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AT HOME OR AN “OTHER” IN THE U.S.:

**TAIWANESE IMMIGRANT WOMEN’S AMBIVALENCE, RESISTANCE, AND
BORDER CROSSING**

A Thesis in

Curriculum and Instruction

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents the stories of five Taiwanese, immigrant, middle-class women and their border crossing, resistance, and ambivalence which evolved as they acquired English as a second language in the context of the United States. Rapeseeds were carried by the wind to many places and I adopt that image as a metaphor to symbolize how these women came to be in the U.S. either by their choice or following their husbands. During this one-year qualitative research, I conducted ethnographic interviews to analyze individuals' histories and their personal stories. I used narrative methodology to gain insight into the meanings of their life experiences, especially to understand the impact of the particular experience of uprootedness on their concepts of "home" and identity development as they transitioned from being dependent to independent while learning English in the U.S. These personal narratives illustrate the significance of sociohistoric circumstances influencing people. This study also reveals how social empowerment and acquisition of the English language reshaped these women's relationships with their husbands, children and mothers. All of these women transformed from primarily dependent beings into not only independent but empowered women due to English language learning. This research analyzes how power, both gained and lost in the process of learning English as well as maintaining Mandarin, becomes a central feature of these women as they encounter challenges and gain independence and confidence. Acknowledging Chinese cultural heritage, I reveal the importance of Taiwan's modern history beginning in 1895, and in particular how the Chinese civil war affected language practices, created identity crises, and led to the final home choices of Taiwan and the U.S. Furthermore, rather than "reporting" women's perspectives and life experiences, this research goes beyond the superficial to identify any contradictions in the conversations. I adopt the Chinese fable of the Shield and the Spear as a metaphor to describe the

inconsistencies in the narratives which indicate multi-layered negotiations of their identities.

Finally, this study reflects on the insider/outsider status between myself as the researcher and the researched participants. I employ the methodology of reflexivity as I examine the shift in power relations during the long interview process and the interactions which empowered both myself and the participants, allowing us to discover and reshape our multiple identities in meaningful ways.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	xi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	xii
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
A Brief History of Immigration: a Transforming Landscape.....	2
The First Waves: European Immigration to the United States.....	3
The Second Waves: Asian Immigration to the United States.....	4
The Significance of Taiwanese Immigration.....	5
English Only? The Challenge of Language Acquisition.....	7
Purpose of This Research.....	8
Research Questions.....	10
Chapter Descriptions.....	12
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	15
The Dynamic Relationship between Language and Identity: Sociocultural Theory.....	15
Language and Identity Formation in Terms of Poststructuralist Theories.....	20
Postmodernism.....	20
Poststructuralism.....	21
A General View of Immigration.....	25
Women's Roles and Experiences in Immigration.....	28
New Immigrants---Taiwanese Immigrants.....	30
History of Taiwanese Immigration.....	31
Three Categories of Taiwanese Immigrants in the U.S.....	34
First category: Professionals.....	34
Second category: Investors.....	34
The Third group: Transnational families.....	35
Women's stories in transnational families.....	36
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	39
Data Collection.....	39
Ethnographic Feminist Interviews: An Overview.....	39
The Details of Each Meeting.....	40
Selection of Study Participants.....	42
Rapport: Start to Build Trust with Participants.....	47
Data Gathering.....	49
Language in Interview---Mandarin.....	49
Audiotaping.....	50
Field Notes, Reflections.....	50
Data Analysis.....	51
Important Concepts: Narrative Research.....	51
Data Analysis Stages.....	53
The First Stage of Analysis--Transcription of the Audiotapes in Mandarin.....	54

The Second Stage of Data Analysis—Typed into Traditional Mandarin.....	56
The Third Stage of Data Analysis—Summary Storylines.....	57
The Forth Stage of Analysis—Find Key Themes, Topics by Reading Transcriptions...	57
The Fifth Stage of Analysis—Connection, Differences in Each Woman.....	59
The Sixth Stage of Data Analysis—Conclusion.....	60
Important Concept to This Thesis: Truth and Reflexivity.....	60
Truth.....	60
Reflexivity.....	61
Chapter 4: Profiles of the Five Taiwanese Women.....	63
Personal Information.....	64
Jane: An Uneasy Journey to Get a Master’s Degree.....	64
Mei: Transnational Family, Living Separately from Her husband.....	66
Lily: Intermarriage with an American.....	69
Kelly: A Book of Chinese History.....	73
Sharon: Influenced by Japan Colonization and Taiwanese Independence.....	76
Chapter 5: Creating a “New Way of Life:” Lily, Sharon, Kelly, Mei and Jane as English Learners in the U.S.....	80
油麻菜籽 Rapeseeds, the Metaphor of Rapeseeds.....	82
Rapeseeds Fall in the U.S.: Their New Environment in the U.S.....	84
Lily: I chose to leave Taiwan.....	85
Kelly: Stay with husband after finding a job in the U.S.....	86
Jane: Coming to the U.S. without knowing why.....	87
Mei’s reason for staying: Son’s allergy kept me stay.....	89
Sharon’s story: America was not our first choice.....	91
The Rapeseeds: Where am I?.....	93
Their First Impressions and First Lives in the U.S.....	93
Sharon: Shock by the U.S.....	93
Kelly: What a horrible life!.....	93
Lily: America is so great!.....	95
Mei: Kids, kids, kids.....	96
Jane: Do I have choice?.....	96
Kelly: Hardships just began.....	97
Sharon: I was stuck at home.....	97
Lacking Family Support.....	98
I made tofu by myself.....	98
Lacking Family Support.....	99
Jane: I had no one to help me.....	99
My Reflections.....	100
One Person Two Cultures: English Language—Learning Experiences.....	103
The Role Language Plays in Learning Theories.....	104
Language-Learning for Second Language Learners.....	105
Language-Learning and Use within Schools.....	107
Mei, Lily, Sharon, Kelly and Jane’s Experiences Learning English in Taiwan.....	107

