. Moreover, partly due to religious practice, another reason is that Mr. Lin has a relatively good command of the Dutch Language, which also hinders language maintenance to some extent.

Mr. Lin, aware of the purpose of my research, offers the following information on other immigrants:

"I am not a typical Chinese immigrant among my fellow countrymen. The stereotype of Wenzhounese is those restaurant owners with a large families in the Netherlands. Grandparents typically raise their grandchildren, as the parents work in restaurants. Because they place a great value on Chinese culture, they celebrate every Chinese festival and regularly get together with other Chinese people. Moreover, their children speak good Mandarin and their regional dialect...."

Mr. Lin seems aware of the relationship between language maintenance and being closely linked to the Chinese community and identity. Yet, his independence from Chinese identity is critical for their family language policy.

Language practices and management

As mentioned earlier, Mr. Lin's 12-year-old- son recently entered the Chinese school and is much older than most of his classmates in the class, which is a first-grade class with children ranging in age from 6-8. Fortunately, he has two additional older students in his class who speak Chinese but wants to learn to read and write Chinese characters. Mr. Lin claims that

his younger son is not resistant to attending the Chinese school, but his first son, who is three years older than the younger son, has refused to go.

Mr. Lin's reasoning for sending his younger kid to Chinese school is simple. *"I have time to bring my son to learn Chinese,"* he asserts, *"I sold my Chinese restaurant before the pandemic began, and now I am doing business online with China. However, My wife is still working at a Chinese restaurant. Her boss's two children attend the Chinese school in Rotterdam, and my wife wants my son to join them too."*

Given that the nearest Chinese school they can access is in Rotterdam, which is a 40-minute one-way drive away, Mr. Lin explains, *"It was impossible for us to bring the children here to learn Chinese while we were operating the restaurant. The children of my wife's boss are always brought to the Chinese school by their grandparents by bus because their parents have no time"*.

Like most Chinese parents whose children attend Chinese school, Mr. Lin must assist with his weekly Chinese homework. However, there is no other Chinese language practice in Mr. Lin's household. According to Mr. Lin's sharing and my own observation during the visit to their family, the parents and the children do not interact much. On the one hand, their sons are old enough to be independent and occupied with their activities; On the other hand, they are also accustomed to staying at home alone while the parents run their own restaurant. I witnessed very little conversation between the parents and the children during my visit, mainly in Dutch. The mother occasionally began speaking to the children in Chinese but switched to Dutch immediately when they showed their incomprehension. In addition, the parents also state that they do not have any Chinese books at home, but the boys sometimes read Dutch books and watch Dutch or English TV shows. Most of their spare time they spend playing video games. Moreover, they do not have much socialization with the neighboring kids or school friends.

Challenges

Mr. Lin claims they have no expectations for their children's Chinese learning and performance in a Dutch school. He explains to me: *"We did not receive so much education ourselves. Some Chinese words I cannot even pronounce correctly, and it is not easy for me to help him do Chinese homework. I cannot help them with Dutch either. My older son's Dutch is not good enough to attend a better secondary school. The younger one has no problem in Dutch"*

but struggles with mathematics. However, as parents, we cannot help our children so much with their education. So, we cannot put them under pressure either. I want to respect them. It is all right if my kids do not want to keep learning Chinese. If they do not want to go to university, that is fine with me. They are Dutch citizens and can live comfortably in the Netherlands without a higher degree."

5.3. Case 3 Mrs. Yang

Language attitude and beliefs

This case may seem a unique example, but it is relatively common among Chinese immigrant households.

According to CBS (2019), almost 43 percent of all Chinese workers in the Netherlands are employed in the accommodation and food service industry, as described in the previous chapter. Chinese-owned restaurants are often family-run businesses, with working days ranging from ten to thirteen hours per day, six days a week. The majority of restaurant owners have no time for their children. In recent years it has become a trend for them to hire a Chinese nanny with or without legal residence to take care of children. Mrs. Yang, whom I interviewed, is one of the nannies in Chinese communities. She is also the physical sister of her employer's wife, who runs a sushi restaurant with his wife in the Rotterdam region. During my research in this study, I was revealed by many Chinese people that the Chinese own around 95% of Sushi restaurants in the Netherlands. Mrs. Yang lives together with her sister's family. Because the business is open from Tuesday through Sunday, the sister and her husband only see their children on Mondays. According to Mrs. Yang, the parents arrive every night at around 23-24 while the children are asleep and leave in the morning after the children have already departed for school. Mrs. Yang's job is to take care of the children's daily lives and their Chinese learning; in other words, Mrs. Yang functions more or less like a mother. Mrs. Yang states it with pride:

"Indeed, the younger children who are 8 and 7 years old are even much closer to me than to their mother, you know, I have been taking care of them since they were born."

The family has four children, two of whom, aged 18 and 16, are already entirely independent. Mrs. Yang claims that every child speaks exclusively Mandarin to her. When I

initially met her at the Chinese school, she was very straightforward when I asked her why the children learn Chinese on weekends:"

"In order to communicate with me, because I do not speak Dutch." She argues that many children whose parents own restaurants attend Chinese school for the same reason: to interact with Chinese nannies. There is no language barrier between them and their parents in general because the parents already speak Dutch to some extent when they can operate a restaurant on their own. As a result, Chinese nannies in those families, such as Mrs Yang, serve as caregivers, allowing children to communicate in Mandarin. During my research progress at the Chinese school, I learned that most nannies employed by Chinese families in the Netherlands are from the Dongbei region of China, where a variety of Mandarin dialects are spoken. Given that the owners of Chinese restaurants speak Mandarin as a second language and are initially from Zhejiang, Guangdong, and Fujian provinces, employing a Dongbei nanny offers their children a natural linguistic setting in which to acquire Mandarin.

