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# Cultural Studies in the Mandarin-English Dual Immersion Classroom: A Case Study

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by

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**Introduction**

Exponentially more and more American families are choosing Mandarin-English dual immersion classrooms as the learning environment for their children. The increasing popularity of Mandarin-English dual immersion programs can be attributed in part to beliefs that (a) Mandarin is a useful language to learn, (b) Mandarin is a difficult language to learn, and (c) languages are easier to learn at a younger age. Taken together, these beliefs make Mandarin-English dual immersion programs, which start young and boast native-like speaking potential, very attractive.

However, language learning—at all ages and in all formats—is always about more than just language learning. Languages are produced by, used by, and symbolic of cultures. Teaching language, therefore, always involves teaching culture, whether that teaching is implicit, explicit but peripheral, or explicit and central. According to Michael Byram, "cultural studies" which he defines as "how, what and why people learn about other countries, other peoples, other ways of life while they are learning a foreign language," is "taught and learn[ed] both overtly and implicitly, both consciously and incidentally."[1] This study uses Byram's definition of "cultural studies" to examine how Chinese culture is taught and learned in Mandarin-English dual immersion classrooms.

Specifically, this study looks at Mandarin-English dual immersion kindergarten and first grade classrooms at Valley Elementary School, a public elementary school in Southern California.[2] The dual immersion program at Valley Elementary School consists of partial-day

[1] Michael Byram, *Cultural Studies in Foreign Language Education*. Vol. 46. Multilingual Matters, 1989, 2-3.
[2] Valley Elementary School is a pseudonym. The names of the school as well as its staff have been changed.

instruction in Mandarin Chinese and partial-day instruction in English. Each classroom has a Mandarin teacher and an English teacher.[3]

The research questions for this study are, (1) How does learning in Mandarin shape early elementary school students' perceptions of China and Chinese culture?, and (2) How is Chinese culture woven into the dual immersion curriculum? With what intentions? How effective is the teaching of that content? Classroom observations and interviews with students offer insight on "how" and "what" cultural studies is done, while interviews with teachers, parents, and administrators shed light on "why" cultural studies is done. The case study is primarily qualitative in nature, though some quantitative data is also collected in the student interviews, through a brief modified survey.

**Literature Review**

This case study sits at the intersection of many strands of research within foreign language education, each addressing different aspects of the case. For appropriate background and context, each is dealt with in turn. First, the "when": foreign language education in the elementary curriculum. Then, the "how," dual immersion education, and the "what," Mandarin language education. Finally, the particular "why" within foreign language education that is being investigated: language learning as a site for cultural studies.

The research informing this study is diverse not only in field of specialty but also in perspective. However, much of the research on language education can be situated within the three language orientations proposed by Richard Ruíz: language-as-problem, language-as-right, and language-as-resource.[4] The language-as-problem orientation assumes a connection between

[3] For more details about the school and program, see the introduction to Chpater Two.
[4] Richard Ruíz, "Orientations in Language Planning," *National Association for Bilingual Education Journal* 8, No. 2 (1984): 15-34.

non-English language heritage with social problems, and between multilingualism with a lack of social cohesiveness. Ruíz presents as an alternative the language-as-right orientation, which treats learning and using minority languages as a civil rights issue, but argues that a more robust and viable alternative would be a language-as-resource orientation, wherein language learning has trans-national, social, and educational benefits.

**Elementary Foreign Language Education**

The limited existing research on foreign language education in elementary/primary[5] schools is strongly rooted in the language-as-resource orientation. One source of this research is edited collections from Europe (where primary foreign language education is more common), two of which are dealt with here. The first, published in 1997, is edited by Peter Doyé and Alison Hurrel. It consolidates the findings of workshop programs undertaken by the Council of Europe. Drawing on scholars from throughout Europe, the collection advises foreign language learning that is integrated in the primary curriculum and taught by the class teacher (as opposed to a visiting specialist).[6] The second, published in 2005, is edited by Patricia Driscoll and David Frost and specifically addresses the debate over whether to mandate foreign language education in British primary schools. Drawing on research from Britain and Scotland, it comes to similar conclusions about integrated language learning taught by classroom teachers, for communicative and intercultural competence.[7] There is significant overlap in the two collections' authorship. Most are scholars in the field of education, and are writing for practitioners in the field.

[5] Education of children aged 5/6-10/11 is referred to as "elementary" education in the United States and "primary" education in Europe. Both terms are used here, depending on which context is being referenced.
[6] Peter Doyé and Alison Hurrel, eds. *Foreign Language Learning in Primary Schools (Age 5/6 to 10/11)* (Council of Europe, 1997).
[7] Patricia Driscoll and David Frost. *The Teaching of Modern Foreign Languages in The Primary School* (Routledge, 1999).

Both the 1997 and the 2005 collection argue for the importance, even the necessity, of foreign language education in the primary curriculum. The European context—multinational, multicultural, and multilingual—adds extra weight to this argument. Doyé and Hurrel cite Hans Heinrich Stern: "the acquisition of a foreign language must become part of the basic literacy of the child on a par with reading and writing…If education is to reflect the realities with which we have to live, other languages and other cultures should impinge on children from the earliest stage of formal education."[8] Since the European reality is multilingual and multicultural, European primary curriculum ought to be as well. Driscoll and Frost take the perspective that sensitization to other cultures and languages is even *more* important in the British context, because while the immediate environment may be mono-cultural and mono-lingual, the reality is that the British are *Europeans.*[9] Therefore, they argue that foreign language education, beginning at the primary level, is imperative.

While this scholarship is of course useful in the United States, there are also particularities to the American context. Foremost among these may be that absence of foreign language education in American elementary education. Surveys conducted by the Center for Applied Linguistics indicate that the percentage of public elementary schools offering foreign languages actually dropped from 24% to 15%, from 1997 to 2008. Schools cited lack of funding (especially with resources shifting to reading and math due to No Child Left Behind legislation) and shortages of qualified teachers. Among public elementary schools offering language education, the most common type of program was exploratory (to gain general exposure to language and culture, learn basic words, and develop interest in future study of foreign

[8] Hans Heinrich Stern, *Languages and the Young School Child*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 26, quoted in Driscoll and Frost, *The Teaching of Modern Foreign Languages in The Primary School,* 13.
[9] Though of course, the recent "Brexit" makes it clear that this is not the foregone conclusion that Driscoll and Frost took it to be.

languages). However, the survey showed growth in immersion programs, where the target language is used as the language of instruction for at least half the school day. As of 2008, 14% of elementary language programs are reported to be immersion programs (like the one in this case study).

**Immersion Education**

Bilingual education has taken many forms, including partial immersion, two-way immersion, and dual immersion. These immersion programs began in the United States in the 1970s, but the history of bilingual education in the United States can be traced to before the beginnings of the nation. In his article, "Bilingual Education in the United States: Historical Developments and Current Issues," Carlos Ovando argues that policy on bilingual education has shifted in response to historical forces, with four main periods capturing these shifts.[10] From the 1700s to the 1800s was the Permissive Period, with immigrant enclaves offering bilingual education that was in some cases state-authorized. From the 1880s to the 1960s was the Restrictive Period, in which anti-immigrant sentiment fostered a "submersion" strategy of English education. From the 1960s to 1980 was the Opportunist Period, in which the Cold War motivated foreign language education and federal funds were allocated for bilingual education. Ovando argues that the period from the 1980s to the time of publishing (2003) is a Dismissive Period, where anti-immigrant sentiment again is motivating "English Only, U.S. English, English First" policy. Ovando laments these changes and their more general context of racism, tracking, and "unempowering school culture," as well as nativistic and melting pot ideologies in society at

[10] Carlos J. Ovando, "Bilingual Education in the United States: Historical Development and Current Issues." *Bilingual Research Journal* 27, No. 1 (2003): 1-24.

large. For Ovando, a professor of Transborder Studies at Arizona State University, bilingual education is a language-as-right issue: developing native tongue is a matter of just education.

Donna Christian, a senior fellow at the Center for Applied Linguistics, gives a different history in her article "Immersion Education in the United States: Expansion and Extension."[11] Christian sees continuity from the mid-Twentieth century until the present, with immersion education programs spreading from the Culver City Unified School District and steadily expanding from three programs in 1971, to 92 in 1989, to 263 in 2006. Christian interprets this expansion according to two main drives: wanting more language education, and wanting language minority students to be successful. Like Ovando, she cites the Cold War for instilling concerns about insufficient language resources in the United States, especially in elementary and secondary education. While the majority of students in the original Culver City Spanish immersion program were monolingual English-speakers, the program itself was based on Wallace Lambert's French immersion school in Canada, which was meant to serve French heritage students.[12] According to Lambert, "the best way…to release the linguistic and cultural potential of ethnolinguistic minority groups is by transforming their subtractive experiences with bilingualism and biculturalism into additive ones"[13] Christian argues that this language-as-right motivation became more significant as immersion education expanded, but it co-existed with the initial language-as-resource motivation.

While histories of immersion education straddle language-as-right and language-as-resource orientations, recent work from the educational research field on immersion education

[11] Donna Christian, "Immersion Education in The United States: Expansion and Extension." *Canadian Issues* (2011): 37-40.
[12] Heritage students are discussed in greater detail in Chpater Two (pg. 24).
[13] Wallace Lambert, "An Overview of Issues in Immersion Education Studies on Immersion Education: A Collection for United States Educators" (Sacramento, CA: California State Department of Education, 1984), quoted in Christian, "Immersion Education in The United States," 36.

has mostly come out of a language-as-problem orientation. Most research tackles the specific question of whether immersion education students can achieve academically at comparable levels. The answer is consistently and overwhelmingly yes, immersion students are capable of achieving as well as, and in some cases better than, non-immersion peers on standardized tests. Jim Cummins summarizes this research for Canadian French immersion programs in his review "Immersion Education for the Millennium: What We Have Learned from 30 Years of Research on Second Language Immersion."[14] Tara Williams Fortune does the same for United States immersion programs in her article "What the Research Says about Immersion."[15] Amado Padilla and his co-researchers track academic achievement score from kindergarten through 5th grade specifically for a Mandarin-English immersion program, again reassuring that immersion students do not "fall behind" on state-mandated content.[16] Thus, though the findings are positive, the research questions themselves point to a persisting suspicion of non-English language learning and the lingering influence of a language-as-problem orientation. But as Christian's article indicates, these orientations are often overlapping. This language-as-problem nervousness about impaired English and math learning exists alongside an eagerness to equip students with language tools for "the future"—and this is especially true in the case of Mandarin.

**Mandarin Education**

Shuhan Wang traces the roots of Chinese language education in the United States to heritage language schools. According to Wang, these schools can be grouped into three waves:

[14] Jim Cummins, "Immersion Education for The Millennium: What Have We Learned from 30 Years of Research on Second Language Immersion?" in *Learning Through Two Languages: Research and Practice*, eds. M. R. Childs & R. M. Bostwick (Katoh Gakuen, Japan: Second Katoh Gakuen International Symposium on Immersion and Bilingual Education, 1988), 34-47.
[15] Tara Williams Fortune, "What the Research Says about Immersion," in *Chinese Language Learning in The Early Grades: A Handbook for Resources and Best Practices for Mandarin Immersion*, (The Asia Society, 2012), 9-13.
[16] Amado Padilla et al., "A Mandarin/English Two-Way Immersion Program: Language Proficiency and Academic Achievement." *Foreign Language Annals* 46, no. 4 (2013): 661-679.

Chinatown schools which taught dialects like Cantonese beginning in the 19th century, schools set up by immigrants from Taiwan and Hong Kong in the early 1970s, and schools set up by immigrants from the People's Republic of China in the 1980s (the latter two mostly teaching Mandarin). Operated by parents and community members for the sake of the community and the "next generation," these heritage language schools fit within the language-as-right framework. However, Wang argues that in the later twentieth century, Chinese shifted from being a "heritage language" to a "foreign language" or "world language." Early private initiatives by the Carnegie and Dodge Foundation, and expansion in the 2000s under both government and non-government initiatives, have been driven by a language-as-resource mindset. The expansion is significant. In the introduction to the collection of which Wang's piece is a chapter, the editors point to an 81% increase in university students enrolling in Mandarin from 1998 to 2006, and a 200% increase in K-12 schools offering Mandarin from 2004 to 2008.[17] Wang describes the motivation for this growth as follows:

> "The U.S.-China relationship is one of the most important international relationships in the twenty-first century. It is critical to world peace, prosperity, and planet health, among others. United States students need to develop a high degree of global competence that includes linguistic and cultural abilities to engage others to collaborate effectively across a wide range of issues."[18]

The language-as-resource orientation prevails in the scholarship (see, for example, Wen and Grandi's "Study of the Chinese International Engineering Program at the University of Rhode Island," in the same collection, which highlights a direct professional gain for studying

[17] Jianguo Chen et al., ed. *Teaching and Learning Chinese: Issues and Perspectives* (Charlotte, N.C.: Information Age Publishing, 2010).
[18] Shuhan Wang, "Chinese Language Education in the United States: A Historical Overview and Future Directions," in Chen et al., *Teaching and Learning Chinese*, 25.

Chinese.) However, it also prevails in the popular discourse on Mandarin education, as illustrated by the U.S. News article "Mandarin is a Must" (Oct. 25, 2016).[19] The article presents Mandarin immersion programs as an economic investment in ties between the United States and China. The goal is "to equip our students with the necessary language tools to engage with the world's second-largest economy." At present, Mandarin is treated overwhelmingly as a resource. Giving students the advantage of starting early is treated as an investment.

