

**COMING OF AGE LEARNING MANDARIN:
CHINESE L2 LEARNERS' INVESTMENT DURING THEIR TRANSITION FROM
HIGH SCHOOL TO UNIVERSITY**

by

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Coming of Age Learning Mandarin: Chinese L2 learners' investment during their transition from high school to university

Abstract

Situated in the changing context of Mandarin learning in the United States, Mandarin these days is changing from a less commonly taught language to a more commonly offered foreign language option in American secondary schools. However, in the applied linguistic literature, “few empirical studies have focused on pre-college CFL learning” (Ke, 2012, p.98). Moreover, the transition from high school to university often entails complex social, cultural, and emotional changes (e.g., Nathan, 2006). The goal of this dissertation project, therefore, is to investigate how students' investment in Mandarin is socially and historically constructed at these three levels: personal, familial, and institutional, as they transition from high school to university.

This study draws upon the theory of identity and investment (Norton, 1995) to examine how these teenage language learners are multidimensional beings with multiple desires, and how their investment is produced or reproduced from social interactions, and is subject to change. Three high school campuses were chosen, because Mandarin classes are now offered from kindergarten through twelfth grade in these schools. Six students who expressed their intentions to continue learning Mandarin in university consented to participate in this study. Data collection for this study lasted from March to December 2015, which covered these students' last semester of high school, their first semester of college, and the period between. Data were collected from interviews and monthly informal Skype chats, and supplemented with class documents. Using qualitative analysis methods, the findings show the following factors as salient to their investment in Mandarin learning at the high school stage: 1) the students' personal interest, and

2) the influence from their families and their institutions. In the university setting, these students' investment in Mandarin was mostly mediated at the personal and the institutional levels. The results reveal the identity shift from childhood to adulthood these adolescent learners experienced during the transition. Specifically, the adolescent learners became more independent in making their own decisions, and less dependent on their families, both financially and symbolically. Second, the findings also highlight how these individuals' investment in Mandarin could be constrained at the institutional level. This points to the need for L2 educators to pay attention not only to individual students' personal interests and motivations in language learning, but also to a better understanding of how students perceive their own identities and whether foreign language learning is accessible to learners institutionally.

Chapter 1

Introduction

One of the central questions regarding foreign language learning is why learners want to invest their time and energy in learning a foreign language such as Mandarin. The purpose of this dissertation project is to investigate high school students' investment in learning Chinese as they transition to college. Situated in the changing context of Mandarin learning in the United States, Mandarin these days is changing from a less commonly taught language to a more commonly offered foreign language option in American secondary schools. The trend has even accelerated since the introduction of the Advanced Placement Chinese Language and Culture in 2007. Data from the College Board (2008) demonstrated a 200% increase of Chinese programs in 2008 compared to 2004. Moreover, the transition from high school to college often entails complex social, cultural, and emotional changes (e.g., Nathan, 2006). Yet, sociolinguists have very rarely examined language learners during this transition. In an attempt to investigate Mandarin language learners as they transit from high school to university, this study uses the concept of investment to answer the research question: How is students' investment socially and historically constructed from these three levels: personal, institutional, and familial?

To situate the study, it is useful in this chapter to consider briefly the three questions that informed the creation of the research design: Why look at Mandarin investment in the U.S. context? Why begin investigation on the students' Mandarin investment as they transition from high school to university? Why consider the personal, familial, and institutional levels when discussing adolescent learners' Mandarin investment?

1.1 Rising popularity of Mandarin

President Obama announced the launch of “1 million strong,” seeking to encourage American residents to learn Mandarin by sending one million Mandarin learners by the year 2020 as the goal. The intriguing announcement broadcasts: “if our countries are going to do more together around the world, then speaking each other’s language, truly understand each other, is a good place to start” in a joint press conference with Chinese President Xi Jinping on September 25, 2015 (Foreign Policy Magazine , September 25, 2015). The primary objective is for American students to study Mandarin, improve language skills and deepen mutual understanding. Actually, as early as 2009, President Obama already had a similar announcement during his trip to China. He held a “town hall meeting” with college students in Shanghai, and pledged to send 100,000 American students to study in China in the next four years (Chen, Wang, & Cai, 2010). This announcement initiative reflects an increasing awareness of the growing importance of the expanding status of China in today’s world affairs and consequently of the urgent need for Mandarin learning. Such unprecedented announcements in 2009 as well as in 2015 have an important influence on increasing the popularity of Mandarin.

The U.S. government’s interest in promoting the teaching and learning of Mandarin is not new. Data obtained from the national foreign language program survey conducted by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL, 2008) every 10 years also provide evidence: there is a 900% increase in the elementary school, rising from 0.3% in 1997 to 3% in 2008. There is also a 300% increase in the secondary schools, rising from 1% to 4% (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2008). Furthermore, according to an informal survey of schools conducted by the College Board and Asia Society, there is an increase of 200% in four years of the numbers of K-12 schools offering

Chinese, growing from 264 in 2004 to almost 800 in 2008 (Asia Society & College Board, 2008)¹.

In addition to K-12 schools, the rising popularity of Mandarin is thriving in the college level. The Modern Language Association (MLA) conducted a survey in 2007. The result shows that there was a 20% increase in the class enrollment for the Mandarin classes at American colleges and universities from 1998 to 2002. Such extraordinary growth of the popularity of Mandarin learning jumped by 51% during the period of 2002 to 2006.² Taken together, there was an 81% increase in the class enrollments for Mandarin classes in postsecondary institutions in the United States (MLA, 2007).

America provides an excellent example of the growing interests in the teaching and learning of Mandarin. On one hand, U.S. government keeps promoting the importance of Mandarin learning and teaching. On the other hand, the educational system in the U.S. has been trying to meet the demand for increased enrollments to enable more students to develop a functional proficiency in Mandarin. As a result, Mandarin learning can be seen easily in the public. For example, a lot of Chinese books and Chinese dictionaries are released each year, and commercials advertising Mandarin learning schools and programs are commonly seen. Scholars in applied linguistics also remark, “Chinese is present in public policy, educational settings and socio-demographics in an extraordinarily diverse and rich array of contexts, as cultural capital and as instrumental attraction on an unprecedented scale” (Bianco, 2007, p.24).

¹ For detailed information, see Asia Society’s November 17, 2008 newsletter at <http://asiasociety.org/education-learning/policy-initiatives/state-initiatives/expand-world-language-programs>

² For the full text of the survey, see the November 2007 release of the Modern Language Association at http://www.mla.org/pdf/enrollment_survey_release.pdf

Meanwhile, the announcement and data provide a window on the growth to learn Mandarin, as well as raise the question about the Mandarin investment as American citizens are being negotiated, especially the adolescent learners. The following is to explain why the adolescent learners' Mandarin investment becomes the focus in this study.

1.2 Investment in Mandarin from high school to college

Situated in the changing context of Mandarin learning in the United States, Mandarin these days is changing from a less commonly taught language to a more commonly offered foreign language option in American secondary schools. The National Defense Education Act Title VI of 1958, now Title VI of the Higher Education Act, focused the introduction of the non-Western European languages to a limited number of graduate programs in select universities, so it did not have much impact on spreading the Mandarin learning in K-12 schools (Moor, Walton, & Lambert, 1992). There were two major initiatives – the Carnegie Foundation's initiative and the Geraldine Dodge Foundation's initiative – were established to introduce Mandarin to the schools in the U.S. in early 1960s throughout 2000s.

Table 1

Chinese students' enrollment from the 1960s through the early 2000s. (Table extract from Wang, 2010, p. 16)

Postsecondary	Secondary schools	Heritage Community schools	Total
34,153 (MLA, 2002)	24,000 (Draper & Hick, 2000)	82,675 (NCACLS, 1995) 6000 (CSAUS, 2003) 150,000 (McGinnis, 2003)	208,000 roughly

In addition, federal funding support has been limited to the Foreign language Assistance Program (FLAP). First enacted in 1988 and 1990, respectively, FLAP grant awarded state and local educational agencies to establish, improve, and expand foreign language study, including Mandarin, in elementary and secondary schools. Wang's research (2010) has taken the data together, and shows that there was a slow and gradual increase in both the K-12 and postsecondary sectors from the 1960s through the early 2000s in Table 1.

Mandarin learning started to expand rapidly when the paper "Call to Action" was produced at the National Language Conference hosted by The Department of Defense, State, and Education in 2004 (US Department of Defense, 2005). The paper "Call to Action" aims to improve the nation's foreign language and cultural competency, and Mandarin learning is one of the focuses. Cosponsored by the U.S. Departments of Defense, State, Education, and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) of 2006 with a proposed annual budget of 114 million dollars for the fiscal year 2007 was a response to the "Call to Action."³ Approximately 58% of the funding was awarded to the Chinese program (Wang, 2010). Since that time, a lot of effort has been put on the Chinese programs to increase the number of U.S. students studying and mastering Mandarin at the academic settings. For example, there are eight Chinese Flagship Programs founded to assist learners to reach the goal of global profession in the target language as well as the culture. The new project, such as STARTALK, was created to offer intensive Mandarin learning opportunities in the summer for both students and teachers from kindergarten through university.

³ For more information, see <http://exchanges.state.gov>

As the result, Mandarin becomes a prominent foreign language in the United States. One of the most significant demographics affecting education in the United States today is the exponential growth of the Mandarin learners population, as Wang (2010) has summarized the data in Table 2. I also have discussed the rapid growth of Mandarin learning earlier in section 1.1.

Table 2

Percentage of students studying Chinese in schools and colleges: 10 year comparison. (Table extract from Wang, 2010, p. 20)

Year	Elementary Schools	Secondary Schools	Postsecondary
1997	0.3%	1%	2.4% (1998)
2008	3%	4%	3.3% (2006)
Rate of change	+900%	+300%	+43.5%

However, too little is known about how these Mandarin learners take on the challenges of learning a new emergent language in the U.S. pre-college. As Ke (2012) points out, “The majority of Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) learning in the United States is from the pre-college. Yet, few empirical studies have focused on pre-college CFL learning” (p.98). If Mandarin learners at the pre-college level are an under-researched population, work on their transition from high school into college is virtually nonexistent. Moreover, the transition from high school to university often entails complex social, cultural, and emotional changes (e.g., Nathan, 2006). Yet, applied linguists have very rarely examined language learners during this transition. Thus, the importance of this study lies in filling the gap by studying the learning path

of the Mandarin learners during three periods: high school; the period between high school and university; and university.

The lack of research on the growing population of adolescents in U.S. high schools and universities provided the impetus for the study. Its initial purpose was to describe how these adolescent students negotiated the changing demands during the transition from high school to university. As the study progressed, I discovered that learning Mandarin in university might not even be a choice for them, and this became an increasingly salient issue. The details will be discussed in Chapter 5.

1.3 Investment at three levels: personal, familial, and institutional

The focus of this section is to discuss why the adolescent learners' investment in Mandarin can be discussed at three levels: personal, familial, and institutional, as they transit from high school to university.

Investment is defined as what “signal[s] the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it” (Norton, 2000, p.10). Based on the definition, there are two important elements which explain why adolescent learners' investment in Mandarin can be mediated at three levels: personal, familial, and institutional, as they transit from high school to university. The first element is the language learners themselves as multidimensional beings, and the second element is language learners' social contexts with which they interact. The following elaborates on these two elements in more detail.

1.3.1 Personal Level: identity and human agency

The definition of investment positions a language learner as a multidimensional being with a complex social history and multiple desires, so his or her investment is produced or

reproduced from social interactions. Such investment is subject to change. In order to examine the role of the language learners, subjectivity or social identity (Weedon, 1997) is used as a construct to investigate learners' investment because it provides a framework that defines who learners are, which identities are relevant in and out of the classroom, and what other influences can be at work, such as their relationships with their families. Thus, investment in Mandarin is seen as an investment in the learner's sense of self, which can become a locus of struggle and conflict changing across time and space. Several studies have documented the multiple and contradictory nature of identity categories that are constructed by and for language learners (see e.g., McKay & Wong, 1996; Siegal, 1996).

Specifically, language learners are the heart of the language learning process because they are agentive beings who can decide which language they want to invest in as well as when they should discontinue such investments. The personal level indicates the participants' views of themselves; that is, the students who attend Mandarin classes in colleges bring not only their personal histories from high school, but also their expectation of Mandarin learning and their own visions of the future they desire in the university and beyond. At the personal level, we learn what learners' capacity for making decisions and choices are about their Mandarin learning, and how they enhance their abilities to achieve goals in keeping with their investment in Mandarin.

1.3.2 Familial and institutional levels: social contexts

A focus on the identity and human agency of the language learner, however, requires not only paying attention to the ways that those identities are generated and connected to their lives, but also investigating particular social identities within a variety of social sites (referred to as family and the school henceforth), in which learners exercise their agency in forming and reforming their identities (DiLeonardo, 1984).

Norton (2000) adopted the idea of community of practice by advocating language learning as a form of social practice. The practices are considered normal in learners' daily lives, as Lave and Wenger's (1991) insistence on the need to conceptualize learning as situated within particular communities of practice in which learners participate in. In the study, I attempt to identify what the social environments in which the students are socially situated in order to understand how they negotiated multiple, dynamic, and often contradictory identities. As Harlan (2000) points out, "identity are locally understood and constantly remade in social relationships" (p. 37), I narrow down my research focus of the students' social environments into their school, classroom, and family. For adolescent L2 learners transitioning from high school to university, their social relationship may typically involve three environments: school, classroom, and family. These environments serve as sites of identity construction, allowing students to negotiate the often contradictory tensions they encounter as members of diverse communities.

For the family level, there is a strong connection between students' education in school and family influence (Eccles, 1993; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Lee & Croninger, 1994; Yang, 2010), especially for adolescent learners because families' beliefs and behaviors usually have a direct impact on students' learning in school. Duff (2008) explicitly states "the family was seen to be the site of social production and reproduction" (p. 25). Gee (1990) also discussed that primary, home-based discourses may or may not be congruent with the discourse of the school. For example, parents' attitudes toward students' Mandarin learning might be a determining factor for students to continue or discontinue with their learning (c.f. section 4.1). In addition, students' ethnic backgrounds might be another determining factor on their foreign language choices in school (c.f. section 4.1). Therefore, although language learning mostly happens in school, students' families indeed have a certain influence on adolescents' learning in school.

For the institutional level, much of the research that took place in educational institutions explores how schools categorize and position students with identities; how classroom curricula, social organization, and interactions serve to reinforce or contest these categories; and how students accommodate, resist, and counter identities imposed on them (see, e.g., Talmy, 2004; Thesen, 1997; Toohey, 1998, 2000). In this study, the institutional level refers to the students' study environment, which not only includes the classroom learning with the teachers and classmates, but also the learning in general on campus in both high school and university.

The classroom is an apparently important site to investigate learners' social identity because "pedagogical practices in language classrooms can either constrain or enable students in their re-imagining of possibilities for both the present and the future" (Norton, 2013, p. 17). Through classroom practices, students can create their identities through the interaction with Mandarin teachers and classmates. As Pittaway (2004) states "engaging investment at the classroom level involves interaction between an instructor and a learner." (p. 213) For the language instructors, they provide students with the access to the cultural and symbolic capital by implementing the curriculum to help learners achieve their learning goals. Yet, through these practices, they may also subordinate student identities by limiting students' access to language learning opportunities, as Cummins (1997) has observed teachers' and students' identities are mutually constituted. In addition, classmates may possibly bring a positive influence, or a negative influence, or even the mixture of the positive and negative feelings toward the class atmosphere. Thus, through the participation in Mandarin investment in school, as well as the interactions with the teachers and classmates, the learners are shaping and recreating their identities.

Thus, understanding learners' investment in Mandarin requires attention to not only how they position themselves, but also how identity is constructed and negotiated across social practices in contexts in which individuals learn the foreign languages. As De Costa (2010) mentions, "learning events need to be examined at a micro level – by way of analyzing learner positioning over stretches of time and as mediated through different forms of stylization – while situated against larger structural forces" (p. 779). Specifically, I pay close attention to how the changing identities of the adolescent learners within two different institutional settings is mediated at the personal, familial, and institutional levels. Because the interactions in students' schools, classrooms, and families help not only to facilitate or constrain learners' access to their investment in Mandarin from their communities, but also to shape the investment each student makes toward learning Mandarin in high schools as well as in universities. However, these three levels do not operate in isolation. As my study demonstrates, they interact with each other.

1.4 The present study

In this chapter, I begin by describing the current situation of Mandarin learning in the United States in section 1.1. I then address why it is important to conduct the research on adolescent learners as they transition from high school to university in section 1.2. I then outline the three levels of adolescent learners' investment in Mandarin: personal, familial, and institutional in section 1.3. Taken together, the purpose of this dissertation project is to investigate high school students' investment in Mandarin as they transit to university. By employing a qualitative study, I plan to focus on how changes in their investment can be mediated at three different levels: personal, institutional, and familial.

I begin, in chapter 2, with the conceptual framework and literature review. Here, I start out by explaining the notion of investment, drawing from the poststructuralist theory, with

reference to language learning and social identity. The reviews of recent research work are also examined in this chapter. In chapter 3, I articulate the procedures and methods which guide this study. I comment on my choice of the research sites, my relationship to these sites, and learners who participated in this study. Furthermore, I explain my approach to data collection and analysis which offers a detailed account of the study's design. Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 present the findings from the data, and shows how learners' investment is mediated at these three levels: personal, familial, and institutional by answering my research questions. In chapter 6, I conclude my study by offering a discussion of the implications of the research for both SLA research and foreign language pedagogy. The conclusion remarks and reflexivity are also included in this chapter.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

In this chapter, I begin with an outline of the conceptual framework drawing from poststructuralist theory. Specifically, I contextualize the construct of investment in light of the concept of subjectivity to explain the complex relationship between elements of investment, language learning, social identity, and power. Next, there is an overview of previous research on investment that has explored the relationship between the individual learner and his or her social environments. Finally, on the basis of the preceding discussions on the construct of investment through subjectivity, this study investigates how learners' investment in Mandarin is socially constructed at three levels: personal, familial, and institutional, as guided by the research questions.

2.1 Investment and poststructuralist theory

When discussing language learning, most studies adopted theories from second language acquisition (SLA), but in the present study, I adopted Norton's investment (1995) drawing from poststructuralist theory to investigate students' Mandarin learning. Investment is defined as what "signal[s] the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it" (Norton, 2000, p.10). Based on the definition, I adopted Norton's investment for two reasons: 1) because it presupposes that language learners as multidimensional beings, and 2) language learners are constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world.

First, the concept of investment from poststructuralist theory views a language learner as a multidimensional being with a complex social history and multiple desires, as opposed to traditional SLA research on motivation which views that every individual learner has a fixed and

unique trait. Motivation has been considered an important factor for achieving fluency in a second/foreign language (SL/FL), because it can presumably be enhanced in the appropriate psychosocial context or decreased in an inappropriate psychosocial context (Gardner & Lambert, 1959; Lukmani 1972). The empirical evidence has shown this from previous research in this line (Gardner et al., 1976 a; Gardner et al., 1976 b; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Dornyei, 1994; Dornyei, 1998; Dornyei, 2001; Dornyei & Clement, 2001). The previous and current research is very consistent in considering Gardner and Lambert (1959) as the founders of motivation in SLA. They established the framework for research on motivation, including integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation refers to a desire to communicate with people or to identify with the target community, while instrumental motivation focuses on its practical goals, such as a better career in the future. Another traditional model of motivation is intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation from McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, and Lowell (1953). Intrinsic motivation aims at achieving pleasure and satisfaction from learning process, whereas the extrinsic motivation emphasizes language learning as means to achieve certain goals. These two pairs of concepts are considered well matched: integrative motivation is to a large extent intrinsic, and instrumental motivation is extrinsic (Chambers, 1999). However, these fixed and unitary characteristics of motivation in a dichotomous way – integrative/intrinsic and instrumental/extrinsic – fail to take the complex social factors of each individual into consideration. Lantolf and Genung's (2002) study on an adult graduate student in learning Chinese as a foreign language testifies, "We wonder about the value of attempts to measure the amount of motivation a learner supposedly possesses as a way of predicting learning outcomes. Things appear to be much more complex and unstable than we may have suspected" (p. 191). Investment, on the contrary, is used as a concept in a comprehensive way to examine language

learners' desire to speak or their decision to remain silent. As Norton (1995) advocates, "the notion of investment conceives of the language learner, not as ahistorical and unidimensional, but as having a complex social history and multiple desire" (p.9).

Second, the construct of investment drawing from poststructuralist theory makes a meaningful connection between a learner's desire and commitment to learn a language, and their relationships to their social world, as opposed to the current SLA theories which inadequately conceptualize the relationship between the language learner and the social world (Norton, 1995). Specifically, early SLA theorists, in general, have drawn artificial distinctions between the language learner and the language learning context. On one hand, Krashen's (1981, 1982) affective filter is used to discuss language learners' affective variables, such as motivated or unmotivated, introverted or extroverted, in language learning. On the other hand, Schumann's (1976) social distance is used to determine whether a language learner is able to enhance his/her language learning based on how little or how great differences between the language learner group and the target language group. This distinction between the language learner and the language learning context raises questions: how could researchers not consider that such affective factors are frequently socially constructed in a complex language learning context? Would it be possible that both affective factors, introverted and extroverted, coexist in a single language learner? In order to solve these problems, the construct of investment drawing from poststructuralist theory offers a way to understand learners' variable desires to engage in social interaction and community practices. Thinking in terms of investment makes it possible to eliminate the artificial distinctions between the language learners and the learning context, and helps to discover how a learner's investment is socially constructed from their diverse experiences. As Norton (1995) supports, "[the] artificial distinctions are drawn between the

individual and social world [will] lead to arbitrary mapping of particular factors on either the individual or the social” (p.11). Thus, investment from poststructuralism is associated with structuralism, from universal or unchanging human behavior and social phenomena to more multileveled and complicated social world around us (Block, 2003). This opens up SLA beyond its roots in linguistics and cognitive psychology, and makes the link between language learning and the learners’ social world more evident (e.g., Duff & Uchida, 1997; McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton, 1995; Rampton, 1995; Toohey, 1998).