Mrs. Yang adds that connection with family in China is another reason to value the Chinese language. Before the pandemic, the children spent at least four weeks each summer in China with their grandparents and other relatives. "The children loved traveling to China and did not want to come back," Mr. Yang recalls. *"They felt Guangzhou was a great place to spend their vacation, and they had a few cousins to play with. I always remind the children that if they do not speak Chinese well, it would be difficult for them to play with their cousins when they travel to China since their cousins only speak Chinese. They are thus motivated to learn Chinese."* According to Mrs. Yang's perspective, the children's positive attitude toward China seems to be one factor that enhances their language maintenance. Other studies have found similar effects (Kang, 2012; Kung, 2013; Nesteruk,2010).

Language practice and management

Mrs. Yang keeps speaking Chinese Mandarin with the children at home while speaking Cantonese with her sister and brother-in-law.

My daughter is in the same Chinese class as Mrs. Yang's young niece, who is eight years old. According to my daughter, the little girl is the only child in her class who only speaks Chinese at the Chinese school, while the other children prefer communicating in Dutch with each other. This information I confirmed with their Chinese teacher. Mrs. Yang also mentions

that her younger nieces (9 and 8 years old) communicate in Mandarin at home, while the two older boys (18 and 16 years old) speak Dutch. However, she commented about her nieces' Dutch proficiency, *"Their Dutch is terrible! Their teachers informed the mother. So I suggested the mother find a private tutor to teach the children Dutch. However, my sister doesn't care; she says their Dutch will get better later naturally. Like their brothers, they used to speak only Chinese at home, but now they speak Dutch well."*

"Are the brothers doing well in school?" I asked her with curiosity.

"They are not excellent students. The oldest boy finished high school with low grades. He works as a waiter in a restaurant owned by his parent's friend. Mrs. Yang explains, "But the parents are not concerned about it. They said the boys could take over their restaurant if they could not find a better job elsewhere in the future; that would be the worst case. After all, I am just their aunt and cannot become involved. And I am concentrating on caring for the two younger children" (Mrs. Yang)

According to Mrs. Yang, the younger children began attending the Chinese Saturday school when they were four. The Chinese school in Rotterdam offers classes for children aged 4 or 5, which focus on playing, singing, and doing handicrafts in a Chinese-speaking setting, although they do have a textbook with just rhymes and so on. However, students in Grade 1 start receiving homework from their teachers every week, typically consisting of writing and reading a lot of Chinese characters. Mrs. Yang urges them to do Chinese homework every day. They might have finished them in one day. However, Mrs. Yang believes it is more efficient to split homework into daily assignments since this allows children to interact with Chinese characters daily, ensuring they do not forget.

Watching Chinese TV shows was another family practice that enriched children's Chinese language retention. The children have their own Ipad and have enjoyed listening to children's songs in Chinese on YouTube since a young age, and they continue to watch Chinese entertainment TV shows. However, Mrs. Yang claims that the two girls never watch Dutch programs. In addition, every Saturday following the Chinese language session, the children attend Kungfu (Chinese martial arts) at the Chinese school for one hour, although the coach speaks to the children in both Dutch and Mandarin. Finally, during the summer vacation, the Chinese school hosts a two-week summer camp that includes various traditional, modern, and popular cultural activities. Mrs. Yang's two nieces attended summer camp in the previous two summers since they could not fly to China owing to strict pandemic restrictions.

Furthermore, the neighborhood where Mrs. Yang and her sister's family live is the Netherlands's biggest Dutch Chinese community (Gijsbert et al., 2011). Mrs. Yang and her nieces frequently visit Chinese grocery stores, hairdressers, and physicians, allowing the children to hear and use Chinese regularly. This is consistent with the findings of Raschka et al.(2002), who discovered that social networks are crucial factors in heritage language maintenance, that is to say, Children with the opportunity to use their heritage language, their close family members and neighbors, and older generations usually have higher proficiency than children who lack such opportunity.

Challenges

Mrs. Yang claims that the children complain that sometimes it is difficult to read and write, but this is not the case with listening and speaking. The distinct features of the Chinese Language and writing system as a logographic language have led to differences in how reading works in Chinese compared to Dutch. Early emphasis is usually placed on phonological processing skills when learning to read an alphabetic writing system such as Dutch. Early Chinese reading, on the other hand, emphasizes the significance of fully processing orthographic information before activating and meaning information (Wang et al., 2005). *"It is challenging for the children, some simple characters such as 水(water), 火 (fire) , 吃 (to eat) , 喝 (to drink) , are fine, but the words which are more abstract, they cannot remember, such as 欲 (wish) , 求 (request) (Mrs. Yang),"*

Mrs. Yang also expresses concerns about the children's lack of time owing to their busy schedules. *"They not only learn Dutch and Chinese, but they also participate in many extracurricular activities. They have piano lessons on Mondays, swimming on Tuesdays, dancing on Wednesdays, and painting on Thursday, for example. They spend almost the entire Saturday at the Chinese school. They also need time to play,"* Mrs. Yang says.

Mrs. Yang also shares another challenge: she finds it difficult to explain something complicated in Chinese to the children. In addition, her limited Chinese literacy may not be able to help the children's further development in Chinese due to her lower educational level and her competence in Mandarin as a second language.

5.4. Case 4 Family Li and Family Xing

Language attitude and beliefs

Mrs. Li is 34 years old, and Mrs. Xing is 38. Their families have a lot in common regarding their family situation and immigration background. Mrs. Li, the mother of Family 3, and Mrs. Xing, the mother of Family 4 and the fathers of both families, is originally from the same town in Guangdong Province, one of the most significant Cantonese-Speaking regions in China. After finishing secondary school in China, they assisted their parents in their self-owned small businesses, which is relatively common in their hometown.

Both mothers have been residing in the Netherlands for about eight years, while their spouses have been immigrants for more than two decades. Family reunification immigrants account for roughly 17% of the Chinese population settled in the Netherlands in the last decades (Mandin & Gsir, 2015), and the two mothers belong to them. In fact, the two husbands could migrate to this country because their family members who own Chinese restaurants assisted them in doing so. After establishing themselves in the Netherlands through many years of laborious but reasonably well-paid culinary profession in one of Rotterdam's most well-known Chinese restaurants, they married their spouses from their hometown in China via a family match. Before moving to the Netherlands, Mrs. Li and Mrs. Xing acquired a very rudimentary understanding of the Dutch language to fulfill the requirement of their immigrant process. However, their Dutch language command has not improved even after eight years of living in Rotterdam.

