

Teaching Practices of Six Chinese Heritage Language Teachers in Montreal

by

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Abstract

Considering the widespread assumption that the majority of Chinese heritage language school instructors use a home-country model, in this thesis, I investigate six Montreal-based heritage language teachers to identify the particularities of their teaching practices. My investigation employs qualitative research methods, including interviews and observations. The findings show that the teachers who participated in this study are willing to change their teaching practices according to their new environment. However, their efficiency in doing so differs. The findings suggest that heritage language teachers' prior teaching experience in their native country is an asset rather than an obstacle to their adaptation to their new environment. However, their teaching experience in China can only be an asset when accompanied by other factors (e.g., preference for Western education, their own children's Western mainstream school learning experiences, their own children's heritage language learning experiences, as well as cooperation and interaction with heritage language colleagues, their own Second Language learning experience in local schools, and parental expectations) that familiarize teachers with the local pedagogical environment. It is problematic that teachers' effective adaptation to the new environment depends on resources that are generally not provided by the schools in which they are working. Thus, I propose that a stable support system be put in place to benefit both heritage language teachers and their students.

Résumé

Compte tenu de l'hypothèse largement répandue que la majorité des chinois moniteurs de l'école de langue du patrimoine utiliser un modèle du pays d'origine, j'étudie six professeurs de langues du patrimoine montréalais dans un effort pour identifier les particularités de leurs pratiques d'enseignement. Mon enquête utilise des méthodes de recherche qualitative, y compris les entretiens et d'observations. Les résultats montrent que les enseignants qui ont participé à cette étude sont prêts à changer leurs pratiques d'enseignement en fonction de leur nouvel environnement. Toutefois, leur efficacité en faisant diffère. Les résultats suggèrent que l'expérience d'enseignement avant professeurs de langues de patrimoine dans leur pays natal est un atout plutôt qu'un obstacle à leur adaptation à leur nouvel environnement. Cependant, leur expérience de l'enseignement en Chine ne peut être un atout lorsqu'ils sont accompagnés par d'autres facteurs (par exemple, la préférence pour l'éducation occidentale, les expériences d'apprentissage de l'école ordinaire de propres enfants, propres expériences d'apprentissage de la langue d'origine des enfants, la coopération et l'interaction avec des collègues de langues d'origine, propre langue seconde l'expérience d'apprentissage dans les écoles locales, et les attentes des parents) qui familiariser les enseignants avec l'environnement pédagogique locale. Il est problématique que l'adaptation efficace des enseignants au nouvel environnement dépende des ressources qui ne sont généralement pas fournis par les écoles dans lesquelles ils travaillent. Ainsi, je propose qu'un système de soutien stable être mis en place au profit des deux professeurs de langues du patrimoine et de leurs étudiants.

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Chapter 1 **Introduction**

1.1 Personal motivations

When I taught Chinese as a second language in China, one of my students, who was an exchange student from McGill University, told me a story about her family. Emigrating from China at the beginning of the twenty first-century, her parents had been working as tailors in Montreal's Chinatown for approximately twelve years. However, they spoke little English or French. My student's ten-year-old younger sister, who was born and educated in Montreal, resisted speaking Chinese, her heritage language, to her parents. As a result, my student's parents and her younger sister seldom communicated with each other, which caused family tension. I was shocked by this story. Since I had never previously thought about the importance of maintaining one's heritage language when living in a foreign country, this story initiated my interest in heritage language (HL) research.

Feuerverger (1997), a heritage language educator and researcher, recalled her miserable days of attending heritage language school in Montreal:

My minority language educational experiences in childhood were a very dismal affair. I was sent to a Yiddish language program after regular school hours (twice a week from 4 to 6 pm), which took place in the basement of a dilapidated community centre. The teacher didn't know how to engage her pupils and so our main activity in class was to gaze out the window at the other children who were playing in the street. There might as well have been bars on those windows. It was clear: nobody wanted to be in that classroom. The books were old, torn and grey.... No pretty pictures. The stories held no meaning and certainly no excitement.... Once an eraser hit the teacher in the face. Dead silence. She sat down at her desk and began to cry out of sheer desperation. Poor woman.

I felt sorry for her and disgusted. I compared her to the exciting French teacher at school.
(Feuerverger, 1997, p. 44)

This excerpt provides a vivid picture of what happened in a Yiddish heritage language class. The uncomfortable surroundings, the tedious activities, the old textbooks, and the inconvenient time contributed to the fact that “nobody wanted to be in that classroom” (p. 44). Also, Feuerverger compared her dull Yiddish teacher with her “exciting” French teacher in regular school.

A study conducted by Curdt-Christiansen (2006) further aroused my interest in heritage language class. In this study, a learner expressed her perspective about Chinese heritage language classes that she attended in Montreal:

I don't like the Chinese [heritage language] school ... there is no action in the class ... I like action. But in the Chinese school, we are not allowed to do anything. We are not allowed to talk or to write except dictations.... In my French [mainstream/regular] school, we are allowed to make up stories, we can talk about our stories in front of the whole class, and the teachers are nice. (p. 204)

In this particular study, the learner compared Chinese learning in a HL class with French learning in a mainstream class. She viewed Chinese learning as a rigid and low-motivation process, while French learning as an engaging experience, which, intriguingly, is identical with Feuerverger's (1997) reflection. Furthermore, through observing seven Chinese heritage language classes in Montreal, Curdt-Christiansen (2006) found that “teacher-controlled and teacher-centered classroom interactions are predominant” (p. 193). She claims that this teaching pattern is not ideal for students' heritage language learning.

The aforementioned two studies demonstrate that heritage language teachers' unsatisfactory teaching practices are one of the factors why heritage language learners have

negative attitudes to heritage language classes. In heritage language classes, inappropriate instructional approaches can result in heritage language learners' negative attitudes not only to the courses, but also to their cultural background. Thus, this study aims to investigate heritage language teachers' teaching practices, one of the factors that appear to prevent heritage language maintenance in a classroom setting.

1.2 Research questions

Heritage language teachers have often had all of their formal education in their country of origin. Many of them have therefore never experienced the educational practices in the countries they immigrated to. As a result, they are unfamiliar with the teaching norms and strategies of the mainstream education system which their heritage language students experience (Feuerverger, 1997; Majhanovich & Richards, 1995). This unfamiliarity might influence their understanding of heritage language learners' expectations about teaching and also influence the learners' learning experience. As a teacher quoted in Majhanovich and Richards (1995) explained:

We have a certain type of dichotomy here where the students are taught by regular day school teachers who are qualified in one specific area using specific strategies to encourage them to learn in a certain manner, and on Saturday they move on to the heritage language school where people in front of them don't have any idea of what they are doing... I think it's terrible because a child's learning needs to be on a continuum and where it is cut off on Friday and they go to a different methodology, we are inviting disaster. (p. 27)

Wang's (1996) study reports that "the majority of Chinese [heritage] language school instructors teach students using a 'home-country' model as if the schools were still located in the home country" (p. 87). Therefore, this study focuses on a group of Chinese heritage language

teachers in Montreal in an effort to identify the particularities of their teaching practices. Most of the teachers that have participated in this study have previously taught Chinese as a native language or as a second language in China. In order to reach a better understanding of their teaching practices within the Montreal/Quebec context, I have sought to address the following research questions:

1. In what ways do the heritage language teachers perceive that their teaching practices and approaches meet the needs of the Montreal/Quebec heritage language context?
What kinds of adjustments might be considered? Why?
2. What are the critical factors that might influence heritage language teachers' willingness to change their teaching practices?

1.3 Significance of the study and thesis structure

In their review article, Duff and Li (2013) point out that “little if any research has explored classroom discourse, instruction and ideologies involving K-16 Chinese heritage language learners in Canada” (p. 92). Thus, this study attempts to fill this research gap by investigating the complexities of teaching Chinese as a heritage language in the Montreal environment. An in-depth study of heritage language teachers' instructional practices can help us gain a better understanding of their concerns and needs, which may help to better prepare and support heritage language teachers and preserve heritage languages.

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter introduces the purpose and background of the study and outlines the study's research questions. The second chapter provides a review of the literature that guided the study. Chapter three explains the methodology of the study. It describes the theoretical framework that the study adopts. It also elaborates the methodological rationale and the procedures of data collection and analysis. Chapter four

presents and discusses this study's findings. Chapter five presents a summary of the findings and the implications for research and pedagogy. It also acknowledges the limitations of the study and proposes suggestions for further study. In the following chapter I report on literature relevant to this study.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Defining heritage language

In this thesis, I adopt Cummins's (1992) definition of the term heritage language, which is "all languages other than the aboriginal languages of First Nations peoples and the 'official' Canadian languages (English and French)" (p. 286). Specifically, heritage languages refer to immigrants' heritage languages, which are the languages "they speak at home with their families" (Arnett & Mady, 2013, p. 199) or their "usual language[s] of communication" (Cummins, 2001, p. 15). The term heritage language, however, has different meanings when it is used in different contexts. It is sometimes employed broadly to include minority languages and Aboriginal languages. For example, in the review article "300-Plus Years of Heritage Language Education in the United States" by Fishman (2001), Indigenous, colonial and immigrant heritage languages are considered heritage languages. In addition, there are many other terms that are used to refer to the same concept. For example, in Australia, Britain and New Zealand, heritage languages are called community languages. Even in Canada, different terms have been used at different times and in different provinces, such as "ethnic", "minority", "ancestral", "third", "modern", "international" and "non-official" languages. In the province where the present study was conducted, Quebec, "langues d'origine" (original languages) is used to refer to heritage languages (Cummins, 1992).

An article called "Who Are Our Heritage Language Learners?" pointed out the problem caused by the varying definitions, as "there is still no general consensus on who heritage language speakers and learners are, which in turn has hindered the field from advancing pedagogically or theoretically" (Hornberger & Wang, 2008, p. 3). As for why multiple terms are used for this concept, Cummins (1992) suggests:

A number of Canadian proponents of heritage language teaching have expressed misgivings about the term because “heritage” connotes learning about past traditions rather than acquiring language skills that have significance for children’s overall educational and personal development. (p. 286)

Thus, in 1994, the Ontario government replaced the term heritage language with international languages, partly in an attempt to defuse the strong emotional reactions that the term “heritage languages” evokes.

2.2 Importance of heritage languages

No matter how complicated and difficult the term HL is to define, the three-generational language shifts depicted by Fishman (1966) are thought provoking. In his book *Language Loyalty in the United States: The Maintenance and Perpetuation of Non-English Mother Tongues by American Ethnic and Religious Groups*, Fishman presents the phenomenon that after the third generation, an immigrant’s mother tongue can hardly be preserved in the United States. Specifically, foreign-born first generation immigrants to the U.S.A. generally speak mostly their mother tongue while learning English; the native-born second generation may speak a little of their mother tongue at home but uses English at school and work; for the native-born third-generation, English usually becomes the only language they can speak. Fishman’s classic model has proved to be representative not only in the U.S.A. but also in other countries.

In the face of the attrition of heritage languages, new awareness of language rights has prompted researchers to investigate heritage languages. Maintaining heritage languages is deemed important by many studies (Baker, 1995; Cummins, 2000, 2001; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). As summarized by Arnett and Mady (2013), “the right to access and pursue opportunities to initiate and /or maintain proficiency in their heritage languages is an important part of the

transition to life in a new country” (pp. 199-200). In the following section, I give a synopsis of the major benefits of preserving heritage languages as mentioned in the relevant literature.

From the perspective on the individual, maintaining heritage languages can have the following advantages:

1. Benefit for overall educational success

A common misunderstanding is that learning HL will inhibit children’s acquisition of the mainstream school languages. On the contrary, “the level of development of children’s mother tongue is a strong predictor of their second language development” (Cummins, 2001, p. 17). Learning a heritage language can help children promote their main educational language skills, as “children’s knowledge and skills transfer across languages from the mother tongue they have learned in the home to the school language” (Cummins, 2001, p. 17). When children’s heritage languages are effectively and positively taught in school, these multilingual children develop literacy in those languages, and they can perform better in school based literacy tasks (Cummins, 2005; Fillmore, 1991). By contrast, when children’s heritage languages are not encouraged, language and literacy development stagnates, and children’s personal and conceptual basis for learning is damaged (Cummins, 2001a; Schecter & Cummins, 2003). Thus, their overall educational success will be affected. By surveying, interviewing and observing 105 Chinese-American and Korean-American public high school students who were born in the United States, Lee (2002) found that students who were more interested in preserving their HL and culture achieved a higher level of academic success than those who were less interested.

2. Construction of a better social identity

The concept of identity is interchangeable with notions of “self-concept or self-system” (Hornberger & Wang, 2008, p. 6). Identity refers to “how people understand their relationship to

the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future” (Norton, 1997, p. 410). West (1992) provides more concrete components of identity. West points out that identity includes the desire for recognition, visibility, acknowledgement, affiliation, protection, security, safety and surety. In her study, He (2010) identified that identity construction is intricately linked with heritage language learning.

Hornberger and Wang (2008) state that “identity is crucial in a child’s development and learning. Identity contributes to children’s sense (or lack thereof) of belonging, worth, competence, and achievements” (p. 6). According to Phinney, Romero, Nava, and Huang (2001), an ethnic identity is “an identity as a member of an ethnic group within the larger society” (p. 135). Tse (1998), however, claimed that it is difficult for “visible or racial minorities” to be integrated into the host society because of their physical differences (p. 15).

By investigating 216 second-generation immigrant adolescent students and their parents, Phinney et al. (2001) found that second-generation immigrant students’ ethnic identities are positively related to their HL proficiency. In addition, parents’ encouragement of their children’s learning and use of HL enhances these students’ ethnic identity development. Besides the aforementioned benefits, learning heritage languages can also help learners establish better communication patterns within families, communities, nations and the world (Cummins & Danesi, 1990; Fillmore, 2000).

From the perspective of a nation, linguistic resources are important for nations in this era of globalization. Cummins (2001a) states that “A society that has access to multilingual and multicultural resources is advantaged in its ability to play an important social and economic role on the world stage” (p. 16). He also points out that it is short-sighted for nations to squander their linguistic resources by discouraging children from maintaining their mother tongues.

2.3 Heritage language status in Canada

Valdes (2001) claims that due to the new effort to correct old wrongs and the new consciousness of language rights, educators all over the world have recognized the significance of heritage languages. Consequently, some countries have implemented policies to support heritage language learners. Policy exponents hold a belief that these policies give these ethnic languages both legitimacy and attention (Cummins, 2001). However, as Duff and Li (2013) claimed, “the unique colonial linguistic duality of Canada (settlement by Anglophones and Francophones) has detracted from the importance and role of other minority languages (immigrant and Indigenous alike)” (p. 90). By examining recent census data, Jedwab (2014) states that there is a significant language loss by the third generation immigrants in almost every heritage language community in Canada. Various factors such as unfavourable government policies, low funding, exogamy, family language practices and inadequate education contribute to this loss (Cummins & Danesi, 1990).

Cummins (2014) identifies four phases of educational policies regarding heritage languages in Canada. (1) Pre-1971: Social policy was characterised by the active suppression of languages other than English and French in schools. (2) 1971 to mid-1980s: The 1971 federal policy on multiculturalism raised the status of heritage languages, but subtle forms of language suppression still exist (e.g. advising parents to switch to English in the home). (3) Mid-1980s to mid-2000s: This period was characterised by benign neglect of heritage languages. Maintenance of heritage languages was seen as an issue for the parents rather than the school. (4) Mid-2000s to present: Small-scale shifts have taken place within schools to provide pro-active support to enable students to maintain and take pride in their heritage languages (e.g. writing and publishing of bilingual books).

2.4 Challenges for heritage language maintenance process

In the heritage language maintenance process, three stakeholders are included: learners, guardians, and teachers. Certain proponents believe that education should play an essential role in preserving heritage languages (Baker, 2003; García, 2003; L. Tse, 2001). However, some challenges within the education system prevent learners' HL maintenance.

2.4.1 Negative influences of mainstream schooling

In some cases, public school teachers' attitudes towards linguistic minority students' home language can affect heritage language maintenance. Lee and Oxelson (2006) investigated K-12 teachers' attitudes toward students' heritage language maintenance. The teachers who did not receive training as language instructors expressed negative or indifferent attitudes towards heritage language maintenance. Specifically, they saw heritage language maintenance as an individual or family activity. It is predictable that teachers' negative attitudes towards heritage language could largely influence those of learners. As heritage language maintenance is a societal process, Lee and Oxelson's study advocated that public school teachers should encourage learners to develop positive attitudes towards heritage language.

