

University of Windsor

Scholarship at UWindor

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Theses, Dissertations, and Major Papers

2013

The Role of Parents in Maintaining Cultural Values in Vietnamese Immigrant Families in Windsor

Xuan Le Nguyen
University of Windsor

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/etd>

Recommended Citation

Nguyen, Xuan Le, "The Role of Parents in Maintaining Cultural Values in Vietnamese Immigrant Families in Windsor" (2013). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 4893.
<https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/etd/4893>

This online database contains the full-text of PhD dissertations and Masters' theses of University of Windsor students from 1954 forward. These documents are made available for personal study and research purposes only, in accordance with the Canadian Copyright Act and the Creative Commons license—CC BY-NC-ND (Attribution, Non-Commercial, No Derivative Works). Under this license, works must always be attributed to the copyright holder (original author), cannot be used for any commercial purposes, and may not be altered. Any other use would require the permission of the copyright holder. Students may inquire about withdrawing their dissertation and/or thesis from this database. For additional inquiries, please contact the repository administrator via email (scholarship@uwindsor.ca) or by telephone at 519-253-3000ext. 3208.

**The Role of Parents in Maintaining Cultural Values in Vietnamese Immigrant
Families in Windsor**

By

Xuan Le Nguyen

**A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Faculty of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Education
at the University of Windsor**

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2013

© 2013 Xuan Le Nguyen

**The Role of Parents in Maintaining Cultural Values in Vietnamese Immigrant
Families in Windsor**

by

Xuan Le Nguyen

APPROVED BY:

Wansoo Park (External Reader)
School of Social Work

Cam Cobb (Second Reader)
Faculty of Education

Shijing Xu (Advisor)
Faculty of Education

R. Darren Stanley (Chair of Defense)

May 6, 2013

Declaration of Originality

I hereby certify that I am the sole author of this thesis and that no part of this thesis has been published or submitted for publication.

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, my thesis does not infringe upon anyone's copyright nor violate any proprietary rights and that any ideas, techniques, quotations, or any other material from the work of other people included in my thesis, published or otherwise, are fully acknowledged in accordance with the standard referencing practices. Furthermore, to the extent that I have included copyrighted material that surpasses the bounds of fair dealing within the meaning of the Canada Copyright Act, I certify that I have obtained a written permission from the copyright owner(s) to include such material(s) in my thesis and have included copies of such copyright clearances to my appendix.

I declare that this is a true copy of my thesis, including any final revisions, as approved by my thesis committee and the Graduate Studies office, and that this thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution.

Abstract

This study, with narrative inquiry approach, has investigated the parents' perception of their roles, their perspectives and experience as well as their strategies in maintaining cultural values in immigrant families in Windsor. Eight parents from four immigrant families from the Vietnamese church community in Windsor participated in semi-structured in-depth interviews. Fieldnotes were also used as a supplementary method for collecting field text. The findings highlight the educational roles of parents in maintaining cultural values as a part of the home education. The parents' narratives has shown the parents' great effort to keep the language, habits and traditions such as "respect the elders," "love the younger" or "being a good person" in their families. They also reveal the cultural conflicts and the tensions in immigrant families in terms of childcare and child discipline. There are also other challenges coming from the outside factors that go beyond the parents' control.

Keyword: parents' role, cultural values, immigrant families, Vietnamese, narrative inquiry, maintaining culture.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank first and foremost Dr. Shijing Xu, my wonderful supervisor. I could not have finished this thesis without her continued support and guidance. I am so grateful for her substantial patience and understanding as well as her encouragement for me along the way. My special thanks also go to my committee members, Dr. Cam Cobb and Dr. Wansoo Park who have given me valuable suggestions and comments to improve my thesis.

I greatly appreciate the participating parents in my study for their contribution and support to my study. I have learned so much from the stories and the experiences that they shared. I also wish to thank Ms. Gayle Tait for her encouragement throughout my master's program.

I would also like to thank my friends in our narrative inquiry team Ju Huang, Nesreen El Kord and Hermes Fomutar for their feedback and encouragement on this work. My thanks also go to Holly Renaud for her helpful edits and comments for my writing. Special appreciations are for my friends and colleagues in Vietnam and my friends in Canada for their cheers and support.

Finally, I owe my special thanks to my dear husband and my little daughter for their love, understanding and encouragement. I would also like to express my deep gratitude to my parents and my big family in Vietnam for their love and care. Without their support, the completion of this work would be impossible. I dedicate this paper to my beloved grandmother who has taught me the first lessons of how to be a good person.

Table of Contents

Declaration of Originality	iii
Abstract	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Background to the Study	1
Purpose of the Study	3
Research Questions	4
Significance of the study	4
Outline of the Thesis	5
Chapter 2 Literature Review	6
Culture and Cultural Values	6
Definitions of culture.....	6
Components and characteristics of culture.....	8
Language as Culture	9
Definitions of Cultural Values.....	10
Maintaining Cultural Values in Immigrant Families	12
Why it is important to maintain cultural values in immigrant families?.....	12
The role of parents in cultural values maintenance in immigrant families.	16
Chapter 3 Research Methodology	18
Narrative Inquiry	18
What is narrative inquiry?	18
Three-dimensions of narrative inquiry space.	19
Procedure.....	21
Research method.	21
<i>In-depth interview</i>	22
<i>Fieldnotes</i>	22
Participants.	23
The pilot study: My first lesson about narrative inquiry.	27

Chapter 4	30
“Blood Is Thicker Than Water” – The Close Kinship in Vietnamese Culture	30
Introduction to the Chapter	30
“Everyone Is Brother and Sister, or Auntie and Uncle”	31
Vietnamese Dinner and its Traditional Custom	34
“In my Family, We Always Have Vietnamese Food”	34
“Vietnamese Language Is the First Thing to Keep”	36
“In Vietnam, They Could Learn Much More Than Just the Language”	40
“We Can Not Discipline the Child in Our Asian Way”	41
“You Can’t be a Real Vietnamese If You Can’t Tell about Vietnamese History”	42
“There Is No Time for Talking between Parents and Children”	43
Chapter 5	45
A Family’s Principle: “It’s Most Important That You Spend Time with Your Child”	45
Introduction to the Chapter	45
“There Is No English in This House; We Only Speak Vietnamese at Home”	46
Nam and Tram’s Effort to Teach Vietnamese to Their Children	48
“Parents Play very Important Roles in the Children’s Education”	49
“I Encouraged Them to Speak Vietnamese, but I Did Not Force Them at All”	51
“We Treasure the Vietnamese Values of Having the Family Meal Together”	52
“We Feel So Blessed that We Could Keep Those Tradition for Our Children”	54
“It’s Most Important that You Spend Time with Your Child”	55
“Punishment Does Not Mean that You Do Not Love Your Children”	56
“It’s Sometimes very Difficult to Educate and Discipline Your Child in Canada”	58
Chapter 6	61
“It’s Too Difficult, Xuan! Things Are Different in Canada”	61
– Tensions in an Immigrant Family	61
Introduction to the Chapter	61
“Raising a Child Is Like Planting a Tree” – Chi’s Educational Philosophy	62
“Each Culture Has Its Own Advantages”	64
“In Canada, Children Do Not Learn How to Respect Their Parents and the Elders”	65
“It’s Too Difficult, Xuan, Life Is Different in Canada”	67
“She Does Not Like Cooking Vietnamese Food”	69
If You Ask Your Son and Daughter to Do Housework in Canada, You Will Have Immediate Troubles with the Children Aid Society	70
“It’s Fortunate that He Agreed to Join the Vietnamese Community at the church”	73
“I Want Them to Experience the Values that We Treasure in Vietnam”	73

Chapter 7	76
“Culture Is Like a Cloud” – a Father’s Concept of Culture	76
Introduction to the Chapter	76
“Culture Is Like a Cloud”	77
“Family Oriented” vs. “Individual Oriented”	79
“The Best Way to Teach Them about Cultural Values Is to Bring Them to the Community”	80
“Although It Is a Language School, What the Children Have Learned There Is Much More”	81
“Sometimes Vietnamese parents in Canada Seem to Hold On to the Tradition and Values More Tightly Those in Vietnam”	82
Politics and Culture: “... Those Annoying Northern People”	84
“The Children Were Born and Grown Up in Canada; They Will be Canadian No Matter How You Teach Them”	85
“The Most Difficult Thing Is to Set Up a Model for the Children to Follow”	86
“The Children Take Their Parents for Granted and Think that Their Parents Have the Responsibility and duty to Raise Them”	87
Chapter 8 Discussion	89
Maintaining Cultural Values as a Part of Home Education	89
Role Model in the Family.....	91
Language and Culture	93
Vietnamese Food and Its Cultural Values	96
Core Values in Vietnamese Culture	98
Child Discipline and Child Care	100
Vietnamese History and Political Issue.....	102
Loss of Traditions in the Modern World.....	103
Cultural Assimilation	104
Conclusion	107
References	112
Appendices	124
Appendix A: Pilot Study for the Research	124
Appendix B: Interview guide	130
Vita Auctoris	132

Chapter 1

Introduction

Background to the Study

In early 2011, a week before I ventured to Canada, I went to see a cousin who had just arrived in Vietnam for Christmas vacation. He was born in Canada, and for 14 years of his life, that was the first time he returned to the place where his parents were born and lived during their childhood. Although both parents were from Vietnam, he knew very little Vietnamese and seemed to be unfamiliar with many cultural norms and everyday activities. Consequently, he behaved at times like a foreigner, and found himself a stranger in his parents' (also his) homeland. At that time, I felt something odd with his situation, but I could not identify exactly what it was.

Two months later, I had a chance to visit another Vietnamese family, but this time in Windsor. The family's children were also born in Canada, and were about the same age as my cousin. Having taken for granted how a Canadian-born child would be, I was surprised when these children talked to me in perfect Vietnamese and could easily understand the Vietnamese way of thinking or addressing issues. We could chat about Vietnamese traditional holidays or wedding procedures, or even discuss about some conflicts between the norms of social manners in two cultures. Therefore, I could not help myself complimenting the children on their Vietnamese manner and knowledge to their parents and heard the simplest explanation it could be: "They should be since we are Vietnamese." At that moment, I began wondering about what role parents would play in helping immigrant children learn about their native culture. When we talked further about the topic, the parents laughed and added that the children learned mostly about

Vietnamese culture from their parents. In their opinions, parents had great influences on how the children understand about the culture of where they called their “far away homeland”. The parents also suggested that I should study about this topic if I have a chance. They showed the expectation that the study would be helpful for parents in Vietnamese church community in particular and Vietnamese immigrant families in Windsor in general.

My later experience with the children in other immigrant families had consolidated my determination to explore the role parents have in maintaining the cultural values for their children within their homes. Children seem to express different levels of understanding the Vietnamese language and its culture from family to family since their parents have different views and explanations toward the subject. In addition, cultural values in immigrant families also change much depending on many other elements such as the family’s background, economic status and religion. However, when I read further about the topic, I could hardly find any research about Vietnamese immigrants as an independent group but rather as a part of the Southeast Asian immigrant community. I realized the need to study about the role of parents in maintaining the cultural values within Vietnamese immigrant families. When I took a graduate course with Dr. Xu in the fall of 2011 and began to study about narrative inquiry, I learned that the parents’ differences in their views and perspectives could be explained best by the flow of their particular experiences in the past and the present as well as their hope and plans for the future (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Xu, 2006). Therefore, I had been motivated to carry out a pilot study as my coursework in the fall of 2011. With a Research Ethics Board (REB) approval, the purpose of the pilot study was to help me to

formulate my thesis research and practice using narrative inquiry to investigate the parents' experiences and perspectives about maintaining cultural values in immigrant families. I have interviewed a parent from Vietnamese church community, which is also the field work for my final thesis afterward. I have learned much from this pilot study, which has helped me develop my thesis proposal and paved the way to this thesis study. For example, the pilot study made me realize that the parents were unfamiliar with the common terms on this topic in the literature such as "ethnic identity" or "cultural identity". They used their own terms of "culture" and "cultural values". I will further explain and discuss over those concepts when I review the literature for my study.

Purpose of the Study

My purpose in conducting this study is to investigate the role of parents in maintaining cultural values, including the language of their origin in Vietnamese immigrant families in Windsor and how parents perceive their role. A further goal I have is to identify the various strategies that parents use in maintaining cultural values for their children. I am particularly interested in exploring the different perspectives and experience parents have on the topic of values and maintaining values.

I hope to gain insight into how the parents maintain cultural values in the families while their children were so much influenced by the mainstream culture, to understand their experience, their hopes and the values they treasure through the stories they tell. Therefore, I chose narrative inquiry as the methodology for my research as in narrative inquiry, the stories are treated as a "portal to experience" to learn from experience and make meaning of the experience (Xu & Connelly, 2010, p.352).

The findings of this study will be useful for parents in Vietnamese families in Windsor in particular and parents in immigrant communities in general who are concerned about maintaining “cultural values” as a part of the family values system rather than just keeping the “ethnic identity” from their countries of origin.

Research Questions

Following are the questions that have been investigated in this study:

1. What roles do parents play in maintaining cultural values, including Vietnamese language within immigrant families in Canada? How do parents perceive their roles?
2. What are the cultural values within Vietnamese immigrant families? What cultural values are often highly treasured? What cultural values are normally adapted?
3. What strategies do parents use to help their children respect Vietnamese cultural values and maintain Vietnamese language in the family? What strategies do parents use to help them deal with cultural and linguistic conflicts?

Significance of the study

Multiculturalism has been instituted as a policy in Canada in general and in Windsor in particular since 1971 (Multicultural Council, 2013). According to Statistics Canada (2006), Windsor is among the cities that has the highest proportion of visible minorities in Ontario. Therefore, the issue of maintaining cultural values is a concern of this city. This research will make a contribution to the literature on the topic of maintaining cultural values in immigrant families in Windsor.

The topic of maintaining family language and cultural values has been investigated by many researchers (Bankston & Zhou, 1995; Dion & Dion, 2001; Fillmore, 2000; Inman et al., 2007; Lee, 2006; Ngo & Lee, 2007; Phinney et al., 2001;

Syed, 2010; Warikoo, 2009 in the U.S.; Choi, 2001; Flemming, 2003; Park & Sarkar, 2007; Xu, 2006 in Canada). However, in the existing research literature, Vietnamese immigrants are often lumped into the Southeast Asian group and as united disregarded within group differences. (Choi, 2001; Lee, 2006; Ngo & Lee, 2007). Meanwhile, each Southeast Asian country has diverse and different traditions, cultures and languages. There is a need for research on Vietnamese immigrant families in Windsor as an independent group. The findings from my pilot study also indicate the importance of studying about maintaining cultural values in Vietnamese immigrant families in Windsor. The strategies and suggestions from this research might be valuable to parents in immigrant families and to anyone who concern about the problem of maintaining cultural values in immigrant families. The implication from this study might bring benefits to Vietnamese immigrant parents not only in Windsor but also in other small Canadian cities which has a multicultural community like Windsor.

Outline of the Thesis

Chapter 1, Introduction, is an overview of my study in which I talk about the research problem, the purpose of the study and the research questions. Chapter 2 presents a review of existing research on culture, cultural values and maintaining cultural values in immigrant families. In Chapter 3, I will outline narrative inquiry as the methodology of my study as well as how I used narrative inquiry in my stories. Chapters 4 to 7 are the stories from four participating immigrant families in this research. Those story chapters are the core of my thesis, which depict vividly the parents' experience and perspective on maintaining Vietnamese cultural values in their families through their narratives. In Chapter 8, the discussion chapter, I will discuss the educational and social issues emerging from the stories.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

In this chapter, I will discuss about the concepts of “culture” and “cultural values, as well as maintaining cultural values in immigrant families. There are two main parts in this chapter. In the first part, I will define culture and examine the four components of culture and the relationship between language and culture. I will also define cultural values. In the second part, I will review literature about the importance of maintaining cultural values in immigrant families and the role of parent in cultural values maintenance.

Culture and Cultural Values

Definitions of culture. In everyday language, the term ‘culture’ is used without concrete definitions due to its complicatedness. The word “culture” is often used to refer to intricate and distinct concept like “art and culture” or “language and culture” or “cultural heritages”. Generally, the term implies that culture is an “abstract entity” which is human-related and shared collections of material and non-material elements, from works of arts or constructions to norms, values, beliefs, etc. These elements together form the culture as a whole (Dahl, 2004, p.1). Overall, the term suggests that culture is always associated with the human society and civilizations, forming common concepts of values, principles and behaviours among a community.

Historically, the word ‘culture’ is rooted from the Latin origin ‘colere’, which means ‘to build’, ‘to care for’, ‘to plant’ or ‘to cultivate’ (Dahl, 2004). Throughout its history, the word usually refers to something that is “derived from, or created by the intervention of humans – ‘culture’ is cultivated” (Dahl, 2004, p.1). This definition gives

the description of the word 'culture' as something related to human, which is of high value, chosen or refined by human and society.

Over a long time, there has been a large body of research related to culture; still, this term remains somehow a controversial topic to researchers who have made efforts to give it an adequate definition. In the 1980s and early 1990s, many researchers viewed culture as a complicated, abstract and subconscious concept (Hall, 1983; Hofstede, 1991; Jayasuriya, 1990; William, 1983). They compared culture to a working system in our mind which controls our thoughts unconsciously, which set the boundaries for us in examining, acknowledging and distinguishing social issues (Hofstede, 1991). These boundaries help us form our beliefs or norms which lead to different behaviours and attitudes toward a phenomenon or event.

Later researchers attempt to extend the concept of culture (Beamer & Varner, 2001; Brislin, 2001; Fuchs, 2001; Gonzalez et al., 2000; Kendall, 2010; Schwartz, 1999; Spencer-Oatey, 2000). Beamer and Varner (2001) claim that culture belongs to a community rather than being a characteristic of individuals. They consider culture as a program made from life experience which tells us what matters, what to prefer, what to avoid, what to do, and what ought to be (p.3). According to Spencer-Oatey (2000), "culture is a fuzzy set of attitudes, beliefs, behavioural norms, and basic assumptions and values that are shared by a group of people, and that influence each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the "meaning" of other people's behaviour" (p.4). This extension in the concept of culture is also shared among recent studies with an emphasis on group identity while also acknowledging the complication of the concept (Collier, 2003; Hecht, 2003; Gudykunst, 2003; Nieto, 2009; Schwartz 2006; 2009; 2010). Collier

(2003) gives her own definition of culture as “a historically based, interpretive, constitutive, creative set of practices and interpretive frames that demonstrate affiliation with a group” (p.417). Nieto (2009) believes that culture is a complicated and sophisticated concept, which consists of “the ever-changing values, traditions, social and political relationships, and worldview” (p.136). She also refers to culture with a number of aspects and characteristics such as: culture is dynamic, multi-faced or learned.

Regarding learning aspects of culture, Nieto demonstrates a series of definitions for the term from educational views. Among all the educational aspects, she stated that “Culture is learned” (2010, p.143). With this definition, she emphasizes that culture, especially ethnic and religious culture, can only be unconsciously absorbed through contacts and exchanges with families and communities. This definition is of much importance for the purpose of imparting culture to the next generations, so it is valuable for studies and research on cultural values maintenance in immigrant families.

Components and characteristics of culture. In order to have a thorough understanding of the concept, theorists divide them into different components and then look at each of these components (Collier, 2010; Kendall, 2010; Peoples & Bailey, 2011). However, as Nieto (2009, p.9) postulates, “culture is complex and intricate”, there are various ways to group culture components. Collier (2010, p.19) believes that culture is an “organization of factors”, which contains four components: cognition, behaviour, language, and education. Those are four elements that are fundamental when studying about any culture. Cognition refers to the way we think; behaviour refers to the way we act; language (including both words and discourse) serves as the means of communication for a culture; and education implies on how other three components are transmitted to the

next generations. Meanwhile, Kendall (2010) agrees that any culture shares four major components, but her components of culture are different. They are symbols, language, values and norms (p.46). According to Kendall, those components are interrelated which form an integrated system. Samovar et al. (2009, p.24) divide cultures into another set of five elements: history, religion, values, social organizations and language. They also give six characteristics of any human cultures as follow:

- Culture is learned,
- Culture is shared,
- Culture is transmitted from generation to generation,
- Culture is based on symbols,
- Culture is dynamic, and
- Culture is an integrated system (p.39).

Although theorists hold different opinions on components and characteristics of culture, all of them acknowledge the language and values as important components of a culture. They also emphasize on the social aspect of culture and see culture as a process of learning and sharing and passing on to the next generation.

Language as Culture

As we have seen from the analysis of culture components, language is profoundly implicated with culture and a crucial part of it (Chow, 2001, Collier, 2010; Cummins, 2007; Edward, 1979; Gkaintartzi & Tsokalidou, 2011; Nieto, 2009). There is no language without culture or vice versa. This explains why, in any culture, there are many proverbs and saying about the power of language, for example, *The pen is mightier than the sword*. As stated by Ruiz (1991), “a major dimension of the power of language is the power to

define, to decide the nature of lived experience” (as cited in Nieto, 2009, p. 218).

With the central role in culture, language is considered as a channel of communication among members of a group in order to exchange ideas and pass on knowledge of the world. According to Edwards (1979, p.16), “a common language is a powerful symbol of group identity.” Language differences can be used to identify different ethnic groups. Although other components of culture can function as a symbol of ethnicity, language is “the prime symbol system to begin with” (Chow, 2001, p.4). In other words, when language differences disappear, differences in ethnic identities also vanish. Chow even emphasizes that all ethnic activity much depends on language, if not saying “exclusively”.