I interviewed the two mothers together because they are friends and their children have regular playdates after the Chinese class. Mrs. Li emphasized why her Dutch is insufficient, and Mrs. Xing shared a similar viewpoint.

"I was a study slacker in school and never showed any interest in studying. I learned English for six years in school, but could not speak a word of it. Dutch is too difficult for me"
(Mrs. Li)

"I did not like learning at all. It was a suffering for me in school. I have never considered going to college. Learning Dutch was such a challenge!" (Mrs. Xing)

The two mothers state that their husbands are no more fluent in Dutch than they are, although the husbands have been residing in the Netherlands much longer because Chinese Mandarin and Cantonese dominate their jobs and personal environments.

"We do not have Dutch-speaking friends in this country," Mrs. Li claims, "therefore, we do not need to speak Dutch very much. Our acquaintances all speak Chinese.

"How about attending a regular parent-teacher interview in your children's school?" I asked her.

"That is not difficult, and the interviews are maximal 10 minutes. Because the teacher knows I am not fluent in Dutch, they always talk slowly to me. She asks my daughter to translate for me if I do not understand something. Some Chinese parents do not speak any Dutch; therefore, the school arranges an interpreter for them" (Mrs. Li)

Additionally, two mothers can primarily stay home and care for their children thanks to their husbands' sufficient income. They also said that even when their children get older, they may be able to obtain work in a Chinese-spoken environment. Clearly, they are not motivated to learn Dutch, which is the mainstream language. This is consistent with Gardner's (1985) definition of the importance of motivation in SLA(second language acquisition). Moreover, he claims "that motivation in SLA refers to the extent to which the language learner strives to achieve a particular goal (instrumental motivation) or to become an indistinguishable member of the target community (integrative motivation)." Both families lack this desire or motivation, indicating that integration with mainstream society is not their objective. Mrs. Li's statement reveals this:

"My husband aims to return to China when he retires in the future. Therefore, our whole family keeps our Chinese citizenship."

In contrast to Mrs. Li's family, Mrs. Xing is the only member of her family with a Chinese passport, while her husband and children are Dutch citizens. Mrs. Xing explains,

"Having a Dutch passport is convenient for children. For example, they do not require a visa to travel to the United Kingdom or the United States. However, I still retain a Chinese passport, and we will be able to return to China in the future."

Previous research has also found that parents who hold onto their original citizenship status are more interested in Chinese language maintenance (Kuo, 1974)

"Do you want your children to return to China in the future?" I asked,

"They can make their own decision later. However, they are Chinese whether they stay here or return to China. Therefore, it is very important to be fluent in Chinese. Also, they must learn to read Chinese characters. Otherwise, when we visit China, they are just like illiterates. My in-law's daughter had such an experience. She is 19 years old now. She speaks Cantonese but did not attend a Chinese school. Every time she visited China, she complained about being unable to read street signs, restaurant menus, and so on" (Mrs. Li)

Mrs. Li and Mrs. Xing's statements confirm the viewpoint frequently shown in other studies that the sense of ethnic identity is solid among Chinese immigrants (Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). For example, studies on Chinese immigrants in the US also reveal that parents consider their children as Chinese, and thus they should learn and speak Chinese (Leung & Uchikoshi, 2012; Liao & Larke, 2008). They do not expect their children to forget their identity, believing that maintaining the heritage languages is conducive to shaping children's positive ethnic identity (Lao, 2004).

Mrs. Li seems to say that you are no longer Chinese without the Chinese language. Even though Mandarin is not their first language, they seek to transmit their ethnic identity to their children through the most acceptable Chinese language. It has been introduced in the previous chapter that the Chinese language consists of a wide variety of dialects in addition to standard Mandarin. Also, Chinese immigrants all use the umbrella word "Chinese" regardless of their specific dialect background, the Chinese immigrants all use the umbrella word "Chinese" to refer to their heritage language in both oral and written forms (Zhang & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). They point out that:

"that a common language called 'Chinese' that all immigrants of Chinese origin share could represent national, unified identity, ethnicity, and a common culture. Ethnic group members can easily identify with those who share the same heritage language."

Language practice and management

Mrs. Li and Mrs. Xing are native Cantonese speakers who learned Mandarin when they began primary school education in China, which is a common situation in most non-Mandarin-speaking areas in China. Mandarin Chinese has served as the country's de facto lingua franca over the past decades. It is the only language used at school, on official and non-official

occasions in peoples' work, study, and social interactions. Both families use mostly Cantonese with each other at home,

"It feels awkward to speak Mandarin to them because my husband and I only speak our dialect to each other. Therefore, we speak our dialect to the children at home. Although some of our friends suggest we speak only Mandarin to the children, they say our dialect is not useful compared to Mandarin" (Mrs. Li)

Spolsky's inertia condition can explain Mrs. Li's home language environment: "once we start speaking to someone in a specific language, it is easier and more natural to continue using the same language, and it may be uncomfortable to switch"(Spolsky, 2009).

In addition, Mrs. Li, in this narrative, also revealed a common language belief and attitude among Chinese immigrants toward Mandarin. This is confirmed in many studies with regard to the language shift from Cantonese to Mandarin among Chinese immigrants all over the world. For example, Li and Juffermans (2011) also state that they witness a gradual shift from Mandarin as a lingua franca to Mandarin as the most common language of the Chinese diaspora in the Netherlands.