Therefore, it is the dynamic views of language learners and the complex relationship between the language learner and their social world makes the construct of investment from poststructuralist theory a fundamental theoretical framework in this study.

2.2 Framing investment: subjectivity

In this study, subjectivity (social identity) is used to frame investment, because the notion of subjectivity directly links individual language learners’ experiences and the social world (Norton, 1995). The term subjectivity is derived from the word subject, which “refer[s] roughly to a learner’s experience of the subjective aspects of language and of the transformations he or she is undergoing in the process of acquiring it” (Kramsch, 2009, p. 17). The definition of subject highlights the importance of individual language learners’ experiences. The term subjectivity takes one step further to connect the relationship between individual language learners and the social world. Subjectivity is defined as “the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world” (Weedon, 1997, p. 32). Subjectivity helps me to formulate the concept of investment, because investment from poststructuralist theory not only conceives a language learner as a

multidimensional being, but also values the relationship between language learners and their social practices. As Norton (1995) explains:

The notion [of investment] presupposes that when language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with target language speakers, but they are constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. Thus an investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner's own social identity, an identity which is constantly changing across time and space (p. 10-11).

From Norton's explanation, students' investment in language learning is seen as part of the ongoing process of identity construction. In this regard, there are three defining characteristics of subjectivity: "the multiple, non-unitary nature of the subject, subjectivity as a struggle, and subjectivity as changing over time" (Norton, 2000, p.125). These three defining characters of subjectivity make the notion of investment visible by helping me to understand how Mandarin learners' investment is socially and historically constructed from their social world with which they interact.

First, drawing from poststructuralism, subjectivity depicts the concept of the individual language learner as diverse and dynamic. In other words, subjectivity highlights the uniqueness of each individual. Even though the students in this study are from the same age group and share similar experience of learning Mandarin (i.e., taking Mandarin at the same school and for the same purpose of graduation requirement), their desires and complex social histories are different from each other. These differences are interwoven with their investment in language learning.

Second, subjectivity is produced or reproduced in a variety of social sites in which the person may be in conflict with others. For example, in my study, a Mandarin learner is perceived as passive when taking a test in class, but active when participating in a class activity.

Subjectivity as a site of struggle is conceived of both passive and active within a particular community and society.

Third, subjectivity encompasses the changing quality in their social world. For example, in my study, a Mandarin learner changed from an active learner to a marginalized learner as he transitioned from high school to university (c.f. section 4.2.1). Specifically, learners' investment is created or recreated in their social identities through their interactions with complex social contexts, and constantly evolves and changes over time. This study looks to expand the notion of the socially contextual significance of investment and identity.

Therefore, investment is closely connected to the ongoing production of a language learner's social identity, and students' social identities can be discussed through these three features: "the multiple, non-unitary nature of the subject, subjectivity as a struggle, and subjectivity as changing over time" (Norton, 2000, p.125). I will discuss how my research questions are formulated based on these three defining characters of subjectivity.

2.3 Investment, identity, power, and language learning

The concept of investment is originally from Bourdieu's (1977) economic metaphors. There, cultural capital is used to categorize different classes and groups in relation to a given social context. Some forms of cultural capital have a higher value than others in a given social context. As Bourdieu (1991) sees linguistic varieties are assigned values and hierarchically organized based on the constructed social spaces. In this light, Norton (2000) expands the usage of investment into the field of language learning, and links the relationship between cultural capital, investment, and language learning:

If learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value

of their cultural capital. Learners expect or hope to have a good return from that investment – a return that will give them access to hitherto unattainable resources. (p. 10)

Based on this, a language learner is like a financial investor in the stock market – both expect a profitable return from their investment. In the case of language learning, a learner’s investment has a purpose, which depends on the relationship he/she has within a given environment. Learners’ investment will be reassessed if their perceived cultural capital increases or decreases.

Since the construct of investment from poststructuralist theory was introduced in the field of language education, SLA researchers have started to pay attention to the relationship between language learners and the learning contexts through subjectivity. To examine learners’ investment as a site of identity construction in their social world, language is “the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed” (Weedon, 1997, p. 21). Learning a foreign language is not simply a skill that is acquired with hard work and dedication, but through a complex social practice that engages the identities of language learners. Norton (1995) takes one step further, stating the following:

It is through language that a person negotiates a sense of self within and across different sites at different points in time, and it is through language that a person gains access to – or is denied access to – powerful social networks that give learners the opportunity to speak. (p. 13)

The role of language is constituted by a language learner’s social identity, so language is not just a neutral form of communication, but a practice that is socially constructed from learners’ participation in events and activities from their social world. In such complex social practices, students’ investment in Mandarin is multiple and identities hybrid. Specifically, I draw

from the poststructuralist perspective (e.g., Block, 2006; Miller 2003; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004) and define the relationship between language learning and identity as mutually constitutive through the social practices. As a complex social being, an individual learner's identity is produced both within and through language.

However, I cannot discuss how the concept of investment is used in my study without taking the crucial element of power, because social identity is produced in a variety of social sites which are structured by relations of power. Power relations refers to the “socially constructed relations among individuals, institutions and communities through which symbolic and material resources in a society are produced” (Norton, 2000, p. 7). In my study, I will demonstrate how learners' identity construction is intertwined with the power relations between language learners and the social world (c.f. section 4.2). As Norton (1995) advocates that the construct of investment can more adequately explain “the complex relationship between relations of power, identity, and language learning” (p. 17). The power relations of the wider social context are essential in explaining how the shifting power dynamics within one interaction affect the conditions for language acquisition. There is now a wealth of research that has recognized the issues of identity and power are central to SLA (see e.g., Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Block, 2003; Clarke, 2008; Day, 2002; Kannon, 2003, 2008; Toohey, 2000).

2.4 Previous research studies on investment

The concept of investment I used in this study was coined by Norton (1995). Norton conducted research in Canada in the 1990s to illustrate how English language learners' investment and identity change across time and space. She found that learners' complex social world influenced the extent to which they invest in language learning. From this, Norton surmised that learners' desire to learn a language was not a question of motivation, but rather the

way in which learners viewed themselves, and their relationships to their social world. The examples in Norton's study show that the five immigrant women were highly motivated learners of English, yet there were particular social settings under which the women were uncomfortable and unlikely to speak. Inspired by Norton, I am going to use the concept of investment to explain Mandarin learners' language learning from their social and historical nature, which helps me to understand motivation from a sociolinguistic perspective, and extends motivation comprehensively in the field of SLA. Specifically, the construct of investment is not only associated with a learner's commitment to learning the target language, but also examines how a learner's Mandarin learning is constructed through their social world. Such investment plays a powerful facilitating or hindering role in the learner's language learning, as the previous research studies have shown.

Earlier studies that drew from Norton's construct of investment were mostly from English learning in the North American context. For instance, McKay and Wong (1996), by examining Chinese adolescent immigrant students in the United States, extended the construct of investment in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The study provides evidence of the impact of social positioning by teachers and peers on an individual's language learning. Skilton-Sylvester (2002) has drawn on the construct of investment by conducting her research with four Cambodian women in adult ESL classes in the United States. She argues that an understanding of a woman's domestic and professional identities is necessary to explain learners' investment and thus participation in particular adult ESL programs.

Later in the year, although researchers' interest in the construct of investment has been used in Spanish and English immersion schools, English learning is still the focus in the literature. For example, Potowski (2004) adopted the construct of investment to understand

students' use of Spanish in a dual Spanish and English immersion program in the United States. The study proves that students' language choices in the classroom can be seen as part of their identity performance. Barse and Jong (2008) used the construct of investment to examine Latino and Anglo adolescents' use of Spanish and English in a secondary two-way immersion program. The findings suggest a concern about the unequal distribution between English and Spanish. As students move from elementary to secondary level, English becomes the dominate language because of its potential linguistic and cultural investment.

In more recent years, even though the construct of investment has been used worldwide, researchers still pay great attention to English learning. For example, Gu (2008) used the construct of investment to discuss the English learning in a Chinese society by conducting research with college students from non-urban areas in China. This study demonstrated how English learning influenced learners, with respect to not only linguistic improvement, but also their identities, values, and ideologies. Moving from the Mainland to Hong Kong, Gao, Cheng, and Kelly (2008) adopted the construct of investment to investigate the use of an English club, a weekly English discussion group, for mainland students to practice English in Hong Kong. The result shows that the English club serves as a source of mutual support where they could socialize as well as learn English.

In addition to the North American and the Asian contexts regarding learners' investment in English learning, the construct of investment is also being used in the African context to better understand students and teachers' investment in English and digital literacy (Early & Norton, 2014; Mutonyi & Norton, 2007; Norton & Early, 2011; Norton, Jones, & Ahimbisibwe, 2011; Norton & Williams, 2012; Tembe & Norton, 2008). The findings suggest that both students and

teachers' identities are socially imaginable through investment in English and the digital literacy. Thus, the construct of investment has been indexed with imagined future and imagined identities.

Beyond the northern parts of the world, research studies on learners' investment in English learning from the southern hemisphere have also emerged. In Australia, for instance, Ollerhead (2012) has drawn on the construct of investment to investigate how the learners' multiple identities were developing in low-level adult ESL classrooms with respect to their teachers' responses. The result indicates that learners' hopes for the future in the imagined communities are essential for their identity construction.

However, there are scant research studies on other foreign languages besides English. For instance, Haneda (2005) used the construct of investment to examine two Canadian university students in an advanced Japanese course, and concluded that their multiple membership in different communities may have shaped the way they invested differently in Japanese writing.

From the discussions above, these previous research studies have informed that subjectivity (social identity) constructed within social practices is paramount to understand learners' investment in a foreign language, whether they are in North America or other continents in the world. Also, these previous studies have brought to light that students' investment interplays not only between their lived experiences and the social world, but also extend to their imagined communities and imagined identities. This dynamic view of investment has explored language learning in different places, such as English learning in the North American context (McKay & Wong, 1996; Skilton-Sylveser, 2002), English learning in the Asian context (Gu, 2008; Gao, Cheng, & Kelly, 2008), English learning in the African context (Early & Norton, 2014; Mutonyi & Norton, 2007; Norton & Early, 2011; Norton, Jones, & Ahimbisibwe, 2011; Norton & Williams, 2012; Tembe & Norton, 2008), English learning in the

Australian context (Ollerhead, 2012), Japanese learning in the North American context (Haneda, 2005), English and French learning in the European context (Zeither & Bemporad, 2014), and immersion programs in English and Spanish in the North American context (Bears & Jong, 2008; Potowski, 2004). However, to date, little attention has been paid to the research investigating learners' investment in Mandarin learning in the United States. Addressing this gap in the literature, this study examines how the investment in Mandarin takes place in the United States.

2.5 The research questions

On the basis of the preceding discussions on the construct of investment through subjectivity, investment signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language and their sometimes ambivalent desire to learn and practice it (Norton, 1995). This study aims to explore how learners' investment in Mandarin is socially constructed at three levels: personal, familial, and institutional. In so doing, subjectivity (social identity) is used to frame how students' investment in Mandarin is socially and historically constructed through the complex relationships between language learners' identities and the learning contexts. As identity is fluid, multiple, and a site of struggle, learner's investment is complex, contradictory, and in a state of flux (Norton, 2013).

The research questions are:

1. Why do students invest in Mandarin in high school? Why do students continue to invest in Mandarin in university?
2. Are there any changes in terms of learners' investment in learning Mandarin in the two academic settings (high school and university)? What factors may have contributed to these changes?

Chapter 3

Methodology

The focus of this study is to investigate learners' investment in Mandarin through subjectivity, a poststructuralist theory. From this theoretical lens, each individual is a multidimensional being with a complex social history and multiple desires. In addition, the opportunity to explore the investment in a target language, which is essential to language learning, is fundamentally socially constructed. Considering such social nature of language learning in this study, a qualitative research method is ideal. Because it allows me to display more detailed information and gain an in-depth understanding (Duff, 2008; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). This study utilizes a qualitative approach to examine how learners' Mandarin investment is socially constructed as they transition from high school to university.

In this chapter, I describe my methods of data collection and analysis. I begin Section 3.1 by outlining the reasons which guided my choice of charter schools as the site for my dissertation study. Next, I detail the structure of the Chinese program at these three charter schools. The section ends with a discussion of my research relationship with these sites and the procedures I followed for securing permission for the study. Section 3.2 describes the students I have recruited, and my choice of these advanced students as the focus of my research. The students' teachers and one of each student's parents have consented to help my research. Sections 3.3 and 3.4 consider my methods of data collection and data analysis respectively. Narrative inquiry is used for data collection. Thematic analysis and discourse analysis are used for data analysis. In addition, I summarize the analytic procedure used for data, and the relationship between the data and my research questions.

3.1 Sites

This research was conducted in the city of Tucson. For the most part, large Hispanic immigrant communities live on the south side of town, while the richer Anglo communities live on the north side of town. The study took place in three charter schools: Sunny Desert High A, Sunny Desert High B, and Diamond Star High (all school names are pseudonyms) (see Table 3). Sunny Desert High A is located on the northwest side of Tucson. Sunny Desert High B is located on the north side of Tucson, Arizona, United States. Diamond Star is located on the west side of Tucson, Arizona, United States.

Table 3

The geography of the charter schools

Sites	Locations
Sunny Desert High A	Northwest side of Tucson
Sunny Desert High B	North side of Tucson
Diamond Star High	West side of Tucson

3.1.1 The charter schools

I chose these three charter schools as the sites for my study for several reasons.

First, “charter schools are publicly funded entities that enjoy freedom from many of the regulations under which traditional public schools operate” (Vergari, 2002, p. 2). For the foreign language learning, unlike most public schools under state regulation only require one-year or two-year foreign language learning, all three schools are among the handful of schools in the local community that offer a comprehensive Chinese language program. Course offerings range

from introductory language classes to the advanced level. Students have the opportunity to continue their language studies beyond the elementary level.

Second, the schools' proficiency-based language requirement has resulted in an emphasis on foreign language learning. All three schools have the preparation of the Advanced Placement Chinese Language and culture (AP Chinese) classes (College Board, n.d.). As the AP Chinese course intends to prepare students for the AP Chinese test, all the students are expected to receive at least a score of 3 and above out of 6. The score of 3 and above is often interpreted as salient to high school students. It is institutionally defined as the cutoff line for students to transfer credit hours, and waive some introductory Chinese classes at the university level (see section 3.1.2). Although there is no official document to standardize the AP credit policy in colleges/universities, most colleges/universities do take the AP Chinese test seriously and have their own policies for students to transfer AP credit hours. Take the University of Arizona for example; a score of 3 is equivalent to 10 credits, a score of 4 is equivalent to 15 credits and so on⁴. Several prestigious institutions also endorse the AP test in similar ways (e.g., University of Washington⁵, University of Pennsylvania⁶, Purdue University⁷, Rice University⁸, etc.) Thus, Completion of either a certain number of language courses, or passing the AP Chinese test is required to graduate from the schools, which probes their expertise in four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Third, Sunny Desert High has an International Student Program, and Diamond Star High has a partner school in China. All three schools not only attract a number of international

⁴ Please see the link for more detail. <http://catalog.arizona.edu/2011-12/policies/apexam.htm>

⁵ Please see the link for more detail. <http://admit.washington.edu/Admission/Freshmen/University/AP>

⁶ Please see the link for more detail. <http://www.admissions.upenn.edu/apply/freshman-admission/ap-ib-and-pre-university-credit>

⁷ Please see the link for more detail. <http://www.admissions.purdue.edu/transferecredit/universityboardap.php>

⁸ Please see the link for more detail. https://registrar.rice.edu/students/ap_credit/

students from China, but also encourage students to study a short-term in China. While English is still the dominant language at school, being bilingual in Mandarin and English is generally regarded as positive or even advantageous, especially since Mandarin now is offered from kindergarten to twelfth grade. The importance of taking Mandarin as a foreign language is explicitly stated in Sunny Desert High A's website.

Foreign language acquisition has been shown to improve critical thinking, increase creativity, and stimulate learning in many different subject areas. For most students, studying Mandarin involves learning a new syntax, which helps them better understand the various parts of languages and how these parts relate to each other. Mandarin class integrates language development with the study of Chinese culture and history, allowing students to better appreciate other cultures in addition to their own. (Excerpt from the Sunny Desert High A's website)

From the website, foreign language learning is valued in school because it helps to not only improve students' critical thinking, but also stimulate students' learning in different subject areas. Mandarin is especially promoted in school, because it very different from English alphabets, that opens a new window for students to appreciate other languages and cultures in addition to their own.

Finally, students' parents fully support the students' Mandarin learning in these three charter schools, and many of them aspire to careers in which expertise in a language other than English is an asset. The parental support is essential in my study because the parents are the people who usually make the school choice for these adolescent learners. Given the increased presence of Chinese speakers in the United States, Mandarin is generally regarded as the

practical choice for those studying a foreign language at the schools, as it offers many potential benefits to students' future (See Chapter 4).

Table 4 offers a brief overview of the Chinese programs at these three Charter schools, and the Chinese programs will be discussed individually in the following.

Table 4

The overview of the Chinese programs at the Sunny Desert High and Diamond Star High

	Sunny Desert High A & B	Diamond Start High
The elementary school	Mandarin is a compulsory subject	
(Grades 1 – 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 1 – 4: 40 minutes of Mandarin class every day • 5th grade: Latin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal Mandarin learning: Mandarin teachers stop by occasionally
The junior high school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6th grade: Latin • 7 & 8th grades: 90 minutes FL class on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays (4 choices: Mandarin, Latin, Spanish, and French) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-year is the minimal requirement. • Formal Mandarin learning in classroom: 50 minutes of Mandarin class every day
The senior high school	50 minutes of FL (Mandarin) class	
(Grades 9 – 12)	every day	

3.1.2 The AP Chinese test

The Advanced Placement (AP) is a program in the United States and Canada created by the College Board which offers college-level curricula and examinations to high school students.

The AP Chinese Language and Culture (the AP Chinese) is one of the World Languages and Cultures courses⁹. The AP Chinese was launched in 2007 and is used to assess students' communication skills in Mandarin Chinese, as well as knowledge of Chinese culture. The AP Chinese is an appropriate indicator to situate my study, because it sets a standard where Mandarin learners are able to know their Chinese language proficiency level; the standard from which I chose my participants.

Section I: Multiple Choice | 70 Questions | ~ 1 Hour, 30 Minutes | 50% of Exam Score

- ▶ **Part A: Listening** (2 sections; 20 minutes total)
 - ▶ Interpersonal Communication: Rejoinders (10-15 questions; 10 minutes)
 - ▶ Interpretive Communication: Listening Selections (15-20 questions; 10 minutes)
- ▶ **Part B: Reading Selections** (35-40 questions; 60 minutes)

Section II: Free Response | 4 Tasks | ~ 45 Minutes | 50% of Exam Score

- ▶ **Part A: Writing** (2 sections; 30 minutes total)
 - ▶ Presentational Writing: Story Narration (1 prompt; 15 minutes)
 - ▶ Interpersonal Writing: Email Response (1 prompt; 15 minutes)
- ▶ **Part B: Speaking** (2 sections, 11 minutes total)
 - ▶ Interpersonal Speaking: Conversation (1 conversation: 6 prompts; 4 minutes)
 - ▶ Presentational Speaking: Cultural Presentation (1 prompt; 7 minutes)

Figure 1. The format of the AP Chinese test. (Source: the College Board website.)

⁹ AP courses are rigorous, college-level classes in a variety of subjects. The AP Chinese course is categorized into the World languages and Cultures. For detailed information regarding AP courses, please see: <https://apstudent.collegeboard.org/apcourse>

The test is divided into two sections. The first section contains the listening and reading parts, and the second section contains the writing and speaking parts¹⁰. Figure 1 summarizes the AP Chinese test. The test is administered on a computer. Both simplified and traditional characters are provided for students to choose from. During the test, students read on the screen, listen through headphones, type using the keyboard, and speak into a microphone. The test is approximately two hours long.

AP Examination	Minimum Credit-Granting Score	Number of Semester Hours	Number of Semesters
Art History	3	6	2
Art/Studio (Drawing or General Portfolio)	3	6	2
Biology	3	8	2
Calculus AB	3	3 to 4	1
Calculus BC	3	6 to 8	2
Chemistry	3	8	2
Chinese Language and Culture	3	8	2
	4	12	3
	5	16	4

Figure 2. AP Credit-Granting Recommendations. (Source: the College Board website.)

According to the College Board website, the AP is a nationally recognized program and AP tests offer a consistent measure of academic achievement. Specifically, the American

¹⁰ For detailed information of the AP Chinese test, please visit the College Board website: http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/members/exam/exam_information/157009.html

Council on Education (ACE) and the College Board recommend that colleges and universities award credit for AP scores of 3 or higher on any AP Examination¹¹, including the AP Chinese test. The scoring criteria on the AP Chinese test is from 0 to 6. Figure 2 shows how the scores on the AP Chinese test are awarded as credit to students at the college level.

Furthermore, the AP Program recognizes high school students who have demonstrated outstanding college-level achievement through AP tests with the AP Scholar Awards¹². The award related to the World Language and Culture course is AP International Diploma (APID). This award requires students to earn scores of 3 or higher on: 1) five or more total AP tests, 2) two AP tests from one world language and culture course and one English course, 3) one AP test offering a global perspective, 4) one AP test from either the sciences, or math and computer science, 5) one additional AP test; cannot be English or a world language. Thus, students, who take the AP Chinese test, acknowledge APID is the highest honor for their language skills recognition, especially for students who are interested in study abroad in a foreign country or are interested in pursuing university study outside of America.

To sum up, the AP is important for high school students because it represents a significant collaboration between colleges/universities and secondary schools. Specifically, the AP tests allow high school students to transfer credit hours at the college level. It also serves as a tool to identify students who will perform well in subsequent courses within the same discipline and will have the potential to succeed in rigorous curricula and in college (Mattern, Marini, & Shaw, 2013; Murphy & Dodd, 2009; Patterson, Packman, & Kobrin, 2011).