2.4.2 Negative influences of heritage language school

In the review article, Tse (1997) found that a majority of immigrant students hold negative memories of their HL schools. The negative memories about heritage language school mentioned by Feuerverger (1997) cited in the introductory chapter of this thesis is typical among heritage language learners. Rincker (1991) generalizes some reasons for this phenomenon by surveying 154 heritage language teachers and administrators in Canada. From the perspective of HL schools, the insufficient instruction time, poor quality of materials and curriculum, insufficient funding, different ages and language levels in the same class, and lack of

professional development opportunities for teachers to improve teaching skills lead to poor learning on the part of students. Additionally, HL students' low motivation is also oriented by the marginalization of HL classes within the regular curriculum. In the case of Somali HL learners in Liverpool, for example, "the students were coping with the results of the positioning of community language as not merely peripheral, but oppositional to mainstream schooling" (Arthur, 2004, p. 234).

2.5 The uniqueness of heritage language teachers

As "the newer immigrants are often very proactive in establishing language schools and community centers while actively maintaining their transnational ties" (Duff & Li, 2013, p. 88) , nowadays, there are many different kinds of HL schools, such as bilingual public school, weekend or after school HL school. However, the most common form is weekend HL school that operates outside the public school system (Wang, 1996).

In weekend heritage language schools, heritage language teaching is only a secondary job or a personal mission for disseminating heritage language and culture (Wu et al., 2011). Due to the limited working time offered by HL schools, HL teachers generally cannot support themselves by relying on HL teaching alone. As a result, many of them have full-time non-language teaching positions on weekdays. Peng (1996) reported the critical situation faced by Chinese HL teachers in the United States. As there is limited funding to employ long-term teachers, most of the HL teachers are parents who volunteer to teach because their own children are enrolled in the program. When their children leave the program, these teachers stop volunteering. Liu's (2006) study, which was conducted ten years after Peng's (1996), confirmed that parental contribution to HL teaching is still the norm in the United States. According to his

research, approximately 70% of the 92 participants who taught Chinese HL in Southern California were parents of students in the program.

Majhanovich and Richards (1995) stated that most HL teachers are first generation immigrants who were educated in their home countries. Although the majority received tertiary education, few of them have language teaching backgrounds or language teaching educational experiences in their new countries (Feuerverger, 1997; Liu, 2006; Majhanovich & Richards, 1995). As teachers' instructional practices are largely determined by their cultural, educational and/or teaching backgrounds, they might transfer their former learning and/or teaching experiences to HL classes. Nevertheless, their former experiences might conflict with mainstream teaching norms and values, which might confuse learners. As this thesis focuses on Chinese heritage language teachers, in the following section, I will summarize the major differences between Chinese and Western teaching cultures.

2.5.1 Differences between Chinese and Western cultures of teaching

In China, there is a long history of using examinations to evaluate a person's success in education. A formal civil service examination system (imperial examination) known as the Keju (科举) system was implemented in China from the 7th century to the beginning of the 20th century. The purpose of this system was to select high officials to serve the Emperor. Appointments to civil service positions, such as grand councillors (equivalent to prime ministers), provincial governors and district magistrates, were based on the individual candidates' performance in the civil service examinations (Carless, 2012; Suen & Yu, 2006). Nowadays, Chinese people continue to use exam results to judge a person's general performance in education. The modern version of Keju is the National College Entrance Exam (NCEE), known as Gaokao (高考), which was developed for the purpose of selecting students for higher

education. In a society where success in exams is highly valued, the glory of being successful continues today under the Gaokao. Attaining a high Gaokao score and entering the national key Universities are the dream of almost all high school students and their families (Suen & Yu, 2006). Thus, teachers in China are more concerned with students' test scores than with their interest in learning. Test scores are used to evaluate both the performance of students and teachers (Carless, 2012).

In addition, Confucian-oriented culture influences the teaching and learning norms in China. Drawing from the existing literature on Chinese education, Biggs (1996) describes typical Chinese classes as follows: "Confucian-heritage culture classes ... appear to Western observers as highly authoritarian: teaching methods are mostly expository" (p. 46). Literature on the Chinese culture of teaching often contrasts Confucian-oriented teaching in China with Socratic-oriented teaching in the West.

Traditional Confucian-oriented education emphasizes teacher authority. The authority of the teacher influences both teacher-student relationships and teaching methods. Students' viewing teachers as authorities leads them to show respect to their teachers both in class and out of class. In turn, a teacher "would value those who are more obedient and quiet in class, listen to him and follow his instruction with no conditions" (Zhao, 2007, p. 129). One participant in Turner and Acker's (2002) study recalled her experience of disobeying a teacher's instruction in primary school in China.

Actually, I was a smart kid when I was in primary school. I would actually just listen to what the teacher said and if there was something you should do, a question that the teacher gave, you would just do it.... One of the most impressive things that I remember was once when we took a test. The teacher just wrote the question on the board—we

didn't have handouts at that time. The teacher then just told us what to write just like this.

The style was set. But I didn't follow it. Actually, I should have got full marks, but the teacher just gave me zero. (p. 108)

This excerpt shows that the authority of Chinese teachers made them intolerant to the students who disobeyed their instructions. Direct challenges to or criticisms of the teacher appear to be unacceptable. In Turner and Acker's (2002) study, another participant recalled one episode when his classmate challenged the teacher during his studying in primary school in China:

I remember one teacher, when we were studying ancient poetry. We had some problems and one student said, "Oh, teacher, you are wrong." ... But the teacher was very angry with this student, "No, I'm teaching YOU, you are a student!" You know that feeling is very bad. (p. 108)

The authority of the Chinese teachers results in their indifference to or even anger at students' feedback. This unequal power relationship is also reflected in the teacher-centred educational methods. Many researchers have commented on the centrality of lecturing in the Chinese classroom. For example, "Chinese teachers are very serious and tend to lecture as a teaching style" (Huang, 2009, p. 338). Lee (2000) states that Confucian philosophy emphasizes the importance of lecturing in education. Weng and Lin (2013) claim that teachers in China prefer a teacher-centred approach by using lectures to transmit information and knowledge. In Turner and Acker's (2002) study, a participant expressed his opposition to teacher-centred education in China:

There is something wrong with the Chinese education system. Normally, Chinese teachers always tend to teach the students in a style, in a way of stuffing, just like a [Beijing] duck. Yes, like stuffing a duck. In the whole class, from beginning to end, the

teacher always talks himself and students seldom speak, seldom ask questions, even when answering a question, [the only time] is when the teachers ask them. (pp. 110-111)

The “education-as-stuffing-a-duck” metaphor describes Chinese teachers’ instilling knowledge in students and students receiving knowledge passively. One participant in Turner and Acker’s (2002) study thinks “this is a disadvantage of the Chinese school. This is not a good way to lead students to think their own way” (p. 111).

In Western classes influenced by Socratic-oriented culture, however, teachers are viewed as facilitators of learning rather than authorities of knowledge (Huang, 2009). Coleman (2001) states that a teacher as a facilitator means that the teacher assists the students to learn and facilitates learning by encouraging the students to express their opinions. Teachers stress student thinking and discussion, encourage students to be active in classroom discussions, and praise critical and daring ideas (Upton, 1989). Zhao (2007) thinks that Western teachers demand more individual identity in class, not expecting their students to be as obedient as the Chinese students are. Therefore, in Western classrooms, the atmosphere is more relaxed. For example, students can pose questions to their teacher. Weng and Lin (2013) summarize that in Western schools, teachers “prefer students doing over listening; prefer critical thinking over quiet receiving; prefer dialogue over lecture” (p. 49).

Facing the difference in pedagogical cultures between East and West, heritage language students who were born and grew up in a Western educational environment might have difficulty getting used to the Chinese pedagogical norms used by their heritage language teachers. Weng and Lin’s (2013) study reports parents’ and students’ challenges to teachers’ authority in American heritage language schools. A teacher who participated in their study reported a parent’s challenge to her teaching:

One afternoon, a mother came to ask me to reduce my teaching material because her son couldn't keep up. She told me that she was not interested in having her son learn Chinese formally, but rather playing in a Chinese language environment. She said this was the American teaching style for young kids. I feel so angry and upset, because I never experience[d] this in China. (p. 46)

Parents in China regard teachers as experts and usually support teachers' teaching practices. This teacher was angry and upset because her teaching authority was challenged by a parent. Another teacher who participated in Weng and Lin's (2013) study told a story about what happened in her school:

One of my students in my 2nd grade class moved up to a 3rd grade class. His 3rd grade teacher is regarded as a good teacher in our Chinese school. Once, the boy forgot to finish his homework, and then was thrown out of the classroom by the teacher. Since then, the boy hated the Chinese school and didn't want to go back to school anymore. (p. 46)

Obviously, the teacher who is "regarded as a good teacher" in the heritage language school obeyed traditional Chinese teaching norms. He was extremely strict with his students, not tolerating any mistakes. His authority as a teacher led him to throw the student out of the classroom. However, the student, who was taught according to a Western pedagogical norm, might not have expected his teacher's method of teaching. He might have interpreted his teacher's behaviour as humiliating him instead of helping him to make further progress. This episode shows how the conflict between different pedagogical norms might lead to students' unpleasant learning experiences.

2.6 Second language/heritage language teachers' professional development

As Richards and Nunan (1990) point out, “The field of teacher education is a relatively underexplored one in both second and foreign language teaching” (p. xi). Compared to mainstream teacher education, research on language teacher education “has been noticeably missing from the professional discourse” (Freeman & Johnson, 1998, p. 397).

2.6.1 Influential factors

In the limited literature, a number of factors that shape language teachers' teaching practices have been proposed, which include teachers' own second/foreign language learning experience, their beliefs about language learning and teaching, language teacher education programs, local school context, updates about new ideas, accessible teaching materials and their students (Freeman & Freeman, 2011). Other influential factors mentioned are: knowledge about teaching contexts and knowledge about students (Freeman & Johnson, 1998).

2.6.2 A dynamic system

Freeman and Johnson (1998) suggest that there are three domains that influence language teachers' knowledge: “teachers as learners of language teaching,” “the social context of schools and schooling,” and “the pedagogical process of language teaching and learning” (Freeman & Johnson, 1998, pp. 405-412). In the process of developing their knowledge, teachers interact “with people in their contexts of work, where they constantly construct and reconstruct their understandings of their work as teachers” (Tsui, 2003, p. 64). Specifically, teachers are actively learning and shaping their knowledge. Language teachers' knowledge is indicated as a dynamic and developmental system (Tsui, 2003).

2.6.3 Teachers' beliefs and assumptions in teachers' knowledge

When language teachers are from cultures other than the host context where they are teaching, their teaching practices are largely influenced by their own cultures and teaching profession. The problem is that “language teachers’ original beliefs and assumptions about teaching in the host culture may not be true or may even look unacceptable as perceived by the language teaching profession in the host country” (Wang, 2012, p. 9). Thus, better capacities to adapt to local school contexts and willingness to integrate the concept of context into their teaching are required. Johnson (2006) emphasizes that “context is not necessarily limited to specific geopolitical boundaries but can be sociopolitical, sociohistorical, and socioeconomic contexts that shape and are shaped by local and global events” (p. 245). In this case, it is important to investigate what factors influence HL teachers’ professional development, especially for those who are from a culture different from the host country.

2.7 Summary

This chapter begins with various definitions of heritage language. In this study, heritage language refers to immigrants’ home language, which was acquired through contact with parents and/or other family members. Recent research has emphasized the importance of maintaining heritage language. A strong foundation in children’s heritage language can not only benefit their overall academic progress, but also aid in their identity construction. In addition, heritage languages are valuable linguistic resources for a country. However, both the mainstream school education system and the heritage language schools do not provide sufficient support to help learners preserve their heritage languages.

In heritage language schools, heritage language teachers are viewed as the major parties who need to take responsibility for students’ learning. Nevertheless, many studies suggest that

heritage language teachers' teaching practices are largely influenced by their former teaching and learning experience in their home country. Their relatively insufficient understanding of the pedagogical norms and strategies in the new context might prevent them from teaching effectively. However, little research has provided an in-depth investigation into this alleged problem. When teaching in a new environment, are heritage language teachers willing to change their former teaching practices? If so, what are the factors that facilitate their professional development? As few studies pay attention to heritage language teachers, we do not benefit from scholars' opinions and the dissemination of heritage language teachers' experiences. Thus, this study aims to promote our understanding of the complexities of heritage language education by investigating Chinese heritage language teachers' teaching practices in the Montreal context.

Chapter 3 **Research design: Methodology and methods**

This chapter outlines the methodology used in this study. I first present the research questions and theoretical framework. Second, I describe the rationale for the research design. Then I explain the research context, participants and data collection procedures. The final section presents the major principles guiding the approaches to data analysis.

3.1 Research questions

This research focuses on two interrelated research questions:

1. In what ways do the heritage language teachers perceive that their teaching practices and approaches meet the needs of the Montreal/Quebec heritage language context?
What kinds of adjustments might be considered? Why?
2. What are the critical factors that might influence heritage language teachers' willingness to change their teaching practices?

3.2 Theoretical framework

In order to address the research questions, this study adopts a situated learning perspective to investigate heritage language teachers' adaptation to a new teaching environment. Originally developed by Lave and Wenger (1991), situated learning theory suggests that learning takes place through active engagement in contextual experience and engagement in a community. They characterize learning as legitimate peripheral participation, which concerns the process by which newcomers are integrated into a community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). As heritage language teachers are normally immigrants who are accustomed to a different cultural environment, they are newcomers in the community of practice. Situated in a new pedagogical environment, they can be understood as legitimate peripheral participants within the broad education system. They are likely unfamiliar with the pedagogical norms and strategies

embedded in the local education system. Through heritage language teachers' engagement in the community, they can develop a deeper understanding of what that community of practice entails, and what there is to be learned. Lave and Wenger (1991) claim that legitimate peripheral participation is about being located in the social world, as a place where one moves toward more intensive participation: "learners must be legitimate peripheral participants in ongoing practice in order for learning identities to be engaged and develop into full participation" (p. 64). In order to gain full participation in the new teaching society, heritage language teachers must define their own trajectory to adapt to the new teaching environment. "Moving from peripheral to full participation requires newcomers to develop a deeper involvement in the life of the community, an increased commitment of time, gradually intensified efforts, and most importantly, a developing identity as a master practitioner." (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 111) Centered around the idea of situated learning, this study explores how heritage language teachers adapt to, and make sense of, their teaching environments and their alienated teaching conditions.

3.3 Methodological rationale

As my research questions focus on heritage language teachers' perspectives, this study applies qualitative research methodology. "Methodology is a more generic term that refers to the general logic and theoretical perspective for a research project" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 35). As Grills (1998) claims, qualitative inquiry helps us better understand the human experience by giving us a better grasp of the participants' challenges, frustrations, and everyday relationships. The characteristics of qualitative research make it a useful approach to probe heritage language teachers' teaching practices and their perception of their own teaching. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argue that qualitative research is primarily conducted through various methods in order to get a better understanding of the specific research questions in natural research settings. By

applying multiple methods in qualitative research, researchers may obtain a deep, rich and diverse understanding of possible answers to research questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). A number of data gathering techniques are applied in this study. Aiming to get in-depth information from the participants, I applied one-on-one interviews as a major method. I also observed some of the teachers' classes, with their permission, in order to obtain a better understanding of their teaching context and practices.

3.4 Research site

This research was undertaken in Montreal, Quebec. According to Statistics Canada, in 2011, "the vast majority (94.8%) of Canada's foreign-born population lived in four provinces: Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec and Alberta" (Statistics Canada, 2011, p. 9). "Among the immigrants whose mother tongue was other than English or French, Chinese languages were the most common mother tongues. A total of about 852,700 individuals reported these languages" (Statistics Canada, 2011, p. 18). As in other Canadian cities, Montreal is attracting more and more Chinese immigrants. In Montreal, 1.1% of the total population reported speaking Chinese as their mother tongue (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Nowadays, "heritage language teaching for school-aged students in Canada is carried out within three major educational contexts: public schools, private or independent schools, and in community-supported out-of-school programmes" (Cummins, 2014, p. 3). In Montreal, limited Chinese heritage language education is provided in public or private schools. Thus, community-supported out-of-school programmes have long been an option for Chinese-background learners in major cosmopolitan areas (Duff & Li, 2013). According to a Montreal newspaper in 2008, there were more than eight Chinese heritage language schools in the Greater Montreal Area (Zi, p. 17). The primary goal of these schools is to ensure the

maintenance of the Chinese language and culture through the study of subjects like language, literature, painting, dance, and martial arts. Most of these schools are independent, receive no government grants, and have no connection to Quebec school boards. These schools are generally well organized and are usually comprised of a school board, a principal, and an administrative staff. Most of these heritage language schools open on weekends or after school and rent classrooms from other institutions such as local public schools, colleges or churches. This study focuses on teachers in these heritage language schools.

3.5 Participants

The participants in this study are teachers who work in Chinese heritage language (weekend) schools in Montreal. They were recruited through the following channels:

1. Through the principals of heritage language schools. After getting the approval of the heritage language school principals, I asked them to help me recruit participants by sending out the participant-recruiting letters (see Appendices 1 and 2).
2. Through my friends and acquaintances. I asked my friends and acquaintances to introduce potential participants to me and I explained my study to them in person.