Researchers show that parents' own bilingual experiences significantly impact their decisions and shaping of their attempts to promote children's bilingualism and families' language management (Caldas, 2012; Curdt-Christiansen, 2013; King & Folge, 2006; Piller, 2001). Mrs. Li and Mrs. Xing both agree that it is essential to learn Mandarin in order to be able to communicate with Chinese people. However, it is also necessary to keep their own dialect due to the language environment at home". Their conversation explains this:

Mrs. Li: Of course, they need to learn Mandarin. Everyone speaks Mandarin in China. However, at home, we still feel comfortable for us to speak our dialect.

Mrs. Xing: Yes, we also speak our dialect at home. But Mandarin is heard everywhere, even here in the Netherlands. In addition, Mandarin is the language used in television shows and in Chinese films and audio books.

Two years ago, when their eldest children turned six years old, they began attending the Chinese school. They could already speak Mandarin at that time. The mothers performed daily reading in Mandarin aloud to the children before they started primary school. They also introduced their children to various Chinese audio stories and children's films. The mothers believe this is mostly how their children acquired Mandarin Chinese; Mrs. Xing illustrated it :

"I think they learned from the audio books and Chinese cartoons. You know we do not speak Mandarin at home. My son loves listening to audio books, especially the stories from the Ximalaya audio channel(a well-known audio channel in China). It was fascinating for him. He could spend hours listening to it!"

Mrs. Li adds: *" Yes, exactly! Before starting group 2, Ziyang (Mrs. Li's eldest daughter) only watched Chinese programs. However, because her teacher from primary school urged her to watch Dutch children's news every day, Ziyang's younger sister joined her. They speak to each other only in Dutch at home. Her Mandarin is not as strong as Ziyang's at this age."*

Mrs. Li and Mrs. Xing share the same expectation that their children should at least attend Chinese school till the secondary level. However, Mrs. Li, in her narrative, also reveals a fact that is consistent with many other studies younger siblings were found to use mainstream language more often than the older siblings (Brown, 2011; Lee, 2013; Nesteruk, 2010)

Regarding their children's Dutch learning progress and proficiency, Mrs. Li and Mrs. Xing are pretty optimistic:

"My husband says the Dutch language is not a problem for children at all, and they will learn it anyways in school !" (Mrs. Xing)

"The teacher says my daughter has a good command of Dutch, and she even did not need to go to speech therapy and extra Dutch lessons when she entered primary school. Many Chinese children I know are required to participate. Moreover, I cannot help her even though she is not good! My Dutch is so bad" (Mrs. Li)

Challenges

The main challenge both families have in supporting their children's Mandarin learning would be a shortage of time to attend Chinese school in the future, because it takes time to do much homework after each class. Mrs. Li express her concerns:"

"Ziyang must spend an entire Sunday morning doing her homework from the Chinese school. It is fine now as they do not have any homework from the local Dutch school. But I hear from other Chinese mothers that the last two years of Dutch primary school are quite demanding. So many children drop out of Chinese school at that age. I hope Ziyang will not."

Mrs. Xing agrees with her friend and gives an example :

"The other day, I ran across a friend's 10-year-old daughter. She stopped going to the Chinese school last year! I realized she does not understand me so well, so I had to talk to her in my poor Dutch".

Another challenge Mrs. Li faced was the gap between the content of Chinese books and the children's actual proficiency level. As a result, there were not many books the Mother could find that interested her daughters.

5.5. Case 5 Family Ye

Language attitude and beliefs

Mr. Ye was born in the Netherlands to a Cantonese-speaking family. His parents were from Hongkong, and since he was born, they spoke Cantonese to him. Given that they were living in a remote village in the Rotterdam area where they were the only Chinese families, his parents soon learned some Dutch quickly to communicate in the neighborhood. Mr. Ye did not have as much contact with other Chinese immigrants in this case. As a result, when he started Dutch school, he gradually shifted from speaking Cantonese to Dutch at home. His parents would speak to him in Cantonese, but he would respond in Dutch. However, the parents never forced him to respond in Cantonese either. Mr. Ye, on the other hand, commented on his Cantonese proficiency:

"I understood my parent's Cantonese without any problem, but their input in vocabulary was restricted mostly in the domestic domain. Later, when I visited Hongkong, I discovered that I could not understand so much of the 'real Cantonese'". Mr. Ye considered Chinese Mandarin much more useful than Cantonese, *"Of course, I did not have this understanding when I was a kid. Actually, I attended a Mandarin school for some period when I was around 7 or 8 years old. Unfortunately, only a Chinese Mandarin school was offered in the area where I grew up. It was quite boring. We were often prompted to repeat and write the characters during class. Two years later, I dropped the Chinese class, and my parents accepted my decision. However, I traveled to Beijing for an intensive Chinese language course ten years ago after finishing my bachelor's degree. This was because I was not interested in beginning work immediately after graduation. I decided to learn Mandarin in China as Mandarin is*

becoming increasingly popular across the world. Even in Hongkong, people speak more Mandarin than Cantonese."

I conducted the interview with Mr. Ye in Mandarin. His Mandarin was quite fluent, but it was clear that he was not a native speaker through his incorrect Chinese tones. Mr. Ye claims that when he left China, his Mandarin had advanced in one year from hardly comprehending anything to being able to converse with others without any problems. *"Since very few could speak English in China then, I was forced to speak Chinese at restaurants, supermarkets, and on the street. There is another reason, and I guess they thought I was a Chinese, people only talked to me in Chinese"* However, Mr. Ye's Mandarin learning experience proved Cummins's (2009) immersive language learning theory, which shows that students who are exposed to the language they are learning in an immersive way, exhibit higher levels of fluency.

Based on his own experience, Mr. Ye considered speaking the Chinese Language to be extremely important with a Chinese face based on his own experience. As a result, he supports his wife as much as possible to maintain their daughter's Mandarin.

