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# Ethnic Identity and Heritage Language Ability in Second Generation Canadians in Toronto

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ETHNIC IDENTITY AND HERITAGE LANGUAGE ABILITY  
IN SECOND GENERATION CANADIANS IN TORONTO

BONNIE MAH

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The Major Research Paper is submitted  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Master of Arts degree  
in  
Immigration and Settlement Studies

Ryerson University  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

2005

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Ethnic Identity and Heritage Language Ability  
in Second Generation Canadians in Toronto

A Major Research Paper presented to Ryerson University in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Masters of Arts in Immigration and Settlement Studies

By Bonnie Mah

ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between heritage language ability and ethnic identity in a sample of ethnically diverse second generation Canadians. Previous literature suggests that ethnic identity and heritage language ability are strongly related. The findings from this study, gleaned from 114 surveys and 2 focus group interviews, only partially support this hypothesis. Instead, this study reveals that identity is a complex and mutable concept that is more clearly related to oral language ability than to language literacy. The findings suggest a distinction between external/behvioural expressions of ethnic identity, such as participation in ethnic activities, and internal/attitudinal markers of identity, such as pride or belief in group values. The results from both the interviews and the surveys indicate that participation in ethnic practices is related to oral language ability but not literacy. No clear link between internal aspects of identity and language ability was found.

Keywords: second generation; immigrant generation; heritage languages; ethnic identity

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## Table of Contents

### **Introduction 1**

### **Review of the Literature 2**

<i>Heritage Language Transmission, Maintenance and Loss</i>	2
<i>The Importance of Language and the Context of Language Shift</i>	3
<i>Function and Use</i>	4
<i>Attitude and Motivation</i>	6
<i>The Family and Individual Context</i>	7
<i>Language as a Marker of Identity</i>	8
<i>Ethnic Identity</i>	10
<i>Discussion</i>	13

### **Method 15**

#### **Stage 1: Survey 15**

<i>Recruitment</i>	15
<i>Sample</i>	16
<i>Instrument</i>	17
<i>Analysis</i>	19

#### **Stage 2: Group Interview 19**

<i>Recruitment</i>	19
<i>Sample</i>	20
<i>Instrument</i>	21
<i>Procedure</i>	22
<i>Analysis</i>	22

### **Results**

#### **Survey 23**

#### **Group Interview 26**

<i>Family as the Site of Ethnic Culture</i>	27
<i>Practices and Values</i>	33
<i>Flexible and Hybrid Identities</i>	36
<i>Authenticity and Authority</i>	39
<i>An Innate Characteristic</i>	40

### **Discussion 42**

### **Conclusions 51**

### **References 54**

### **Appendices 58**

## **List of Appendices**

**Appendix A: Survey Key 58**

**Appendix A1: Survey Instrument 59**

**Appendix B: Interview Guide 65**

## **Introduction**

In the past thirty years, researchers have paid increasing attention to language shift from minority to majority languages. In Canada, studies have indicated significant intergenerational language shift from heritage to official languages (O'Bryan, Reitz & Kuplowska, 1976; Harrison & Lachapelle, 1990). This shift is quick and severe. A 1976 study found that only one in ten second generation Canadians had fluency in their parents' (heritage) language; by the third generation, it had virtually disappeared (O'Bryan, Reitz & Kuplowska, 1976). In third and subsequent generations, where individuals did have fluency in a heritage language, this was likely a result of re-acquisition rather than mother tongue transmission. A decade later, a similar study found that heritage languages were transmitted to children in only half of cases or less (Harrison & Lachapelle, 1990).

This pervasive language shift has implications for a society that defines itself as multicultural (but bilingual), as well as for individuals who experience these changes personally.

The present study explores the relationship between heritage language ability and strength of ethnic identity in second generation Canadians. Data is gathered from second generation Canadians from a diversity of ethnic backgrounds; a study of individuals with Chinese heritage in particular allows for a more in-depth look at the dynamics of this relationship within the bounds of one ethnic group.

## **Review of the Literature**

### ***Heritage Language Transmission, Maintenance and Loss***

Language transmission is the process of passing on a language to young children, and happens in the home or family context; language maintenance occurs after transmission, and when the language is used in the community (Fishman, 1991). Language shift refers to changes in a group's language use, while language loss refers to an individual's decreased language ability (Fase, Jaspaert & Kroon, 1992).

Several terms are used to refer to non-Aboriginal languages other than English and French in Canada, including: non-official language, minority language, immigrant language, ethnic language, and heritage language (Jedwab, 2000). Each of these terms is problematic in its own way. For instance, non-official language is inherently political; minority language and ethnic language are imprecise; immigrant language implies that some languages are 'more foreign' to North America than English or French; and heritage language implies historical rather than contemporary relevance. However, I must, by necessity, choose one. Following Jedwab (2000), I will use the term heritage language to convey the cultural and historical aspects often associated with these languages and which speakers themselves may wish to invoke.

The term 'second generation' generally refers to the native-born children of foreign-born parents, although some authors include foreign-born individuals who arrived during childhood (e.g. Portes & Hao, 1998; Portes & Schauffler, 1994).

### *The Importance of Language and the Context of Language Shift*

In much of the literature about language shift, authors argue for a strong link between language, ethnocultural identity, and group membership (e.g. Fishman, 1991; de Vries, 1990; Smolicz, 1992; Schmid, 2002). In this view, particular languages are linked with particular cultures because they are lexically the most appropriate to express culturally embedded concepts (Fishman, 1991) and because they are symbols or markers of ethnicity (de Vries, 1990). For cultural groups who hold knowledge of a heritage language as a core value, language shift can lead to a loss of ethnic identity, cultural fragmentation and “non-authentic” expressions of ethnicity (Smolicz, 1992, p.291). However, such insistence on the inexorable and overarching significance of heritage language has been criticized for casting groups who do not maintain a heritage language as ‘inauthentic’ and therefore lesser (Myhill, 2003).

Sociolinguists consider external or societal factors in their explanations of language shift. The majority of language shift occurs from languages spoken by socially and politically marginalized groups, and in states that require knowledge of a common, national or official language (May, 2001). This marginalization can include physical and demographic dislocation, social dislocation and cultural dislocation (Fishman, 1991). Physical and demographic dislocation occurs when speakers are physically separated from the linguistic community, through migration or colonization, for example. In these situations, opportunities for functional use of the heritage language in neighbourhood and community settings are reduced. Social dislocation is indicative of the unequal distribution of power among linguistic or cultural communities, and may result in educational or economic disadvantage for certain communities. Finally, cultural dislocation occurs when

groups are “enticed and re-routed” from customary areas and ways of being, thus cleaving speakers from historically and culturally embedded languages (Fishman, 1991, p.62).

### ***Function and Use***

Language use is perhaps the most significant external or practical variable in language acquisition and loss (de Bot, 2001; Fase, Jaspaert & Kroon, 1992; Fishman, 2001b; Seliger & Vago, 1991). For most, languages are not their own rewards; they must serve a functional purpose or they will not be used (Fishman, 2001b) or perhaps never even acquired (de Bot, 2001).

Knowledge of two or more languages may be expressed not as bi- or multi-lingualism per se, but rather as parallel monolingualisms (Heller, 1999). This is a result of the separation of languages into different domains of use. A speaker might use L1 (a first language) in the home and family domain, for instance, and L2 (a second language) in school or work, with friends, in leisure activities, or in wider society generally. Fishman (2001a) divides these into powerful and less-powerful domains. Powerful domains include employment, higher education, mass media and government institutions, while less-powerful domains include family, friends, neighbourhood, community institutions and in some cases pre-school or elementary education (Fishman, 2001a). The label ‘less-powerful’ is somewhat misleading, though, as the family-neighbourhood-community nexus is a significant one (Fishman, 2001b). Specifically, Fishman (2001b) argues that support for a language at this nexus is crucial for its maintenance, as it provides a “real life” context and motivation for its use. Moreover, since minority groups have the most control over these domains, they are the context for the most realistic and practical language maintenance strategies. Some studies support this argument; research from Australia, the United States

and Canada suggests that residence in communities with high co-ethnic concentration and/or communities with strong family-neighbourhood-community links increases the likelihood of language transmission and maintenance (Clyne, 2001; Portes & Hao, 1998; Portes & Schaufli, 1994; Schrauf, 1999).

This closeness with other members of the group points to the importance of the use of the language in intragroup interaction. In these situations, the choice of language is “not motivated by the need to establish communication, but by the wish to establish it in a certain way” (Fase, Jaspaert & Kroon, 1992, p.6). If communication norms change, such that members wish to establish communication in L2 rather than L1, the chances of L1 transmission to the next generation will be drastically reduced. For this reason, intragroup communication norms and behaviours are significant factors in language transmission, and maintenance or shift.

Domains of use might also be characterized by their affective value; Seliger and Vago (1991) point to the importance of affective domains of language such as prestige, social status, attitude and degrees of acculturation (p.4). For example, the use of a language in prestigious domains such as school, the Church, or mass media, may contribute to the shift from or loss of a less prestigious language (Schmidt, 1991). However, the evidence for the role of prestige level is not clear cut. Olshtain and Barzilay (1991) found that while the perceived high prestige and utilitarian value of English may have influenced its continued use in Hebrew-dominated Israel, speakers nevertheless displayed signs of language loss.

Language can also carry symbolic or instrumental meanings. Those who continue to use a language for its symbolic meaning might speak of its “sacred heritage,” their “roots” or “the language of [their] forefathers” (Chumak-Horbatsch, 1987; 1999). In contrast, a

language with instrumental meaning is important for attaining a goal such as school achievement or employment. Children may develop an ‘importance level’ hierarchy which places the instrumental (school) language above the emotive (home) language (Chumak-Horbatsch, 1987).

In the absence of language transmission, the heritage language may be acquired as a second language. Domains of function and use play a significant role here as well, as interest in learning is clearly related to how the language can be used (de Bot, 2001). If children determine that they can survive in their peer group without learning a heritage language, their interest in learning that language will be fairly low, and little acquisition is likely to take place (de Bot, 2001, p.78). Thus, function and use can create a motivation for second language learning.

### ***Attitude and Motivation***

In their landmark study, Gardner and Lambert (1972) argue that attitude and motivation are key determinants in second language acquisition. They describe two types of motivation: instrumental and integrative. The instrumental motivation reflects the utilitarian value of linguistic achievement; for example, language ability may aid in academic achievement, or give one access to more or better jobs. The integrative motivation reflects an interest in the cultural-linguistic community. Students with an integrative motivation may feel an affinity with or desire to be a part of the cultural-linguistic community.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) argue that motivation to learn a language is also determined by the learner’s attitudes towards the group associated with that language. Further, in order to be successful, the learner must be “psychologically prepared to adopt various aspects of behaviour which characterize members of another cultural-linguistic

group” (p.3). If the learner is not prepared to do so, or is attitudinally hostile towards the cultural-linguistic group, she or he is unlikely to be successful.