In order to investigate my research questions more thoroughly, I used purposeful sampling to choose the participants, taking each participants' educational and teaching background into consideration. The criteria for the chosen participants were age (ranged from 20s-40s), former teaching experiences and former Chinese residency. I contacted every potential participant who was willing to participate in this study and obtained her or his biographical information. Among them, I chose six participants: Han, Wenhui, Juan, Meimei, Chao and Shichang (pseudonyms). I will introduce all my participants briefly below (also see Table 1).

Han is in her 40s. She graduated from a prestigious university in China, where she

majored in Chinese language and literature. She taught Chinese as a native language in a Chinese high school for 10 years. After immigrating to Canada with her family, she has taught Chinese as a heritage language for 3 years.

Wenhui is also in her 40s. She graduated from a teacher's college in China, where she majored in English language and literature. She taught English as a foreign language in an elementary school in China for 8 years. She also has 2 years of Chinese as a second language teaching experience in a private educational institute. Since coming to Montreal, she has taught Chinese as a heritage language at a heritage language school for 2 years; she also teaches Chinese as a foreign language in another private language school in Montreal.

Juan is in her 30s. She graduated from a teacher's college in China, where she majored in preschool education. Before moving to Canada, she taught in a kindergarten for 7 years in China. Since immigrating to Quebec, she has been studying in a French college to get her teaching certificate while she works part-time in a French kindergarten. On weekends, she teaches Chinese to kindergarten students in a heritage school.

Meimei is also in her 30s. After receiving her bachelor's degree from a prestigious normal university in China, she began to teach pre-service kindergarten teachers in a college. After about 5 years of service in the college, she immigrated to Montreal. Until now, she has taught Chinese as a heritage language at the kindergarten level for 6 years.

Chao is in her 20s. After getting her bachelor's degree majoring in Chinese language and literature in China, she is continuing her graduate studies in a renowned university in Montreal.

Table 1 *Summary of participants' profile*

		Han	Wenhui	Juan	Mei	Chao	Shichang
Educational Background	Major	Chinese Language and Literature	English language and literature	Preschool education	Preschool education	Chinese language and literature	Finance
	Level	Tertiary level	Tertiary level	Teacher's college	Tertiary level	Tertiary level	Tertiary level
	Place	China	China	China	China	China	China
Teaching Experience		Chinese as first language	English as a foreign language & Chinese as a second language	Chinese as first language	Teacher training	Chinese as second language	N/A
Length of Teaching in China		10 years	10 years	7 years	5 years	few weeks	N/A
Length of Teaching in Montreal		3 years	2 years	1 year	6 years	2 years	1 year
Status		Immigrant	Immigrant	Immigrant	Immigrant	Immigrant	Immigrant
Length of arrival in Canada		10 years	4 years	2 years	6 years	2 years	2 years
Place of Birth		Mainland China	Mainland China	Mainland China	Mainland China	Mainland China	Mainland China
Native Languages		Mandarin	Mandarin	Mandarin, Cantonese	Mandarin, Cantonese	Mandarin	Mandarin, Cantonese
Other Languages Spoken		English	English, French	French, English	English	English, French	English, French
Age		40s	40s	30s	30s	20s	20s

Her former teaching experience was limited, as she only taught Chinese as a second language part time for a few weeks in China. Since she came to Montreal, she has taught Chinese as a heritage language for 2 years.

Shichang, the only male in this study, is in his 20s. After graduating from a university with a major in finance in China, he immigrated to Montreal. He is the only participant who did not have any teaching experience before he came to Montreal. After teaching Chinese as a heritage language in Montreal for one year, he moved to another city to look for a permanent job.

Two teachers with little teaching experience were recruited because individuals with less experience account for the majority of heritage language teachers (Liu, 2006; Wang, 1996). Although this study focuses on experienced heritage language teachers' teaching practices, interviewing and observing inexperienced teachers as well can give us a general view of the normal conditions of heritage language teaching.

3.6 Data collection methods

3.6.1 Interviews

Since my research questions aim to probe the teachers' attitudes and reflections on their own teaching, interviews were the most appropriate approach. According to Robson (2002), "interviewing as a research method typically involves you, as researcher, asking questions and, hopefully, receiving answers from the people you are interviewing" (p. 269). Interviewing is a powerful implement to collect in-depth information based on communication between researcher and participants. It allowed me to gather information such as learners' perceptions and attitudes, which cannot be gathered from direct observations. Once I chose my participants, one-on-one interviews were arranged based on participants' time and location preference. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with guiding interview questions (see Appendix 3). All of the

interviews were conducted during the summer of 2014, and the major locations were cafés and the participants' classrooms. The interviews were semi-structured, and focused on the following:

1. Participants' teaching and learning experience
2. Their normal teaching procedures
3. Their teaching goals
4. Participants' reflections on their teaching practices.

All of the teachers chose to be interviewed in Mandarin Chinese, which is their mother tongue and the language in which they are most confident. As some teachers were willing to share more of their teaching story with me than others, the running time of the interviews varied from forty minutes to four and a half hours, with an average of two hours.

3.6.2 Classroom observations

After interviewing my participants, I observed some of their classes. According to Merriam (1998), the reason to “conduct observation is to provide some knowledge of the context or to provide specific incidents, behaviors, and so on that can be used” (p. 96). Classroom observation is a helpful strategy to obtain a general view of my participants' teaching environment. It provides me with additional information to better understand the teachers' statements regarding their teaching practices. Since the interviews were conducted during the summer, when most of my participants did not have classes, the classroom observation was conducted at the beginning of the fall semester of 2014. Unfortunately, after the summer, I was not able to observe all of my participants' classes, as Shichang moved to another city, Han went back to China, and I was not available at the time Juan offered me to observe her class. Although I could not observe all the teachers' classes, this does not decrease the validity of this study since the foci of this study is teachers' perceptions of their teaching practices. The information

collected from classroom observations served to provide a context in which to situate and understand the teachers' instructional practices. During the observations, I took descriptive field notes that describe the physical setting and the activities, as I did not get permission to video or audio-record the classes. I also took some reflective field notes to help me clarify my thinking, speculations, feelings, ideas and impressions. After the observations, I asked the participants some supplemental questions that arose during the observations. The following table (Table 2) summarizes the length/sites of interviews and the length of class observations.

Table 2 *Summary of the interviews and observations*

Name	Interviews site	Length of Interview (Minutes)	Length of Class Observation (Minutes)
Shichang	Café	70	N/A
Han	Classroom	56	N/A
Juan	Classroom	43	N/A
Meimei	Classroom	237	240 (four classes)
Wenhui	Café	274	50 (one class)
Chao	Café	101	50 (one class)

3.7 Data analysis and reporting

After I finished the interviews, I transcribed the audio-recordings immediately into Chinese, the language used by the participants. In terms of the classroom observation field notes, I typed up all my notes with my reflections and feelings the day after each class observation. Using the coding strategies provided by Saldaña (2013), I coded the data manually using the following steps: First, I read my transcripts four times. The first time I just got a rough idea of all the participants' words. The second time I read them carefully and wrote down my first

impressions and feelings about the words in the margins. The third time I used words or phrases to code the transcripts. After that, I grouped similarly coded data into categories and generated the most frequent themes. As coding is a cyclical act, rarely is the first cycle of coding data perfectly accomplished (Saldaña, 2013, p. 8). Thus, I applied the Second Cycle methods, which repeated the First Cycle methods. During the Second Cycle coding, I rearranged the coded data and found some new categories.

When reporting the data, I reproduce lengthy excerpts from the interviews. Since all the interviews were conducted in Mandarin, I first present the original excerpts from the interview data and follow them with my translation. The reason for using the participants' spoken words verbatim is that it provides "opportunities for people to give their own views about policy or practices which affected them directly, and to express their feelings or beliefs in the way they themselves perceived these. Giving people a voice by using their spoken words was also a way of demonstrating the value of what they said" (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006, p. 13).

3.8 Ethical issues

Ethical issues are one of the most important factors that I considered when designing this qualitative research. I submitted my application for approval to the Research Ethics Board and I received approval to interview the participants and observe their classes. The participants' rights are carefully protected. I informed the participants that all the data I collected would be confidential and that any information that could identify them would not be included in my final report.

3.9 Summary

In this chapter, I have presented the methodology I applied to design this study. I explained the theoretical framework that I adopted and the reasons for applying a qualitative

study. I then described my research participants, data collection processes and strategies used for data analysis. I will present and discuss the results in the next chapter.

Chapter 4 **Results and Discussion**

This chapter provides answers to, and discussion of, the following research questions:

1. In what ways do the heritage language teachers perceive that their teaching practices and approaches meet the needs of the Montreal/Quebec heritage language context? What kinds of adjustments might be considered? Why?
2. What are the critical factors that might influence heritage language teachers' willingness to change their teaching practices?

This chapter consists of four sections. The first section addresses the first research question by presenting teachers' perceptions about whether, and why, they think they need to adjust their teaching practices in Montreal. Teachers stated that the different teaching priorities in China and in Montreal necessitated a change in their teaching practices. The second and the third sections continue to answer the first research question by exploring (1) the teachers' adaptations of their teaching practices in the new environment and (2) their perception of the effectiveness of their current teaching practices. The fourth section answers the second research question by analysing the factors that influence heritage language teachers' willingness to change their teaching practices. I identify their former teaching experience, preference for Western education, learning experience, and parental expectations as factors that influence their career development.

4.1 The need to change teaching practices from China to Montreal

All the teachers who participated in this study hold the opinion that they needed to change their former teaching practices in this new teaching environment. They specified that teaching practices effective in China might lose their efficacy in Montreal. It was necessary to adjust their teaching practices according to students' circumstances. Han stated:

我觉得这毕竟是，不是中国的环境，我觉得每个老师都得变.....这是中文学

校，但我不可能把中国的东西 100%搬来。

After all, it is not a Chinese environment that I think every teacher needs to change... Although I am teaching in a Chinese school [in Montreal], I cannot just use my teaching practices from China to teach here in Montreal. (Interview: Han)

The thematic analysis of the data shows that the major reason that teachers thought they needed to change their teaching practices is the different teaching priorities in Montreal and in China. It appears that exam-directed education in China leads teachers to focus more on helping learners perform better in examinations, while teaching heritage language as an out of regular school program makes teachers focus more on inspiring students' interest in learning.

Han identified the different teaching priorities in China and in Montreal.

我们在[中国的]学校的时候，你的目标就是你要争取要百分之多少的学生达到九十分以上，那是你的目标。在这儿，你的目标是什么，是让学生有兴趣。让学生了解中文，了解中国文化。

When I am teaching in China, my aim as a teacher is to try to help the largest percentage of students to achieve more than 90 (out of 100). However, here in Montreal, my aim is to arouse my students' interest in learning Chinese and help them know the language as well as Chinese culture. (Interview: Han)

4.1.1 Exam-directed education in China

As I mentioned in literature review chapter, in China, there is a long history of using examinations to evaluate a person's success in education. Nowadays, since test scores are used to evaluate both the performance of students and teachers, teachers in China still focus on students' test scores. As Biggs (1996) summarized, teachers in China “are sharply focused on preparation for external examinations. Examinations themselves address low-level cognitive goals, are

highly competitive, and exert excessive pressure on teachers and exam stress on students” (p. 46). After a standardized exam, the school will rank all of the students in one grade according to their scores. Han recalled a particular monthly exam written by her high school students in China. Her class did not perform well and, at the weekly meeting, the principal criticized her in front of all the other teachers; she lost her bonus that month. This kind of high-pressure competition pushes teachers to overemphasize students’ performance on exams. From Han’s point of view, the primary aim in Chinese teaching is to help students achieve the best scores. However, most teachers in this study do not support the exam-directed education in China. Chao described the negative influence of this type of education on students.

在我们[中国]那种环境中，整个社会都只看重成绩，爸爸妈妈也那样，老师也那样，所以小孩子没有别的选择，他们只能去适应。久而久之他们就习惯了被动地为了考试去学习，而不是真正出于自己的兴趣去学。

When we are in that environment [China], the whole society, parents, and teachers all focus on test scores. Children have no other choice. They have to adapt to this system. Over time, some students might get used to accepting knowledge passively for exam preparation instead of learning out of their own interest. (Interview: Chao)

4.1.2 Interest as a teaching priority in Montreal

In heritage language schools, however, teachers no longer emphasize students’ grades, as the test score is not the only way to assess students’ performance. Mrs. Zhan showed me the grading scale that teachers use in her heritage language school during the interview:

评分标准

平时成绩（包括出勤，课堂表现，作业）占总成绩的 60%

测验（包括一学期的期中考试）占总成绩的 20%

期末考试（包括口语和笔试）占总成绩的 20%

总成绩满分为 100%

Assessment standard

Daily performance (including attendance, in-class performance, and assignments) 60%

Tests (including the mid-term) 20%

Final test (including the oral and written) 20%

Total 100%

This grading scale shows that students' test scores are not the decisive factor when assessing their performance, as tests only account for 40% of their final grades. Instead, the daily performance (which includes attendance, in-class performance, and assignments) constitutes a major part of the students' final grade. Instead of emphasizing students' scores, teachers care more about the students' individual development and their engagement in learning. Shichang told me:

我常告诉学生不要把学中文变成一个负担，压力，就像一个兴趣。毕竟真的是兴趣班，不要为了成绩为了什么高低去学，成绩不重要，我说，能够学到你感兴趣的东西才是真正好学的东西。

I always tell my students not to treat learning Chinese as a burden and pressure. It should be an interest. After all, it is an optional class. Your aim in learning Chinese is not to achieve a high score, as scores are not important. I told them that acquiring the knowledge in which they are interested is the most important thing. (Interview: Shichang)

In this study, teachers acknowledged that students have relatively low motivation to attend Chinese heritage language classes. Teachers were aware that students prioritize their

regular school above their heritage language school. Learning Mandarin in a heritage language school is only an additional activity for some students; and, in most cases, this additional activity is chosen by parents. Most students lack enthusiasm and interest in attending the heritage language class.

大多数是家长，呃，逼他们去学，基本上很少是自己自愿去学的。极个别，基本上他们都对中文有点反感。

Most of the students are forced by their parents. Basically, only a few of them are willing to come to [heritage language] school. Most of them are a little resistant to learning Chinese. (Interview: Shichang)

这些孩子星期六早上不愿意起床。学校九点半就开课，那就意味着你可能八点半就得从家出来，八点半就从家出来你得几点起，孩子得七点就起……上课九点半到十点半他们都不在状态。

These children are not willing to get up early on a Saturday morning. As the class begins at half past nine, they have to get up at seven and get ready to leave their house at half past eight. They do not have the right mindset for the first class from half past nine to half past ten. (Interview: Wenhui)

Teachers' awareness of the students' low motivation inspires them to arouse students' interest in learning:

这儿的教学，还是培养他的兴趣，让他觉得还想学，让他一辈子都对中文感兴趣。

The teaching priority here is to cultivate students' interests. You need to help them feel that they are willing to continue their study and are interested in learning Chinese for their whole life. (Interview: Wenhui)

我的目标是让他们喜欢我，喜欢中文课，喜欢这个学校，让他们每周都想来上课。

My aim is to make them like my Chinese course, this school and me. The aim is to make them want to come to my class every week. (Interview: Meimei)

Teachers present different reasons for why their main aim is to arouse students' interest in learning. Han expressed directly “如果他们上得不开心，那他们都走光了” (“if they are feeling unhappy, they will leave my class.”) Han provided a practical reason. As studying in heritage language school is not compulsory for the students, if they don't like the class, they are bored and find excuses not to attend. Then the teacher might lose his/her job.

Chao explained this issue from another perspective—contextual differences.

东方和西方的教育本身就很不一样。现在这边还是孩子为主体吧，他的兴趣而且确实会对他的学习效果产生很大的影响，所以你只能是尽可能地鼓励他，调动他的积极性，他自己愿意学比别人逼着他学要好得多的多。

There is a huge difference between education in the East and in the West. Here in Montreal, children are the center of attention. Their interests will definitely influence their academic performance. Thus, you should encourage and motivate them as much as possible. It will be much better if they want to learn instead of being pushed to learn by others. (Interview: Chao)

As the value of success through exams has been well integrated into Chinese culture, it might be difficult to change teachers' beliefs that education consists mainly of examinations and

that scores are of the utmost importance (Curd-Christiansen, 1999). In this study, however, the fact that Chinese heritage language teachers no longer use examinations as the only way to assess students' performance demonstrates their changing attitudes in the new teaching environment. Heritage language teachers are situated in a challenging teaching environment. The relatively low motivation of heritage language learners inspires them to make efforts to arouse learners' interests. If students' interests are at the center of teaching, then teachers no longer need to focus only on exams. Teachers could use multiple ways to draw students' interests and encourage them to learn on their own in an effort to positively affect their learning.