Recent researchers also claim the relationships between language and culture and the role of languages of different cultures (Beaudrie et al., 2009; Cummins, 2007; Gkaintartzi & Tsokalidou, 2011; Iannacci, 2008; Ilieva, 2001; MacPherson, 2003; Nieto, 2009; Steinman, 2003). They indicate the role of language in exploring a culture, and in learning a new culture. Many of these studies also explain why minority language and culture is so important for teacher of second language teaching. Others show concerns about the loss of cultural identities when the language disappears (Cummins, 2000; Cummins et al., 1984; Fillmore, 2000; Gibbons & Ramirez, 2004; Suarez, 2007).

Definitions of Cultural Values

“Values”, in D’Andrade’s (2008) view, is a poly-semantic word, which has at least five different meanings. Among the five, the first three are more quantitative which refer to the quantity of some variables, the utility or preference of something or the price of goods. The latter implies “the goodness attributed to something important” (p.9) and

“the degree to which something is morally right” (p.11). However, in his opinion, much of the research on values involves trying to measure the degree people are internalized. The concept of cultural values, in most studies, refers to this latter connotation of the word.

Many researchers consider *values* as a fundamental part in the definition of *culture* (Collier, 2003; Nieto, 2009; Schwartz, 2006, 2010; Shearman, 2008). These social and cultural values provide parents with the standards needed to form their manner and behaviour in raising and educating their children (Super & Harkness, 1997; Shearman, 2008). For example, Vietnamese families were highly influenced by Confucian philosophies and values. As integrated into Vietnamese culture, the most important priority of Confucianism, which highly values knowledge and scholarship, can be seen as the principle in many Vietnamese families, even when they immigrated to another country. Parents pay much attention to children’s study and in many cases sacrifice their career for their children to learn further. Also, a scholar often receives much respect from the society even if he is economically poor, rather than if he is a millionaire but academically insufficient.

According to Hofstede (1991), on a national scale, although the national geographical boundaries do not inevitably match with the social ones, there seems to be strong forces towards integration existing within the nations which produce substantial sharing of culture over the land. He also points out that on personal scale, individual value priorities are a product both of shared culture and unique personal experience. Shared cultural values in a society help to shape the common criteria and framework for individuals to adapt to the culture in which they spend their life time. Therefore, each

cultural group or community has different values shared among members, coming from the relevant experiences socialized by its people. Of course, each person has his or her own personal priorities according to individual variations, unique experiences, characteristics and personalities.

Cultural values imply those criteria and standards that have been rooted in our mind, which are not easy to give up or to build up a new one. Even when the socio-economical complexion of the society has changed, some values were still in active (Nieto, 2009). For instance, although Confucianism reached its prosperity in the feudal society a long time ago, many of the Confucian philosophies and values are still shared among the Vietnamese, Chinese and some other Asian communities (Mc Hale, 2004; Rainey, 2010, Xu, 2006). Therefore, it has been claimed that ethnic cultural values and identities are maintained among immigrant community for many generations (Nieto, 2009).

Maintaining Cultural Values in Immigrant Families

Why it is important to maintain cultural values in immigrant families?

To the community. Cultural values of a community are invaluable, which should be preserved for the benefits of each member in that community as well as their descendants. The importance of cultural values maintenance for each culture in general and for immigrant communities throughout the world is not a topic of debate. This is also written in the UNESCO Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity in 2001, Article 7: “Heritage in all forms must be preserved, enhanced, and handed on to future generations as a record of human experience and aspirations, so as to foster creativity in all its diversity and to inspire genuine dialog among cultures”.

Brislin (2001), when defining the concept of culture, implies that cultural values are the heritage of each ethnic or community. Although these values can sometimes be invisible to the outsider, they are the fundamentals that help form a culture and identify a community. That is why the concept of *culture* was always associated with *ethnic identities* in a lot of research (Flemming, 2003; Inman et al., 2007; Phinney et al., 2001; Warikoo, 2009; Syed, 2010). Preserving the cultural values, therefore, is keeping the identities of people belong to that culture, which creates a connection for individuals with the community within which they feel they belong.

To children's performance at school. Many immigrant parents, who learn from their own experience about the importance of English in the new environment, accept the situation when their children are more proficient in English than the family language. They think that English proficiency brings the key to schooling success for their children, which promises a bright future for them. The thing is, the academic success they expected from their children, despite its close link to English competency, does not mean that the children have to give up their family language.

On the contrary, many studies have provided evidences for the benefits that bilingual education brings to the children (Bankston & Zhou, 1995; Cummins, 2000, 2005; Cummins et al., 1984; Dolson, 1985; Golash-Boza, 2005; Lazaruk, 2007, Smitherman, 1994; Soto, 1993). In fact, there have been studies about the positive effects of family language use on academic performance since the mid-1980s (Cummins et al., 1984; Dolson, 1985; Smitherman, 1994; Soto, 1993) which opposed the common attitudes in public schools at that time. They suggested that the children with lower academic achievement enjoyed to a much less extent of a home language setting with

their parents than those of higher-achieving youngsters; and that speaking English as monolingual might act as an obstacle to academic success for bicultural students. These findings prove that having a firm foundation in the first language would help the children with progress in terms of both language learning and academic performance. In other words, immigrant children who are learning English and their native language at the same time will do better at school than if they totally shift to English. These positive influences of the family language on children's academic performance have been repeatedly reported in more recent research (Cummins, 2000, 2005; Golash-Boza 2005; Padila & Gonzalez, 2001).

It has also been proved that the native language knowledge enhance children's second language acquisition (Cook, 2007; Cummins, 2000, 2005, Golash-Boza, 2005). There seems to be several reasons for this. As soon as the children are able to continue with their native language at home, they develop a systematic awareness of how language works and how to function the language properly. This language acquisition development is called "metalinguistic awareness" (Collier, 1995, p.14). It is this metalinguistic awareness that helps children improve not only their native language but also the language of English. Collier suggests that if the children communicate better in their native language, practicing English at home can slow down the cognitive development of the children. This is because the "level of cognitive maturity" can only act when speakers (children and their parents) talk the language of their proficiency (Collier, 1995, p.14). This result matches with Cummins's (1989) principle of linguistic interdependence, saying that 'there is an underlying cognitive and academic proficiency which is common across languages' (p.44). Cummins insists that the children's second language acquisition

and academic skills can be greatly facilitated and enhanced by their native language knowledge.

To home education. Family provides the children with the fundamental elements for their success in later life, which the school cannot deliver (Fillmore, 2000; Nodding, 2005). These factors are also a part of the cultural values including knowledge of one's origin and identities, the ability to deal with hardships, the importance of emotional connections and responsibility to oneself, family and community.

In addition, from the curriculum at home, the children learn of the sense of belonging and learn how to be a part of the community (Fillmore, 2000). This provides children with more connections to the immigrant community and peers, developing children's confidence and self-esteem, which are crucial for their future lives. Also, the perception of two different cultures helps children improve their critical thinking by seeing various viewpoints toward a phenomenon or problem.

Moreover, there is a strong connection between maintaining language and cultural values and enhancing the relationship between parents and children in immigrant families. (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007; Fillmore, 2000; King & Fogle, 2006; Hornberger, 2010). If parents can help their children to preserve the cultural values of their origin, there will be opportunities that the children understand and respect their parents' traditional values and beliefs. This creates the space for family members to share, discuss and exchange their views. Therefore, maintaining cultural values within immigrant families will help parents to maintain the home education, the hidden curriculum that may greatly affect the development of the children.

The role of parents in cultural values maintenance in immigrant families.

Maintaining cultural values in immigrant families are important topic and that has gained concerns from parents and educators for a long time. There have also been some studies about the role parents and the link between parents' attitudes and the situation of cultural values maintenance in immigrant families (Bankston and Zhou, 1995; Dion & Dion, 2001; Inman et al., 2007; Park & Sarkar, 2007; Phinney et al., 2001; Super and Harkness, 1997). Phinney et al.'s (2001) suggests that together with the influence from their peers, parents' attitudes are important to adolescents in maintaining cultural values and forming ethnic identities.

Super and Harkness (1997) claim that the major socializing influence on children and adolescents is from their family, which explains why parents' strong commitment is important to cultural values maintenance and ethnic identity. There is also evidence about a positive relationship between a child's sense of ethnic identity and parents' attempt to maintain family language (Bankston and Zhou, 1995; Dion & Dion, 2001; Inman et al., 2007; Park & Sarkar, 2007; Phinney et al., 2001).

However, among the research about the topic of maintaining cultural values in immigrant families, there is little research about Vietnamese immigrant community (Chow, 2006; Farver et al., 2002; Phinney et al., 2001; Nguyen & Williams, 1989; Tran, 2005). The existing body of research tends to frame Vietnamese immigrant experiences within the larger Southeast Asian immigrant population (Choi, 2001; Lee, 2006; Ngo & Lee, 2007). The issue of culture, nevertheless, is various among countries in the Southeast Asia. As Vietnam has been among the 30 most common birthplaces of immigrants to Windsor and Vietnamese is among the top 15 first-language among

immigrant in this city with an increasing trend (Statistic Canada, 2007 as cited in Artaman, 2009), there comes a need for a study about the Vietnamese immigrant community as an independent group. The implications from this study might also be applied to Vietnamese community in other small cities in Ontario which is has a multicultural community like Windsor.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

In this chapter, I will give an overview of narrative inquiry as my research methodology and how I have applied the narrative inquiry to study the families' stories. First, I will provide a definition as well as other general concepts of narrative inquiry. Second, I will explain the procedure of my research, what research methods were used, how I recruited the participants. Finally, I will discuss about my pilot study and what I have learned from the pilot study.

Narrative Inquiry

What is narrative inquiry? Narrative inquiry is defined as “a way of thinking about life” (Xu & Connelly, 2009, p. 221). The study of narrative, therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience their own lives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). One can understand narrative inquiry as a method of studying and understanding experience as “lived and told stories”. In other words, narrative inquiry is learning from experience, and making meaning of experience. The method of narrative inquiry illustrates a view of education as the “construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2), which studies educational phenomena not as rigid and theoretical but flexible, ongoing reflection of what is happening in everyday life. In other words, it is the study about a “phenomenal world in which experience is mediated by stories” (Xu & Connelly, 2009, p. 221).

In narrative inquiry, the role of experience is highly appreciated, especially for educational research. The theoretical foreground for the method comes from Dewey's (1938) writings about experience and education, in which he emphasized the importance

of learning through experience and the need of a theory of experience. As a result, narrative inquiry is an approach of studying through stories. It allows the researcher to learn through personal experience and human social aspects without quantifying them into rigid facts or numbers, because when experience is quantified, it loses its fullness and meaning which we are searching for (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

In this study, immigrant Vietnamese parents from each family have different experiences in educating their child and maintaining educational or cultural values of the family. Although the parents belong to the Vietnamese community in Windsor, their experiences in relation to this topic may vary from family to family depending on their own socio-economic situation, past experiences, expectations for the future, religions, beliefs, etc. A story of one's experience might be transcribed very differently considering these above factors. With narrative inquiry, I had a chance to approach the parents' experiences through their own stories, which reflected vividly their conceptions, perspectives and behaviours on the topic.

Three-dimensions of narrative inquiry space. In narrative inquiry approach, the experience or phenomenon is studied as an ongoing life space, with three continuums of temporal, personal-social and place that form a three dimensional life space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This three dimensional life space, corresponding to interaction (personal-social), continuity (past, present and future) and situation (place), is a metaphorical images of “the four directions in any inquiry: inward and outward, backward and forward” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 50). For those directions, “inward” refers to the internal situations including feelings, hopes or morality, “outward” indicates the surrounding conditions; and “backward” and “forward” focus on the notion

of temporality (p. 50). Clandinin and Connelly believe that when studying an experience, the narrative inquirer should put himself in these four directions at the same time. The following sections will give further explanation of those terms and show how they are applied to this study.

Temporal continuums. The continuum of temporal refers to the “backward” and “forward” among the four directions (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This dimension of time based on Dewey’s (1938) principle of continuity of experience, which is considered as one of the criteria of experience. This is because current experiences are not independent in time, but rather a result of what had come from earlier experiences and will be part of any further experiences one might have in the future. As no experience could stand alone in time, stories from parents do not merely reflect experiences they have at that moment, but also a reflection of their background in the past and their expectation for the future. When studying about experiences, therefore, each story should be put into the continuous relation of time in order to interpret or explore them.

Personal-social continuums. Personal-social continuums correspond to the “outward” direction which is associated with Dewey’s (1938) second criterion of experience – the criterion of interaction. Since no one can live without interaction with other people and the surrounding environment, the “outward” conditions should be considered seriously in any study about personal experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Stories from a parent reflect the social background of the family, because the experiences they have are the combination of their norms, beliefs and behaviours, which are affected by their interaction with other people in the society. Different backgrounds lead to different experiences, and require different interpretations. Furthermore, the

criterion of interaction refers to the relationship and interaction between parents and the researcher as well as the background from which the researcher came.

Continuums of place. This dimension focuses on the importance of place to an experience. A narrative inquiry method requires the stories or experiences should be located into the continuum of place in order to study them. The term “place” refers to different living situations or environment such as at school, in the office, in the family, from western countries, from eastern countries. When learning about human experience, inquirer should understand that people behave or experience differently in different situations, or their background might change when they move from one living space to another. In other words, experiences will be diversified corresponding to the situation, formality, or culture of the place where those experiences happen. For instance, parents’ experiences in Vietnam will not be the same as that in Canada; the stories that happen at school will differ from ones at home.

In short, the metaphorical three-dimensional life space proposed by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) is the key to any narrative inquiry. Any stories and experiences will be studied by the inquirer in its ongoing three dimensional life space so that the stories would live with their full colours and richness rather than just being quantified into rigid facts and numbers. Stories of parents should be treated with consideration for their continuity (past-present-future), interaction (personal-social and relationship with interviewer) and situation (place).

Procedure

Research method.

In-depth interview. I chose to use in-depth one-on-one interview as my primary inquiry method for my study. The advantage of interview is that it lets the researcher gain a more insightful look of the issue. In-depth interviews help provide more details concerning the participants' experiences (Cresswell, 2009). Interview is employed in narrative inquiry as a method of collecting the "field texts" as being called by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), and is one of the most common formats in narrative inquiry. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), the "field texts" are "created, neither found nor discovered" by the interviewer and the participants (p. 92). The "field texts" created from an interview, therefore, are in the three-dimensional life space and "reflect the complexity of the life space" (Xu & Connelly, 2010).

For the purpose of narrative inquiry, the interviews semi-structured with open-ended questions. To collect the fieldnotes, as an inquirer, I did not force the participants to answer the questions in a strictly structured way or talk about any specific issues like language or education. Rather, my participants were the ones who took the lead in the interviews. They chose to tell me their stories in their own ways and with their own terms. This goes in accordance with Xu's (2006) and Xu and Connelly's (2010) principles in collecting field text. The participants were also the ones who chose the location for the interviews based on their convenience and privacy. As a result, the interviews were conducted at participants' homes or their store provided that the children were not present. Each interview lasted for about one hour; and the language of interview was Vietnamese, as the parents feels more comfortable to be interviewed in Vietnamese and this is also my first language. After interviewing, the transcriptions were sent back to the participants for revision and verification before translating into English. In addition, I

had a number of small talks with the parents to include more details about the content of the interviews or related issues.

Fieldnotes. In addition to the interview, I also took Dr. Xu's advice to keep taking fieldnotes about the context of the interviews (time, location and some specific conversations) and write my reflections on what I had observed in the families as those fieldnotes would provide me with more details for later analysis of the field text. It also helped me record what the recorder couldn't such as the participants' facial expressions or their gestures which are important to make meaning of their stories. Dr. Xu said: "Keeping fieldnotes will help you think narratively. Later, when you analyze the narratives you have collected from the interviews, you can refer back to your notes and those fieldnotes will help you see the flow of the stories in the ongoing life space" (personal communication, November 2012). Therefore, I used fieldnotes as the supplementary method for my interviews. The system of fieldnotes really helped me in developing a narrative way of thinking of the lived experience and retelling the stories in the three-dimensional inquiry space as discussed in Xu and Connelly (2009; 2010). In other words, for each narrative I tried to interpret it "not as a thing happening at that moment but as an expression of something happening over time" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.29).

Participants. The participants in this study are parents from Vietnamese immigrant families in Windsor. After the pilot study, I decided to interview both parents from each participating family. The parents who will be interviewed are the ones who have at least one of their children at the school age or older (i.e., from 6 years old up). The participating parents are living in the Vietnamese church community in Windsor. I

had initially contacted ten parents from five immigrant families. However, when I contacted the participants for my thesis study, one of the participating families was moving to Ottawa where the father found a new job. As a result, they wanted to withdraw from my study. Finally, there were eight parents from four families participating in my study. Xu (2006) also describes the similar situation in her dissertation when she could not follow up with some of her participants due to the “fluidity of people’s lives” (p. 215).

As stated earlier, for narrative inquiry, an interview is not employed merely as a way of collecting field text, but rather a collaboration between the researcher and the participants to create a reflection or “*field texts*” from what the story tells (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In order to have a good collaboration with the participants, interviewers must build a trusting relationship with the participants. A trusting relationship is the key for the researcher to get my inquiry into people’s lived experiences and to make meaning of their stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Xu, 2006; Xu & Connelly, 2010). Xu and Connelly (2010, p.364) also discuss how to develop such trusted relationship with the participants overtime as the researcher “joins in with the flow of life”. As a result, before conducting interviews with the participating parents, I visited them several times at the church or at their houses in order to try to get involved into the participants’ life space. However, for the purpose of confidentiality, the name and other demographic of all the participants are not revealed and all the names appear in the narrative chapters are pseudonyms (S.J. Xu, personal communication, November 2011).

I started my initial entry into the research field by participating at the Windsor church activities in November 2011 after I got the REB approval for my pilot study for a

graduate course. This pilot study helped me much with developing my thesis proposal and my thesis research. When I volunteered at the church, I was warmly welcomed by the community. Learning that I was an international student who did not have a car, some parents even gave me a lift home after the church. A couple of weeks later, I gave a short introduction about my research at the church weekly meeting. Many parents seemed to be interested in my research topic, and they came to talk to me after my presentation. Some parents gave me their phone number so that I could contact them later for my research. However, I only contacted one parent for my pilot interview and saved the contact information that other parents gave me for my main research. After my pilot study, more parents showed their interest in my research. The topic of maintaining Vietnamese language and culture became a shared concern among the parents when they met me at the church community meeting or activities. Some parents introduced me to their children and asked me to speak with them in Vietnamese or give them advice for schooling according to my experience. I also got contact information of more potential participants for my study.

When I first volunteered at the church, I noticed that some people asked about how I traveled to Canada when they talked about me. The same question was also frequently asked when the parents came to talk to me after my presentation at the church. Given the assumption that airplane would be an obvious way to travel from Vietnam to Canada as the two countries are half-the-earth apart, I was confused when people kept asking me the question: "How did you get to Canada?" I did not know why many parents asked me this question until later when I talked to a parent who was my husband's friend and learned that the connotation of that question would refer to my immigrant status in

Canada. Later on, a parent told me in an interview that most people who came to Canada and the U.S. during the 1970s and 1980s were “boat people”, a term referring to people who came as refugees. The term “boat people” does not only refers to their way of traveling but also indicates the challenges and hardships that they had experienced during the journey to Canada. Therefore, among the Vietnamese people, if one says that he or she travelled to Canada by boat, others will understand that he or she came under refugees’ stream.

Among the Vietnamese immigrants in Canada, although there are no exact statistics, the majority seem to have come from the South Vietnam who landed as refugees for political reason as an aftereffect of the Vietnam War during the late 1970s (Wikipedia, 2011). That is when the term “boat people” came into common use with the mass departure of Vietnamese refugees from the South Vietnam. However, in the 1980s, there was also a trend of leaving the country for a better life in some coastal provinces like Haiphong in North Vietnam and Nha Trang in the central of Vietnam. Two out of four families in this study are from the South Vietnam. There is one family from the North and one family from the Central of Vietnam. All parents had gone through the concentration camps (prison centres to detain illegal immigrants before they were recognized as refugees) in Hong Kong and/or the Philippines for at least a year before they got to Canada.

I visited each of the families several times for my interviews with the parents. As I found from my pilot study that the parents from the same family might have different perspectives toward the issue of maintaining cultural values in their family, I decided to interview each parents separately as an individual participant for the study. However,

when I came to see them at home, the parent sometimes appeared together. They also appeared in one another's stories. Those individual interviews from each parent, thus, would contribute to the stories of the family. Moreover, although I interviewed them separately, I also have a number of small talks with both of them over the topic of parents' educational role, home education, maintaining culture, and Canadian education system. Therefore, for each family in this chapter, I will not present the parents' perspectives separately by their interviews but rather compare and group their views according to the similarities and differences and how they fit into the family's stories

The pilot study: My first lesson about narrative inquiry. Base on the research questions, I have piloted an interview a father from Vietnamese church community in Windsor. With the narrative inquiry approach, I used a semi-structured interview, with open-ended questions and the language of interview was Vietnamese. The interview lasted for about an hour, and was recorded for later transcribing and translating into English. Full descriptions and detailed findings of the pilot study were enclosed to the appendix of the thesis.

The pilot interview had helped me much not only with testing the structure and contents of the interview questions but also collecting initial field text to make suitable adaptation for future interviews. For instance, after the pilot interview, I decided to interview both the father and the mother in a family instead of interviewing only one parent. That is because I found out from the father's sharing that even within the family, parents might have different views about their educational role. In addition, the stories of each parent will contribute to a bigger picture of the family.