¹¹ For detailed information regarding the AP Credit-Granting Recommendations, please see:

<https://aphighered.collegeboard.org/setting-credit-placement-policy/credit-granting-recommendations>

¹² For detailed information regarding the AP Scholar Awards, please see: <https://apscore.collegeboard.org/scores/ap-awards/ap-scholar-awards>

3.1.3 The Chinese program at Sunny Desert High

Sunny Desert High is an educational group, including charter schools and independent private schools across the United States, and an international school in China. The Sunny Desert High educational group is still expanding its schools, and hopes to educate students at an internationally competitive level. Sunny Desert High A was established in 2010, and Sunny Desert High B was established in 2012. Both schools are divided into two tiers: lower school (fifth through eighth grade), and upper school (ninth through twelfth grade). Unlike the two-year basic foreign language requirement in most public schools, charter schools are operated independently, and they are able to offer more foreign language classes. Students are required to take Latin classes during their fifth and sixth grades. For students from seventh to twelfth grade, they are asked to choose one foreign language among four choices: Mandarin, Spanish, French, and Latin, and stick with it until they graduate. In Grades 7 and 8, students take 90 minutes of a foreign language class on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Students in Grade 9 through 12 take 50 minutes of a foreign language class each day. There is an AP Chinese class offered when students are in eleventh grade, and students are either to take the AP Chinese test or take a mock AP Chinese test at the end of their AP Chinese class to demonstrate their proficiency in Mandarin. The advanced Mandarin class is offered when students are in twelfth grade.

The main difference between Sunny Desert High A and Sunny Desert High B is that Sunny Desert High A opened up a primary school (Kindergarten through fourth grade) in August 2014. Students are now required to take Mandarin as a compulsory subject from first grade to fourth grade. It is a 40-minute Mandarin class each day. Since the new school policy, created in August 2014, will not affect my participants and my research, I do not discuss the Chinese program in these two schools separately.

3.1.4 The Chinese program at Diamond Star High

Diamond Star High was opened in 1998, and is divided into two tiers: elementary (kindergarten through fifth grade) and secondary (sixth through twelfth grade). In elementary school, students are placed based on their age. In secondary school, unlike most schools which place students based on their age, incoming students have to take a placement test before enrolling. Students are placed in the classes, including Mandarin, based upon the results of the placement test.

Students are exposed to Mandarin starting at the fifth grade level. The Mandarin teacher would come to class sometimes to teach students some basic Mandarin.¹³ Starting from the sixth grade, students can enroll in any Mandarin classes, from introductory to AP Chinese. If they pass the AP Chinese test, they can continue with advanced Mandarin class.

The basic requirement for the foreign language is two years, and Mandarin is the only foreign language class available since 2008. After taking Mandarin classes for two years to fulfill the foreign language requirement, students are free to choose to continue or discontinue learning Mandarin. Most students are encouraged to continue to take the intermediate or advanced Mandarin class throughout their stay at Diamond Star High.

There is another way to fulfill the foreign language requirement by getting a score of three or higher on any AP foreign language tests. The options are French, German, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Mandarin, and Spanish from the College Board. Since the city of Tucson is close to the Mexican border, a lot of students are Hispanic and fluent in Spanish. Under this situation, they can take the AP Spanish test and get at least a score of three to be exempt from taking Mandarin classes.

¹³ Although Mandarin classes are currently offering from Kindergarten through twelfth grades, the Mandarin class were offered only from fifth through twelfth grades during my participant's school year.

3.1.5 Research relationship

With respect to obtaining permission for my study in the three charter schools, Sunny Desert High A, Sunny Desert High B, and Diamond Star High, I emailed the administrators and Mandarin teachers and shared my dissertation proposal with them. I also told them that I had chosen their schools as the sites for my research, because of their reputation as good places for Chinese language learning. In subsequent conversations with the teachers and administrators of these three schools, they all expressed their interest in having me conduct the study in their institutes.

My status as a part-time Mandarin teacher for the past academic year (2014-2015) at Sunny Desert High A afforded me close contact with both its teachers and students. In addition, at the time of my teaching, I was also the Mandarin subject leader for the Sunny Desert High educational group, which afforded me close working relationships with the school staff and the administrators. Under this situation, I was able to gain access to Sunny Desert High B, another site of Sunny Desert High.

The Mandarin teacher at Diamond Star High is a friend of mine. We met each other at a conference in 2009. Because of our friendship, she helped me get in touch with the administrator and gain the permission to conduct my research project at Diamond Star High.

As soon as I obtained the permission from the schools' administrators, I consented the Mandarin teachers. Then, I emailed the recruiting announcement to the teachers, so they would help me send out my recruiting announcement to students' parents and to explain the research to the students to see if they were interested. Those who were interested in my research project would be directed to contact me via email. According to an Institutional Review Board (IRB) policy, if participants are under 18 years of age (minors), the regulations require permission from

their parents before I receive assent from these minors. I first asked for the students' parents' help in allowing me to interview them and their children twice to understand the students' progress as Mandarin learners from high school to university. Once I got the email response from the students' parents, I made an appointment with them, briefly introduced my research project, went over the consent form, and gave them the consent form to fill out. After I obtained consent from the students' parents, I scheduled a time to meet with the students, went over the assent form, gave them the assent form to fill out, and began the research. To ensure that there would not be any miscommunication, I explained my study in English both orally and in the consent form, although the language of the classroom is Mandarin.

3.1.6 The universities

After all the students graduated from high school, they were accepted into a four-year university where Mandarin learning is available. Table 5 offers a brief overview of the background information after the students entered their universities. Two are at four-year public universities, one is at a four-year private university, one is at a four-year liberal arts university, and two are at an Ivy League university. They all went from high school to university directly, except for Cecile, who decided to take a gap year at a martial arts school in China. All of them clearly knew what major(s) they are going to pursue, except for Kelly, who was still struggling with her major and still had not made up her mind after her first semester in university. Four students are pursuing one major, and the other two are pursuing a double major. All the students had a specific plan for their Mandarin learning in university.

Table 5

A brief overview of each student's background after they entered their universities

Student	Location¹⁴	Type of school	Major	Plan for learning Mandarin
Andy	West: Mountain	a four-year private university	Physics	Minor
Cecile	Gap year in East China	a martial arts school	Practice martial arts mainly & supplemented with a Chinese language class and classes related to Chinese culture	Immersion
	West: Pacific	a four-year liberal arts university	Environmental studies	Double major or minor
David	West: Mountain	a four-year public university	Information technology	Minor
Kelly	Northeast: New	an Ivy League university	Biology or other science (haven't decided)	Probably minor or study
Nina	England		Neuro science & Pre-medical (double major)	abroad in China
Sherry	South: South Atlantic	a four-year public university	Chemical engineering & Paper science and engineering (double major)	Minor

¹⁴ The geographic divisions of the United States are officially recognized by the United States Census Bureau. There are four regions with nine divisions. For detailed information, please see: http://www.census.gov/econ/census/help/geography/regions_and_divisions.html

3.1.7 The Chinese programs at universities

Table 6 summarizes the information about the Chinese programs at each student's university. Every student goes to a different university, except for Kelly and Nina, who go to the same university.

At Andy's university, five language programs (Chinese, French, German, Russian, and Spanish) together form a department to help students to build language skills and cultural awareness from the beginning to advanced level. Students in the Chinese program can take the classes either on campus or at the sister school in Beijing, China. The courses "Advanced Topics in Mandarin Chinese I (CHN 401) and II (CHN 402)" are only offered in each Fall semester at the sister school. The department only offers a minor in Chinese and a minor in Chinese education. Neither the major degree in Chinese nor the major degree in Chinese education is offered by the department.

Cecile took a gap year at a martial arts school in East China. The school mainly recruits students internationally, but has a few spots for domestic students. At school, all the students have to practice martial arts for three hours on weekday mornings. Although practicing martial arts is the focus at school, there are some elective courses, including Buddhism, Daoism, Mandarin Chinese, Chinese painting, calligraphy, massage, and acupuncture, for students to choose from in the afternoon and evening. The Mandarin Chinese language course meets three days a week (Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday). There is only one Mandarin Chinese language course available, so students with all different proficiency levels are placed in this class. Because of the fact that most students come here to practice martial arts that is taught in English, their Mandarin ability is very limited. Also, students come and go with different lengths at school,

there are always new students in the language class. Thus, the Mandarin Chinese language course is at the introductory level and is offered by translators.

At Cecile's university, four languages (Chinese, French, Japanese, and Spanish) together form a language and culture program. Cecile's university requires all students to take a minimum of four language courses, one of which must be at the 202-level or above in the target language of the study-abroad destination. In addition, it requires that all students participate in a semester studying abroad during their junior year. Students who study Chinese have four possible locations for their study abroad: three cities in China and Taipei in Taiwan.

At David's university, Chinese and Japanese together form the B.A. program in Asian languages. Both a major and a minor in Chinese are available, but classes are only offered at one particular campus. In addition, the university offers an intensive eight-week Chinese language summer program in Chengdu, China. Furthermore, there is a Chinese Language Flagship Program¹⁵ to help students achieve a superior level of proficiency in Chinese (based on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines¹⁶). The Chinese Language Flagship Program has its own overseas summer programs, and provides students more options for study abroad locations, and more advanced level courses for students to take. All Flagship students are required to participate in a Capstone year¹⁷ in China, where they have to enroll in classes at a partnered university, along with an internship utilizing Chinese in each individual student's future career field.

¹⁵ Chinese flagship programs provide undergraduate students with pathways to professional-level proficiency in Chinese. For detailed information, please see: <https://thelanguageflagship.org/content/chinese>

¹⁶ For each skill (speaking, writing, listening, and reading), the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines identify five major levels of proficiency: distinguished, superior, advanced, intermediate, and novice. For detailed information, please see: <http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012#sthash.ysqRSPSy.dpuf>

¹⁷ Once students have completed their domestic portion of the Flagship program they are eligible to apply for their Capstone year, which takes place at one of the two Flagship overseas centers (Beijing or Nanjing in China).

Table 6

A brief overview of the Chinese programs at students universities

	Course offerings	Study abroad program	Degree awarded
Andy's university	1) Chinese language courses: beginning to advanced level 2) Chinese content courses	at a sister school in Beijing, China	1) minor in Chinese 2) minor in Chinese education
Cecile's martial arts school	1) Required course: martial arts 2) Elective course: Chinese content courses	N/A	N/A
Cecile's university	Not specified in the website	1) a semester in students' junior year. 2) three cities in China & Taipei in Taiwan	Not specified in the website
David's university	1) Chinese language courses: beginning to advanced level 2) Chinese content courses	1) a summer program in Chengdu, China 2) Chinese language flagship program	1) major in Chinese 2) minor in Chinese
Kelly & Nina's university	1) Chinese language courses: beginning to advanced level 2) Chinese language drill 3) Chinese content courses	at a sister school in Beijing, China	1) major in Chinese 2) minor in Chinese

Sherry's university	1) Chinese language courses: beginning to intermediate level	a summer program in Nanjing, China & sponsored by the Confucius Institute	1) minor in Chinese 2) major in Chinese (new as of Fall 2015)
	2) Chinese content courses		

At Kelly and Nina's university, four languages (Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, and Japanese) together form a department. Class offerings range from introductory to advanced level. Students are required to take a language drill section while taking a language course. The drill sections reinforce what students have been learning from the regular language class, and emphasize speaking skills. Study abroad programs are available every summer and fall at a sister school in Beijing, China.

At Sherry's university, eleven languages (Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish) together form a department. Class offerings range from introductory to intermediate level, and the advanced level is not available. The study abroad program is sponsored by the Confucius Institute, and it is only available in the summer. The department has provided a minor in Chinese for many years (according to the website, "in the last two decades"), but a major in Chinese became available as of Fall 2015.

3.2 Participants

As implied by my choice of the research sites, for adolescent L2 learners transitioning from high school to university, their social relationships may typically involve three environments: school, classroom, and family. These environments serve as sites of identity construction, allowing students to negotiate the often contradictory tensions they encounter as

members of diverse communities. Therefore, the participants in my study were six students from these three charter schools, as well as their parents and their Mandarin teachers in high school and university.

3.2.1 Students

Six students have consented to participate in this study. In the initial interview, they all expressed their intentions to continue learning Mandarin at the university. In addition, they have all received a score of 3 and above out of 6 on the AP Chinese test. This score is typically interpreted as an indication that the students have reached the basic communication skill in Mandarin. It also allows them to transfer credit hours when they are at the college level, so they can skip some introductory Mandarin classes and take the intermediate level or advanced level classes. It is these advanced learners this study looks to expand on; otherwise students simply retake the beginning level class in university.

Of these six students, three were from Sunny Desert High A, two were from Sunny Desert High B, and one was from Diamond Star High. Two were male students, and four were female students. One of the six students is an Asian-American student; two of the six students are Hispanic-American students; two of the six students are European-American students; and one of the six students is an American student. All the students were at the age of 18, except for Andy, who graduated one year early from high school, and he was 16 years old. All the students' first language is English, except for Nina whose first language is Vietnamese. Although all the students had begun their study of Mandarin at school, and had engaged in formal classroom learning for at least five years, Kelly and Nina started their Mandarin learning as early as in their elementary schools. Table 7 offers a brief overview of the students' backgrounds. The

information was gathered through interviews and Skype chats. All names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the participants.

Table 7

A brief overview of the students' backgrounds

Name	School	Gender	Race	Age	First language	Years of Chinese learning	AP score
Andy	Sunny Desert High A	Male	White	16	English	5 (7 th – 11 th)	3
Cecile	Sunny Desert High B	Female	White	18	English	6 (7 th – 12 th)	3
David	Sunny Desert High B	Male	White	18	English	6 (7 th – 12 th)	5
Kelly	Diamond Star High	Female	Hispanic (non-white)	18	English	8 (5 th – 12 th)	4
Nina	Sunny Desert High A	Female	Asian	18	Vietnamese	9 (elementary – 12 th)	4
Sherry	Sunny Desert High A	Female	Half Hispanic & half white	18	English	5 (8 th – 12 th)	3

Andy

Andy identifies as White. Andy is the second oldest child in his family. He has one brother (1 year older than Andy) and two sisters (3 years younger than Andy & 4 years younger than Andy). Andy switched to Sunny Desert High A in Grade 7, and started to learned Mandarin at that time. Both his brother and one of sisters chose Mandarin as their foreign language, but his youngest sister chose Spanish, instead. Both Andy and his brother, similar to their father, graduated one year early from high school.

Cecile

Cecile identifies as White and from Europe. Cecile is the second oldest in her family. She has one brother (2 years older than Cecile) who was a college student and one sister (2 years younger than Cecile). All three children had homeschooling until age 10. During their homeschooling, Cecile's father introduced Mandarin to them since he had a Chinese textbook from his university, and he also had his Children to learn Spanish from a tutor. All three children started school in Grade 5 at Sunny Desert High B, and the school requires fifth and sixth graders to take Latin classes. After that, both Cecile and her bother started their Mandarin learning in Grade 7, but Cecile's sister chose Spanish, instead, for her foreign language.

David

David identifies as White and from Europe. David is the oldest child at home, with one sister who is five years younger than him. Like Cecile, David was required to take Latin in his fifth and sixth grade at Sunny Desert High B. After that, David started to learn Mandarin at school. However, David's sister chose French as her foreign language. None of his family can speak Mandarin, except for him. In addition to formal classroom learning at school, David also took four classes sponsored by Confucius Institute in Summer 2013 for HSK preparation, and

passed Level 5¹⁸. Furthermore, he is interested in learning Japanese and has been learning it via Internet for one year.

Kelly

Kelly identifies as Hispanic as she refers to both her parents as Hispanic. Kelly is the second oldest in her family, with two sisters (2 years older than Kelly & 3 years younger than Kelly) and one brother (2 years younger than Kelly). At first, Kelly studied at a public school where she felt bored and decided to switch to Diamond Star High in Grade 3. Kelly is the first child in her family who began Mandarin learning in Grade 5, and continued taking it throughout middle and high school. Her younger brother and sister began Mandarin learning in Grade 5 as well, but her older sister never learned Mandarin. Instead, Kelly's older sister learned Turkish in her elementary school and middle school (Grades K-7) and learned Spanish in her high school. During Kelly's study at Diamond Star High, she studied abroad twice with her classmates, Mandarin teacher, and faculty members. It was a two-week program in early June.

Nina

Nina identifies as an Asian or Asian-American of first generation as she refers to both her parents as immigrants from Vietnam. Nina is the oldest child at home, and she has one brother (2 years younger than Nina) and one sister (3 years younger than Nina). All three children's first language is Vietnamese. They all started elementary school at the age of 5 and began their Mandarin learning there. However, because of the Mandarin teacher's unavailability, the school stopped offering Mandarin classes for two years. When Nina was 14 years old, she and her siblings switched to Sunny Desert High A for a better education. Nina chose Mandarin as her foreign language and continued her Mandarin learning at Sunny Desert High A (Grades 8-12).

¹⁸ HSK is an international standardized exam that tests and rates Chinese language proficiency according to the six levels. The highest level is Level 6. For detailed information, please see: http://english.hanban.org/node_8002.htm

There were ten years in total for her Mandarin learning before she went to university. In addition, Nina is interested in Korean, and has been learning it via Internet for two years.

Sherry

Sherry identifies as half White (father's side) and half Mexican (mother's side). She is the eldest child in her family and has one sister who is three years younger than her. Sherry's parents sent their two children to a Catholic school (Grades K-7) because of their religion, and Sherry studied Spanish and Latin there for seven years. Sherry and her sister switched to Sunny Desert High A in Sherry's eighth grade and started to learn Mandarin at that time. In addition to formal classroom learning at Sunny Desert High A, she spent one semester in Confucius Institute learning Mandarin on weekends. As for Sherry's sister, she chose Latin as her foreign language. None of her family can speak Mandarin, except for her.

3.2.2 Parents

When I emailed my recruiting announcement to the students' parents and students, I invited one of each student's parents to participate in my study. The students' parents and the students decided if the father or the mother would show up for the interviews in May and December. Six parents have consented to participate in this study. Table 8 offers a brief overview of the parents' backgrounds. The information was gathered through the interview in May. All names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the participants.

Andy's father

Andy's father was born and raised in Tucson, Arizona. He started to learn Spanish as early as fifth grade, and has been learning it over 30 years. During his mission for a church in New York, he learned Portuguese and Italian through friends. After his mission, he returned to university and learned French for one year, Mandarin for three semesters, and Italian for two

years. Then, he earned a Bachelor degree in Spanish and Portuguese. Andy’s father even teaches Spanish at a university. Andy’s father explicitly said “that's one of the things I've chosen to do with my spare time is study languages” (Interview in May). This information indicates that graduating early from high school is a family tradition, and learning a foreign language at an early age is highly recommended in Andy’s family.

Table 8

A brief overview of one of each student’s parents’ backgrounds

Parents	Age	Race	Occupation	Place of origin
Andy’ father	40s	White	Lawyer	Tucson, AZ
Cecile’s father	50s	White	Self-employee & business owner	Pittsburgh, PA
David’s mother	50s	White	Elementary school administration	Douglas, AZ
Kelly’s mother	40s	Hispanic (non-white)	Self-employee	Tucson, AZ
Nina’s father	50s	Asian	Nail technician	Vietnam
Sherry’s mother	50s	Hispanic (non-white)	Housewife	Tucson, AZ

Cecile’s father

Cecile’s father was originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and has been in Tucson, Arizona, for 34 years. Cecile’s father holds a Bachelor’s degree in classical Greek, and learned five languages (Chinese, French, Greek, Latin, and Russian) in his university. Also, Cecile’s father learns Spanish by working with Spanish speaking individuals for his self-employed

business. Not only Cecile's father, but also his family members know at least two foreign languages besides English, and said "the whole family was always interested in languages" (Interview in May). Thus, foreign language learning is a focus in Cecile's family.

David's mother

David's mother was born and raised near the border between the United States and Mexico in Arizona. David's mother knows some Spanish because of her childhood around the border, and she also took two years of Spanish classes in school. Then, she moved to Tucson for college, and stayed in Tucson ever since. Thus, Mandarin is a new foreign language to David's family.

Kelly's mother

Kelly's mother was born and raised in Tucson, Arizona, and her first language is Spanish since her family is from Mexico. But Kelly's mother started to use English after she went to her elementary school because everyone, especially her friends, was speaking English. Kelly's grandparents would speak Spanish to Kelly's mother, and Kelly's mother responded to her parents in English. Although Kelly's mother took two years of Spanish classes at a community college, her Spanish is still limited; she said "I don't feel comfortable speaking it ... I don't read it. I don't write it" (Interview in May). Kelly's father moved to the United States from Chile for college at age 18 and stayed in the U.S. after he completed his bachelor degree. Little by little, his family has moved to the U.S. However, compared to Kelly's mother's family who are able to communicate through English, Kelly's father's family, especially Kelly's father's parents, have limited English proficiency. Thus, the ability to speak Spanish is still valued in Kelly's father's family.

Nina's father

Nina's father and mother were raised and grew up in Vietnam, and he claimed that Chinese is his family's heritage language. However, during his education in middle school, everyone had to learn French because France colonized Vietnam at that time. In 1975, at the outbreak of the Fall of Saigon (or the Liberation of Saigon), Nina's father and his family stayed in a refugee camp. The American government accepted Nina's father's family in 1978, and they emigrated to the United States. Nina's father began to learn English at the refugee camp and continued learning it (English as Second Language) at a high school and a community college in the U.S.. Nina's father and his family moved back and forth from three different places (California, Virginia, and Georgia) for personal and familial reasons, and finally settled down in Arizona in 1997. Nina's father and mother together run a nail salon here in Arizona. Since Mandarin is Nina's family's heritage language, Nina's father wants all his children to learn Mandarin in schools (K-16).