Mr. Ye's wife is from China and came to the Netherlands to pursue her master's degree. She is the only child in her family due to China's widely known one-child policy, which began in 1979. Research shows that single children were more likely to report a close relationship with their mothers and fathers than children from multiple-child families (Liu & Jiang, 2021). This phenomenon is the case of Mr. Ye's wife and her parents. Mr. Ye's wife and her parents maintain a strong connection despite not living in the same country for over a decade. For example, when Mr. Ye's first child was born in Rotterdam six years ago, his in-laws traveled from China to assist his wife in caring for the newborn. They stayed for six months and would have remained longer if their visa had allowed it. Before the pandemic began in 2020, Mr. Ye's in-laws visited them in the Netherlands for at least three months yearly, and his wife returned to China every summer. During the pandemic, the grandparents from China video-call with Mr. Ye's wife and the kids almost daily. In this way, Mr. Ye's wife states that their daughter must maintain Mandarin to interact with her parents; otherwise, her parents would be heartbroken if they could not communicate with their only granddaughter. *"I was everything to my parents, but now my daughter is everything to them,"* she emphasizes.

Language practice and management

Mr. Ye's family follows the one-parent, one-language policy at home, which means Mr. Ye speaks Dutch to his daughter while his wife speaks Mandarin. Although Mr. Ye's wife is from a big city in southern China, her parents raised her in Mandarin rather than the local dialect. According to the couple, the six-year-old daughter is more fluent in Dutch than Mandarin. Mr. Ye, as a second-generation immigrant, has integrated to a great extent into the Dutch society; this is in line with Gijssberts et al. (2011) statement that the majority of the second generation of Chinese immigrants identify strongly or very strongly with the Netherlands. Mr. Ye's daughter has many native Dutch-speaker friends who come over to play, which is a noticeable difference from other participants' children in this study. The mother sticks to speaking only Chinese to the daughter. When she has trouble expressing herself in Chinese, her mother always encourages her to try and teaches her proper usage of Chinese.

Mr. Ye's wife began reading children's books in Chinese to the daughter at an early age. It is worth noting that the grandparents send many Chinese books to them regularly, in addition to suggesting the girl watch popular children's TV programs in China during the daily video conversation.

Another language practice to promote their daughter's Mandarin maintenance was to enroll her in a Chinese school in Rotterdam when she was just four years old, which was the earliest acceptance age. Despite that, they must drive almost an hour from their house to the Chinese school every Saturday.

Challenge

Mr. Ye claims that maintaining their daughter's Mandarin learning has not been challenging until now. Their daughter looks forward to going to the Chinese school on Saturdays because she has made friends in her class. The new friendship gives the daughter motivation to continue the Chinese lesson. When looking for volunteers for this study, I was notified by a Chinese father who mentioned that his daughter attends a Chinese school since she wants to join her best friend, who is in the Chinese school, despite the fact that her father had no intention of sending her to the Chinese class. Likely, Winter and Pauwels (2006) also found that friendship plays an influential role in Language Maintenance for many second-generation members in Australia.

Mr. Ye expresses his concern about his daughter's lessons next year, stating that she would begin learning to write Chinese characters next year, which is the most challenging aspect for most children. In addition, there will be significantly more homework in the new semester. "I hope we can assist my daughter through the challenge," Mr. Ye wishes.

Furthermore, Mr. Ye and his wife know that traveling back to the home country is one of the best strategies for language maintenance. However, they have not returned to China for three years due to China's strict quarantine rule. It is said that China will not loose the restriction in the near future; Mr. Ye expresses that this can be a big concern for them.

5.6. Case 6 Family Chen

Language ideologies

Mrs. Chen's husband moved to the Netherlands with his parents when he was nine years old from Wenzhou, China. They have several relatives who run restaurants or Chinese grocery stores here. Owing to the help of relatives and their hard-working in the Netherlands, the family, could open a grocery store to run their own business. After graduating from high school, Mrs. Chen's husband began working in their family's shop. He met Mrs. Chen in his hometown while on vacation in China twelve years ago. After their wedding in China, Mrs. Chen moved to the Netherlands on a family reunion visa within a year. Mrs. Chen only completed secondary school in a rural area in China and spoke no English. Her husband, on the other hand, wanted her to learn Dutch once she came here in order to help the family business. Mrs. Chen claims that she made much effort to learn Dutch and was quite fluent before the birth of her first child. Also, she is pleased that she can communicate in Dutch since her perspective has changed as a result of being able to speak the language. She believes that being fluent in Dutch is essential for living in the Netherland. However, Mrs. Chen does not expect her children to lose their heritage language, which she believes is essential to shape their ethnic identity. Mrs. Chen says: "*We are originally Chinese people, no matter how long we have stayed here. My in-laws, my husband, and I all identify ourselves as Chinese. Our children are our descendants. Therefore, there is no reason for him not to learn Chinese. I think more or less he should speak Chinese.*" Although it is a simple comment, it clearly shows that parents recognize the symbolic value of

language for identity, the connection between language and inheritance, and language and affiliation(Li & Duff,2013).

Language practices and management

The family language situation in Mrs. Chen's household is complicated. Her husband, who immigrated to the Netherlands when he was nine years old, speaks Dutch to the children, while Mrs. Chen speaks Mandarin and Dutch to them. However, Mrs. Chen and her husband communicate in their regional dialect, Wenzhounese. According to Mrs. Chen, she stopped working in their family business to care for the son when he was born. Surprisingly, Mrs. Chen talked mostly Dutch to the kid before he was two years old because she was concerned that he would be unable to understand Dutch once he started nursery school. *"I thought he should learn some Dutch before joining the daycare, my husband was too busy to talk to him, so I spoke to him in Dutch."* However, she began speaking Chinese Mandarin to the boy after receiving advice from the boy's daycare center that she should speak to her child in her own language. Mrs. Chen picked Mandarin Chinese over Wenzhounese because it is widely accepted among Chinese people that Mandarin is more valuable, which is currently the case in China. Some Chinese parents in this study reveal that very few children in China can speak dialects nowadays. Mrs. Chen illustrates the reason *"Wenzhounese is only spoken by Wenzhou people, the rest of China does not understand it. Of course, he should learn Mandarin."* However, Mrs. Chen claims that her kid has a relatively good command of Chinese even though she did not speak Chinese for the first two years of his life.