Before the pilot interview, I was afraid that my participating parents would have similar or same narratives about the role of parents in their families, as they had so much in common in their backgrounds. All of them came as refugees with similar hardships on their way to Canada, they have been in Canada for more than 15 years, their children are similar in age, and they all have the same religion. Listening to my concern, Dr. Xu said: “The parents may have similar background, but how do you know that they have the same perspective? How do you know that their hardships are similar? You don’t know. You need to put off your assumptions before you interview them” (personal communication, October 2011). What she said had become true. The more I got to know the parents and listened to their families’ stories, the more differences I found. At last, my presumptions were reversed. Even though the parents seemed to be similar in their backgrounds, their narratives and experience are totally different. Even parents from one family might have different opinions toward the issue depending on their experience both past and present, their beliefs and their hopes for the future. As Dr. Xu had foreseen, the pilot study really helped me get rid of my presumptions before getting into the main study and it was also an opportunity for me to practice to “think narratively”.

In addition, the pilot interview was a wonderful chance for me to practice my interview skill and double check the terms from my questions. What I learned from my pilot interview with Mr. Tran, the participating father also confirms Xu’s (2006) argument about understanding the immigrant families’ stories in their own terms. When I interviewed Tran using the terms that were common in the literature such as “ethnic identity”, “ethnic adaptation” and “cultural identity”, he kept asking me to explain such terms. After I gave him the explanation, he used the terms “culture” and “cultural values”

instead in his answer. I have come to realize that the majority of existing studies in culture and maintaining cultural values have been done in terms unfamiliar to immigrant parents. From parents' perspectives, what they have been trying to do is not just keeping the so-called "ethnic identity" but rather holding the values of their origin and creating a system of values in the family for the purpose of educating their children. When I reported to Dr. Xu about this, she advised me noting down my reflection about this and learning from it for my future interviews (personal communication, December 2011).

From Chapter 4 to Chapter 7, I will present the field text that I have collected in the form of the families' stories. This idea was originated from Xu (2006) in which she presented her work with Chinese newcomer families in the form of an opera in the three-dimensional narrative inquiry framework to make it easier for the readers "to follow and identify more vividly with the characters" in their own narrative ongoing life space (p.16). This way of presenting the field text into families' stories also helps me as an inquirer in structuring my thesis to best "capture" and present the fluidity of the participants' lives (Xu, 2006). Another reason is that I would like to let the readers see all the glimpses of people's lives as I experienced it and allow the readers to have their own thinking and judgments of the problems and issues from the stories (S.J. Xu, personal communication, March 2012). These four chapters, therefore, will be the core of my thesis.

Chapter 4

“Blood Is Thicker Than Water” – The Close Kinship in Vietnamese Culture

Introduction to the Chapter

The stories in this chapter are from a family from the North of Vietnam. The family has been in Windsor for over 16 years since 1996. The father’s name is Tran, and the mother’s name is Mai. They were among the “boat people” from Vietnam who left the country in the late 1980s. They had spent four years in Hong Kong concentration camp and another two years in The Philippines before they could reach Canada. The three daughters of the family, as a result, were born in different places, one in Vietnam, one in Hong Kong, and the youngest one in Canada. Van, the oldest daughter of the family, is 24 years old. Born in Vietnam, she had to leave the country with her parents when she was only nine months old. She has lived on her own since she was 17 when she went to university in London, Ontario, a city two hours away from her home, and she rented an apartment near her university. She only came back several times a year on her vacations. Therefore, I was lucky to meet her two times when she brought her boyfriend home to introduce him to her family and later when she was back for her summer vacation. The second daughter, Tam, born in a refugee camp in Hong Kong, is now 20 years old. She joined her sister in September 2012 at the same university. However, she often came back for a dinner with the family on the weekends. Vicky, the youngest daughter, is 15 years old. She is a high school student and still lives with her parents at home. Unlike her two sisters, Vicky doesn’t have a Vietnamese name. Tran and Mai also called her by her English name Vicky only.

In their early years in Canada, the parents had tried various kinds of basic labour and farm work before the father found a job as a technical worker in an automobile company. However, since the father has to work at night-time hour while the mother work daily on the farm, the family really treasure the time when they can be together during the weekend.

I knew Tran when I joined a group from the church to watch a football game at a member's house after going back from the church's Sunday meeting. Tran and I had a small talk when we were waiting for the game to start, and he seemed to be interested when I told him about the topic of my study. Tran told me a story about his friend whose children did not speak Vietnamese nor played with Vietnamese friends. He said he felt sad about it and encouraged me to continue with my study. Before we left on that day, he told me that he would like to participate in my study and invited me to his house when I had free time. I also had some other chances to talk with him later on when we met at the church's meetings and at the coffee shop. The father, Tran, had also participated in my pilot study that I mentioned in the previous chapters in Fall 2011. However, for my pilot study, I did not have a chance to meet with Tran's family because they were not at home when I interviewed him. I only got to know his wife, Mai, and his three daughters when I visited the family in June 2012.

“Everyone Is Brother and Sister, or Auntie and Uncle”

(June 3, 2012 at Tran's house)

On a Sunday in June, Tran invited me to visit his house so that he could introduce me to his wife and his daughters. As he knew that I was studying a master program in education, Tran wanted me to come and share my experience with his second daughter

who intended to pursue her graduate study in the field of education. I was at his house at around 1 pm. That was the first time I had been to his house. Because it was a Sunday, the whole family was at home.

When I came in, Tran, his wife and one of their daughters were sitting at the table working on some paper work. The daughter was trying to translate the document with the help of a computer dictionary. Tran introduced me to Mai, his wife and Vicky, his daughter and told me that they were preparing the supporting documents to sponsor his wife's nephew to study in Canada. As I am fluent in both Vietnamese and English, Tran asked me to help with checking his daughter's translation and the documents.

Mai, Tran's wife, told me about Dat, the nephew, when we were working on the paper:

Dat is my sister's only son; he's the hope of her family. His parents have been working so hard for all their lives; they just dream that their son can study at a university in Canada. It was out of our reach a couple of years ago, but now that two of my daughters have moved out and lived on their own, I can take Dat to Canada to fulfill my sister's dream. That's the best thing I can do for her.

(Fieldnotes, June 3, 2012)

Later on she added:

I am glad that my daughters are helping with this. When I talked to them about this, they understood and agreed with me. They even assisted me with translating the documents and writing the guarantor's letters. I was once afraid that they would question and oppose my decision to take my nephew here but fortunately they didn't. I know a friend whose son did not want her to send money or to help

any of the relatives in Vietnam, or even contact them. He said that his mother was working too hard to earn her living in Canada without any help from the relatives in Vietnam, so they didn't need the relatives. Isn't that bad? My friend was so sad that her son was thinking that way.

I often send part of the money we make to my mother in Vietnam, too. I also give some money to my sisters or brothers who are in need. I may not earn much, and it's not easy to earn money, but we would still like to send some to Vietnam.

Sharing is not only our responsibility but also our happiness. What is the point if you earn a lot of money and keep it all for yourself?

That's one of the differences between Canadian and Vietnamese culture. In Canada, people live in nuclear families with only parents and their children. They rarely live with their grandparents, let alone cousins or relatives. In Vietnam, as you know, we live in big families; everyone is brother and sister, or auntie and uncle. That's how it works for us. If there is a value from Vietnam that I would like to keep, it will be that close kinship we hold with our relatives.

There's an old saying "Blood is thicker than water". Wherever you go, you should keep contact with your relatives. We help each other when we can, we share ups and downs, and we respect the elders and share our love with the younger. In my opinion, learning how to share our love with our family and relatives in particular and with other people in general is the first lesson in order to be a good person.

(Fieldnotes, June 3, 2012)

I was impressed by what Mai shared about her family values. I know that they have to work very hard for 10-12 hours a day to earn their living. But they still think

about sharing it with their relatives in Vietnam. It shows their strong connection with their country of origin. How does this strong attachment influence her way of educating the children and maintaining cultural values in her family? I will discuss about this later in my discussion chapter.

Vietnamese Dinner and its Traditional Custom

(June 3, 2012 at Tran's house)

Later, she invited me to have dinner with the family. Her two elder daughters, Van and Tam, came back home for the weekend dinner, so all members of the family were present at the meal. We sat around the table and ate together. The food on the table was typical Vietnamese food from Northern provinces: rice, seafood, and spring rolls with fish sauce.

When we were sitting at the table, I noticed that all the three girls waited for their father to take the first spring roll to his bowl before they started eating. Actually, this illustrates a Vietnamese traditional custom in which the younger wait for the oldest in the family to start eating first. I also waited with the girls until her father started eating. This is an example of the values learned naturally around the table. (Fieldnotes, June 3, 2012)

“In my Family, We Always Have Vietnamese Food”

(August 2012 at Tran's house)

I go to Tran's house for the second visit in August 2012 when Mai and Tran wanted to introduce to me Dat, their newly arrived nephew. As they knew that I was an English teacher in a Vietnamese university before I came to Canada, they wanted me to talk to Dat and give him advice about how to learn English and how to cope with university life in Canada.

Although they invited me and my husband for dinner, I arrived alone earlier in the afternoon to spend time talking with the nephew to see if I could help him with his studying English. It was a Sunday again because that was the only day when Tran and Mai could both be at home for a family dinner. Knowing that I was always interested in talking about education, maintaining culture and teaching Vietnamese, Tran and Mai tried to cover these topics when we were eating together. The meal gathered Tran, Mai and their three daughters (Van, Tam and Vicky), the nephew (Dat), my husband and myself. This time, when I came, all the girls were in the kitchen helping Mai with preparing the food and decorating the table. When we put food on the table, Mai said to me: “A meal together is very important for a family. It is by far the most effective way to teach the children about cultural values in the family. As a result, we always try to have dinner together although we can only gather once or twice a week on the weekend.”

(Fieldnotes, August 2012)

Mai also shared with me her view about which Vietnamese cultural values that she would like to maintain in her family:

I find it too broad to cover the term cultural values. It is very difficult to define what the cultural values are and what we should or should not keep. Well, we know when it comes to the specific situation, but it is just not that clear to tell. I personally take Vietnamese cultural values as everything from our country's customs, traditions and norms that have been involved in the family's everyday life. Generally, we can not keep our Vietnamese ways rigid all the time, but we have to combine the two cultures to make... something new... provided that it

works for the family, you know, you can not indicate a clear boundary for such an abstract thing like culture.

I would keep the traditional foods, and the traditional celebrations. It's maybe because I am a woman (smile). In my family, we always have Vietnamese food. I also teach my daughters to make Vietnamese traditional food like spring rolls and some other simple dishes. All my girls like Vietnamese food. Tam [the second daughter] called me from her apartment last month asking me how to cook chicken porridge because she missed that dish from home. I told her how to cook it and she could make porridge for herself from my instructions on the phone. Tam is always good at cooking Vietnamese food; she has invited her friends to come and enjoy Vietnamese food too.

Van can also cook a bit of Vietnamese food, although she prefers cooking Western food as she said it would save her time. Cooking Vietnamese food takes a bit more time and is more difficult for her, I think. That is why she's never made spring rolls by herself although she likes spring rolls best among the Vietnamese food. She said that it took too much time. So I usually have to prepare spring rolls for her to bring to her university when she comes back home on the weekends. I also told them to invite friends to our house to have dinner or share Vietnamese food to their friends when they bring lunch to school. Of course, my daughter's foreign friends can only eat very common Vietnamese food like spring rolls or Pho, but it's a big dynamic for them to keep Vietnamese food in our home. That also increases their pride in being Vietnamese. (Interview with Mai, August 2012)

“Vietnamese Language Is the First Thing to Keep”

(August 2012 at Tran's house)

When they first came to Canada, both Tran and Mai could not find a job. They had to work on the farm and took turns to look after the two daughters. When Vicky, the third daughter, was born in 1997, Mai decided to stay at home as a housewife. However, to increase the income for the family, Mai looked after the children for other Vietnamese mothers who worked fulltime with cheaper price than the public and private daycares. She used to have around ten children at her house including her three daughters which helped her earn even more money than working on the farm. I was surprised at how she could handle such work load and filled with admiration when she revealed her philosophy of living.

This is what she revealed about teaching Vietnamese in the family and how she taught her daughters to learn Vietnamese:

It's obvious that Vietnamese language is the first thing to keep in order to maintain Vietnamese culture in the family. Vietnamese is important to them [the children] and to us. We can not speak English, so they have to speak Vietnamese to sustain the communication in the family and help us with some work that requires translation or interpretation. It's also a bonus if the children can talk in Vietnamese with their grandmother on the phone when we call to Vietnam during the holidays; this will bring a huge happiness to my mother. Besides, it's an advantage for them to learn another language so they have more chances to find a good job.

I take this seriously. Actually, I could not speak English when I first came here, so I only spoke Vietnamese to my children, and they had to respond in Vietnamese if

they would like me to understand. I took that as a blessing in disguise for me. I know a family who spoke mostly English at home because the parents could speak English well. They lost Vietnamese in the home as soon as the children went to school and learned English at school.

When they were small, I used to tell them bedtime stories in Vietnamese, I retold the fairy tales that my grandmother told me when I was a little girl. When they went to school and learned how to read and write, I bought ABC books from Vietnam to teach them. I wrote the letters in pencil and asked them to cover my writing with pens. When they could write by themselves, I asked them to copy half a page of Vietnamese book per day and two pages for the weekend. And I asked them to practice until the letters were well-written and easy to read. I also asked them to read to me what they had written when they were done. If they could not read the page, they would have to rewrite it. That way they would try to learn what they had written, not just copy it physically. You know, it was difficult for the children to write Vietnamese sometimes as the language has five tone marks and about ten special letters that are different from the English alphabet. My youngest daughter, Vicky, often makes mistake when it comes to the tone and she sometimes creates very funny words (laugh). These copying exercises were an effective way for all of my daughters to practice Vietnamese and also an effective way for me to monitor their time.

However, it got more and more difficult when the girls were in higher grades. They had more homework, they spent more time at school and they spoke more English. We had to be really firm to keep them speaking Vietnamese at home. If

we spoke English even once, they would understand that they can speak English at home to us, and we would lose. (Interview with Mai, August 2012)

Mai also added her “secret strategy”:

To encourage my children to speak more Vietnamese, I try to answer with a “yes” if they can ask me in Vietnamese, and give them a “no” if the request is in English. We made an agreement between us to keep forcing the children to speak more Vietnamese that way. For example, when my girl would like to ask for some money to buy her friend a birthday gift, I would refuse if she asked me in English, and tell her that I did not understand what she was talking about. Then, if she repeated the question in Vietnamese, she would get what she wants (smile).

Tran also repeated what he had told before when I interviewed him in my pilot study:

We did not state it as a rule, but after a while, all my daughters figured out the trick to have our agreement, and they were so eager to use their “secret power”. Gradually, my girls preferred to speak Vietnamese with me and my wife, they keep practicing their Vietnamese. The “secret power” works better than any compulsory rules do. (Fieldnotes, August 2012)

Nevertheless, both Tran and Mai think that Vietnamese is only important for the first generation to ensure the communication between the children and their parents who do not speak English. Tran said:

I don’t think they [his daughters] need to be proficient [in Vietnamese] enough to teach their children in the future. The next generation will live here [in Canada]

forever and can communicate with their parents perfectly in English so they do not have to learn as much Vietnamese. (Interview with Tran, December 2011)

“In Vietnam, They Could Learn Much More Than Just the Language”

(August 2012 at Tran’s house)

Mai also talked about bringing the children back to Vietnam as a way of improving the language for their children:

You can bring them all to Vietnam. In Vietnam, they have no choice but to speak Vietnamese. I have brought my daughter to Vietnam three times, each time for a month or two. My daughters loved it very much as they could play and travel. In Vietnam, they could learn much more than just the language, they would have the sense of their parent’s homeland and relatives as well. However, this is a costly method, and you will have to go in summer so that it does not affect their learning at school. (Interview with Mai, August 2012)

Nevertheless, Tran did not recommend this as a method for learning the language. In his opinion, this method is not suitable for the children but for a more professional people who have the real need of understanding the language and the culture:

It’s effective, but too costly. It’s not necessary to come back to Vietnam just to learn the language. It would be beneficial if you would like to learn the language and culture for serious purpose, for example, to get a professional job, like being an MC for a Vietnamese TV channel... like Ky Duyen [a famous Vietnamese singer in the show Paris by Nights - a well-known entertaining show among Vietnamese oversea community in the U.S and Canada]. (Fieldnotes, August 2012)

“We Can Not Discipline the Child in Our Asian Way”

(August 2012 at Tran’s house)

Mai also highlighted the difference between the two cultures:

The way of educating a child in Canada is so different. Here, the children are not taught how to respect their elders, everyone calls each other by the first name. I find it ridiculous when a child calls a man at her grandpa’s age by his first name, it’s just so difficult to get used to that. Also, the children were taught too much about individuality. I see that it makes the child more independent, but then the child has no sense of sharing and they do not listen to their parents. In addition, in Canada, we can not discipline the child in our Asian way because we will be intervened for sure by the Children Aid Society. We Asian believe in “Spare the rod, spoil the child”. However, in Canada, you will be in trouble if they see you use the rod, even just to discipline the child for the benefit of herself or himself.

She continued to tell the incident she once had with the Children Aid Society:

It was when we first came here, and Vicky was only a couple of months old. I did a daycare job at home, and the house was always full with ten kids, including my three daughters. I don’t remember exactly why I spanked Van at that time, but it was really soft. I just used my hand to smack her bum; it did not hurt her at all. However, when she wrote that I spanked her in her journal, the teacher read it and called the Children Aid Society. I had to deal with the Children Aid Society for almost two years. They came and interviewed me every month. I had a daycare at home as well, so they came and watched me. I tried to explain to them about the Vietnamese ways of discipline the children; I told them that I neither spanked her

because of my bad temper nor did anything that would harm her physically or mentally, but they did not listen. Finally, I felt so frustrated that I told the Children Aid officer that they could take my daughter away if they would like to provided that they must ensure a spot for my daughter at a good university because I had the RESP plan for her already. After lots of interviews, they finally let me be. (Interview with Mai, August 2012)

“You Can’t be a Real Vietnamese If You Can’t Tell about Vietnamese History”

(August 2012 at Tran’s house)

Tran returned his talk to the strategies for maintaining culture. He talked about learning Vietnamese history as a part of Vietnamese culture:

In my opinion, history of a country is very important to learn. You can’t be a real Vietnamese if you can’t tell about Vietnamese history. So I told my daughters a lot of stories and legends in our history which were fascinating to them and easy for them to remember. (Fieldnotes, August 2012)

To illustrate his viewpoints, Tran showed us a bunch of historical story books in Vietnamese that he keeps in his basement. He seemed to be very proud of the bookshelf. However, when he left the room, Mai smiled and told me that history did not work for the girls anymore. She explained that historical stories and legends were interesting to the daughters, but only when they were small. Now that they are going to school and busy with homework and other concerns, they seem to lose their interests in their father’s stories which sometimes makes him upset. Besides, a part of the recent history is related to the Vietnamese War, which is not a nice memory to remember and to tell. Since she told me the major population of the immigrant families in Canada and the U.S are

refugees from the South (as Mai told me earlier when I chatted), Mai feels that they are fortunate enough that other families from the South do not see them as enemy because they are from the North. It is definitely not a wise thing to remind other immigrants in the community about that part in history. (Fieldnotes, August 2012)

“There Is No Time for Talking between Parents and Children”

(August 2012 at Tran’s house)

Mai also added some difficulties in educating the children which in her opinions is very common among immigrant families.

Time is an issue to parents. Most parents have to work very hard to earn a living for the whole family. Because most of them do not speak much English, their obvious choices are to work on the farm, in a restaurant or catching worms in the field. These are hard work and require severe hours, usually overnight. Parents, therefore, are so tired when they get home, and do not have time for their children anymore. Sometimes, they try to help the children with the homework, that’s the best they can do. There is no time for talking between parents and children.

When the children go to school, it gets worse as the children learn more English. Children do not talk in Vietnamese as much as when they were at home, and parents do not have enough English to explain things or talk to them. It becomes more and more difficult to communicate in the family. The children also get to learn more about Canada culture at school and gradually forget about the Vietnamese way at home. But we can never cherish the children in our arm forever; we have to let them go out. Therefore, it takes great effort from parents to maintain cultural values for their children. You have to be keen on all the

tradition, the food, the language, and any traditional celebrations. I was thinking about skipping the Vietnamese New Year's celebration sometimes, as those days were usually normal weekdays in Canada, but I did not dare to. I was afraid that if I skipped it one time, I would skip it another time and skip it all gradually. I know it's tough to keep the values, but it's worth it. (Interview with Mai, August 2012)

To sum up, I have learned so much from this family's stories, from their determination to maintain Vietnamese traditions, especially its language and food, to those beautiful values that they treasure in the family. Although the parents have to work 10-12 hours a day, they still share part of their earnings with their relatives in Vietnam. I was impressed by how the parents managed to keep this oversea family bond. This represents one of the core values in Vietnamese culture which I will discuss further in my discussion chapter. Another issue that will be brought into discussion is the tension in disciplining a child in a Vietnamese way in the Canadian cultures and how it affects children's home education by parents. In the next chapter, I will explore the efforts in maintaining the cultural values in one of the participating families who is considered a well-adapted family by other parents in the church community because both parents can speak English and have stable jobs that they find are satisfying and well-paying jobs.

Chapter 5

A Family's Principle: "It's Most Important That You Spend Time with Your Child"

Introduction to the Chapter

The main characters in this chapter are Nam and Tram, who both came to Canada from the South Vietnam. Tram and Nam have been in Canada for almost 30 years since they left Vietnam in the early 1980s. Tram had lived in different places in Canada with her family before she met Nam, married him and moved to Windsor in 1990. The family had become one of the core families of the church community since they came to Windsor. They often helped with organizing and preparing the activities and celebrations of the church and soon earned the respect of the people within the community.