4.2 Teachers' adaptation to new environments and their instructional practices

In the interviews that I conducted, teachers mentioned arousing students' interest as a top priority in teaching Chinese as a heritage language in Montreal. The thematic analysis of the data shows that teachers apply different instructional strategies in their teaching. Their different beliefs about heritage language teaching lead to different practices, and these practices differ in their efficacy. On the one hand, some teachers know how to adapt their teaching practices to the educational expectations in Montreal, while other teachers feel less prepared. In this study, Han, Wenhui, Meimei and Juan all expressed confidence in adapting to new environments. They apply different teaching strategies to meet the needs of their students. However, Chao and Shichang expressed their frustration in heritage language teaching. In the following section, I will explain how each teacher adapted to the teaching environment in Montreal. I will then elaborate on their teaching practices. As Meimei and Juan, Chao and Shichang are facing very similar circumstances, I will present their cases together.

4.2.1 Han—differentiated instruction and cultivating cultural identity

Before moving to Montreal, Han had taught Chinese as a first language in high school for ten years in China. At the time of my interview, Han was teaching a ninth grade heritage language class in Montreal. Her class was made up of students from different backgrounds and different Chinese proficiency levels. Responding to my question about the teaching differences between teaching in Montreal and China, Han said:

(在这里教学和在中国教学有)非常大的不同，因为孩子的成长背景不一样。

在中国的孩子们成长的环境单一，所有的孩子都是土生土长的。而在这儿就不一样了，在这儿孩子的家庭环境也不一样，来的时间长短也不一样，中文水平也不一样。

There is a huge difference between teaching Chinese in China and in Montreal, because students in Montreal have different backgrounds. In China, children grow up in the same environment; everyone is born and raised in China. However, it is different here. Students differ in their family backgrounds and the length of time they have been here. Thus, their levels of Chinese vary. (Interview: Han)

Facing a class with heterogeneous backgrounds and language proficiencies, Han tried to balance every student's needs. Rather than approach her class as a homogeneous unit, she takes into account individual variations and applies different teaching strategies to different students. She explained:

然后我对每个孩子一定要有不同的教法，你要是只是就着成绩好的孩子呢，那些（成绩差的）就干脆跟不上了，他也就没兴趣来了。我估计到最后，今天，可能都坐不了这么多人了，没兴趣就落下了。可是你要是就着这些成绩不好的，成绩好的他也吃不饱，对他来讲也是浪费时间。

I apply different teaching methods to different students. If I only direct my attention to the ones who obtain high grades, then the ones who don't have good grades will fall behind and be less interested in coming to class. If I did that, I assume that there wouldn't be as many students in my class today. However, if I only focus on helping the ones who don't have good grades, the ones with high proficiency won't learn much from my class. Then it is also a waste of time for them. (Interview: Han)

Han has a good grasp of every student's language proficiency and caters her teaching approaches accordingly. For example, she promotes the writing ability of students who already have high speaking and reading proficiency. As for the students who do not speak Mandarin frequently at home, she aims to improve their speaking ability so that they can express themselves in Mandarin. Han does not rely on tests to assess students; she makes efforts to understand each student's progress and take individual differences into account. That is, Han adjusts her teaching methods in accordance with the learning styles of her students.

Han also adjusts her teaching strategies to students' age. She told me confidently that when teaching grade nine students (about 15 years old), the most effective and meaningful way to motivate them is to teach them about Chinese culture. She stated that teaching strategies involving games were not suitable for her students.

小孩子就不能像那个幼儿园的孩子那么对待，他们有他们自己的想法……我不需要说给他们做游戏那样的方式，但是我觉得我这个班的孩子对于文化历史更感兴趣。

You can't apply the way you treat kindergarten students to teenagers. Teenagers have their own thoughts... I don't need to attract them by using games. I think students in my class are more interested in Chinese culture and history. (Interview: Han)

Han believes that teaching Chinese as a heritage language involves not only the complex learning of Chinese characters and grammar, but also the subtle sociocultural–historical knowledge associated with the characters and the texts. She stressed that teachers created literacy activities, which are a major source of information for learners. She explained her intention to integrate Chinese culture into her instruction:

我讲的不仅仅是课文，我会围绕这个课文再讲他们涉及到的中国历史地理文化这些东西，培养他的兴趣，让他知道就是作为中国人的后代，我们中国自己的文化。

I do not only focus on the text. I also tell them some other Chinese historical or geographical knowledge based on the text. The aim is to cultivate their interest and help them know that as Chinese descendants we have our own Chinese culture. (Interview: Han)

Han emphasizes the importance of transmitting cultural knowledge in her teaching. She raised the significance of inculcating heritage language learners with cultural awareness. From her viewpoint, heritage language development enables learners to construct and develop their cultural identity. Her ability to relate the instructional materials to the learners' cultural identity has great impact on older heritage language learners. Han provided an example of how she integrates culturally relevant knowledge into her lessons to draw her students' interests:

你比如说，我们课本上有一课是，三国演义里面的空城计，一个片段。它就一张半纸，大概 700 字左右吧。你如果你只是说念一遍课文，熟悉一下不会的字，生字，解释一下生词，这篇课文你也可以就把它讲完了。但是你说你通过它，你能讲出多少中国东西来啊。你通过空城计，你可以把它整个放大到三国演义，通过《三国演义》你可以放大到中国四大名著，对吧？真的有太多的东西要讲了。

For example, one lesson in the textbook is an excerpt from “Kong Cheng Ji” [the stratagem of the empty city – presenting a bold front to conceal a weak defence] in the novel The Romance of the Three Kingdoms. The text is only one and a half pages, about 700 characters. If you only lead the students through the texts, and explain the new characters and words, you can finish this lesson very quickly. However, based on the text, you can explain a lot of Chinese cultural knowledge to the students. Through “Kong Cheng Ji”, you can let them know the novel The Romance of the Three Kingdoms. Through The Romance of the Three Kingdoms, you can teach them the Four Chinese Classical Novels, right? There are so many things you can illustrate to the students.

(Interview: Han)

She stated that when she taught the same lesson in China, she would only focus on the content shown in the textbook:

我都觉得说，这在中国你不会说，你讲那些，因为觉得分数是你的重要哈。我下次考试会考什么，这是你关心的事情。可是在这里的教学，我更关心的是让我的学生，通过这篇课文，了解，了解中国的名著，了解中国的文化，

I think in China, I would not explain this cultural knowledge to my students, because the exam scores are very important. I only care about the content that will appear in the exam. However, teaching here in Montreal makes me care more about whether my students know more about Chinese literary classics and Chinese culture through the text. (Interview: Han)

According to Han, the exam-directed education in China makes teachers narrow the curriculum to specific topics covered in the exam. Subject matter that is being tested will be taught and students will try to learn it well. However, subject matter that is not tested, no matter

how valuable, will be ignored or de-emphasized and students will not wish to spend too much time learning it. In heritage language schools, teachers have more freedom to integrate into their teaching curricula the content that they think is valuable to cultivate students' learning interest and to build their identity.

Han found students were keen to learn about Chinese culture. She explains how she manages students' interest:

这样我就发现，当我讲这些 [文化知识] 的时候，他们就格外地安静，眼睛就跟着你，就不枯燥。要不然你只是念课文啊，我跟你说那个词什么意思，然后让你们会写了这个字，那他就觉得是很苦啊，对他来说就困难。你讲一些文化的，他通过那个就有兴趣。

I have found out that when I am talking about [Chinese culture], the class is extremely quiet, and everyone's eyes are on me. In this case, they do not feel bored. If I only read the texts, tell them the meaning of the words, and teach them how to write the Chinese characters, they will feel learning Chinese is an unpleasant and difficult experience. However, if I teach them some cultural knowledge, their interest will be aroused. (Interview: Han)

Han identified the differences between teaching Chinese in Montreal and China. She applied differentiated instruction in her teaching. As Tomlinson and McTighe (2006) claim: "Few teachers find their work effective or satisfying when they simply 'serve up' a curriculum—even an elegant one—to their students with no regard for their varied learning needs. For many educators, Differentiated Instruction offers a framework for addressing learner variance as a critical component of instructional planning" (pp. 1-2). Han develops her teaching

approach on the basis of students' language proficiency and needs. Tragant's (2006) study suggests that second language learners of different ages are motivated by different factors. Younger students' enthusiasm for learning is tied most directly to their satisfaction with classroom practices. Older students concentrate more on the current and future utility of the language (Tragant, 2006). Han develops curricular models and materials that she believes are suitable for the teenagers in her class. Her teaching ways do not only connect with students' interest, but also help students develop the skills that will facilitate their future purposes. In addition, Han uses cultural knowledge to arouse students' interest, promote their academic success and build their identity. Her attempt to help students develop pride in their own cultural backgrounds has received positive reactions from her students.

4.2.2 Wenhui—student-centred teaching

At the time of my interview, Wenhui was teaching a fourth-grade heritage language class in Montreal. Her students' average age was about nine years old, and most of them had been learning Chinese in her school for about two years. In the first class of the fall semester (2013), Wenhui found that the textbook assigned was not suitable for her students' level of Chinese. She stated that:

开学后我拿到课本一看，我们班的学生根本达不到这个水平。我就跟校长争取了很久，她才答应给我从第四册换到第三册。

After the first class, I found my students' Chinese level was much lower than the book's requirement. Thus, I argued with the principal to change the textbook for my students. After a long time she finally agreed to change the textbook from level four to level three. (Interview: Wenhui)

Wenhui explained that the school does not offer a coherent textbook choice for different grade levels. Specifically, students in the third grade and the fourth grade are using two types of textbooks that differ in terms of language level and content. In this case, students in the fourth-grade might experience difficulty in using the new book. The inconsistency in textbooks for different levels created teaching difficulty for Wenhui.

Wenhui said that she was the only teacher who requested that the school change their textbooks in order to fit students' language level. She stated that she would never do that in China. Teachers regard the content in the textbooks as authoritative because the material to be assessed is mainly from the textbooks. Thus, teachers seldom ask whether or not the textbooks are appropriate for their students, and they simply teach the content in the textbook. However, as Wenhui's teaching priority was to arouse students' interest in learning Chinese, she realized that her teaching should be based on students' language level and needs. She stated:

在中国是课本有什么我就讲什么。这儿不行，你得问问学生需要什么，然后决定从课本里拿出什么可以用的。

In China, we need to teach whatever is in the textbook. But you cannot do this here, you have to ask what content your students need, then you can decide which part of the textbook you can make use of. (Interview: Wenhui)

Wenhui felt that she had more freedom in heritage language teaching. That is, textbooks no longer directed her instruction practices. However, this was also a challenge for Wenhui's teaching, as she mentioned:

这些教材都是给国内的孩子准备的，这儿的的孩子根本就不合适。

These textbooks are prepared for the children who learn Chinese as a first language in China; they are not suitable for the heritage language learners at all.

(Interview: Wenhui)

Teachers at heritage language schools are not provided with any curriculum or teaching guidance other than textbooks. If teachers find the textbooks are not suitable for their students, they need to devise a more appropriate teaching plan. It is a widespread concern among teachers that there is a lack of professionally produced material to be used in the classroom that reflects the reality of heritage language students (Carstens, Tian, & Zheng, 2013; Majhanovich & Richards, 1995). Consequently, producing supplementary materials to make textbooks more relevant to students' needs requires teachers to have a better understanding of their students' language needs and have the competence to address learners' needs. Also, it demands that teachers devote their personal time to produce these materials.

Wenhui gave me an example of how she altered the textbook to fit her students' needs. She considered Pinyin (the official phonetic system for transcribing the Mandarin pronunciation of Chinese characters into the Latin alphabet) as one of the most important language skills heritage language learners should acquire. However, she observed that not all of her students had a good command of Pinyin knowledge even though they had learned it in their previous classes. Since the textbook does not provide systematic Pinyin knowledge, Wenhui decided to add Pinyin instruction to her class. She provided the following reasons for her decision: First, by laying a good foundation in Pinyin, students could acquire the pronunciation more easily and accurately. Second, in this information age, computer input might replace writing by hand, and Pinyin is one of the most popular and convenient Chinese input methods. Therefore, she added Pinyin knowledge to her teaching. She said she spent a great amount of time thinking out an effective

way to engage her students in learning Pinyin. Finally, she created some Pinyin poker cards and guided students to learn Pinyin by using these cards. She said her Pinyin poker cards are welcomed by her students, and the Pinyin poker games she came up with help facilitate her students' Pinyin learning.

Changing the textbook and designing the Pinyin games demonstrate that Wenhui is not only competent to devise lesson plans based on students' needs, but she also has her own perception of how to make a lesson more approachable in the Canadian context. She suggested that:

这儿的语言老师和国内的语言老师不一样，你要想让这儿的孩子们喜欢你，你就得有这儿的老师的影子。虽然你教的是汉语，但是你得有这儿的老师的影子。

Language teachers in Montreal differ from those in China. If you want your students to like you, you need to emulate the teachers here. Although you are teaching Chinese, you have to teach as the local teacher does. (Interview: Wenhui)

She possesses the attitude that heritage language teaching should be in accordance with local teaching norms. That is, she needs to adjust her teaching from Chinese style to Western style in her new teaching environment. Wenhui expresses the belief that using Western pedagogical methods to teach students could nurture their enthusiasm and advance their skills in Chinese language and culture. However, she contends that using old-fashioned traditional Chinese methods (e.g., rote learning, teacher-centred teaching) might diminish students' learning interest.

In order to achieve her goal, she applied many activities in her class. She frequently used puzzles, group work, and storytelling in her class. Facing the heterogeneous proficiencies and learning styles students bring to the classroom, she applied a particular strategy to use with these

activities. Specifically, she allocated different activities to different students based on their interests:

我需要备学生。这五个学生这个特点，这五个学生这个特点，这五个学生这个特点，啊，一个班十五个人，我分成三组。同样的一项教学任务，我让这组的同学做 puzzle，我让下一组同学做听力，我让下一组同学编小故事。这是一个教学任务，但是我用三种方法哈，为什么要用三种方法呢？就是因为每一组学生不一样。他们的共性让你觉得把他们放在一起。好像每个学生都喜欢听我的课哈，因为每个学生都有自己的任务。下课他就想试试其他组的任务。听力里有什么，小故事是什么， puzzle 到底是什么。这样他才有，他才有什么，他才有兴趣，人的兴趣来源于对未知问题的信息差。

I need to prepare for every student. These five students have this characteristic. These five have another characteristic. The last five have their own characteristic. Thus, I divided the 15 students in my class into three groups. For the same teaching task, I asked the first group to do the puzzle, the second group to do listening comprehension and the third one to tell a story. There was only one teaching task, but I used three different ways to fulfill it. Why did I need to use these three different ways? That's because of the students' different characteristics. You need to put the students with the same characteristic together. It seems every student likes my class because every student has a different exercise. They might want to try the other groups' activities during the break. What's your reading comprehension? What's your story? And, what's the puzzle? Thus, they will have the interest to learn. Our interests originate from information gaps and curiosity about things we don't know. (Interview: Wenhui)

As students have heterogeneous proficiencies and learning styles, Wenhui told me that she assigned different kinds of homework to each student. Normally, she gives the students some common assignments, but she also adds assignments for different students. She stated that in China, she would not do that because teachers treat the whole class as a unit. Students receive the same lectures and assignments from their teachers.

Wenhui stated that she is lucky that she learned a great deal from one of her own French teachers, who taught her French in the classes provided for immigrants by the Quebec government. In her opinion, this French teacher was an excellent model of Western language teaching. She described how the teacher compiled her own textbook for students and designed various tasks to facilitate students' learning. Although the French teacher teaches the same level every semester, Wenhui took the teacher's course twice in order to observe and learn from her. She commented that it was her French teacher's way of teaching that enhanced her understanding of authentic Western teaching practices.

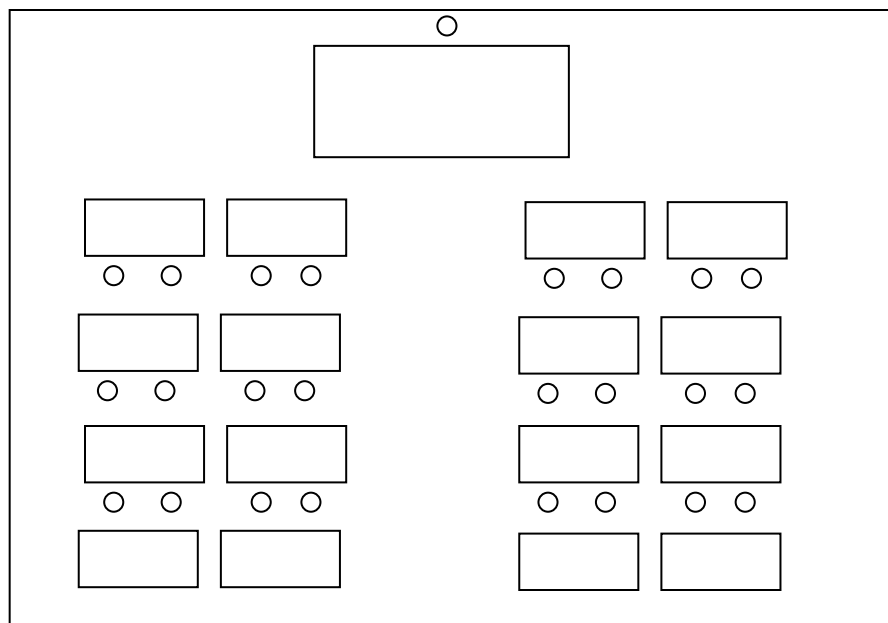
4.2.2.1 Observation of Wenhui's class

I obtained Wenhui's permission to observe one of her classes (about 50 minutes). The following figure (Figure 1) shows the classroom arrangement. Her classrooms are set up in a typical Chinese configuration: students sit in rows while the teacher stands at the front. She arranged for me to sit at the back of the class.