Subsequent studies have further investigated the relationship between motivation and achievement in language learning, and in some cases have examined motivation and the heritage language learner specifically; however, the various studies have not revealed a consistent relationship between heritage language learning, motivation and achievement (for a recent review of this literature, see Geisler, 2004).

### ***The Family and Individual Context***

Significantly, Gardner and Lambert (1972) argue that the family provides the context for attitude formation. Numerous quantitative studies have considered the influence of ethnic and linguistic intermarriage on transmission and maintenance rates (Stevens, 1982; Harrison & Lachapelle, 1990; Harrison, 2000; Portes & Hao, 1998). These studies indicate that linguistic homogamy plays a significant role in heritage language transmission (Stevens, 1982; Harrison & Lachapelle, 1990; Harrison, 2000; Portes & Hao, 1998), while ethnic homogamy alone does not (Stevens, 1985). In addition, ‘intact’ families may be more likely to transmit heritage languages than those affected by divorce (Portes & Hao, 1998).

Relationships within the family may also play a role in language maintenance. A study of Chinese immigrant children in Australia found an association between negative feelings about their family and family members and the use of and preference for English (Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002). It also found an association between high levels of self-reliance and the use of and preference for English.

Studies have also explored the relationship between individual characteristics such as nativity (Stevens, 1985), length of residence, gender (Portes & Hao 1998; Portes &

Schauffler, 1994), presence of co-ethnic friends and peers (Portes & Hao, 1998), and language maintenance. Briefly, Stevens (1985) found that parents' nativity, and not the nativity of the children, was a key variable in language shift in the United States. Individuals with two foreign-born parents were more likely than those with one or no foreign-born parents to acquire a heritage language. Portes and Hao (1998) and Portes and Schauffler (1994) found that length of residence had no effect on the fluency of second generation Americans in their heritage language. They found that gender did have an effect; specifically, girls were more likely than boys to be fluent in the heritage language. Interestingly, Portes and Hao (1998) found that the presence of co-ethnic friends and peers influenced heritage language fluency in different ways for different groups. For the Latin-heritage youth in the study, higher numbers of co-ethnics in school was related to higher heritage language fluency; in contrast, for those with Asian heritage, higher numbers of co-ethnics was related to lower heritage language fluency.

### ***Language as a Marker of Identity***

Theorists posit a strong relationship between identity or desire for group membership and language maintenance or loss. Many authors see language as a marker of ethnic identity. De Vries (1990), for example, sees the maintenance of a heritage language as a necessary but not sufficient condition for the maintenance of ethnicity, and language shift as an indicator of weakening ethnic identity. Further, he argues that change in language behaviour can allow a person to "pass" from one ethnic group to another, or to end up "without an ethnic identity" (de Vries, 1990, p.235). In this view, the presence of a heritage language is necessary for an 'authentic' ethnic identity. Although this view is prevalent in the literature, it has also been criticized for its assumption of a universal standard of 'authenticity' (Myhill, 2003).

Specifically, critics argue that this “native-language-as-identity” philosophy does not account for groups that do not use the heritage language as a marker of ethnicity (Myhill, 2003).

Not many empirical studies have examined the relationship between identity and heritage language acquisition, maintenance or loss. However, a few studies deserve mention here. First, Smolicz (1992) examined three immigrant groups (Polish, Welsh and Chinese) in Australia to determine whether each group held maintenance of their heritage language as a core value. He studied individuals from each group who had varying degrees of knowledge of their heritage language and at the individuals’ attitude towards that language. In all three groups, he found that maintenance of the language was a core value. With few exceptions, he found that those who had high heritage language proficiency expressed pride in the language and ethnicity, and that those who did not expressed regret at the loss, and acknowledged the importance of the language to the group. Further, he found that the group that had experienced the most significant language shift, the Welsh, “resort[ed] enthusiastically to ‘residual’ or ‘non-authentic’ expressions of ethnicity” (Smolicz, 1992, p.291).

Second, in her study of German Jews who had migrated to anglophone countries, Schmid (2002) suggests that language use and loss are strongly influenced by speaker attitudes towards the language. These attitudes may be based largely on the individual’s perception of how the minority group is perceived by the majority group and vice versa. She argues that

What matters is the speaker’s identity and self-perception... Someone who wants to belong to a speech community and wants to be recognized as a member is capable of behaving accordingly... On the other hand, someone

who rejects that language community ... may adapt his or her linguistic behaviour so as not to appear to be a member any longer.

(Schmid, 2002, p.191-192)

Here, Schmid appears to support the notion of a 'rival identity' and linguistic behaviour intended to separate oneself from a linguistic group.

In addition, Verkuyten and de Wolf's (2002) study, although not specifically about language and identity, nonetheless noted the importance of the issue. The study describes how second generation individuals with Chinese heritage living in the Netherlands account for their ethnic identity. In it, participants presented knowledge of a Chinese language as a central marker of ethnic identity. Language was viewed as so central, in fact, that "in one group it was argued that you are a 'fake' ... Chinese when you do not speak and understand the Chinese language" (Verkuyten & deWolf, 2002, p.386). This centrality of language for Chinese groups living in diaspora has been observed by other authors; Tannenbaum and Howie (2002) write that in the face of conflicting values in the new country of residence, parents' concern for their children's Chinese identity often focuses on language (p.411). It is significant that language becomes a focus for identity in the new country of residence, because it points to the importance of context for identity formation.

### ***Ethnic Identity***

Broadly defined, an ethnic group is bonded by a perception of a common ancestry, a shared history and shared symbols of peoplehood (Cornell and Hartmann in Kibria, 2000). A "self-conscious sense of group membership" is critical to the concept of ethnicity (Kibria, 2000, p.78). Isajiw (1990) provides a practical, operational definition of ethnic identity. He divides ethnic identity into external and internal aspects. External aspects of ethnic identity

involve observable behaviours such as: 1) speaking an ethnic language, practicing ethnic traditions etc.; 2) participation in ethnic personal networks, such as family and friendship networks; 3) participation in ethnic institutions; 4) participation in ethnic voluntary associations; and 5) participation in functions sponsored by ethnic organizations. Internal aspects involve attitudes, feelings, ideas and images. Internal aspects of ethnic identity can be further divided into cognitive, moral and affective elements. The cognitive element involves subjective knowledge of group values, and of the group's heritage and history. The moral element involves feelings of obligation and commitment to the group. Similarly, the affective element is comprised of feelings of attachment to the group, especially when compared to other groups.

In the case of second or subsequent generations, ethnic identity becomes a question of retention. However, it is important to note that ethnic identity retained by second and subsequent generations may not assume the same form as that of the first generation. In fact, evidence indicates that second and subsequent generations develop patterns of behaviour and subjective identities that are not present in the first generation (Isajiw, 1990).

Moreover, the nature of ethnic identity may change over generations. For example, ethnic attachment may become symbolic: symbolic ethnicity is characterized by a high degree of choice, is highly subjective, focused on symbols and may be intermittent (Kibria, 2000). Symbols can be tangible items, like art objects or jewelry, or they can be behavioural. Some knowledge of an ethnic language may be retained, for example, but as a symbol rather than as a skill (Isajiw, 1990). Food appears to be one of the most enduring symbols of ethnic identity; attachment to ethnic foods often persists into third and fourth generations (Isajiw, 1990).

When ethnicity becomes symbolic, individuals can choose which elements of their ethnic background they wish to express, and also if and how important an ethnic identity is to them in the first place. Ethnicity may cease to be an important marker of identity. Tonks (in Tonks & Paranjpe, 1999) argues that ‘deculturation’ – the loss of concern with ethnicity and culture per se – is a growing phenomenon in Canada. Decultured individuals “opt-out” of traditional cultural ties without experiencing any crisis or stress (Tonks in Tonks & Paranjpe, 1999, p.6).

Dion and Dion (2004) suggest that retention of aspects of ethnic identity in the second generation may be influenced by gender. Their study of second generation individuals found that women and men were similar in terms of pride and attachment to the ethnic group; however, women showed a stronger commitment to maintaining cultural practices and to seeking knowledge and understanding of the ethnic background. Dion and Dion also suggest that because women and girls may be more likely to face conflicting values regarding their gendered roles, they may tend to be less accepting of traditional views, and more reflective about their own ethnic identity, than men (p.348).

Individuals from racialized groups may face both options and binds when negotiating the expression of their ethnic identities. Kibria (2000) argues that while members of white ethnic groups can exercise great choice in the expression of their ethnicity, members of black groups are more often bound to a black identity. Chinese-and Korean- Americans, she argues, fall somewhere in between the two, and may simultaneously experience pressure to express an “authentic” ethnicity and, conversely, to suppress ethnic identification. Similarly, Pyke and Dang (2003) found that second-generation Korean- and Vietnamese- Americans try

to establish a non-stigmatized identity in the bicultural middle of a spectrum bounded by terms like “FOB”<sup>1</sup> (too ethnic) and “whitewashed” (too assimilated).

Age may also influence the expression of ethnic identity. In their study of the formation of ethnic identity, Min and Kim (2000) found that Asian-Americans were likely to identify more strongly as ‘American’ as children, and to adopt the ethnicity of their parents as they entered adulthood. Min and Kim point to the departure from the family home as a key point in the formation of an adult identity. Paradoxically, this departure often represents both the break with the strongest ties to ethnicity – the parents – and also the beginning of the independent adoption of an ethnic identity.

### *Discussion*

The literature on language transmission, maintenance, shift and loss can be divided into two types: theoretical and empirical. Empirical studies can be further divided into two<sup>2</sup>: first, and more commonly, those which examine language transmission, maintenance and loss in terms of contextual factors (residential pattern, length of residence, presence of coethnic friends or peers, nativity, family type, etc.); and second, those few that look to internal or identity-related factors (relationship with family members, self-reliance, perceptions of self in relation to L1 and L2 groups). Much of the theoretical literature, in contrast, focuses on the issues raised in the latter type; language is seen as a marker of ethnicity, a vehicle of identity, an indicator and a result of group membership. The theoretical literature that looks at contextual factors, such as domains of use, also relates to affective notions of prestige and symbolic meaning.