The family has two children, one boy and one girl, who were both born in Canada. The boy's name is Tien, he is 14 years old. The girl is 10 years old, and her name is Na. I was really impressed by Tien and Na since the first time I saw them at the Vietnamese church's meeting. It is not only because both of them were nice and elegant to me and other people in the community, but also because they spoke Vietnamese well and something in the way they behave were very similar to children from Vietnam.

I got to know the family as I sat next to them the first time I visited the church. Nam and Tram were very easy to talk to and we all enjoyed talking about education related issues. We became friends immediately and we often sat together whenever I came to the church after that. When the Tram and Nam knew about my study, they told me they would like to participate in my study and introduce me some potential participants as well.

I had several chances to go to their house on different occasions from church's group meetings to a private dinner or a family visit. Every time I visited the family, I felt warm and happy because of the way their children, Tien and Na, came to greet me. They always stood by the door with their parents to welcome me when I arrived and would say goodbye to me when I left. I soon recognized that they did so with other guests, too. Even though they might be doing their homework or playing games upstairs, Tien and Na never showed a sign of reluctance to go downstairs to greet the guests with their parents before going back to their work. While many children might feel very uncomfortable when they were interrupted in the midst of their work by their parents to greet the visitors, Tien and Na took this as one of their usual duties. Actually, this is a Vietnam custom in which the children and youngsters in the family come out and greet their parent's guests to show their respect and welcoming attitudes to the guests. This custom, however, is lost among many families in Vietnam nowadays when the children become so busy with their homework that their parents would not like to disturb them. Therefore, I was very surprised when the children came out to greet me warmly with their parents in our traditional manner as I never expected to see this in Canada. That is the reason why the family of Tram and Nam interested me so much.

The fact that Nam and Tram could keep the custom of greeting the guest for their children in Canada while it was given up in many families in Vietnam emphasizes the relationship between cultural values and family education. I will discuss further about this later in the Discussion chapter.

“There Is No English in This House; We Only Speak Vietnamese at Home”

(August 11, 2012, at Nam and Tram's house)

I first visited the family at the church group meeting held at their house. Actually, initially I had scheduled my interview with Tram in the evening of that day. However, Tram suggested that I should come earlier in the afternoon and join the church group meeting at their house. Her hope was to let me “see the practice of how cultural values are maintained among the community” by participating in the community’s activities to observe, get to know and talk to people (Fieldnotes, August 11, 2012). I thought that was a good idea so I got to her house early on that day to join their group meeting. Tram also introduced me and my research topic to other people in the group as there were some of them who were absent from the church when I gave the presentation about my study there. When I talked and chatted with Tram’s children, Tien and Na, I found that they spoke very good Vietnamese. When I complimented on her children’s Vietnamese, she just smiled and said: “There is no English in this house; we only speak Vietnamese at home. I think that’s the main reason.” (Fieldnotes, August 11, 2012)

In our interview about maintaining Vietnamese language in the family, I asked Tram whether she applied any rules in the house to make the children speak Vietnamese more. Tram shook her head and smiled. Tram explained:

We do not have any fixed rules about talking English or Vietnamese in this house. However, I “force” them gently to speak Vietnamese by speaking just Vietnamese to them at home. Sometimes, when I find that it’s very difficult to explain something in Vietnamese, I will try English to make sure they are able to follow me. Then I return to Vietnamese. If Tien or Na speaks English to me, I will remind them that I don’t understand English and ask them to repeat in Vietnamese. Gradually, both of them understand that Vietnamese is the only

language that works in the house. Sometimes, I speak Vietnamese too fast and make it difficult for Tien and Na to follow what I am saying. Usually, my husband stops me and asks me to slow down so that the children can catch up. My husband often reminds me to speak more slowly with the children as Vietnamese is not the only language they speak, but I always forget. After a while, only Na may have troubles following my pace sometimes, but Tien can understand very well even when I talk fast. Then he will tell Na what I have just said and help her catch up with my speaking pace (Interview with Tram, August 11, 2012).

Nam and Tram's Effort to Teach Vietnamese to Their Children

(August 11, 2012, at Nam and Tram's house)

I asked whether the children could read and write Vietnamese too, Tram revealed: They surely read and write a bit, but not much. I once sent Tien and Na to a Vietnamese language school downtown for a couple of months, but it was not effective, so I let them quit. At the language school, the teachers taught both written and spoken Vietnamese, but it was not interesting to the children because the class consisted of people from all ages, both adults and children. It was due to the low demand in learning Vietnamese that the school could not open a separate class for children. Most people in this school learned Vietnamese as they needed it for their business. It was not suitable for the children at all. Moreover, Tien and Na were always busy with their school work and other classes in Art, Spanish, Music, and so on. So I decided that we would teach them Vietnamese at home. Since then, my husband has taught them to read and write in Vietnamese on the weekend whenever he had time. Sometimes, I saw them read the subtitles when

they watched Vietnamese movies on TV, so I think they had learned quite a bit of reading and writing.

Later on that day, when I had a chance to visit their workroom, I noticed a big board in the corner of the room in front of a big table. On the left of the board were the simple common moral rules that are usually taught to young children in Vietnam. On the right column was a list of Vietnamese words. The moral rules were all in Vietnamese; however, the expressions and wording seemed to be a bit strange to me. After a minute, I realized that they were common dialects used in the South Vietnam before 1975. I also saw a couple of ABC books in Vietnamese on the table. Nam said he had asked his friend to bring those books from Vietnam to teach the children. He also showed me a pile of papers written in Vietnamese by Tien and Na. Looking at those papers, I began to see how much effort the parents have put on teaching their children Vietnamese. At that time, I understood why Nam and Tram had told me many times that spending time learning and playing with the children was the most important in educating a child in general, and in maintaining Vietnamese cultural values in particular (Fieldnotes, August 11, 2012)

“Parents Play very Important Roles in the Children’s Education”

(August 11, 2012, at Nam and Tram’s house)

When I interviewed them, both Nam and Tram emphasize the roles of parents in teaching the children about Vietnamese culture. Nam said:

Parents play a very important role not only in maintaining cultural values but also in home education, which helps their children develop their personalities that will in turn decide their future. In the Asian culture, it is said that the personalities of a

child are formed by the age of three. Therefore, parents' roles as home educators are the most important to the child's development and successes in his life.

Tram explained further:

It is parents who guide the children to success or failure in life. I do not mean to deny other social relationships that affect the children's development, but parents' educational role is the most important. Parents' role is not limited at teaching the children what is right or what is wrong; the role of parents is to act as a model for the children to learn about how to be a human. The purpose of education, after all, is to educate the child to be a good human. In my opinion, the most important thing to teach a child is teach him how to love and respect other people and how to be a caring man. Successes and happiness will follow the one who knows how to love and respect the others. Where else can the children learn those things other than in his family? In the family, we show them love, so they know how to love. We teach them to respect other people and give them the sense of belonging, the sense of community. We teach them to be hard working, and to walk over all the failures, so on and so forth. All of those above values that we maintain in our family are from Vietnamese culture. Nevertheless, we do take advantage of the Western education, for example, to teach our children to be more independent in their work. But after all, I prefer the Vietnamese way of educating a child, of which the emphasis is on love and care in the family between parents and grandparents and children, among siblings, cousins and relatives. The children should learn about these when they are as small as two or three years old, otherwise it would be too late.

“I Encouraged Them to Speak Vietnamese, but I Did Not Force Them at All”

(August 11, 2012, at Nam and Tram’s house)

However, Nam and Tram revealed different views toward learning Vietnamese. While Tram took the language as a bridge to Vietnamese culture, which was a part of home education, Nam only considered Vietnamese as a second language that his children should learn since they were living in a facilitating Vietnamese-speaking environment.

They [the children] were born in Canada. They are Canadians. There is no reason to force them to behave like Vietnamese. What important is that they should grow up to be good people. It doesn’t matter whether they are from an Eastern or Western family. Both Eastern and Western ways of educating a child have strengths and weaknesses. I think of home education as a place to teach the children the values that we treasure in our family no matter if those values are from Vietnam or Canada’s culture. Although the major values that I teach Tien and Na seem to be from Vietnamese culture, it does not mean that we oppose to Canadian cultural values. The right way is to combine them into our family’s values because those values may also reflect our own experience and our living philosophy. For example, I do not insist that Tien and Na have to speak Vietnamese. Although I understand that speaking Vietnamese at home may enhance the family relationships as parents and children can share more with each other, it will be unfair to the children if we force them to learn Vietnamese to share with us. If we look at this from the side of the children, Tien and Na have the right to ask us to learn more English to talk with them. That’s why I only encourage them to speak more Vietnamese, but I do not force them. I told them

that adding Vietnamese to their languages, just like French or Spanish, would add to their strength in the future. I showed them that they had a facilitating environment to learn Vietnamese, and encouraged them to take the chance. I took myself as an example for them; I talked about my regret of missing the chance to learn Cantonese when I was in the concentration camp in Hong Kong. I told them I would have found a job easier if I had learned some Cantonese. That was how I encouraged them to speak Vietnamese, but I did not force them at all.

Although Nam emphasized that he did not force the children to learn Vietnamese, his effort to keep and teach Vietnamese for the children was not the effort that many parents could make. However, I always saw a concern bothering him throughout his stories. That was the concern about how to help his children balance between the two cultures. This was also a question that Bao, another parent from Chapter 4 had raised during his talk with me. I will go back to this issue in more details in my discussion chapter.

“We Treasure the Vietnamese Values of Having the Family Meal Together”

(August 11, 2012, at Nam and Tram’s house)

When I asked Nam, the father, about the Vietnamese cultural values in his family, both Nam and Tram talked about Vietnamese food and meals as an essential part of the culture. In Nam’s views, it is crucial for the parents to teach the children about “the values around the table” because the dinner table is “a warmest place in the house” where the family gathers after a long day:

We treasure the Vietnamese values of having the family meal together. We take dinner seriously. Although everyone is busy with school and work, we always

have dinner together at around six o'clock in the evening. We try to maintain a meal together, if anyone in the family comes home late after work, we will wait a bit so that everyone starts eating at the same time. Once, my son, Tien, was going out with his schoolmates for a whole day field trip until late in the evening.

Although he had told us before, Tien still remembered to call home around six o'clock to tell us to have dinner first as he knew he would be very late.

I glanced at the food that his wife, Tram, prepared for dinner. It was all common Vietnamese food. Some food required so much time to prepare and it also consisted of many special ingredients that I hadn't seen on any other family dinner tables since I came to Canada. Tram also shared her husband's opinion about the Vietnamese values "around the table":

One thing about our meal is that we always have Vietnamese food. We also have Canadian food sometimes, but mostly Vietnamese food. Why Vietnamese food? It's not just because Nam and I are more familiar with the Vietnamese taste that I cook Vietnamese food, but it's something that I would like Tien and Na to learn. Vietnamese food leads to Vietnamese table manner, which is very different from the Canadian's manner. In Canadians way, each one come to the table with their own plate, take your own portion to your plate and finish it. In Vietnam, although everyone has his own bowl of rice, we share all other food from the beginning to the end of the meal. On the table, we show respect to the elders by waiting for them to take the first bite of meat, we show love to the younger by giving the bigger fish-ball to their bowl before we take one for us. Children learn around the table much more than just a meal.

We also take turns to pray before we eat, if this time I pray then next time it will be Nam, then Tien, and Na, and then back to me. We all pray in Vietnamese. We take turns to pray before going to bed as well. It helps enhance the relationship in the family when we pray together. Besides, if the children pray in Vietnamese, they will treasure the language more as that's the language of faith and beliefs.

“We Feel So Blessed that We Could Keep Those Tradition for Our Children”

(December 31, 2012, at Nam and Tram's house)

My second visit to the family was on the last day of 2012. Nam and Tran invite my family to join them for New Year's Eve. When I came, the whole family was preparing food for the party to celebrate the New Year's Eve. Tien, their 14 years old boy, was helping his mother washing the dishes. His sister, Na, was preparing the powder for her mother to bake a cake according to the recipe on the Internet. Nam, the father, was cleaning around the house and Tram, the mother, was cooking in the kitchen. I joined the girl to mix the powder for baking and started to talk with the children, asking them what they like most about the holidays. Tien and Na said they loved the atmosphere when people from the Vietnamese church came together to sing and play at their house. Then, Nam and Tram also joined us, and we talked about what people usually do in Vietnamese traditional holidays. Tram revealed how they tried to keep all the Vietnamese traditional customs and celebrations for the children and the families in the church.

We celebrate both Canadian holidays and our Vietnamese traditional occasions.

On Tet holidays (the Vietnamese traditional New Year's holidays), we wear Ao dai (the traditional Vietnamese long dress), sing Vietnamese folksongs and eat Chung cake, Tet cake (a traditional square sticky rice cake that is often made

when the lunar new year comes). We try to keep all those celebrations, so that Tien, Na and other children in our church community can enjoy their Vietnamese holidays like other children in Vietnam. The children also learn to sing Vietnamese songs to perform at the church's New Year party. We feel so blessed that we could keep those traditions for our children. (Fieldnotes, December 31, 2012)

Nam and Tram's family is one of the key families in the church community in Windsor. They are the one who often help with organizing all the church activities and celebrations, from Canadian holidays to summer camping trips or Vietnamese traditional celebrations. Their children, Tien and Na, are members of the church music band. Although Nam and Tram did not talk much about the Vietnamese church community's influence on their children, I could tell from their children's eagerness that the activities at the church are strong external factors that motivate them to learn Vietnamese and explore about Vietnamese culture since all the meetings and activities there were in Vietnamese. (Fieldnotes, December 31, 2012)

“It's Most Important that You Spend Time with Your Child”

(December 31, 2012, at Nam and Tram's house)

When I asked Tram, the mother, what strategies she has to maintain Vietnamese cultural values are, she just smiled and told me what she called “her secret” of maintaining culture:

In my opinion, it depends on the parents whether their children enjoyed the Vietnamese language and traditions. In my family, my children are so close to Nam and me. We always spend time with them at home and we also spend time

stay together as a family at the church activities. The children usually tell us their stories from school, joke with us, and play with us. We talk everyday. That's why my children seem to be so Vietnamese. Many people are surprised that Tien and Na are so Vietnamese although they were born in Canada. It's just that. That's my secret.

Nam, the father, also emphasized that parents should spend much time with their children and have patience in educating them:

It's most important that you spend time with your child. The more time you spend with them the better results you get. It doesn't take serious "schooling" lessons or a lot of money to bring them back to Vietnam to maintain cultural values for them, but it takes you much time and patience. Educating a child is a long-term effort.

From my experience, if you have more than one child, it's very important that you spend time setting up the family rules as soon as possible for the first child. Then when the oldest child grows up, he will help you to explain the rules to the younger and keep them following those rules. That's why in Vietnam, when the youngest child does something wrong, the parents often punish both the youngest and the oldest. The oldest has to understand their responsibilities toward their younger brothers or sisters. The younger, in turn, has to follow and listen to the older siblings. That enhances the relationship between brothers and sisters in the family.

“Punishment Does Not Mean that You Do Not Love Your Children”

(December 31, 2012, at Nam and Tram's house)

When we talked further about teaching a child in an immigrant family, both Nam and Tram make comparison about the way of educating a child between Vietnamese and Canadian cultures. Nam shared:

I don't know whether the way of educating a child in Canada is more advanced than the traditional Vietnamese way, but I prefer the Vietnamese way of educating and disciplining much more. When a child is naughty, she should be punished so she knows that she did something wrong. A small child can not tell right from wrong; therefore, we need to discipline her to show her what is right and what is wrong. For example, when Na was three or four years old, every time she broke the glass or did something wrong, I asked her to be on her knees or stand by facing the wall until I told her to stop. That way, she understood that she would have to face the consequences if she did something wrong, and she would be more careful. When a child is older, you can explain more to her about what she does wrong, but punishment is necessary. Punishment does not mean that you do not love your children. (Interview with Nam, December 31, 2012)

Nam also made some further explanation on the points:

You have to differentiate between spanking the child because of parents' hot temper, or what they call "abuse" and punishing the child as a way of discipline. I am so much against the overuse of rod and violence. However, I do not agree either with the way of educating a child in Canada where parents seem to give no punishment at all but only encourage and praise the child for his good behaviour. That is not good for the child at all. I support the way of disciplining a child in Vietnam and other Asian countries which can be summed up by the old saying:

‘Spare the rod, spoil the child’. Appropriate punishment helps the children realize and remember what is right and what is wrong. I explain to Tien and Na that it hurt the parents much more when they have to punish their own children. They have to know that we punish them because we love them and would like to make them a better person. It’s important that the children understand this, and I think they do. I learned this from my own experience. When I was small and was punished by my mother or father, I often felt uncomfortable, even angry sometimes. But when I got older, I understood and felt so grateful that my parents had shown me the right way to live so that I could become a good man. I want to pass on what is best from my parents’ education to my children, and I think Tien and Na know that. (Interview with Nam, December 31, 2012)

“It’s Sometimes very Difficult to Educate and Discipline Your Child in Canada”

Nam then talked about the difficulties parents have in disciplining the children in immigrant families in Canada:

However, it’s sometimes very difficult to educate and discipline your child in Canada because of the Children Aid Society. People with the Western culture can not understand our way of discipline. In Canada, whenever they hear about spanking, they will think immediately of a child abuse. They say that they allow the children to develop in their own way. But I have seen many families where the children shout at their parents and show no respect to them. There are also families where parents and children can not stand to talk with each other for five minutes. There is no spanking at all in those families, but there is no love either. I think people from Western culture do not understand what we see as the parents’

responsibilities and obligation behind the rod. They only see spanking as “bad” and “abuse” but do not see the philosophy behind it. In some cases, the intervention of the Children Aid Society may lead to worse results than the rod itself. For example, if a child was spanked because he behaved badly and was disrespectful to their parents, the Children Aid Society’s support to prevent him from the rod would lead to a wrong understanding of the child that he was doing the right things, and that his parents were violent. (Interview with Nam, December 31, 2012)

Tram also added more to the conversation about the Children Aid Society: Many Asian people have problems with the Children Aid Society. We never have any troubles with them, but I think it’s the cultural conflict rather than the problem of violence. The relationship between parents and children is sometimes very complicated that a third person from outside the family can never understand. I think it will be more appropriate if the Children Aid Society listen to the parents more without prejudice and presumption that the children always tell the truth or they are somehow a victim of an abuse. A lot of time it’s not the case. (Interview with Tram, December 31, 2012)

From this family’s stories, the readers can see the importance of family rules and principles in educating children at home. Although Tram and Nam can speak English well and can easily adapt fully to the mainstream culture, they still make twice the effort to maintain the Vietnamese language and cultural values in their family. We also see the parents’ strong attachment to the core values in Vietnamese culture such as “being a good person”, “respecting the elders” and “loving the young” through their volunteer activities

at the church and their efforts to keep the traditions and values as part of family education. The stories also reveal the parents' deep understanding of the influence of the mainstream culture on their children which help them to keep their principle in educating and disciplining the children. The next chapter is a story from a family where parents got lost in disciplining their son due to the dissonance between the two cultures which led to tensions and anxieties within the family.

Chapter 6

“It’s Too Difficult, Xuan! Things Are Different in Canada”

– Tensions in an Immigrant Family

Introduction to the Chapter

This family is from South Vietnam. The father’s name is Anh, and the mother’s name is Chi. Anh and Chi came to Canada in 1992 and have been in Canada for over twenty years, since their first daughter was only 4 months old. They used to work as primary school teachers in Vietnam until they moved to the U.S with their relatives for a better life in the late 1980s, and finally they landed in Canada where they found their new home. Although Chi’s mother was in the U.S, she and her husband decided to move to Canada with the hope to find a more multicultural education system for their children and a better healthcare system for the whole family, especially for Anh, the husband, who has a heart problem.

Anh and Chi both work fulltime on a farm to earn their living in Canada. Besides, Chi spends most of her time at home for her passion in gardening. She grows flowers and vegetables in her garden and shares them with her friends. This passion in plants and trees influences her life philosophy and educational beliefs that constantly emerge from many of her stories.

The family has two children. The daughter, Hoa, who was only 4 months old when she came to Canada, is now 20 and is studying at university. The girl, however, still stays with her parents as her university is close to her parents’ house. Hoa has both Vietnamese and English name, but Chi often calls her “Hoa” at home, which is her Vietnamese name while her English name “Anna” is used at school. Her younger brother,

Tom, who was born in Canada, is now 16 and is a high school student. Tom doesn't have a Vietnamese name. Anh and Chi also call him Tom at home too. Although I have visited the family several times, I rarely saw the children even when they were at home. Both of them were always in their rooms playing or studying even at meal time.

I first meet Anh and Chi at the church weekly meeting. After a five-minute-conversation, we recognized that we had a couple of Vietnamese friends in common. They also liked to discuss with me about educational issues because we all had teaching background in Vietnam. When Anh and Chi knew that both my husband and I are graduate students at university, they wanted us to get acquainted with their son and daughter and encourage them to study harder. Later, Chi came to my house for a couple of time to give me some fresh vegetables that were taken from her garden.