That being said, Mandarin education is still very rare in elementary schools (3% of schools were offering Mandarin in 2008, up from 0.3% in 1997). Research on young children in Mandarin-English dual immersion is even more rare. One existing study was conducted by Anne Soderman and Tokio Oshio at a preschool within a Beijing international school. Focusing on social behavior, they found that social competence, adaptation, and expression varied by the students' gender, language, and nationality, and that adaptation to the dual immersion environment was harder than presumed.[20] Another study was conducted by Rebecca Starr at a private school on the West Coast. Looking specifically at retroflex and dental sibilant initials, she found that native speakers of Mandarin retain home patterns of use, while non-native students "exploit patterns in teacher and classmate speech" to develop more standard use (rather than imitating either adults or peers).[21] These observational studies, of social behavior and sociolinguistics respectively, focus on how students respond within the Mandarin-English dual immersion environment. An additional study, conducted by Yuan Cao at a private school in California, used interviews to examine staff's purposes for and perceptions of immersion

[19] Jack Markell and Gary R. Herbert, "Mandarin Learning is a Must," *U.S. News*, October 25, 2016.
[20] Anne K. Soderman and Toko Oshio, "The Social and Cultural Contexts of Second Language Acquisition in Young Children." *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 16, no. 3 (2008): 309.
[21] Rebecca Lurie Starr, "Acquisition of Sociolinguistic Knowledge in a Mandarin-English Dual Immersion School." PhD diss., Stanford University, 2011.

programs. Cao found that immersion education was established not only for language acquisition, but also to develop character, critical thinking/problem-solving abilities, and cross-cultural competence.[22]

In light of Cao's research, the current study uses interviews of students and staff and classroom observations to examine how cultural studies are embedded in the Mandarin-English dual immersion classroom. Therefore, before turning to the research questions of the study, it is appropriate to review the literature in one last domain within foreign language education research: cultural studies.

**Cultural Studies**

The term "cultural studies" is taken from Michael Byram, who was one of the first to write on the topic at length. His book, *Cultural Studies in Foreign Language Education*,[23] argues that cultural awareness and cultural experience are two essential components of language education, along with language learning and language awareness. Byram defines this cultural half as "cultural studies," "information, knowledge, or attitudes about the foreign culture which is evident during foreign language teaching," both overt and conscious as well as implicit and incidental.[24] Focusing on secondary schools in the West, Byram finds cultural representations in language classes often distorted, shallow, and over-idyllic, often within the context of preparing students as "consumer-tourists." Byram argues that cultural studies should reach beyond contrast and description, to interpretation and explanation of underlying values and meanings from within the target language context. Self-presentations by native speakers are especially important tools

[22] Cao, Yuan. "Mandarin Chinese Immersion Program for Preschool Children in an Urban Private School in California: A Case Study." Master's thesis, Dominican University of California, 2013, 7, 18.
[23] Byram, *Cultural Studies in Foreign Language Education*.
[24] Byram, *Cultural Studies in Foreign Language Education*, 3.

in this endeavor. Here Byram is drawing on social anthropology, and the ethnographic method in particular. Byram also looks to social psychology, arguing that cultural studies should involve negotiating one's stereotypes and schemata of both their own culture and the target culture.

Claire Kramsch, another foundational scholar in the field of cultural studies, goes beyond this discipline-based interpretive framework approach and advocates for a "dialogic pedagogy" that recognizes the struggle between learners' meanings and those of native speakers. Her book, *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*, presents a teaching strategy of manipulating facets of the context of a text, in order to create opportunities to discover and discuss individual and social meanings.[25] This "language as discourse" approach invites students to analyze, understand, and come to terms with boundaries, rather than simply trying to bridge them. According to Kramsch, students become meaning-makers in this process, creating "third spaces" for interpretation of own and other cultures in their classrooms. Students negotiate their understanding of cultures with each other, as well as with their instructor.

Byram, who has continued to produce scholarship on the topic of cultural studies, reached a similar conclusion in a review published together with Anwei Feng in 2004. [26] Their review of existing research and scholarship on culture and language learning concludes that efforts have been made to shift from facts-oriented culture learning to a "critical model" that makes space for reflection, scrutiny, and opinion forming. Byram and Feng argue that in this way, students can experience culture learning as socialization not into the target culture, but into "a group who see themselves as mediators, able to compare, juxtapose, and analyze."[27] These recommendations for critical, third-space-shaping cultural studies are easier to conceptualize for

[25] Claire Kramsch, *Context and Culture in Language Teaching* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).
[26] Michael Byram and Anwei Feng. "Culture and Language Learning: Teaching, Research and Scholarship." *Language Teaching* 37, no. 03 (2004): 149-168.
[27] Byram and Feng, "Culture and Language Learning," 164.

secondary and post-secondary education. But they are harder to imagine in the elementary curriculum.

Byram addresses this in a chapter co-authored by Peter Doyé, which was published in Driscoll and Frost's abovementioned collection.[28] According to Byram and Doyé, the goal of cultural studies should be to develop "intercultural competences:" attitudes about other cultures, knowledge of other cultures, skills of interpreting, skills of discovery, and skills of evaluation. In elementary education specifically, the priorities should be developing positive attitudes, and developing skills of discovery. Byram and Doyé stress the importance of preventing over-generalization, by giving a range of perspectives and experiences for young students to discover.

The literature on cultural studies reflects a language-as-resource orientation, though different from the economics-centered discourse on Mandarin language learning. Instead, it focuses on language learning as a process that develops complex critical thinking skills. Students get the opportunity to reflect on their own cultural context, and learn to interact with other cultures in a way that "recogniz[es] boundary-making and the existence of other centers."[29] Cultural studies is about how language curriculum shapes students. Seeing as Byram and Kramsch are both professors of education,[30] it makes sense that their work focuses on shaping classrooms and shaping students. Their research serves to analyze existing practices, develop new frameworks, and present strategies for implementing these new frameworks.

[28] Michael Byram and Peter Doyé, "Intercultural Competence and Foreign Language Learning in the Primary School," in Driscoll and Frost, *Teaching Modern Languages in the Primary School*.
[29] Byram, *Cultural Studies in Foreign Language Education*, 137.
[30] Kramsch holds a joint appointment in Education and German.

**The Present Case Study**

The following case study is not so extensive in scope. Rather than developing new theory and recommendations for its practice, this study seeks to apply existing theories in analyzing a Mandarin-English dual immersion program. Research on foreign language education in the elementary curriculum, dual immersion education, Mandarin education, and finally the place of cultural studies in language education all serve as relevant context. The recommendations from Europe on integrated language learning are applied to the extreme in the dual immersion context, where bilingual teachers use the target language as the language of instruction for a full half of the school day. This particular program is a manifestation of the recent boom in interest in Mandarin as a language "for the twenty-first century," addressing the challenges of the language by taking advantage of the reputed plasticity and aptitude for language learning in young children. These Mandarin-English dual immersion students are fostering "cross-cultural competence" and cultural studies: this is the primary area of inquiry for this study.

Very little work has been done so far on Mandarin instruction and young children. Given the rapidly increasing demand for Mandarin-English dual immersion programs, this is a significant gap in existing research and is worth exploring. Moreover, only a slim portion of this existing research takes culture and cultural studies into consideration. However, researching the methods, intentions, and outcomes for Chinese cultural studies in Mandarin instruction is a crucial component of researching the teaching and learning of Mandarin in general. Michael Byram comments:

> "Language learning, it is often said, `broadens the horizons' and, if it does, then it has educational significance. In fact, what is really meant is that cultural learning, as a result

> of language learning, broadens the horizons, and once that is recognized then the need for good `culture teaching' becomes quite evident."[31]

Thus, this case study at Valley Elementary School seeks to offer insight into how, what, and why cultural studies takes place in the Mandarin-English dual immersion setting. For this study, "cultural studies" is defined to include both knowledge about and attitudes towards culture; it is concerned with both the teaching and learning processes, and the classroom as a space for negotiating meaning. Chapter Two summarizes the findings from eighteen hours of classroom observations, addressing the questions: How is Chinese culture taught during Mandarin (and English) instruction time, implicitly and explicitly? What aspects of culture are taught, and with how much depth or nuance? Chapter Three summarizes the findings from interviews with four Mandarin-English dual immersion teachers, the Valley Elementary School principal, three staff, and two parents of Mandarin-English dual immersion students. It deals with the following questions: What significance is assigned to cultural studies? How does this vary across roles? What are the intentions and methods for teaching Chinese culture in the Mandarin-English dual immersion setting? Chapter Four summarizes the findings from interviews with Mandarin-English dual immersion kindergarten and first grade students. It seeks to answer, What are these students' perceptions of China and Chinese culture? How are these perceptions shaped by Mandarin-English dual immersion instruction? Finally, Chapter Five connects these findings with each other, with wider implications, and with questions for further research.

[31] Byram, *Cultural Studies in Foreign Language Education*, 4.

**CHPATER TWO**

**In and Around the Classroom:**

**Conveying, Constructing, and Negotiating Chinese Culture**

## Introduction

This case study was conducted in the winter and spring of 2017 at Valley Elementary School, a public school in Southern California. It is located in an "upper-middle class"[32] neighborhood with a significant Asian population, nearly half of which is Chinese.[33] However, the school district also includes many low-income students, mostly Latino, from the neighboring community.[34] Thus, the student population is relatively diverse in socioeconomic status (one-third of students qualify for free or reduced lunches) as well as race (almost half of its students are identified as Asian and about one-third as Latino). The staff is also diverse, with a significant minority of Asian teaching staff, including the two Mandarin teachers in the Mandarin-English Dual Language Immersion Program.

Valley Elementary School established its Mandarin-English Dual Language Immersion Program in the fall of 2015, with one Kindergarten class. The program is now in its second year, with one Kindergarten class and one 1st Grade class (the original Kindergarten class). Students in the program split their time between two classrooms: Group 1 spends the first half of the day with the Mandarin-language teacher in the Mandarin-language classroom, while Group 2 is with the English-language teacher in the English-language classroom. Halfway through the day, Group 1 switches to the English-language teacher and classroom, and Group 2 switches to the

[32] Median household income is not far below $100,000.
[33] Throughout this study, "Mandarin" is used to refer to the dialect of Chinese language which is spoken and taught at Valley Elementary School; "Chinese" is used to refer to Chinese ethnic heritage and Chinese culture, as well as the broader group of languages spoken by some of the Valley Elementary School students' families (including Mandarin but also Cantonese and other dialects).
[34] Median household income in this neighboring community is just under $50,000.

Mandarin-language teacher and classroom.[35] The program is a 50/50 model, where 50% of the instruction time is in Mandarin and 50% is in English.[36] With regards to curriculum, Mandarin instruction time includes Mandarin language content and math curriculum; English instruction time includes English Language Arts with embedded social studies and science curriculum, in addition to an overview of math vocabulary in English.

Kindergarten is taught by Ms. U and Ms. V; 1st Grade is taught by Ms. N and Ms. O. Ms. U and Ms. N, both from Taiwan, are the Mandarin-language teachers. Ms. U's background is in teaching Chinese heritage students in Chinese community schools.[37] She was drawn to teaching in dual immersion because of its broader student population, application to daily life, and effectiveness for retention. Ms. N is a younger teacher; she intended to become a teacher from the outset, though not necessarily in dual immersion. She was offered the dual immersion job and took it because she believes in its methods (as contrasted with those of Chinese community schools).

Ms. V and Ms. O are the English-language teachers; neither of them speak or understand Mandarin. Ms. N made note of the fact that the students thought she didn't speak English before the Winter Break, because she only used Mandarin in the classroom and around the school. However, she began speaking some English because it was difficult not being able to communicate with her partner teacher, Ms. O. She indicated that the students' behavior and willingness to make the effort to speak Mandarin were both negatively impacted by the change, and expressed that the program would be more effective if she had either a bilingual aid or a

[35] Students have seats assigned in both rooms; they carry their personal pencil boxes and folders with them as they transition.
[36] In contrast, some dual immersion programs use a "90/10" model where instruction is 90% in the target language in the first year, and that percentage gradually decreases as students go up in grade level.
[37] These schools are typically established and run by local Chinese immigrants who want the next generation in their community to learn Chinese. They usually meet once a week, for several hours on the weekend. See Chapter 1 (pg. 8).

Mandarin-speaking partner teacher. This way, Ms. N would be able to speak exclusively in Mandarin throughout the school day, and students would speak exclusively in Mandarin with Ms. N. However, logistics have demanded otherwise, such that (as of now) English is used sparingly in the Mandarin classrooms.

Most of my time was spent with Ms. U and Ms. N, the Mandarin-language teachers, observing how culture was taught and learned in their classrooms. Ms. U and Ms. N both emphasized in interviews (see Chapter Three) that culture was embedded throughout the day and throughout the curriculum. This chapter summarizes findings from twenty hours of classroom observations, and argues that culture is indeed embedded: the physical classroom environment, classroom routines, teacher interactions with Chinese adults, and student interactions with Chinese heritage students all function as means for conveying, constructing, and negotiating Chinese culture.

**Physical Classroom Environment**

The physical classroom environment of Ms. U and Ms. N's Mandarin classrooms is similar in theme and atmosphere to the typical lower-grade elementary school classroom. Each room has a large colorful rug, small tables and chairs clustered in groups, and posters and student artwork adorning the walls. However, noticeably absent are English sight words ("the," "look," "can," etc.) and the letters of the alphabet. In fact, there is no English around the room, save that which labels store-bought game boxes, teaching materials, and the like. All the posters have Chinese text. Some are simply language posters with no cultural content; they are visually identical to posters in any other classroom except that the text is Chinese. (Examples are posters of shapes, seasons, and colors. There is also a Chinese-language "How to Get to College" poster.) However, others are more unique, for example two posters in Ms. N's room featuring the

Pokémon Charmander and Squirtle with their various body parts labeled in Chinese. These posters present Chinese vocabulary together with a visual that is more specific to Asian culture. Brushstroke posters and basic Chinese characters take the place of alphabet letters and English sight words, analogously representing the components of words and common words with which one should be familiar. In addition to these posters are red banners for the Lunar New Year, which happened to take place during the span of classroom observations.

Both classrooms also feature student artwork, the majority of which is Chinese in theme or influence. There are "Starry Night"-like drawings which feature pagoda-style buildings[38] and multicolored Chinese-style lions. For the Lunar New Year, there are Year of the Rooster coloring pages and complex paper rooster crafts, which feature a rooster hanging below a stylized 春, the character for "spring". The student artwork was one of the first things pointed out by Ms. N as an example of cultural studies in the classroom. The artwork serves as a chance for discourse about culture and cultural products, for example describing the upward swoop of Chinese rooftops, or explaining how the Lunar New Year is known as the "Spring Festival" (春節) in Chinese. Moreover, the artwork allows students to be active participants in constructing a "Chinese" classroom—that is, not a classroom representative of China itself or of Chinese education, but a classroom representative of their experience learning Chinese at Valley Elementary School. The student artwork contributes to the making of what Kramsch referred to as "third spaces," within which students make and interpret meaning. In the example of the "Starry Night" drawings, students negotiate the Chinese-style buildings in comparison with the buildings that surround them in California, construct their own renditions, and convey these to the audience of their drawings (peers, family, myself, etc.).