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<sup>1</sup> “FOB” is a slang term and acronym that stands for “Fresh Off the Boat.”

A number of interesting notions arise from the theoretical literature; those of ‘authentic’ ethnicity, symbolic ethnicity, levels of prestige and attitude are particularly striking. Yet, few empirical studies have addressed these notions in relation to language. Moreover, few studies have specifically addressed the particular character of the second generation.

The present study seeks to address this gap in the current literature. It asks the question: what is the relationship between ethnic identity and heritage language ability in second generation Canadians in Toronto? Based on the literature reviewed above, that maintains that language is a key element in ethnic identity, it is hypothesized that there will be a strong positive correlation between ethnic identity and heritage language ability. This hypothesis was tested using a survey instrument measuring strength of ethnic identity and extent of heritage language ability on a sample of second generation Canadians.

In addition this study explores, through in-depth group interviews, the ways in which second generation Canadians today understand ethnic identity, and if and how heritage language ability fits into their own ethnic self-identifications. Some literature on heritage language takes the premise that heritage language ability is necessary for the persistence of an ‘authentic’ ethnic identity. This study is not intended to evaluate identity against an ideal of authenticity, nor to refute the notion of an authentic ethnic identity. Rather, the aim is to explore identity as defined and experienced by individuals, and expressed by attitudes and behaviours. By taking this approach, my intention is to validate the experiences of participants and the identities that they express.

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<sup>2</sup> A third type of empirical study involves the technical linguistic processes of language loss (see for example, Jaspaert & Kroon, 1992; Olshtain & Barzilay, 1991; Chumak-Horbatsch, 1999; Schmid 2002), but here I am

## **Method**

This study used a mixed method approach resembling the sequential explanatory strategy outlined by Creswell (2003). Data was collected sequentially in two stages: the first stage used a survey to collect quantitative data, while the second used focus group interviews to collect qualitative data. A sequential explanatory model allows for the use of qualitative data to assist in explaining and interpreting the quantitative results (Creswell, 2003). The dual approach provides an opportunity for triangulation and to examine different aspects of the research question. Specifically, the surveys allow for the measurement of attitudes and behaviours using pre-established indicators of ethnic identity, while the group interviews allow participants to describe their own attitudes and behaviours in greater depth, and to emphasize or minimize aspects of their ethnic identity as they deem appropriate. Because many do not think in terms of personal identity, asking direct questions about identity is generally inappropriate (Stroh, 2000). The group interview is therefore useful in this situation, as it allows participants time to reflect and the opportunity to consider and react to comments made by others.

### **Stage 1: Survey**

#### ***Recruitment***

The target population for Stage 1 was comprised of students at Ryerson University who were enrolled in courses during the Spring/Summer semesters of 2005. All of the courses were offered through the G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education. Since Ryerson University's student population is quite diverse, it is an ideal site to conduct research involving ethnic groups. Students were solicited from first- and second- level

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concerned with the more sociolinguistic or social aspects of language transmission, maintenance, shift and loss.

Accounting, Finance and Marketing classes. To be eligible to participate in the survey, respondents had to have all three of the following characteristics:

- 1) Were born in Canada with foreign-born parents OR were born in another country and moved to Canada before the age of 10; and
- 2) Have parents who share a first language, which is a language other than English; and
- 3) Are 18 years old or older.

### *Sample*

In total, I administered the survey in eleven classes. The total number of respondents was 157. After coding, 43 surveys were removed from the sample because they were incomplete or because the respondent did not meet the eligibility criteria, leaving an  $n$  of 114.

The sample group showed great ethnic and linguistic diversity. The surveys identified 53 countries of origin (for the respondent or the respondent's parents), 54 languages, and 52 ethnic identity labels. Religious and racial identity labels were included in the latter category.

Of the 114 respondents who comprise the total sample, 50 (43.9%) are female, and 64 (56.1%) are male. Ages range from 18 to 35, with a median age of 21. Approximately half (55 = 48.2%) are Canadian born. Twenty respondents (17.5%) arrived in Canada aged 0-5, 38 (33.3%) arrived aged 6-10, and 1 did not declare. After Canada, the four most frequently declared countries of birth were: Hong Kong (9), Sri Lanka (9), Vietnam (4), and the Philippines (4).

From the total sample, 33 respondents were identified to have Chinese heritage. Respondents were deemed to have Chinese heritage in the following cases:

- 1) both parents have a Chinese language as their first language; or
- 2) both parents share a common Chinese language; or
- 3) the respondent has a single parent whose first language is a Chinese language.

Of the 33 respondents who comprise the Chinese sample, 11 (33.3%) are female and 22 (66.7%) are male. Ages ranged from 18-30, with a median age of 21. The majority were Canadian born (20 = 60.6%). Three respondents (1%) arrived aged 0-5; the remaining 10 (30.3%) arrived aged 6-10. Foreign-born respondents listed four countries of birth: Hong Kong (9), Vietnam (2), China (1) and Taiwan (1). Five Chinese languages were represented: Cantonese, Mandarin, Hakka, Yinan and Chui Chow.

### ***Instrument***

The survey instrument consists of three sections: 1) identity items, 2) demographic information, and 3) heritage language ability.

The first section of the survey contains a total of seventeen questions. Nine items focus on strength of identification with the ethnic group. The nine target questions are adapted from previous studies (Chow, 2004; Fu, Lee, Chiu & Hong, 1999; Sarnoff, 1951; Noel, 1964; Johnson, 1957), and address both external and internal aspects of ethnic identity, as defined by Isajiw (1990). These include: participation in customs and cultural practices, ties with Canadian culture, pride in ethnic group, importance of maintaining an ethnic identity, identification with group, and belief in ethnic group superiority. Eight statements regarding multiculturalism and language use are interspersed to prevent response bias. Respondents are asked to indicate the extent of their agreement with each statement on the following five-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Strongly Disagree.

The second section of the survey solicits demographic information about the respondent, including: age, sex, country of birth, age at arrival (if foreign-born), parents' nativity, language knowledge of parents, parents' first language, language knowledge of respondent and respondent's first language. Respondents are asked to rank order up to three aspects of their ethnic identity.

Finally, the third section contains five items that measure heritage language ability. The survey relies on the self-assessment by the respondent. Self-reports of language ability are considered reliable (in Portes & Hao, 1998; Portes & Schauffler, 1994), and moreover, the respondents' own perception is more relevant to this study than an objective evaluation of proficiency. Respondents assessed their heritage language ability in each of five categories: speaking, listening, reading, writing, and overall ability. The self-assessment for the first five categories used a five point scale:

- 1) No ability
- 2) Ability to understand/use a few words
- 3) Ability to understand/use language in informal settings about everyday topics
- 4) Ability to understand/use language in the context of popular culture (movies, television shows, magazines, etc.)
- 5) Ability to understand/use language in an academic or professional settings about complex or unfamiliar topics

The self-assessment for overall ability also used a five point scale: Excellent, Very Good, Okay, Poor, No Ability. The scales used to assess heritage language ability were created by the author.

A draft of the survey instrument was pre-tested ( $n=8$ ) and revised; the revised version is described above. Please see Appendix A (survey key) and A1 (survey).

### ***Analysis***

All survey questions were coded by the author. Likert scale items were coded from 1 to 5. Target items were coded using the principle: 1 = strong Canadian identity; 5 = strong ethnic identity. Non-target items were coded using the standard of 1 for “Strongly Agree” and 5 for “Strongly Disagree.” Each of the heritage language ability items was coded from 1 to 5 using the principle: 1 = no ability; 5 = fluent ability. Coded responses were then entered and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software.

A factor analysis of the nine target items for identity was used to build indices that measured different aspects of ethnic identity. Nonparametric correlations were used to test the strength of relationship between language skills and the indices and individual scale items measuring ethnic identity. Nonparametric methods were used because there was no guarantee that the sample achieved a normal distribution, nor were the variables measured on an interval scale.

## **Stage 2: Group Interview**

### ***Recruitment***

The last page of the survey was a detachable form that solicited volunteers for “focus group” interviews. The form outlined the eligibility criteria for participation in the group interviews. These criteria differ slightly from the criteria used for the survey:

- 1) Were born in Canada with foreign-born parents OR were born in another country and moved to Canada before the age of 5; and

- 2) Have Chinese heritage (from any country); and
- 3) Have parents who speak the same Chinese language or dialect as their first language; and
- 4) Are 18 years old or older.

Although the form specified that volunteers should have Chinese heritage, a number of individuals with other ethnic backgrounds filled out this form as well. I decided to run one focus group with individuals from non-Chinese backgrounds. I contacted every person who filled out the form. One individual was found to be ineligible, while a few others were unable to participate due to outside factors.

I asked volunteers in both groups to refer other participants who met the eligibility criteria. As a result, one participant was added. In addition, two participants were added who were personal contacts of the author.

### *Sample*

Two group interviews were conducted; one was comprised of individuals with Chinese heritage, and the other with non-Chinese heritages. In total, eight participants took part. Five participants were male; three were female.

Group 1 (Chinese Heritage) consisted of five individuals with Chinese heritage, three male and two female. The ages of the participants ranged from 19 to 25 (median = 24). Three of the participants were Canadian-born; one participant was born in Taiwan, and one in Hong Kong. The foreign-born participants arrived at ages 3 years and 2 months, respectively. The participants' parents were born in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Two participants declared Mandarin as their heritage language, while three declared Cantonese. Heritage language ability ranged from low to fluent, though all rated their listening and

speaking ability as higher than their reading and writing ability. In terms of listening and speaking ability, four of the five participants self-reported a high or fluent ability, while one reported moderate/low ability.

Group 2 (Diverse Heritage) was diverse, and consisted of three individuals – two male and one female – representing Indo-Pakistani, Filipino and Greek heritages. Ages in this group ranged from 23 to 27 (median = 25). All three participants were Canadian-born, with parents born in India/Pakistan, the Philippines and Greece. Heritage languages represented were: Urdu, Tagalog, and Greek. One participant declared low listening and speaking ability; one declared high listening and low speaking ability, and one reported high listening and speaking ability. Reading and writing skills for all participants ranged from low to moderate.

The Diverse Heritage group was small when compared to the Chinese Heritage group. Also, it had relatively more participants with low heritage language ability, while the majority of participants in the Chinese Heritage group had high Chinese language ability. Due to the limitations of time and numbers, group interview participants could not be divided into groups based on language ability, as was originally intended. It was hoped that such an arrangement would encourage honest and uncompromised discussion, and at the same time allow for a more distinct analysis of responses by heritage language ability.