“Raising a Child Is Like Planting a Tree” – Chi’s Educational Philosophy

(July 2012 at Anh’s house)

It was a long day for me travelling around the city to help another Vietnamese family when Chi called and invited me to go over to their house. When I managed to reach their house, it was almost 5 o'clock in the afternoon. It began to rain heavily at that time, so Chi invited me to have a cup of tea and ask me to stay in the living room with her husband for a while when she went out to cover her small nursery garden. Later, when she came back, I told her that I would like to see her garden as I always dreamed I would have a house with a small garden. So, we moved to the kitchen and she showed me her small garden through the glass door of the kitchen. It was a very beautiful and well-organized garden with flowers and vegetables planted into different beds. At the farthest corner of the garden, there was a frame for several types of melons, the central of the

garden are for flowers and vegetables, and then the closest beds to the house under the roof shelter are for nursery seeds.

The kitchen itself was the art work of plants and flowers. Half of the kitchen was covered by various kinds of plants placing on the floor, by the window or hanging on the wall. Chi loves planting trees very much. I could recognize the pride in her voice when she talked about her garden and the plants in her house. She also summed up what she learned from gardening and make connections with her views toward other issues in life, including education.

Look at the bitter melon I gave you, the seeds are imported from Vietnam, but it looks and tastes differently because the weather and the earth in Canada are different. You see, even with the same seed, when the environment is changed, the tree will not grow in a same way, and the taste of the fruit will be different too. Raising a child is similar. As the children were born in Canada and influenced by Canadian schools and friends, we could not expect them to be as “Vietnamese” as if he grew up in Vietnam. But that doesn’t mean that he is not Vietnamese. (Fieldnotes, July 2012)

Her husband, Anh, also walked into the kitchen and sat down at the table to join our conversation with his opinion about changing and adapting in Canada:

We are in Canada, we’re the newcomers here, and we can not swim against the flow of the whole society. It’s very difficult to teach a child in such situations. You have to combine what you think is the best of the two cultures, and beware of any conflicts there might be. (Fieldnotes, July 2012)

“Each Culture Has Its Own Advantages”

(July 2012 at Anh’s house)

I brought my tea to the table to begin an interview with Anh. He continued with his perspective about Canadian culture:

Each culture has its own advantages. We have to admit what is good from Canadian culture, learn it and turn it into our personal values. At the same time, we can try to adjust what is not suitable or in conflict with Vietnamese culture. For example, in Canada, children are educated to be independent, that’s very good for them. We have to admit this and learn from it. In our country, parents seem to cover their children too much and never let them do anything by themselves. Especially now, when each family only has one or two kids, parents become over protective but at the same time over ambitious. They would always like their children to just read books and books, do more and more homework but never ask them to help with housework or to take care of themselves. They do not realize that housework will help children learn about their responsibilities in the family. Another good thing in Canada is that the children learn how to be financially independent really soon. That way, children will learn how to be responsible for their own future. In Canada, when a child would like to continue going to university, his parents will let him work part time for a couple of hours on the weekend or after school so that he can earn money for his campus life. My daughter, Hoa, is also working at a restaurant now to start earning for her student life. This is not the same in Vietnam. When I called to Vietnam, many of my relatives were surprised that I let Hoa work part time at high school in order to

support herself to go to university. In Vietnam, parents pay all tuition fees and also give their children pocket money every day even when they are at university. Parents do too much for their children; therefore, the children become dependent on their parents and do not learn how to be responsible with their own lives. I feel sad for them when some children become so dependent and irresponsible that they leave everything for their parents to do for them. (Interview with Anh, July 2012)

Anh also made comparison between the two education systems in Vietnam and in

Canada:

I am impressed by the education system of Canada where children are taught how to do things by themselves. The children here seem to be more active and creative; they like schools much more and do not have such pressure as in Vietnam. In Vietnam, we only focus on how children do on their tests so they are always overloaded by homework and extra classes. In addition, teachers usually do not have time to take care of each student's needs, but rather reading all the necessary materials and rushing from class to class. We should definitely learn from Canadian's education system, I hope Vietnamese education system will change to something similar to Canadian's in the future. (Interview with Anh, July 2012)

“In Canada, Children Do Not Learn How to Respect Their Parents and the Elders”

(July 2012 at Anh's house)

After talking about Canadian education system, he stopped and asked me what I thought about the two education systems and how I perceive the differences. He was afraid that I might get offended as I was a teacher in Vietnam before I came to Canada. I

told him that I was really interested in listening to his idea, and I did not feel offended at all about his opinions. However, I also asked him if there was anything he liked about Vietnamese education. He said:

In Vietnam, although teachers do not teach children to develop their independence, they are successful in teaching general moral lessons. I don't know how the situation has changed in Vietnam now, but in my time, the teachers' responsibilities were not only giving the students the knowledge but also teaching them how to behave, how to live, how to be human. Being a teacher therefore was a very highly respected job.

The moral lessons are among the values in our culture that I think we should treasure and pass on to our children. For example, children in Vietnam are taught to respect the elders and love the young. In Canada, children do not learn how to respect their parents and the elders. Some of Tom's friends used to come over to play with him, but they never greeted me when they saw me. They ignored me as if I was not there. When I told them, they said "Hello" when they came in, but they seldom remembered to say "goodbye" before they got back home. (Interview with Anh, July 2012)

He stopped for a short moment and added that he would not like his son Tom to play with some of his friends because he was afraid those friends would have bad influences on Tom. He stopped again; his face was a bit unpleasant. It seemed that he was thinking of some bad memories.

Anh was about to say something more while Chi brought him a glass of water and interrupted our talk. I tried to ask him to continue with his story, but Chi stopped us and said:

Alright, alright, it's impossible to ask the children in Canada to behave in a Vietnamese way even though they are from Vietnamese immigrant families. In this country, they think highly of one's individuality, everyone is equal, and their respect to the elders is different. As you can see from the language, as it's easiest to notice, English only has one pronoun "I" to indicate the first person. Meanwhile, there are about ten different pronouns to indicate the first person in Vietnamese to show different levels of respect and relationships. That is just one among many examples. There are many other differences between the two cultures. Therefore, it's not the children's faults to behave differently since they were born in Canada.

Then she turned to her husband and added:

Tom and those kids are in their teen years. You know how annoying the children are at this age. Don't be angry with that and harm your health, Anh. Now, both of you come and help me bringing those plates to the table. We're going to have a very delicious meal today, the vegetables are so fresh.

I could sense that Chi was trying to interrupt our conversation for some reason, but I did not know why until later when I helped her to clean up after dinner. (Fieldnotes, July 2012)

"It's Too Difficult, Xuan, Life Is Different in Canada"

(July 2012 at Anh's house)

When we were preparing dinner, their son, Tom, came home from school. He did not say anything and went straight to his room and closed the door. Chi immediately brought some snacks to his room. When she was back, she told me that the boy was tired and would not come for dinner. Anh signed but did not say anything.

When we began to eat, Hoa - the daughter got home. She was about to go straight into her room as well, but her mother called her to the kitchen to introduce her to me. After our short introduction, Chi gave Hoa a small plate of pasta with seafood (that portion was reserved for her before we began to eat) and told her to bring it to eat in her room.

“Hoa eats very little.” Chi said to me as Hoa went to her room. “If I didn’t call her to give her some food, she might even skip dinner”. When I asked her why the children did not eat together with parents, Chi exclaimed: “It’s too difficult, Xuan, life is different in Canada. We can not keep our Vietnamese way here. The children were born in Canada; they have different lives from us”. Later, I realized that she often repeated that it was difficult when I asked her about her children’s lives in Canada and about what they did or did not do in the family.

She also gave further explanation about Hoa and Tom not eating together with them:

The main reason is that we have different time schedules. We usually work from very early in the morning until late in the evening. The children also have their learning routines which are different from our time schedule. When we come home for dinner, it is usually time for Hoa and Tom to do their homework for their next-day classes. Therefore, it’s more convenient for them to bring food to

the room and eat while they are learning. Besides, they don't eat much Vietnamese food, even if we eat on the same table, I will have to prepare some different food for them, then what is the point of eating together? (Fieldnotes, July 2012)

“She Does Not Like Cooking Vietnamese Food”

(July 2012 at Anh's house)

After dinner, Anh went back to the living room to watch TV. I stayed in the kitchen to help Chi cleaning the dishes and had a quick chat with her. When we talked about the interview, Chi said she would choose the kitchen as the place for our interview rather than any other places where she does not feel comfortable. So I took the computer into the kitchen after we cleaned up and I had an interview with her. We talked for nearly an hour about the family's experience in Canada, conflicts between two cultures and other issues.

When we talked again about Vietnamese food, she admitted that her children do not like Vietnamese food very much.

Taste is not something that can be forced. My children can both eat Vietnamese food, and they like some of the traditional dishes, but in general they prefer Canadian food and Canadian way of cooking. Hoa said she did not like cooking Vietnamese food as it's too complicated for her to prepare. She would like to cook Canadian dishes which were easier to cook and saved her more time. Take fish as an example, they don't like any Vietnamese dishes relating to fish at all. Both Hoa and Tom would refuse to eat fish if I cook it in our traditional way with fish sauces and ginger. (Interview with Chi, July 2012)

I asked her whether it is hard for her to prepare food for the whole family if there are such different preferences among family members in taste. She said:

What else should I do? It is not in Vietnam, and I can not ask Hoa or Tom to help with cooking either because it's too complicated for them. Hoa can only cook simple food like Canadian ones, the ones that she can cook with the microwave. Vietnamese food, with many ingredients, is difficult for her. When I am not at home, I have to prepare all the food and pack them in different jars or boxes so that Hoa can cook it by microwave for herself and her brother. That is good enough. (Interview with Chi, July 2012)

If You Ask Your Son and Daughter to Do Housework in Canada, You Will Have Immediate Troubles with the Children Aid Society

(July 2012 at Anh's house)

I told her that she had to let the girl help more with the work in the kitchen and other housework. In Vietnam, girls at her age are already big helpers in the kitchen. She repeated her "favourite" sentence: "It's too difficult, Xuan". And here is her explanation:

I used to help my mother a lot with the housework when I was a girl. I had to cook, clean the house and take care of my younger brothers and sisters. But it's not like that in Canada. If you ask your son and daughter to do housework in Canada, you will have immediate troubles with the Children Aid Society. The Children Aid Society is powerful. They can even take your son and your daughter away from you or give them to another family who would like to adopt a child. I know a couple of friends who had to deal with the Children Aid Society. It will be a big trouble if you have to deal with them.

I told her I did not think the Children Aid Society would take the children away if it was not necessary because it was best for the children to live with their parents. I said I believe the Children Aid Society would not intervene if there is no sign of violence in the family. She replied:

Then you don't know enough about how things work here. The children in Canada are well-equipped with the idea of calling the Children Aid Society at any time. It's so easy to get the Children Aid Society into your home. The children can just make a phone call or tell their teacher or friend that they were spanked at home, whatever the reason is, the Children Aid Society will come immediately. The children in Canada are equipped with such power, and they are well aware of their power. I don't think it is good for the children to have such power as they do not understand how to use that properly. But that is the way things work here and we have to follow.

Chi also shared a story about the relationship between her husband and her son: Currently, we are having some troubles in educating Tom. That's why I tried to stop you and my husband before dinner when you two were talking about Tom and his friends. My husband used to be a secondary school teacher in Vietnam, so he likes to talk about education very much. But his health is very bad and he is very emotional now. When you talked about the negative side of education in Canada, and he talked about Tom, I could feel an arising emotion in his voice, and I knew it was time to stop you two. If he still continued to talk about Tom, he would be angry which might harm his heart a lot. He had to be in hospital for several days last time after he had an argument with our son.

I told Chi I was sorry as I did not know about the tension between Anh and Tom.

Chi continued to explain to me:

My son Tom was so attached to video games. He played games so much that it began to affect his study and behaviour. He used to be a very nice and gentle boy. But when we tried to limit his time for games, he began to shout back to us. We tried to talk and persuade him not to play video games that much, but it wouldn't last long. He liked video games so much that he could not stand a day without it. When Anh threw all his games away, he became furious and left the house for two days until I found him and persuaded him to go home with a promise to buy the video games back for him.

From that day on, Tom refused to speak Vietnamese. Now, he doesn't speak Vietnamese at all in our home. When we speak Vietnamese to him, he seems not to listen. It has been a while that I don't know for sure whether he does not want to speak Vietnamese or he doesn't remember enough to speak anymore. Tom was not as good at Vietnamese as his sister anyway. He could speak a bit when he was small, but when he went to school and learned English, he forgot Vietnamese gradually.

From the day Tom came back after he left our house, the situation became worse and worse. Both Anh and Tom sometimes had very bad tempers, they shouted at each other, and it often caused heart troubles for Anh when he stopped. Tom made his father furious sometimes by ignoring what he said in Vietnamese. But we can not spank Tom because we are afraid of the Children Aid Society. As I have told you, that is not good at all in some cases when the children use there

“power” to fight against their parents who want the best for them. That’s sad.

(Interview with Chi, July 2012)

“It’s Fortunate that He Agreed to Join the Vietnamese Community at the church”

(August 22 at Anh’s house)

The second time I went to visit the family was on a summer day in August. When I got there, Anh had to go and drive their daughter, Hoa, to the restaurant where she worked. I spent some more time chatting with Chi while helping her in the kitchen.

When I asked about Tom, she told me that he behaved much better when he joined the Youth group at the Vietnamese church every weekend. “It’s fortunate that he agreed to join the Vietnamese community at the church. The children there are very nice and kind, it is good for him to play with them. I heard he replied in Vietnamese with some children or other adults if they asked him in Vietnamese. We both feel glad about that.”

She looked so proud when she talked about Tom playing basketball at school. She said that the boy was already taller than his father, and looked much stronger since he played sports. She was also eager to tell that Anh’s health had been improving. “My husband is back to work on the farm now after a long time fighting with his heart issue. Although he can only work on the weekend at the moment, that is a big improvement. He also spends his time at home teaching Hoa to speak French, and Vietnamese as well.”

(Fieldnotes, August 2012)

“I Want Them to Experience the Values that We Treasure in Vietnam”

(August 22 at Anh’s house)

Later, when Anh came home, he told me that he intended to bring the children back to Vietnam in summer if his health permitted.

I realize that it is good for them to go back to Vietnam just so they know about the country of their parents' origin. Last time, when I took them to Vietnam, Hoa liked it very much, but Tom did not like it because the weather was too hot for him, and he did not know much Vietnamese. I hope it will be better this time.

Both Hoa and Tom were eager when I told them about the trip.

Then, he explained further about his decision:

I want them to experience the values that we treasure in Vietnam. It was very difficult to explain and keep those values in Canada where they always immerse in the mainstream culture. Since we came to Canada, we were so busy working to earn money so that Tom and Hoa could have a better life than ours. We both worked on the farm from dawn to dusk, we barely had time to take care of ourselves and our children. When we got home, we were so tired already. We did not have time to talk to the children in general and to teach them our cultural values in particular. Moreover, seeing is believing, I want Hoa and Tom to be exposed to a different culture from what they are in. It will help broaden their views and perspectives. I also hope that they will understand their parents more after the trip. I hope it will help enhance the relationship between us and them before we get old and they get bored with us.

He also expressed his pleasure that Tom and Hoa joined the Vietnamese church community:

I am glad that my children joined the Youth Group of the Vietnamese church now. They learn much from their peers in the group. Now, they're more interested in exploring different things in the Vietnamese culture, trying the food, and talking in Vietnamese. They could not write Vietnamese, but I don't think it is necessary. Speaking Vietnamese fluently is good enough. (Fieldnotes, August 2012)

This chapter has presented how the parents struggled in finding a way to educate and discipline their children when they find that their habitual ways of disciplining a child is not acceptable in Canada. In my discussion chapter, I will explain and argue further on the issues of child care and child discipline in immigrant families. I am glad, however, to see that the son had got back on track when he found himself a place in the church community. This also raises a question about the importance of role modelling in the family education which I will discuss later in my thesis. Nevertheless, I have also learned much from the parents' perspectives about the differences between the two education systems and the mother's beautiful philosophy of educating a child in immigrant families through her metaphor about planting a tree. In the next chapter, another interesting metaphor about culture will be discovered from another family story.

Chapter 7

“Culture Is Like a Cloud” – a Father’s Concept of Culture

Introduction to the Chapter

In this chapter, the main characters are Bao and Ngan. This is also a family from South Vietnam. Bao and Ngan have been in Windsor since they first came to Canada in the early 1980s. They were among the families that left the country for political reasons after the Vietnamese War. There are two children in the family, one boy and one girl. The girl is 14 years old and her name is Lan. Her younger brother, Linh, is 10 years old. They were both born in Canada.

Bao and Ngan run a small convenience store in Windsor. Bao, the husband used to work as an engineer in Windsor, but he was interested in running his own business, so he quit his job and opened a convenience store. Bao spends his entire day at the store everyday. His wife, Ngan, stays at home doing the accounting for the store and taking care of the housework. However, she often runs back and forth between their house and the store to help her husband. On weekends, she usually takes her husband’s job to look after the store so that he can enjoy the weekend at home.

I met Bao in his store a couple of time when I first came to Windsor in 2011, but I had no idea at the time that he was Vietnamese. Later, when he heard me speak Vietnamese in his store, he greeted me and asked me if I was a student from Vietnam. When I told him that I was a student from the North of Vietnam, he immediately commented: “Oh, your parents should be so rich. Do they work for the government?” I could sense the tension in his voice when he asked me that question, but I did not know why until later when I talked to his wife. But when I told him that I came to Canada by myself and paid the

tuition fee through my scholarship, he seemed to change his attitude. He talked to me more openly and told me that he got his Bachelor degree in engineering in Windsor. However, we did not have any chance to talk again until he knew about my study.

Bao was among the first group of people who gave their consents to participate in my study. He seemed to be very interested in the topic. One special thing about his family is that Ngan, his wife is a Buddhist. Therefore, their children go to both pagoda and church and participate in activities of both communities. As Ngan later revealed, it's very rare among the immigrant families to have parents from different religions. The perspective from Bao and Ngan, as a result, was a bit different from other parents.

“Culture Is Like a Cloud”

(July 29, 2012 at Bao's store)

After Bao agreed to participate in my study, I often stopped by his store when I had a chance for a small talk with him. That was because Bao was always willing to share his opinions and experiences about life in Canada and in Vietnam; and to me his stories and perspectives were usually very interesting and unique. During the interview, he also asked me many questions that open up a new space for thoughts and ideas. Normally, he would challenge me first with his questions before giving further explanations or reasons for them. For instance, when I told him about the topic of my thesis, he immediately asked me: “What does culture consist of? What are the cultural values? How do you know what cultural values to be kept?” I was a bit surprised when he asked me such questions because these were among the questions of my research, but then Bao continued to give his opinions:

What is culture? What are the Vietnamese cultural values that we should keep for our children? Those are tough questions. I remember a metaphor about culture that I heard on a Vietnamese talk show last year in which the speaker used the idea of a cloud to talk about culture. Generally, he said that culture was like a cloud, when you were far from it, you could tell what it looked like, but when you were flying on an airplane through the cloud, you would find all clouds looked the same, nothing was special anymore. This is so true; at least I can tell from my experience. To me, all the process in adapting to the new culture in Canada or keeping old values from Vietnamese culture happened so naturally that sometimes I don't even notice. After a long time living in Canada, I have shifted from seeing the differences to seeing the similarities between the two cultures. Let's say... I have found a balanced point between Vietnamese and Canada cultures. I find myself to be less extreme than before and less judgmental. I tend to see everything with the view that balances both cultures, and open to other views from other cultures. (Fieldnotes, July 29, 2012)

Bao also had a very interesting summary of what Vietnamese cultural values should be maintained in the immigrant families:

Although they all originate from Vietnamese culture, the cultural values within each family vary widely according to the parents' life experience. Thus, it's more appropriate to talk about the cultural values in immigrant family as part of the family education. There may be some basic values from Vietnam that you can find in many families such as respecting the elders, being grateful to parents, being a caring human; those basics are the most obvious values to be kept.

Language and food should also be counted as the most obvious part of culture to be maintained. You may also find common Vietnamese traditional celebrations like Lunar New Year or Mid-Autumn on the list. Other than that it depends on the family. (Interview with Bao, July 29, 2012)

“Family Oriented” vs. “Individual Oriented”

(July 29, 2012 at Bao’s store)

In Bao’s opinion, the core difference between Vietnamese and Canadian cultures (or Eastern and Western cultures as he used those terms interchangeably) is that Vietnam has a “family oriented” culture while Canada culture is “individual oriented”. Bao used those terms in English as he explained to me what he meant.

Canada’s culture is “individual oriented”. In Canada, children are educated to develop themselves as independent individuals. They learn how to think critically, how to express their own thinking, how to live as themselves, and so on, all about individuals. Vietnamese culture is the reverse, it’s “family oriented”. What we teach children will be how to love and respect their parents and care for their siblings first. And then, they will learn how to care for the relatives and other people around them. That way, they will gradually learn how to be a good person in the society. The core values in our culture always emphasize on educating children in the relationship with others, not as an individual. Therefore, since the children were small, they have learned about love and responsibilities to brothers and sisters, to their family, their relatives and friends... (Interview with Bao, July 29, 2012)

“The Best Way to Teach Them about Cultural Values Is to Bring Them to the Community”

(July 29, 2012 at Bao’s store)

We just began the interview when Ngan, Bao’s wife, walked in. She came to look after the store for Bao so that he could leave early because it was on Sunday. However, Bao introduced me to Ngan and said that he would stay at the store for my interview as he really liked the topic of my research. Knowing that I was studying about maintaining Vietnamese language and culture, Ngan invited me to come to her house when I had time to talk with her children.

You will like talking with them. They are very friendly to Vietnamese people. We often bring them to join all the activities at the church community and the pagoda community, so they understand much about Vietnamese cultural traditions. You can chat with them about Vietnamese traditions too.