She neither introduced me to her students, nor invited me to help with the class. Her students wondered why I was there and occasionally looked back at me. During that class, she had the students review the five ancient Chinese poems they learned last semester. The class began with an activity she had prepared. She gave each student a paper on which was a sentence from a poem. After she read the first character of a sentence, the students had to identify whether

the character the teacher read was on their papers; if so, they had to read the whole sentence. Since the students had forgotten the pronunciation of many characters, Wenhui constantly corrected their pronunciation while they were reading the sentences. She repeated this activity four times. After that, she changed the exercise. The students were no longer allowed to look at the paper. Then she read the first three characters of the poem, and she invited a random student to complete the whole sentence. Later, she led a poem reciting competition. She separated the whole class into two groups; the group that wrote down more poem sentences on the blackboard won. The students participate in this activity with enthusiasm. At the end of the class, she gave the students ten minutes to work in pairs to answer the questions she asked, and those students could ask her questions freely. Her class was well disciplined. She gave equal opportunities to every student. In this class, Wenhui had good interactions with her students, and her students participated willingly.

Figure 1 *Classroom arrangement of Wenhui's class*



All these teaching practices demonstrate that Wenhui prepares for individual student's needs. Her teaching style showcases that teaching is dynamic. She actively learns from local teachers and applies efficiently what she has learned in her own teaching. She adjusts her teaching to meet learners' expectations. Duff and Lester (2008) have pointed out how, typically, Western-educated students expect that the methods used will be engaging, challenging, and enjoyable. Heritage language learners who experience Western style teaching in their daily class also expect to have opportunities to work collaboratively and creatively with one another. Wenhui is aware of the importance of teaching in a way that is more compatible with Western communicative approaches. She provides engaging language-learning tasks for her students to develop their language skills. These tasks were distributed to different students according to their learning styles, interests, and needs. Rather than playing a role as a knowledge transmitter, Wenhui shares power with students by integrating group activities into her classroom.

4.2.3 Meimei and Juan—create enjoyable learning environment

Both Meimei and Juan teach Chinese as a heritage language at the kindergarten level. They stated that their adjustments in teaching practices depend mainly on parents' expectations. Meimei mentioned that in China, parents expect their children to learn as much as they can at the kindergarten level in order to give them a good foundation for the competition that will follow in elementary school. Thus, teachers need to focus on passing on knowledge and skills to their students rather than catering to their desire to play. However, she stated that in Montreal, parents focus less on how much knowledge their children have learned in kindergarten. They pay more attention to how teachers nurture their children's interest in learning. Meimei expressed:

国内从老师的角度来说，大部分老师你要尊重孩子爱玩的天性，但是他们是无能为力的。因为你学校老师都要围绕家长的期望去呈现成果的，你对孩子的尊重

孩子就会被忽略或者是有限度的。所以在国内来说,我感觉就是说因为竞争很激烈,老师的目标就是去灌输啊,技能知识啊。但是在蒙特利尔我相信家长的心态会好一些,因为这里的教育竞争没有这么激烈。那么从学中文角度也是一样的,我还是能明显感觉到就是以培养孩子的兴趣为主,这是不一样的我觉得。

In China, most kindergarten teachers know that we need to respect children's natures, their desire to play and have fun. However, teachers feel they are unable to allow students to explore this side of themselves, because teachers need to teach what parents expect them to teach. Thus, teachers are forced to ignore, or can only have limited respect for, children's natures. Because of the fierce competition in China, teachers aim to instil more knowledge into students and teach them skills. But, in Montreal, the educational environment is less competitive and so parents are less demanding of their children. When parents send their kids to my heritage language class, I can tell that their aim is to cultivate their children's learning interests. I think this is the difference. (Interview: Meimei)

Juan shared the same view as Meimei:

国内家长总是问今天学了什么。现在这边的家长被这边的环境感染,很少问学了什么,就会问你今天开不开心。

In China, parents always ask their kids what they have learned today. However, here in Montreal, Chinese parents are influenced by Canadian society. They seldom ask what their kids have learned. They only ask whether their kids are happy today. (Interview: Juan)

In order to arouse students' learning interest, both Juan and Meimei design their teaching content and activities according to students' age and psychological needs. Meimei said:

这个阶段孩子的一个主要心理特点就是要非常具体形象。我经常给他们画画，虽然我画画不是太好，但是画个男孩儿女孩儿，画个小动物是没有问题的。如果你没有这些东西作载体的话，他不会被你吸引。

One of the students' major psychological characteristics is that they need to be taught by means of something concrete and vivid. Thus, I always draw pictures for them. Although I am not so good at drawing, it is not a problem for me to draw a girl, a boy, or an animal. If I don't use these tools, students will not pay attention to me. (Interview: Meimei)

Meimei gave an example that when she teaches the Chinese characters “male” and “female”, she always draws a girl and a boy on the blackboard with the Chinese characters “男” (male) and “女” (female) next to them. At the beginning, students might not be able to recognize these two characters but after drawing the pictures with the characters for many classes, students will start to recognize these characters without the pictures.

In my observation of Meimei's class, she used a Chinese flashcard application on her tablet to teach the parts of the body in Chinese. She commented that using the application is a convenient way to prepare courses. Normally, she needs to spend a long time to make flashcards by herself. However, the flashcards on the tablet save her more time to plan the courses. Also, students like the tablet flashcards better than paper flashcards, since the colour and the pictures presented on the tablet are more interesting to them.

Juan also stated that it is important to attract students' attention and enthusiasm by using multiple strategies. Songs, games, and stories are her frequently used activities. She emphasized “幼儿园的小朋友不能像大的那样，他们坐着听你说。” (*You can't teach kindergarten students the way you would teach older students. You can't have them sit down and tell them to*

listen to you attentively.) When she talks to her students, she always exaggerates her actions and changes her tone of voice. She suggested that the first activity should have a good connection with the next, and each one should not be too long. For example, she told me that she would never tell a story for longer than five minutes, as the students lose attention if she keeps explaining something. She prepares many learning aids, such as homemade props, to assist her teaching. She likes to teach popular Chinese nursery rhymes by watching music videos. She finds the vivid videos help students understand the meaning of the song. By using these multiple strategies, students learn efficiently through play. She commented “他们学的挺好的，学的字下学期还记得住。” (*They [the students] learned pretty well. They could still remember the characters we learned last semester.*)

Juan actively collects useful multimedia learning resources for her students. She also showed me the blog she created for her students. On the blog, she frequently posts useful learning materials related to what they learned in class. For example, after they learned animals, she posted one story and one song about animals to help students continue to learn after class. She also posted an easy survey for students, including questions such as “Do you like this song?”, in order to have an interaction with her students online. She expressed the view that students are highly enthusiastic about browsing her blog after class. Students’ parents also welcome her blog. Many parents told her, because of the blog, their children started to learn Chinese on their own initiative after class. It also encouraged the parents to collect more multimedia resources for their children’s language learning. Students enjoy using a variety of technologies to learn Chinese, as technology is an effective way to increase their interest in, and exposure to, the target language.

4.2.3.1 Observations of Meimei's class

Meimei is the only teacher who did not restrict the number of times I could observe her class. During my observations, Meimei introduced me to her students and the parents who brought the students to the classroom. She also invited me to participate and help with the class. The following figure (Figure 2) shows the classroom arrangement. It is not similar to the typical Chinese kindergarten classroom. Since Meimei's class was held in a college classroom, which the heritage language school rented to use every Saturday, it was not decorated for kindergarten students.

During the class, Meimei smiled a lot at her kindergarten students. She always communicated with her students and allowed her students to ask questions. When teaching a song, she used gestures to arouse the learners' interest. Her students were very engaged by her vivid performance. I noticed that she did not request that her students conform to her instructions. When showing new characters on her tablet, she sat in the middle of the classroom and invited all of her students to sit on the floor around her. However, on one occasion, two of her students were not willing to sit on the floor. Meimei did not show any displeasure with the students' disobeying her instruction. Instead, she smiled and told them, "Ok, sit wherever you feel comfortable."

Figure 2 *Classroom arrangement of Meimei's kindergarten class*



After the class observation, I mentioned this incident and asked why she did not request every student obey her instruction as teachers in China do. She told me that “我知道国内的老师希望掌控一切，他们希望学生听他们的。不过这是在蒙特利尔，我尊重我的学生，他们有自己的想法，我又不是他们的老板。”(*I know teachers in China tend to control everything and they need their students to follow whatever they say. However, this is Montreal. I respect my students. They have their own thoughts. I am not their boss.*)

Both Juan and Meimei considered that because of the high expectations towards educational success, parents in China are nervous about their children's learning from an early age. One of the important sources of this cultural expectation is Confucian heritage. Confucianism regards education as the most important thing in one's life and sees academic achievement as leading to higher social status. These beliefs form Chinese parents' opinion that only children who excel in their studies will have a good future. Thus, they expect their children to achieve privileged social positions through academic excellence and have high academic expectations for their children from kindergarten (Yu & Suen, 2005). Juan felt that Chinese parents in Canada normally do not place as much educational pressure on their children as

Chinese parents in China do. She believes that as Western people are more interested in enjoying the present, they want their children to enjoy the fun of childhood and learning. She also thought that after immigrating to Canada, many Chinese parents' attitudes were influenced by Canadian culture.

Because of the switch of emphasis from instilled knowledge to the enjoyment of learning, Juan and Meimei both claimed they go to great lengths to make their teaching more enjoyable. Juan and Meimei adjust their teaching practices on the basis of parental expectations. Instead of instilling knowledge into students passively, they apply multiple strategies to create an enjoyable learning environment for kindergarten students. Their integration of multimedia resources and technologies into their teaching enhances their teaching effectiveness.

4.2.4 Chao and Shichang—inconsistency between beliefs and practices

The aforementioned teachers have found unique ways to arouse students' interest and handle the complications inherent in heritage language classes. However, both Chao and Shichang, who had limited teaching experience before they came to Montreal, were still looking for an effective way to survive in this complicated teaching environment. Although both of them considered students' learning interest as their teaching priority, they felt a little helpless about their way to achieve their goal. Chao admitted that “这个兴趣我觉得真的是太难太难太难的一个东西了。” (*Arousing students' interest is really extremely hard.*)

4.2.4.1 “I don't want to be an authority.”

At the very beginning of their teaching careers in Montreal, both Chao and Shichang had similar preconceptions about what kind of teacher they wanted to be. As both of them had little teaching experience and limited contact with local students in Canada, their assumptions were based on their former educational experiences. In China, teachers are the authority in school,

especially in elementary, junior high, and high schools. Students consequently have an impression of teachers as strict taskmasters.

The notion of *Shi Dao Zun Yan* (师道尊严)—the supremacy of the way of the teacher, which originated in the teachings of Confucius two thousand years ago, has a great impact on Chinese classroom discourse. In a traditional Chinese classroom, teacher is the indisputable, unchallenged center and authority of knowledge. The student accordingly is someone who is expected to listen, observe, and follow the teacher's instructions. The atmosphere in Chinese classrooms is usually serious (Zhao, 2007). As a reaction to this stereotype, when Chao started teaching, she decided not to be as strict as most of her teachers in China were. Therefore, she tried to befriend her students.

我第一年没有太大经验，不想和，我尽量，我觉得我自己尽量摆脱变成以前那种权威性的老师，而且这边的小孩子说实话不吃那一套。所以我就尽量和他们想做朋友那样。

I didn't have much experience in the first year. I tried not to be the authority. And to be honest, students who are brought up here wouldn't buy it. Thus I tried to be their friend. (Interview: Chao)

In Chao's mind, not being an authority equates to giving freedom to the students. She did not impose any rules to restrict her students' class behaviour, as she thought the class discipline she experienced in China was too strict. When she attended school in China, students were supposed to sit perfectly straight and fold their arms on top of their desks. Chinese students were required to listen to the teacher attentively and take notes, whereas to her mind, the Western classrooms are more open and students have more freedom. She thinks the Western classroom environment is friendlier and better supports students' development.

She did not develop any class rules. However, she eventually found that she indulged her students too much and her classes were unruly. Chao told me that she did not know how to handle the “problem” students. One student always hid under the desk, and everybody’s attention was diverted by his doing that. Some students talked loudly amongst themselves. She wanted to give students equal opportunity to answer questions, but she did not know how to handle students who dominated the discussion. After these problems arose, she began to wonder whether her idea of being friendly to her students was suitable, or if she should be a stricter teacher instead. This situation frustrated her:

但是后来发现，其实没有纪律也不行。所以第一年基本上就是在这种怎么平衡，又，就是对他们又严厉，然后同时也要鼓励他们像朋友那样的对你敞开心扉，一直在努力地找这个平衡点……我中间有很长一段时间，我想啊，要不然，我想我可能太不适合教课了，我说要不然这个班就不带了。

Then I found out that it is impossible to teach without giving the students any discipline. So in the first year, I struggled to find a balance between teaching students strictly while encouraging them to open their minds to me as a friend. For a long time, I thought I wasn’t suitable to be a teacher and I shouldn’t continue to teach this class.

(Interview: Chao)

Like Chao, Shichang also decided to try to be his students’ friend. His decision related to his learning experience in China. Mr. Zhan recalled that when he studied in secondary school, his exam grades were not good. For this reason, he was one of the bad students in his teachers’ eyes and his teachers paid less attention to him. Shichang believes that it is unfair to judge a student by his/her grade. Thus, he decided to treat students equally and nicely regardless of their grades. However, he also encountered the same kind of class management problem. He found his

students were not afraid of him, as evidenced by their talking amongst themselves when he was lecturing. He thought his students might keep quiet if he were a stricter teacher.

4.2.4.2 “I don’t know what they are interested in.”

As with Wenhui, Chao discovered that the textbook assigned by the school was not suitable for her students, but she did not know how to enrich the lessons. Chao tried many ways to engage her students. However, she found her attempts ineffective.

我会给他们讲一些故事，但是我发现我讲的这个故事，可能这边的孩子我觉得可能会比国内的孩子稍微早熟一点，所以说我觉得我讲的故事在他们听来，好简单啊，好傻啊，他们会这么觉得，我觉得，他们觉得，产生了一种，不是很正面的那种感觉吧。所以我就，我以为会抓住他们的兴趣，结果发现并没有达到那样的效果。

I tried to motivate them by telling some stories. However, I found that students responded negatively to the stories since they thought the stories were too simple, even silly. I thought I could catch their interest, but the result was that I didn’t achieve my expected goal. (Interview: Chao)

She tried to teach in a communicative way. However, she found that some students always dominated the conversation while others did not engage. Chao emphasized that it was difficult for her to discern her students’ interests, as she was not brought up in the same kind of environment as her students were. Lacking resources to understand her students challenged her teaching. She gave an example:

当我们学了一个句型，你需要给他一些提示来联系这个句型，比如说一些他们生活中能碰到的，感兴趣的，就包括一些动画片。可是你知道这边的小孩子看什么动画片吗，你不知道。

After I teach a sentence pattern, I need to give them some hints to practice this pattern. These hints include something they might encounter in their daily life or in which they are interested, such as cartoons. But I don't know what cartoons they watch here.
(Interview: Chao)

4.2.4.3 “I know they are bored by my teaching.”

Teachers' expectations about their teaching might differ from what they accomplish. In an interview, Shichang expressed that he did not want to apply a traditional teacher-centred way to teach his ninth-grade class. He stated “不想很老套的方式去教，总是说能够用大家交流，相互交流的角度去讲解课文” (*I don't want to use the old-fashioned way to teach. I hope I can explain the textbook by using a communicative way.*) However, Shichang's teaching practices do not achieve his goal. He reported his major teaching process as follows:

每次讲解课文之前，就给他们一点时间看看课文，有些你们不懂的字，先画起来。然后，到我解释的时候，先带他们读一两遍，然后带了一两遍之后就一点一点解释给他们听。嗯，然后就，出现的生字词就解释一下啰，呃，然后再解释一下他们近义词反义词啊。

Every time, before I explain the text, I give them some time to read the text by themselves and ask them to circle the Chinese characters they don't know. When I explain the text, I lead them to read the text aloud once or twice. After that, I explain the text to them sentence by sentence. Then, I explain the new words to them and tell them the synonyms and antonyms of the words. (Interview: Shichang)

He acknowledged that he does not know how to engage his students and he felt his teaching bores his students.