Nonetheless, Mrs.Chen has given various types of resources to enhance the boy's Chinese learning in accordance with the expert's recommendations. For example, she kept reading books in Chinese to him until I had an interview with her, even though the boy(8 years old) prefers reading Dutch books by himself. Luckily, the boy continues to enjoy watching Chinese TV shows and cartoons, which Mrs. Chen believes is the most efficient way to learn Chinese. *"He picked up a lot of advanced vocabulary from watching, which surprised me because I had never used such words. Later, I understood he was learning from the cartoons"*, Mrs. Chen explains. Moreover, she also considers listening to Chinese audiobooks a beneficial practice approach. Therefore, Mrs. Chen usually plays audiobooks that her son is interested in when driving him to school or wherever.

Mrs. Chen's son began attending the Chinese school when he turned four years old, and he has never resisted because he has already made friends in the Chinese school after four years of attendance. Mrs.Chen believes that sending her son to a Chinese school is a good idea because he not only learns Chinese here but also gets in contact with Chinese culture and traditional values, which helps him establish his Chinese identity.

Furthermore, Mrs. Chen states that their travel to China every year before the pandemic also benefited her son's Chinese maintenance. They used to visit Mrs.Chen's family in China every summer, ranging from one to three months. *"It was such a definite cut-off. " On the way to China, he spoke Dutch, but on the way back, he only talked in Chinese,"* the mother laughs.

Challenges

The main challenge that Mrs. Chen expresses is about limited Chinese school time. She wishes that Chinese schools could provide after-school activities during the week instead of just on Saturdays.

Mrs. Chen is quite confident about her son's Dutch proficiency as his performance in the local school is excellent in Dutch reading and mathematics. However, she is also aware that it is due to the fact that his son has read a significant amount of Dutch books. On the other hand, this is not the case regarding Chinese reading. Similarly, a study about language maintenance motivation among Chinese-American children has found a significant negative relationship in the participant's attitudes toward reading in their L1 and L2 languages, showing that the more enjoyable reading in English is considered to be, the less enjoyable reading in Chinese (Smith & Li,2020). In addition, the boy always complained about the difficulties of reading and writing Chinese characters.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

6.1. Discussion

This study aims to look at the family language policy of Chinese immigrants in the Rotterdam region in the Netherlands. Seven families are involved. Most of them are immigrants of first-generation families, while some families are considered to be the second generation. In only one family, parents attained higher education. All the other parents have only completed secondary or primary school. In the previous chapter, an in-depth and qualitative analysis of interviews with the families has provided their language attitudes and beliefs about their heritage language, their language practices, and the management they employ to foster heritage language maintenance. In this section, I will discuss these findings in the order that they were explored in connection to the research questions.

Language attitude and beliefs

First of all, regarding the findings with regard to language attitudes toward the heritage language among Chinese families, all parents in this study have positive beliefs toward Chinese language maintenance, which is broadly consistent with previous studies in other Chinese diaspora settings, such as in the USA, Canada, the UK and Australia (e.g., Zhang 2010; Li 2006; Leung, G., & Uchikoshi 2012; Curdt-Christiansen 2009, Tannenbaum & Howie 2002). The Chinese immigrant families in this study aim to maintain the Chinese language for various reasons, including family member communication, family cohesion, and ethnic and cultural identity, which is very much in line with Curdt-Christiansen's (2009,2012) FLP model. According to her, factors that influence parents' beliefs toward language can be related to emotions, identity, cultural transmission, and parents' past educational as well as cultural experiences. For example, Mrs. Wu in case 1 and Mrs. Yang in case 3 need the Chinese language to hold the family bond and relationship because it would hinder communication between the parents or caregiver if their children do not maintain their family language. However, Mr. Lin and his wife, who prefer Dutch as their family language, have considered their children's emotions when making this decision. Like Mr. Lin's wife said, "*We already felt bad for our children, and we did not want to waste time discussing which language we should use at home with them. We followed them and talked Dutch when we had little time at home*".

In addition to the emotional factors, most families in this study preserve Chinese Mandarin because they consider the language an identity marker and seek to transmit an ethnic identity to their children through the Chinese language. As indicated by Gee (2005), identity constructs, defines and frames the language we use, and language is the most essential capital for community membership. Most parents seem to hold the view that by acquiring one's heritage language, their descendants learn about their culture, ethnicity, and identity.

However, a new finding in this study is that none of the parents view maintaining or learning the Chinese heritage language as a benefit or a valuable professional resource in the future, which contradicts previous studies (Curdt-Christiansen & Wang, 2018; Zhang, 2010). It might mean that the parents in this study do not have high expectations and aspirations for their children's future development. Curdt-Christiansen (2009) explains that the parents' high expectations are derived from their own educational and immigrant experiences. Those highly educated parents could migrate to western countries and reach their middle-class position in mainstream society through their education and hard-working attitude. As a result, they focus on their children's academic success and stress the importance of having good marks as an indicator of good academic performance (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009). In addition, they believe the language competence in Chinese and English in Canada or USA will be the key to success in the future.

By contrast, both unskilled and educated parents in this study do not have high expectations for their children, despite previous research indicating that first-generation immigrants in the Netherlands also pressure their children to perform well in school (Gijsberts et al., 2011). However, Mr. Lin, in case two, mentioned that he would not put any pressure on his sons regarding their school performance because he could not help them with their education either. Similarly, Mrs. Yang, in case three, expressed that the parents who are restaurant owners do not demand or pressure their children to have a higher education. In the worst scenario, their children may work in their family-owned restaurant. Therefore, possible explanations may be related to the parent's immigrants and educational background.

Apart from Mr. Ye's family, the other participants are first-generation immigrants to the Netherlands as a result of chain migration and family formation. Typically they are from rural and poor areas in China and have a lower educational level. It is important to note that education is merely the only means for rural parents in China to improve their children's chance of upward social mobility (Hansen, 2016). The participants in this study are aware that they could not have a better life in China with their lower educational background. Therefore they appear to be

content with their life in the Netherlands, which they have achieved without higher education. During my unofficial talk with them, the participants frequently express how lucky their children are to live in the Netherlands.