### ***Instrument***

A preliminary interview guide was pre-tested in one individual and one group setting. Based on the pre-tests, questions were revised and additional prompts developed. The interviews were semi-structured and thus new lines of questioning and topics of discussion emerged during the course of the interviews.

The first question, “What does it mean to be Chinese?” (and in Group 2, “What does it mean to be Indo-Pakistani/Filipino/Greek?”) was adapted from Verkuyten and de Wolf (2002). The question is used to elicit ethnic self-definitions; and “the expected response [is] an explanation for the participant’s sense of ethnic identity” (Verkuyten & de Wolf, 2002, p.378). Subsequent planned questions addressed the participants’ own feelings of being ‘ethnic’ (Chinese/Indo-Pakistani/Filipino/Greek), explored the factors and nuances which produced this feeling, and inquired about the importance of passing aspects of ethnic identity on to the next generation. Please see Appendix B (interview guide).

### ***Procedure***

Interviews were conducted in a group setting. Respondents were offered a light snack and drinks to make them feel more comfortable. Arguably, my positioning as a young second generation Canadian and a student encouraged participation, as well as frank and unaffected responses. However, because I am a member of one of the target ethnic groups, it can also be argued that if participants perceived me as an “insider” group member, they may have been more conscious of expected group norms and values.

### ***Analysis***

Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were coded into general thematic categories which became the basis for analytic memos.

## Results

### Survey

Factor analysis, using the principle component method of extraction and varimax rotation, revealed three factors emerging from the nine target variables. Table 1 presents the rotated component matrix of the factor analysis. The rotation converged in five iterations.

**Table 1. Rotated Component Matrix of a Factor Analysis of Items measuring Aspects of strength of Ethnic Identity.**

Ethnic Identity Items	Component		
	1	2	3
Participation in cultural practices	<b>.755</b>	.122	.093
Preference for ethnic group	<b>.754</b>	.153	-.018
Pride in ethnic group	<b>.754</b>	.174	.249
Importance of maintaining traditions	<b>.563</b>	-.347	-.290
Importance of separate ethnic identity	<b>.537</b>	-.083	.010
Superiority of ethnic group	-.032	<b>.790</b>	.094
Stronger ties to ethnic culture	.241	<b>.627</b>	-.185
Embarrassed by behaviour of ethnic group	-.031	.136	<b>.850</b>
Problems fault of ethnic group	.215	-.318	<b>.626</b>

The items in each of these three factors were combined to create separate indices which were tested for reliability using the alpha scale. This resulted in the creation of three indices initially. The first, combining all five items of the Factor 1, I called the Ethnic Maintenance Index. The second, which I called the Ethnic Superiority Index, was created by combining the two items in Factor 2. Finally, the third, which I called the Ethnic Inferiority Index, was created by combining the two items of Factor 3. Alpha reliability scores were calculated for each of the newly created indices. Neither the Ethnic Superiority, nor the Ethnic Inferiority Index was reliable (alpha = .23 and .35 respectively). The Ethnic Maintenance Index attained an alpha reliability score of .68, which is a bit lower than commonly accepted. A more reliable index was created using only the first three items of Factor 1, which had consistently higher factor loadings than the last two items. This index, which I called the Ethnic Affinity Index, had an alpha reliability score of .73. Index scores

ranged from 3 to 15, with 3 indicating weak ethnic affinity and 15 indicating strong ethnic affinity. The mean score on this index is 11.87.

The strength of relationship between Ethnic Affinity and language ability was then determined for each language skill: listening, speaking, reading and writing, and overall language ability, using Kendall's tau\_b, a nonparametric correlation calculation. As Table 2 indicates, Ethnic Affinity is significantly related to listening and speaking ability, but not to reading and writing ability. It is also significantly related to the respondents' perceptions of their overall language ability. The greater the ability, the higher the ethnic affinity.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 2. Nonparametric Correlations of the Ethnic Affinity Index with Language Skills using Kendall's Tau\_b.**

	<b>Ethnic Affinity</b>	
<b>Listening Ability</b>	Tau_b	<b>.227</b>
	p	<b>.002</b>
	N	114
<b>Speaking Ability</b>	Tau_b	<b>.209</b>
	p	<b>.005</b>
	N	114
<b>Reading Ability</b>	Tau_b	.086
	p	.244
	N	114
<b>Writing Ability</b>	Tau_b	.103
	p	.168
	N	114
<b>Overall Language Ability</b>	Tau_b	<b>.233</b>
	p	<b>.002</b>
	N	114

Because the other indices were not reliable, I decided to measure the strength of the relationship of each of the individual target variables with language ability. These correlations are presented in Table 3. The significant correlations at the  $p < .05$  level are

<sup>3</sup> The index using all five factor loadings gave the same significant results, with slightly weaker correlation coefficients. This indicates that nothing was lost using the more rigorous scale.

presented in bold. The only variable that was related to all the language areas was “Participation in cultural activities.” “Pride in ethnic group” was positively related to listening skills, speaking skills and overall language ability; “Importance of separate ethnic identity” was positively related to listening, speaking and writing ability; “Stronger ties to ethnic culture” was positively related to listening and speaking ability only.

The same analyses were done with a subgroup of 33 Chinese respondents. Because of the small sample size, there were no significant results with the Ethnic Affinity index; however the strengths of the correlations were similar. The only difference on the Ethnic Affinity Index was a very weak correlation of Ethnic Affinity with speaking ability in the Chinese sample.

While for the most part, the same trends were noted in the Chinese subgroup with respect to the relationship between language skills and the individual ethnic identity items, there was an interesting deviation. There were significant positive correlations for those whose ties were stronger with their ethnic culture than with Canadian culture with speaking ( $\tau = .48, p = .002$ ) writing  $\tau = .36, p < .02$ ) and overall language skills ( $\tau = .44, p = .004$ ).

**Table 3. Nonparametric correlations of the 9 separate items measuring strength of ethnic identity with Language Skills using Kendall's Tau\_b.**

		Listening skills	Speaking skills	Reading skills	Writing skills	Overall ability
<b>Participation in cultural practices</b>	Tau-b	<b>.266</b>	<b>.256</b>	<b>.202</b>	<b>.208</b>	<b>.290</b>
	p	<b>.001</b>	<b>.001</b>	<b>.009</b>	<b>.008</b>	<b>.000</b>
	N	114	114	114	114	114
<b>Preference for ethnic group</b>	Tau-b	.129	.134	-.046	-.008	.113
	p	.103	.089	.554	.924	.158
	N	114	114	114	114	114
<b>Pride in ethnic group</b>	Tau-b	<b>.192</b>	<b>.158</b>	.107	.130	<b>.223</b>
	p	<b>.020</b>	<b>.052</b>	.182	.110	<b>.007</b>
	N	114	114	114	114	114
<b>Importance of maintaining traditions</b>	Tau-b	.100	.046	.006	.052	.116
	p	.198	.549	.942	.500	.140
	N	114	114	114	114	114
<b>Importance of separate ethnic identity</b>	Tau-b	<b>.207</b>	<b>.214</b>	.141	<b>.160</b>	.087
	p	<b>.008</b>	<b>.006</b>	.065	<b>.039</b>	.271
	N	114	114	114	114	114
<b>Superiority of ethnic group</b>	Tau-b	-.120	-.130	-.114	-.118	-.053
	p	.129	.098	.140	.133	.507
	N	114	114	114	114	114
<b>Stronger ties to ethnic culture</b>	Tau-b	<b>.160</b>	<b>.195</b>	.059	.079	.146
	p	<b>.041</b>	<b>.012</b>	.441	.311	.064
	N	114	114	114	114	114
<b>Embarrassed by behaviour of ethnic grp.</b>	Tau-b	-.092	-.069	.055	.025	.013
	p	.239	.375	.472	.744	.872
	N	114	114	114	114	114
<b>Problems fault of ethnic group</b>	Tau-b	.082	.123	.022	-.006	.008
	p	.297	.113	.772	.939	.922
	N	114	114	114	114	114

### Group Interview

Analysis of the group interviews reveals that identity is a more complex concept than simple statements in surveys can convey.

The groups were composed of individuals who reported levels of heritage language ability ranging from low to fluent in speaking and listening, and from low to moderate in reading and writing. Due to the nature of the group interview, it is often difficult to attribute a view or opinion to one person, as participants respond to comments made by others, and jointly build ideas through dialogue. Comments must be understood within the context of the

conversation (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). In addition, the presence of others may encourage participants to suppress contrary views or to conform to expected group expressions of values and norms. This might be especially true of the Chinese-heritage group, as participants were surrounded by other “insiders,” including the researcher, whereas in the Diverse-heritage group, participants may have felt free to express non-traditional views without risk of confrontation with co-ethnic group members.

For these reasons, the relationship between heritage language ability and views of ethnic identity cannot be drawn in a straightforward manner.

With this in mind, a number of themes emerged from the group interviews. Most remarkable were the varied ways in which participants define what it means to be ‘ethnic’ (Chinese, Greek, Indo-Pakistani, Filipino), and the flexibility and hybridity of their own identities.

### ***Family as the Site of Ethnic Culture***

For participants in both group interviews, family was the most important source of ethnic identification and of knowledge about ethnic customs, culture and traditions. In addition the family context was the site of both enforcement and reinforcement of ethnicity. In some cases, customs and culture upheld in the family were contrasted with participants’ exposure to other cultures, while in other cases participants were encouraged by their families to gain such exposure.

First, the family and family home represent the most important source of knowledge about ethnic customs, culture and traditions. Specifically, parents and grandparents were seen as authentic sources of knowledge about ethnic customs and culture. One participant in the Chinese-heritage group argues that,

what makes you Chinese is that you've got to be practicing what Chinese people do ... what they do in terms of culture. [Interviewer: When you say "they," who do you mean by "they?"] ...as in the generation that came to Canada. ... learning from what we see from our parents, our grandparents. (Henry<sup>4</sup>, Chinese heritage, age 24)

Here, Henry clearly equates "being Chinese" with the practices of the preceding two generations. He does not explicitly state that he is learning from *his* parents and grandparents, but the comments of other participants revealed the tendency to conflate one's family's culture with the ethnic culture as a whole. That is, participants tended to assume that their family's practice was representative of the practice of the larger ethnic group. For example, when Marsha talks about her experience with the "Chinese" ancestor memorial rituals (often referred to as "ancestor worship"), Caitlin interjects, "my family is Christian, so we don't practice those. It might not be a Chinese [thing]..."