没有太多的教学方式。但是，总是这样讲解，后面他们觉得很沉闷，但是没办法。

I don't have too many different teaching methods. I know they feel bored when I keep lecturing or explaining. But I can't find a solution. (Interview: Shichang)

He stated that he tried to use activities to engage his students, but he finally gave up:

有时候跟他们做一些游戏啰，中文游戏啰，或者猜猜谜语啊什么的。但是后来觉得他们对于还是比较深，都没有怎么做了。我也想不到什么好的点子，因为他们中文水平不高的话，做不了什么太多游戏，所以后来我都取消了。

Sometimes I play some Chinese games with them like riddles. But I found riddles are too hard for them, so I no longer play those with them. I can't think out good activities. Because of their limited Chinese proficiency, they aren't able to play many games. Thus, I abandoned all the games at last. (Interview: Shichang)

4.2.4.4 Observation of Chao's class

I obtained Chao's permission to observe one of her classes (50 minutes). Her classroom arrangement was the same as Wenhui's (see figure 1). Students sat in rows, and the teacher asked me to sit in the back row. She neither introduced me to her students nor invited me to help with the class. Her students occasionally looked back at me as though wondering why I was there. In the class, Chao was teaching a new lesson in the textbook. Her teaching method was mainly lecturing. She interpreted the text sentence by sentence, emphasizing the construction of the new characters and explaining the meaning of the words. She occasionally asked some questions to help students understand the new words. For example, when she was explaining the word 标志 (symbol), she asked her students, "What is the symbol of Montreal?" However, only one or two

students volunteered to answer the questions. When she mentioned something important, she reminded her students to take notes. In that class, Chao dominated the class discourse. Most of her students spent a lot of time looking at their textbook and seldom asked questions or spoke. The classroom was quiet but without much vitality.

Both Chao and Shichang are frustrated in their first year's teaching. They encountered difficulties in managing the classroom, motivating students, and enriching their teaching plans. Both of them told me that “我不知道我适不适合教书。” (*I am not sure I am suitable for teaching or not.*) According to Tsui (2003), the key to successful teaching is the “transformation of subject matter knowledge into forms of representation that are accessible to learners.” (p. 57) In order to fulfil this transformation, Chao and Shichang need to have an adequate understanding of the subject matter, knowledge of learners, curriculum, context, and pedagogy. Chao express that she knows clearly what is missing from her teaching:

我觉得就是你有教学内容，但是你不知道怎么更好地把这个需要展示给孩子们的东西，你要把学生，和你的教学内容联系在一起，内容在那儿，你通过什么样的方式，最适合你的这个群体的学生。你需要了解你的学生，了解你自己，然后了解这边的环境。所以我还是在找。

I think I have the teaching content, but I do not know how to present the content to my students. I need to connect my students with the content. But I don't know what the most appropriate way to do that for my students is. I need to know my students, know myself and then know the local teaching context. I am still searching for these. (Interview: Chao)

4.2.5 Summary

As Freeman and Johnson (1998) summarized, teachers made rational decisions about what to do in their classrooms based on many resources of contextual information as well as on principles of learning and teaching. In this study, Han, Wenhui, Meimei and Juan are more efficient in their teaching. They are sensitive to the contextual information when they are facing in the new teaching environment. Students' relatively low motivation, various language levels in one class, and parental expectations all provide an impetus for them to make reasonable decisions about their teaching methods and practices. However, Chao and Shichang may not have been as able to address the complexity of the heritage language teaching in this particular context. They encountered a great many teaching difficulties. One important characteristic of their teaching is that their theoretical beliefs are inconsistent with their practice. In terms of the teacher-student relations, Chao and Shichang tried to befriend their students, but the disciplinary problems that occurred made them think about being stricter teachers. In terms of their instructional strategies, they attempted to teach in a communicative way. However, because they did not know how to teach communicatively, they reverted to their own experience of a teacher-centred way of imparting knowledge. As Kagan (1992) points out, inconsistency between beliefs and practices is more common among pre-service teachers than among experienced teachers. Fang (1996) suggests that this inconsistency may be attributed to discrepancies between teachers' theoretical beliefs and the complexities of the teaching reality. In this study, a complicated heritage language teaching context contributed to inexperienced teachers' frustrations. They need more supports and resources to help them adapt to the new teaching environment.

4.3 Teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of their teaching practices

This section continues to answer the first research question and specifically investigates whether heritage language teachers believe their current practices are effective in heritage language teaching. During the interviews, the teachers evaluated their own teaching practices through various perspectives. These perspectives include their own feelings as well as feedback from their students and from parents. In this section, I will briefly report how teachers perceive the effectiveness of their own teaching practices.

4.3.1 Han—students' reactions and progress

Han positively evaluated her teaching practices, which she thought were effective. Her assessment was based on students' reactions:

我们班有几个淘孩子，刚开始我教时都不听（课）的。年初的时候他那种抵触，被家长逼着来的那张臭脸，到最后愿意了，愿意坐在这儿，看见你是心情愉快的。然后那份渴望的那份眼神里，那眼神渴望着让你讲点什么东西。

There are some mischievous students in my class. At the beginning of the semester, they didn't listen to me attentively. You could see their resistance from the sour expressions on their faces, as their parents forced them to come to class. However, by the end of the year, they were willing to sit in class and they were delighted to see me. I could tell from their eyes that they were thirsty for knowledge. They were keen to learn something from me. (Interview: Han)

Han's evaluation of her teaching was based on her students' change in attitude. She believes that her students' changed level of motivation is directly related to her instructional practices. She gave me another justification for her feelings:

有个小女孩，应该说是我们班成绩最差的，但是呢，她吧，她感兴趣了。然后她每次课她都坐在这儿。真的，像这种（成绩/水平）不太好的孩子，她能够坐在这儿就已经不错了。她从来没丢过一节课，而且你感觉得到她喜欢来。真的我觉得对我来说，能把孩子吸引到学中文的课堂来，已经是一个褒奖了。

There is a girl, whose grade is the worst in my class. However, she gradually became interested in Chinese. She comes to my class every week. Indeed, for the students whose proficiency is not so high, it is not easy to stay here every week. But that girl never missed any of my classes, and I can feel that she likes to come. It is high praise and an honour to me that I can attract these students to my Chinese classes. (Interview: Han)

Han evaluated her teaching positively as she thought she aroused and maintained her students' interest in learning Chinese. She also thought that her students' progress reflected her teaching efficacy:

那个男生就进步非常快。他由最开始给我写的是流水账的作文，但经过我指点，到最后给我写出来的作文是那么的精彩。真的，他的那个进步是 black and white 的进步。

That boy progressed rapidly. At the beginning, his composition was just a list of things without logic and analysis. But under my guidance, at the end of this semester, his composition was wonderful. Indeed, his progress was black and white. (Interview: Han)

Han was proud of her students' progress. She thought that this progress also demonstrated her teaching effectiveness.

4.3.2 Wenhui—parental requests

Wenhui also held a positive attitude towards her teaching efficacy, and she used parents' feedback to assess this.

新学期注册的时候，教务告诉我有很多以前班上的学生家长还要求让他们的孩子跟着你学习，你就知道你自己教得很有效。他们让孩子跟着你，说明他们认可你的教学。

During the registration period, the dean told me that a lot of parents requested that their children continue to study with me. So, I knew my teaching was effective. The fact that parents wanted their children to stay in my class means that they recognized my teaching abilities. (Interview: Wenhui)

Wenhui evaluated her teaching effectiveness from a unique angle. She stated that parents normally did not give direct feedback to her. However, she did receive implicit feedback from enrolment information. If many of her former students did not continue with her in the next semester, she would know something was wrong with her teaching. Since many parents asked the dean to let their children stay in her class, she perceived her teaching as effective.

4.3.3 Meimei—emotional feedback

Meimei gave positive evaluations of her teaching practices. Drawing from her emotional experience of teaching, Meimei believes that her teaching is effective.

我觉得教学很有效啊。教学对我来说很轻松。我是比较喜欢跟他们呆一块儿，因为就是玩儿呗，对我来说就是很 enjoy 啊。

I think my teaching is effective. Teaching makes me feel relaxed and happy. I like to spend time with my students, because teaching is just like playing with my students. I enjoy it a lot. (Interview: Meimei)

Meimei does not view teaching as a burden; in fact, she finds real enjoyment in it. However, since teaching is a mutual interaction between teacher and student, a teacher's satisfaction with her own teaching cannot stand in for students' progress.

4.3.4 Juan—feedback from students

Juan also thought that her teaching practices were effective. Her self-evaluation was mostly based on positive feedback received from her students.

很多学生很喜欢我，有时候放假还会给我打电话说想我。

Many students like me. Some of them called to tell me that they missed me when they were on vacation. (Juan)

Juan perceived her students' positive feedback as proof that her teaching was successful and engaging. However, Juan did not provide sufficient information to support her claim that her teaching was effective. Although she may be funny and nice—which prompts her students to call her—this does not necessarily mean that she possesses competent teaching skills.

4.3.5 Shichang—students' reactions

Shichang gave negative evaluations of his teaching practices. Shichang was struggling with his teaching. Based on his students' reactions, he thought his teaching was not effective.

上课的时候他们感觉很无聊。我还没有摸索到那么多能够激发他们更大兴趣的方法，我自认我这方面还是不够强。我觉得很难找到一个方法，比较容易平白地引起他们的兴趣。

I feel that students are bored when I am teaching. I haven't found a good way to arouse their interest in learning Chinese. I acknowledge that I am not good at this. It is difficult to find a good way to simply generate their interest. (Interview: Shichang)

Shichang interpreted his students' boredom as an indicator of his ineffective instructional practices. He thought that his ineffectiveness was because he was not capable enough to find a good way to arouse students' interest.

4.3.6 Chao—self-perception

Based on her own perception, Chao thought that her teaching was ineffective, and she felt guilty about that:

第一年完全是 survive 过来的，只能用这个词了。我不能保证说那个班的小孩子真的跟我学到多少东西，或者觉得挺惭愧的吧。没真的帮到他们很多，我自己感觉。

I need to survive in the first year. "Survive" is the only word I can use. I can't guarantee the kids in that class learned a lot from me. I think I felt guilty about that. I didn't really help them a lot, I think. (Interview: Chao)

Chao stated that she tried many different teaching strategies to gain students' interests. However, she did not know how to present what she wanted to teach in an appropriate way. At the same time, she found it was hard to manage the class. However, although Chao gave herself a negative evaluation at the beginning, she changed her mind at the end:

其实我不知道我的教学到底对他们有没有用，因为我觉得现在缺少一个评估。需要一个评估.....然后来真正地测试一下教学到底对孩子产生什么样的影响。不过这个就很难。

Indeed, I don't know whether my teaching is effective or not, because I think there is a lack of evaluation... We need an evaluation to justify what kind of effect our teaching practices have on our students. However, it is very difficult. (Interview: Chao)

In sum, the teachers had a difficult time evaluating whether or not their teaching practices were effective. In the interviews, some of them hesitated or just provided a simple answer to this question, which might indicate that they had never reflected on their teaching effectiveness. Most of the teachers assessed themselves based on their personal perceptions. For example, they tended to look at their own feelings. It is problematic that not every teacher was able to provide concrete facts or evidence to justify his/her self-evaluation. Some of them chose feedback that might not reflect their teaching abilities. Therefore, Juan and Meimei, who perceived their teaching as effective, might be misinformed. Similarly, even Shichang and Chao, who perceived their teaching as ineffective, may be lacking information needed to correctly assess themselves. To obtain a more complete evaluation of the effectiveness of these teachers, I would have needed additional sources of data, such as surveys or interviews with students, parents and administrators. As this study focuses on teachers' attitudes towards their own teaching, interviews were my only source of evidence. This will be discussed in the section 5.3 limitations and future directions.

All of my participants reported that there is not any formal evaluation process conducted by their schools, such as evaluation forms for students or parents to assess teachers' performance. On the one hand, it seems schools trust teachers a great deal and believe that they are teaching effectively. On the other hand, it seems that the schools do not care about the quality of teaching. Danielson and McGreal (2000) claim that the two principal purposes of teacher evaluation are quality assurance and professional development. Heritage language schools do not formally evaluate teachers. This means there is no quality control of teachers' performance. An irresponsible and ineffective teacher could keep his/ her job indefinitely without any pressure to improve.

Teacher evaluation is an important mechanism for improving teaching and learning (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). With evaluation feedback, teachers have concrete guidance about their teaching strengths and what they need to improve. By discovering the gap between teaching practices and the students' expectations, school could identify teachers' problems and offer them help immediately. In particular, teachers who are uncomfortable to seek help from others and unable to solve problems by themselves would benefit greatly from an evaluation process. Take Shichang as an example. He is a novice teacher and encountered difficulties in his first year. Because of his belief that other teachers might not able to offer him any help, he scarcely ever discussed his teaching dilemmas with his peers, which prevented him from benefiting from his colleagues' experience and opinions. If Shichang's school administrators had found out about Shichang's teaching problems through the teacher evaluation process, they might have offered Shichang useful suggestions or assigned a mentor to guide him. In that case, Shichang could have improved his teaching skills and gained confidence in his future teaching. However, as no one knew about his teaching problems, and he was unable to solve these problems by himself, he remained frustrated in his teaching.

4.4 Factors that influence heritage language teachers' willingness to change

This section answers the last research question: What are the critical factors that might influence heritage language teachers' willingness to change their teaching practices? Although my participants all hold the same teaching priority, to arouse students' interest in heritage language learning, they use various teaching practices to accomplish their goals, and their teaching efficacy varies accordingly. Teaching in a foreign context using different teaching norms, teachers make their adjustments according to a multitude of factors. Taking the aforementioned findings into consideration, I identify the following factors that influence a

teacher's ability to adjust: their previous teaching experiences in China, preference for Western education and educational experiences in Canada.

4.4.1 Teaching experiences in China

It is commonly reported that heritage language teachers tend to maintain the teaching practices used in their home country (Majhanovich & Richards, 1995; Wang, 1996). However, heritage language learners who are raised in a different culture and educated according to different pedagogical norms do not welcome these teaching practices (Curd-Christiansen, 2006; Feuerverger, 1997; Weng & Lin, 2013). These studies imply that heritage language teachers' previous teaching experience might be an obstacle to their adaptation to the new teaching environment. In this study, Han, Wenhui, Meimei and Juan received their pre-service training in China and taught Chinese in China for many years. They were accustomed to the Chinese teaching environment and formed their own teaching style to fit Chinese educational standards. When they began teaching in Canada, they had difficulty changing their former teaching practices, especially when they were still teaching Chinese, albeit now in a Chinese heritage language school. As Tse et al. (2012) indicate, persuading teachers to change their practice is a difficult task, especially when the teaching of Chinese literacy is involved. Approaches to teaching Chinese are centuries old, and schools and parents usually feel obliged to uphold "cherished" traditions. Thus, there is a concern that heritage language teachers' previous teaching experience could negatively influence their adaptation to new contexts.

This particular study, however, shows that there is a difference between teachers in terms of their ability to adapt to a new teaching environment. As seen in the section 4.2 above (Teachers' adaptation to new environments and their instructional practices), Han, Wenhui, Juan and Meimei, who had teaching experience in China, were more competent in adapting to the new

teaching environment and adjusting their former instructional strategies. They were more efficient in organizing their courses, managing their classes, and developing appropriate curricula based on their students' needs. They were more attuned to teaching possibilities within their contextual constraints. However, Shichang and Chao, who lacked teaching experience in China, were still struggling. Although they had a specific teaching goal in mind, they had difficulty achieving their objectives and transcending their contextual constraints. This suggests that teachers' previous teaching experiences provided a solid foundation for their adaptation to the new teaching context.

In most cases, heritage language teachers start to teach without having any kind of pre-service training. In the absence of professional training in Chinese as heritage language instruction, teachers' previous teaching experiences become vital to their teaching career. Previous professional development in non-heritage language teaching has proven beneficial to Han, Wenhui, Juan and Meimei. Therefore, this study suggests that heritage language teachers' prior teaching experience in their native country is an asset rather than an obstacle to their adaptation to their new environment.