Sherry's mother

Sherry's mother knows some Spanish because of her ethnic background, but Sherry's father is monolingual in English. Sherry's mother identifies as a first generation Hispanic-American as she refers to both her parents as immigrants. Sherry's mother was born and raised in Tucson, Arizona. Sherry's mother's first language is Spanish. However, her parents stopped speaking Spanish with her after she started her elementary school, because English was considered as a practical language in the U.S. As Sherry's mother recalled "no one could speak another language... it was just English all the time in the house" (Interview in May). Although later in high school, Sherry's mother took two years of Spanish as a requirement to graduate, her Spanish is still limited. As for Sherry's father, he is White (half Italian and half German), and the

breadwinner in the family. Despite the fact that Sherry's father is monolingual, he encourages Sherry to take Mandarin as her foreign language at school because he sees it as a good investment (see section 4.1).

3.2.3 Teachers

In the 2014 – 2015 school year, Sunny Desert High A had one full-time and one part-time Mandarin teacher; together they formed the Chinese language team. The White, non-Hispanic, male, full-time Mandarin teacher, Mr. L, was in his third year in this school. He taught the learners in Grade 7 through 9, and Capstone Chinese to twelfth graders. The Asian, native Chinese speaker, female, part-time Mandarin teacher, Ms. W, was in her first year in this school. She taught the advanced Mandarin class to tenth graders, and AP Chinese class to eleventh graders. I had interviewed both Mandarin teachers in May.

In Sunny Desert High B, there was one part-time and one full-time Mandarin teacher. Both of them are female, native Chinese speakers. The full-time Mandarin teacher, Ms. M, taught the learners in Grades 8 through 12, and she had been teaching Mandarin for eight years in this school. The part-time Mandarin teacher, Ms. D, only taught the beginning level Mandarin to seventh graders, and it was her second year in this school. I only interviewed Ms. M because none of the focus students were from Ms. D's class.

In Diamond Star High, there was one part-time Mandarin teacher and two teachers recruited from China's Hanban¹⁹. Together, they formed the Chinese language team. All three Mandarin teachers were female native speakers of Chinese. The part-time Mandarin teacher, Ms. C, was the coordinator of the Mandarin program, and she was responsible for recruiting other

¹⁹Hanban (the Chinese Language Council International) is funded by the Confucius Institutes Headquarters in China that provides Chinese teaching staff, teaching materials, and other culture activities. It is in the form of Confucius Institute and Confucius Classroom and aims to promote Chinese language and culture in the world (Chen, Wang, & Cai, 2010).

Mandarin teachers from Hanban. I only interviewed Ms. C because the focus student, Kelly, was from her class.

Table 9

A brief overview of students' high school teachers' backgrounds

Name	School	Race	Age	First language	Additional language
Mr. L	Sunny Desert High A	White	40s	English	Mandarin
Ms. W	Sunny Desert High A	Asian	20s	Nanjing dialect	Mandarin, English,
Ms. M	Sunny Desert High B	Asian	50s	Taiwanese	Mandarin, English
Ms. C	Diamond Star High	Asian	30s	Cantonese	Mandarin, English, Japanese

There were two Mandarin teachers from Sunny Desert High A, one from Sunny Desert High B, and one from Diamond Star High. These four teachers consented to participate in this study, and helped me recruited students and students' parents. Table 9 offers a brief overview of the teachers' backgrounds. The information was gathered through the interview in May. All names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the participants.

3.2.4 Professors

In Fall 2015, after the six focal students entered the university, only Andy and Kelly were able to continue with their Mandarin learning in their universities. These two professors consented to participate in my study. Table 10 offers a brief overview of the professors' backgrounds. The information from Andy's professor was gathered through the Skype interview in November. The information from Kelly's professor was gathered through the email in November. As she replied to me, "I don't think I would be able to help with the interview. I don't think that I'm in a right position to talk about my student's study for any projects and I also don't feel comfortable to talk about my student either" (Email response in November). I could only gather the partial data from Kelly's professor through email.

Table 10

A brief overview of students' university professors' backgrounds

Professors	Race	Age	First language	Additional languages
Andy's professor	White	30s	English	Mandarin, Cantonese
Kelly's professor	Asian American	50s	Beijing dialect	Mandarin, English

3.3 Data collection

The duration of the data collection is from March 2015 to December 2015, covering the students' last semester of high school, their first semester at university, and the period between, because this project is designed to track students' Mandarin learning from high school to

university. When I worked with participants over an extended period, I was able to examine to what extent their Mandarin learning experiences changed over time.

The way I approached my research project is qualitative in nature with respect to the identity approach to understand adolescent learners' investment in Mandarin. Narrative inquiry is an ideal approach to understand who the learners are and how they learn the language, because it allows individual voices to be heard (Murray, 2009). One way to gain a better understanding of Mandarin learners' investment is to explore their stories, because the stories foregrounds an individual's sense-making of their experience as well as the complexity of individual or social relationships. The importance of language learners' stories to SLA research was described in Pavlenko's (2001) work. "L2 learning stories ... are unique and rich sources of information about the relationship between language and identity in second learning and socialization" (p. 167). The first-person narratives carry participants' own voices and perspectives, and this is how an individual express himself/herself in telling his/her stories. That is, the way to know each participant beyond a superficial level inevitably draws audiences into storytelling and story listening. As Kanno (2003) supports, "How one views oneself and relates to the world around one – requires an inquiry into people's experiences and meaning making, and an inquiry into those areas calls for the use of narrative" (p.11). Moreover, in an identity approach to SLA, there has been a strong methodological focus on narratives (Barkhuizen, 2008; Block, 2006; Botha, 2009; McKay & Wong, 1996; Miller, 2003). Hence, the narrative inquiry is seen as a powerful medium through participants' experiences, because data are straightforward and speak for themselves, which can be understood and shared with people. My plan is to let my study be narrative-driven, and allow the participants to lead me to answer my research questions. This is further reinforced by allowing them to express themselves naturally and clearly by conducting

the study in their preferred language, Mandarin or English. Based on the narrative-driven approach, data were mainly collected from informal Skype chats and interviews, and supplemented with school documents.

The major data source was informal Skype chats with the students because I tend to communicate more clearly with students. Even though the students' teachers and parents have a huge impact on these adolescent learners' Mandarin learning, the key to understanding students' investment lays heavily on the language learners themselves. I conducted an informal Skype chat once every month with each student not only to track their Mandarin learning, but also to put an emphasis on the students' side of the interaction with their Mandarin learning.

The semi-structured, in-depth interview was my choice as a means of gathering information (Maxwell, 2005), understanding the human reaction and SLA. They were semi-structured in that I used a set of questions as a guide, but the participants were allowed to respond freely. The interviews serve as a research instrument as well as social practice (Talmy, 2011). From the perspective of the research instrument, the semi-structured, in-depth interview is a tool to investigate participants' beliefs, attitudes, truths, facts, experiences, and feelings of respondents. Also, interviews are treated as participation in social practices, which is the process involved in the co-construction of social meaning. Thus, the interview data came from students, one of each student's parents, and students' teachers, because students' learning in school is usually heavily influenced by their parents and teachers. The interview is a form of interaction among them, as well as the way to triangulate the finding. As Duff (2008) supports, "Researchers may interview not only the learners themselves, but also the people they work, live, or study with" (p. 30). All the interview data were recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Lastly, school documents, such as the school website, syllabi, class handouts, homework, etc. were collected for research purposes, because these documents allow me to associate students' Mandarin investments both in class and outside of class.

In the sections which follow, I discuss each of these instruments of data collection in detail, and how they relate to answer my research questions.

3.3.1 Skype chats

There are eight Skype chat sessions. Each Skype chat session was scheduled once a month, starting from March to November 2015. However, there were no Skype chat sessions in May and December, instead, there were two interviews. I emailed each student at the beginning of each month, and asked them to pick a date and time to Skype with me. An email reminder would follow if I didn't hear from them by the middle of each month. All the students were able to Skype with me by the end of each month.

Before I Skyped with the students, I only had a rough idea of the Skype chat questions for each month because I knew that the function of Skype chat was to help me to understand how the students' Mandarin investment is socially constructed at their personal, familial, and institutional levels. With this basic idea in mind, I initially only had a set of questions for March and April. In March, I asked the students to share their Mandarin learning in the classroom setting. In April, I asked the students to recall if they had any struggles or satisfactions of their Mandarin learning in high school. The interview with each student and one of each student's parents was following in May. I had the opportunity to obtain more information regarding the students' learning at home and the students' parents' attitudes toward the students' Mandarin learning in high school. After I gathered preliminary data through the Skype chats and interview, I had a better idea how to formulate the rest of the Skype chat questions. Then, I finalized the topic of each Skype chat

session based on the students' learning experiences in their classrooms, schools, and from their parents. Table 11 displays the areas that were designed to explore via Skype chats.

Table 11

The design of each Skype chat

Month	Contents
March	Mandarin learning from students' formal class setting in high school
April	students' struggles of Mandarin learning, and their satisfactions of Mandarin learning
June	the support from school and the support from family
July	Mandarin learning in summer
August	expectations of students' Mandarin learning in university
September	discussion of the students' continued or discontinued Mandarin investment in their universities
October	the support from family
November	Mandarin learning from students' formal class setting and extra curriculum in university

Conducting monthly Skype chats is essential because it gives me the chance to get closer to students' lives and understand how their investment in learning Mandarin is established from their social environments, and discover if there are any changes from high school to university. It also allows me to fill in the missing pieces during interviews, and permits for my second thoughts to be collected.

In addition, the Skype chats helped me to track students' Mandarin learning each month. The content includes how Mandarin learning was happening in their lives, and discussed issues that are related to their Mandarin study. This would provide me an important insight into what kinds of issues mattered to the students, because they led me to the issues they would like to elaborate and share with me.

Skype chatting was carried at a location wherever it is convenient to the students, as long as they had an internet connection to skype with me. All the skype chats were conducted in English, because English is the language that the students use mostly in their lives. Mandarin was used occasionally when the students explained things by using the examples. All the informal Skype chatting data will be recorded and transcribed for analysis purposes. The length of each Skype was approximately 30 minutes, for a total of almost four hours of Skype chat. The list of questions of each Skype chat is listed in the appendix.

3.3.2 Interviews

In order to reflect the participants' voices, opinions, and beliefs, semi-structure interviews were included in my study. The interview data are from the students, one of each students' parent(s), the students' high school Mandarin teachers, and the students' university Mandarin professors, and all the interview data was recorded and transcribed for analysis.

There were two face-to-face interviews with each student and one of each student's parents: one was conducted in May 2015 when the students were in the high school, and another one was conducted in Fall 2015 when the students are in the university. There was one face-to-face individual interview with the students' high school teachers. There was one Skype interview, instead of a face-to-face interview, with the students' university professors due to the

long distance. The total length of each interview was an hour long. The detailed interview questions are listed in the appendix.

Table 12

A brief overview of the interview data

Methods	Data collections period (March – December 2015)	Data
Each student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one in Spring 2015 • one in Fall 2015 	Recording files
One of each students' parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one in Spring 2015 • one in Fall 2015 	
Students' high school Mandarin teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one in Spring 2015 	
Students' university Mandarin professors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one in Fall 2015 	

The interview data with the students were used to discover why they invested in Mandarin, and examine if there were any changes of their investment in Mandarin and how their investment in Mandarin is constructed differently in high school and in university. The content of interviews included the students' background information, their studies in high school and university, their life experiences related to their Mandarin learning, and how students feel about continuing learning Mandarin, etc.

The interview data with the students' parents were used to gain an understanding of their attitudes toward their child's Mandarin learning. This was done in the hope to gain insights into how they perceived their child's investment in Mandarin in high school and university. The

content of interviews include the parents' background information, their child's Mandarin learning at home, etc. Rather than simply reporting on what students have told me, I decided to include their parents' voices, because the parents were actually investing in their children's learning of Mandarin. Specifically, family support is important for students' investment in Mandarin, especially for these students and their families living near the southwest U.S. border with Mexico. In this town, most families still consider Spanish as a practical foreign language to acquire in the United States. The students' parents, surprisingly, indicated how important Mandarin is and all felt fortunate that the students chose Mandarin as their foreign language in high school. In this usage, the interview is discourse, jointly constructed by the participants (Mishler, 1986), the attempt of the participants to make meaning together. The interviews mostly took place at the conference room in my department or the study room in the main library at the University of Arizona.

The interview data with the students' teachers in the three high schools and professors in their respective universities were used to gain an understanding of their attitudes toward their students' Mandarin learning in the school settings. The content of the interview included the teachers or professors' background information, students' Mandarin learning in the classroom, etc. The interviews with students' high school teachers took place either in the teacher's house or in their offices in the high school.

The interview data from students' professors in the university were quite limited. Among these six focal students, only two students, Andy and Kelly, were able to continue with their Mandarin learning in university. Andy's professor accepted my Skype interview, while Kelly's professor could only reply to some of my questions via emails. Also, she refused to discuss Kelly's Mandarin learning in her class. "I don't think I would be able to help with the interview. I

don't think that I'm in a right position to talk about my student's study for any projects and I also don't feel comfortable to talk about my student either” (Email response in November). The interviews with Andy’s professors were through Skype due to the long distance.

3.3.3 Documents

The schools’ documents pertaining to the teaching of Mandarin, such as the information on the school website, syllabi for Mandarin classes, class handouts, homework, etc. were collected for research purposes. For example, what I learned about the students’ use of materials has been helpful in my work developing self-access and programs. Other relevant documents, such as language competition information, Mandarin-related talks/speeches, etc. were included as well. These documents allowed me to associate participants’ Mandarin investment both in and outside of the classroom.

3.4 Data analysis

Since the data collection is based on narrative inquiry, transcripts are the actual data to look at. My approach to data analysis, first, was informed by an understanding of what participants actually say. Thematic analysis and discourse analysis are the ideal approaches to analyze the data in this study. Thematic analysis is used to systematically group, code, and summarize the respondents’ utterances, which are treated as independent of and unaffected by their interactional context (Talmy, 2011). Discourse analysis is used because a rich, contextualized description of language use is the direct access to what participants actually do or say (Lazaraton, 2009). This approach to analysis was inductive, insofar as it was not designed to test particular hypotheses, but to discover how systematic patterns of discursive organization reside in the talk of the students, and how this organization was deployed by them to make sense of, and account for their experiences of Mandarin learning in high school and university. This

discourse must be understood not only in relation to the words that were said, but in relationship to larger structures within each subject's social world.

3.4.1 Analytic procedure of interviews and Skype chats

Each interview and Skype chatting section was audio recorded, and then transcribed verbatim by me. The purpose of this study is to discover how the adolescent learners' Mandarin investment is socially constructed, so the language features, such as overlapping, pause, emphasis, cut-off words, etc., were not included when doing analysis. Once the data have been transcribed, I created a separate file for each student. Then, I organized each individual student's transcribed data into one composite file in order to create a corpus of extracts. This corpus formed the basic data for the main analysis. Finally, I began with the analytic procedure through thematic and discourse analysis.

For thematic analysis, I started with the individual as the unit of analysis. This gave me a comprehensive picture of each of my students and insight into their experiences as a Mandarin learner in their social world. Also, it helped me to categorize transcriptions from the interviews and Skype chats into developing themes. Most frequent themes from each individual student would emerge at first. Next, I compared these themes across each participant, and common themes were generated after a first few readings of the transcribed data. The themes were then refined through a repetitive process. I also examined the transcripts of the Skype chats to compare them with what the students said in their interviews, following the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The dominant themes that emerged in the students' responses will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4-6.

Discourse analysis begins with the interpretation of the themes emerging from the transcripts. The way I present my findings through discourse analysis is to identify why

participants choose these themes to represent their investment in Mandarin; how these themes were contextualized through their relationships to the social environment, and what the social meanings of these themes were assigned to reflect a view of the investment in Mandarin. My next strategy was to sort all the data that pertained to their investments in the production of three levels: the personal, familial, and institutional. I used these three levels to answer my research questions respectively, drawing comparisons across each student. This gave me the opportunity to examine how students' investment in Mandarin is structured and why the investment must be understood within this context. The detailed findings through discourse analysis will be discussed in Chapter 4-6.

Triangulation (Fielding & Fielding, 1986) of the findings is used to secure the validity of this study. I also gathered the interview data from one of each student's parents, the students' Mandarin teachers in high school, and the students' Mandarin professors in university to deal with validity threats.

As such, the analysis aims mainly to discover the details of students' investment and organization of each extract. In sum, thematic analysis and discourse analysis will not only help me to organize the data in a systematic way, but also aid in the development of theoretical concepts and allow me to answer the research questions accordingly.

Chapter 4

Findings: Investment in Mandarin

In this chapter, I adopt Norton's (2000) definition of investment and explore its application to the present study. My intention is to answer the first research questions: Why do students invest in Mandarin in high school? Why do students continue to invest in Mandarin in university?

As I noted in chapter 3, the narrative inquiry is an approach to discover learners' investment, because as the learners tell how their identities, as multiple and dynamic in particular sociocultural and institutional arrangements, are constructed in their social world. Through the thematic and discourse analyses, we are able to see how language learners position themselves, and how they negotiate their social identities in certain settings. Based on that, I take one step further to discuss how learners' investment is mediated at three different levels: personal, familial, and institutional, because the students' social environment is closely tied to their families and schools.

4.1 Why do students invest in Mandarin in high school?

The focus of this sections is to investigate: 1) Among the four choices – Spanish, French, Mandarin, and Latin – why do students invest in Mandarin throughout their high school year in Sunny Desert High? and 2) After fulfilling the minimal two-year foreign language requirement (Mandarin is the only foreign language option), why do students continue investing in Mandarin till they graduate from Diamond Star High? The students' investment in Mandarin can be understood at three levels: personal, familial, and institutional.

The students were asked to describe why they wanted to learn Mandarin in high school. Through the coding, a number of overlapping themes emerged from the students' data, which I

obtained through a discourse analysis of Skype chats and interviews. The data shows that their personal interests, as well as the influences from their families and their institutions, makes them want to invest in Mandarin in high school. Table 13 summarizes the major themes through coding.

Table 13

The students' investment in Mandarin in high school

Reasons to invest in Mandarin	Students	Level
Interest	Andy, Cecile, & Kelly	Personal
Knowledge	Nina	
Pursuit of challenges	Andy & Kelly	
Construction of family relationship	Andy, Cecile, & Kelly	
Construction of school relationship	All the students	
Ethnic identity	Cecile & Nina	Familial
Future career	Andy, Kelly, Nina & Sherry	
Good students	David & Sherry	Institutional
AP Chinese Language and Culture (AP Chinese) test	All the students	

4.1.1 Personal Level

In terms of the personal level, the students' investment in Mandarin can be categorized into five dimensions by their self-identification as 1) students who attribute their investment in Mandarin to their personal interests in Chinese culture, 2) students who claim their knowledge in

Chinese, 3) a student who enjoys taking challenging classes, 4) students who invest in Mandarin based on the family relationship, and 5) students who invest in Mandarin based on the school relationship.

Interest

The student identified that their initial investment in Mandarin was mostly coming from their personal interest in Chinese culture. Take Cecile for example. Cecile recalled that she was originally in a Spanish class, but the two Spanish classes were filled. The Spanish teachers asked volunteers to switch out to other foreign language classes. “When they asked, immediately I switched to Chinese classes instead ... I always had that interest, especially in Asian cultures” (Interview in May). This “Immediate” physical action, without involving any discussions with people, including her family, implied how much she likes Asian cultures. I learned what Cecile meant by “Asian cultures” when I had a Skype chat session with Cecile in April. She explained:

“A big piece of it, for me, was I did martial arts for a long time. I still practice it. It's a cultural connection to Chinese. A lot of [my] friends who are heritage speakers we met through martial arts. They have a very strong connection to Chinese culture. So I think for me, it is something that can make you continue to learn more and become better in Chinese” (Skype chat in April).

As shown in the quote, it was martial arts that triggered Cecile’s investment in Mandarin because she has been practicing it since she was ten years old. Martial arts are often perceived as a part of the Chinese culture. In addition, Cecile’s membership in the martial arts community allowed her to construct friendship with other members who happened to be Chinese heritage speakers. This indicated that Cecile got an opportunity to get involved in the Chinese culture through martial arts and friendship in the community. This also explained why Cecile switched

to Mandarin class right away without any hesitations when her high school teacher made the announcement. Therefore, her membership in the martial arts community, then, becomes both culturally and socially connected to the Chinese language which gives meaning to her Mandarin learning.

Kelly was interested in Chinese characters. “I like the characters the most. Learn more words, be able to talk about more difficult topics, and actually go the whole hour without speaking English. So I just like that” (Interview in May). From the excerpt, Chinese characters functioned like a doorway to get access to Mandarin, and allowed her to use the target language. However, the idea of being interested in Chinese characters was vague, so I asked Kelly to elaborate more about the reasons she likes Chinese characters during the Skype chat in June. Kelly explained:

“Probably because they're easier for me to understand than like the spoken language, because each character has its own meaning. Whereas if you say a word, and you don't get the tone, then it can mean a bunch of different things. Whereas characters are more specific, so” (Skype chat in June).

Kelly realized that Chinese characters not just provide a platform for her to learn Mandarin. Chinese culture is conveyed through characters. Kelly explicitly stated that it is the specification of characters trigger her interest in learning Mandarin. For example, the character *jiang* 江 “large river” and *he* 河 “small river” have the same radical, because these two characters are related to *shui* 水 “water.” The logographic Chinese writing system is very different from the alphabetic English writing system. As Kelly said, “I think it's pretty cool, because it's just so different. And I really liked the characters” (Skype chat in July). Being cool and being different from the U.S. mainstream is why Kelly was fascinated about Chinese

Character. Therefore, immersing herself in the characters learning is like immersing her in the Chinese culture, which she can barely get from the English alphabets.

Like Cecile and Kelly, Andy also attributes his investment in learning Mandarin to his interests in what he sees as the Chinese culture, though his interests are more general than something so specific as martial arts and Chinese characters. Andy mentioned “it got a very interesting different culture that I want to expose myself” (Interview in May). For Andy, Chinese entails an exotic culture that he wants to explore, so being a member of the Chinese program gave him legitimate access to experience Chinese cultures in the school setting.

Knowledge

Nina claimed her knowledge in Mandarin triggered her investment in Mandarin since she started to learn Mandarin as early as in her first grade. Nina said:

“I had already learned so much Chinese from [my] elementary school and had a lot of experiences with it. I thought that it would be a kind of a waste to learn all of that Chinese, and then just drop it. I also felt a lot more comfortable with it, because it was something I already knew” (Interview in May).