[38] This architectural feature came up repeatedly in students' representations of China. See Chpater Four (pg. 52).

Besides the posters and student artwork, there are also other objects around the room that convey cultural information about China and Asia. In Ms. U's Kindergarten classroom, an abacus hangs on the wall above a number chart. In Ms. N's 1st Grade classroom, there are small Pokémon magnets on the whiteboard, and notes from the children's parents are written on small panda-themed stationery from a popular Japanese discount store. For Lunar New Year, stuffed roosters and red and gold tassel ornaments hang around the room along with the red banners. As the students spend time in these classrooms every day, these cultural products become normalized and familiar. The abacus becomes a familiar implement for counting, adding, and subtracting, since it is present as they learn and practice these skills every day. Lunar New Year decorations become as significant and "normal" as decorations for Halloween or Thanksgiving.

Thus, the physical classroom environment conveys culture and makes it familiar. In the case of student artwork, it is also a means for constructing and negotiating understandings of culture. The physical environment distinguishes the Mandarin classroom as unique from other classrooms, but also makes Chinese and Asian culture a normal, integrated part of learning—as opposed to something exotic and foreign that is learned *about*.

**Classroom Routines**

In addition to the physical environment, classroom routines are a significant means through which culture is integrated in learning. There are several routinized language acts throughout the day which serve as language production opportunities and classroom management strategies, but also conveyers of culture.

In the Kindergarten class, the teacher greets the students collectively: "小朋友早" (Good morning, children). The term 小朋友, literally "little friends," is affectionate but also distancing and hierarchical. The students respond in unison with "[U]老師早" (Good morning, Teacher U).

In interviews, Ms. U stressed the importance of the students knowing and calling them by their position as teachers. In English, adults are usually referred to as "Mr." and "Ms.," including teachers. However, in Chinese the title is used instead. These titles represent how one is supposed to interact with the person addressed—in this case, being respectful. Ms. U differentiated between how this respect is considered something that must be "earned" in American culture, versus how it is automatically granted in Chinese culture based on position. In the 1st Grade class, students greet the teacher one-by-one as they enter: [N]老師早安 (Good morning, Teacher N). The teacher responds to each child, 早安 (Good morning). Ms. N insists upon eye contact, again a matter of respect. These greetings are opportunities to practice language production—especially in the 1st Grade greeting routine, where each student must produce individually, in a clear voice and with eye contact. However, they are also means for conveying Chinese culture, and constructing a classroom culture of respectful teacher-student interactions.

Following greetings, the students participate in a very familiar routine of American education: they recite the Pledge of Allegiance. This instance, however, is unique in that the students stand before the American flag and recite the American Pledge of Allegiance, in Mandarin. It is notable that the Pledge of Allegiance is fairly unique in the American classroom as an instance of group recitation—mostly, American pedagogy does not make much use of memorization and recitation. However, recitation is much more common in Asian classrooms, and thus the collective chanting before the American flag hardly feels out of place in Ms. U and Ms. N's classrooms.

Ms. U and Ms. N both make use of call and response in their classrooms. Ms. U uses a sing-song cue which is non-linguistic (teacher: "bum-ba-da-bum-bum," students: "bum-bum").

Ms. N and the 1st Grade students have an extended repertory of Chinese calls and responses. The main attention-gathering cue is as follows: teacher: “最高品質,” (the highest quality) students: “靜悄悄” (quiet). There is also an extended call and response:

Teacher: 眼睛眼睛 (eyes, eyes), students: 看老師 (looking at the teacher)

Teacher: 耳朵耳朵 (ears, ears), students: 注意聽 (listening carefully)

Teacher: 嘴巴嘴巴 (mouth, mouth), students: 閉起來 (closed shut)

Call and response is a standard classroom management strategy—“One, two, three, eyes on me,” “One, two, eyes on you” might be familiar to American students—but the specific cues used in the 1st Grade classroom (which are used in Chinese and Taiwanese classrooms as well) do bear some cultural information, for example that quietness is what’s mostly highly prized in the classroom.

Another call and response, used for example as students gather after recess, is: 準備好了麼? (Are you ready?), 準備好了! (Ready!). In a moment of lull between recess and instruction, one of the 1st Grade students plays with this call and response. She calls the teacher’s part, 準備好了麼? (Are you ready?). The rest of the students respond loudly and enthusiastically, 準備好了! (Ready!). The first student says, “I’m just kidding!” but is obviously pleased. The exchange reveals the pleasure the students take in these structured and familiar language exercises. Indeed, they are familiar enough to play both roles, caller and responder, and enjoy enacting these roles even when not mandatory. In this interaction, the meanings of the call and response are negotiated and interpreted. The first student plays “teacher” and her peers support her, but she also backs away from taking on that meaning as soon as it is acknowledged.

Besides call and response, there are also other routinized language acts, such as those used to commence activities. Both Ms. U and Ms. N use 預備, 起! (Ready, begin!) as an "entry routine." The 1st Grade students are comfortable using this entry routine as well: during time on the carpet, students take turns leading their peers through various counting exercises. In Mandarin, they announce the exercise (for example, counting to 100, by 5s) and then commence with 預備, 起! (Ready, begin!). Students also play with this call, telling each other to 預備, 起! (Ready, begin!) when there is no formal activity to begin. In Ms. U's class, before commencing a computer activity, the students say together, 加油, 加油, 加油! These are culturally specific words of encouragement, literally translated as "add oil." The phrase is used for wishing good luck, spurring each other on, and cheering in athletic events or competitions.

These classroom routines (greetings, reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, call and response, and entry routines) simultaneously serve a variety of purposes. The calls and responses, greetings, and entry routines facilitate classroom management by getting students' attention, structuring the days, and organizing activities. All of these routinized language acts function as low-risk, high-familiarity opportunities for language production: everyone is speaking, so the fear of mispronunciation is reduced, and moreover, the words are always in a predictable order, used at predictable times. Finally, these routines convey cultural information. As mentioned above, group recitation is common in Asian classrooms, under the influence of Confucian education. While it may be considered "rote" or shallow by Americans, in Chinese pedagogy recitation and repetition are considered tools for understanding.[39] These classroom routines of collective speaking point to underlying values of group harmony and attention to detail.

[39] Xiao Lan Curdt-Christiansen, "Teaching and Learning Chinese: Heritage Language Classroom Discourse in Montreal." *Language, Culture and Curriculum* 19, no. 2 (2006), 201.

Eventually, as the skills are applied to reciting poetry and longer texts, they convey the value for appreciating and imitating masterful language use.

**Non-Teacher Adults**

For now, the students (at least those who speak Mandarin only at school) mainly imitate the language use of their Mandarin teachers. However, Mandarin tutors and Mandarin-speaking parent volunteers are often present in the classroom. These non- teacher adults serve as models for culturally appropriate interaction. With regards to language, conversations between teachers and volunteers (about what papers to grade, how to prepare a particular craft, etc.) serve as examples of complete, complex dialogue in Chinese, and present an image for students to aspire to. However, these interactions also serve as examples of appropriate communication norms. For example, one adult volunteer who enters the classroom in the middle of Ms. U's instruction bows upon entering and says "不好意思" (excuse me). Bowing in greeting is something that Ms. U has taught her students—she bows to them in greeting, and they imitate her. This volunteer reinforces that cultural norm, and in her formally apologetic introduction demonstrates the respect for the teacher that Ms. U has also emphasized.

Interactions between the teachers and myself similarly modeled culturally appropriate interaction. I was introduced as either 張老師 or 張姊姊; both could be translated in English as Ms. Zhang, though the first is "Teacher Zhang" and the second is "Big Sister Zhang." Ms. U introduced me as 張老師 (Teacher Zhang), and asked the students to greet me in the same form used to greet her, 張老師早安 (Good morning, Teacher Zhang). She described my purpose as a researcher, encouraging the students to behave well for me. This behavioral exhortation is in line with how I was positioned, as an adult to be respected.

At recess though, some of Ms. U's students who came from Chinese-speaking homes asked if I was a 姊姊 (big sister). As a college student and young adult, my position is ambiguous to the Kindergarten students: am I of their parents' generation, or am I of their generation? Am I a student, or am I a teacher? Because I do not fit easily into their categories (mom/child, teacher/student), they ask for clarification. As heritage students, they recognize the importance of knowing my position so that they can address me and relate with me correctly. The students appear pleased when I confirm that I am a 姊姊. They interact with me accordingly, asking me for permission (i.e. to go use the restroom) but also playing with me and offering to share their snacks with me. These students demonstrate an understanding of 姊姊 as a social category which dictates how they should interact with me, but also an ability to negotiate with how their teacher originally introduced me (as 老師/Teacher) based on how they appraised my appearance and behavior.

**Heritage Students**

Indeed, these "heritage learners" have an important place in the cultural learning that takes place in the Mandarin-English Dual Language Immersion Program at Valley Elementary School. "Heritage learners" are traditionally defined as those who were raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, and have some oral or at least aural proficiency.[40] In the Valley Elementary School program, there are several Chinese heritage students with varying proficiency in Chinese, ranging from above-average aural proficiency in Chinese to speaking almost exclusively in Chinese (but understanding English). At recess, some heritage students proudly distinguish themselves to me as students who "會說中文" (can speak Chinese) when I hand out

[40] Guadalupe Valdés, *Learning and Not Learning English: Latino Students in American Schools* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001), 38.

snacks, using Mandarin, and English when necessary (mirroring their teachers). This is an interesting identity claim to make, given that all of their classmates are learning to speak Mandarin and spend half their days in Mandarin classrooms. However, they seem proud of the fact that they can (and do) speak Chinese beyond the classroom context. During play time, some of the heritage students who are equally or more comfortable in Mandarin play exclusively with each other. At one recess period, I overhear and join a lively discussion about what zodiac sign they each are. They all not only know their own but also their parents' and family members' zodiac signs. They also talk about what relatives they have in China, and who among them was born in China. In this conversation, these students reinforce among each other what is culturally salient, e.g. zodiac signs as identity markers, and the relevance of family and kin. Other, non-heritage students sit at the fringe of these conversations, appearing interested, but not comprehending. Thus, in this instance the cultural learning mainly takes place among the heritage students as they convey, reinforce, and negotiate understandings of Chinese culture amongst themselves. However, one can imagine that the influence of these students as conveyers of culture will grow as their classmates' Mandarin proficiency approaches theirs.

One non-linguistic example of this peer-to-peer cultural learning already taking place is in dress. The first school day after Lunar New Year (which took place this year over a weekend), some heritage students were dressed up for the holiday and came wearing qipao-style dresses, vests, and shirts. Ms. U noticed and praised their outfits in front of the class; she herself was dressed up in a brocaded shirt and skirt. This small-scale festivity, among the teacher and a few students, can be contrasted with the day of the Lunar New Year school performance a couple days later. On this day, virtually all of the students donned Chinese-style clothing, the girls in floral qipao dresses and the boys in 唐装 (tangzhuang/Tang suit) shirt and pant sets. Heritage and

non-heritage students alike were dressed up for the performance; some students who did not have their own outfits were able to borrow one. While the former practice was dictated by Chinese culture and calendar, the latter was dictated by the culture and calendar of Valley Elementary School and its Mandarin-English Dual Language Immersion program. However, by dressing up the first school day after Lunar New Year, the heritage students brought Chinese culture into the classroom context and reinforced the message that this clothing and practice are part of the Lunar New Year holiday, not just part of the school performance.

Understandings of China were also negotiated by heritage and non-heritage students in English-language conversations. The dragons adorning students' clothing on performance day sparked such conversations: In one discussion among three boys, a non-heritage student proudly showed off the dragon on his shirt, saying that "it's [from] China." The second student (the only heritage student among the three) took the opportunity to declare, "I've been to China once!" The third student reported, "My parents have been to China once; they went to the Great Wall of China," to which the second student responded, "But you have to speak Chinese [to go to China]." In another conversation, this time between two girls, a non-heritage student points to the dragons on her dress and states that "dragons are real in China," but the second student (a heritage student) refutes her.

All of the students are proud of their connections to China and their knowledge about China (factually correct or not). The heritage students seem to speak with some air of authority, and at least in these brief encounters the non-heritage students do not contradict them. The heritage students are not directly teaching culture but are participating in active peer-to-peer negotiating, speaking from their own experiences and opinions. In this way, both heritage and non-heritage students negotiate their understandings of China based on information from school,

home, and other sources, as well as from their own imaginations. More on the student perspective will be presented in Chapter Four.

**Special Activities: Lunar New Year**

As referenced above, classroom observations overlapped with the celebration of Lunar New Year. Lunar New Year is the most important and most lavishly celebrated Chinese holiday, and in Chinese communities in the United States it is a significant cultural event. At Valley Elementary School, the Mandarin-English Dual Language Immersion program put on a Lunar New Year performance. The performance was a short musical about the Story of Nian, a popular Lunar New Year folk tale. The performance was directed by the dual immersion teachers, with the assistance of college students from the Chinese Students Association at Cal Poly Pomona. The plot centers around the Nian monsters who once upon a time lived deep in the sea and came up once a year to eat people. Villagers hid in the mountains on that day to escape the monsters. One year, three travelers came upon the village on this day and found only one grandma who had stayed behind. The grandma tells them about how her son was eaten by the Nian monsters and makes dumplings for them; the fragrance of the dumplings attracts the Nian monsters, but the travelers are able to scare away the monsters by wearing red, making loud noises, and burning bamboo.

Most of the performance is comprised of songs sung by the Kindergarten and 1st Grade dual immersion students. The songs are sung all in Mandarin, with hand motions. The students had been practicing these songs for a month; they had CDs to practice at home, and class sessions were interspersed with opportunities to practice the songs—which they did with relish. Even after the performance was over, students would spontaneously start singing the songs, and their classmates would join in. In addition to the Kindergarten and 1st Grade dual immersion

students, the performance also involved a few older Valley Elementary School students serving as actors, some (Chinese heritage students) speaking in Mandarin, and some in English. There were also older students who participated in the final song of the performance as lion dancers.