4.4.2 Preference for Western education

Heritage language teachers' preference for Western education is another factor that contributes to their willingness to change their teaching practices. All of the participants in this study are immigrants. In the interviews my participants expressed that one of the most significant reasons for their immigration was their appreciation of the quality of education in Canada. This sentiment is in accord with the finding that children's education is one of the most important reasons for Chinese people's immigration to Canada in the new millennium (Waters, 2005). Chinese parents believe that the advanced teaching resources and strategies in Canada would

benefit their children's development (Wang, 2002). In my study, all the teachers expressed discontent with the learning and teaching environment in China. From their point of view, the fierce competition and the exam-oriented education system inhibit students' advancement of their individual interests. Han expressed her dissatisfaction at the Chinese educational system and her appreciation of the Canadian counterpart:

因为在中国都是以分儿为主的，用分儿来说你这个孩子是不是有前途的。那在这儿太不一样了，在这儿我觉得每个孩子他们都有机会，能发挥自己的特长，然后能用上自己的特长，我就觉得在中国没有这种机会。

In China, exam scores are the most important thing. People usually use the exam scores to judge whether the child will have a bright future or not. But it is different here in Canada. I think every child has his or her opportunity to develop and make use of his or her specialty. I think children in China don't have this chance. (Interview: Han)

All my participants whose children are studying in Canada are proponents of the Canadian education system. Wenhui stated that the Chinese education system does not give enough opportunity for students to discover their own interests. However, in Canada, the system encourages and helps students to find their interests by joining different clubs or interest groups and participating in various social activities and volunteer jobs. Wenhui thinks her daughter, who is studying in CEGEP, is benefiting from this support system. She stated:

我孩子对health science很感兴趣，然后社会就给他这个机会去医院做志愿者。她自己做了之后发现，我真的喜欢这个，然后我以后念大学也要继续学这个专业。

My daughter is interested in health science, and the society provides her with the opportunity to do a volunteer job in a hospital. After actually doing the job, she found she

really loves doing it, and she is considering studying science in university. (Interview: Wenhui)

Wenhui commented that it is important to provide the resources to support students' interests. She recalled that when she needed to choose her university major, she did not know what she was interested in and just chose a major randomly. She believes that many high school students in China still do not know their interest when they graduate, since Chinese compulsory education overemphasizes the ability to pass exams.

All my participants believe that Western education focuses more on helping students discover learning interests, forming their critical thinking, and developing their creativity, while Chinese teaching focuses on transmitting knowledge to the students for exam preparation. Teachers' preference for Western education made them apt to change their previous teaching practices. Wenhui stated:

西方的教学是以学生为中心的。这种教学体制让我反思我之前的教学。我常常告诉自己去改变之前的教学方法。我现在更关心学生需要学生，什么方法可以让他们学得更好。

The Western pedagogical norm is student centred. This educational system makes me reflect on my former teaching practices. I always tell myself to change my former teaching methods. Now I care more about students' needs and what are the effective ways to make them improve. (Interview: Wenhui)

In sum, heritage language teachers' appreciation of Western education, an appreciation that emerged prior to their heritage language teaching jobs, is a catalyst for them to reflect on and change their former teaching practices.

4.4.3 Educational experiences in Canada

According to my research, the capability of heritage language teachers to adjust their teaching practices was influenced by their educational experiences in Canada, which is experienced primarily through their own children's mainstream school learning experiences and heritage language learning experiences. Their teaching practices are also informed in a Canadian context by cooperation and interaction with heritage language colleagues, their own second language learning experience in local school, and parental expectations.

4.4.3.1 Own children's mainstream school learning experiences

Half of my participants (Table 3) have children who are receiving public education in Montreal. Their children's education is one of the key channels that helps them to become familiar with the local education system.

Han, Wenhui, and Mrs. Lan stated that their knowledge about mainstream schools came mainly from their own children. They always ask their children about their daily activities at school. By helping their children with their homework, they get to know the teaching materials, teaching activities and approaches in mainstream schools. Wenhui expressed “有了自己的孩子才真正了解，原来这边是这么教的，用什么方法啊，师生关系啊。” (*After you have your own child, you get to know the teaching in their mainstream school, including the teaching methods and student-teacher relationships.*) Knowing about the teaching in mainstream schools provides them with a direction to adjust their own teaching. From their own children's learning experiences, they also receive more information about what the local students' interests are. Thus, they can make their teaching more accessible for heritage language learners.

Table 3 *Summary of the educational circumstances of the participants' children*

Name	Children	Current Educational level	Length of education in Montreal
Shichang	0	N/A	N/A
Wenhui	1	CEGEP	4 years
Han	1	University	10 years
Chao	0	N/A	N/A
Juan	1	Elementary school	2 years
Meimei	0	N/A	N/A

4.4.3.2 Own children's heritage language learning experiences

Teachers also benefit from knowing about their children's Chinese learning problems. These problems help them reflect on and improve their heritage language teaching. Han mentioned that her children's Chinese learning experiences enlightened her heritage language teaching. Her daughter was seven years old when they moved to Montreal. In the first two years, she found that her daughter started to prefer to speak English instead of Chinese to them. She worried that her daughter might lose her mother tongue, so she began to seek ways to help her daughter maintain her first language. An effective way she found was watching Chinese TV dramas. One comedy called *Wu Lin Wai Zhuan* (武林外传) awoke her daughter's interest in learning Chinese. While Han was watching the comedy with her daughter, Han was always amused by the plot, but her daughter could not understand what the laughter was about. Han realized that her daughter's limited language proficiency made the lines less intelligible to her. That is, she could understand the single Chinese word, but she could not understand the cultural implications behind the word. Thus, Han began to explain the cultural implications when they

were watching the TV drama, and she discovered her daughter's interest in Chinese cultural stories. From then on, her daughter continued to learn Chinese on her own. Han also seized any opportunity to teach her daughter. Finally, her daughter achieved a high level of proficiency in Chinese. She commented that

我女儿学汉语的经验就提醒我，教学上一定要把握住小孩子的兴趣，一旦他们有兴趣了，他们就不会觉得学汉语无趣了。

My daughter's Chinese learning process reminds me that in my class, I have to seize the children's learning interests. Once their learning interest is seized, they will learn without feeling bored. (Interview: Han)

In sum, their own children's educational experiences is an importance resource for heritage language teachers' knowledge of the local teaching environment. Their children's Chinese learning problems also help them better understand the heritage language learners and improve their teaching practices.

4.4.3.3 Cooperation and interaction with heritage language colleagues

In addition to drawing on their own children's education, cooperation and interaction with their colleagues is another channel that helps heritage language teachers adjust their teaching practices. Many of my participants reported that learning from their colleagues is vital for their professional growth, as educators constantly construct and reconstruct their understandings of their work with people in their work contexts (Tsui, 2003).

Meimei and Juan noted that teachers in their kindergarten group always cooperate with each other. They often discuss their teaching practices during recess and exchange their teaching materials.

我们幼儿组的教学气氛很好，有经验的老师们很愿意分享他们自己的教学材料，这帮了我很多。下课的时候我们常常一起聊上课发生的事情。教学上有问题的时候，总是一个人想就很难。不过你把你的问题说出来时，大家都会帮你出主意。

There is a good teaching atmosphere in our kindergarten group. Experienced teachers are willing to share their teaching materials, which helps me a lot. During the break, we always discuss what happened in the class. Sometimes it is hard to think out a solution for my teaching problems. However, when I share my teaching difficulty with other teachers, they always offer me many good ideas. (Interview: Juan)

It can be seen that spontaneous communication helps teachers to exchange their ideas. Although they have limited time, this communication also shows their mutual supportiveness and facilitates their teaching improvement.

Chao, who was frustrated in her first years, progressed quickly in the second year. She expressed that she learned a great deal from experienced teachers. In the case of a disciplinary problem, she benefits from asking advice from many teachers:

当时我问了好多那些住在这好多年的老教师，他们就说规矩一定要第一天定。第二学期我就照做，发现确实有用。

I asked many teachers who lived here for a long time. They told me I need to set up rules for students on the first day. Then I did that at the second semester. And I found their way was really effective. (Interview: Chao)

She told me she is keen to learn from others and when she has a problem, she actively seeks help from her colleagues. Specifically, she learned not only from communication with the other teachers, but also from the observation of experienced teachers' classes.

其实我从老教师身上学到了很多。我之前第一年太痛苦了。逮一个老师就会问，去听他们的课。就是那些老师其实都很厉害嘛，我就问他你上课会怎么上，你课下有什么作业啊，怎么跟家长联系啊，他们就会给我很多宝贵的意见。

In fact, I learn a lot from the experienced teachers. During the first year, I suffered while teaching. Then I seized every chance to ask teachers and observe their classes. These teachers are good at teaching. I always asked them how to organize the class, how to assign homework and how to contact students' parents. They offered me a lot of valuable advice. (Interview: Chao)

When encountering problems, Chao is open to speaking about her difficulties with colleagues and incorporating others' suggestion. In contrast to Chao, another inexperienced teacher, Shichang, stated that although he had many concerns about his teaching, he seldom communicated with the other teachers because he did not think he could learn much from his colleagues who he believed were still using the traditional Chinese teaching methods.

我很少跟他们交流，因为知道他们也不会有什么好的方法。我觉得从他们身上也学不了什么太多。

I seldom communicate with other teachers, because I know they don't have good approaches. I think I can't learn much from them. (Interview: Shichang)

Shichang's relatively low motivation to learn from others could prevent him from career development. This finding is similar to that in the literature that colleagues contribute to new teachers' growth of knowledge (Wang, 2012). Learning and interactions with their colleagues at the same schools facilitate the new teachers' understanding of their students and help them solve the teaching problems they encounter. Communicating with their fellow Chinese language teachers can also support them emotionally during their socialization processes. Chao stated that

her teaching frustrated her for a long time, but interaction with her colleagues helped her gain emotional stability. Collegial support gradually contributed to a sense of community among the teachers, providing a platform for the resolution of difficulties in their teaching and use of discipline.

4.4.3.4 Own Second Language learning experience in local schools

Besides profiting from the experiences of their heritage language teaching colleagues, my participants also learned from the local school teachers. Although they did not have the chance to observe mainstream education, heritage language teachers' own language learning experiences at local language schools have revealed to them the various methods that teachers use in the Western context. Local language teachers are their models, especially when these local teachers are using an efficient means of teaching. For example, Wenhui mentioned that she learned a lot from her French teacher. As mentioned in the former session, she was willing to take the same course twice, not because she did not have a good command of the course content, but because she wanted to observe the local classroom and learn from the local teacher. She likes to imitate the language teacher's teaching methods. She expressed clearly that she would like to be that kind of teacher. Teachers develop by observing excellent teaching models. Wenhui views her French teacher as an excellent model of teaching who illustrates the best practices in the new context.

4.4.3.5 Parental expectations

The expectations of students' parents are another influential factor for teachers' adjustment of their teaching practices. In addition to students and teachers, parents are an important party in heritage language education. In heritage language schools, teachers receive feedback both from students and their parents. As most of the students are forced or at least

strongly encouraged by their parents to receive heritage language education, parents' views have the potential to influence teachers' pedagogical goals and practices a great deal. Positive feedback from parents reinforces teachers' confidence. However, negative feedback can prompt teachers to adjust their teaching practices.

In this study, Chao and Meimei reported adjusting their teaching according to parents' expectations. They noticed that parents expect their children to learn Chinese in a pleasant environment, which is different from parents' expectations in China. Thus, they aim to help students learn more effectively with more engaging methods and in more pleasant learning environments.

家长的要求直接影响到我的教法。如果家长希望让孩子多学东西，我却只培养学生兴趣，家长肯定不会满意。我常常跟他们聊天，问他们送孩子来的目的是什么。

Parents' requests will directly influence my teaching practices. Parents will not be satisfied if they want their kids to learn more knowledge, while I only focus on cultivating learning interests. I always chat with them and ask about their purpose in sending their kids to the heritage language school. (Interview: Meimei)

Juan and Meimei actively change their teaching approaches in order to develop students' interest in learning. They make great efforts to create an enjoyable learning environment for students by applying multiple ways and activities, such as songs, drawings and videos, to engage their students. Such efforts not only keep the programs growing but also raise the teachers' perceptions about their teaching efficacy.

In sum, the teachers all went through a process of negotiating their role as educators in a new teaching context. Each teacher's adaptation was influenced by different factors. Their

teaching experience in China, preference for Western education and educational experiences in Canada have had a powerful influence on their adaptation to the new teaching environment. I summarize the factors in Table 4.

As the table shows, teachers who appeared to be more effective in their teaching (Han, Wenhui, Juan and Meimei) were influenced by more factors than teachers who were less confident and perhaps less effective (Chao and Shichang). For example, Wenhui's adaptation was influenced by four factors: her former teaching experience in China, her preference for Western education, her own children's mainstream school learning experiences and her own Second Language learning experience in local schools. But Shichang's adaptation relied only on his preference for Western education. It is important to note that a single factor might not be sufficient to support teachers' adaptation. For example, Han benefited from four factors: her own teaching experience in China, her preference for Western education, her own child's mainstream school learning experience and heritage language learning experiences. If she had not had a child, she might not have been as aware of mainstream school practices and children's expectations of heritage language learning. In that case, her 10 years of experience as a native language teacher in China might have been insufficient on its own to support her adaptation to the new teaching environment. Thus, these teachers' teaching experience in China appeared to only be an asset when accompanied by other factors, such as his or her own children's mainstream school learning experiences, his or her own Second Language learning experience in local schools, and cooperation and interaction with heritage language colleagues. These factors, which familiarize teachers with the local pedagogical environment, are just as important as past teaching experience when it comes to adapting to a new environment.

Table 4 *Factors that influence teachers' adaptation to the new environment*

Participants		Han	Wenhui	Juan	Meimei	Chao	Shichang
Influential factors							
Teaching experiences in China		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Preference for Western education		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Educational experiences in Canada	Own children's mainstream school learning experiences	✓	✓	✓			
	Own children's HL learning experiences	✓					
	Cooperation and interaction with HL colleagues			✓	✓	✓	
	Own second language learning experience in local school		✓				
	Parental expectations			✓	✓		
Total influential factors		4	4	5	4	2	1

According to Lave and Wenger (1991), social interaction is one of the essential components of *situated learning*. Learners become involved in a community of practice through their interaction with members in a target environment. Through their engagement with a community, newcomers can develop a deeper understanding of what that community of practice entails, and what there is to be learned. As newcomers to a different pedagogical environment, heritage language teachers can be understood as *situated learners* within the education system. Heritage language teachers are normally immigrants coming from foreign countries with different cultural backgrounds. They are likely unfamiliar with the norms and beliefs embedded in the local education system. In order to gain full participation in the teaching society, these teachers must define their own trajectory to adapt to the new teaching environment. Effective

teaching practices are acquired through a process of learning, one that is situated in an unfamiliar context.

Unlike compulsory education, which is often geared towards a future career, heritage language learning is generally an after-class hobby or a parent-driven activity. Considering the diversity of possible motivators for heritage language learning, heritage language teachers need to use multiple teaching strategies and methods according to students' level of interest. In addition, heritage language classes consist of students coming from various personal and academic backgrounds, and students may already be used to the Western cultural and educational norms, which pose serious challenges for heritage language teachers. Heritage language teachers themselves are also situated in a culture that is generally different from the one they are familiar with.

Heritage language teachers increase their knowledge of the new teaching environment by interacting and communicating with community members. For example, in this study we see that teachers gradually gain knowledge of the Montreal teaching environment by interaction with people who can benefit their professional growth (e.g., colleagues, students, students' parents, and their own children). The broader cultural environment in Montreal has made them reflect on what the teaching norms are in this new environment and what kind of adaptations they should make. These social practices enhance their ability as heritage language teachers. This is also evidence that "learning is an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 31).

However, obtaining a precise understanding of the new pedagogical environment and becoming more confident in this environment are not easy processes for teachers. In this study, heritage language teachers are seen as having to fulfil this process by themselves. Lave and

Wenger (1991) state that: “the key to legitimate peripherality is access by newcomers to the community of practice... To become a full member of a community of practice requires access to a wide range of ongoing activity, information, resource, and opportunities for participation.” (p.100-101) However, the heritage language school do not provide enough resources for the heritage language teachers to fully participate in the relevant community of practice.

4.5 Summary

This study explores six Chinese heritage language teachers’ teaching practices and investigates the factors that influence the adaptation of their teaching practices to the Montreal context. The results show that the Chinese heritage language teachers in this study thought that their teaching practices and approaches needed to be adjusted for the Montreal heritage language context. They all identified and compared the different teaching priorities in China and Montreal. In China, teaching is directed by examinations, and teachers focus primarily on imparting knowledge to students. However, in Montreal, teachers’ instructional priority is arousing students’ interest in heritage language learning. The fact that the Chinese heritage language teachers in this study no longer used examinations as the only way to evaluate students’ performance demonstrates their changing attitudes in the new teaching environment. However, the teachers differed in their competence in fulfilling their teaching goals. Han, Wenhui, Meimei and Juan, who had teaching experience in China before they moved to Montreal, were confident in adapting their teaching practices to meet the requirements of students in the new pedagogical environment. They identified that a typical heritage language class is made up of students with heterogeneous backgrounds and language proficiencies. In order to balance every student’s needs, they take into account individual variations and apply different teaching strategies to different students. Their instructional practices are student centred. However, Chao and Shichang, who did

not have teaching experience in China, expressed their frustration with heritage language teaching. Their teaching practices are inconsistent with their teaching beliefs. They found that teaching heritage language was challenging. Specifically, they were not able to arouse students' interest, and they did not know how to cater to different students' needs. An analysis of the factors that influence teachers' adaptation to the new environment shows that heritage language teachers' prior teaching experience in their native country is an asset rather than an obstacle to their adaptation to their new environment. However, their teaching experience in China can only be an asset when accompanied by other factors (e.g., preference for Western education, their own children's Western mainstream school learning experiences, their own children's heritage language learning experiences, as well as cooperation and interaction with heritage language colleagues, their own Second Language learning experience in local schools, and parental expectations) that familiarize teachers with the local pedagogical environment. These findings suggest that both teaching experiences and experiences that familiarize teachers with the local pedagogical environment are important for teachers' adaptation to the new environment.