At that time, I did not know that Ngan was a Buddhist, so I asked why they brought them to the pagoda. Ngan smiled and said: “I’m a Buddhist. It was very kind of my husband to let me keep my faith, so I go to pagoda community”. Then she also added:

Bao and I both agreed that it was important to expose our children to the Vietnamese communities so they learned more and had the sense of belonging. So I bring them to the pagoda community as well. If you study about the strategy to maintain the cultural values then I will suggest this among the top one. Children learn much from their peers. The best way to teach them about cultural values is to bring them to the community where they can observe, communicate and learn

from their Vietnamese peers. This is as important as the home education to the development of the children. (Fieldnotes, July 29, 2012)

When I asked whether she knew about other Vietnamese communities in Windsor, she replied: “As I know, most Vietnamese communities in Windsor are religious communities. There are a lot of Vietnamese people in Windsor, but we scattered into small groups. There are no associations or communities other than religious groups for people to share ideas and information. (Fieldnotes, July 29, 2012)

“Although It Is a Language School, What the Children Have Learned There Is Much More”

(July 29, 2012 at Bao’s store)

I asked whether they speak Vietnamese at home. She said:

Sure. We speak Vietnamese at home. I also sent them to Vietnamese language school in Windsor when my children began to learn how to read and write.

Although it was only 1 lesson per week on Saturday, they had learned quite a lot.

I’m glad that I have sent them there. My daughter, Lan, has been studying Vietnamese there for eight years. They do not allow the students to speak English at this school, so the children have no way but to speak Vietnamese to talk with their peers. Although it is a language school, what the children have learned there is much more. I looked at my daughter’s notebook at the school the other day and saw some Vietnamese legends and historical stories in their notebook. (Interview with Ngan, July 29, 2012)

Bao added to his wife’s words:

However, my son, Linh, who is only ten years old, can speak Vietnamese better than his sister now because he is closer to me and my wife and talk to us a lot.

When I asked them a question in Vietnamese, Lan sometimes used both English and Vietnamese to answer me, but Linh will answer in perfect Vietnamese. Lan used to speak Vietnamese very well, but it got worse when she turned 12 or 13 and now she spends more time with her friends than with her mother. (Fieldnotes, July 29, 2012)

I asked Bao whether he spent his time teaching his children Vietnamese at home.

He shook his head, turned a finger to his wife Ngan and said:

That belongs to the mother's duties. Ngan spends her time at home taking care of the children, playing with them, feeding them, helping them to do homework, teaching them Vietnamese, etc. Women are more patient and pay more attention to details, thus, those specific work and duties around the house are dedicated for them. The father in the family is the one who gives big guidelines and strategies. He has to take care of the financial situation of the family and does not have enough patience to stay with their children to do such things as feeding them or helping them do homework. (Fieldnotes, July 29, 2012)

“Sometimes Vietnamese parents in Canada Seem to Hold On to the Tradition and Values More Tightly Those in Vietnam”

(August 4, 2012 at Bao's store)

When we talked again about the strategies for parents to maintain cultural values for their children, Ngan strongly suggested that parents should bring their children back to Vietnam if that is possible for them, especially on Vietnamese big holidays or

traditional celebrations. Those celebrations in Vietnam, as she said, were very different from the way they were celebrated in Canada.

They should go to Vietnam, at least once or twice before they grow up so that they know about their origin [their parents' country of origin]. They will experience in person the cultural values that we treasure in our family: how people live together in an extended family or how we treat our relatives and friends. Those are the things that I would like my children to see. However, there are only a couple of Vietnamese extended families in Windsor, so it is difficult to explain to the children about the close relationships among cousins, uncles, aunts..., our kinship or things like that.

However, it is a funny thing that sometimes Vietnamese parents in Canada seem to hold on to the tradition and values more tightly than parents in Vietnam. When I brought my children back to Vietnam in 2005, I was shocked to find that my relatives in Vietnam were more “industrialized”, “modernized” and more “Western” than us, who were coming back from the “Western” world. For example, we tried our best to make Banh Chung (a traditional rice sticky cake that symbolized Vietnamese New Year holidays) for our children in Canada although it was very difficult to find the ingredients (It is a tradition and essential in Vietnam to make and eat Banh Chung in the family at New Year holidays to show their gratitude to the ancestors). Meanwhile, our relatives in Vietnam did not make Banh Chung any more but simply bought one from the supermarket for the New Year. We told our children in Canada the legend of the cake while my nieces and nephews did not know that there had been a legend for the cake. I felt that I

was more Vietnamese than they were even though I lived in Canada. (Interview with Ngan, August 4, 2012)

When Ngan stopped, Bao laughed and added: “You see, that is also part of the culture cloud I told you before. We hold on more tightly to the traditions and values because we are not in the Vietnamese culture cloud anymore, so we know what the cloud looks like and what values are to be kept.”

Politics and Culture: “... Those Annoying Northern People”

(August 4, 2012 at Bao’s store)

Then, he continued his comment about keeping cultural values in Vietnam, but in a brand new direction: “Moreover, the leaders of the Party in Vietnam were so busy with their corruption that they paid no attention to the culture and values for the people. That was what they called ‘socialist’ ... those annoying Northern people”.

I recalled his attitude and the tension in his voice when he asked me whether my parents were rich because I was from the North of Vietnam. I had no choice but to smile and say nothing when he said so. Ngan gave me a quick smile too. Later, when he left to buy a coffee, Ngan told me not to feel offended if he said something bad about the Northern Vietnamese. She told me that Bao’s father was put in jail as political criminal after the Vietnamese War and died there; therefore, Vietnamese politics is a sensitive topic for him.

I told her that I understood about that part of history and I did not feel offended at all. She said it was also a problem that many immigrant parents did not share their experience in Vietnam with their children. (Fieldnotes, August 4, 2012)

“The Children Were Born and Grown Up in Canada; They Will be Canadian No Matter How You Teach Them”

(August 4, 2012 at Bao’s store)

At that moment, Bao was back and continued with his perspective:

Actually, many immigrant parents had faced remarkable difficulties to adapt to the new culture when they first came to Canada. Therefore, they believe that their children would be more successful in the future and could stay away from the hardship they once had if they were more “Canadian”. They tried to speak English at home with their children, taught them what they thought was Canadian way of thinking. That was terribly wrong. The fact is that the children were born and grown up in Canada; they will be Canadian no matter how you teach them.

Adaptation to Canadian culture is obvious. There is nothing you can do to change that. What you should do is help them maintain cultural values from your country of origin because that is what can be lost easily. So, the problem should never be how to adapt to the new culture, but rather how to maintain your cultural values within the families. (Interview with Bao, August 4, 2012)

Ngan also added to her husband’s point:

I teach the children about Vietnamese cultural values because I would like to teach them about their origin. Windsor is a multicultural city. Everyone has his own origin and culture which create his own values. If you don’t teach the children about our culture, they will grow up thinking that they are just Canadians who have no Vietnamese origin or that their Vietnamese origin is not to be proud of. That way, they will lose half of the identity and values of themselves. They

will be among the “other” Canadians who do not know about their origin. Always remembering our origin and being grateful to the ancestors are among the Vietnamese values as well. (Interview with Ngan, August 4, 2012)

“The Most Difficult Thing Is to Set Up a Model for the Children to Follow”

(August 4, 2012 at Bao’s store)

When I asked him about the biggest difficulty in maintaining cultural values for the children in immigrant families, his answer surprised me. He said:

The most difficult thing is to set up a model in the family for your children to follow. If you would like to teach them to be a good person, you have to be a good person yourself. It is easier said than done. You have to educate yourself all the time as well. You have to give up bad habits, even some cultural bad habits from Vietnam such as: talking too loud, talking and chewing at the same time, etc.

Bao also showed similar opinions with other parents about how to educate a child to be a good citizen:

A child’s well-being should be the combination of two kinds of education: school education and home education. While a child learns knowledge and skills and gets degrees at school, his characteristics, personalities and moral values are from the home education. What is needed to be a good man? Characteristics, personalities and moral values. Therefore, home education is very important to the development of a child. (Interview with Bao, August 4, 2012)

This perspective is similar to Tran’s, a parent in my pilot study. This indicates that Vietnamese parents understand the importance of home education to the children and their role model in the families. I will discuss this later in the discussion chapter.

“The Children Take Their Parents for Granted and Think that Their Parents Have the Responsibility and duty to Raise Them”

(August 4, 2012 at Bao’s store)

Meanwhile, Ngan also shared her stories about child discipline in Canada:

It’s difficult that we can not spank the children in Canada, but we have to talk to them in a way that they will listen. That requires a lot of persuasive talk and psychological methods... and some strategies as well, but Bao is very good at this. He is an open and generous father. The children listen to him.

It is so different from our Vietnamese culture. The children in Canada are taught in schools so much about their rights and freedom that they do not seem to show enough respect to their elders. In Vietnam, one of the top basic cultural values is to be grateful to their parents and respect the elder. In Canada, the concept is turned upside down. The children take their parents for granted and think that their parents have the responsibility and duty to raise them.

However, Ngan also emphasized that parents should be opened to other values from different cultures as they are living in a multicultural society and their in-law might not come from the same culture:

Nevertheless, I understand that we should not expect that our children will be with us after marriage in an extended family or something similar because you’ll never know who your in-law will be. If your in-laws are not from Vietnamese-origin, there will be a great chance that even your grandchildren could not speak a word of Vietnamese. (Interview with Ngan, August 4, 2012)

In Bao and Ngan's family stories, the parents have touched upon many important issues in maintaining the Vietnamese culture, such as comparisons between two cultures, the role of parents in children's education and child discipline. We can also see other matters in their stories such as politics and religions. Although the parents did not give much detail about the influence of politics and religions on cultural values maintaining, their stories show clearly that those factors have deep impact on the parents' experience and perspectives. However, due to time constraint, I did not have a chance to get deeper into how the religions affect the home education in general and cultural values maintenance in particular. Those issues will definitely be a part of my research in the future when I investigate the problem from outside the home.

Chapter 8

Discussion

In this chapter, I will discuss the main themes that emerged from the families' narratives in the previous four chapters. First, I will review the relationship between maintaining cultural values in immigrant families and the home education. My study indicates that maintaining cultural values as an important part of the education at home (Fillmore, 2000; Xu, 2006, 2011). Second, I will talk over about role modelling in the family which has been a particularly important concern to immigrant families as the parents have to change themselves to adapt to the new culture and at the same time keep a model for their children (Xu, 2006, 2011). The third and fourth part will present the parents' experience and effort to maintain the Vietnamese language and Vietnamese food in the family and the values around the table. I will also discuss about the core values that the parents wanted to keep for their children with the connection to Confucian's educational thoughts and to Dewey's (1938) and Count's (1978) educational philosophies. In the next parts, I will argue about the dissonance in child discipline and child care between the Vietnamese and Canadian cultures and explain over Vietnamese history in maintaining culture and political issue. The last two parts will be my discussion over the loss of tradition the modern world and cultural assimilation.

Maintaining Cultural Values as a Part of Home Education

All the parents whom I asked about the role of parents in maintaining their children's cultural values agreed on the importance of this role. As well, more than simply being a passive resource of Vietnamese culture, parents perceived their role in

teaching their children about Vietnamese cultural values as a part of active home education.

In Vietnamese parents' conception, as Bao and Tran stated, children's education consists of school- and home-based education. While school education provides children with knowledge and skills for their future success, home education helps them form their personalities and moral values. According to Tram, what the children learn in the family will bring them successes and happiness in their life: "In the family, we show them love, so they know how to love. We teach them to respect other people and give them the sense of belonging, the sense of community. We teach them to be hard working and to walk over all the failures, so on and so forth" (Chapter 5, p.53). Bao and Tran's views on the importance of home education support existing research about education in the family (Bacallao & Smokowski 2007; Fillmore, 2000; King & Fogle, 2006; Nodding, 2005, Su & Costigan, 2009). Their views go in accordance with Fillmore's (2000, p.206) list of "basic elements for successful functioning" which are provided from education in the family, including "sense of belonging, knowledge of who one is and where one comes from; an understanding of how one is connected to the important others and events in ones' life, the ability to deal with adversity; and knowing one's responsibility to self, family, community".

Parents have brought a number of Vietnamese cultural values (from simple daily routines such as language, food and traditions to core values such as educational beliefs, moral lessons and norms) into home education because they themselves are strongly attached to the Vietnamese cultural values they absorbed when they were young. The narratives of Nam and Ngan's stories show that parents treasure the cultural values that

they learned from their own parents and would like to pass those on to their own children. While Ngan did her best to teach and remind her children about their origin and ancestors, Nam was always grateful for what his parents taught him, even when the lessons came as punishments. As he stated, he wanted to pass on the values of “what is best” from his parents to the next generation (Nam, Chapter 5, p. 56).

The parents’ narratives in my study demonstrate their great efforts to maintain cultural values for their children as part of home education. Bao, Nam, and Mai named a number of strategies that were successful in their families. These strategies are

- speaking only Vietnamese at home, encouraging the children to speak Vietnamese or sending them to Vietnamese language school,
- bringing the children to the Vietnamese community to inculcate a sense of belonging to the culture,
- travelling to Vietnam so that they can experience the cultural values themselves,
- maintaining meals together in the family and serving Vietnamese food, and
- celebrating Vietnamese traditional holidays and special occasions

Those strategies indicate the parents’ consideration and determination to keep the Vietnamese traditional values for their children.

Role Model in the Family

Role modelling is always very important in home education. It is also a very common educational method in Vietnamese culture—as illustrated in many narratives from my research. For example, Mai sent money to her mother and relatives in Vietnam even though she and her husband worked 10–12 hours a day to earn their living in

Canada. Although Mai's primary objective was not to teach her daughters about kinship through this action, she created a wonderful model for them. By sending part of the money she earned, she showed them the value of the connection with relatives in Vietnam and the core value of Vietnamese culture that close kinship represents. As a result, her daughters supported her decision to act as guarantor for her nephew to come to Canada, and even helped her with the paperwork. Likewise, Nam and Tram volunteered for their church although they were very busy with their jobs. By doing this, they set up a model for their children, Tien and Na, about caring for others and sense of community. Nam's lesson of older siblings being responsible for their younger ones and younger siblings listening to the older ones are also examples of role modelling in the family.

However, as Bao revealed in his story, it is difficult to set up a model in the family because parents must lead by example, which is often easier said than done (Bao, Chapter 7, p. 84). Anh-Chi's story demonstrates how the absence of a role model in the family affects home education and the family negatively. Tom did not consider his father to be a role model. Chi's repeated sentence, "It's difficult, things are different in Canada," indicates that Anh and Chi struggle by themselves to adapt to the new culture and to maintain their own values. As Anh and Chi have difficulty finding a balance between the new culture and Vietnamese culture, the "model" they are showing Tom is one of culture confusion. Their difficulties actually led to Tom's reluctance to learn about Vietnamese culture and to keep the language.

As Nam stated: "Educating a child is a long-term effort" (Chapter 5, p.60), role modelling is an on-going process that consumes much time and patience from the parents. One of the main reasons for the absence of role model in immigrant families is

that the parents do not have time to be with their children. Narratives from two different families (Mai's and Anh's) have revealed the parents' difficulties in finding time to talk and play with their children. This situation is common among immigrant parents since many of them try to work harder and longer hours to earn more with the hope that their children could have a more comfortable life than theirs. Yet, as Nam has emphasized in his family's principle: "It is most important that you spend time with your child" (Chapter 5, p.60), it is crucial that the parents spend time with their children and involve in their education, not simply provide them with a convenient and easy life.

The role of parents in being a model for their children to follow is also found in many other cultures. Many Latino mothers in Durand's (2011) study agree that parents are the most influential to the children's development as the children would "learn what they see in their parents" (p.273). Xu (2006) also discusses about role modelling in parenting among Chinese immigrant parents which was traced to the cultural models in Confucian's way of learning. Parents' role model in her Chinese families' stories, therefore, are much influenced by Confucian's values of being a good human.

Language and Culture

Vietnamese language appeared in all narratives of the families in my study as one of the foremost and obvious thing that should be maintained because when the children learn Vietnamese, they will learn much more about the cultural values of Vietnam. Chi provided a wonderful illustration of this through her example of the Vietnamese pronoun for the first person: "English only has one pronoun 'I' to indicate the first person. Meanwhile, there are about ten different pronouns to indicate the first person in Vietnamese to show different levels of respect and relationships". Since Vietnamese

culture places high value on respect for parents, teachers and the elders, the Vietnamese language has various pronouns for the first person to indicate different levels of respect and relationships. Each position or age has its own pronoun; for example, “tôi” (between friends), “tớ” (between classmates or close friends), “em” (younger sibling to older ones), “con” (child to parents or uncle and auntie), “cháu” (grandchild to grandparents or the elderly), “bố” (father to child), “bà” (grandmother to child). In this way, children learn to respect their parents and the elders when they learn their very first sentence in Vietnamese. The Vietnamese cultural value of respecting the elders actually results in the voice of its language. This once again confirms the importance of maintaining the language in order to maintain culture as many theorists have emphasized “language is the most evident expression of culture” (Canada, 1947, as cited in Haque, 2012), “language expresses cultural reality” (Kramsch, 2003, p.3), and language is culture (Neito, 2009).

Language is also a means of communication in a family in which parents do not speak English at all or very well. As a result, Vietnamese is the language of communication for home education. A vast amount of research has discussed the tie between language and relationship in the family or home education (Brown, 2011; Cummins, 1989, 2000, 2001; Fillmore, 2000; Fishman, 2010; Love and Buriel (2009); Oh & Fuligni, 2009). All the stories in my study show very clearly that there is always a strong bond between the language, cultural values and education at home, whether the bond contributes to family education as in Nam-Tram, Tran-Mai and Bao-Ngan’s stories or cause tensions between father and son as in Anh-Chi’s family. In Anh-Chi’s family, the son, Tom, did not talk to his father and refused to speak Vietnamese. This broken communication enlarged the gap between father and son, and disrupted the family

education. Over time, it caused increasing tension between Anh and Tom, which finally resulted in Anh's heart attack. This demonstrates the concern that Fillmore (2000) raises about the consequences of language loss within families. In Fillmore's case study, the family faced a broken relationship between generations due to the loss of the family language. Her concerns more than a decade ago still have not abated among immigrant families. Cummins (2001) also points out that the language gap in the family will make the children feel "alienated" and "rejected" from both home and school and lead to further consequences (p.19).

However, my study also shows a gradual shift in perception among Vietnamese immigrant parents on maintaining Vietnamese language and cultural values for their children. There have been repeated reports over the last decade about the loss of family language among immigrant families including Vietnamese ones (Cummins, 1989, 2000; Cummins et al., 1984; Fillmore, 2000; Gibbons & Ramirez, 2004; Suarez, 2007) due to the children's exposure to the mainstream culture and parent's failure to keep the language in their homes. However, the stories from Mai, Ngan and Nam's families illustrate the parents' determined efforts in maintaining the language in their families. Mai told Vietnamese fairy tales to her daughters every night before they went to bed; Ngan sent both her children to Vietnamese language school; and Nam spent his free time on weekends teaching his children Vietnamese. It is clear that Vietnamese language is no longer considered the barrier to the mainstream culture but is becoming an additional advantage to the children's in the modern world where people try to learn more languages. Vietnamese became the only language at home in all three families above. In Anh's family, Tom had been speaking more Vietnamese as well, although it was only

with his friends and peers at church. As changes do not happen overnight, the stories depict the parents at various levels of this shift in perception. From Anh's struggle to keep communicating with his son in Vietnamese, Mai and Nam had moved one step farther with their efforts in teaching the children Vietnamese at home. Bao reached an even a higher level of language maintenance by both teaching Vietnamese at home and sending his children to Vietnamese language school (for eight successive years) to learn the language in a more systematic way.

However, the parents in my study still see challenges in maintaining the language for the second generations. Although their efforts at teaching Vietnamese to the children are remarkable, they were unsure about whether the language can be passed on to their grandchildren. As Ngan stated in her story, the opportunities for grandchildren to maintain their Vietnamese language and cultural values in their future families would be greater if they married another Vietnamese-Canadian than if they married into another culture.

Vietnamese Food and Its Cultural Values

Food is a crucial part of culture, and is mentioned in the stories of all the families in my study. Different flavours of Eastern ingredients and cooking methods aside, food itself bears many cultural values that parents would like to keep for their children.

What cultural values does food bring? First and foremost, Vietnamese meals help develop family relationships. Nam, Tram, Mai and Nga all told about the importance and their efforts to have meals together as a family and their efforts to serve Vietnamese food at home. In the parents' views, food is "the most obvious part of culture to be maintained" (Bao, Chapter 7, p.81), and a meal together is the "most effective way to

teach children about cultural values in the family” (Mai, Chapter 4, p.37). One of Chi’s reasons for not eating together in her family was because her children could not eat Vietnamese food. Vietnamese food and meals always create opportunities for family gatherings. Nam and Tram tried to keep a dinner time of approximately six o’clock in the evening but would wait for all members to eat together, no matter how busy each one was with their school and work. Tran and Mai did their best to arrange a family dinner every weekend although they have very different work schedules and two of their daughters were at university out of town. They made this effort because eating together is not just a meal but the bond that connects all family members. As Tram stated, dinner was the most precious time for the family to be together enjoying Vietnamese food. It was also around the dinner table that the children spoke about school, thus improving their Vietnamese and enhancing the parent-child relationships.