Because the family is the main source of knowledge about ethnic culture, this knowledge may be incomplete. Marsha's description of the ancestor memorial rituals is illustrative here as well:

One example is ancestor worship, for example burning paper money... to your dead loved ones. Recently it was the anniversary of my grandmother's death, and my family all went to the cemetery, and we did that, but... my parents didn't really understand what they were doing because... when they were little they watched their parents do it and they kind of had it explained to them, but they couldn't really remember what they were doing anymore, so they were like, 'I don't know what order we're supposed to be burning this money in... throw it in and hopefully nothing [else] catches fire.' (Marsha, Chinese heritage, age 20)

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<sup>4</sup> All participants' names have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

This kind of incomplete knowledge may stem from the physical dislocation of immigrants and their children from the culture's country of origin. Incomplete knowledge may be supplemented by images and stereotypes that are prevalent in both mainstream and ethnic cultures in Canada. Participants in the Chinese heritage group, for instance, discussed views of the Chinese as hard-working, frugal, martial artists, etc. In some cases, these were recognized and acknowledged as stereotyped images, and in others, they seemed to be accepted. For example, when Caitlin says,

...you get to see those stereotypes, because Chinese people are cheap, like ... you know what I mean right? They're cheap. [Interviewer asks for further explanation.] They are not cheap as in stingy, but they try to like [...] We always argue, we bargain, we haggle ... even if you're buying a luxury vehicle, like a BMW, you won't buy it for the list price. (Caitlin, Chinese heritage, age 19)

Marsha supports her view:

That's so true. My parents are always like, 'I'm paying cash, can I get a discount?' or things like that. (Marsha, Chinese heritage, age 20)

For some participants, the separation from the parents' country of origin raises questions about the currency of conceptions of the heritage culture. Athar says,

...my experience has been in Canada, and culture is something that is geographically specific to some extent [...] and also, the culture that my parents brought with them is the culture of the 1970s and it hasn't really changed that much, or if it has changed, it's changed in response to Canada rather than Pakistan... (Athar, Indo-Pakistani heritage, age 27)

Here, Athar points out that the physical separation from the culture's place of origin can result in a static view of that culture. That is, the culture that parents and grandparents know may be likened to a snapshot – a frozen moment in time that represents their vision of the culture. As a result of the physical separation, as well as the possible crystallization of the culture, conforming to this culture may be effortful for their children and grandchildren, or a product of enforcement by the parents.

Again, the family context is the major source of knowledge about ethnic customs and culture. Participants in both groups pointed to being raised in an 'ethnic' family as an important factor in "being ethnic." This proximity to family acted to instruct children about ethnic customs and culture and to enforce its practice. Sunny, a participant with Greek heritage, says that "Greek was definitely the culture of my house." She goes on to explain that this culture included the celebration of holidays such as Greek Easter, the use of the Greek language, the religion (Orthodox), and living with her grandparents.

For me, a lot of that came from my grandparents...they didn't know any English, so everything had to be said and done the Greek way. You kind of don't rock the boat with your elders, so you just do that. (Sunny, Greek heritage, age 23)

This example highlights that children may not be given a choice as to the expression of ethnicity in the familial home, as these expressions are regulated and enforced by elder family members. This is especially salient to childhood experiences.

...when I was little, I did a lot of things because my parents told me to. And I didn't really think about it. Or I was just annoyed when I was little. And as I grew older, you kind of develop more of a sense of, of a connection... (Marsha, Chinese heritage, age 20)

Family may continue to play a strong reinforcement role in the lives of adult children living in the family home. For example, Henry talks about how everyday family activities, such as family lunches and dinners, reinforce to him that he is Chinese. His comments also point to the parents' continued role as instructor:

My mom is like, 'you got to go to this thing, or you got to go to some stuff next week. You got to go to the temple to do some stuff. You got to eat some vegetarian stuff on that day,' and I'm like, 'alright.' I'm reinforced everyday that I'm Chinese. (Henry, Chinese heritage, age 24)

Here, although the adult child is willing, he is also reliant on the parent to instruct him on how to fulfill customary obligations. Again, this points to the effort needed to conform to a received culture, and therefore the necessity for reinforcement.

This reinforcement is reliant to some extent on the proximity of family. Participants spoke of how leaving the family home can have an effect on the way they feel.

... I was away on my own for a couple of years. For that time I almost forgot the culture because I was always with non-Chinese people. It's only when my parents called me up every weekend, or [I] went home for the weekend, that's when [I felt Chinese]. (John, Chinese heritage, age 25)

I feel very Chinese, but sometimes I forget it ... until [I] look in a mirror I kind of forget I'm Chinese, sometimes, because I'm not surrounded by family. (Caitlin, Chinese heritage, age 19)

In these cases, proximity to family was necessary for participants to "feel ethnic."

Paradoxically, the departure from the family home and the concomitant constant reinforcement of ethnicity may precipitate the adoption of the ethnicity by the departing child (Min & Kim, 2000). This may simply be a part of the transition between adolescence and adulthood. Or, the sudden absence of ethnic reinforcement may prompt individuals to reflect on their ethnic identity.

...I always considered myself Canadian-Filipino, but I think when I left [home], it... it's more like a security blanket. The food you like ... it reminds me of home, so it was like a comfort zone. ... when I interact with people who are Filipino, it gives me a reminiscent moment of being back home, because you have something to relate to. (Peter, Filipino heritage, age 25)

...as I've gotten older I have sort of embraced the Greek part... I just remember growing up sort of resisting it. And then, once I hit eighteen and left home, and sort of went somewhere where, like wow, there really are other cultures out [there]. Yeah, it's okay to like where you come from. So for me... as I became an adult, it was like, reclaiming it I guess, so now it's a very integral part of how I would identify myself, I think. (Sunny, Greek heritage, age 23)

In this case, exposure to a diverse, multicultural environment prompted self-reflection. The coincidence of this self-reflection with the onset of adult identity will be discussed more, below.

### *Practices and Values*

The celebration of ethnic holidays, religious practices, performance of customs and rituals, eating and liking ethnic foods, and speaking an ethnic language were all mentioned as part of “being ethnic.” Some of these practices were occasional, such as the celebration of holidays, while some of them were daily or regular, such as eating ethnic foods.

Opinions regarding the ability to speak a heritage language were mixed. Some participants felt strongly that heritage language ability is necessary for “being ethnic.”

...you better speak the language. Because if you don't speak the language... you're not Chinese. (Henry, Chinese heritage, age 24)

Language was seen in some cases to be important for communication, especially with grandparents. Sunny explains how the presence of her non-English-speaking grandparents in the family home influenced her heritage language ability:

I wouldn't have had – I know I wouldn't have had – the Greek that I have had my grandparents not lived with us. (Sunny, Greek heritage, age 23)

Other participants saw heritage language ability less as a means of communication than as a “gateway to culture.” This was expressed especially by participants whose parents spoke and understood English, or who grew up with English as one of the languages of the home.

For me, my dad speaks English, everyone speaks English around me. They'll speak to me in Urdu, but they understand, so I never had any difficulty communicating. ...

But in terms of language as the gateway to the culture, I feel like I've lost a lot.

(Athar, Indo-Pakistani heritage, age 27)

I agree, the gateway to the culture, I think I've lost a lot of it. But, as far as the household, we always spoke English, so I don't think it was a big deal, and I don't think it was a big deal to them because, coming to Canada they knew that I would probably [speak English]... (Peter, Filipino heritage, age 25)

Understanding the heritage language was seen as important for understanding the meanings behind certain practices, such as rituals, idiomatic expressions or even food. For example, some participants argued that it was necessary to understand the heritage language in order to perform customs or rituals. However, not all agreed with this view:

...there are a lot of festivals and rituals that you can do without necessarily knowing the language. And sometimes it's easier to do them because learning the language is pretty difficult... (Marsha, Chinese heritage, age 20)

In addition, where multiple languages are associated with the ethnicity, the association of language knowledge and "being ethnic" is not straightforward.

It kind of doesn't make sense though. So say you're Cantonese and you don't understand Mandarin. But you're both Chinese. (Trevor, Chinese heritage, age 25)

In other words, knowledge of one of the languages does not necessarily afford access to cultural meanings or instruction. Therefore, it may be inferred, the essential element of ethnicity is not heritage language ability.

Others felt that speaking another language, in addition to English, was important as a job skill. This view was expressed mainly in the Chinese Heritage group, and may be influenced by the perceived and projected usefulness of Chinese languages, particularly Mandarin.

Generally, knowledge of the language was endorsed as a means to another end – such as communication or access to cultural knowledge – rather than as an end in itself. This suggests that in cases where language is not perceived to be necessary to achieve some end, it is less likely to be acquired, and is consistent with the literature on function, use, and motivation and language learning, discussed above.

Although many of the participants stressed the importance of practicing ethnic customs, and also of knowing the meanings behind customs and rituals, they explicitly stated that belief in these rituals and their meanings was not necessary. In this view, therefore, “being ethnic” requires actions, but not beliefs. In the following illustration, Henry talks about his mother’s response to his sleeping problems.

I told my mom about it, and she was like, ‘you were sit on by a ghost,’ and I’m like, ‘whatever,’ right, but then she goes and buys me those jade things, and she puts it on the wall and she puts it under my pillow without me even realizing it... so all these things would make you Chinese. [Interviewer: Even though you don’t believe in the ghost sitting on you?] Even though I don’t believe in that. (Henry, Chinese heritage, age 24)

In this case, it is Henry’s mother who is “doing” the practice, but Henry’s proximity to it and his position in the family make this integral to his sense of “being” Chinese, *despite* his lack of belief in the remedy. But this extends to customs and rituals performed by the participants themselves. Marsha says this about rituals that are tied to religious beliefs:

You can practice them and respect them, but you don’t necessarily need to believe in it. (Marsha, Chinese heritage, age 20)

The Diverse Heritage and Chinese Heritage groups differed in their emphases on practices and values. While the Chinese Heritage group stressed the importance of practice, and indeed explicitly stated that belief in those practices was not necessary, the Diverse Heritage group emphasized the importance of values. This is clearly illustrated in the following exchange:

Athar: I don't hold my parents' strong belief in the preserving the culture, because I don't believe it's something that can be preserved. But when it comes to values and ideals that may or may not be connected to the culture, things like, respect for your elders, or taking care of old people and don't put them in old folks' homes, and things like that, being generous and kind, and those kinds of things – which I'm sure are pretty universal – I believe those are the more important things.

Peter: I agree.

Sunny: Yeah, me too.