From the excerpt, Nina had foundation in Mandarin learning when she was in the elementary school. She decided to continue investing in Mandarin with which the language she was familiar, instead of starting to learn a new foreign language. Nina admitted that the Mandarin class was boring at first in seventh grade, because she went over all the basic materials, such as *pinyin*. But after that, she enjoyed the class very much because she started to do dialogues and played skits in class where she could use her previous knowledge that she had learned in her elementary school. Nina mentioned that her previous knowledge in Mandarin also

helped her learn more Mandarin by helping her classmates. Nina's discourse mirrored her position as a linguistic broker, and said:

“I helped a lot of [my classmates] with their pronunciation, because a lot of them can't say certain things, like *ü*, that vowel. They just cannot do that, so I help them put it in a way that would help them” (Interview in May).

Nina claimed her expertise in Mandarin pronunciation because her Mandarin teacher from Southern China in her seventh and eighth grades had an accent. Her Mandarin teacher sounded weird on the vowel *ü*, which caused her classmates did not know how to pronounce properly on the vowel *ü*. With the early Mandarin learning experience, Nina felt comfortable helping her classmates to speak Mandarin with the standard pronunciation. Nina even indicated that she not only resolved the pronunciation problems for her classmates, but also played a significant role in encouraging her classmates to continue with their Mandarin learning by saying:

“A lot of my classmates ... because they didn't understand some of the things that [the Mandarin teacher] was saying ... So they were a little bit discouraged, but that's why I would help them, and then we just ended up continuing Chinese” (Interview in May).

Learning how to speak standard Mandarin is the expectation for every Mandarin learner. However, Nina and her classmates could not reach this goal in their Mandarin classes. Unlike other learners who were discouraging under this situation, Nina actively exerted her knowledge to help her classmates' pronunciation. Nina reported that she was actually benefited from this process, because she had to explain how to pronounce in a way that easier for her classmates to understand. Even though Nina could not learn standard pronunciation from her Mandarin teacher, she was able to acquire or even improve her pronunciation by applying her previous

knowledge in elementary school. As a result, Nina and her classmates continued to invest in Mandarin in high school.

Challenge

The students identified that they are the people who enjoy challenges, and feel that they would benefit more from taking difficult classes. Since most people have an impression that Mandarin is a difficult language to acquire, students would like to take this opportunity to challenge themselves. As Andy stated:

“Originally, it just opened up an opportunity to me ... [People surrounding me] told me it was challenging. I was the one who likes to do a little bit more challenging things”
(Interview in May).

Andy specifically positioned him as a challenge pursuer by saying: “I was the one who likes to do a little bit more challenging things.” Among the four choices – Spanish, French, Latin, and Mandarin – he pointed out all the languages are romanticized except for Mandarin. As Andy explained: “Chinese is part of a different language family” (Interview in May). This difference created the challenging environment for learners to acquire the language.

Kelly held the similar thought by saying: “[Chinese has] a lot of characters, and a lot of tones to remember, so I think that makes it challenging” (Skype chat in July). It was the challenging part that triggered Kelly to continue taking advanced level Mandarin classes after she fulfilled the two-year minimum foreign language requirement at Diamond Star High. Kelly was challenged every year by learning new things in her Mandarin classes, and she enjoyed being challenged. Kelly brought up her cheerleading experience during our Skype chat in August, which provides an ideal example for us to understand what she meant by “challenging.”

“I got stuck on the higher level teams in Tucson, because they don’t have any high levels. I already passed the [highest] level, so it was kind of boring for me to keep doing stuff that wasn’t challenging me” (Skype chat in August).

Kelly has been on the cheerleading team for eleven years, which is relatively long compared to her eight years of Mandarin learning. She was thinking about quitting recently because there was no higher level she could pursue. On the contrary, the Mandarin classes at Kelly’s school provided introductory to advanced level classes where she could continue to challenge herself by developing her Mandarin abilities.

I argue that the more challenging the task, the more commitment it requires of the individuals. Mandarin is one of the subjects that not every student could handle. This has been confirmed by the students that the enrollment of Mandarin decreased every year, because a lot of students switched out to other foreign language classes.

Construction of family relationship

The students’ positioned themselves as a son/daughter in relation to their parents, and a brother/sister in relation to their siblings. Under this close family relationship, the students’ family member’s Mandarin learning has a direct influence on their investment in Mandarin. The following examples are going to demonstrate how students’ Mandarin investment is closely tied to their family member’s Mandarin learning.

In Andy’s example, both Andy’s father and brother had Mandarin learning experiences in their universities. Andy recalled:

“Well, I started to study Chinese was actually my dad’s idea. He suggested to me a couple of months before seventh grade started which was when I was going to start studying Chinese. It was actually him telling me that it will probably be the best language

to take, that kind of sparked my interest, and led me to start studying Chinese” (Interview in May).

Andy’s father’s choice on Mandarin came from his foreign language learning background. He learned Spanish in elementary school, he had a bachelor degree in both Spanish and Portuguese, he also took Mandarin in his university, and he did self-study in Italian when he went on his mission. Thorough his foreign language learning, he believed that the foreign language education starts earlier, the better, by saying:

“Chinese is the hardest language I tend to learn. And I think the younger you start out at, the better you're going to grab it, and the more you're going to get out of it” (Interview in May).

“Chinese is the hardest language” recapped what Andy claimed himself as a challenge pursuer. Both Andy and Andy’s father considered Mandarin is challenging language to acquire. With this belief in mind, Andy’s father suggested Andy starts learning Mandarin in his seventh grade.

Andy’s brother also has an influence on Andy’s decision in Mandarin learning:

“I think my brother might have been the biggest help to me in learning Chinese, because he was always a pretty good example to me...he was very successful in Chinese. He always did better, he always did very well in the class... which is very inspiring for me to know that you can start out high school, and then if you study hard enough, you can actually get to the point where people understand you. Not only understand you, but impressed by your Chinese.” (Interview in May).

From Andy’s statement, Andy’s brother is a role model for his Mandarin learning, which inspires him to not only learn Mandarin in school, but also being a good language learner. In

addition, Andy felt that “[my brother] set the standard for the family” (Skype chat in June). Since his brother has already showed what could be done in the family, doing anything less than that would make Andy feel ashamed. Therefore, both his father and his brother have significant influence on his Mandarin learning. His father suggested him to take it, and his brother set a good example for him to reach the level of fluency in Mandarin.

Cecile mentioned that when she was in home schooling as a younger child, her father introduced Mandarin to her since her father took some Mandarin classes in his university for three years. She recalled that even though she was subconsciously learning Mandarin in such a young age, she found that Mandarin was fascinating. This early learning experience during her homeschooling encouraged her to take Mandarin as her foreign language at school. Cecile’s brother also have some influence on her because he was two years older than her. It meant that Cecile and his brother’s Mandarin proficiency level were relatively similar, so they were able to practice together. By the same token, Kelly indicated how important it is to have someone to practice with you outside of class.

“When [my brother] asks me for help, I have to really think and remember what he’s working on, and that parts, and those characters, and all the words, and everything that is there. And it’s a good review for what I’ve already learned.” (Interview in May).

Both Cecile and Kelly expressed the significant role their siblings played in their Mandarin learning, because they were able to find someone close to them and be able to use Mandarin at home. This related to the tension between the often perceived monolingual U.S. and the actual multilingual practices that take place in individual homes. These multilingual practices, in return, further shape individuals from their homes to study foreign languages.

Construction of school relationship

Each student's identity construction processes also takes place in the school setting. In the Mandarin classroom, the students' positioned themselves as Mandarin learners. The identity of being a Mandarin learner has a close relationship with their teachers and classmates. How the students' Mandarin investment is mediated through the construction of school relationship between their Mandarin teachers and classmates will be discussed in the following.

All the students mentioned that their Mandarin teachers are the key factors which made them want to study Mandarin in high school. In addition to the duties in the classroom, such as answering and explaining questions to students, the teachers always go beyond the classroom. For example, the teachers also talked to them about life in general and study habits. This indicates the students' Mandarin teachers were caring guides and had the unique opportunity to engage the students in a much more intimate and intensive way. This personal connection is also resonated in the interviews with students' parents. As Kelly's mother said, "And I think her teacher has a really big part of it. She loves her teacher" (Interview in May).

In addition to the teachers, the students claimed that their classmates are another factor to not only cause them continue with their Mandarin learning, but also make them enjoy their Mandarin classroom learning. First, the students who enrolled in Mandarin classes had the same interest in the language as they had. They were interested in interacting with each other by using Mandarin both in and out of classroom where they were able to gain real life experience. In addition, the classmates' contributions made the class more interesting. As Sherry said, "the classmates just give me the more supportive aspect and the fun aspect of the language" (Skype chat in April). On one hand, the classmates helped each other to progress to the next level each year. On another hand, the classmates constructed the fun environment by playing skits or

making interesting Chinese sentences, which made the language learning more enjoyable. Therefore, access to peers was important not only for language learning but for social affiliation. This result supports Duff's findings "[within] the sizeable Chinese community in the school generated Chinese students a degree of social, cultural, linguistic, and academic solidity" (p. 315).

4.1.2 Familial Level

In terms of the familial level, the students' investment in Mandarin can be discussed from two dimensions: 1) the students' ethnic background and 2) the students' future career.

Ethnic identity

Cecile's family identified that they are European, and Cecile's father expressed that Czechs are the best language learners, as he explained:

"I guess both my parents knew a little Slovak, and my grandparents spoke mostly Slovak. My older brother is married to a German woman, and their children speak numerous languages fluently. They live in Europe, and it just seemed that the whole family was always interested in languages, which, I think again, is an Eastern European trait. I've heard people say oh~ the Czechs, the best language learners" (Interview in May).

Cecile's father set himself as an example of a good language learner. He took five foreign languages in university, including French, Greek, Latin, Mandarin, and Russian, and got a bachelor degree in classical Greek. Now he is currently learning Spanish on his own for his self-employed business. He never attended any Spanish classes, but he considered himself as a fluent Spanish speaker. It is the imagined multilingual national identity made Cecelia and her family believe that through foreign language learning, especially Mandarin, they are able to widen their knowledge, because Mandarin expresses such a different world view from English, whereas

many European languages are from the same basic worldview. I argued that students' investment in Mandarin is related to their ethnic identities, because identities are gendered and connected to their lives as members of a particular ethnic group (DiLeonardo, 1984). The finding shows that Cecile's ethnic identity of Czech makes her and her family more open to embracing foreign language learning, because of the geography in Europe, where Europeans normally take three or four different languages naturally, and come out speaking fluently.

Nina chose Mandarin as her foreign language because of her Chinese heritage identity. Nina's father constantly emphasized how important it is to continue with Mandarin learning, because Mandarin is their root language, and said:

“I have three kids learning Chinese. My mom's background is Chinese. [I am] the second generation. But my mom lost the language, so she didn't speak Chinese. Also, my dad's side is about 5th generation, so we all lost the root. When I found the school for my kids, I am happy that they have Chinese. I like that they are learning [the native language] ... And then, they get more knowledge to know where you come from” (Interview in May).

The use of “root” inferred that Nina's family are members from one bounded, homogenous Chinese community. For Nina's father, being able to speak Mandarin gives the permission to claim the Chinese heritage identity. During our interviews in May and December, Nina's father expressed how unfortunately he lost the Chinese language due to the political environment in Vietnam. Nina's grandfather used to be in the military and served the French government when France colonized Vietnam. Under this situation, everyone in Nina's grandparents' and Nina's parents' generation was encouraged to learn French, and French was the only foreign language available in Nina's father schools in his childhood. Nina's father's regret for not being able to speak Mandarin drove his children to learn Mandarin when Mandarin

was available in his children's school. Having his children take Mandarin classes since their elementary school demonstrates a cultural affirmation of their Chinese heritage identity as well as an affinity for being part of a linguistic minority. Thus, Nina and her family identify that Mandarin is their root language, which allows them to shift cross-cultural and linguistic boundaries. Nina's father never mentioned the importance of the Vietnamese identity during our interviews. This encouraged me to ask Nina's father: "Have you ever worried that Nina might lose the Vietnamese language as well as the Vietnamese identity?" during the interview in December. Nina's father replied:

"[My kids] learn Chinese and Vietnamese at that time [through the Bible study in their Catholic church]. Because Vietnamese is their mother language, the language is close to her. Chinese is passed down from my parents ... she learned two languages at that time, Vietnamese and Chinese. I don't want them to lose both languages" (interview in December).

From Nina's father's response, he insisted on his three children learning both Vietnamese and Mandarin. Nina's father claimed that he is Vietnamese, and Vietnamese is his, as well as his children's, first language. Mandarin is their heritage language, and learning Mandarin is the way to maintain their Chinese identity, which makes Mandarin as equally important as their mother language, Vietnamese. When Nina's father continued explained why Vietnamese and Mandarin are equally important for his children, he said:

"Any time they have questions in the Vietnamese language, or writing, reading, then we can help them [do] that. That's why I focused on them to learn Chinese, something that we cannot help [them with], so that they can learn further in [the] future. Vietnamese is less useful worldwide" (Interview in May).

From the excerpt, Nina's father changed his early statement that Mandarin and Vietnamese are equally important. Nina's father put more weight on Mandarin than Vietnamese, and stated that Mandarin, their heritage language, is more important than Vietnamese, their mother language. This changing statement came from Mandarin's economic value, and helped to explain why Nina's father put such great emphasis on Mandarin learning. Therefore, Nina's father intention on having his children learn Mandarin was not purely related to their heritage identity, but also associated with the economic perspective in Mandarin.

I was also aware that there was another interesting phenomenon when Nina's father continued emphasizing the economic value on his children's Mandarin investment, and said: "I let my kids learn the root, that's a common language used in the world right now ... they get more basic [knowledge of Mandarin] and back to the root that they [should] know, and [it is] useful worldwide. [In] five continents, you can see the Chinese [language] ... You know Chinese and English, [the] two languages that [are] common worldwide" (Interview in May).

From this excerpt, not only Mandarin, Nina's family's heritage language, but also English, the language Nina and her siblings are speaking now, are more important than their ethnic language, Vietnamese. Thus, for Nina's family, Mandarin is not only their belonging and membership in an ethnolinguistic group, it also extends to a valued linguistic capital as English does worldwide.

Parents' investment in children's future career

The students positioned themselves as a good son/daughter who listened to their parents' suggestions in taking Mandarin as their foreign language, and agreed with the statement their parents made: knowing Mandarin would open up more doors for them and it would help the

students' futures when they graduate from university. Examples below are going to illustrate why parents invest in their children's Mandarin learning in terms of their children's future career.

Sherry told me that his father played a significant role in persuading her to stay in Mandarin class when the school made a mistake and placed her in the Mandarin class. Sherry further explained how her father persuaded her to choose Mandarin as her foreign language:

“China has a really rapidly growing economy. They have learned [China] is one of the two most populous countries in the world. It's being spoken in the business [world] more and more. We have tons of Chinese immigrants coming to the United States. It's the most widely spoken language in the world, I think, so I mean I should probably learn that.

That's his reasoning” (Interview in May).

Andy's father held the similar opinion and associated Mandarin learning with the business in Andy future.

“I think that the Chinese economy is growing. There's a lot of Chinese people, and I think that Chinese is going to be an important language understand in the business world” (Interview in May).

From the excerpts, Mandarin is the language of business. Mandarin is not only being spoken widely in the United States, but also being used widely in the world. Mandarin is become more intercontinental. From the business perspective, Mandarin could be a real asset for Andy and Sherry to get a job internationally after they graduate from their universities.

Compared to other focal students, Kelly's family support is relatively essential for Kelly's investment in Mandarin. Kelly's family is Hispanic, especially her father's whole side of the family speaks Spanish because they are all from South America. Kelly's father would rather

Kelly learn Spanish since Spanish is her heritage language. However, Kelly's parents sent Kelly to Diamond Star High where Mandarin is the only foreign language option in school. Kelly's mother explained:

“I think that only especially when she goes to school, when she decides to get a job after. I think she's done well enough that that could be an option for her. She could do something in that possibly with that field, with the language, that would open other opportunities for her that she didn't have before” (Interview in May).

If Mandarin is the only available foreign language option at Diamond Star High, choosing to send Kelly to this school implies that Kelly's family fully support the foreign language learning in school. Kelly's parents go beyond their heritage language boundary, and ponder deeply over the foreign language learning in reaction to Kelly's future career. Even though Kelly's family considers learning Spanish is important for Kelly, they did see the potential benefits from Kelly's Mandarin learning for her future job. More importantly, unlike the other students' families mainly use moral support to encourage their children's Mandarin learning, Kelly's family physically helped Kelly to learn Mandarin by hosting exchange students from China for six years. This allowed Kelly to not only actually apply Mandarin with native speakers, but also gain cultural knowledge through interaction with native speakers.

4.1.3 Institutional Level

The students' Mandarin at the institutional level is categorized by their good student identity and their pre-qualified college student identity by taking the AP Chinese test.

Becoming a “good student”: Stratification at school

The students identified that they had a great investment in their status as a good student in all subjects, including Mandarin. The good student identity caused the students to study well in

Mandarin, especially for the students, David and Sherry. Both of them claimed that it was a mistake for them to be in the Mandarin class. David and Sherry recalled:

“Originally, I forgot to fill in the language form. I had one keep taking Latin, and I got stuck in Chinese ... [Mandarin] was a class and I needed good grades, because I'm a good student, so I need to learn the language to get my grades... I actually started to read things, and listening to Mandarin, tried to consume Mandarin entertainment basically, and in order to do that better, I need to learn Mandarin well” (David, Interview in May).

“I don't actually want to take Chinese. I was accidently put in that class. I signed up for French ... a couple of weeks to a month half, I wasn't really trying. I didn't have any interest in it. You know, I will switch out very soon, so it doesn't matter... I figure out that as long as I was in Chinese, I might as well try hard to get a good grade, because my grade does matter to me... So at that point, my attitude changed to Chinese, and I started working hard and learning it” (Sherry, Skype chat in April).

Clearly, both David and Sherry had no intention to learn Mandarin. David wanted to continue to learn Latin, and Sherry's foreign language choice was French. What driven them to learn Mandarin was their good student identity. During the students' studies in these high schools, all school subjects are equally important because their grade point average (GPA) is equally distributed from all the classes they took. For those who study Mandarin, their grades from the language class are also included in the calculation of their GPA. When David and Sherry were trying to switch out to other foreign language classes, they realized that they had to go through a bunch of administrative stuff. Specifically, switching to a different class took time to process, so they might not be able to switch to other foreign language classes till next trimester. Before their application to switch to other foreign language classes were approved,

they were not allowed to miss any Mandarin classes, and their performances were evaluated under the Mandarin teachers. Sherry recalled the first time receiving her Mandarin grade report at the mid-trimester of the first trimester, she got a D in Mandarin. Such tensions between individual students and institutional requirements made the students be aware of what is expected from themselves, how they must perform, and what they need to do in order to earn recognition from a teacher by getting high grades. I argued that it is the good student identity that makes them become a good language learner (see Naiman et al, 1987).

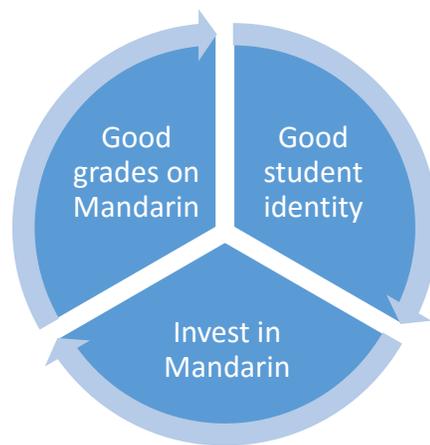


Figure 3. Becoming a “good student”: Stratification at school

AP Chinese: Standardized test as an identity tool

The students positioned themselves as pre-qualified college/university students. The way to prove their qualification as a college-level student is to take the Advanced Placement (AP) course and take the AP test, as the school website shows:

“The Upper School, beginning in Grade 8, is consistently ranked as one of the top-ten high school programs in the country by U.S. News, Newsweek, and The Washington Post. Upper School students take Honors and Advanced Placement courses across the academic spectrum” (Sunny Desert High).

AP tests function like a sign to determine if students meet the expectations of each subject they take in high school. Students always have a mindset that the AP test is the standard to show their knowledge in each subject. The more AP tests the students take, the better to show their success in academics at college/university. Advanced Placement Chinese Language and Culture (AP Chinese) is categorized under the World Languages and Cultures from the College Board website.²⁰ Mr. L used the soldier metaphor to describe students' investment in the AP Chinese test:

“[The students] are ready to put their Mandarin to the test. They're like trained soldiers by the fifth year, so they don't want to sit around, and clean their guns. They want go on and test themselves” (Interview in May).

Followed by the school curriculum, the students were placed in the AP Chinese course in their eleventh grade, and they were expected to take the AP Chinese test at the end of the course. All the students mentioned that although taking AP Chinese was stressful, they were keen to show their proficiency level by taking the AP Chinese test after more than five years of Mandarin training at school. The AP Chinese test was significant to these students, because the students with a score of three or above on the AP Chinese test indicated exposure to rigorous, college-level curricula, which is a key element of college readiness. Most importantly, the AP Chinese test allowed students to transfer these credit hours after they entered universities. It seemed that all of the effort the students put in was paying off, and they enjoyed this rewarding process.

²⁰ Each AP course from the College Board website:
http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/courses/teachers_corner/index.html

4.2 Why do students continue to invest in Mandarin in university?

The students were asked to describe why they wanted to continue learning Mandarin in their university during the interview in December. Through the coding, a number of overlapping themes emerged from the students' data, which I obtained through a discourse analysis of skype chats and interviews. The data show that students' investment in Mandarin all come from their personal reasons in order to meet their personal needs or expectations when they are in their universities. Table 14 summarizes the themes through coding.

Table 14

The students' investment in Mandarin in university.