On the day of the performance, a dress rehearsal performance was held in the morning for the rest of the Valley Elementary School students. Both heritage and non-heritage students wear their Chinese outfits proudly and were complimented by school adults. The adults helped them with the fabric loop-and-knot buttons on the Chinese outfits, different from the plastic buttons and eyes that they are accustomed to. The broad participation makes the dress seem normalized rather than exoticized. A few heritage students of other cultures wore dress from their own heritage cultures: two students wore *hanbok* (traditional Korean dresses); one student wore an *ao dai* (a traditional Vietnamese dress); one Latino student wore a woven hat and a bandana around his neck. Thus the meaning of the event is shifted from celebrating Chinese culture specifically, to celebrating culture and heritage in general. Students have the opportunity to compare between Chinese, American, and (where applicable) home dress and practices of celebration, and in this process to negotiate and refine their understandings of each.

Besides the dress, folk tale plot, songs, and lion dancing, additional "cultural" elements of the performance include the decorations around the auditorium (the students' rooster crafts, as well as some banners and ornaments on the doors and on the stage, and red lanterns strung across the top of the stage) and also a large drum which Ms. N beats during the lion dancing parts of the show. The show was preceded by an optional dinner, for families who bought dinner tickets. Egg rolls and other Chinese food was served. As referenced earlier, food (specifically dumplings) have a central role in the story. One of the "songs" in the performance is a chant that goes through the dumpling-making process:

洗白菜, 洗白菜, 洗洗洗 (Rinse the cabbage, rinse the cabbage; rinse, rinse, rinse)

切白菜, 切白菜, 切切切 (Chop the cabbage, chop the cabbage; chop, chop, chop)

剁豬肉, 剁豬肉, 剁剁剁 (Chop the pork, chop the pork; chop, chop, chop)

包餃子, 包餃子, 包包包 (Fold the dumplings, fold the dumplings; fold, fold, fold)

The students chant along with hang motions for rinsing, chopping, and folding. The following week, as students make dumplings in class together with a parent volunteer, one girl starts chanting to herself in sing-song, 切白菜, 切白菜, 切切切.

Overall, the students clearly enjoyed putting on the Lunar New Year performance. They enjoyed dressing up; they enjoyed singing the songs and did so freely outside of when they were asked to by teachers. Through the performance, all of the dual immersion students act as conveyers of culture, to their classmates in the morning dress rehearsal performance and to their families in the evening formal performance. The adage is that "the best way to learn something is to teach it:" As Principal Tan introduces the dress rehearsal performance, he turns away from the mic to confirm with Ms. N about how to say "Happy New Year" in Mandarin. He says 新年快樂 to the audience, then turns back to the stage to ask the student performers if he said it right; they giggle and nod. In this small moment and many others, and in the performance as a whole, the students become language and culture "teachers" within their learning community.

It is notable that the performance is predominately in Mandarin, interspersed with just enough English narration to keep the audience in the loop of what is going on plot-wise. All of the songs are sung in Mandarin. In this way, Chinese culture is conveyed largely "on its own terms," linguistically speaking. This is in line with Michael Byram's recommendations for culture studies: he argues that culture is best understood in its own language, and therefore self-

presentation by native speakers is an important avenue for cultural learning.[41] The Cal Poly Pomona Chinese Student Association volunteers and the Mandarin teachers, Ms. U and Ms. N, initially present the material to the students, but the students also become presenters and conveyers themselves as they perform, engaging in even deeper understanding of Chinese culture by presenting it in Mandarin.

**Chapter Summary**

Thus, the Mandarin-English Dual Language Immersion Program at Valley Elementary School involves a community of learners: the students (heritage and non-heritage), the teachers, the parent volunteers and tutors, and even myself, during the period of my research. Within this community, understandings of Chinese culture are conveyed, constructed, and negotiated. Teachers construct and convey culture to students (both explicitly and implicitly), but students also construct their own varied understandings which they convey to and negotiate with others. The next chapter turns to the adults within this learning community (teachers, parents, administrators, etc.) for their perspective on the cultural learning process at Valley Elementary School's Mandarin-English Dual Language Immersion Program.

[41] Michael Byram, *Cultural Studies in Foreign Language Education*. Vol. 46. Multilingual Matters, 1989, 90.

**CHPATER THREE**

**What the "Grown-Ups" Think:**

**Cultural Education as "Looking at the Ocean"**

The Mandarin-English Dual Language Immersion Program at Valley Elementary School is part of a community which includes not only its students, but also students' families, teachers (Mandarin teachers, English partner teachers in the program, and teachers in the school's "English-only" track), school administrators, administrative staff, and other staff. The following chapter summarizes findings from interviews conducted with these "grown-ups" connected to the Mandarin-English Dual Language Immersion Program.[42, 43]

The interviews were semi-structured, with slightly different question sets for the Mandarin teachers, for other staff and administrators, and for parents.[44] Interviewees were asked about their attitudes toward the Mandarin-English Dual Language Immersion Program, what they hoped students would gain from the program, how they would define "cultural education," what place cultural education has in dual language education, and how important they think it is for students to learn about other cultures and why. Interviews were conducted at the school, during or around school hours, and lasted from 10 to 45 minutes.

The two Mandarin teachers introduced in Chpater Two, Ms. U and Ms. N, were interviewed together. Ms. U and Ms. N are both originally from Taiwan; both are new to Valley Elementary School this year. Ms. V and Ms. O, their respective English-language partner teachers, have each been at Valley Elementary School for more than ten years. Also interviewed were the school principal (new this year); Ms. H, a Campus Supervisor and Kindergarten

[42] Again, names have been changed to protect the confidentiality of interviewees.
[43] Some of the interviews were conducted partially or entirely in Chinese; in these cases, interviewees' responses are paraphrased here in English
[44] The questions used can be found in the Appendix

classroom aide; a Mandarin tutor who assists inside and outside the classroom; two administrative staff, the Front Office Clerk and Office Manager; and two parents, Parent A and Parent B.[45]

The findings from these interviews are organized in line with Michael Byram's definition of cultural studies as "how, what and why people learn about other countries, other peoples, other ways of life while they are learning a foreign language."[46] The chapter addresses what, how, and why students in the Valley Elementary School Mandarin-English Dual Language Immersion Program learn about Chinese culture, according to the perspectives of the adults in that community. These adults viewed cultural education through lenses of both comparison and connection; they saw it as weaved into the school experience, and important for character development, career opportunities, and heritage education.

**What: Defining "Cultural Education"**

Describing perceptions of "cultural education" at Valley Elementary School involves first elucidating how "culture" is understood: in general, culture was defined as ways of doing and thinking. Ms. N gave the categories "the way people do things, why they do things, how they think;" similarly, the Front Office Clerk described culture as "a different way that people live" in addition to "a different way of beliefs." Ms. V (Ms. U's English partner teacher) also used the language "other ways of living." Thus, culture is understood primarily as a "way," specifically in contrast to one's own way. The idea of "different" and "other" was an important part of the discourse: many interviewees interpreted culture through lenses of comparison and difference. However, simultaneously present were lenses of commonality, connection, and unity, across

[45] Parent B is a staff member of Valley Elementary School, not in the Mandarin-English Dual Language Immersion Program, but her child is in the program

[46] Michael Byram, *Cultural Studies in Foreign Language Education.* Vol. 46. Multilingual Matters, 1989, 2.

cultural difference. Interviewees with more connections to the "Mandarin" element of the Mandarin-English Dual Language Immersion Program tended to rely more heavily on difference lenses, while interviewees with more connections to the "English" element tended to rely more heavily on unity lenses, but the two were by no means exclusive or opposed.

To begin, the Mandarin tutor stressed that American and Chinese cultures are in many ways opposite (相反). She gave an example about owing money: in American culture, if you owe someone $97, you give them exactly $97, but in Chinese culture, if you owe someone $97, you just give them $100 and forget about the $3. She described how it is important for students to understand Chinese culture so that they can interact with people correctly, and not just automatically apply the rules of American culture. From her perspective as a language tutor, the most important part of cultural education is learning how to use the target language and how to interact with speakers of that language. In particular, students should be able to understand and navigate how interacting with target language speakers is *different* from interacting with speakers of their primary language.

One salient point of difference between Western and Asian culture that came up in multiple interviews is respect for elders. In their joint interview, Mandarin teachers Ms. U and Ms. N emphasized respecting elders and authority figures (i.e. themselves as teachers) as important in their classrooms. Ms. U drew a comparison with "the Western education system," where respect is considered as something earned, versus something granted automatically by position, as it would be in China or Taiwan. Ms. N added to this that respect for elders and authorities in Asian cultures is not explicitly taught, but rather something that students know is "the norm" based on their parents' behavior. However, in the context of the Mandarin-English Dual Language Immersion Program, it is something that must be taught, because not all students

come from that culture at home. Similarly, Campus Supervisor Ms. H brought up "how to respect your parents" as an example of culture. She specified that this involves learning how to talk to one's parents, how to not disturb adults when they are talking, and how to "have manners." Implied in these conversations is that American culture is lacking in respect for elders, or, to put it positively, that respect for elders is more important in Chinese culture and other Asian cultures than it is American culture. For Ms. U, Ms. N, and Ms. H, respect for elders was an obvious point of cultural difference, and one that they felt it was important for students to understand and incorporate in their daily interactions.

However, culture was discussed not only as a matter of "difference" but also as a matter of commonalities. Ms. N explained how cultural education involves "relating to what [the students] already know." Ms. U gave Lunar New Year as an example: they could relate the practice of gathering and eating together to American Thanksgiving, or relate red envelopes[47] to Christmas presents. These analogies allow students to grasp what another culture's practice involves and means, by relating it to practices in their own life that are already imbued with meaning. Moreover, they allow students to connect with the target culture through common experience. The principal highlighted in his interview that cultures have "common threads and motifs," and that it was important for students (and adults) to see these. Relatedly, Ms. V (Ms. U's English partner teacher) expressed her hope that students would grow up to "see people as people," because of their experiences with diversity in the Mandarin-English Dual Language Immersion program and at Valley Elementary School in general. Interacting with other cultures and with people of other cultures would hopefully give students a chance to see underlying

[47] Red envelopes with cash inside are traditionally given to children as Lunar New Year gifts.

"humanity," instead of only seeing difference or foreign-ness. Thus, culture and cultural education were also viewed through lenses of commonality and unity.

Cultural education, that is, the process of learning culture, was described by the principal as a sequence of "exposure, understanding, acceptance, and connection." Ms. O (Ms. N's English partner teacher) spoke similarly of "knowing that other cultures exist, forming an appreciation…and embracing humanity [across] differences." In this sequence, students move from exposure to difference, to unity and connection. Ms. U and Ms. N's descriptions of cultural education in their own classrooms at Valley Elementary School can be fit into this sequence.

*Exposure*

To begin, exposure to a culture entails exposure to its *people, practices,* and *products*.[48] At Valley Elementary School, the people include the Mandarin teachers, Mandarin tutors, and Chinese parent volunteers. For heritage students, this category also includes their own family (this is true for Chinese heritage students, but also heritage students of other related Asian cultures, i.e. Korean, Thai, and Vietnamese heritage students). Examples of exposure to cultural practices include bowing in greeting, or taking shoes off in the classroom. Cultural products that students were exposed to include chopsticks, food (such as dumplings and Asian snack items), red envelopes, and the costumes that they wore for the Lunar New Year performance.

*Understanding*

Proceeding from exposure is understanding: Ms. U described how her students quickly learned to bow in greeting, after she initiated with her own example. As per Claire Kramsch, understanding involves understanding of both the target culture and one's own culture(s).[49] This is showcased in the cultural education example Ms. U gave about New Year. In America, New

[48] The categories of cultural practice and cultural products come from Ms. U.
[49] Claire Kramsch, *Context and Culture in Language Teaching* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

Year is celebrated with a countdown, watching the Rose Parade, etc. Students see this aspect of their own culture more clearly as they compare with Chinese celebrations of Lunar New Year and talk about them at school. Ms. U expressed her hopes that the students would also learn about other cultures' New Year practices, for example in Muslim and Jewish traditions.

*Acceptance*

Understanding of one's own and others' cultures precedes acceptance. Ms. N framed acceptance as respecting other cultures whether they are similar to or different from your own, and whether or not you agree. This acceptance is not ignorant of differences but *understands,* to some extent, native culture and target culture and the space between. Keeping in mind that the student subjects of this case study are five to seven years old, "acceptance" at this young age may well be represented simply in a positive attitude towards the target culture and learning about the target culture. Ms. N gave as an example the genuine excitement with which her students now regard Taiwan, for example, when they discovered that the chairs in their classroom were made in Taiwan.

*Connection*

Cultural education, as it was understood and spoken of at Valley Elementary School, culminates in making meaningful personal connections with other cultures. Ms. U and Ms. N cited another program which took its Mandarin immersion students on a trip to Sichuan. The students apparently enjoyed the trip very much, and it motivated their study of Mandarin. This example illustrates how physical experience in the target culture, on the target culture's own terms, facilitates exposure, understanding, acceptance, and (most importantly) connection at a much faster rate and at a more profound level. But interviewees expressed hopes that the students would not only *experience* but also *create* connection, through their dual immersion education.

Ms. H described how she hoped learning Mandarin would equip students to "reach out a hand" and help other people, specifically immigrants. She gave an anecdote about a "blond-haired, blue-eyed" non-heritage student who used Mandarin to try and explain something that she was saying to a limited-English Chinese heritage student. Ms. H related this incident to her own context, recalling how she felt lonely and scared when she first arrived to the United States as an immigrant in the 1970s. She hopes that the "bond" between the non-heritage student and heritage student in her anecdote would extend to other situations where students can use their language and culture education to help others who, as in her own situation years ago, feel isolated among the unfamiliar. One might add to her hopes that the dual immersion students' familiarity with another *culture,* as well as another language, would equip them to interact with others. In these ways, students move beyond learning language to be "consumer-tourists," and can apply language and culture education to making meaningful connections.

Thus, cultural education can be understood as process of "exposure, understanding, acceptance, and connection." However, these "steps" may overlap and all be simultaneously ongoing. Exposure to elements of another culture (people, practices, products) develops understanding, appreciation, acceptance, excitement, and personal connection, connection leads to deeper understanding and a desire for further exposure. Especially in the context of the immersion classroom, students are constantly being exposed to culture in myriad implicit and explicit ways (see Chpater Two), constantly negotiating their understandings, and developing various connections with the target culture.