Although Athar qualifies his statement by characterizing the values as “universal,” the implication is that these values are ones he has gleaned from his heritage culture, and which, to him, are essential elements of the culture. Notably, the other participants in the group agree without hesitation or qualification.

### ***Flexible and Hybrid Identities***

A common theme among both groups was that their identities were made up of multiple components. For some, the expression of component parts was dependent on context. For others, the components did not exist separately, and thus their expressions were, presumably, more consistent. In both cases, participants did not express any conflict over the co-existence of multiple identities – indeed, frequently, this was embraced.

The Chinese Heritage group expressed more of a sense of flexibility that allowed them to express both Canadian and Chinese identities when appropriate or when most beneficial to them. The expression of identity is determined by context.

Instinctively, whenever there's a form to fill out, I always put Chinese. [...] Unless I'm on a plane, and then I put Canadian. (Trevor, Chinese heritage, age 25)

...you play up whichever one it is that will benefit you the most at that moment... we have that kind of benefit. We can play up whichever one would be more beneficial to us. (Marsha, Chinese heritage, age 20)

However, the participants in the Diverse Heritage group did not see any separation between the "ethnic" and the "Canadian." Instead, many participants expressed a hybrid identity wherein both "ethnic" and "Canadian" identities were integral and indivisible.

It's this whole separate... it's its own entity... It's not being caught between two worlds, it's being a hyphenated Canadian. (Sunny, Greek heritage, age 23)

It's like rum and coke, the drink... is it rum or is it coke? It's rum and coke. [...]

There's just a blend. A blended culture where you've adapted everything and you have one. It's not like I'm more of this than the other. (Peter, Filipino heritage, age 25)

For these participants in the Diverse Heritage group, the emergence and acceptance of hybridity often came in the later stages of or after adolescence, with the onset of adult identity. As children, the ethnic identity was often hard for participants to accept; any perceived conflict that arose between the two identities resulted in feelings of embarrassment

or shame. Ironically, acceptance of the parental ethnicity was often accompanied by the understanding and acknowledgement of the differences between the participant and their parents, such as differences in values and beliefs. The acceptance of these differences allowed participants to reshape ethnicity in accordance with their own beliefs, thus (re)claiming the ethnic identity as their own. Here, Athar describes this period of growing of realization and acceptance.

For me the big problem with the religion and the culture is... I feel that there are elements of it that don't agree with my own value system, so I've always been kind of at odds with it. [...] Maybe [my parents] were getting more into [the religion], but I think it was more just me becoming more who I am... realizing that I was different, that my value system was in some ways different than my parents... (Athar, Indo-Pakistani heritage, age 27)

Later, he says, "I think now I'm just comfortable in my own skin."

Sunny echoes these sentiments:

I think also as you get older there's that acceptance that you're not going to change your parents, you know, and I think that part of being a teenager is that you're always trying to do that... I might not like the way my dad treats my mom all the time, or I might not like some of the racial slurs or whatever, but you know what, I'm not going to change it. I don't have to be like that. (Sunny, Greek heritage, age 23)

As a result, participants in the Diverse Heritage group saw themselves as agents of culture, rather than as passive recipients or heirs. This agency leads to a positive sense of ownership and comfort.

...we kind of recreated our culture... The awareness that I've come to now, I feel really comfortable with it. So I think that's where the pride comes from. Not even pride really, it's just, that's who you are. (Sunny, Greek heritage, age 23)

### *Authenticity and Authority*

The subtext of the opening interview question, "What does it mean to be [ethnic]?" solicits the participants' understandings of 'authentic' ethnicity. An interesting adjunct theme emerged regarding the authority to determine authenticity. Participants in the interviews were asked to define "being ethnic" generally, and then to specifically discuss their perceptions of themselves as 'ethnic.' But in both groups, participants also initiated discussion about the ways that others evaluated their ethnic identity.

...My reading and writing is a little weaker [than my speaking] and I remember last time being in Greece, when someone picked up on that, and they were like, "Ah, that's too bad. You're not really Greek, you're Canadian." [...] Initially I felt really guilty and I thought, you know, they're right. Why didn't I spend more time to learn to read and write better... (Sunny, Greek heritage, age 23)

Here, Caitlin describes her experience in her parents' country of origin:

I got called a 'banana'<sup>5</sup> like three times. [...] My cousins all called me a banana, even though I speak the language fluently, but, just the way I act. [...] I felt embarrassed, because I've always felt really Chinese. I'm like, I'm not a banana! (Caitlin, Chinese heritage, age 19)

Evaluations by others that found the participants lacking in 'ethnicity' resulted in feelings of embarrassment or guilt. The reasons for this are not readily apparent. It could indicate that

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<sup>5</sup> "Banana" is a slang term similar in meaning to "whitewashed." The implication is that the individual is 'too assimilated' to Canadian or American culture, or 'yellow on the outside, white on the inside.'

participants' sense of their own ethnic identity is insecure. Alternatively, it may indicate that participants have internalized the norms and values of their ethnic group about what it means to 'be ethnic,' and the public recognition of a failure to conform to those norms and values overpowers their own conceptions of self. Participants themselves were aware of instances or situations when their 'Canadian-ness' interfered with or overpowered their 'ethnicity.' This frequently occurred when participants were outside of Canada, in their parents' country of origin. However, these instances did not seem to invoke embarrassment or guilt in the same way that negative evaluations from others did.

Participants were also aware of negative evaluations that find others to be 'too ethnic.' Although no one talked about being labeled a "FOB," they did talk about this evaluation:

Caitlin: ...FOBs... are basically people who are...

Marsha: Fresh off the boat.

Caitlin: From China or Hong Kong. ... People look down on those people...

Negative evaluations, therefore, are ones that find an individual to be either 'too ethnic' or, conversely, lacking in 'ethnicity.'

### ***An Innate Characteristic***

In the Chinese Heritage group specifically, some of the participants implied that "being Chinese" involves an innate characteristic which is not influenced by practice or belief. The nature of this innate characteristic is not clear. Comments about the importance of having a Chinese family name, of "Chinese blood," and Chinese as a "race" indicate that this characteristic may be physical. Participants in this group also discussed children who were the product of interracial unions – and thus were "half Chinese" – although no

consensus was reached about whether having one Chinese parent was sufficient to ensure that the child is Chinese. However, this debate about mixed-race children suggests that the innate characteristic might not be purely physical. In addition, participants were reluctant to explicitly state that “being Chinese” was related to physical makeup. Instead, participants made comments such as, “the way she looks” is not important.

Although this group identified a number of practices which comprised “being Chinese,” some participants also indicated that non-practice did not cause the loss of one’s Chinese identity. For example, when asked about the importance of reading and writing a Chinese language, Trevor replies, “There are a lot of people who are Chinese who are illiterate, like in China.” And then, as participants discuss their ability to read traditional Chinese characters, he quips, “And Indiana Jones can do the same thing.” (Trevor, Chinese heritage, age 25) Here, Trevor indicates that non-practice does not constitute lessened Chinese identity, and also that practice does not confer Chinese identity. Chinese identity, therefore, is not something that is gained or lost through practice. Marsha explains:

Just because you don’t practice the tradition doesn’t mean you stop...being Chinese. [... ] Maybe you’re not quite as connected...with the culture, but it doesn’t mean that your identity as a Chinese person suddenly vanishes. You still have, I think what makes you Chinese is that’s where you come from, that’s where your ancestors came from. You can’t erase history, just by not doing it yourself... (Marsha, Chinese heritage, age 20)

In this view, “being Chinese” comes from family history, and not necessarily from personal experience.

This theme emerged in the Chinese Heritage group only. No indication was given in the Diverse Heritage group of the importance of an innate characteristic.

### **Discussion**

The survey used nine indicators of ethnic identity; of these nine indicators, only one reliable index, which consisted of three items, was found. The index measured Ethnic Affinity, or sense of closeness with the ethnic group. This seems to correspond with what Doucette and Edwards call a “sense of groupness” which they claim indicates that ethnicity has taken on a symbolic nature (in Isajiw, 1990). The other indices, Ethnic Maintenance, Ethnic Superiority, and Ethnic Inferiority were not found to be reliable.

The results from the total sample reveal a significant, positive correlation between scores on the Ethnic Affinity scale and heritage language ability in the listening, speaking and overall categories. That is, those who scored high on the Ethnic Affinity scale were likely to report high overall, listening and speaking ability in their heritage language, and vice versa. No correlation was found between Ethnic Affinity and heritage language reading or writing ability. Since the heritage language is most likely used in the emotive, home context, and not in the instrumental, school context (Chumak-Horbatsch, 1987), respondents are less likely to have learned reading and writing skills. This will be discussed in greater detail, below.

It is striking that only one item – “I participate in customs and cultural practices of my ethnic group” – was positively related to all of the language skills. The reasons for this are not immediately clear. It may be that knowledge and use of the heritage language are themselves considered cultural practices, resulting in a natural relationship between

participation in cultural practices and language ability. If this is so, it may indicate that knowing and using the heritage language is considered an important or primary cultural practice. Notably, this item on participation in cultural practices is the only one of the nine that can be clearly characterized as an external aspect of ethnic identity (Isajiw, 1990). The other eight items address feelings, attitudes and images, which are more appropriately characterized as internal aspects (Isajiw, 1990). This may also suggest that habitual behaviour is stronger than attitudes, an observation that is supported in the interviews as well (see below).

Due to the small sample size, the results from the Chinese sample were not statistically significant. However, the same trends appear in this group, with Ethnic Affinity scores more closely related to overall and listening ability, but less related to speaking, reading or writing ability in the heritage language. This suggests that among the Chinese-heritage respondents, the ability to understand spoken Chinese was more integral to a Chinese identity than the ability to speak Chinese. In addition, the analysis of the Chinese sample revealed a relationship between strong ties with the ethnic culture and speaking, writing and overall heritage language ability. This relationship did not appear in the total sample, and is remarkable for its focus on productive (speaking, writing) over receptive (listening, reading) skills. This result is puzzling. Perhaps the stronger ties to the ethnic culture are reflected in an increased 'commitment' to the language, which is necessary to acquire the productive skills. Or perhaps those who have the productive skills feel stronger ties to their ethnic culture because they are linguistically integrated.

These findings partially support the hypothesis, and suggest that oral heritage language ability remains an element of ethnic affinity in second generation Canadians.