Reasons to invest in Mandarin: A waste if drop it		Students	Level
Interest	Martial arts	Cecile	Personal
	Enjoyment	Andy	
Knowledge	Linguistic ownership	All the students	
Future career	A useful language	All the students	
Degree	Minor or major	Andy, Cecile,	Institutional
		David, Sherry	

4.2.1 Personal Level

All the students expressed the sentiment that only continued investment in learning Mandarin would makes more sense because they have already spent over five years learning it. This continuity of investment became central in connecting their language learning experience in the high school and that in university. In fact, these

students used the phrase “a waste of time” to describe the scenario of discontinued Mandarin learning. Furthermore, they also link their continued investment in learning Mandarin with the following factors: 1) personal interest, 2) knowledge, and 3) future career.

Personal interest

Cecile identified that she liked everything about Chinese, not only Mandarin, but also Chinese culture, especially martial arts. Although Cecile was actively involved in martial arts at local communities and Mandarin learning at classrooms for several years (c.f. section 4.1), she was still not satisfied with the learning environment, and said, “I find many aspects of Chinese culture fascinating, you know, I would like to learn if I had another life, it would be fascinating to go there” (Interview in May). This demonstrates that the local access to martial arts was not enough, and she expected a more direct access. Cecile made the decision on taking a gap year before she entered university to truly embrace the Chinese culture by practicing martial arts, as well as immersing herself in the Chinese-speaking country by actually using the language. After her trip to China, Cecile was very certain that she will continue to learn Mandarin at her university, and said:

“I would like to continue learning Chinese in some respect, and I think it would be kind of a bad idea to let it drop. So I would like to keep learning it... after traveling [to China], I think it's still probably the most interesting language to me... Especially martial arts. That's a connection, of course, of the language, so it is nice to be able to kind of study Chinese” (Interview in December)

From the quote, constructing a closer relationship to the martial art community in China was important for Cecile because this direct involvement with martial arts gave her more access

to Chinese cultures. Whereas in high school within the local community, the information she got was limited, because Cecile sometimes had to drive to New Mexico in order to meet her martial art master. This also explained why Cecile decided to stay in a martial art school when taking a gap year, instead of going to a school focused on language learning. Therefore, Cecile's certainty of Mandarin investment in university came from her study abroad experience in the martial school, because she realized that Mandarin learning in her university will continue giving her access to her interest in martial arts.

Andy mentioned his investment in Mandarin came from his enjoyable learning experience in high school:

“I have spent five years on it already ... it's become something I enjoy studying at this point” (Interview in December).

Andy shared how he changed from a stigmatized Mandarin learner to a role model for other Mandarin learners throughout his Mandarin learning in high school. At first, Andy had difficulties learning Mandarin for the first year and half, and he even considered discontinuing his Mandarin learning. He recalled: “I was the only person through the year. I was not doing well at all ... because [the] teacher sometimes singled me out [for] not doing well” (Skype chat in April). Andy was labeled as an unsuccessful learner by his Mandarin teacher. However, Andy did not like being labeled this way, and started wondering if he put enough effort in Mandarin, and decided to make a change. Andy had a specific plan during his first summer. When everyone was taking a break, Andy was reviewing his Chinese book. After the school resumed, Andy started to pay attention to the Mandarin sentence structures and actually study for the class, he began to see his learning experience as meaningful. First, Andy's GPA in Mandarin always went up over the course of the year, starting from C+ to A. Second, Andy was selected as the best

student of the year in Mandarin during his tenth grade. This prize made the learning of Mandarin rewarding to him. Last, Andy did well on his AP Chinese test. He was the only non-native speaker who took the test in eleventh grade, receiving a score of 3 (often understood as the “cut-off” line to waive his introductory Mandarin class at the university). All of Andy’s achievements was confirmed by Mr. L, who perceived Andy as the student making the most progress during the interview in May. This rewarding process contributed to Andy’s sense of pride and joy as a Mandarin learner, which he described as reasons for him to continue learning Mandarin in his university.

Knowledge

Having studied Mandarin in their high schools, all the students in this study claimed ownership of the linguistic knowledge in Mandarin. The way to keep this ownership was to continue developing knowledge in Mandarin. As Kelly explained: “I just want to get better at it, instead of starting over, being half good at two different languages” (Interview in December). Nina, like other students, even specifically stated her learning goal was to “gain a level of fluency” (Interview in December). Achieving the native-like level is often perceived as the ultimate goal of foreign language learning. Students’ pride in their competence in Mandarin made them not only want to keep up the same high standard at university as they did in high school, but also to reach the near native-like fluency level at university.

Future career

After the students entered universities, they all equated their learning of Mandarin as a potential asset that would help them compete in the future job market. The students viewed Mandarin as a useful language in their professional fields. In order to obtain more information on what they meant by Mandarin is a useful language in the future, I asked students if Mandarin

directly related to their future during the interview in December. Even though the students were not always able to explain explicitly the link between their investment in learning Mandarin and their future, they all held the belief that Mandarin would help open a lot of doors for them after they graduate. Thus, for these students, learning Mandarin became an identity tool for them to position their future selves (Norton, 2000), belonging to this imagined community where Mandarin is a good asset in the job market.

4.2.2 Familial Level

None of the students mentioned their persistence in Mandarin is mediated at their familial level. All the students identified that they are adults, and they should be responsible for their own academics, including making their own decisions on whether they should continue learning Mandarin in the university. These adolescent learners started to claim the right as adults to actively seek legitimacy on their own terms, so there is very little influence from their families in terms of their Mandarin investment. This changing investment at the familial level will be discussed more in details in section 5.1.

4.2.3 Institutional Level

In terms of the institutional level, the students reported that their continued investment in Mandarin was to earn a diploma in Chinese. Specifically, Andy, David, Sherry, and Cecile wanted to declared their minor or major in Mandarin because they wanted their Mandarin proficiency to be recognized. Earning a degree in Chinese at university functions like earning a score of three or above on the AP Chinese test in high school. The score on the students' AP Chinese test validated that they were an intermediate or advanced Mandarin learner. This recognition goes beyond the local school district level and was proved at the college level. By

the same token, the students hope to earn a major or minor in Chinese at university. This diploma is recognized internationally. As David explained:

“Because I’ve already learned enough, that would be nice to have a degree in it, just to sort of prove that I can speak Chinese without having to give an example. (Interview in December).

David identified that he was an advanced learner in high school because he was exempted from doing Mandarin homework, he was a teaching assistant for the Mandarin teacher, and he was tutoring other Mandarin learners. Although David’s Mandarin abilities were known by his classmates and teachers, this recognition was only confined to his high school. After David received a score of five on his AP Chinese test and earned a National AP Scholar (see section 3.1.2), his Mandarin proficiency level was recognized nationally. Specifically, David was able to transfer his AP Chinese credit hours and was placed at the three hundred level Chinese class. David understood the importance of getting the diploma in Chinese. All he wanted to do with his Mandarin in the university was to earn recognition after he invested so much time and energy in Mandarin since middle school. With this diploma, he hoped to claim to be a legitimate speaker (Bourdieu, 1977) in the Chinese-speaking communities.

4.3 Summary of the findings

4.3.1 The students’ investment in Mandarin in high school

In the high school setting, the data shows that the students’ personal interest, as well as the influences from their families and their institutions, contributed to their desire to invest in Mandarin. In terms of the personal level, the students’ investment in Mandarin can be categorized into five dimensions by their self-identification as 1) students who attribute their investment in Mandarin to their personal interests in Chinese culture, 2) a student who claim

their knowledge in Chinese, 3) students who enjoy taking challenging classes, 4) students who invest in Mandarin based on the family relationship, and 5) students who invest in Mandarin based on the school relationship. In terms of the familial level, the students' investment in Mandarin can be discussed from two dimensions: 1) the students' ethnic background and 2) the students' future career. The students' Mandarin at the institutional level is categorized by their good student identity and their pre-qualified college student identity by taking the AP Chinese test. Thus, in the high school setting, the students' personal level, familial level, and institutional level are equally important to construct their investment in Mandarin. All of the students appreciated that Mandarin came into their lives, and appreciate their families' as well as schools' support for their investment in Mandarin.

4.3.2 The students' investment in Mandarin in university

In the university setting, the data shows that students' investment in Mandarin most come from their personal reasons in order to meet their personal needs or expectations. At the personal level, all the students felt that it would not make sense if they quit Mandarin after they worked so hard in middle school for more than five years. They would like to take the opportunity to polish their Mandarin abilities at universities for their own personal reasons, which can be discussed in three dimensions: 1) personal interest, 2) knowledge, and 3) future career. At the familial level, these adolescent learners started to claim the right as adults to actively seek legitimacy on their own terms, so there is very little influence from their families in terms of their Mandarin learning. All the students' parents confirmed that it was the students' decision on continuing investing their Mandarin learning, and they all fully support the students' decisions. At the institutional level, the students reported that their continued investment in Mandarin was to earn

a diploma in Chinese. With the Mandarin learner identity, they want their Mandarin proficiency to be institutionally recognized and licensed through declaring a minor or major in Chinese.

Chapter 5

Findings: Changing investment in Mandarin

In this chapter, I adopt Norton's (2000) definition of investment and explore its application to the present study. Specifically, my intention is to answer the second research questions: Are there any changes in terms of learners' investment in the two academic settings (high school and university)? What causes the changes?

5.1 Are there any changes in terms of learners' investment in learning Mandarin in the two academic settings (high school and university)? What factors may have contributed to these changes?

The students were asked to compare and contrast how their experiences with their Mandarin learning in two different academic settings: high school and university. They unanimously evaluated their Mandarin learning experience in their high schools as enjoyable, and appreciated having had this opportunity to learn the language of Mandarin and the Chinese culture. With the Mandarin learning experience in high school, they all expressed how much they desired to continue with their Mandarin investment in their universities when I interviewed them in May. However, as the students entered their respective universities, their investment in learning Mandarin was also changing. The following aims to discuss how students' investment in Mandarin is understood and constantly remade through their social relationships at three levels: personal, familial, and institutional.

5.1.1 Personal Level

In terms of the personal level, the data suggest all but one slight difference regarding the students' Mandarin investment in university compared to high school.

In high school, none of the students mentioned the importance of Mandarin from its economic value. However, after they began their time in universities, the students started to associate Mandarin learning with its economic value. Perhaps when the students were still in high school, they might have not clearly seen themselves participating in the competition of the job market, in which Mandarin may be seen as a valuable skill. Whereas when the students started to apply for universities or later when they entered the university, they also began to associate their academic experience with their future career choices, and realized that their continued Mandarin investment might be a profitable investment after they graduate from the universities. In fact, their concept of themselves as individuals competing against one another and Mandarin as a potentially valuable skill came from the university application process: I asked the students if learning Mandarin helped them to get the admissions from universities during the Skype chat in August, and the students explicitly stated that their Mandarin learning experience in high school helped them to apply for universities.

In Andy's example, he discussed if his Mandarin learning in high school helped him to get the university admissions with the university faculty/staff. He recalled the conversation with the university faculty/staff, and said:

“If you're a non-native Chinese speaker, and you want to learn that language, for most people perceived [Mandarin learning] to be a very difficult thing to do. They might perceive people who study Chinese more willing to work hard, as a result of [they're] more willing to let the students into their programs” (Skype chat in August).

The faculty/staff at Andy's university confirmed that they perceived Mandarin learners are diligent, which is the personality that they are looking for. This shows that there is a labor competition going on at universities because students are going to face job markets after they

graduate. From the faculty/staff's perspective, the students who are learning Mandarin possess the good quality of being outstanding laborers at the future job market, so they are able to earn the admissions to the universities. For other focal students, even though the concept that learning Mandarin might help them get into a university came from the students' observations and speculations, they did start to understand that Mandarin is not merely a language to acquire, it is a commodity (Heller, 2011). That is, Mandarin is presented as a product that people can use for jobs on labor markets because of its own value. The students perceived Mandarin as a commodity that their Mandarin investment at university is going to ensure them to get a good job in the future. This changing investment at the personal level might be explained through the micro-level and macro-level. The excerpt reveals how the macro-level (globalized economic value from the societal) and micro-level (personal interest) capture the change of students' Mandarin investment from high school to university. In high school, the students' Mandarin learning was mainly coming from their personal interest, whereas in university, their Mandarin learning has evolved into a form of participation in the globalized labor market, which requires higher levels of communication and literacy skills (Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996). It seems that the students is able to foresee how continued Mandarin investment can actually increase their Mandarin abilities, which might be an asset for their future career after they graduate from university. As Andy said, "Well, I want to go into physics, but if I may, there's a lot of collaboration going on internationally. If I was able to take care of myself in China because I'm fluent in Chinese, it would be a huge advantage for me" (Interview in May). This quote is consistent with Wenger's (1998) analysis, "We not only produce our identities through the practices we engage in, but we also define ourselves through practices we do not engage in" (p. 164). Although Andy has not been involved in the practices where the collaboration might be

needed with Chinese at work, this imagined identity implies that Mandarin as a commodity in labor markets are recognized at national or international levels. Through the practices that the students have not engaged in, they are able to predict that learning Mandarin would offer them more career opportunities and open more doors for their future.

5.1.2 Familial Level

The students' changing investment in Mandarin at the familial level can be categorized into two dimensions: 1) Continued parental support in post-secondary schools, and 2) the changing relationship between parents and children. These changes can be discussed through their changing identity from childhood to adulthood.

Continued parental support in post-secondary schools

The students reported that their decision on continued investment in their Mandarin in university is fully supported by their families as they had in high school. There appears to be no change in terms of their families' attitudes and support. However, there were two students mentioned where there was a slight difference in terms of their families' support between the high school and university. The students' stories in the following will explain why they felt that their families' support in their Mandarin has changed.

“I would say and, of course, in high school, it's easier for parents to look at what you're doing ... in China, of course, it's a bit more difficult. You can just talk about it [and] describe it. Just that distance factor, of course. But I think in terms of attitudes, probably the same, I think” (Cecile, Interview in December).

“In terms of attitudes, I'd say no. There's no difference, but in terms of support, it wasn't intentional, but since I was living a thousand miles away. They just weren't there as

much, so I'd say a little bit more support in high school, just because they were nearby” (Andy, Interview in December).

These two focal students did see being physically distant from home as a factor which led to the change in their families' support between high school and university. This close support from the family is extremely important, especially to Andy, because he was actually planning on transferring back to the in-state University where he is close to his family. I argued that the distance between the family and the school might be an essential factor to determine if the student can perform well in university. When I saw Andy during the interview in December, he seemed very anxious and looked worried, whereas he seemed excited about everything in university during the interview in May. His struggle with university learning, including Mandarin, can be seen easily from his contradictory statements in the Skype chat in November and our interview in December.

“I really want to switch back, because I want to be home with my family a little bit more. And it's kind of cold here. I kind of miss being warm, so I figure out I'm going to come down see my family a little bit, so I keep on going to the school [where close to my family] It's kind of difficult living out on my own too, because I discovered that I kind of miss my mom to take care of me... I'm pretty much set to go to the [in-state University]. My application is in” (Skype chat in November).

“I'm not actually transferring back to the [in-state University]. I'm doing online classes from [my] university. I'm staying in Arizona, but I'm still a student of my university. It's kind of strange. It's kind of crazy, actually. It's actually kind of a last minute decision. I originally intended to stay up in my university, but my parents decided that [it] might be better for me to be home for a while before my mission to get ready for that, so I still

wanted to go to my university, so I decided to take online classes” (Interview in December).

There are two obvious contradictory statements between the Skype chat in November and the interview in December. First, during our skype chat in November, Andy told me that he was going to switch back to the in-state University for sure. His application was in, and everything was all set. However, during our interview in December, Andy suddenly told me that he wanted to stay in his current university. These contradictory statements indicates that Andy was struggling if he should stay in the family safe zone. Second, Andy mentioned that he missed his mom taking care of him, and he needed his family’s close support during our skype chat in November. However, Andy told me that he intended to stay in his current university, but it was his parents who wanted him to be home and take the online courses during our interview in December. The contradictory statement between Andy voluntarily wanted to move back for his family support versus his family kept him at home depicts that the communication between Andy and his family was unclear. In other words, there was a tension during the transition from childhood to adulthood, and this transition often leads to chaos, as shown in the quote, “It’s kind of strange. It’s kind of crazy, actually. It’s actually kind of a last minute decision.”

More importantly, the geographic distance has a negative impact on Andy’s Mandarin learning. During our interview in December, sometimes Andy gave me a low, choking moan when he was describing his Mandarin class in university, especially when he talked about how disappointed he felt about himself because he did not perform well to reach his family’s expectations. As Andy’s father mentioned, “He got a B in the class. He should have an A” (Interview in December). Even though Andy’s performance in Mandarin class did not reach his

or his family's expectations, his family is still very supportive. As Andy's father explained why it is understandable that Andy struggled for his Mandarin learning in the following:

“I remember what it was like my first semester away from home, and... It's easy to have that sort of thing happen. It's not just the schooling that you're dealing with. It's being away from home, doing [everything] for yourself. It's growing up. You have to make those decisions for yourself. Your parents are not there to make them for you, or to see what you're doing. Hopefully, he will chalk that up as a learning experience. But now, [Andy getting a B in Mandarin] doesn't surprise me at all. I don't look at it as a bad thing. It's just what happened” (Interview in December).

This quote is compelling because the leaving home and becoming an adult did play a significant role in students' Mandarin learning trajectory. Andy performed very well in Mandarin throughout his high school career, but when he studied Mandarin at the university, he felt disappointed about himself. In high school, Andy was allowed to fully concentrate on his learning in school because everything was being taken care of by family. However, in university, Andy was living independently and no one was there to make the decision for him. Andy's difficulties in his Mandarin learning at university will be discussed more in detail at the institutional level.

Changing relationship between parents and children

All the students identified that they are adults, and they should be responsible for their own academics, including making their own decisions on whether they should continue learning Mandarin in the university. These adolescent learners started to claim the right as adults to actively seek legitimacy on their own terms, so there is very little influence from their families in terms of their Mandarin investment. All the students' parents corroborated that it was the

students' decision on continuing to invest in their Mandarin learning, and they all fully support their decisions.

Among the six focal students' parents, only Nina's father and Kelly's mother claimed that the decision was made from both sides: the students and the parents, when I asked "Is continuing learning Mandarin in university your decision?" during the interview in December.

"Both. That's from kindergarten to elementary, to high school, and until university. We took all three kids to learn Chinese. That's a useful language [I want Mandarin to] become more like a mother language [for my kids], so this is the best for them" (Nina's father, Interview in December).

As shown in the quote, parenthood had a critical influence on Nina, especially because she came from an Asian family (Vietnamese to be specific), which is often perceived as a patriarchal society. Although Nina's father claimed that Nina's continued investment in Mandarin was made from both sides, his statement "I" and "we" revealed that the decision was actually made by himself or both him and his wife. In addition, "useful" and "best" demonstrated that Nina's father imposed the language ideology on Nina, and convinced Nina to continue learning Mandarin in University.

"I kind of pushed. I mean she told me she was taking it, and I was glad to hear that. I would like to see her continue just because she's done so well with it (Kelly's mother, Interview in December).

Kelly's mother, at first, used "pushed" and adjusted the language by using "I mean she told me" when answering the question. This shows that Kelly's mother tried to change her statement in order to emphasize that decision on continuing to learn Mandarin was actually coming from Kelly's willingness. However, "glad" indicates that Kelly's

decision to continue or discontinue her investment in Mandarin was still monitored by her parents.

From Nina and Kelly's examples, the parents were adapting the situation that their children were changing from childhood to adulthood. This explained why the students claimed that continued Mandarin investment was made by them, while the parents claimed that it was made by both parents and child.

5.1.3 Institutional Level

Although all the students evaluated their experiences in their Chinese program positively in high school and inclined to continue investing in their Mandarin in university, half of the focal students faced the dilemma: they are not able to take any Mandarin classes because of the influence from their institutions. Apparently, such unequal relation of power operates within students' social practices in the university, which constrain or enable human action (Cummins, 2000; Fairclough, 1989; Janks, 2010; Pennycook, 2007). Under this situation, Andy and Kelly are still able to enroll in a Mandarin class in their universities, but David, Ni, and Sherry cannot enroll a Mandarin class in their universities.

When I was coding the data, I realized that the themes emerged from the students who continued with their Mandarin learning are very different from the students who discontinued with their Mandarin learning. It was at this stage that I decided to organize the analysis by comparing and contrasting the Mandarin investment of these continued students, with those of the discontinued students. Table 15 shows who are able to continue or discontinue their Mandarin investment in their universities.

Table 15

A list of continued investment and discontinued investment

Continued investment in Mandarin	Discontinued investment in Mandarin
Andy: CHN 102 class	David
Kelly: Accelerated advanced-beginning class	Nina
Cecile: A gap year in China ²¹	Sherry

The focus of the following is to understand how students' investment in Mandarin is socially and historically constructed through their changing identities as they transition from high school to university in terms of the institutional level.

Continued investment in Mandarin

Andy and Kelly, both of whom were able to continue with their Mandarin investment in their universities, mentioned that their university-level Mandarin classes were not as enjoyable as they had in high school. The reasons they explained were: 1) the placement test and 2) the expectations of the class.

Before the classes started in August, Andy told me, via the Skype chat, that he was the first student who has had gotten a score of 3 on the AP Chinese test. His university did not have experience with helping students transfer the AP credits, and his university decided to place him in a Chinese 102 class. However, Andy was not satisfied with this decision, and complained:

²¹ Since the focus on this study is to discuss the students' changing investment in Mandarin from high school to university in the United States, I do not include Cecile's gap year in China when discussing the students' Mandarin investment at the institutional level.

“I have enrolled for 102 because my AP Chinese credit only gave me credit for 101. I don’t think it’s fair, but I’m currently enrolled for 102. I am probably going to take a placement exam, and [they] probably won’t put me in 102” (Skype chat in August).

From the excerpt, the score of three on Andy’s AP Chinese test assigned the different meanings to Andy himself and his university. From Andy’s perspective, he was not happy with the decision that the school placed him in the Chinese 102 class. Andy certainly felt that his Chinese abilities were above the Chinese 102 level. On the contrary, Andy’s university interpreted that the score of three was equivalent to waive one course, as shown in the Figure 4. That is, Andy was allowed to skip Chinese 101 class and to be placed in the Chinese 102 class. Andy was not satisfied with this decision made from the institution, and planned to take a placement test and hoped to solve this issue.