**How: Mechanisms for Cultural Education**

As described in Chpater Two, much of the cultural education that students participate in at the Mandarin-English Dual Language Immersion Program at Valley Elementary School is

implicit and embedded. Ms. N explained that "kids learn through lessons *and* what teachers do, how they react," but primarily through the second mode. However, Ms. U and Ms. N also described explicit strategies for cultural education in their classrooms. They mentioned folktales and storytelling, as well as learning games, watching videos, singing and dancing, and eating food. Ms. N especially emphasized the last of these ("Food, food, did I say food?") and gave examples like making dumplings, or passing out snacks such as lychee jellies. She described how excited the students were about the jellies, asking "Did you bring these from Taiwan for us?" Ms. U and Ms. N stressed the importance of making activities fun. In many cases, "fun" also means participatory (e.g. playing games and eating food), such that "explicit" education does not necessarily mean passive or didactic.

The Mandarin tutor stressed the importance of these kinds of activities, arguing that they make an impression on the students because the students are using their bodies to participate, not just looking at things. She referenced the Lunar New Year performance as an example. In fact, almost all of the interviewees brought up the recent Lunar New Year program as an example of cultural education. The staff agreed that the program was very positive for students and families. They noted how cute the students were, how excited and proud they were, and how much the parents enjoyed the show.

However, cultural education overall certainly does not take place without some amount of struggle and challenge. Staff who were more connected to the "English" element of the Mandarin-English Dual Language Immersion Program were more likely to speak about this. This begins with enrollment—the cultural education experience of dual immersion is necessarily limited to the few dozen students who can be enrolled in the program. As the school principal referenced, the size of the program is limited by the physical capacity of the school as well as by

staffing. The first cohort (current 1st Graders) consists of 36 students; the second cohort (current Kindergartners) consists of 48 students. As the program expands, there are "growing pains" involved. The principal reported a spike in interest for this third year of enrollment. Naturally, families whose children cannot be enrolled will be disappointed.

With regards to students currently enrolled, Ms. V brought up the dumpling-making activity with the Kindergartners. Because there were only a couple parents helping, only the dual immersion students were able to participate, but this left parents of students in the "English-only" program at Valley Elementary School feeling that their children were left out. Ms. O gave a similar example: the dual immersion 1st Graders were going on a field trip to the Huntington Gardens to learn about Chinese culture (e.g. through a scavenger hunt), where the Mandarin teachers would be speaking in Mandarin. However, the English-only 1st Grade teacher felt like her students were left out from the trip. Ms. O explained that this was difficult because Valley Elementary School has always been good at having all the teachers working together, and all doing the same thing. But now, not everything is the same; there are two different programs at the school: Mandarin-English and English-only. Ms. O stressed the importance of communication, including the role of the school principal in explaining differences between the programs, and why there might be different or additional activities. Ms. O expressed hopes that things would remain the same with regards to being united as a staff and doing common activities, but simply with extra activities for the students learning Mandarin. For example, regarding the field trip, the dual immersion students are still going on a 1st Grade-wide field trip in addition to their trip to the Huntington Gardens.

Cultural education, then, takes place in both everyday interactions and special activities, but intentionally setting up these opportunities for some students means leaving others out of

those opportunities (whether that's the program itself or the activities within the program). Managing expectations and apparent "unfairness" (fairness being the creed of the Kindergartener's world) is a challenging task, for students, parents, teachers, and administration. In summary, cultural education—implicit and explicit—takes place at cost.

**Why: The Importance of Cultural Education**

As to "why" culture in general and Chinese culture in particular are studied, it is necessary to consider both the "who" and the "when," that is, the importance of cultural education for this community, and the importance of cultural education at this time. The "who" can be broken down into the students, the families, and Valley Elementary School; cultural education is important to each in different ways. The "when" can be broken down into the developmental moment and the historical moment, economically and politically speaking.

*Who: The Students*

Interviewees presented many aspects of cultural education's importance for students; these can be grouped in the categories of "character," "career," and "heritage." With reference to character development, Ms. U noted that "everything we learn comes from kindergarten." Therefore, learning about other cultures now will really impact students. First among the impacts that interviewees hoped the program would have is greater awareness. Ms. H gave the metaphor of "not living in a pond, [but] looking at the ocean." Multiple staff talked about "getting a greater sense of the world" and "opening up their minds to the rest of the world." Ms. V expressed that while it is especially important for the students to learn Chinese culture while learning the Mandarin language, it is also important for them to learn about other cultures, for example learning about Jewish culture or celebrating Black History Month. Thus, while the dual immersion program would itself be eye-opening, it would also hopefully develop a more open

disposition towards "the world" at large. The Office Manager also mentioned the importance of awareness of the world including awareness of one's privilege, for example realizing that children in other parts of the world don't have the opportunity to attend school.

Besides awareness, interviews also mentioned understanding and empathy: Ms. N spoke of "understanding and accepting difference," and Ms. O spoke similarly of "embracing" differences. Among Parent B's hopes for her child was that he would learn through the dual immersion program to "be kind and considerate of all cultures." In addition to an ability and willingness to help others, Ms. H also spoke of self-esteem: "you can't even imagine, they're so proud of themselves," she said. Both she and Parent B brought up the example of counting. Counting to 100 in Mandarin was a common exercise in both the Kindergarten and 1st Grade classes. Parent B described how her child was trying to teach her to count, and found it funny and enjoyable to teach and correct her. He was pleased with "knowing something [she doesn't] know," even though she is the adult and parent figure.

Related to character development is skill development. Ms. O brought up problem-solving skills as something she hoped students would gain from the program. For example, it took a lot of problem-solving to navigate how to communicate in Ms. N's classroom when she presented herself as unable to speak English in the fall. Students had to make a significant effort to express themselves using their limited Mandarin, plus gestures and other means. This was especially challenging for the 11 students who were new to the dual immersion program as 1st Graders (coming either from other schools or from the English-only program at Valley Elementary School). Besides problem-solving skills, Ms. N also brought up generalizable skills of analysis. She gave an anecdote about teaching her students how dogs bark in Mandarin, saying "wang-wang," instead of "ruff-ruff" like they do in English. Students came back to school

reporting that dogs really do sound like they are saying "wang-wang," and one student shared that in Korean, dogs say "mung-mung." Growing in ability to generalize skills (i.e. to other languages and cultures) is part of the personal development that Valley Elementary School adults hope the dual immersion students will gain.

Besides character (awareness, empathy, self-esteem, and skills), interviewees also saw potential benefits for students' future careers. The principal spoke of Mandarin as a "gateway" in business. Many of the interviewees mentioned that some of the students could be trilingual (with Spanish, Cantonese, Korean, or other languages), and particularly in light of this Ms. H and the Office Manager expressed their hopes that learning Mandarin would help the students get a good job; Parent B mentioned college as well as career. Parent A and Ms. H talked more generally about "having more options" and "having more opportunities." Ms. H emphasized that this would only be possible if the program and its funding continue, and if the students have the opportunity to continue through Junior High and High School. "Even if there are only 10 students," she said, "they should be able to continue." Ms. V echoed these concerns that the program may not be sustained all the way through 6th grade, and she too vocalized her desire to see programs offered in Junior High and High School.[50]

Thus, interviewees were both optimistic and realistic about their hopes for the future career-related benefits that students might gain from the Mandarin-English Dual Language Immersion Program at Valley Elementary School. With the students being still so young and the program being still so new, they recognized that the benefits would only materialize if much more work was done in the coming years, within Valley Elementary School and beyond.

[50] At an information session for prospective parents, the principal explained that the local Junior High and High Schools are currently working on establishing programs that Valley Elementary School Mandarin-English dual immersion students could matriculate into.

Finally, some interviewees spoke to the benefits of cultural education in the dual immersion program for Chinese heritage students. Parent A explained that she enrolled her child in the program because they all speak Chinese at home. She described her hopes that her child would learn Chinese traditions at school, in addition to Chinese language. She explained that "it will be hard to communicate when [she and her brother] grow up," presumably that is if they grow up speaking only English at school and lose Chinese proficiency. It should be noted that their family speaks Cantonese at home, not Mandarin; in the classroom, Parent A speaks with her child in Cantonese. However, Parent A described how she and her child will read books and watch TV in Mandarin at home, and her child sings Mandarin songs from school, shares Mandarin vocabulary that she learns at school, and asks about how to say words in Mandarin. Thus, even though different dialects are spoken at home and at school, being part of the Mandarin-English Dual Language Immersion Program has fostered dialogue and opportunities to share language and culture.

The school principal mentioned a current dual immersion student who was adopted from China. Her parents are White and Latino, but they wanted her to understand her Chinese culture, and the child herself had expressed interest in such. Thus, they enrolled her in the Mandarin-English Dual Language Immersion Program at Valley Elementary School. The principal described her as "very open, expressive, and excited to share with her parents," "bounding off the stage" after the Lunar New Year performance.

*Who: The Families*

This example illustrates how students' benefits from cultural education cannot be isolated from their families'. The adopted parents have the opportunity to learn about Chinese culture through their daughter and her participation in the program. More generally, the program

facilitates opportunities to share culture among and between families. Ms. N described how when students go home and share the Chinese language and culture that they're learning at school, it's an opportunity for the parents to share about their own culture. "Each family," she said, "has their own culture." As an example, Ms. H talked about a recent "snowman project" where students dressed up paper snowman using materials from their culture and ethnicity.

Returning to the dumpling-making activity, another illustrative anecdote can be found in an interaction observed between a parent volunteer and her child. On the day that the Kindergarteners were making dumplings with a Chinese parent volunteer, a Latina mother also came in to volunteer. When she asked her child whether she liked the dumplings, the student hesitated a little before replying, "I'm not a dumpling fan." Even though this moment wasn't entirely positive, it is representative of the cultural exchanges that the program facilitates, not just among the students but also involving parents and families.

*Who: Valley Elementary School*

Moreover, the Mandarin-English Dual Language Immersion Program was important for families in the sense that it was "showing [parents] that the district is listening" and "providing solutions to their needs," as the principal described. In this and other ways, the dual immersion program has also been important for Valley Elementary School. According to office staff, the program has "put [the school] on the map," resulting in phone calls even from families out-of-state who are interested in relocating in order for their children to participate in the program. However, as referenced above, the recent growth "in leaps and bounds" has come with challenges for staffing, enrollment, and the admission process for the program. Overall though, there was genuine excitement about the program at Valley Elementary School. Ms. H saw it as "a good start;" one of the office staff described the impact of the program on the school as

"fantastic." By offering opportunities for not only language but also culture education through the dual immersion program, Valley Elementary School has an opportunity to grow, distinguish itself, and gain positive attention.

*When: The Developmental Moment*

The importance of cultural education in this case study is particular not only to the students, families, and school involved, but also to the present moment in which it is taking place. First, there is the particular developmental "moment" for students: multiple staff brought up how exciting it was to see students absorb language and culture so quickly, "like a sponge." They noted the ease with which students could repeat Mandarin phrases back to their teachers. Indeed, this "pop psychology" understanding of how much easier it is to learn a language at a younger age pervaded the interviews and conversations about Valley Elementary School's young Mandarin-learners. On a similar note, Ms. O said that the dual immersion program "seems very normal to [the students]." She remarked, "I don't think they all know that the other 1st Graders don't learn another language." Because they have started with dual immersion so early in their educational "career," they are absorbing not only Mandarin language and Mandarin culture, but also the classroom culture of Mandarin-English dual immersion.

*When: The Economic and Political Moment*

In addition to the importance of cultural education at this time in students' lives, interviewees referenced the importance of cultural education at this time in history. In conversations about how learning Mandarin would lead to better jobs, staff and parents spoke of the growing importance of China for international business. In this way, interviewees' excitement about the students learning Mandarin was based on perceptions of a politically and economically rising China. As an indicator of this, Ms. H cited Ivanka Trump's daughter (five

years old) speaking fluent Mandarin (Indeed, a Google search for "Ivanka Trump's daughter" leads to the suggestions "Mandarin," "Chinese," and "singing in Chinese," and leads to a video of the girl reciting a poem in Mandarin.) In fact, Trump's presidency came up in a couple of the interviews as a humorous aside. However, the off-hand remarks suggest a serious desire for Valley Elementary School students to develop an awareness of and positive attitude toward diverse perspectives, such as the current president is critiqued for lacking.

**Chapter Summary**

"Cultural education" emerged in interviews with Valley Elementary School staff and parents as a matter of seeing both differences and commonalities, with a progression of exposure, understanding, acceptance, and connection. It takes place both implicitly, for example through how the Mandarin teachers interact and respond, and explicitly, for example through making dumplings and presenting a Lunar New Year performance. But opportunities for this implicit and explicit cultural education are limited, and navigating this as a "scarce resource" is challenging. For those who are able to access it, hoped-for benefits include character development, career opportunities, and (when applicable) heritage education. The importance of cultural education extends beyond to students, to facilitating conversations about culture with their families, and increasing the prominence and offerings of Valley Elementary School. Considering the young age of the students, China's growing economic power, and current domestic politics all heighten the importance of cultural education in this moment.

**CHPATER FOUR**

**The Student Perspective: Learning About "How Other Things are Different"**

At the center of the Mandarin-English Dual Language Immersion Program, of course, are its students. There are currently 84 students in the program, 48 in Kindergarten and 36 in 1st Grade. For this study, 14 Kindergarteners and 19 1st Graders in the dual immersion program were interviewed, in addition to 6 1st Graders in the English-only program at the same school. Students were interviewed during class time in groups of two to three. Having a couple students pulled aside to work with a non-teacher adult is a fairly common occurrence in their classrooms. During classroom observation hours, there were often small groups of students working with a parent volunteer or tutor (i.e. to finish an assignment or to make a craft). Thus, the format was a familiar one.