However, the results suggest that literacy in the heritage language is not related to ethnic affinity. This may be due to the relative rarity of literacy skills in the heritage language. At all language levels, respondents reported low to moderate reading and writing abilities. It was not uncommon for a respondent to report high oral language ability and no or minimal literacy. Second generation Canadians may have difficulty gaining literacy in heritage languages which are most often used in the primarily oral domains of family, neighbourhood and community, and not in the formal education system. While some respondents may have had access to the appropriate Heritage Language programs, these after-school and weekend classes offer only a few hours of instruction per week, and may not be sufficient to foster literacy in many students. Moreover, when the heritage language uses a pictographic writing system or a phonetic system that is much different than the Roman alphabet, it may be especially difficult to gain literacy. Languages with these characteristics, most notably Chinese languages (mainly Cantonese and Mandarin) and South Asian languages (mainly Tamil, Hindi, Urdu, and Punjabi), were among the most frequently reported heritage languages in this sample.

The survey measured ethnic affinity and heritage language ability in adult respondents, who are expected to have entered a stage of stabilized identity, and to have passed the stage of heritage language acquisition. Consequently, these results reveal a correlation between ethnic affinity and heritage language ability. It is, however, impossible to attribute causality in either direction.

The qualitative findings complement, but do not clearly support the quantitative results. The purpose of the group interviews was to allow participants to provide their own

definitions of ethnicity and what it means to “be ethnic.” The qualitative findings thus help to explain the survey results as well as to expand on them.

The interviews revealed a large role for family in the formation of ethnic identity, both as the main source of knowledge of the ethnic culture, and as the primary site of enforcement and reinforcement of ethnic identification. The departure from the family home thus represents a break with the strongest tie to ethnicity (Min & Kim, 2000). This is reflected in diminished feelings of “being ethnic” and “forgetfulness” of ethnicity once removed from the primary site of ethnic reinforcement. Min and Kim (2000) found that some Asian Americans look forward to university or college for this very reason, and view going to university as an “opportunity to escape from the demands of their parents’ cultural expectations” (p.745). However, in many cases, the departure from the family home during early adulthood also precipitates the emergence of ethnic identity. Participants generally left the home to attend university; in some instances, the university setting exposed the participant to more ethnic diversity, and in some cases less. The exposure to different environments may have prompted self-reflection about ethnic identity, and encouraged an interest in the ethnic culture. Similarly, Min and Kim (2000) found that while leaving the family home was often eagerly anticipated, ironically, many developed a greater interest and pride in their ethnic culture while in university.

The family is also the place where the heritage language is most likely to be used. Participants who reported low or moderate heritage language ability also reported that English is understood or spoken by parents, and that English is sometimes or frequently used in the family home.

Participation in cultural practices was also a part of “being ethnic.” Important practices include: celebrating ethnic holidays, religious rituals and practices, customs and traditions, eating ethnic foods and speaking an ethnic language. These were expected results. Tonks and Paranjpe (1999) found that such observable practices were among the most frequent responses to the question, “what does your ethnicity mean?” These practices represent external aspects of ethnic identity (Isajiw, 1990). However, participants also related practices to internal aspects of identity. Specifically, it was considered important to know and understand the meanings behind practices. This represents the cognitive element of identity, the subjective knowledge about group values, heritage and history (Isajiw, 1990). Thus, practices are comprised of both external and internal elements.

Remarkably, while the practices are considered important, a belief in the practices and the meanings behind those practices are not. The Chinese Heritage group, specifically, expressed this view. This unexpected expression might be explained in a number of ways. It may indicate a “progressively insignificant” ethnicity, wherein individuals find little meaning in customs, even though they occasionally practice them (Breton, Isajiw, Kalbach & Reitz, 1990, p.6). However, I suggest that participants do derive some meaning from these practices, though perhaps not the originally intended meanings. For these participants, the meaning of the customs and cultural practices was the honour and respect that their practice implies. It could indicate that external and internal aspects of ethnic identity may not be equally retained by the second generation. This is also suggested by the survey results, which show that behavioural aspects are more strongly and consistently related to language ability than attitudinal ones. Or, it may merely represent a particular way that some second generation Canadians have adapted their heritage and Canadian cultures.

Ability to speak the heritage language was seen as an important conduit to knowledge about group values, heritage and the meanings behind practices. In some instances, it was also valued as an instrument of communication, especially with non-English-speaking grandparents or family members. The heritage language could thus serve instrumental (communicative) or integrative (reflecting an affinity with the linguistic community) functions (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). These two functions serve as the main sources of motivation to learn a second language (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Participation in cultural practices was the only variable in the survey related to all language skill areas. While language ability may not be necessary for the performance of customs or rituals, it frequently facilitates access to knowledge about these practices. Also, the desire to carry on customs or rituals indicates a desire to display membership in a cultural community, which may be echoed in the integrative use of the heritage language.

Generally, participants agreed that heritage language ability is valuable; however, not all agreed that it is a necessity. In the Chinese Heritage group specifically, two opposing views were expressed. First, a strong belief in the necessity of Chinese language ability was expressed; one participant went so far as to say that individuals who did not speak a Chinese language were “not Chinese.” This expression was expected. The primary importance attributed to Chinese language ability has been observed by previous authors (Verkuyten & de Wolf, 2002; Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002). Verkuyten and de Wolf (2002) found similar expressions that only “fake” Chinese are not able to speak and understand a Chinese language (p.386). Conversely, participants also expressed the view that Chinese language ability is not a requirement of a Chinese identity. This supports Smolicz’s (1992) finding that for Australians with Chinese heritage, an absence of heritage language does not

invariably mean an absence of Chinese identity (p.301). Similarly, Djao (2003) found that for “Chinese overseas,” the ethnic dimension of identity can be quite strong with extremely little or no knowledge of a Chinese language (p.214). In the present study, this view was closely related to the idea that Chinese identity could not be gained nor lost through practice or non-practice. Thus, based on this sample, one cannot generalize about the role of Chinese language ability in Chinese identity.

Some participants emphasized the importance of values over practices. In these cases, the values were ones that were gleaned from the heritage culture, although their importance and merit were seen to be universal. These same participants tended to talk about choice – both in terms of knowledge and exposure to other cultures, and in terms of deciding which components of ethnic identity were of importance to them. Choice, in turn, requires participants to exercise agency to determine the nature and shape of their own ethnic identity. The importance placed on values is meaningful because the values are not necessarily linked to cultural practice, and need not be conveyed through the heritage language. In fact, the values need not be bound to one particular ethnic culture in the first place.

Overall, identities were characterized by flexibility and hybridity. Flexibility was primarily expressed in the Chinese Heritage group, and allowed participants to express whichever part of their identity was beneficial in a specific context. This flexibility can be likened to the “ethnic options” or latitude that Asian Americans are able to exercise in the organization and expression of their ethnic identity (Kibria, 2000). Kibria (2000) argues that Asian Americans fall in somewhere in the middle of the “ethnic options” spectrum, between the considerable latitude of the “white ethnic” experience and the limitations imposed on black Americans (p.79-80). In contrast, participants in the Diverse Heritage group expressed

hybrid identities, in which “ethnic” and “Canadian” components were blended and inseparable. The character of these identities have clearly changed from that of the first generation, as expected (Isajiw, 1990). This could help to explain the results of the survey. The survey used selected measures of strength of identification with the ethnic group. The interviews suggest that while second generation Canadians do identify with their ethnic group, they also identify as Canadian. These identities are blended, not dichotomous or opposed. Therefore, the survey results do not show individuals grouped at “Ethnic” or “Canadian” ends, because second generation Canadians do not consider themselves to be wholly “ethnic” or wholly “Canadian.” Rather, they occupy the hybrid spaces in-between the two ends. Further, the interviews indicate that participants are happy there.

Nevertheless, they are sensitive to the opinions of others. Evaluations that deemed a participant to be “whitewashed” – or in the Chinese group, a “banana” – resulted in negative feelings of embarrassment or shame. At the same time, participants were sensitive to negative evaluations of those who are on the opposite end of the spectrum, and are labeled “FOBs.” This tension between being “too assimilated” and “too ethnic” compels individuals to negotiate a non-stigmatized identity in the bicultural space in between the two extremes (Pyke & Dang, 2003). This constant negotiation is reflected in the flexibility of identity, which allows the individual to avoid stigma and criticism without challenging the system of evaluation (Pyke & Dang, 2003).

That “being Chinese” was seen to involve some innate characteristic suggests that ethnicity may continue to be confounded with ‘race.’ This raises the question of how ‘visibility’ or racialization affects how second generation Canadians see themselves and relate to their heritage culture. Kibria (2000) draws a connection between the use of race as a

marker of identity and the “ethnic binds” faced by racialized persons. She argues that Asian Americans are limited by perceptions of their “foreignness,” and consequently are not free to adopt an “American” identity (Kibria, 2000, p. 86). Similarly, Min and Kim (2000) note that “being ethnic” continues to be “a societal expectation for third- and fourth- generation Japanese and Chinese Americans” (p.742).

In summary, the group interviews reveal that second generation Canadians hold a diversity of opinions about the determinants of ethnic identity. Some participants held more traditional views of ethnic identity, indicating the importance of adhering to cultural practices, customs and rituals, including speaking the ethnic language. Ideas about which practices were important appeared to be influenced by the practices of the participants’ families. Interestingly, participants insisted that while understanding the meanings behind customs and rituals is important, belief in those meanings is not necessary.

Other participants held a less conservative view of ethnicity, which was more open to reconsideration of factors traditionally associated with ethnic identity. Values, for instance, were given more importance than practices. In addition, these participants tended to talk about choice – both in terms of knowledge about and exposure to other cultures, and in terms of deciding which components of ethnic identity were of importance to them. In contrast to the traditional view, which relies on received understandings about practices, this open view requires participants to exercise agency to determine the nature and shape of their own ethnic identity.

Heritage language ability was not clearly or consistently related to traditional or open views on ethnic identity. While the traditional view was endorsed by participants with high

heritage language ability, the open view was more widely endorsed. That is, participants with high, moderate and low heritage language abilities supported this latter view.

The results of the group interviews, specifically the articulation of an open view of ethnic identity, raise the question of whether ethnicity has become symbolic for the second generation Canadians in this sample. Symbolic ethnicity is characterized by a high degree of choice, a focus on symbols and intermittence. Arguably, this open view involves both elements of choice and some focus on symbols such as food and ritual customs. In addition, because daily practices were not a major element of this perspective, one could argue that it is, by definition, intermittent. However, the notion of choice here has been applied more in the sense of a creative agency than in the sense of opting in or out of the ethnicity. While proponents did comment on the importance of symbolic elements such as food, they also emphasized the importance of values. Moreover, the majority of participants expressed an identity that was comprised of both Canadian and ethnic components and did not express conflict over their co-existence. For many the components could not be quantified or separated; each was an integral part of the individual's identity. Therefore, I submit that the 'open' view of ethnicity described by the participants does not represent symbolic ethnicity, but rather is the product of the unique experience and expression of these second generation Canadians. For these individuals, heritage language ability has ceased to be essential element in their flexible and hybrid ethnic identities.