In contrast, the children of their relatives or friends must spend overwhelming amounts of time on school work, competing against one another to get into a good school, university, or get a well-paying job. Furthermore, compared to China or the United States, Chinese immigrants often feel that the Netherlands is a pleasant and relaxing place to live. In particular, Li (2002) discovered that Chinese student immigrants view that excellent students consider the Netherlands too small to achieve their ambitions and leave their own volition, while average and below-average students are forced out of the country entirely (Li, 2002). Indeed, the parents with higher education levels I talked to during this research at the Chinese place a priority on their children's needs for happiness. *"If my child is happy, then I will be happy. I have no aspiration for their future"* is their frequent comment.

Language practices and management

Regarding Chinese parents' family language practices and management, this research discovered that parental support and involvement are essential factors for migrant children's language practice and development. All families in this study send their children to the Chinese Saturday school, which has been shown to be the prevalent practice among immigrant families worldwide. However, the families' social and economic status also play crucial roles in the degree of parental support and involvement. For example, Mrs. Wu's family is so preoccupied with work that they cannot devote as much time to their children's Chinese learning, which is why they send their son to Chinese school. On the other hand, Mr. Lin's family has experienced their children's language loss because they spent most of the time making a living to support the family and ended up with no time to have family interaction in their heritage language. On the contrary, families with better economic status in this study, who can afford to have one parent or a nanny as the language agents, employ various resources to support their children's language maintenance.

Moreover, the families in Cases 3 and 4 reside in a neighborhood with many other Chinese households, allowing for increased daily interaction and the use of Mandarin as the community language outside the home domain. As a result, their children incline to maintain their heritage language easier. Mrs. Wu in case 1, Mr. Lin in case 2, and Mr. Ye's parents'

households, on the other hand, are located in small villages where their families are the only Chinese families, which may quickly lead to the children's language shift or loss. Similarly, Holmes(2013) found that Chinese living in China-towns in the US were more likely to maintain the Chinese language than those who had left the China-town areas.

Furthermore, families in cases 3 and 4 in this study take measures and make efforts primarily to develop and maintain their children's heritage language. This contradicts earlier studies indicating that lower – SES Chinese American immigrants may regard Chinese maintenance as a hindrance to societal advancement (Li 2006a; Zhang 2012). Instead, they are pretty optimistic about their children's Dutch learning. They regard Dutch learning as a natural process and cannot be involved in it. Interestingly, the findings in this study also differ from a recent study on first-generation Turkish mothers, who likewise have lower levels of education, but put the most effort into their children's Dutch language management activities (Bezioglu-Göktolga, 2019). The reason could be that these three Chinese families have family members or friends who migrated to the Netherlands much earlier than they did. My participants believe there is no need to be concerned about their Dutch based on the pioneer's experience. Meanwhile, they tend to rely on the mainstream resources, such as schools to develop their children's Dutch language proficiency.

Lastly, there are also differences between the first and second generations and parents with different education levels. While Mr. Ye, a typical highly educated and modern Chinese immigrant of the second generation, according to Gijbert et al. (2011), and his well-educated wife from China, are confident and equally involved in Dutch and Chinese management practice. They emphasize the importance the bilingualism education and have explicit language practice and management in both languages. However, the other parents, typically the first generation of labor workers, focus mainly on their children's Chinese language management.

Challenges

These families have commonalities and differences regarding the challenges the participants face in their children's heritage language maintenance. Mrs. Wu's main concern concentrates on a lack of time to take care of their only son's Chinese language learning because they have to spend most of their time making a living. The same challenges have led to Mr. Luo's children losing the opportunity to maintain their heritage language earlier; however, Mr. Luo now has no expectations of the children's performance in school. Nonetheless, Mr. Luo

regards himself as incapable of assisting his children in learning Chinese or Dutch due to his lack of higher education. Mrs. Yang, the nanny, hired by her sister to take care of her nieces, also expresses her limitation of Chinese proficiency to help her nieces to reach an advanced level in Chinese. Even though the other participants did not talk about this problem, as a native Chinese Mandarin speaker, I am aware of my participants' poor proficiency in Mandarin. Those first-generation immigrants speak Mandarin as their second language, and their lower education level may hinder the deeper conversations between them and the next generation, who speak Chinese as a heritage language.

Although previous studies indicate that parents force children to attend Chinese Saturday school, most of the students show resistance (Brown, 2011; Jeon, 2008; Zhang, 2012; Li, 2006). However, Chinese immigrants children in this study expressed the opposite attitude when I asked them about their attitudes. The explanation for this might be that the participants' children are still young. Therefore, Mrs. Li and Mrs. Xing mention that it could be a challenge in the future that their children might be reluctant to attend Chinese school. In addition, Mrs. Li reported a lack of books that could meet her daughter's proficiency level and age, while Mrs. Chen's son showed little interest in reading Chinese books. Moreover, the most common concern in those families is that children have or may have difficulty completing their challenging written assignments from the Chinese school.

6.2. Conclusion

This study focuses on the family language policy in Chinese immigrant families who migrated to the Netherlands as unskilled workers. With the seven families, I investigated the parent's perception of Chinese as a heritage language. The findings reveal the diversity and complexity of Chinese immigrants' language maintenance situations in the Rotterdam region. While there has been little research on Chinese as a heritage language maintenance in the Netherlands, this study fills a gap in the understudied Chinese immigrant Chinese language as a heritage language in the Netherlands, focusing on lower SES families. Moreover, it might contribute to a better understanding of why Chinese labor immigrants' families support and manage their language learning, why some families can successfully maintain, and some families experience language shifts or loss. Based on the findings of this research, it is

noticeable that there are considerable discrepancies between parents' perceptions of Chinese as a heritage and their family policy.