Advanced Placement (AP)

AP Test	Minimum Score	College Credit Awarded	BYU-Idaho Course	Satisfies Foundations Requirement
AP Art History	3	3	ART 201 ART 202	FDHUM 110
AP Biology	3	3		FDSCI 299L
AP Calculus AB	3	4	FDMAT 112	FDMAT 112*
AP Calculus BC	3	4	FDMAT 112 MATH 113	FDMAT 112*
AP Chemistry	3	4	CHEM 101	FDSCI 299P
	4	4	CHEM 105	FDSCI 299P
	5	4	CHEM 105**	FDSCI 299P
AP Chinese Language and Culture	3	3	N/A	FDINT 299
AP Comparative Government and Politics	3	3	POLSC 150	FDINT 299

Figure 4. The AP college credit at Andy’s university. (Source: Andy’s university website.)

This similar issue of the placement test happened to Kelly, too. Figure 5 from Kelly’s university’s website provides how the institution transfers students’ AP exams to the college credits.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT EXAM	GRADE	CREDIT ON ENTRANCE * OR EXEMPTION	PLACEMENT
Calculus: AB or AB Subscore from Calculus BC	4 or 5	Math 3 credit	Math 8
Calculus BC	4 or 5	Math 3 and Math 8 credit	Math 11
Chemistry	5	Chemistry 5 credit	Chemistry 6; invitation to take a department test for possible Chemistry 6 credit.
Computer Science A	4 or 5	Computer Science 1 credit	Computer Science 10, 30
Economics: Micro	5	Economics 1 credit	Intermediate or advanced course.
Environmental Science	4 or 5	Environmental Studies 2 credit	
French: Literature	5	Exemption from foreign language requirement and French 10 credit	Intermediate or advanced French courses.
	4	Exemption from foreign language requirement	French 8 or 10 ; Invitation to take Dartmouth Advanced Reading Test for possible French 10 credit.
French: Language	4 or 5	Exemption from foreign language requirement	
Geography	5	Geography 1 credit	
	4	Exemption from Geography 1	
German	5	Exemption from foreign language requirement and German 10 credit	Intermediate or advanced courses.
	4	Exemption from foreign language requirement	Intermediate courses.
Italian : Language	4 or 5	Exemption from foreign language requirement	Italian 8 or 10; invitation to take Dartmouth Advanced Reading Test for possible Italian 10 credit.
Latin	5	Credit possible; consult department	Intermediate or advanced courses.
		Exemption from foreign language requirement	Latin 15
Music	Combined score of 5	Music 20	Music 21 or 22
Physics: C (Electricity)	4 or 5	Physics 3 credit	
Physics: C (Mechanics)	4 or 5	Physics 4 credit	
Spanish: Literature	5	Exemption from foreign language requirement and Spanish 9 credit	Spanish 20 and higher numbered courses.
	4	Exemption for foreign language requirement	Spanish 9
Spanish: Language	4 or 5	Exemption for foreign language requirement	Spanish 9
Statistics	4 or 5	Math 10 credit	

Figure 5. The AP college credit at Kelly's university. (Source: Kelly's university website.)

In Kelly's university, they only allowed students who took the AP tests on French, German, Italian, Latin, and Spanish to transfer credit hours to the university. Since Mandarin is off the list, taking a placement test was the only way for Kelly to figure out which class was more appropriate to her proficiency level. Kelly said:

“I tried to take the placement test...But I don't know what happened to the result or something because it didn't show up until after I already registered and went to that class... I should be in the intermediate class, but I didn't know that when I registered. So I took [the beginning level] class. I would probably just stay in it. It's kind of too late now” (Skype chat in September).

The placement is interpreted by these students as an essential component of students' foreign language learning, because it marks their proficiency level by placing them in different classes and perhaps more importantly, granting credits accordingly to the students. For Andy, he did not take a placement test even though he knew that he should have, and he did not know how to fix this problem when he missed the placement test. For Kelly, she only took the written part of the placement test, but missed the speaking part. Like Andy, Kelly knew that she should complete the placement test, but she did not know how to fix this problem. The placement test is supposed to be easily accessible to new students, but it seems that the placement tests in these students' universities were not accessible as they expected. This issue might be explained from the micro-macro perspectives (Wang, 2010). High schools are in a local context at the micro level versus universities are in an inter-state or international context at the macro level. In a high school, the school is small and local, so it often can be fixed in a short amount of time if students miss the deadline, and teachers are always there if students need any remedies. Whereas, in a

university which typically serve a much larger student population from different social, cultural and even linguistic backgrounds, you can only take a certain test at a certain time. If you miss the time, you might need to wait until next semester or next year. More importantly, the issue of placement test is just a beginning. There are more problems coming along after the students missed the placement test. The examples are listed as follows:

“I probably could have done 201 or 202... I didn't try as hard as I probably should have, and didn't turn in all the homework, because it was such an easy class. I didn't feel like it was contributing at all in my learning, because I already knew all the materials. I felt like it was just kind of a waste of time. And then I had other homework which was [in] harder classes for me” (Andy, Interview in December).

From the quote, the common assumption is that institutions should be service providers for students to continue enhancing their Mandarin abilities, but it was not the case in Andy's university. Andy mentioned that the class he took at university was very easy and did not reach his expectations. Specifically, Andy's reflections on his Mandarin class was that homework assignments failed to provide new learning materials for them to study, so doing homework was wasting his time. Kelly reported the same problem and said:

“I thought that it's going to be harder, but it wasn't. I would just say maybe less homework. We had homework every night. It wasn't hard. It is just time-consuming, so it's hard to balance my other classes with it” (Kelly, Skype chat in December).

Kelly used the word “time-consuming” to describe her Mandarin learning through homework. This, again, addresses the issue that the institution is not a service provider. Students' pride in their competence in language learning makes them want to keep up the same high standard when continuing on their foreign language learning (Uzawa & Cumming, 1989).

However, doing homework is just to keep Andy and Kelly busy, instead of learning something new about Mandarin, so they felt disconnected about the Mandarin class they were taking. Consequently, Andy and Kelly changed from enthusiastic learners to apathetic learners in their Mandarin classes.

In addition, Andy and Kelly both mentioned these time-consuming assignments made them unable to balance their other classes, especially when these classes are related to their majors. I argued that it is the good student identity that causes the changes and struggles in their Mandarin investment. I will discuss this in more detail later with those students who could not take any Mandarin classes in their universities.

As opposed to Kelly, who still performed well in her Mandarin class, the conflicting expectation of the students' investment in Mandarin is relatively influential in Andy's case, because Andy ended up taking Mandarin class lighter than his other classes. Andy's Mandarin professor confirmed that, "the latter half of the semester, he's been missing classes quite frequently" (Skype Interview in December). This indicates that Andy withdrew from the participation in the class because he was not only missing the homework deadline, but also did not show up in the class. However, at the same time, Andy rejected being categorized or having to label himself as an apathetic Mandarin learner. As Andy explained:

"I think if I'd been taking the Chinese class that was closer to my level and add more challenges on, I think I would have considered [my Mandarin class] about the same [as my other classes] ... not doing my homework really affects my G.P.A., not my learning of Chinese " (Interview in December).

This excerpt depicts that Andy tried to keep his identity as an enthusiastic learner, even though his performance in his Mandarin class went against it. Andy specifically separated his

Mandarin learning from his GPA. Andy's low GPA of Mandarin did not mean that he is an apathetic language learner, where it truly captures that Andy's placement in university is a site of struggle.

Discontinued investment in Mandarin

For David, Nina, and Sherry, who were not able to continue with their Mandarin learning in their universities, their Mandarin changing investment can be discussed from two dimensions at the institutional level: 1) foreign language education was being marginalized, and 2) the identity of being a good student.

David, Ni, and Sherry, who did not continue investing in Mandarin in their universities, expressed their disappointment when they learned that they could not take any Mandarin classes in their universities since they had planned on taking it. What made them even more frustrated was that postponing their Mandarin learning was the only option they had. The following is to discuss why the students' Mandarin investment is not feasible in their universities by sharing the students' cases individually.

For David, he explained: "The campus I'm on doesn't offer any language classes. I would have to go to [another] campus, which is forty-five minutes away" (Skype chat in September). The Chinese coordinator at David's university confirmed, "Yes, he is right. We do not have Chinese class on that campus. And that campus is quite far from [the other campus]. Not sure if that campus will offer Chinese in the future or not" (Email in November). David's mother especially was surprised the university does not take Mandarin learning seriously, and said:

"They actually discouraged a freshman coming in to not take a foreign language. They felt that there was a lot for [freshmen] to already get used to being [at] the university and

doing the other curriculum. And they really felt that [freshmen] should not take a foreign language” (Interview in December).

As shown in the quote, foreign language education is being marginalized – both geographically and symbolically – on David’s campus at this university. David’s campus emphasized the engineering and science learning, and linguistic capital was not valued there. Taking a long commute to another campus was how they marginalized foreign language learning.

In Sherry’s case, both Sherry and her mother agreed that it is better for Sherry to start with CHN 102 during the interview in December. Sherry explained the reason she did not sign up for a Mandarin class, “I’m currently not enrolled in a Chinese class, because my school does not offer any in the fall, besides Chinese 101, and that’s too easy” (Skype chat in August). The Chinese coordinator confirmed that, “We offer 101, 201, 301, and 401 in Fall semester, and 102, 202, 302, and 402 in Spring semester” (Skype Interview in December). Since CHN 102 was not offered in Fall, Sherry had to wait until Spring semester. This issue happened to Nina as well. Nina explained, “I’m not taking one... because [of] the placement [test], they would place me in the class that’s not offered right now. I think they placed me in the intermediate Chinese” (Skype chat in September).

From David, Sherry, and Nina’s examples, the students started to realize how difficult it is to continue with Mandarin learning. Let alone take an appropriate level of the Mandarin class in university. Whereas, in high school, the Mandarin classes from introductory to advanced levels are available every term. This points to the issue that foreign language education was being marginalized at universities, compared to high schools. Mandarin learning was the focus in high school, because taking a foreign language throughout the students’ entire school years was

required to graduate. On the contrary, Mandarin learning was being marginalized in universities because foreign language only requires one semester or one year. Under this situation, it requires almost two hours commute every day for David to travel to another campus where Mandarin classes are offered. For Sherry and Nina, all they could do is to wait for the Mandarin class, an appropriate class to match their proficiency level, being available next term. The result supports Norton's (2000) observation, these adolescent learners were not unmotivated; rather, it could be argued that their investment in Mandarin was constrained by their universities, where foreign language was being marginalized. This truly depicts the struggles the students had for the decision on discontinuing their Mandarin learning in university since they had planned for taking it before coming to university (c.f. personal level).

Next, I am going to demonstrate how the students struggled with the role of being a good student in their universities when discussing their Mandarin investment by sharing their stories.

Sherry planned to take CHN 102 class in Spring. However, during our interview in December, Sherry suddenly told me that she decided not to take a Mandarin class in Spring 2016. She explained:

“I want to finish my major first cause that's what my scholarship entails ... I just don't have time to put Chinese in it, because I'm going to be overwhelmed by the schoolwork, and I will not do well. So I can't get the time to take it” (Interview in December).

As shown in the quote, Sherry put her major classes as the priority. The Mandarin class at university became a burden if she added it into her schedule, whereas the Mandarin class at high school was considered an interesting class where the students were able to cultivate their interest in Chinese culture. Not only Sherry, but also Nina faced the same issue. Nina stated:

“Because I am in pre-med, and I have a lot of things to worry about ... It would be very difficult to try to plan everything out based on my Chinese learning because I feel like I need to plan it out for my pre-med classes and stuff like that” (Skype chat in November).

Apparently, Nina’s pre-med classes dominated her learning in university. The Mandarin class, again, became a burden and might even interrupt their learning in university. Thus, in order to maintain the good student identity and get successful in their academics in university, she has to prioritize her major courses, and Mandarin learning becomes inferior.

In addition, even Andy and Kelly, who took a Mandarin class in university, also had the same issue. Their major classes are more important than their Mandarin class. Andy, in high school, never missed his Mandarin assignments, while in university, he missed almost one third of his Mandarin assignments. According to Andy’s Chinese professor: “Just for homework, I see thirty three zeros...There were eighty assignments in total” (Skype Interview in December). However, Andy wasn’t worried about he didn’t turn in my Mandarin homework, he was more concerned about his performance in math and physics, which were related to his major courses and entailed his good student identity. For Kelly, even though she planned to minor in Chinese at university, she decided to put Chinese aside to save time for her major classes. Her plan to minor in Chinese did not matter anymore when she realized that getting the distributives done was the only way to graduate and keep her good student identity.

These examples from Sherry, Nina, Andy, and Kelly capture the negotiation of the good student identity situated in these institutional contexts. When they studied in high school, their linguistic capital in Mandarin was valued because they were encouraged to pursue the higher level each year. On the contrary, when they study in the university, their linguistic capital in Mandarin is not valued there because they were advised that they should focus on the courses

from their major. This has been confirmed by Andy’s Mandarin teacher in the university, who said “there are some majors here on campus. They limit the number of electives that you can take” (Skype Interview in December). Thus, the good student identity provides two different results. When students were in high school, learning Mandarin well was how they maintained the good student identity. Whereas, in university, learning Mandarin well is no longer pertained to the good student identity, instead studying well in their major courses takes the place.

Furthermore, during the interview in December, all the students told me that they were not taking any Mandarin classes in Spring. Table 16 details the reasons why the students stop investing Mandarin in Spring 2016.²²

Table 16

The reasons that the students stop investing Mandarin in Spring 2016

Students	Reasons to stop investing Mandarin
Andy	No online Mandarin class is available.
David	CHN 302 requires CHN 301 as a prerequisite. CHN 301 is not available.
Kelly	Have to focus on fulfilling the graduate requirements, instead of Mandarin learning.
Nina	Intermediate level of Mandarin is not available.
Sherry	Need to focus on her major courses as her scholarship entails.

Andy told me that there was no online Mandarin course that he could take. David told me that he originally planned to take a Mandarin class since he will spend most of his time on

²² Although students might not be able to take a Mandarin class in Spring 2016, they might have an opportunity to take it later in their junior or senior year (see section 6.4).

another campus to do his internship in the Spring semester. His AP Chinese test waived the introductory and intermediate classes, and placed him in CHN 301. However, the school only offers CHN 302, and he cannot take it, because it requires CHN 301 as a prerequisite. Nina told me that the intermediate level class she planned to take will still not be offered next term. Sherry told me that she needed to focus on her major classes as her scholarship entails, so there was no extra time for Mandarin class. Kelly told me that she had to fulfill all the undergraduate requirements, so she has no intention to take a Mandarin class at this point. Thus, none of the students were going to take a Mandarin class in Spring 2016, as the result of the influence on the institution level. This, again, displays that foreign language education was being marginalized at universities, which caused their ambivalent desire to learn Mandarin. It is also because the good student identity constrained their personal interest in Mandarin, which made the students discontinue their Mandarin learning in university.

5.2 Summary of the findings

All the students agreed that the biggest change in their Mandarin investment from high school to university is at the institutional level, and only few changes at the personal and familial level. At the personal level, the only change on the students' Mandarin investment is that they constantly emphasized the importance of the economic value in Mandarin. I argued that the change was coming from the students' imagined identity, in which Mandarin is a good asset to invest in the future. At the familial level, the students are struggling with the transition from a childhood to adulthood. This change can be discussed from two factors: the geographic distance between home to university, and the changing relationship between parents and children. At the institutional level, the student's changing investment in Mandarin has to be discussed separately in two groups: the continued investment and discontinued investment. For those who continued

with their Mandarin investment in university, because of the placement test and the conflicting expectations in the Mandarin class caused them change from enthusiastic learners in high school to an apathetic learners in university. The results revealed that the continuing students had to adapt themselves to certain changes in their Mandarin learning in university, and these changes sometimes cause their ambivalence in Mandarin. For those who discontinued with their Mandarin investment in university, their changing investment can be discussed from two aspects: 1) Mandarin learning has been marginalized, and 2) the good student identity. First, in high school, Mandarin classes were offered from introductory to advanced level every term, while in university, some Mandarin classes were offered during certain times. Second, in high school, the good student identity is indexed with the students' Mandarin learning, while in university, the good student identity is no longer pertained to their Mandarin learning. Consequently, even if the student had already planned taking a Mandarin class, or their language learning is supported by their families, all the students have come to the realization that the personal level and familial level have to subordinate to the institutional level when discussing their Mandarin investment in the university setting. The result supports Norton's (2000) observation, these adolescent learners were not unmotivated; rather, it could be argued that their investment in Mandarin is constrained by their universities.

Chapter 6

Implications, Concluding Remarks, and Reflexivity

Using the theory of investment (Norton, 1995), this study has examined the group of Mandarin learners as they transition from high school to university. In particular, I have argued that these adolescent language learners are also multidimensional beings with social histories and multiple desires. Their investment is produced and reproduced within and through social interactions, and the changes in their investment may be socially and institutionally constrained. In an effort to account for the learners as a complex social beings, I advocated for the theoretical framework of subjectivity (Weedon, 1997) as a way of conceptualizing the relationship between identity and language learning (Norton, 1995). The findings in the study have demonstrated how these adolescent learners' Mandarin investment was mediated at the three levels: personal, familial, and institutional. The implications for future SLA research and foreign language pedagogy will be discussed in sections 6.1 and 6.2 respectively. Concluding Remarks follow in section 6.3, and reflexivity is in section 6.4.

6.1 Implications for SLA research

This section discusses implications of the study's findings for the SLA field in the U.S. First, there are three possible types of Mandarin learners in the high school where this study was conducted. Type 1: students who took the AP Chinese course and earned a grade from their teacher without taking the AP Chinese test. Type 2: students who took the AP Chinese course, but did not earn a score of 3 or above on the test. Type 3: students who took the AP Chinese course, and earned a score of 3 or above. I only recruited students from the third type. Future research might need to recruit students from the first and second types, and compare and contrast all three types of students. For type one, it would help us understand why these students chose

not to take the AP test, and why they continued with their Mandarin investment in a university. For type two, it helps us to discover why these students did not get a score of 3 or higher on the Chinese AP test, and why they continued with their Mandarin investment in university. It would be even more interesting to investigate why these Mandarin learners from these three types of students stopped investing in Mandarin and why they invested in another foreign language at the university level.

Second, the students I recruited are often perceived as privileged students from three elite charter schools. Future research might need to investigate students from different social and economic populations and from both private and public schools, and compare and contrast their Mandarin investment, in order to generate a more thorough investigation on investment in adolescents' Mandarin learning. As Dyson (1997) mentioned "the contextual ground of education is always shifting" (p. 179), because each study deals with particular students in particular educational contexts. This type of multiple or collective study, covering charter, private, and public schools, would "lead to a better understanding, and perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases" (Stake, 2005, p. 446).

Third, the data sources for this study are mainly students, their parents, and their teachers. There were some questions I included in the interviews that the Mandarin teachers and professors knew very little about, so I could not gather that information from them. For example, why is Mandarin the only option at Diamond Star High? Why are the AP tests of other foreign languages, such as Spanish, German, French, Latin, and Italian, able to transfer college credits to waive the introductory or intermediate classes, but not Mandarin, at Kelly's university? Therefore, future research on this topic should include perspectives of other stake holders, such as the school leaders and administrators. In so doing, we would be able to not only get more

information at the institutional level, but it would also allow us to discuss what the institutions' investment are in their Chinese programs.

Last, there is a tendency to overlook the transition from high school to university in FL education. There is a need for more research on language learners to reveal the cultural and social information during this transition. Also, it would be better if research on different FL investment in different social contexts during this transition were available. This would help us to understand to what extent adolescent learners' individual agency and their dependence on their families would come into play in their decisions to learn or continue to learn FLs.

6.2 Implications for foreign language pedagogy

This study has two implications with respect to the issue of foreign language pedagogy. First, we can assume that the institutional power of the AP Chinese test constrains each individual learner's desires and identities in foreign language learning. As both Sunny Desert High and Diamond Star High are currently organized, students are expected to obtain at least a score of 3 or higher on the AP Chinese test in order to prove their comprehension in Mandarin. Such a focus on taking the standardized test provides an institutional incentive for students to engage in foreign language learning to some extent. The focal students in this study all appreciated how much they have learned in high school by following the test-oriented Mandarin curricula (c.f. section 4.1). However, it has also led to the creation of certain challenges in their Mandarin speaking ability as they transitioned from high school to university. The focal students recalled that when they tried to practice speaking with their classmates, they realized that they could not even talk to each other more than one minute in Mandarin, which made them feel frustrated because what they learned from test preparation could not be used for actual communicative purposes. It seems that the curricula in these high schools are designed for

preparing students to get a good score on the AP Chinese test. The test, thus, became the institutional criterion of defining who these learners should be and how their legitimacy status regarding the language should be determined (Bourdieu, 1991). Thus, the findings of this study suggest that the unequal relationship between the institutional power and the individual learners reminds teachers and administrators that they should not ignore the students' learning goal to be a legitimate speaker of the language when creating the curriculum, as suggested from the findings in this study.

The second implication is that maybe we should unlink the score on the placement test from the interpretation of students' proficiencies. The findings from this study have shown that placement tests do not fully demonstrate students' Mandarin proficiencies. For instance, according to the academic policy at Andy's university, the score of three on his AP Chinese test is equivalent to three-hour college credits, which placed him in Chinese 102. However, this class is too easy for Andy. Specifically, doing homework was just to keep him busy, instead of improving his linguistic capital. The conflicting expectation of Andy's language learning experience in the classroom was influential because it made Andy become an apathetic learners (in university) after being an enthusiastic learner (in high school). The Mandarin learning experience at the university even became a negative one for Andy because he ended up taking his Mandarin learning not as seriously as the other classes, and even withdrew from the participation in the class (c.f. section 5.1). Andy's case reveals that the result of placement in his university might not be equal to his Mandarin proficiency. Thus, students' proficiency levels should be unlinked from the score on the placement test, and the curriculum should allow more flexibility in placing students into different levels.