Interviews lasted approximately 10 to 25 minutes. They were recorded but not transcribed or coded; what follows is based mostly on notes taken during the interviews. After a brief introduction and verbal consent, interviews began with affinity questions: "Do you like learning in Chinese?," "Do you like learning about China?," followed up with questions about what the students liked learning about.[51] Next was a drawing exercise, which took the bulk of the interview time. Students were instructed to "draw a picture of what life is like in China—if you lived in China, what do you think it would be like?" They were then asked to describe their pictures. The drawing exercise was followed up with questions about whether they want to go to China someday (or go back, if they shared that they had been there before), and what they would want to see in China if they went. Next, students were each given a modified Likert scale which used colors and emoticon faces to represent "I agree a lot," "I agree," "I disagree," "I disagree a

[51] The complete list of questions and materials used can be found in the Appendix.

lot," and "I don't know." After hearing an explanation of the scale and trying practice questions (e.g. "bananas taste good," "I like spicy food," "I like going to the beach"), students were given a series of five statements to rate. Students heard the statement and then were told that "some kids agree, some kids disagree. What do you think? Point to the picture that matches what you think."[52] The target statement was then repeated. Students' responses were tallied. Finally, students were asked if they had questions for me or other things that they wanted to share, which (unlike the adults) they almost invariably did.

Interviews with groups of English-only students were significantly abbreviated, lasting about 5-10 minutes. These students were asked whether they wanted to go to China, and what they thought they would see there. They then responded to selected questions of the survey, and were invited to ask their own questions. English-only students were not asked to draw or describe pictures of life in China.

**Preliminary Affinity Questions**

The first question was "Do you like learning in Chinese?" A majority (n = 31) of the students said yes promptly and enthusiastically, though some hesitated, and two gave more neutral answers like "I guess" or "it's fine." Many students spoke about the content they learn in Chinese, for example math, numbers, and counting. Some students focused on specific activities they enjoyed, such as singing, rug time, reading books, and using the computers, specifically using programs like Kahoot and Better Chinese. Some students focused on communication: "You can speak to other people in Chinese, and they know what you're talking about," said one Kindergartener. Another student in the group agreed, "yeah, it's fun!" A 1st Grade student spoke

[52] One student reacted to this prompt by asking later, "Why don't all kids agree about stuff?"

similarly: "[It's] really fun to learn Chinese…if you learn Chinese, you can speak it!" The students appeared to enjoy gaining and using communication skills in a new language.

Besides content, activities, and communication, some students responded to this question and to the one following ("Do you like learning about China?") by talking about traveling. A couple students brought up that they wanted to learn Chinese so that they could travel, to a "Chinese place:" one student specifically brought up Hong Kong; another, somewhat erroneously but very eagerly, said that he likes learning Chinese because he wants to go to Japan. Students also answered by bringing up culture. A 1st Grade student said explicitly, "I like that I can learn about a new culture." She went on to give her own background which motivated her pleasure in learning about a new culture: "I'm a lot of stuff, but I'm not Chinese" she said, proudly referencing her mixed cultural heritage. Other students spoke about specific cultural elements, such as learning about zodiac animals or using chopsticks. One described the process of learning about another culture this way: "I like learning about how other things are different."

**Drawing Life in China**

*Differences*

Difference and sameness were discussed frequently in the interviews. Students were prompted to draw what they think life is like in China. As students described the items in their drawings, they were asked (when appropriate) whether those things were different in China than in America, or whether they were the same. If they indicated that they were different, they were asked to describe what the differences were. Among what students indicated were "the same:" cars, sea animals, and parks. Among what students indicated were "different:" money, elements of nature, houses, people, and food.

Nature came up as a difference, especially in the Kindergarten interview groups. One girl expressed that the flowers are different in China: "they are longer and pink" (Figure 1A). She referred to these later as "the pretty other flowers," which is an interesting sentence construction in that "other" is treated as an adjective, as in "foreign." Flowers also came up in one 1st Grader's drawing, which includes two trees with pink flowers and falling flower petals (Figure 1B). She indicated that she had never seen trees like this, but would want to see them in China. In one Kindergarten interview group, all three students drew scenes from nature. One drew a forest, which was "different" because "it has lots of flowers and big, big trees" (Figure 2A). One drew a beach, which was different because it "has coconut trees" (Figure 2B). One made a drawing focused on lily pads (Figure 2C). Bamboo and bamboo forests came up multiple times in the 1st Grade interview groups, often in connection with pandas (discussed below). Some of the more fantastical images may have been influenced by picture books or movies. The notion that flowers or trees are bigger in China lends itself to the conclusion that for some students, "China" is a mystical fairy-tale land of sorts; this is discussed further below.

**Figure 1A.** Pink "other flowers."

**Figure 1B.** Pink flowers on a tree.

**Figure 2A.** Forest.

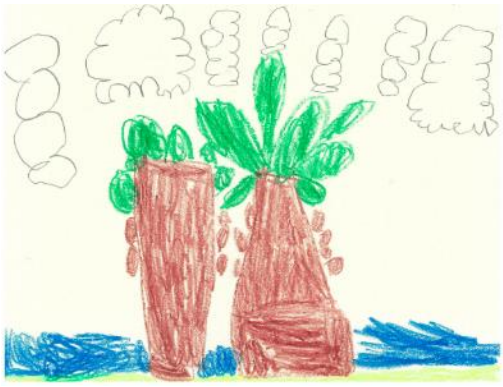

**Figure 2B.** Beach with coconut trees.

**Figure 2C.** Lily pads.

Many students drew buildings, often specifically houses. Quite a number of students, both Kindergarteners and 1st Graders, referenced the swooping corners of pagoda-style roofs (Figure 3). When describing these roofs, they used phrases like "the roofs have curls," or used

swooping and swirling hand gestures. Often these roofs were the distinguishing factor between the houses drawn in this assignment and houses that the students might draw in another circumstance. Other differences noted include "different windows" and taller buildings, as well as different people (i.e. Chinese people) inside.

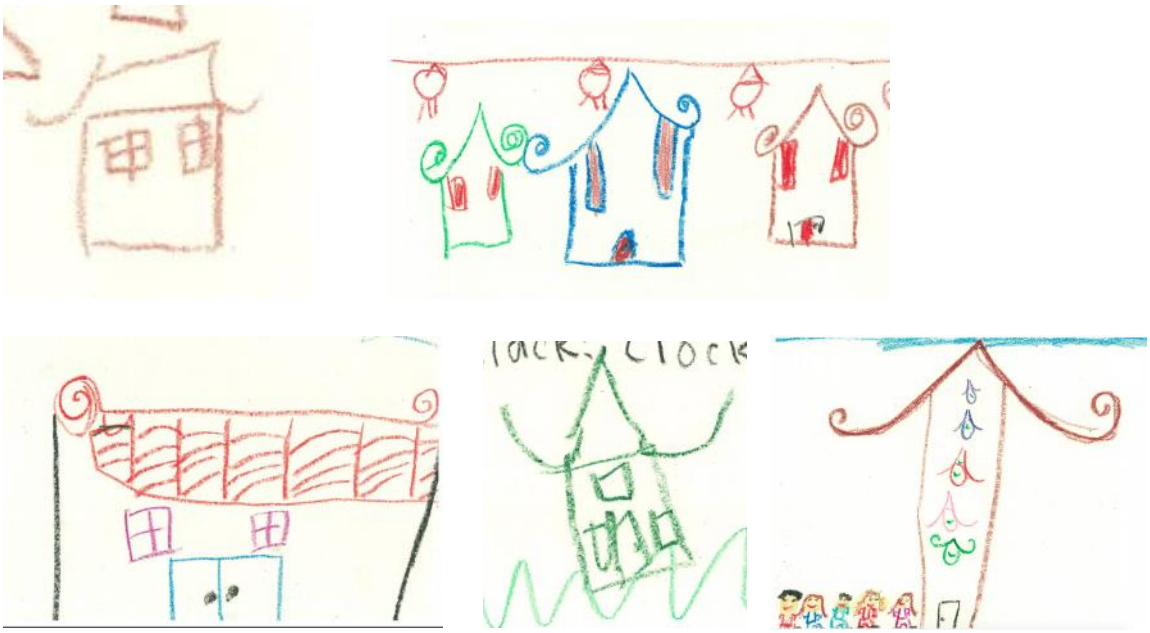

**Figure 3**. Pagoda-style roofs.

Some students included people in their drawings. Many students drew themselves; many included a family member or their entire family. Some students chose to draw themselves and/or their family members wearing Chinese clothing. Other students indicated that the people they drew were not them; they were simply Chinese people. Salient differences which set apart Chinese people included hair, dress, and language.

Students uniformly depicted Chinese hair as black. Several students drew girls and women wearing chopsticks in their hair as a Chinese hairstyle (Figure 4). One 1st Grade student ("Student A") drew herself and her mom wearing their hair in buns with chopsticks. This prompted a conversation with another student in the group ("Student B," a heritage student):

**Student B**: Did you know my mom used to live in Shanghai and she put chopsticks in her hair, and she took them out to eat and when she was done she would put them back in her hair?

**Student A:** Her hair would be wet.

**Student B:** No but then she dried it and she cleaned it, and then she put it back in her hair.

Here, students construct and negotiate understandings of life in China (see Chpater Two). Student B tells a story about her mother that is (most likely) more imagination than fact. When Student A challenges the story on a logistical basis (the chopsticks would be wet and presumably dirty from being used for eating), Student B adjusts the story and adds details accordingly. Their ideas about China are actively being shaped by each other and by themselves.


**Figure 4.** Chopsticks hairstyle.

Besides hair, students also talked about distinctive Chinese dress. "Clothes and shoes," said one Kindergartener, "are a little different." Specifically, there are "beautiful dresses," with designs on them (Figure 5) and like the ones which the girls wore for the Lunar New Year performance. Two students independently brought up the color red: one Kindergartener said that he would want to see "Chinese people, probably with red," and one 1st Grader commented similarly that "the people [in China] all wear red." The Lunar New Year performance (which

involved dressing up and included the New Year tradition of wearing red in the storyline) clearly influenced students' perceptions of what is worn in China.

**Figure 5.** "Beautiful dresses."

Finally, students noted that Chinese people were different because they speak Chinese (or, in the words of one student, "conversations" are different). One Kindergartener drew a school: school, she said, is different in China in that "you speak a lot of Chinese;" she indicated that nothing else was really different. One student confided later, after the Likert scale survey that "my family would love to live in China, but I picked ['agree' instead of 'agree a lot'] because I don't know how [to speak] Chinese." Thus, not all students identified as being able to speak Chinese, and for those who did not, this was something foreign about China, and something that marked Chinese people as different not only from American people in general but from themselves in particular.

Besides money, nature, and people, students also took note of food. Multiple students drew themselves or others eating Chinese food, most commonly dumplings and noodles. "[I drew] a girl eating delicious food from China!" said one 1st Grade student (Figure 6). She listed these foods as dumplings, noodles, and shrimp. Among the students who drew dumplings, three indicated that they ate dumplings at home, too. However, in the words of one 1st Grade student, "they're most famous there [in China]," hence they were part of his drawing of life in China.

These foods are not necessarily different because they are consumed *only* in China, but because they are Chinese foods, and therefore they are extra delicious when consumed there.

**Figure 6.** "Delicious food from China."

*Fixation*

Another theme in the drawings and the conversations surrounding them was fixation. Some students tended to fixate on one topic of varying relatedness to China, and that topic dominated the discussion for them from beginning to end. The strongest example of this was one Kindergarten student who said that he had visited China, and drew a picture to share about his trip (Figure 7). The drawing is of his family (including his father, mother, baby brother, and pet fish) on a fishing boat, because he went fishing there and caught catfish. He brought up catfish [n] times in the interview. He explained how he caught it and went on to say, "I released it after, because I care for China." For this student, his conception of China was heavily tied to and largely consumed by his memory of an experience catching catfish.

**Figure 7.** Fishing boat.

In the 1st Grade interview groups, two groups fixated on pandas. In the first group, two of the three students drew pandas in their drawings. When asked what they wanted to see in China, all three agreed that they wanted to see pandas (especially baby pandas). In another group, all three students drew pandas. One student in that group said that she did not like learning about China very much, except she "only likes the pandas." Naturally, some of this uniformity was students influencing each other within their interview groups; however, the fact that pandas came up in multiple groups and students spoke enthusiastically about them across the board indicates that they occupy a significant place in their collective understanding of "China."

Finally, another 1st Grade student was fixated on dragon dances. For his picture, he drew a dragon (Figure 8), and he said that he wanted to visit China so that he could be part of the dragon dances. These kinds of fixations dominated a few of the interviews, and emerged as a theme in the Kindergarteners' and 1st Graders' discussions of what life is like in China.

**Figure 8**. Dragon.

*Realism*

As was to be expected, students' conceptions of China were not necessarily "realistic," but there were themes in their "non-realistic" conceptions. Specifically, students' conceptions were sometimes non-real in their geography, creatures, and temporal distance.

Regarding geography, some students had a sense that China was far away, but the scale of that distance, relative to other distances, was not necessarily clear. One Kindergartener appeared to be confused as to the distinction between China and Chinatown (where her grandmother lives). Another Kindergartener described to me, "my uncles are [in] China and they're not coming, so this weekend I have to go visit them," indicating that he thought of China as close enough to go and visit on a weekend (perhaps "driving-distance"). One 1st Grade student drew himself arriving to China on a train. Thus, not all students had a clear idea of how far away China was and what the ("real") journey from here to there would look like.

As referenced above, creatures came up often in the interviews. Students did not necessarily have a "realistic" understanding of what creatures they would find in China. One conversation with a Kindergartener included the following exchange:

**Student:** "I want to see if there are pets!"

**Researcher:** "What kind of pets?"

**Student:** "Koalas, and pandas!"

While koalas and pandas are real animals that really exist in China, the notion that they exist as pets is non-real. Among other non-real ideas of creatures in China: one Kindergarten student drew a robot and expressed that he would like to see the robots in China. Finally, dragons came up again in the interviews.[53] A Kindergarten student drew a dragon that she said was the Nian monster (referencing the monster in the Lunar New Year play). When asked whether it was real or pretend, she answered that it was "pretend, but real a long time ago." This statement reveals the hazy distinction between "real" and "pretend," especially when imagining a foreign place through myths and stories set in the distant past.

In one two-student Kindergarten group, the students were divided: one thought that the Nian monster was real, the other thought that it was not. Meanwhile, a few 1st Graders drew dragon parades, sometimes with people carrying the dragon costumes (Figure 9). These 1st Graders and their peers in their interview groups agreed universally that dragons were pretend, though some did hesitate before answering.

[53] See Chpater Two (pg. 26).