Chapter 5 **Implications and Conclusion**

This chapter first provides a summary of the major research findings of this study. Then I discuss the implications of these findings. I conclude that heritage language teachers lack assistance for their professional development. Thus, a stable support system needs to be built for their career development. Finally, I state the limitations of this study and suggest several directions for future research.

5.1 Answers to the research questions

Motivated by the alleged problem that most Chinese heritage language school instructors use a “home-country” model in the classroom (Wang, 1996, p. 87), I investigated six heritage language teachers in Montreal in an effort to identify the particularities of their teaching practices. In the following part, I provide a brief answer to each research question.

1. In what ways do the heritage language teachers perceive that their teaching practices and approaches meet the needs of the Montreal/Quebec heritage language context? What kinds of adjustments might be considered? Why?

All Chinese heritage language teachers in this study think their teaching practices and approaches need to be adjusted for the Montreal/Quebec heritage language context. The major reason that teachers think they need to change their teaching practices lies in the way teaching priorities differ in Montreal and in China. Exam-directed education in China leads teachers to focus more on helping learners perform better in examinations, while teaching heritage language as an out-of-regular-school program makes teachers focus more on inspiring students’ interest in learning. Teachers’ awareness of the students’ low motivation inspires them to arouse students’ interest in learning. In this study, Han, Wenhui, Meimei and Juan are more efficient in their teaching. They are sensitive to the contextual information when they are facing in the new

teaching environment. Students' relatively low motivation, various language levels in one class, and parental expectations all provide an impetus for them to make reasonable decisions about their teaching methods and practices. However, Chao and Shichang may not have been as able to address the complexity of the heritage language teaching in this particular context. Han, Wenhui, Meimei and Juan believe their teaching is effective, while Shichang and Chao have less confidence in their teaching abilities. Most of the teachers assess themselves through personal perceptions; for example, by looking at their own feelings, by referring to their self-perception and emotional feedback. Lacking concrete facts or evidence to support their perception made their self-evaluation imprecise. As their heritage language schools do not provide formal teacher evaluations, teachers in this study are unclear about their teaching strengths and what they need to improve.

2. What are the critical factors that might influence heritage language teachers' willingness to change their teaching practices?

The results demonstrate that there are three critical factors that influence heritage language teachers' willingness to change their teaching practices: teachers' former teaching experiences in China, their preference for Western education, their educational experiences in Canada (including their own children's mainstream school learning experiences, their own children's heritage language learning experiences, cooperation and interaction with heritage language colleagues, their own Second Language learning experience in local schools, and parental expectations). This study suggests that heritage language teachers' prior teaching experience in their native country is an asset rather than an obstacle to their adaptation to their new environment. However, their teaching experience in China can only be an asset when accompanied by other factors that familiarize teachers with the local pedagogical environment.

In this study, the heritage language teachers are *situated learners* within the new education system. They increase their knowledge of the new teaching environment by interacting and communicating with community members. They gradually gain knowledge of the Montreal teaching environment by interaction with people who can benefit their professional growth (e.g., colleagues, students, students' parents, and their own children). The broader cultural environment in Montreal has made them reflect on what the teaching norms are in this new environment and what kind of adaptations they should make. These social practices enhance their ability as heritage language teachers. This is also evidence that "learning is an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 31).

5.2 Implications and recommendations

The findings show that the teachers who participated in this study are willing to change their teaching practices according to their new environment. However, their efficiency in doing so differs. An analysis of the factors that influence teachers' adaptation to the new teaching environment reveals the reasons for their various levels of efficiency. Both teachers' former teaching experiences in China and their resources that familiarize them with local teaching norms help them adapt to the new environment effectively. It is problematic that their adaptation to the new environment depends on their personal resources, such as their former teaching experience and their own children's learning experience in mainstream school. For teachers who do not have these resources, their adaption process might slow down or stagnate. Thus, a stable support system is needed for heritage language teachers' effective adaptation to a new environment. I propose that a professional development program, a collegial support network, and a teacher evaluation system be put in place to benefit both heritage language teachers and their students.

1. Creating efficient professional development programs

Professional development aims to provide “systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students” (Guskey, 2002, p. 381). Liu (2012) points out that constantly advancing teachers’ professional knowledge is important to the development of teacher efficacy. No matter whether a teacher has former (non-heritage language teaching) experience or not, acquiring heritage language teaching professional knowledge and skills is important for their own development as heritage language teachers. The knowledge and skills include, but are not limited to teaching strategies and activities that cater to heritage language learners’ characteristics and needs, familiarity with local cultural norms, and familiarity with education systems. For Chinese immigrant teachers, the incongruity between their native understanding of educational theories and practices and what is considered as the Canadian way of thinking and acting as teachers are challenges they constantly face (Wang, 2002, p. 38). Professional development opportunities need to be provided for teachers to explore the different learning styles in the Western and Eastern pedagogical contexts. This is worthwhile to help teachers identify the different roles teachers play in Eastern and Western classes and to help them form a view that seeing teachers as facilitators instead of authorities would benefit teachers in changing their way of teaching. It is also important to help heritage language teachers to discover heritage language learners’ characteristics and expectations. Professional development opportunities need to equip teachers with the teaching methods and strategies they need to cater to heritage language learners’ special needs.

Teacher training, workshops and accreditations are all useful techniques for heritage language teachers to update their teaching strategies and knowledge. Unfortunately, nowadays,

few teacher development opportunities are provided to heritage language educators. Even when there is a training opportunity, heritage language schools can scarcely afford to support teachers financially. Additionally, as most teachers have full-time positions on weekdays, their limited time could prevent them from receiving training (Wu et al. 2011). Thus, when designing professional development programmes, heritage language teachers' circumstances need to be taken into account.

2. Creating opportunities for collegial support

Collegial support facilitates heritage language teachers' professional growth. Teachers working at the same heritage language school might encounter the same teaching difficulties and challenges. As teachers constantly construct and reconstruct their understandings of their work with people in their work contexts, colleagues contribute to teachers' growth of knowledge (Tsui, 2003; Wang, 2012). Learning from and interacting with their colleagues at the same schools could facilitate teachers' understanding of their students and help them solve the teaching problems they encounter. In addition, communications with their fellow teachers can also support them emotionally. Collegial support gradually contributed to a sense of community among the teachers in this study, providing a platform for the resolution of difficulties in their teaching and use of discipline. We see, therefore, that heritage language schools need to provide opportunities for collegial support and communication.

3. Establishing an evaluation system

Efficient evaluation systems which aim to support teacher growth and development are another way to facilitate heritage language teachers' career growth. Teacher evaluation is an important mechanism for improving teaching and learning (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). With evaluation feedback, teachers would have concrete guidance about their teaching strengths and

what they need to improve. By discovering the gap between teaching practices and the students' expectations, schools could identify teachers' problems and offer them help immediately.

However, in order to establish an evaluation system for heritage language teachers, there are many prerequisites. First, heritage language schools need to have enough financial resources and staff to complete the process. Second, heritage language schools need to have a set of criteria of what constitutes good heritage language teaching. For example, teachers need to arouse students' interest by applying different teaching strategies and add content about Chinese culture to cultivate students' cultural identity.

5.3 Limitations and future directions

One limitation of this study is that the information gathered is mainly from interviews with the participants. Observations of teachers' classes are limited. Students and parents' perspectives are seldom included in this study. Teachers' change of their teaching practices is a dynamic process. It is possible teachers are unable to report their change accurately. Because of the time constraint, I was not able to conduct a longitudinal study that would have probed the participants' teaching practices before and after they came to Canada (which would have included observing heritage language teachers over time as they become more adapted to Canadian educational pedagogical contexts). In future research I hope to conduct a longitudinal study to investigate heritage language teachers' changes in their teaching practices.

Another limitation is that different ethnic groups may have different perspectives on heritage language teaching. For example, exploring other heritage language teaching experiences would provide a broader understanding of heritage language teaching conditions.

This study's findings indicate that a lack of professional development opportunities inhibits heritage language teachers' career growth process. Therefore, future studies should focus

more on finding how to offer effective and efficient teacher development opportunities for heritage language teachers. Additionally, the findings show that heritage language schools do not evaluate their teachers. Future research should endeavour to provide information about how to create an evaluation system suitable for heritage language teaching. Finally, in order to gain a better understanding of the teachers' teaching efficacy, it would be beneficial to include opinions of students and parents.

5.4 Closing remarks

In conclusion, this study is unique in that it investigated the complexities of teaching Chinese as a heritage language in the Montreal environment. An in-depth study of heritage language teachers' instructional practices help us gain a better understanding of teachers' concerns and needs, which help to better prepare and support heritage language teachers and preserve heritage languages. Heritage language teaching is undermined by many factors. In a classroom setting, heritage language teachers endeavour to help learners maintain their heritage language; however, the limited support they obtain from heritage language schools does not facilitate their professional development, which also prevents them from providing a better learning experience for the heritage language learners. Changes in the teaching context demand that heritage language teachers have a greater capacity to respond effectively to a range of changing conditions. Teachers' continuing improvement requires support from all angles. In order to provide professional development opportunities and establish an evaluation system for heritage language teachers, support is needed from the broader educational community.

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Appendix 1A: Letter to the teachers (Chinese version)

致老师的信

尊敬的老师：

您好！

我是麦吉尔大学教育学院第二语言教育专业的硕士研究生。我的论文课题是汉语作为继承语教师的课堂教学。我期待通过对教师课堂教学的研究，增进对继承语课堂教学的了解。如果您对这个话题感兴趣，希望您能参与到我的研究课题中。我将在您合适的时间和地点采访您，时长大约一小时。采访中将讨论您的教学目标，教学理念和具体的教学方法。在您允许的情况下，我会对采访进行录音。我也期望能有机会观察您的课堂，整个过程不会被录音或录像。您的参与完全自愿，您可以选择只参加采访或课堂观察。在我的论文中，任何能识别您身份的信息都将被删除。我的导师是 Caroline Riches 博士（电子邮箱：caroline.riches@mcgill.ca）。希望您能考虑我的邀请。非常谢谢！

此致

敬礼！

潘梦婷

Appendix 1B: Translation of letter to the teachers

Dear Teacher,

I am a masters' student at McGill University presently working on my master's thesis in second language education. My research focuses on the teaching practices of Chinese heritage language teachers. I hope this study can enhance our understanding of heritage language teaching. If you are interested in participating, I would like to interview you, at your convenience, for about one hour. During the interview, we will discuss your teaching practices, goals, and beliefs with regard to teaching Chinese as a heritage language. The interview will be tape-recorded with your permission. I also hope to observe some of your classes without video-taping or audio-taping. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may only agree to participate either in the interview or the class observation. All of the information which can identify you will be eliminated in my research report. Also, I will keep all of the interview data confidential. This research work is under the supervision of Dr. Caroline Riches (Email: caroline.riches@mcgill.ca). Thank you for considering my invitation. Please contact me if you are interested. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Mengting Pan

Appendix 2A: Letter to the principal (Chinese version)

致校长的信

尊敬的校长：

您好！

我是麦吉尔大学教育学院第二语言教育专业的硕士研究生，我的论文话题是汉语作为继承语教师的课堂教学。我期待通过对教师课堂教学的研究，增进对继承语课堂教学的了解。我希望能到您学校采访几位老师，了解他们的教学目标，教学理念和具体的教学方法。在您和老师同意的情况下，我也希望能有机会观察他们的课堂。我的导师是 Caroline Riches 博士（电子邮箱：caroline.riches@mcgill.ca）。希望您同意贵校的老师参与到我的研究课题，也希望您能帮助我发邀请信给贵校的老师。非常感谢您的帮助和支持！

此致

敬礼！

潘梦婷

Appendix 2B: Translation of letter to the principal

Dear Principal,

I am a master's student at McGill University who is majoring in second language education. Currently, I am collecting data for my master's thesis, which aims to get a better understanding of Chinese heritage language teaching in a school setting. I hope to interview some Chinese heritage language teachers in your school in order to understand their teaching goals, beliefs and practices. I also hope to observe some of their classes with the teachers' and your permission. This research work is under the supervision of Dr. Caroline Riches (Email: caroline.riches@mcgill.ca). I hope you will permit me to conduct the study with the teachers in your school and help me send out the participant-recruiting letters to them. Your help is essential for my study. I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Mengting Pan

Appendix 3A: Interview guideline questions (Chinese version)

采访提纲

1. 请谈谈您在中国的教育和学习背景。
2. 请谈谈您在蒙特利尔的教育和学习情况。
3. 在中国教学和在蒙特利尔教学有什么不同？
4. 您在蒙特利尔的教学目标是什么？
5. 您在中国的教学目标是什么？
6. 请描述一下您在中文学校的一般教学流程？
7. 您在课堂中会有怎样的教学活动？
8. 您认为您的教学是否有效？
9. 您和您的学生之间的关系是怎样的？
10. 哪些因素影响您在蒙特利尔的教学？

Appendix 3B: Translation of the interview guideline questions

1. What was your teaching and learning experience in China?
2. What is your teaching and learning experience in Montreal?
3. What are the differences between teaching in China and in Montreal?
4. What is the goal of your teaching in Montreal?
5. What is the goal of your teaching in China?
6. What are your normal teaching procedures in heritage language class?
7. What kind of teaching activities do you use in your class?
8. Do you think your teaching practices are effective?
9. How would you describe the relationship between you and your students?
10. What are the factors influence your teaching practices in Montreal?

Appendix 4A: Consent Form (Chinese version)

同意书

研究课题：蒙特利尔汉语作为继承语教师的课堂教学研究

研究者：潘梦婷，麦吉尔大学教育学院第二语言教育研究生

联系方式：电话 514-8036869 电邮 mengting.pan@mail.mcgill.ca

导师：Caroline Riches 博士 电邮 caroline.riches@mcgill.ca

研究目的：探索汉语作为继承语教师的课堂教学行为，教学理念和方法。

步骤：我将在您合适的时间和地点对您进行一对一的采访，时常大约一小时。采访中将讨论您的教育及教学背景，您的教学目标，教学理念和具体的教学方法。在您允许的情况下，我会对采访进行录音。我也期望能有机会观察您的课堂，整个过程不会被录音或录像。所有录音我都会妥善保管。在我的论文中，我会用假名取代您的真实姓名。其他任何能识别您身份的信息都将被删除。您的参与完全是自愿的，您有权拒绝回答我提出的问题甚至在任何时候退出这个研究项目。

研究对象同意书：

我已阅读以上信息并同意参加次研究。我知道我可以跳过任何我不想回答的问题，我也可以在任何时候退出此次研究。

我同意接受录音采访 _____ 是

_____ 否

我同意研究者观察我的课堂 _____ 是

_____ 否

参与人签字 _____ 日期 _____

研究者签字 _____ 日期 _____

Appendix 4B: Translation of the Consent Form

Title of Study: Teaching practices of Chinese heritage language teachers in Montreal.

Researcher: Mengting Pan, MA student, Second Language Education, Department of Integrated Studies of Education, Faculty of Education, McGill University.

Contact: Phone: 514-803-6869. Email: mengting.pan@mail.mcgill.ca

Supervisor: Dr. Caroline Riches. Email: caroline.riches@mcgill.ca

Purpose of the study: This study aims to investigate Chinese heritage language teachers' teaching practices, goals and beliefs.

Procedures: An interview will be conducted one-on-one with you. The interview will include questions about your teaching and learning backgrounds, your teaching practices in heritage language classes, and your teaching goals and beliefs. The interview will take about 1 hour to complete. With your permission, the researcher would also like to tape-record the interview, and observe some of your classes. The class observation will be conducted without audio or video-recording. The records of this study will be kept confidential. In the final report, your real name will be replaced with a pseudonym. Any information that will make it possible to identify you will not be included. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You can refuse to answer any questions and withdraw from the study at any point.

Participant's consent: I have read the above information, and I agree to participate voluntarily. I understand that I can skip any questions that I do not want to answer during the interview. Also, I can withdraw from this study at any time.

I agree to be tape-recorded during the interview _____ YES

_____ NO

I agree to the observation of my classes by the researcher _____ YES

_____ NO

Participant's signature _____

Date _____

Researcher's signature _____

Date _____