Taken together, understanding the investment of adolescent learners in learning Mandarin requires seeing the classroom as a place where the multiple selves of learners can become central to teaching, learning, and program development. As Norton (2000) pointed out, “unless learners believe that investment in the target language are an integral and important part of the language curriculum, they may resist the teacher’s pedagogy, or possibly even remove themselves from the class entirely” (p. 142). In this respect, this study points to the need for FL educators as well as administrators to pay greater attention to students’ investment in reaching the goal to be a legitimate speaker of the language by not only constantly developing their linguistic capital to pass the AP test in high school, but also using the language in their real life, when creating their curricula. This is especially important during the transition from high school to university because the placement test in university is often being used to interpret students’ proficiency levels. However, in the findings, the way to figure out an appropriate class based on the students’ placement tests might contradict the students’ expectations in Mandarin learning. Thus, how to assist students who have previous language learning experiences to be placed in an appropriate class after they enter university becomes an urgent need for all the FL educators and administrators.

6.3 Concluding remarks

The purpose of the study is to explore adolescent learners’ Mandarin investment as they transition from high school to university. The findings in the study have demonstrated how the adolescent learners’ investment was mediated at the three levels: personal, familial, and institutional. Findings revealed by the study contribute to the FL pedagogy and SLA research in three significant ways.

First, the findings show that these adolescent learners' identities were shifting from childhood to adulthood as they graduated from high schools and entered universities. Specifically, the adolescent learners became more independent in making their own decisions, and less dependent on their families, both financially and symbolically. In the literature, the construction of the family relationship was discussed either on adult learners (Norton, 2000) or on adolescent learners (Kanno, 2003). This study addresses the gap on SLA research and aims to mediate the gap by showing the social and cultural impacts from this transition. The findings reveal that geographical support matters in students' Mandarin investment, especially for Andy (c.f. section 5.1). Also, both the parents and the students were adapting to the transition. For students, they tried to claim the legitimacy on their own terms in their academic learning in university, including Mandarin. The parents had to learn how to be free from being decision makers for their children. This indicates the need for L2 educators to pay attention to parental influences, especially for those learners who are not yet ready for their adulthood.

Second, the study identifies the gap in the institutional structures between high school and university of the FL education. In high school, earning a score of three or above on the AP Chinese test is often perceived as the ultimate goal for Mandarin learners to demonstrate their proficiency levels, so the students felt that their Mandarin learning was constrained by the AP curriculum. In other words, they learned Mandarin is to pass the AP Chinese test, instead of enjoying the process of learning a foreign language. At the university, the restriction at the institutional level had even more significant influence on students' Mandarin learning, for both continued and discontinued learners. For the continued Mandarin learners, they discovered that the score on the AP Chinese test is not fully acknowledged at the university level. For instance, Kelly's university did not award any Chinese AP credits to students (c.f. section 5.1). Also, the

placement is assigned different meanings from students' perspectives and school perspectives. For those discontinued learners, Mandarin was not even an option because the foreign language class that was appropriated for their level was not offered when they entered the university. As a result, the students either felt disconnected from the Mandarin class they eventually took because there were conflicting expectations, or they were not able to take any Mandarin class because foreign language learning was marginalized at the universities they went to. The result supports Norton's (2000) observation that these adolescent learners were not unmotivated; rather, it could be argued that their investment in Mandarin was constrained by their universities. This points to the need for L2 educators to pay attention not only to individual students' persistence in language learning with respect to their investment, but also to the accessibility of foreign language learning.

Last but not least, since students at the pre-college level are an under-researched population, working on their transition from high school into college is virtually nonexistent (c.f. section 1.2). The findings from the study set a foundational background for SLA researchers, especially for the field of teaching Chinese as second/foreign language, to conduct additional investigations on similar and related topics in the near future.

6.4 Reflexivity

These adolescent learners in my study showed their changing investment as they transitioned from high school to university. Yet, compared to previous language investment research in adolescent learners, such as Kanno's study (2003) about Japanese adolescent learners for three years, the length of my study was still short. The study showed that Andy and Kelly were struggling with their Mandarin investment during their first semester in university because the placement test was a site of struggle, and also because the institution was not able to provide

the resources for them to continue growing their Mandarin abilities. But one would ask about the students' later years in university. Is it possible that the students are able to place in a class that was appropriate for their proficiency levels after they were more familiar with their Chinese programs at their universities? For David, Nina, and Sherry, who were not able to invest in Mandarin because they needed to prioritize their major courses in order to keep their identity as good students, and also because certain Mandarin classes were offered in semesters when it was difficult for them to add Mandarin into their schedules. One could ask if it is possible that students' ambivalence toward Mandarin investment could change during their junior or senior year after they fulfill their major requirements. These questions cannot be answered in my study. Future research should investigate these learners' Mandarin investment over a more extended period of time at the university.

Next, while most of the students went to their universities directly after they graduated from high school, there was one student in my study who took a gap year in China. It is equally important to note that the transition from high school to university is not unidirectional. With the rise in popularity of taking a gap year during this transition, the investigation of Mandarin investment should not be confined to the institutional settings of a university. Instead, Mandarin investment can flow through other means, such as taking a gap year in a Chinese-speaking community. The possible impact on students' Mandarin investment through a gap year cannot be underestimated, because immersion in a target language community is often interpreted as an efficient way to gain linguistic and cultural capitals. Meanwhile, because there is only one case in my study, it is urgent to conduct more research on this population and gain more information about how students perceive the value of taking a gap year in a Chinese-speaking community, and how the experience of taking a gap year engages students in linguistic and cultural practices.

Due to the varying status of Mandarin and the local varieties in different regions, it would also be interesting to examine what social meanings are being assigned to these varieties, such as in Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

In addition to the investigation of how students' investment is socially constructed in these two different academic settings, I discovered that the students like to discuss how they deploy knowledge, skills, and other resources in support of their investment in university. This might be an interesting topic to investigate in the future since all the students lead me in this direction. For example, Cecile was very excited while showing me her notebook. She used her notebook to document what she learned at her martial arts school (Figure 6). First, Cecile drew pictures of each gesture of martial arts she learned in class, and asked the translator from her language class to help her with the terminology in Mandarin Chinese. Thus, Mandarin learning, for Cecile, was associated with her personal interest in martial arts. In other words, for her, learning is not simply about following the rigorous curriculum at school, but it is about liking and agreeing with the syllabus, as she is passionate about martial arts.

Although the construct of investment in language learning has implied the importance of the relationship between language learners and the social world, how the students deploy knowledge, skills, and resources to support the language investment is also essential in SLA. Seen in this way, "knowledge and participation in education activities are co-constructed, and are crucially linked with [the identity construction]" (Duff, 2002, p. 291). In other words, learners' identity construction plays a key role in shaping access to resources and participation in language learning. This topic is central to poststructuralist theory in applied linguistics (Duff & Uchida, 1997; McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton, 2000; Ochs, 1993; Toohey, 2000), and might need more research in future studies.

study, the findings may or may not have direct implications for a wider population – students' investment in other foreign languages. Moreover, because I have provided a rich description and in-depth analysis of these Mandarin learners in the United States, my hope is that readers of this study will be able to interpret the findings and think about the implications based on the similarities and differences between what is happening in the United States and elsewhere in the world.

Appendices

1. Interview questions

1.1 interview questions for each student in May 2015

Background Information

1. What is your name? Age? Ethnicity?
2. What is your first language? What language(s) do you speak at home? What language(s) do you speak at school?
3. How long have you been learning Chinese? Where have you learned it?
4. Do you have any previous language learning experiences besides Chinese and English? What are these languages? How long have you been learning these languages? Where?
5. Which language(s) is frequently used in your family?

a. about yourself

1. Was learning Chinese your decision?
 - If yes, why did you want to learn Chinese?
 - If no, who made the decision for you? Please explain the process.
2. What has helped you the most to learn Chinese?
3. Who has helped you the most to learn Chinese?
4. What is your current learning goal in Chinese? How do you plan to achieve it?

b. about your family

1. Does anyone in your family speak Chinese?
 - If yes, who are they? Do you ask for their help if you have difficulty learning Chinese? Can you give me some examples?
 - If not, what if you encounter difficulty in learning Chinese?

2. Does anyone from your family play a significant role in your Chinese learning? Why?
Can you give me examples?

3. What do your parents think about you learning Chinese now? Why?

c. about your school

1. Are there any support groups in your school for learning Chinese (e.g., Chinese club)?

- If yes, are you able to get the help from the support group if you have difficulty learning Chinese? What do you usually do when participating in the support group? Can you give me some examples?

- If not, why not?

2. How would you describe your Chinese classes in school (e.g., hard, interesting, etc.)?
Why?

3. How many Mandarin teachers do you have? Are you able to ask for help from your Mandarin teacher if you have difficulty learning Chinese? Can you give me some examples?

4. How many classmates do you have? Are you able to ask for help from your classmates if you have difficulty learning Chinese? Can you give me some examples?

5. Do you have any Chinese speaking friends besides your classmates in your school? Do you speak Chinese with them? Why or why not? How often? In what situation?

6. How did you feel about the learning materials in your classes, including handouts, slides, movies, tests, quizzes, exams, etc? Are these helpful for you to learn Chinese? Why or why not?

7. Why did you want to take AP? Why was it so important to pass the AP test?

8. Does anyone from your school play a significant role in your Chinese learning? Why or why not? Can you give some examples?
9. What do your teachers think about your learning of Chinese?

1.2 interview questions for each student's parent in May 2015

Background Information

1. What is your name? Age range? (30-39/40-49/50-59/60-69/70-79)? Ethnicity?
Occupation?
2. Where are you from? What is your first language? Are you monolingual? Bilingual?
Trilingual? Multilingual?
3. How many children do you have? How many of them are learning Chinese? For how long? Where? Would they practice Chinese together? Can you give me some examples?
4. Can you speak Chinese?
 - If yes, how long have you been learning Chinese? Where? For what reasons? Can you speak other foreign languages besides English and Chinese? What are these languages? How long have you been learning these languages? Where? For what reasons?
 - If not, can you speak other languages besides English? What are these languages? How long have you been studying them? Why do you want to learn them?

Interview questions

1. What do you think about your child's language learning in Chinese? Can you give me some examples?
2. Is learning Chinese your child's decision or yours? Why?
3. How do you help your child learn Chinese? Any strategies?

4. How would you describe your child's Chinese learning at home?
5. How important do you think it is for your child to learn foreign languages now or in the future? Why?
6. How important do you think it is for your child to learn Chinese now? Why?
7. How important do you think it is for your child to learn Chinese in the future? Why?
8. Why charter school? What are the advantages you see compared to public schools and private schools?

1.3 Interview questions for each student's teacher(s) in May 2015

Background Information

1. What is your name? Age range? (30-39/40-49/50-59/60-69/70-79) Ethnicity?
2. Where are you from? What is your first language? Are you Bilingual? Trilingual? Multilingual? What are these languages?
3. How long have you been teaching Chinese? How long have you been teaching Chinese here?
4. Can you please tell me more about the Chinese program in this school? (e.g. When does Chinese program start in this school? How many Chinese classes are offered in this school? What are these classes? How many classes are you teaching? How many students in each class? What is the size of the student population?)
5. How long have you known the student(s)? How well do you know them?

Interview questions

1. What do you think about your student(s)' language learning in Chinese?
2. How do you help/encourage your students to learn Chinese? Any strategies?

3. Do you suggest any extra materials for students to study Chinese after class? If yes, what are they? Why do you share these materials with students? If not, why not?
4. Do you have any suggestions to improve the Chinese program in your school?
5. How well do you know about the secondary educational system in the US? Do Charter schools treat Chinese programs differently or the same compared with the public/private schools?
6. Is there any Chinese-related extracurricular activity in your school? If yes, could you please tell me about the extracurricular activity? If no, how could you help students' Chinese learning outside of class?
7. Do you help students' Chinese-learning during summer/winter break? If so, how? If not, why not?

1.4 Interview questions for each student in December 2015

Background Information

1. What language(s) do you speak at school?
2. What is your GPA in college? How about your Chinese class GPA?

a. about yourself

1. Have you ever thought about learning another foreign languages in college?
 - If yes, what foreign language(s) you would like to learn? Why?
 - If not, why do you want to continue learning Chinese? Is continuing learning Chinese your decision? If no, who made the decision for you? Would you explain the process?
2. What has helped you the most to learn Chinese?
3. Who has helped you the most to learn Chinese?
4. What is your current learning goal in Chinese? How do you plan to achieve it?

5. What significant improvement have you made after you took the Chinese class in college?
6. Any plans for Chinese learning during this winter break?
7. Is Chinese specifically related to your future? In what way?

b. about your family

1. Did anyone in the family start to learn Chinese after we had the interview in May?
 - If yes, who are they? Why do they want to learn Chinese? Do you practice Chinese together?
2. Does anyone from your family play a significant role in your Chinese learning? Why? Can you give me examples?
3. What do your parents think about your learning of Chinese in college? Why?
4. What is your parents' educational level? Your parents' occupation? Age range? Ethnicity?

c. about your school

1. Was there anything you expected to learn, but did not learn from the Chinese class in college?
 - If yes, what did you want to learn?
 - If no, why did you think that the Chinese class was good for you?
2. Does anyone from your school play a significant role in your Chinese learning? Why? Can you give some examples?
3. What do your teachers think about your learning of Chinese?
4. Do you think that what you have learned in high school was enough to support your Chinese learning in college?

5. Did you get any new resources to learn Chinese in college?
6. Do you think that the college you attend is a good fit for you? Why or why not?
8. Are there any suggestions for your Chinese class? If not, why are you satisfied?
9. Have you ever thought of seeking more opportunities to practice Chinese outside of class?
 - If yes, how would you create the opportunities to practice Chinese?
 - If no, why not?
10. Do you think that your school takes the Chinese program seriously? Why or why not?

d. Comparison

- i. Are there any differences in your Chinese learning between high school and university, in terms of your family's attitudes/support? How so?
- ii. Can you describe what the biggest differences and similarities are in these two different learning institutes?
- iii. Can you try to compare and contrast the learning materials in these two different learning institutes?
- iv. Can you try to compare and contrast the classmates you had in these two different learning institutes?
- v. Can you try to compare and contrast the teachers you had in these two different learning institutes?
- vi. Can you describe your attitude toward Chinese learning in these two different learning institutes? Was it different? The same?

1.5 Interview questions for each student's parent(s) in December 2015

Background Information

Have you learned any foreign languages in these 6 months (June – December)?

- If yes, what are these languages? Why do you want to learn the language(s)? How long have you been learning the language(s)? Where?
- If no, have you ever thought about learning a foreign language? Why or why not?

Interview questions

1. Did your child discuss which classes he/she would like to register for in college?
2. What do you think about your child's Chinese learning in college?
3. Is continuing learning Chinese your child's decision or yours? Why?
4. How do you help/support your child to learn Chinese in college?
5. Is going to this college your decision?
 - If yes, why this college? What are the advantages you see compared to other universities?
 - If no, which college do you wish your child would attend? Why?
6. How do people usually describe your child when they learn that your child is learning Chinese?
7. If Chinese was available when you were in high school, did you choose Chinese as your foreign language? How about in college?
 - If yes, why Chinese?
 - If not, what foreign languages did you choose?
8. If you were able to choose the foreign language for your child, what foreign language would you choose for high school? How about for college? Why?
9. How do you check on your child's Chinese learning in college?

10. Can you talk about your child's Chinese learning during summer vacation? During winter break? (Have you ever worried about your children not studying Chinese for a while over the summer/winter?)

1.6 Interview questions for each student's professor in December 2016

Background Information

1. What is your name? Age range? (30-39/40-49/50-59/60-69/70-79) Ethnicity?
2. Where are you from? What is your first language? Are you Bilingual? Trilingual? Multilingual? What are these languages?
3. How long have you been teaching Chinese? How long have you been teaching Chinese here?
4. Can you please tell me more about the Chinese program at this school? (e.g. When did the Chinese program begin at this school? How many Chinese classes are offered at this school? What are these classes? How many classes are you teaching? How many students in each class? What is the size of the student population?)
5. How long have you known the student(s)? How well do you know them?

Interview questions

1. What do you think about your student(s)' language learning in Chinese? Do you know why they want to study Chinese?
2. What strategies do you use to help/encourage your students to learn Chinese?
3. Do you suggest any extra materials for students to study Chinese after class? If yes, what are they? Why do you share these materials with students? If no, why not?
4. Do you have any suggestions to improve the Chinese program in your school?

5. How well do you know about the higher educational system in the US? Does your school treat the Chinese program differently or the same compared with other public/private/ivy league schools?
6. Is there any Chinese-related extracurricular activity at your school? If yes, could you please tell me about the activity? If no, how could you help students' Chinese learning outside of class?
7. Do you help students' Chinese learning during summer/winter break? If so, how? If not, why not?
8. Does the Chinese program receive enough attention from the school compared to other foreign language programs?
9. Do you address students by their Chinese names or English names? Why?
10. Is there any official standard for students to transfer their AP credits? Where is this standard coming from? Do you think it is an appropriate way to determine students' Chinese proficiency?

2. Skype chat questions

2.1 In March

1. How is your Chinese learning recently?
2. What do you learn from your Chinese classes? Is this useful now? Is this useful for the future? Why or why not?
3. Do you have chances to use Chinese outside of class? Can you give me some examples?
4. Does your family, teacher(s), classmate(s) help your Chinese learning? In what ways?

2.2 In April

1. In all the Chinese classes you have taken so far, what are things that you feel have/had a **positive** impact on your motivation to learn/continue learning Chinese? Please explain.
2. In all the Chinese classes you have taken so far, what are things that you feel have/had a **negative** impact on your motivation to learn/continue learning Chinese? Please explain.
3. In your experience of learning Chinese, have you ever thought of giving up?
 - If yes, please describe your experience. Also, explain what served as a turning point to continue your learning.
 - If not, how do you maintain your enthusiasm to learn Chinese?

2.3 In June

1. Could you please describe to me what kind of student you are in your class? (e.g. active student, passive student, good student, diligent student?)
2. Do you think that your school takes Chinese language learning seriously? Do you get enough support from your school? Why or why not?
3. Do you have any suggestions for your school/teachers to improve the Chinese program?
If no, what do you think makes the Chinese program so successful at your school?

4. Are you satisfied with your Chinese learning/performances in your school? Why or why not?
5. Was the school you attended a good fit for you? Why or why not?
6. How do you usually plan for your Chinese learning in the summer? What's your plan for Chinese learning this summer?
7. Can you compare and contrast your language classes led by the teachers of Chinese native speakers versus non-native speakers?

2.4 In July

1. How's your Chinese learning in the summer? How do you get the help/resources for your Chinese learning in the summer?
2. How do you view yourself, a Chinese learner, compared to other students who haven't learned Chinese before?
3. How do people describe you when they know that you are learning Chinese?
4. How many AP tests did you take in high school? How many did you pass? How many of them are mandatory? How many of them are optional?
5. How difficult do you think it is to learn Chinese: scale 1-10 (easiest -> hardest). Why?
6. Did you win/earn any awards during the time you were in school? Or did you receive any recognitions during the graduation commencement?
7. How much do you know about Charter schools? What similarities and differences do you think there are among charter schools, public schools, and private schools?
8. Do you prefer your teacher/classmates addressing you by your Chinese name or English name during the Chinese class? Why? How about after class?

2.5 In August

1. Which college/university are you going to? Why did you choose this school? Could you please tell me the procedure? What's your major? Why did you choose this major?
2. How do people react when they learn that you are going to ***college/university?
3. Did learning Chinese as your foreign language help you when you applied to the college? If yes, How so? If no, what helped you the most when you applied to the college?
4. Is the Chinese program one of your concerns when you applied to colleges?
5. Which Chinese class(es) are you enrolled in? Why? Any other Chinese-related classes? (e.g. Chinese civilization; Chinese poetry, etc.)?
6. What's your expectation of Chinese learning in college?
7. What kind of students would choose Chinese as their foreign/second language?
8. Is there anything that you are worrying about going into college?
9. Is there anything that you are excited about going into college?
10. Are any awards you earned in high school significant to you?

2.6 In September

1. Please remind me of the Chinese classes (Chinese related classes) you are taking now.
2. Would you rather be retaking the introductory Chinese class, or do you prefer taking the intermediate/advanced Chinese class? Why?
3. Did you continue using your old Chinese name in college? Or did you choose a new one? Why or why not?
4. How many credits are you registered in for fall 2015 (this semester)? How many credits are Chinese class(es)? Is this your decision or is it part of the curriculum?
5. What are your high school teachers' reactions to the result of your college application?

6. What's your Chinese class rank? GPA in Chinese class? GPA in high school?

2.7 In October

1. Do you think that your Chinese name right now is significant enough to represent you? If yes, when did you feel that way & why? If no, why not?
2. How often do you call/contact your parents? What do you usually talk about? How often do your parents check your learning in college? Are parents' phone calls important to you?
3. Who in your family cares about your education most (your father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, brother, sister)? How do you know he/she/they care about your education? Can you give me some examples?
4. How do you usually get support for your learning in college from your family?
5. Have you ever thought about majoring in Chinese? Why or why not? When?
6. Who would you usually talk to if you encounter difficulties in learning Chinese? Why?

2.8 In November

1. Could you please introduce your Chinese program in college to me? (e.g. how many levels? how many teachers and classmates? Class format? Textbook?)
2. How do you feel about your Chinese class? Too easy? Too difficult? Okay? (scale: 1-10; easiest → most difficult).
3. Are the learning materials from Chinese class useful? Will they be useful in the future? Why or why not?
4. Does the Chinese class you are taking meet your expectations? Why or why not?

5. Are you able to get help from the college when learning Chinese? Can you give me some examples?
6. Are you involved in any Chinese extracurricular activities?
7. Have you ever participated in any Chinese-related events? For example, Mid-autumn festival? Speech? Performances?
8. How do you learn Chinese if you are not taking a class?

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