**Figure 9.** Dragon parades.

Returning to the theme of time: a few students, interestingly, chose to set their drawings in the distant past. One student drew himself shooting arrows (Figure 10). When I asked him, "Do they shoot arrows in China?" he replied, "Sometimes—the knights…[fought], a long, long time ago." Thus, when asked to depict life in China, by drawing himself shooting arrows he was deciding to place himself not only geographically but also temporally far away. Another student described her drawing as a depiction of "before, when China wasn't built." The only things in the picture are green grass and a sign that says "China," and a tunnel with a person inside (Figure 11). When asked about the tunnel and the person, she said, "He's trying to escape, a lot of people tried to escape China before…because China was bossy." Her surprisingly truth-laden answer reveals that she's probably heard something, perhaps from family members, about China's political history.

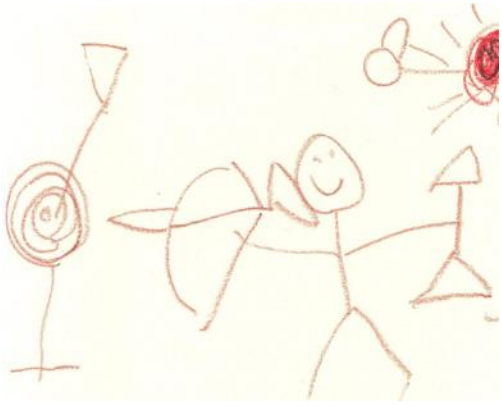

**Figure 10.** Shooting arrows.


**Figure 11.** Tunnel escape.

Thus, students' perceptions of life in China, as reflected in their drawings, were sometimes surprisingly "non-real" and other times surprisingly real. Their ideas of where China was and how to get there, what kind of creatures exist there, and what time frame is relevant did not necessarily match with adults'. As will be discussed below, various influences have had roles in shaping these ideas.

*Influences*

Primary for many of the students and primary for this study is the influence of school, specifically elements of the Mandarin-English Dual Immersion program. Multiple students brought up storybooks that they had read together at school. The influence of art projects could be seen, for example, in how students depicted Chinese roofs. During the drawing exercise, two 1st Graders referenced their field trip to a Chinese garden. One student drew a garden structure. She went back to her desk to fetch a worksheet from the field trip, so that she could copy the characters on the sides of the structure (Figure 12). Her drawing is very "Chinese"—even if the characters are in a nonsense order, visually she represents the architectural feature of writing flanking doorways quite clearly and accurately.

**Figure 12.** Garden structure.

Besides books, art projects, and field trips, Lunar New Year activities stood out as influential in students' understandings of life in China. In the preliminary affinity questions, one student said, "I like learning about the special celebrations." In the drawings, lanterns came up multiple times (Figure 13). They were depicted as strung across the scene, much like how they were strung across the stage at the performance. As mentioned above, some students referenced the clothes that they got to wear in the Lunar New Year performance, particularly girls referencing the dresses. One student indicated that "on New Year, you have to wear red."

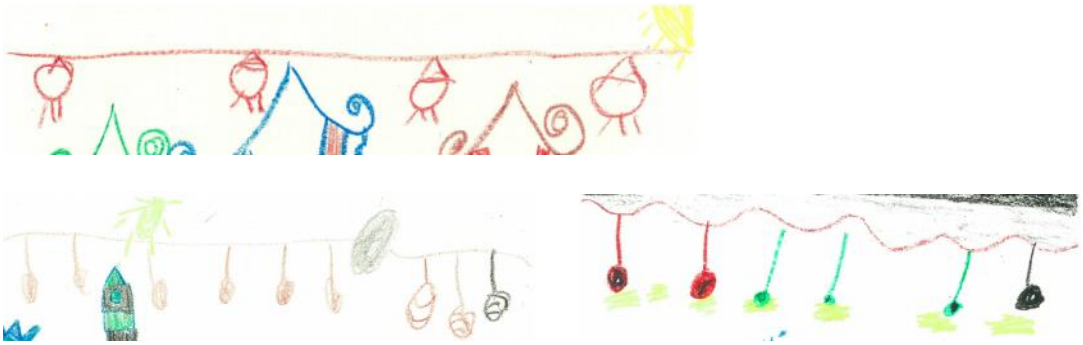

**Figure 13.** Lanterns.

School was not students' only source of information about China: the sources and outcomes of non-school influences on students' understandings of China were diverse and sometimes surprising. Some sources were expected—family, for example, came up often, as the following quotations illustrate:

"I'm Cantonese, my grandma really wants me to learn Chinese."

"My mom and dad went to the Great Wall."

"My mom really likes Chinese food."

"My parents showed me a lot of pictures [of China]."

During the Likert scale survey, when asked about whether she learns about China at school, one student expressed that she mainly learned about China from her mom and dad.

Besides family, movies also came up as an influence in a few interviews. One student, talking about the trees with pink flowers that she "always wanted to see" said, "I saw them in a movie; it's called *Mulan*" (see Figure 1B). Another student, drawing a Chinese dragon parade, indicated that she had seen such a parade in a movie. Another student said that he wanted to go to China to be in Chinese movies.

Outside influences were not limited to family and movies. One Kindergarten student drew "the big wall," which was certainly big in the sense that it took up his entire paper (Figure 14). Responding to his drawing, another student said, "I saw pictures of the Great Wall at Costco on the TVs!" In a different interview, when asked about what she would want to see in China, one Kindergartener replied that she would want to see the 7-Eleven's. 7-Eleven stores are ubiquitous in many Asian cities. They sell convenience store items and snacks, but also hot food of considerable elaborateness and quality. They are an extremely common fixture in the daily lives of many city-dwellers, not just as convenience stores but as food purveyors and meeting places, with no real equivalent in American culture. However, as salient as 7-Eleven may be in a "low culture" way, it is not often taught as "culture" in the way that, for example, Lunar New Year customs are. Thus, I was quite surprised to hear this student bring it up—when asked, she

said that her mom talks about the 7-Eleven's in China (though her mother is not from China). Again, students' accuracy was often as surprising and interesting as their inaccuracy.

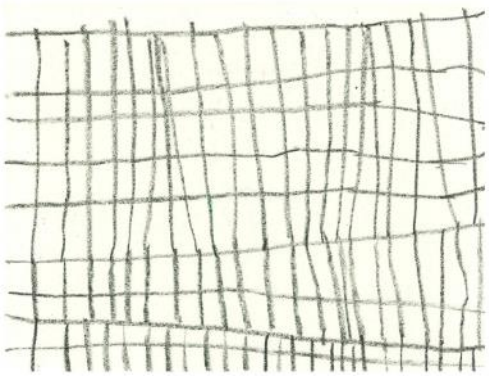

**Figure 14.** The "Big Wall."

*Comparing with English-Only Students*

Six 1st Graders who are not in the Mandarin-English dual immersion program (they are in the "English-only" program) were also surveyed. These students were surveyed in order to discern the particular effect of the Mandarin-English dual immersion program, versus other relevant influences (see above). Differences observed from their abbreviated interviews include attitudinal differences and less specificity.

When asked, "Do you want to go to China someday?" two responded positively, two responded neutrally ("sort of" or "maybe"), and two responded negatively (one cited the cost, and one said "I just don't want to"). These reactions were in general less positive and less enthusiastic than their dual immersion peers'.

Though it is difficult to conclude because only six students were interviewed, no clear themes emerged in their responses to "What would you want to see in China?" One student brought up Chinese food (when asked, he specified "noodles"), one student brought up "Chinese people" and "Chinese celebrations," and one student brought up "Chinese clothes." The latter two students were unable to specify further about the topics they listed. However, these topics

themselves were similar to those given by the dual immersion students. The other English-only students interviewed mentioned the ocean, penguins, and "BB guns made in China—I have a lot of those." Though these did not necessarily come up as specific topics with the dual immersion students, the themes of nature and fixation on one's own experiences related to China are relevant here also.

Though these students were not asked to draw pictures of life in China due to time constraints in research, their verbal responses indicate that they generally have a lesser quantity of information about China, which is less specific and less united across students (though there are themes which run between their answers and dual immersion students' answers). Their responses are quantitatively analyzed and compared in the section below.

**Likert Scale Survey**

The final activity in the interview was a modified Likert scale survey. Students were asked to point to the facial expression picture that matched how they felt about five statements.[54] The results of these surveys are separated by grade level, though in most cases the distribution was very similar. Questions 1, 4, and 5 were asked to both Mandarin-English dual immersion and English-only students; questions 2 and 3, regarding learning about China, were only asked to dual immersion students since they were not necessarily relevant to English-only students. Comparisons are made between dual immersion and English-only 1st Graders' responses; however, it must be noted that the sample size for English-only 1st Graders is very small (n = 6).

[54] The pictures used are included in the Appendix.

*(1) "Life in China is very different from life in America"*

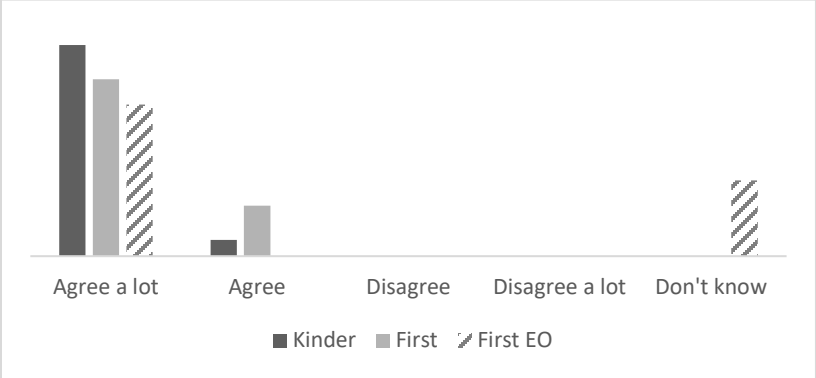


**Figure 15.** Survey responses to "Life in China is very different from life in America."[55]

Most students (n = 31) strongly agreed that life in China is very different from life in America; some students (n = 5) felt that life was a little different. One 1st Grade student used both hands in order to point to both "Agree a lot" and "Disagree a lot;" he felt that life in China and life in America is both very different and very similar. Four of the English-only 1st Graders are included among those who strongly agreed that life in China is very different from life in America. In contrast to the dual immersion interview groups, where all students chose either "Agree a lot" or "Agree," two students in the English-only interview groups chose "Don't know," indicating that they did not feel confident about having enough information to answer the question.

[55] Results are shown for Kindergarten dual immersion ("Kinder"), 1st Grade dual immersion ("First"), and 1st Grade English-Only ("First EO"), 39 students in total. The same is true for Figure 19 and Figure 20.

*(2) "At school, I learn about what life is like in China"*

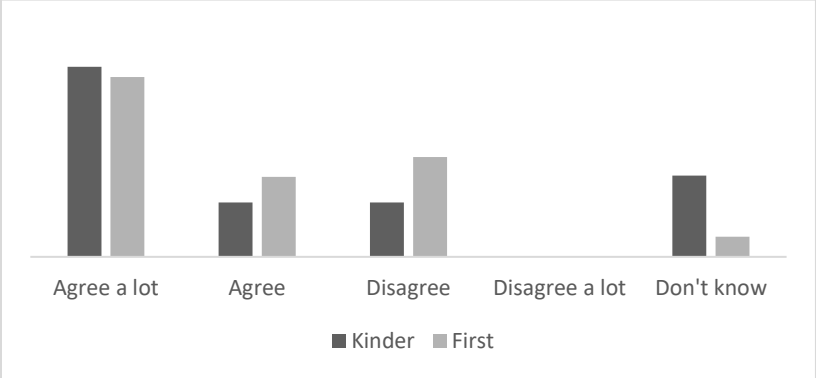


**Figure 16.** Survey responses to "At school, I learn about what life is like in China."[56]

There was some disagreement on this question. In the opening affinity questions, when asked if they like learning about China, three students countered, "[I'm] not sure if we learn about China in school" or "we don't really do that." However, these students seemed to be drawing on knowledge gained from school when making their drawings, and they did not necessarily choose "disagree" on the Likert scale survey question.

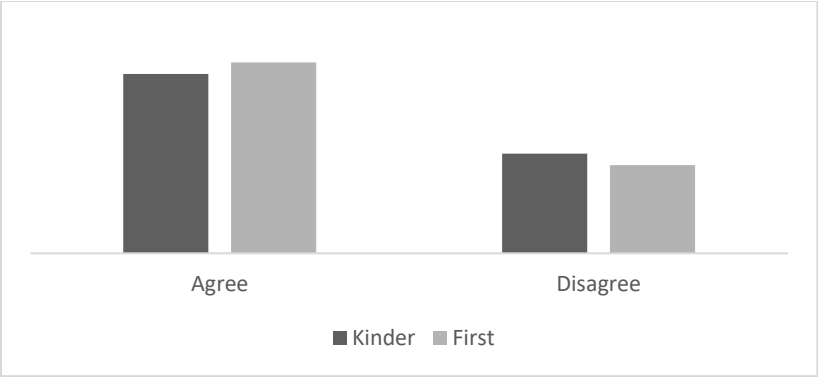


**Figure 17.** Survey responses to "At school, I learn about what life is like in China," simplified.

[56] Results are shown for Kindergarten dual immersion ("Kinder") an 1st Grade dual immersion ("First"), 33 students in total. The same is true for Figure 17 and Figure 18.

If the data is simplified by combining "agree a lot" responses with "agree," and combining "disagree" responses with "I don't know" (which in this case, seemed to indicate hesitation as to whether they learned about China at school), then it appears that two-thirds of students (n = 22) could say with some confidence that they learn about China at school.

*(3) "I like to tell my family and friends what I learn about China at school"*

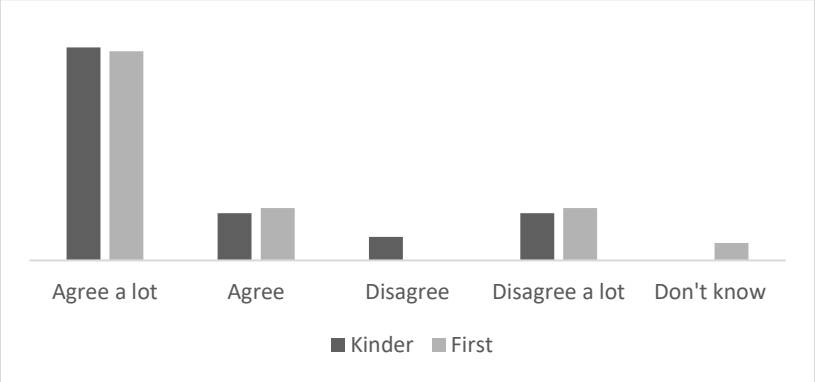


**Figure 18.** Survey responses to *"I like to tell my family and friends what I learn about China at school."*

Most students (n = 26) expressed that they enjoy sharing what they learn about China. Students generally had no problem answering this question, even if they disagreed with statement 2 regarding learning about China at school.