The children learned not just the traditional food and the joy of sharing the food, but also the sense of family and belonging, traditional philosophies surrounding Vietnamese food and other values. For example, to show their respect, all Tran’s daughters waited for him to take the first bite of food, indicating the Vietnamese value of respecting parents and the elders. Tien called home when he could not come home for dinner because he knew that the whole family was waiting for him to arrive to start eating. Meanwhile, Anh and Chi could not manage a family dinner together, as their son and daughter locking themselves in their rooms as soon as they got home. The tensions around family dinner table reveal more important issues that go beyond the food itself.

Moreover, Mai tells that her daughter, Tam, loves to cook Vietnamese food, which also indicates a strong connection between food and family culture. When Tam

moved away from home, she still called home for her mother's recipes for Vietnamese chicken porridge. Vietnamese food has become a part of her memories of family and childhood. It has also grown into her pride about Vietnamese culture when she cooked Vietnamese food for her non-Vietnamese friends.

However, from two different family narratives (Mai's and Chi's), we can see the different attitudes the children of these two families have toward Vietnamese food. While Mai's second daughter, Tam, liked to eat and cook Vietnamese food, her first daughter, Van, preferred to cook Canadian food to save time. Her attitude was similar to Hoa (Chi's daughter), who could only cook Canadian food and only use microwave oven. These differences make me wonder what has made girls from the same family behave so differently. Do children change their attitude as they grow up? Are there other puzzles in the children's lives, as Chi had said, that go beyond the parents' control?

Core Values in Vietnamese Culture

The parents' efforts to maintain Vietnamese core values, such as respecting the elders, loving the young, or being a good citizen also indicate their notions of the purpose of education. The highest purpose of education reflecting the core values of Vietnamese culture is to mould a child into a good and caring human who will contribute to the development of society. Those values appeared in the parents' narratives often, under different circumstances. Mai claimed that "being a good person" was among the first values that she wanted to teach her children. She sent money to Vietnam when someone was in need, and she brought her nephew to Canada to fulfill her sister's wish. Nam and Tram maintained those values by involving their children in many volunteer activities at church. In other words, the values focus on the moral and social aspects of being a

human. These beautiful values match Confucian thought about education. Xu (2006) points out how being human in Confucian values “stresses the importance of man’s moral nature” (p. 233). Historically, Vietnamese culture was somewhat influenced by Confucian’s values and ideologies. These ideologies were imported when China as an ancient empire, had been a suzerain to its neighbouring countries including Vietnam around 40 A.D. These cultural values also go in accordance with Dewey (1938) and Counts’s (1978) philosophies of education in which they emphasize the social aspect of education and the purpose of education to prepare individuals to live as members of a society.

Another core value in Vietnamese culture mentioned in the narratives in my study is the close family bond between relatives in Vietnamese culture. As Mai summarized, “everyone is brother and sister, or uncle and auntie.” That is why Mai and Tran often sent money to their mother and relatives in need. This reflects the moral value in Vietnamese culture to show love and respect to parents and to help people in need. In Vietnamese culture, children should be grateful to the parents who give them their lives, share love with them and raise them to be good citizens. As the parents age, it becomes the children’s duty to take care of their parents. Mai was abroad, so she sent some money home to show respect and help care for her mother. These cultural values apply to extended families, where everyone is considered a family member and contributes to the development of the greater family. If any family member experiences difficulties, the whole family pulls together to help. Every member of the family takes care of every other member of the family. The parents were taught these values since they were very young. Although Mai was not in Vietnam any more, her story showed that she still treasured this

close bond and the values in her larger family in Vietnam. These core values in extended families reflected in Mai's stories are similar to those in Xu's (2006) narratives in which a grandfather sent part of his pension to the oldest sister in law in China to provide her with some financial support. Those values are also a part of Confucian values that are dominant in Chinese culture. The close kinship care in extended family and family-oriented relationships are also considered a profound strength in Latino cultural values (Walsh, 2012). Durand's (2011, p.2730) study about Latino immigrant families also points out that in their extended family, "there is always someone in the house to help".

Child Discipline and Child Care

The parents' stories and telling of the Children's Aid Society show evidence of the predicament and misperceptions in child discipline and child care. This gap between the Asian and Canadian way of child discipline and child care has been the topic of discussion of other research (Anisef & Kirbride, 2003; Tajima & Harachi, 2010; Xu, 2006). Xu's (2006) narrative tells a family who had similar trouble with parenting in Canada: the parents were unable to discipline their son to save him from failing at school. It is very troubling and confusing for parents to discover that the way of educating and disciplining children that they were accustomed to is not accepted or even legal in Canada. As a result, parents lost their power and control over this parenting issue. Anisef and Kirbride (2003) points out that children are also confused by their parents' back-and-forth behaviour. In my study, only one parent (Mai in Chapter 4) had real experience with the Children Aid Society, but confusion and fear are common among the parents. The narratives from this study reveal the reasons behind this fear: the psychological aspect of immigrants who always do their best to adapt to the new culture (Adler & Gielen, 2001).

Most parents in the Vietnamese community arrived as refugees, which means they could not return to Vietnam. Since Canada was the only choice, adaptation to the new culture was crucial. As a result, they accepted rather than questioned and defend for themselves. Instead they tried to avoid conflict as much as possible, especially with a government agency. In some cases, like in Anh's stories, this fear might lead to other problems for family tension beyond the parents' control.

Questions that still remain for many immigrant families are how to bridge the two cultures, and how to find the balance between two cultures in terms of child discipline and child care. Parents still feel they lack appropriate support in educating their children and in maintaining their cultural values in a multicultural society like Windsor. While seeing that the so-called Asian way of parenting and child discipline is inappropriate or even illegal in Canada, parents do not fully understand the Canadian way of educating a child or the Canadian education system. The loss and fear in their minds lead to tension between parents and children and sometimes leads the parents to desperate situations. Anh (Chapter 6) had heart attack in part because he could not discipline his son to prevent him from playing computer games. As the same time, he did not know what else to do, or how and where to call for help. This finding is another response to Xu's (2006) appeal for a Parent Aid Society to help those parents who get lost in their ways to discipline their children. The narratives from other families, however, also indicate the parents' efforts in partly adapting their habitual way of disciplining the children without getting rid of the traditional method. Nam and Tram did not spank their children, but found other ways to punish them such as let them be on their knees or stand by facing the wall. Bao tried to find a way to persuade his children to listen to him.

Nevertheless, Nam's sharing about responsibilities and obligations behind the rod also raise a question about child discipline and child abuse from a cultural view. In his view, spanking a child should not be automatically seen as child abuse. As "spare the rod, spoil the child" is one of the Asian parents' educational philosophies, they should be well aware of their actions. The issue, however, is that sometimes it is very difficult to differentiate between child abuse and child discipline. Therefore, any suspected abuse cases should be treated by the Children Aid Society with carefulness and consideration to "the stories behind the rod" and the parents' cultural perspectives in order to protect the child but at the same time avoid unexpected educational impact on him.

Vietnamese History and Political Issue

Samovar et al. (2009, p.24) have listed history as one of the five elements of culture: history, religion, values, social organizations and language. Similarly, the parents in my study also mention history as a part of Vietnamese culture they would like to maintain for their children. Tran has claimed the importance of history to Vietnamese culture: "You can not be a real Vietnamese if you can not tell about the Vietnamese history" (Chapter 4, p.42). He considered telling history as a strategy to maintain cultural values in his family. As a result, he bought many historical books for his three daughters. In his view, learning about Vietnamese culture through historical books and legends was an effective and fascinating way as historical stories are easy to remember. Ngan was so glad to find that her children were learning about Vietnamese history in their language school.

However, Bao's narrative illustrates a problem with teaching the children about Vietnamese history which is associated with the political issues regarding Vietnamese

War from 1954 to 1975, a part of the Vietnamese recent history. In 1954, Vietnam was separated into two parts with different governments: North Vietnam and South Vietnam. The North government, often referred to as “the Communists”, ally with the Soviet Union while the South received support from the Capitalist U.S military. The unification of the country in 1975, with the victory of the North military force, had pushed many people from the South to migrate to the U.S and Canada as political refugees. The South Vietnamese see the North people as their invaders. Therefore, there remain hostile attitudes from the South Vietnamese people toward the North people who work for the “communist” government. The Vietnamese War, consequently, has become a forbidden part of the history that the parents do not want to share with their children. However, there is a need to study deeper about the influence of these historical and political issues on maintaining Vietnamese cultural values within the community. I will to go further into this point in my PhD research.

Loss of Traditions in the Modern World

Ngan, a parent from Chapter 7, has revealed her experience and observations in which she found that Vietnamese parents in Canada held on more tightly to the Vietnamese traditional values than those who were in Vietnam. She also gave a couple of examples to illustrate her point. Ngan told that the parents in Canada tried their best to make Banh Chung, a traditional cake for New Year celebrations, despite the difficulties to find enough ingredients for it. Meanwhile, many parents in Vietnam had simplified this tradition by buying one from the market. The story about Tien and Na, Nam and Tram’s children in Chapter 5, and the way they greet the guest is another example for this. While Nam and Tram still manage to let their children come to greet the guests,

many families in Vietnam nowadays had abandoned this tradition because the parents did not want to disturb their children when they were busy. These stories from the parents help me realize the traditions that have been lost in Vietnam as the country is “modernized”, “industrialized” and “Westernized”. This is why Ngan felt that they were more Vietnamese than those who never left the country. Bao has explained this phenomenon with his beautiful metaphor: “Culture is like a cloud, when you were far from it, you could tell what it looked like, but when you were flying on an airplane through the cloud, you would find all clouds looked the same, nothing was special anymore” (Chapter 7, p.82).

Similarly, the Vietnamese language that Nam taught their children at home was somewhat different and not updated with what happened in modern Vietnam as well. The vocabulary he taught are from old language, some of which are no longer used in South Vietnam nowadays. This phenomenon is called “interlanguage fossilization” which is explained by Montrul (2008) as a situation when “many heritage language speakers and learners do not develop the full spectrum of sociolinguistic registers or the level of cognitive and academic literacy commanded by monolingual native speakers” (p.490).

Cultural Assimilation

The parents from my study revealed that they do not only hold on rigidly to their cultural values but also take the advantages of the mainstream culture into their home education. Anh shared about this in his educational thought: “You have to combine what you think is the best of the two cultures, and beware of any conflicts there might be” (Chapter 6, p.64). Nam claimed that he had never forced his children to learn Vietnamese

but only encouraged them to learn Vietnamese as an additional language to their English. Above all, I was impressed by Bao's sharing about his view change toward cultures:

After a long time living in Canada, I have shifted from seeing the differences to seeing the similarities between the two cultures... I have found a balanced point between Vietnamese and Canada cultures. I find myself to be less extreme than before and less judgmental. I tend to see everything with the view that balances both cultures, and open to other views from other cultures (Chapter 7, p.89).

Those are the views from the parents about how they have dealt with the dissonance between the mainstream culture and their own. Those are also the clearest answers to the questions of whether the cultural values from immigrant families can threaten the mainstream cultural identity (Huntington, 2004; as cited in Citrin, 2007). The parents' narratives confirm Citrin et al.'s (2007) findings that there are no collisions between strong national and ethnic identity. Despite researchers' concerns about cultural assimilation as a two way process, this process seems to dissolve the conflict between cultures other than threaten the mainstream culture (Citrin et al., 2007). Although the parents from my study tried their best to maintain the Vietnamese language and cultural values in the family, they were also sure that "the children were born and grown up in Canada; they will be Canadian no matter how you teach them" (Chapter 7, p.89). "Each culture has its own strengths and weaknesses" (Nam, Chapter 5, p.54). The values that the parents tried to maintain in their families mentioned in previous chapters are beautiful values which should be considered as added strengths to the mainstream culture. In the same vein, Xu (2006) also makes an appeal to see the immigrant families as contributors

to the culturally diverse society with their beautiful values from their own culture instead of seeing them as the ones who have to fully adapt to the mainstream culture.

Conclusion

My research has revealed the important role of parents in maintaining cultural values in immigrant families. The narratives in my study demonstrate the parents' determination, experience and strategies in maintaining language, food and other core values as part of the home education for their children. I have learned so much from the parents through their stories and their experiences. It is the participating parents who helped me to put off my assumptions and start my inquiry with an open mind. Before I began this study, I wondered whether the immigrant parents in Canada could keep the language in their families or could keep the close bond with their bigger family in Vietnam as those are the traditional values that we treasure in Vietnam. When I knew that many of them were working hard on the farm or doing labour work to earn their living, I did not expect them to understand much about their educational role or about maintaining cultural values in the family. I would feel satisfied if the children in their families could speak only a little Vietnamese. However, the more I talked to the parents, the more I changed my mind.

The questions for my research were about the roles of the parents in maintaining cultural values in their families and how parents understand about their role. I also questioned about the parents' perspectives of what cultural values should be kept or adapted. Another query was about the strategies to help maintaining cultural values within their families. The parents' narratives not only answered all of my questions but also brought a new insight and raised new questions on other educational matters. First, the parents indicated that they are well aware of their roles in maintaining cultural values in the families. They moved a step further by considering cultural values maintenance as

part of the home education. Second, the narratives from the parents revealed how they took advantages of both cultures for their children's education. On the one hand, the parents had impressed me by their determination and continued efforts to keep Vietnamese language, food and other core values in their families. I was surprised about how the parents tried to maintain Vietnamese language, about how the core values such as "respect the elders, love the young" or "be a good person" were kept in the family, about how these values were taught around the dinner table, and about how the language and the food could convey culture. I admired the parents for their efforts to maintain many old traditions which were difficult to keep in the modern world and actually lost in the industrialization in Vietnam. On the other hand, the parents also showed how they adapt to the mainstream culture and taking advantages of both cultures. For example, Bao and Ngan (Chap 7) changed their ways of disciplining a child; Nam and Tram (Chap 5) left the choices open for their children to learn Vietnamese language and other languages; Anh and Chi (Chap 6) let their girl work part time to earn for her university life. I have learned much from the parents' open views toward different cultures, about how to find the balanced point between the cultures and how to keep the best among the cultures for their children's education. Finally, I have also collected a number of strategies to help maintain Vietnamese culture in the family as I mentioned earlier in my discussion (p.91) such as speaking only Vietnamese at home, keeping meals together in the family, getting the children involved with the Vietnamese community, celebrating Vietnamese holidays and special occasions, and bringing them back to Vietnam if possible.

There are also other issues coming up from the parent's stories. The parents' narratives in my study have indicated the importance of the home language to the parent-

child relationship in immigrant families. This issue has been discussed widely in the literature such as Fillmore (2000) for Chinese families, Love and Buriel (2009) for Mexican American families, Brown (2011) for Korean families and Oh and Fuligni (2009) for families from Latin American and Asian background. As Brown (2011) has pointed out, language maintenance is a necessary condition in order to maintain “meaningful family relationship” in the family (p.33), reduce depression (Love & Buriel, 2009), and prevent predicted emotional consequences for children both at school and at home (Cummins, 2001). That is why language was considered by the participating parents as the first thing to be maintained. The parents’ stories in my study have shown a step forward in the parents’ awareness in maintaining culture in immigrant families since Fillmore (2000) reported about the loss of family language and broken relationship in immigrant families in her case study.

The stories from the participating parents also demonstrate the similarities between the values across cultures. I am touched by the parents’ attachment to the beautiful values in Vietnamese culture about “being a good human” in the society such as helping others in needs, respecting the elders and loving the younger, or values about family-bond and close kinship with the relatives. These beautiful values are in the same vein with the Confucian values that are treasured among Chinese immigrant families (Xu, 2006, 2011). The values are also similar to other “Western scholars” such as Dewey’s (1938) and Counts’ (1978) thought about education. The “family-oriented” values are also found in studies about the Latino immigrant families. We can see how similar the cultural values are across the world, from Vietnamese to Chinese to Latino and Canadian families. Wherever they are from, the parents try their best to be models for their children

to follow since they understand deeply that children would learn “what they see in their parents” (Durand, 2011, p.273; Xu, 2006, 2011).

However, I still witness how some parents struggle between the two cultures in educating their children which lead to tensions and broken relationships in the families. Although immigrant families in my study are well aware of the issue of child discipline and child abuse, there is still a need to help those parents who get lost in their ways to discipline their children when there are cultural conflicts.

The narratives in my study also reveal a number of challenges that parents have to face in maintaining cultural values in immigrant families. There are so many outside factors influencing the children’s development that go beyond the parents’ control (Anisef & Kirbride, 2003; Cummins, 2000; Fillmore, 2000, Phinney et al., 2001; Tajima & Harachi, 2010; Xu, 2006). As I have discussed in the previous chapter, there is confusion and loss among the parents about how to educate and discipline their children in Canada when their conventional ways are not acceptable. In addition, the parents also feel that the children have changed very much once they began to go to school due to the exposure to the new culture via the school system and the impacts from their peers. Another challenge for the parents is to find the time to be with the children. As most immigrants have to work really hard to settle for a new life in Canada, there is not much time left for parents and children to be together. Furthermore, the children become busier and busier with their schools, friends and their social life (and sometimes video games) that time with parents seem to be difficult to find. Although parents and home education are still important to the children, there are many other factors that greatly influence their development from their teachers, their friends and peers and other social relationships.

Through my volunteer work with the church community, I found that other elements such as religions or socio-economic status also influenced the values in immigrant families.

Therefore, there comes a need to explore the issue from a broader view outside the home.

As there are many factors that influence the children's lives other than the home education, I wonder how these outside factors affect Vietnamese cultural values maintenance in the families. For my future research, I wish to go further to explore the children's school life and social life to see how those factors influence the children's perspectives and personal values including the cultural values in the families.

References

- Adler, L. L. & Gielen, U. P. (2001). *Cross-cultural topics in psychology*. Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Anisef, P. & Kilbridge, K. M. (2003). *Managing two worlds: The experiences and concerns of immigrant youth in Ontario*. Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Artaman, A. (2009). *Windsor-Essex County Population Report*. Retrieved from http://www.wechealthunit.org/about-us/reports/2009_WEC_populationreport.pdf on March 6, 2013
- Bacallao, M. L., & Smokowski, P. R. (2007). The costs of getting ahead: Mexican family system changes after immigration. *Family Relations*, 56(1), 52–66.
doi:10.1111/j.1741-3729.2007.00439.x
- Baker, C. (2011). *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism*. Multilingual Matters.
- Bankston, C. L., & Zhou, M. (1995). Effects of minority-language literacy on the academic achievement of Vietnamese youths in New Orleans. *Sociology of Education*, 68(1), 1-17. doi:10.2307/2112760
- Beaudrie, S., Ducar, C. & Relano-Pastor, A. M. (2009). Curricular perspectives in the heritage language context: Assessing culture and identity. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 22(2).
- Beamer, L. & Varner, I. (2001). *Intercultural communication in the global workplace* (2nd ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill Irwin.
- Bornstein, M. H. & Cote, L. R. (2006). *Acculturation and parent-child relationships: measurement and development*. Routledge.

- Brislin, R.W. (2001). *Understanding culture's influence on behaviour* (2nd ed.). Ft. Worth: Harcourt.
- Brown, C. L. (2011). Maintaining heritage language: Perspectives of Korean parents. *Multicultural Education*, 19(1), 31–37.
- Brym, R. J. & Lie, J. (2009). *Sociology: your compass for a new world, the brief edition*. Cengage Learning.
- Choi, N. G. (2001). *Psychosocial aspects of the Asian-American experience: diversity within diversity*. Routledge.
- Chow, H.P.H. (2001). *The challenge of diversity: Ethnic identity maintenance and heritage language retention in the Canadian mosaic*. Ottawa: Department of Canadian Heritage, Secretary of State (Multiculturalism).
- Chow, H.P.H. (2006). Vietnamese-Canadian university students in Regina: Socio-cultural and educational adaptation. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 38(2), 104-112.
- Citrin, J., Lerman, A., Murakami, M., & Pearson, K. (2007). Testing Huntington: Is Hispanic immigration a threat to American identity? *Perspectives on politics*, 5(01), 31–48. doi:10.1017/S1537592707070041
- Collier, V. P. (1995). *Promoting academic success for E. S. L. students: Understanding second language acquisition for school*. Bastos Book Company.
- Collier, M. J. (2003). Understanding cultural identities in intercultural communication: A ten-step inventory. In L. A. Samovar & R. E. Porter (Eds.), *Intercultural communication: A reader* (10th ed., pp. 412–429). Belmont: Wadsworth.
- Collier, C. (2010). *Seven steps to separating difference from disability*. Corwin Press.

- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2–14.
- Clandinin, D. Jean & Connelly, F. Michael (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco, Ca.: Jossey-Bass.
- Cook, V. (2007). The goals of ELT. In J. Cummins & C. Davison (Eds.), *International handbook of English language teaching* (Vol. 15, pp. 237-248). Boston, MA: Springer US. Retrieved from <http://www.springerlink.com.ezproxy.uwindsor.ca/content/t20676441031w424/>
- Counts, G. S. (1978). *Dare the school build a new social order?* SIU Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. SAGE.
- Cummins, J. (1989). *Empowering minority students*. Sacramento, California: Association for Bilingual Education.
- Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power, and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire*. Multilingual Matters.
- Cummins, J. (2001). Bilingual children's mother tongue: Why is it important for education?. *Bilingual children's mother tongue*, 19(1), 15-20.
- Cummins, J. (2005). A Proposal for Action: Strategies for Recognizing Heritage Language Competence as a Learning Resource within the Mainstream Classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 89(4), 585–592.
- Cummins, J. (2007). Rethinking monolingual instructional strategies in multilingual classrooms. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics (CJAL)/Revue canadienne de linguistique appliquée (RCLA)*, 10(2), 221–240.

Cummins, J., M. Swain, K. Nakajima, J. Handscombe, D. Green, and C. Tran (1984).

Linguistic interdependence among Japanese and Vietnamese immigrant students.