### **Conclusions**

The results of the quantitative survey indicate that second generation Canadians continue to view oral proficiency in a heritage language as a salient component of ethnic

identity. However, this positive correlation was not clearly supported by the results of the group interviews. The interviews allowed participants to give their own definitions of ethnicity. The interviewees expressed a variety of opinions about what “being ethnic” means, how heritage languages are related to ethnic identity, and how they identify themselves. If placed on a continuum, the opinions ranged from strict or traditional to open. There was no clear relationship between the endorsement of either view and the heritage language ability of the participants themselves.

When interpreting the quantitative and qualitative findings of this study, it is important to consider that ethnic groups may value their ethnic languages differently. That is, for some groups, passing an ethnic language on to Canadian-born children may be of utmost importance, while for others it may be seen as unnecessary. Thus the relation of heritage language ability and ethnic identity may not be as straightforward as it appears, and indeed may vary significantly from group to group. Heritage language ability may be more related to factors which were not measured in this study, such as the presence of non-English-speaking grandparents or relatives in the home, than to strength of identification with the ethnic group. It should be noted that the division of the quantitative sample into Total and Chinese portions, and the qualitative sample into Diverse and Chinese groups is intended to illuminate the dynamic of one ethnic group, rather than to homogenize or deny the differences that exist among the other ethnic groups represented in this study.

The results of this study suggest a number of directions for future research. First, it would be useful to validate these findings with a larger sample, or samples drawn from different ethnic groups. In this study, limitations of time necessitated the use of pre-established indicators of ethnic identity. However, future studies would benefit from the

construction of a new survey instrument that tests both behavioural and attitudinal indicators of ethnic identity, and which draws on the kinds of non-traditional expressions of identity found in this and other studies. Further, more exploration is warranted into the ways in which second generation Canadians today understand their own ethnic identities. Do these understandings vary by ethnic group or by gender? What role does visible minority/racialized status play? While physical characteristics may not be considered ethnic markers per se, racialized Canadians may face more “ethnic binds” than their non-racialized peers. In addition, while some second generation Canadians seem to be playing an active role in defining their ethnicity for themselves, it is apparent that the evaluation of others continues to be relevant. How do negative and positive evaluations by others affect self-identification?

Finally, it would be fascinating to explore the relationship between ethnic identity and heritage language acquisition in children. An investigation of this relationship during the stages of language acquisition may bring us closer to determining if a causal relationship exists, and if so, the direction of that causation.

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### Appendix A: Survey Key

Questions 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, 14, 15, and 17 were target items. They were adapted from a number of sources, as outlined in Table A, below.

**Table A: Sources of Adapted Target Items**

Item		Source
2.	No need for separate ethnic identity	(Fu, Lee, Chui & Hong, 1999)
5.	Participate in customs and cultural practices	(Chow, 2004)
6.	Pride in ethnic group and accomplishments	(Chow, 2004)
8.	Ties with Canadian vs. ethnic culture	(Meinhard, unpublished)
10.	Embarrassment of behaviour	(Sarnoff, 1951; Johnson, 1957; Noel, 1964)
13.	Problems are fault of ethnic group	(Sarnoff, 1951; Johnson, 1957; Noel, 1964)
14.	Choose to be a member of ethnic group	(Fu, Lee, Chui & Hong, 1999)
15.	Ethnic group is superior	(Fu, Lee, Chui & Hong, 1999)
17.	Not important to maintain customs	Negative phrasing of #5

The rest of the questions were divided into two categories: questions 1, 3, 4, and 11 about multiculturalism in Canada, and questions 7, 12, 16 about heritage languages in Canada. The questions in these two categories were created by the author. They were not used in the analysis of data.

## Appendix A1: Survey Instrument

Instructions:

This is not a test; it is a survey of your opinions. **There are no right or wrong answers.**

Please read each statement or question carefully and choose the answer which most closely matches your present view. Please be as honest as possible. Remember that this survey is completely anonymous, and no one will ever know which questionnaire is yours.

You may skip any question that makes you feel uncomfortable or that you do not wish to answer. You may withdraw your consent or stop your participation at any time.

For each of the following statements, please circle whether you Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, or Strongly Disagree.

1. It is important for Canadians to learn to speak multiple languages.

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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2. In Canada, there is no need to keep a separate ethnic identity.

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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3. Canadian society benefits from knowledge of other cultures.

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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4. People from ethnic minority groups should work hard to maintain their culture.

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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5. I participate in customs and cultural practices of my ethnic group.

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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6. I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group and its accomplishments.

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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7. Learning a heritage language should not take precedence over learning English.

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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8. My ties with Canadian culture are weaker than my ties with my ethnic (heritage) culture.

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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**9. I feel pressure from my parents and/or family to maintain our culture and customs.**

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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**10. I am sometimes embarrassed by the behaviour of some people of my ethnicity.**

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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**11. My ethnicity has been a disadvantage for me in trying to get ahead.**

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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**12. I wish there were more TV shows broadcast in my heritage language in Toronto.**

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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**13. A lot of problems faced by people of my ethnic group today are their own fault.**

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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**14. If I could choose, I would choose to be a member of my ethnic group.**

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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**15. I believe that compared to other Canadians, people from my ethnic background are superior.**

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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**16. It is important to be able to speak your heritage language.**

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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**17. It is not important to me to maintain the customs and traditions of my ethnic group.**

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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Please check (✓) the appropriate box, and print your answers clearly.

18. How old are you? (Remember, this is anonymous!) \_\_\_\_\_ years old

19. Are you:     Female         Male         Transsexual/Transgender/Other

20. Were you born in Canada?     Yes         No

If yes, please go to #21.

If no:    In which country were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

How old were you when you came to Canada?     0-5 years old  
 6-10 years old  
 11+ years old

21. In which country was your mother born? \_\_\_\_\_

22. In which country was your father born? \_\_\_\_\_

23. What languages does your mother speak? Please list all languages spoken.  
 Example: Cantonese, Taishanese, English

\_\_\_\_\_

a. What is your mother's *first* language? \_\_\_\_\_

24. What languages does your father speak? Please list all languages spoken.

\_\_\_\_\_

a. What is your father's *first* language? \_\_\_\_\_

25. What languages do you speak? Please list all languages spoken.

\_\_\_\_\_

a. What is your *first* language? \_\_\_\_\_

26. Please list the most important aspects of your identity (up to three).

Examples: 1) Polish, 2) Ukrainian, 3) Canadian, OR

1) Canadian, 2) Serbian, 3) - - -

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

Please check (✓) the statement that best describes your heritage language ability.

27. Listening:

- I can't understand speech in my heritage language.
- I can understand a few words.
- I can understand speech about everyday topics.
- I can understand speech in movies, TV shows, or on the radio.
- I can understand speech in academic or professional settings about complex or unfamiliar topics.

28. Speaking:

- I can't say anything in my heritage language.
- I can say a few words.
- I can speak about everyday topics.
- I can tell a story about a movie or television show I saw, or sing popular songs.
- I can speak in an academic or professional setting about complex or unfamiliar topics.

29. Reading:

- I can't read anything in my heritage language.
- I can read a few words.
- I can read simple sentences about everyday topics.
- I can read magazines, newspapers or stories.
- I can read literary or professional texts about complex or unfamiliar topics.

30. Writing:

- I can't write anything in my heritage language.
- I can write a few words.
- I can write simple sentences about everyday topics.
- I can write letters or stories.
- I can write an essay or business document about abstract or complex topics.

31. Overall, I rate my heritage language ability as:

- Excellent
- Very good
- Okay
- Poor
- I don't have any heritage language ability

Thank you for participating in this survey.

By completing and returning this survey, you are:

- Giving your consent to participate in the survey.
- Granting permission to the researcher to use the information you have provided. Please be assured that all responses are confidential and anonymous.

Would you like to participate in a focus group\* where you could express your opinions about some of the topics in this survey?

I am seeking individuals with **all** of the following characteristics:

- Born in Canada with parents who were born in another country;  
OR born in another country and came to Canada before age 5
- Have Chinese heritage (from *any* country: China, Hong Kong, Taiwan etc.)
- Have parents who speak the same Chinese language or dialect as their first language
- Are 18 years old or older

If you have all of these characteristics, and are willing to participate, please **detach this page** and return it to:

Bonnie Mah  
Room 805, Business Building  
or email: b2mah@ryerson.ca

\*Focus groups will last approximately 2 hours. Participants will be compensated with a \$10 gift certificate.

- Yes, I am willing to participate in a focus group.  
 Yes, I have **all** of the characteristics listed above.

My first name is: \_\_\_\_\_

Please contact me by:

- Email: \_\_\_\_\_  Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I would prefer to attend a focus group in the:  daytime  
 evening  
 no preference

I am seeking individuals with **all** levels of Chinese language ability (including individuals with no Chinese language ability). Please indicate your Chinese language ability below:

Listening:

- I can't understand speech in my heritage language.  
 I can understand a few words.  
 I can understand speech about everyday topics.  
 I can understand speech in movies, TV shows, or on the radio.  
 I can understand speech in about complex or unfamiliar topics.

Speaking:

- I can't say anything in my heritage language.  
 I can say a few words.  
 I can speak about everyday topics.  
 I can tell a story about a movie or television show I saw, or sing popular songs.  
 I can speak in an academic or professional setting about complex or unfamiliar topics.

## Appendix B: Interview Guide

1. What does it mean to be (*ethnic*)?
2. Do you feel (*ethnic*)?  
What about yourself makes you feel this way?  
How has this feeling changed from childhood to adolescence to adulthood?  
(Prompt: Pride/shame?)
3. In your opinion, how important is it to be able to speak (*language*)?  
(Prompt: Does language connect you to the culture?)  
How do you feel about your ability to speak (*language*)?  
How important is it to read and write (*language*)?  
Would you want your kids to speak (*language*)?  
(Prompt: What about your marriage partner? Is it important to marry someone from the same ethnic/cultural background?)
4. In your opinion, how important is it to you to keep up (*ethnic*) culture?  
Traditions and customs? Which traditions and customs are important to keep?  
Popular culture?  
How do you see (*ethnic*) culture changing or developing?
5. Follow up on elements of (*ethnicity*) that participants mention in #1.