In general, the Chinese maintenance among the Chinese immigrants' children tends to be relatively high. The motivation for maintaining children's Chinese Language are various. While some families emphasize communication and connection with family members, others value the Chinese language as a means of transmitting culture and identity. Various factors contribute to enriching and helping their language maintenance. Apart from speaking heritage Chinese at home, children also attend Chinese Saturday schools, participate in Chinese activities through the presence of Chinese media, go to China for vacation, and have extensive social contact with other Chinese in the Netherlands. In addition, they also face various challenges and obstacles. It is worth noting that most families in the study are first-generation with lower socio-economic status. Their family language policy concentrates on the heritage language; Dutch practice and management hold a less critical place. On the other hand, second-generation family tends to bring up successful bilingual children.

All in all, the findings significantly align with Gijsbert et al.'s (2011) report about the first-generation immigrants in the Netherlands. They are labor migrants, and their partners who later followed them as family reunion members still fit the picture of a closed, inwardly focused community. Moreover, they have little contact with the native population or other immigrant communities due to their poor Dutch language proficiency.

However, there are still some limitations that need to be addressed. First, this thesis adopts the qualitative approach allowing me to gain an in-depth holistic view of individual Chinese immigrant families' HL maintenance; however, the size of participants is insufficient to generalize the FLP of the entire Chinese community in the Netherlands. In order to gain a broader understanding of Chinese immigrants' FLP, future studies might look at more Chinese families with a larger size by using a quantitative method. Secondly, Chinese immigrants in the Netherlands are more widely distributed across the country (Gijsbert et al., 2011). Finally, while this study only took place in Rotterdam, there is still plenty of research space for researchers to explore to discover more about the Chinese immigrant parents' family language policy. Last but not least, the perspective of the children at the Chinese school is also worthy of another research topic.

To sum up, the Chinese community in the Netherlands is currently understudied in terms of their language ideology, practices, and policies. As a result, there is still a great deal to be

explored. Hence, future researchers must continue investigating numerous aspects of language maintenance, such as varied groups, generations, and children's Chinese and Dutch language proficiency.

Appendix

(Szilagyi & Szecsi, 2020)

Name:

Mobil:

Demographic Information

Please fill out the following questions about your background.

1. **Background of Members in the Household: (yourself, spouse/partner, child 1,2..., grandfather, grandmother, aunt/uncle, nanny, etc)**

Family member in the household	Age	Gender	Country of birth	# of years in the Netherlands	Native/first language	Language being used in the family	Highest education

2. **How much time on average do the children spend in China each year?**

- Do not travel every year
 Less than two weeks
 Between 2 weeks and a month
 Between one and two months
 More than two months

3. **In which Chinese communities –where your children speak/are exposed to the Chinese language? How often?**

Never a few times a year monthly weekly daily

Chinese families/friends

Chinese school

Chinese church

Chinese social organizations

4. **How well do you understand Dutch?**

1. I don't understand it 2. Not very well 3. Well 4. Very well

How well do you understand English?

1. I don't understand it 2. Not very well 3. Well 4. Very well

5. **How well do you speak Dutch?**

1. I can't speak English 2. Not very well 3. Well 4. Very well

How well do you speak English?

1. I can't speak English 2. Not very well 3. Well, 4.
Very well

6. How well can your child/children speak Mandarin?

Please fill in the order of the youngest to the oldest child:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Child 1: Very proficient, | Proficient, Not very proficient, | Not proficient at all |
| Child 2: Very proficient, | Proficient, Not very proficient, | Not proficient at all |
| Child 3: Very proficient | Proficient, Not very proficient, | Not proficient at all |
| Child 4: Very proficient | Proficient, Not very proficient, | Not proficient at all |

7. How well can your child/children speak Dutch?

Please fill in the order of the youngest to the oldest child:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Child 1: Very proficient, proficient, | Not very proficient, | Not proficient at all |
| Child 2: Very proficient, proficient, | Not very proficient, | Not proficient at all |
| Child 3: Very proficient, proficient, | Not very proficient, | Not proficient at all |
| Child 4: Very proficient, proficient, | Not very proficient, | Not proficient at all |

8. Do you have a “language strategy” or “language policy” at home?

Explain: e.g.

- a. No strategy. Anyone can speak any language he/she wishes
- b. We only allow our native language at home
- c. We only allow Dutch
- d. One parent speaks the native language and the other speaks Dutch to them.
- e. We speak in our native language and they respond to us in Dutch

9. Do you use the language(s) for different things or activities ? (Are there certain subjects/activities you usually talk about to your children in Chinese and certain ones for which you switch to English/Dutch?)

For example,

Daily routine,

Homework,

Behavioural and cultural issues

10. What do you think was the main reason your child kept/dropped Chinese? (you can select more than one)

They kept it because

- A. We were strict on allowing only Chinese at home.
- B. We taught them to respect their heritage language and culture through our behaviors.
- C. We traveled to China frequently.
- D. We had books, movies, and TV channels in Chinese at home.
- E. They attended Chinese classes.
- F. We had friends and family members around us with whom they could interact in Chinese.

- G. We read books/attended workshops that helped us know how to raise bilingual children.
- H. Other- please specify.

11. They dropped it because

- A. Of the peer pressure at school and outside.
- B. Of the media.
- C. Of their schools' high emphasis on the value of knowing Dutch.
- D. They had to use Dutch all the time interacting with others in their environment.
- E. We wanted them to focus more closely on learning Dutch than Chinese.
- F. We stopped using Chinese at home.
- G. Other- please specify.

12. How important do you think learning Chinese is for children like yours? Why?

- A. Not important at all
- B. Of little importance
- C. Of average importance
- D. Very important
- E. Absolutely essential

13. How important do you think learning Dutch/English is for children like yours? Why?

- A. Not important at all
- B. Of little importance
- C. Of average importance
- D. Very important
- E. Absolutely essential

Open-ended Questions:

Please answer the following questions with as much detail as you can.

- 1. Why do you send your child/children to the Chinese complementary School?**
Do you think your children must learn Mandarin?

- 2. What are the major obstacles/challenges in maintaining the Chinese language in your family?**

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