*(4) "I would want to visit China"*

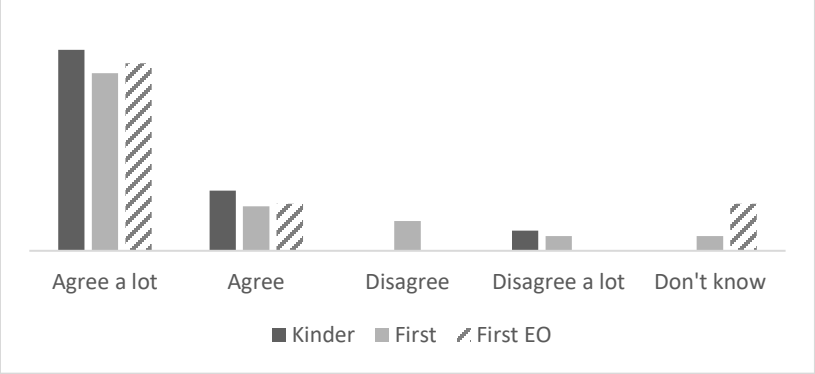


**Figure 18.** Survey responses to *"I would want to visit China."*

Most students (n = 33) indicated that they would want to visit China (this was clarified for students as "going on a trip" to China). There was no significant difference between English-only 1st Graders and dual immersion 1st Graders (*t-test, p = 0.26*). Among those who indicated that they would not want to visit China (n = 3), some gave reasons such as fear of flying, or not wanting to travel that far away. One 1st Grade student said, "I just don't feel comfortable somewhere else than my home, I only like it near my home." Thus, hesitations about visiting China seemed to be based more on aversion to travel than any negative feelings towards China as a destination.

*(5) "I would want to live in China"*

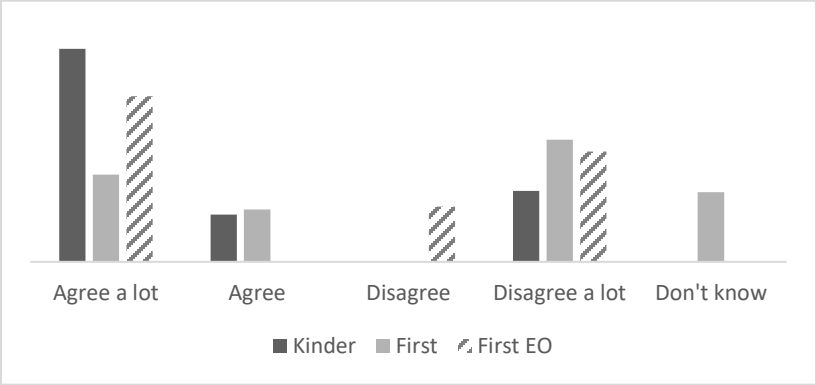


**Figure 19.** Survey responses to *"I would want to live in China."*

Kindergarteners and 1st Graders diverged on this question, and it was the most divisive within interview groups. Some students were enthusiastic about the fact that they and/or their families would want to live in China (17 chose "agree a lot"), while others were very sure that they would not want to live in China, and preferred to live in America (10 chose "disagree a lot"). One student said, "maybe when I grow up." The difference between English-only 1st Graders and dual immersion 1st Graders' responses was somewhat significant (*t-test, p = 0.05*): English-only 1st Graders seemed more averse to the idea of living in China than did their dual

immersion peers. This stands in contrast to their similarity in willingness to travel to China on a trip to "visit."

**Chapter Conclusion**

Some of their questions for me were revealing and reflective of the themes gathered from the rest of the interviews. Some reflected divergence from adult "realism," for example: "Are there magic lamps?" or "Are there monsters?" Some pertained to the natural world ("Is there bamboo?"), or to food ("Do you like dumplings?"). Some were extensions of fixation. The Kindergartener who had spoken about catfish asked, "Have you ever tried catfish? Have you ever fished for catfish?"

Many of their questions were about me. Some were unrelated to the interview topic ("How old are you?" "Do you like college?"), but some were related. Many students asked if I spoke Chinese, or if I was from China. (One student directed me to use the modified Likert scale to answer her question, "Do you want to go to college in China?") These questions about my connections to China spurred further questions, as they tried to use me as a source of information to clarify and extend their knowledge about China. Thus, the ongoing process of "China" being conveyed, constructed, and negotiated continued here in the student interviews. The Mandarin-English Dual Language Immersion program is a primary context for this process, though the process also extends to include family, media, and other influences.

At the end of our times together, multiple students expressed that they had fun in the interview. They enjoyed drawing and having an opportunity to express their thoughts and opinions. In general, as the Likert scale survey reveals, the students have quite positive attitudes toward China, learning about China, and learning Chinese. These positive attitudes will facilitate

further cultural learning in their coming years as dual-language immersion students, and hopefully for the rest of their lives.

**Conclusion**

This case study used the relatively new Mandarin-English Dual Immersion program at Valley Elementary School to investigate how culture (specifically Chinese culture) is taught and learned in the dual immersion setting. Classroom observations, interviews with school adults, and interviews with students all contributed to this analysis.

Classroom observations in the Kindergarten and 1st Grade Mandarin classrooms revealed how culture is conveyed, constructed, and negotiated. Some instruction is explicit, but much of it is implicit. Aspects of the classroom which contribute to cultural studies include features of the physical classroom environment, such as posters and student artwork; classroom routines, such as greetings and call-and-response; teachers' interactions with non-teacher adults; interactions with and between heritage students; and special activities such as those surrounding Lunar New Year. These practices and interactions serve to make Chinese culture more familiar—more like a "normal" part of the school day rather than an exotic or "foreign" topic for study. Students are actively involved in this process, conveying to each other, constructing amongst each other, and negotiating with each other about what "China" and "Chinese culture" are.

The teachers, principal, staff, and parents at Valley Elementary School spoke optimistically about their hopes for the dual immersion program expanding students' horizons. To quote Michael Byram once again:

> "Language learning, it is often said, `broadens the horizons' and, if it does, then it has educational significance. In fact, what is really meant is that cultural learning, as a result of language learning, broadens the horizons..."[57]

[57] Byram, *Cultural Studies in Foreign Language Education*, 4.

The Valley Elementary School adults defined "cultural education" as learning about other ways of living and thinking, in a process of exposure, understanding, acceptance, and connection. They listed benefits for this cultural education which are pertinent to the students (developing their skills, character, job-readiness, etc.), but also benefits which are pertinent to families (especially families of heritage students) and to the school ("putting the school on the map").

The dual immersion students had a diverse set of knowledge about China and Chinese culture, but there were unifying details, topics, and themes. Some elements of culture which had come up in their class activities (for example, pagoda-style roofs, lanterns, and dumplings) came up repeatedly across interview groups. Students spoke often about nature: many drew and spoke about animals/creatures, plants, and habitats. Their notions about what exists in China, what is different or similar in China, and where China is were sometimes fantastical, exaggerated, or otherwise inaccurate. However, sometimes their comments were remarkably accurate. This reflects first a diversity of input (including stories, activities, and lessons at school, but also families, media, and other sources). It also reflects a high selectivity with regards to what "sticks," and the sometimes seemingly-random nature of that selectivity.

Overall, "China" emerged as simultaneously a "different" place and place to be connected with. This reflects the nature of the dual immersion setting, where students are simultaneously learning about and entering into another language and culture. Mandarin is an academic subject, but also a medium of instruction. Likewise, Chinese culture is a subject of explicit study (e.g. through art projects or performances), but also integrated in the classroom culture. In a way, dual immersion students are both peering into the fish tank, and swimming in the water themselves.

However, many students (especially non-heritage students) did not necessarily recognize themselves as Mandarin-speakers, or as students who learn about China at school. Perhaps as their time in the program increases, and as their awareness about themselves and the uniqueness of their dual immersion program increases, they will identify more as "fish in the tank," or at least as students trying to approach that kind of knowledge and experience.

In general, the efficacy and effects of cultural education in the dual immersion at Valley Elementary School will become clearer as the students continue in the program (given that the program can continue to expand). Many more research opportunities lie ahead in these students' years as 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Graders, as the process of conveying/constructing/negotiating "China" goes on. The lasting effects of this unique educational experience on students' secondary school experiences, college opportunities and experiences, and career choices are certainly also worthy of investigation.

Currently, more research also remains to be done on comparing Mandarin-English dual immersion students with their English-only peers, in an attempt to have a more comprehensive picture the effects of the dual immersion program on understandings of culture. Valley Elementary School is uniquely set up for this kind of research, because it has both programs, applied to similar student populations for whom other factors might be generally the same.

The present study took place entirely on-site at Valley Elementary School, and was very much centered around the school. However, further investigation of "cultural studies" in the home and the dialogue between the home context and school context would yield a more holistic picture of students' learning processes. The experience of Chinese heritage students would be especially worth investigating, across the spectrum of recent immigrant families to families in which the parents are already 2nd or 3rd generation Chinese. Also of interest would be students of

salient non-Chinese heritage cultures and languages (for example, Valley Elementary School dual immersion students of Vietnamese, Korean, or Mexican descent). Among the questions to consider might be: how does home experience with non-majority culture(s) affect the attitudes and skills which students bring to engaging with non-majority culture at school? How does cultural learning affect identity development? How are these processes different or similar based on whether the home culture and school target culture are the same?

This case study was exactly that, a simple study of one particular case—the Kindergarten and 1st Grade classes at Valley Elementary School—conducted over a short period of time (about two and a half months altogether). However, it is significant in adding to the very limited pool of research on Mandarin education in the elementary school setting. Moreover, it is an addition to the limited research available about cultural studies (which is, again, more limited in the elementary school setting). The latter is especially crucial as we expand our ideas of language studies to make space for rich, complex, and engaging cultural studies, such that students would be equipped to make meaningful connections in an increasingly connected global context.

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**Appendix**

*Interview questions for teachers:*

1) What attracted you to this job as a Mandarin-English dual immersion teacher?
2) How would you define "cultural education?"
3) What place do you feel cultural education has in your classroom?
4) How important do you think it is for students to learn about other cultures? (Not important at all, of little importance, of average importance, very important, or absolutely essential)
    a. Why?
5) Are there explicit strategies that you use to make cultural education part of the dual immersion classroom?
    a. Can you describe a few?
    b. Do you feel like these are effective? Why or why not?
6) Do you see your students learning about Chinese culture through means outside of your explicit instruction?
    a. If so, how?
7) Is there anything you learned about cultural education previous years of teaching that has influenced your strategies for this year?

*Interview questions for administrators and non-teacher staff:*

1) What excites you about the Mandarin-English dual immersion program at Valley Elementary School?
2) How has having the dual immersion program affected Valley Elementary School as a whole?

3) What do you hope students in the Mandarin-English dual immersion program will gain?
4) How would you define "cultural education"?
5) What place do you feel cultural education has in the dual immersion classroom?
6) How important do you think it is for students to learn about other cultures? (Not important at all, of little importance, of average importance, very important, or absolutely essential)
    a. Why?

*Interview questions for parents of students:*

1) What motivated you to enroll your child in Mandarin-English dual immersion at Valley Elementary School?
    a. What do you hope they will learn in the program?
2) How would you describe what your child is learning about China and Chinese culture?
3) How important would you say it is for your child to learn about other cultures? (Not important at all, of little importance, of average importance, very important, or absolutely essential)
    a. Why?

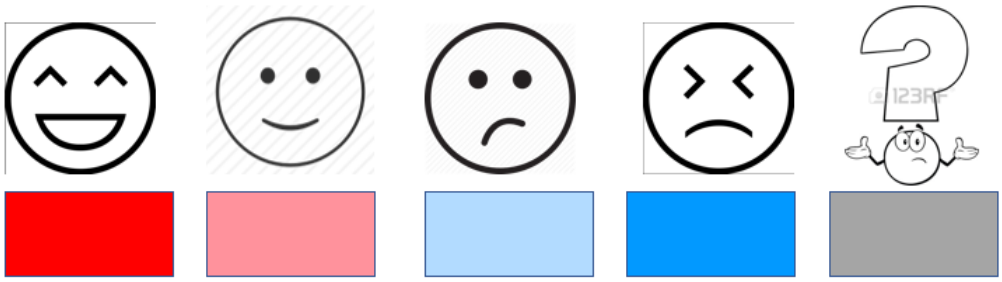
*Interview questions for students:*

1) Do you like learning in Chinese?
    a. What do you like/not like?
2) Do you like learning about China?
    a. What do you like/not like?
3) Draw a picture of what life is like in China.
4) Can you each describe your picture for me?

5) Do you want to go to China someday?
    a. What do you want to see there?

*Modified survey questions:*

The modified survey was conducted in a visual/tactile format. Students were surveyed in their interview groups of two to three students. They were each presented with a modified Likert scale using emoticons and colors to represent "I agree a lot," "I agree," "I disagree," "I disagree a lot," and "I don't know," respectively. The scale was explained, and then students were given a few practice questions (e.g. "bananas taste good," "I like spicy food," "I like going to the beach"). Then, each of the five statements were read, and students' answers were tallied.



1) "Life in China is very different from life in America." Some children agree with this, some children disagree. What do you think? Point to the picture that matches what you think. "Life in China is very different from life in America."
2) "At school, I learn about what life is like in China." Some children agree with this, some children disagree. What do you think? Point to the picture that matches what you think. "At school, I learn about what life is like in China."

3) "I like to tell my family and friends the things I learn about China at school." Some children agree with this, some children disagree. What do you think? Point to the picture that matches what you think. "I like to tell my family and friends the things I learn about China at school."
4) "I would want to visit China." Some children agree with this, some children disagree. What do you think? Point to the picture that matches what you think. "I would want to visit China."
5) "I would want to live in China." Some children agree with this, some children disagree. What do you think? Point to the picture that matches what you think. "I would want to live in China."