In C. Rivera (ed.), *Communicative competence approaches to language*

proficiency assessment: Research and application (pp. 60-81). Multilingual

Matters.

D'Andrade, R. G. (2008). *Study of personal and cultural values: American, Japanese,*

and Vietnamese. Palgrave Macmillan.

Dahl, S. (2004). Intercultural research: The current state of knowledge. Middlesex

University Business School Working Paper. Retrieved Mar 15, 2011 from

http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/CiteReader_IN.cfm?request=90000&abid=658202

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience & education*. New York: Kappa Delta Pi.

Dion, K. K., & Dion, K. L. (2001). Gender and Cultural Adaptation in Immigrant

Families. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(3), 511–521. doi:10.1111/0022-4537.00226

Dolson, D. P. (1985). The effects of Spanish home language use on the scholastic

performance of Hispanic pupils. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural*

Development, 6(2), 135-55.

Durand, T. M. (2011). Latina mothers' cultural beliefs about their children, parental roles,

and education: Implications for effective and empowering home-school

partnerships. *The Urban Review*, 43(2), 255–278. doi:10.1007/s11256-010-0167-

5

Edwards, A.D. (1979). *Language in culture and class*. London: Heinemann Educational

Books.

- Farver, J. A. M., Narang, S. K., & Bhadha, B. R. (2002). East meets West: Ethnic identity, acculturation, and conflict in Asian Indian families. *Journal of Family Psychology, 16*(3), 338–350. doi:10.1037/0893-3200.16.3.338
- Fillmore, L.W. (2000). Loss of family languages: Should educators be concerned? *Theory into Practice, 39*(4), 203-210.
- Fishman, J. A., & García, O. (2010). *Handbook of language and ethnic identity*. Oxford University Press.
- Fleming, D. (2003). Building personal and nation-state identities: Research and Practice. *TESL Canada Journal, 20*(2), 65–79.
- Fuchs, S. (2001). *Against essentialism: A theory of culture and society*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Gibbons, J., & Ramirez, E. (2004). *Maintaining minority language: A case study of Hispanic Teenagers*. Multilingual Matters.
- Gkaintartzi, A., & Tsokalidou, R. (2011). “She is a very good child but she doesn’t speak”: The invisibility of children’s bilingualism and teacher ideology. *Journal of Pragmatics, 43*(2), 588–601. doi:10.1016/j.pragma.2010.09.014
- Golash-Boza, T. (2005). Assessing the advantages of bilingualism for the children of immigrants. *International Migration Review, 39*(3), 721-753. doi:10.1111/j.1747-7379.2005.tb00286.x
- González, A., Houston, M., & Chen, V. (2000). Introduction. In A. González, M. Houston, & V. Chen (Eds.), *Our voices: Essays in culture, ethnicity, and communication: An intercultural anthology* (2nd ed., pp. xiii–xxv). Los Angeles: Roxbury.

- Gudykunst, W. B., & Kim, Y. Y. (2003). *Communicating with strangers: An approach to intercultural communication* (4th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Hall, E. T. (1983). *The dance of life: The other dimension of time*. New York: Doubleday/Anchor Books.
- Haque, E. (2012). *Multiculturalism within a bilingual framework: Language, race, and belonging in Canada*. University of Toronto Press.
- Hecht, M. L., Jackson, R. L., & Ribeau, S. A. (2003). *African American communication: Exploring ethnic identity and culture*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Hofstede, G. (1991). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind*. London: McGraw-Hill.
- Hornberger, N. H. (2010). *Sociolinguistics and language education*. Multilingual Matters.
- Iannacci, L. (2008). Beyond the pragmatic and the liminal: Culturally and linguistically diverse students code-switching in early-years classrooms. *TESL Canada Journal*, 26(1), 103 – 123.
- Ilieva, R. (2009). Living with ambiguity: Toward culture exploration in adult second-language classrooms. *TESL Canada Journal*, 19(1), 01–16.
- Inman, A. G., Howard, E. E., Beaumont, R. L., & Walker, J. A. (2007). Cultural transmission: Influence of contextual factors in Asian Indian immigrant parents' experiences. *Journal of counseling psychology*, 54(1), 93–100. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.54.1.93

- Jayasuriya, K. 1990. *The problematic of culture and identity in cross-cultural theorizing*.
Department of Social work and Social administration. University of Western
Australia, Nedlands, Fineline Perth.
- Kendall, D. (2010). *Sociology in Our Times*. Cengage Learning.
- King, K., & Fogle, L. (2006). Bilingual parenting as good parenting: Parents' perspectives on family language policy for additive bilingualism. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 9(6), 695-712.
doi:10.2167/beb362.0
- Kramersch, C. (1998). *Language and Culture*. Oxford University Press.
- Lazaruk, W. (2007). Linguistic, academic, and cognitive benefits of French immersion. *Canadian Modern Language Review/ La Revue canadienne des langues vivantes*, 63(5), 605-627. doi:10.3138/cmlr.63.5.605
- Lee, S. J. (2006). Additional complexities: social class, ethnicity, generation, and gender in Asian American student experiences. *Race ethnicity and education*, 9(1), 17–28. doi:10.1080/13613320500490630
- Love, J. A., & Buriel, R. (2007). Language Brokering, Autonomy, Parent-Child Bonding, Biculturalism, and Depression A Study of Mexican American Adolescents From Immigrant Families. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 29(4), 472–491.
doi:10.1177/0739986307307229
- MacPherson, S. (2009). TESOL for biolinguistic sustainability: The ecology of English as a lingua mundi. *TESL Canada Journal*, 20(2), 01–22.
- Mc Hale, S. F. (2004). *Print and power: Confucianism, communism, and buddhism in the making of modern Vietnam*. University of Hawaii Press.

- Montrul, S. (2008). Review article: Second language acquisition welcomes the heritage language learner: opportunities of a new field. *Second Language Research* 24 (4), 487-506, DOI: 10.1177/0267658308095738
- Multicultural Council (2013). History of the multicultural council of Windsor and Essex County. Retrieved from <http://www.themcc.com/content/history-multicultural-council-windsor-and-essex-county> on May 6, 2013
- Ngo, B., & Lee, S. J. (2007). Complicating the image of model minority success: A review of Southeast Asian American education. *Review of Educational Research*, 77(4), 415–453. doi:10.3102/0034654307309918
- Nguyen, N. A., & Williams, H. L. (1989). Transition from East to West: Vietnamese adolescents and their parents. *Journal of the American Academy of child and adolescent psychiatry*, 28(4), 505-515. doi:10.1097/00004583-198907000-00007
- Nieto, S. (2009). *Language, culture, and teaching: critical perspectives*. Taylor & Francis.
- Noddings, N. (2005). What does it mean to educate the whole child? *Educational leadership*, 63(1), 8-13.
- Oh, J. S., & Fuligni, A. J. (2010). The role of heritage language development in the ethnic identity and family relationships of adolescents from immigrant backgrounds. *Social development*, 19(1), 202–220. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9507.2008.00530.x
- Padilla, A. M., & Gonzalez, R. (2001). Academic performance of immigrant and U.S.-born Mexican heritage students: Effects of schooling in Mexico and bilingual/English language instruction. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(3), 727 -742. doi:10.3102/00028312038003727

- Park, S. M., & Sarkar, M. (2007). Parents' attitudes toward heritage language maintenance for their children and their efforts to help their children maintain the heritage language: A case study of Korean-Canadian immigrants. *Language, culture and curriculum, 20*(3), 223–235. doi:10.2167/lcc337.0
- Peoples, J., & Bailey, G. (2011). *Humanity: An Introduction to cultural anthropology*. Cengage Learning.
- Phinney, J., Romero, I., Nava, M., & Huang, D. (2001). The role of language, parents, and peers in ethnic identity among adolescents in immigrant families. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 30*(2), 135-153.
- Rainey, L. D. (2010). *Confucius and Confucianism: The Essentials*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Samovar, L. A., Porter, R. E., & McDaniel, E. R. (2009). *Communication Between Cultures*. Cengage Learning.
- Schwartz, S. H. (1999). A theory of cultural values and some implications for work. *Applied Psychology: An International Review, 48*(1), 23-47
- Schwartz, S. H. (2006). A theory of cultural value orientations: Explication and applications. *Comparative Sociology, 5*, 137-182.
- Schwartz, S. H. (2009). Culture matters: National value cultures, sources and consequences. In C.- Y. Chiu, Y. Y. Hong, S. Shavitt, & R. S. Wyer, Jr. (Eds.), *Understanding culture: Theory, research and application* (pp. 127-150). New York: Psychology Press.
- Schwartz, S. H. (2010). Values: Individual and cultural. In S. M. Breugelmans, A. Chasiotis, & F. J. R. Vijver (Eds.), *Fundamental questions in cross-cultural psychology* (pp. 463-493). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

- Shearman, S. M. (2008). *Culture, values, and cultural variability: Reviews of Hofstede, Inglehart, and Schwartz universal value frameworks*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Montreal, Quebec. Retrieved Mar 15, 2011 from http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/2/3/4/5/9/p234591_index.html
- Smitherman, G. (1994). *Black Talk* (First Edition.). Mariner Books.
- Soto, L. D. (1997). *Language, culture, and power: bilingual families and the struggle for quality education*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Spencer-Oatey, H. (2000). *Culturally speaking: managing rapport through talk across cultures*. London: Continuum.
- Statistic Canada (2006). *2006 Census highlights – Fact Sheet 11: Ethnic Origin and Visible Minorities*. Retrieved March 20, 2011 from <http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/economy/demographics/census/cenhi06-11.pdf>
- Statistic Canada (2007). *2006 Census: Detailed Mother Tongue and Knowledge of Official Languages*. Retrieved March 6, 2013 from http://www.wechealthunit.org/about-us/reports/2009_WEC_populationreport.pdf
- Steinman, L. (2003). Cultural Collisions in L2 Academic Writing. *TESL Canada Journal*, 20(2), 80–91.
- Su, T. F., & Costigan, C. L. (2009). The development of children's ethnic identity in immigrant Chinese families in Canada: The role of parenting practices and children's perceptions of parental family obligation expectations. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 29(5), 638–663. doi:10.1177/0272431608325418

- Suarez, D. (2007). Second and third generation heritage language speakers: HL scholarship's relevance to the research needs and future directions of TESOL. *Heritage Language Journal*, 5(1), 27–49.
- Super, C., & Harkness, S. (1997). The cultural structuring of child development. In J. Berry, P. Dasen, & T. Saraswathi (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology: Vol. 2. Basic process and human development* (2nd ed., pp. 1–39). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Syed, M. (2010). Developing an integrated self: Academic and ethnic identities among ethnically diverse college students. *Developmental Psychology*, 46(6), 1590–1604. doi:10.1037/a0020738
- Tajima, E. A., & Harachi, T. W. (2010). Parenting beliefs and physical discipline practices among Southeast Asian immigrants: Parenting in the context of cultural adaptation to the United States. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 41(2), 212–235. doi:10.1177/0022022109354469
- Tran, Y. (2005). From Vietnam to Calgary. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 37(2), 103-106.
- UNESCO, (2001). Universal declaration of cultural diversity. United Nations.
- Walsh, F. (2011). *Normal Family Processes, Fourth Edition: Growing Diversity and Complexity*. Guilford Press.
- Warikoo, N., & Carter, P. (2009). Cultural explanations for racial and ethnic stratification in academic achievement: A call for a new and improved theory. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(1), 366–394. doi:10.3102/0034654308326162
- Wikipedia: The free encyclopedia. (2011 December). FL: Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. Retrieved March 10, 2013, from <http://www.wikipedia.org>

- William, Raymond (1983). *Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and society*. Oxford University Press.
- Xu, S. J.(2006). In search of home on landscapes in transition: Narratives of newcomer families' cross-cultural schooling experience (Doctoral Dissertation). University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada.
- Xu, S. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2009). Narrative inquiry for teacher education and development: Focus on English as a foreign language in China. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25*, 219-227.
- Xu, S. J. & Connelly, F.M. (2010). Narrative Inquiry for school-based research. *Narrative Inquiry 20*(2), 349–370. doi 10.1075/ni.20.2.06xu
- Xu, S. J. (2011). Bridging the East and West dichotomy: Harmonizing Eastern learning with Western knowledge. In Janette. Ryan (Ed.). *Understanding China's education reform: Creating cross cultural knowledge, pedagogies and dialogue* (Ch 11, pp.224-242). London, UK: Routledge.

Appendix

Appendix A: Pilot Study for the Research

Based on the research questions, I have conducted a pilot study to, firstly, test the kinds and contents of the interview questions, and secondly, collect and analyze the data. It is worth interpreting the first-hand data from the pilot study to have a better approach and direction for the study in the future.

Participants. For this pilot study, I conducted an interview with a parent from an immigrant family in the Vietnamese church community in Windsor. The family has been in Windsor for over fifteen years and has three daughters; the oldest one is 23 years old, the second one is 17 years old and the youngest is 12 years old. The oldest daughter is in London now to study at a university, so only two daughters are living with their parents at home. After receiving the approval from the Ethical Review Board of the University of Windsor, I have contacted the parents to arrange a face-to face in-depth interview with them. When I contacted the family to conduct an interview, both of the parents expressed their willingness to be interviewed. They also suggest that the interview should be taken place in their house so that they feel more comfortable. However, I could not schedule to interview the mother because she had to work until very late at night during the last few months of the year, so I decided to save her for later interview. As the result, I could only interview the father of the family.

This is a semi-structured interview, with open-ended questions. The language of interview is Vietnamese, the mother-tongue of both the researcher and the participant. The interview lasted for about an hour. The father agreed for me to record the interview for later transcribing and translating into English. For the purpose of confidentiality, the

name and other demographic of the father will not be revealed and a pseudonym will be used. In my anticipated findings, the father will be called “Mr. Tran”.

Findings from the pilot study. The findings from the pilot study will be presented in two main themes: parents’ perceptions of their roles in maintaining Vietnamese cultural values within the family and their strategies or experience of how to teach children about the topic.

Parents’ perception of their role in maintaining cultural values in the families.

Parents from immigrant families are often well aware of their role in their children’s education. Mr. Tran, the father of the family more than one time emphasized the role of parents in educating their children, not only involves with school activities but also carries out home education for the children. He divided education into two separate branches which he called ‘school education’ and ‘home education’. “School education” will provide the child with basic knowledge and way of thinking and working while “home education” helps form the child’s living values and characteristics. Therefore, he claimed that the children’s life success is determined by which home education brings, and parents are their educators at home. This goes in accordance with Fillmore’s (2000) argument about the importance of education at home on the future of the children.

In addition, Mr. Tran also indicated that mother and father have different roles in educating the children in a family: father is the one who gives general guidance and directions; and mother will be the one who take care of everyday trouble for the children. Although he admitted that the model does not fit all families, he believed that most Vietnamese families in Windsor have this typical assignment of parents’ role in a family.

According to Mr. Tran, the Vietnamese traditions and Vietnamese language are the two essential parts of home education in immigrant families. He insisted that maintaining Vietnamese traditions and language for the children is the role of the parents. He also expressed his disagreement with parents who are not aware of this role:

I feel really sad when I came to a Vietnamese friend's house, and I saw a sign on his door with the sentence 'No Vietnamese' on it. It's not just I feel sorry for the children in the house, but also I feel that I do not belong to that house, and I don't want to stay with them anymore. Although I know that my friend's purpose is to improve his children's abilities to speak English so that they can get integrated to the Canadian society easier, I really oppose the way he does it. The parents' role is to keep the traditions and language of our origin for the descendants, not to abandon them.

He also added that parents are also not motivated in their role of maintaining the traditions and language of their origin if the mother or the father does not agree to keep those. The task will be much more difficult if the parents are from different cultures or have different views toward the issue.

Strategies parents use to maintain cultural values in the family. "Each parent will find his or her own way to teach their children about the language and cultural values that they brought from Vietnam," Mr. Tran revealed, "there are no fixed ways to teach the children about Vietnamese culture." However, Mr. Tran shared the methods that work best for him, which are learning through language, food and stories.

"Language first, food the second". When being asked about the strategies that he has used to maintain the traditions and cultural values within the family, Mr. Tran smiled

and said: “There is no secret. You must maintain the language first”. In his opinion, language is the key to a culture and is the first thing about culture that the children should learn. The language, then, will lead to other discovery about the culture.

However, maintaining a language is not an easy task, especially with Vietnamese, as the language has five tones, which are very different from that of English, where the language emphasis was on stress rather than tones. To help the children learn Vietnamese, he did his best to encourage his children to use Vietnamese as much as possible at home, but he never forced them to speak Vietnamese if they are not ready to or if they do not feel comfortable about it. In his opinion, if there is regulation about speaking Vietnamese at home, the language will become compulsory and reluctant to the children. Otherwise, he wants them to take the language as fun and benefits. Mr. Tran described his own method that he called “encouragement by benefits” as follows:

To encourage my children to speak more Vietnamese, I try to answer with a “yes” if they can ask me in Vietnamese, and give them a “no” if the request is in English. For example, when one of my girls wants to go out with her friends, if she asked me in English, I would refuse. Then, if she asked again in Vietnamese, I will allow her to go. I did not state it as a rule, but after a while, all my girls figure out the trick to have my agreement, and they are so eager to use their “secret power”. Gradually, my girls prefer to speak Vietnamese with me and my wife, they keep practicing their Vietnamese, and the “secret power” works better than any compulsory rule of speaking Vietnamese could ever bring.

He also sent his girls to Vietnamese language school (the school is free) in summer or sent them back to Vietnam for vacation, which is also useful for their learning Vietnamese language.

Food, as Mr. Tran said, is the second ambassador of Vietnamese culture in his family. His opinion is that, if the children like the food, they are one step closer to the culture. That is why he and his wife try to maintain Vietnamese food in their children's meals. Again, he does not take it as a compulsory, his daughters can eat whatever they want, and can have fast food for lunch at school anytime they want to. His idea is to have family meals at the weekend, when all the family will eat Vietnamese food together. On weekday, they do not have time to eat together because each of them has different schedule at school and at work. In addition, his wife often asks the girls to help her with the cooking. She teaches them how to cook popular Vietnamese dishes, which they can bring to school to share with friends. The two older girls of the family, therefore, can cook Vietnamese food rather well, and they are so proud about their Vietnamese food each time they have a chance to share it with their friends.

Cultural values and traditions through stories of parents' lives. Another effective way to introduce the culture to children, as Mr. Tran suggested, is telling stories about life in Vietnam for the children. Children can learn naturally about the culture through the story details. With the stories, parents can help their children imagine about their lives before they moved to Canada, which brings more than one benefits at the same time. This, firstly, will help them feel familiar with the Vietnamese traditions and customs. Secondly, knowing stories about parents' lives will enhance the relationship between parents and children. Another benefit is that the children will learn more of the language

through the stories, as he told them in Vietnamese. In his opinion, teaching through stories is one of the best ways because stories are “interesting and easy to remember”.

I found that those methods are really effective as his three daughters are very good at speaking Vietnamese, and they have no difficulties switching between the two languages. Every time I came to visit them, they are always willing to talk with me in Vietnamese. All the girls prefer to speak Vietnamese at home (to their parents, to each other and to their parents’ guests). The only time when they speak English at home, as they shared, is when they want to keep secret from their parents, and English slang can help them with that.

Appendix B: Interview guide

Good morning!

Thank you for taking part in this interview.

My name is Xuan Le Nguyen, from University of Windsor. I am doing my thesis writing titled “The role of parents in maintaining cultural values in Vietnamese immigrant family in Windsor”. The purpose of this interview is to explore parents’ perception of their role in maintaining cultural values for their children and the strategies that they might know or use.

The interview might last about an hour and will be recorded for later transcription. You have the right to withdraw from the interview/study at anytime until the transcription and verification of interview data are done. Also, you can refuse any questions that might be sensitive to you. All the information during this talk will be kept confidential and for the purpose of my research only.

1. General information of the parents and the children:

1.1. How long have you been moving to Canada/Windsor?

1.2. How many children do you have? How old are they? Were they born in Canada or in Vietnam?

1.3. Do your children speak Vietnamese at home? How well can they understand Vietnamese?

1.4. Who (which of the parents) often talk more with the children? How much time do you spend talking/communicating with your children in a day?

2. Parents’ perception of their roles:

2.1. What do you think about maintaining cultural values of your original country in your family? Do you think it is better for your children to understand both Vietnamese and Canada values?

2.2. What do you often talk or show your children about Vietnamese culture? What do you think is the most important factor of a culture? What are the common Vietnamese values that you expect your children to keep? How do you think the culture of your original country can benefit the children?

2.3. What do you think about the role of parents in teaching their children in general and in teaching them about Vietnamese culture in particular?

3. *Parents' strategies in educating children about culture:*

3.1. How do you teach your children about Vietnamese cultural values? Do you have any special strategies in teaching your children about Vietnamese culture? Are there any resources available for you about Vietnam (for example: TV shows, magazines, and so on...)

3.2. How do you teach them to speak Vietnamese? What are the difficulties in teaching your children Vietnamese in an English-dominant environment? Do you have any ways or strategies to deal with such problems?

3.3. Do you have any further advice for Vietnamese parents in teaching their children about the cultural values from our hometown?

Thank you for your time and cooperation!

Vita Auctoris

NAME: Xuan Le Nguyen
PLACE OF BIRTH: Hanoi, Vietnam
YEAR OF BIRTH: 1984
EDUCATION: Vietnam - Germany High School, Hanoi,
Vietnam, 2002
University of Science and Technology, B.A.,
Hanoi, Vietnam, 2007
University of Windsor, M.Ed., Windsor, ON,
2013