Experiences Learning English in U.S. Schools.....	109
Americanization.....	109
My Reflections.....	111
Kelly's beginning school experiences: Learn with children from a superintendent..	112
Kelly's college class experiences.....	113
My Reflections.....	114
Jane's school learning: I don't want to be a mom and a servant only.....	115
Jane's horrible experiences with school.....	117
My Reflections.....	118
Learning English: Experiences outside of School.....	121
Sharon's First Temporary Job: I need to Go out to Learn English.....	121
Learning English at an American Church: I begin to Talk in English!.....	123
Jane's Learning Experiences in an American Church: I went to Church for fun.....	124
Mei's Story of Church Cooking Class: I Learned American Cultures.....	125
Kelly's Feelings toward American Church Classes: Too Easy.....	125
Kelly: American Church Friends are My Teachers.....	126
My Reflections.....	128
The Other Activities for Learning English.....	129
TV programs.....	129
Learning another culture during children's school activities.....	129
Public services: Libraries or dramas are fun.....	130
My Reflections.....	130
Workplaces, New Identities.....	131
Jane: Americans Treated Me Different.....	131
Jane's Interview Experiences: This is What I am Afraid of.....	135
Lily's Work Experiences: I could do Something Different.....	137
Lily's Work Environment: I was being Discriminated Against.....	138
Lily's Turning Point: I could Open My own Company.....	140
Mei's Work: I am Lucky.....	141
Kelly's Working at the Chinese Restaurant: I passed through it All.....	143
Chapter 6: Complicated Power: English Language-learning and Identity Negotiation....	146
The Development of Identity from the Perspective of Language Theories.....	149
Identity Development from Feminist perspectives.....	150
Identity Crisis.....	151
Power Relations.....	152
Domestic Empowerment and Negotiations: Transforming the Woman's Role.....	154
Sharon's Journey: Empowerment and Partnership.....	155
Sharon: I Have to Stay Here for My Husband.....	156
Sharon: Becoming a Major Decision Maker.....	157
Sharon: I Refused to Let My Husband Become a Governor.....	159
Jane's Relationship with Her Husband Gradually Changed and Transformed.....	159
School experience changed Jane's relationship with her husband.....	162
Her Reflections: I was So Stupid.....	164
My Reflections.....	165

Mei's Physical Separation from Her Husband: I am Very Strong Now.....	166
Mei's Identity Develops: I Have to be Independent.....	168
Mei: I Want My Son to be a Doctor.....	168
Mei: If Dad is Here.....	170
My Reflections.....	170
Mei: It is My Choice to Continue Staying Here.....	171
Mei: Life is Going on!.....	172
Kelly: Dependent Wife to a Strong Mother.....	172
Kelly's Turning Point: I Have to be Strong after He Died.....	174
Lily: My Changes Started after Getting Married.....	175
Lily: I Want a Family.....	177
My Reflections: Language Matters.....	178
Negotiating Two Languages: The Relationships between Mothers and Children.....	181
Home Language Struggles—Mandarin v.s. English.....	182
Mei's Story: I am a Busy, Sacrificed Mother.....	184
My Reflections: Where is the Daughter?.....	185
Mei: Sacrifice for My Son as much as I could.....	186
Mei's Progress of Having her Power Back.....	187
Mei: 甜蜜的負擔 My Children are My Bittersweet Burden.....	190
My Reflections.....	191
Sharon: My English was not Improved Because of Children.....	192
Lily: I was Teased by My Daughters.....	193
My Reflections.....	195
Kelly's power Relations with Children: I am Proud of My Son who is a Doctor.....	197
Doctor, doctor.....	197
Kelly: I could Learn English from Children.....	198
My Reflections.....	200
Jane's Relationship with Her Children: They Felt My English was Strange.....	200
My Reflections.....	202
My Story about Speaking Mandarin and Taiwanese.....	203
My Dilemmas of Teaching Two Languages.....	206
嫁出去的女兒潑出去的水: A Daughter Who Got Married, Became a Water which was Poured.....	209
Sharon: I could not even See My Mother after She Died.....	210
Mei, Jane: I would like to Take Care of My Mother, but I couldn't.....	212
Kelly: Sending Money is My Only Way to Make Up to My Mother.....	213

Chapter 7: Where is Our Home? The Importance of the Past in Reshaping the

Final Choice of Home	217
Timeline.....	221
Japanese Colonization of Taiwan, 1895-1945.....	223
Japanese Rule and the Japanese National Language (1895-1945).....	224
KMT Rule (1949-2000).....	224
Two-Two-Eight Incident (1947).....	225
Chiang's Rule of Taiwan and Mandarin as the National Language.....	226

Who Are They? Benshengren or Waishengren?.....	227
Sharon's Identity: The Japanese are not Bad Guys.....	229
My Reflections: Whose History is it?.....	232
Where is My Home?.....	237
Kelly's Americanization.....	240
Americanization process.....	240
Kelly: China and Taiwan are not My Roots.....	242
Sharon: I am not a Taiwanese anymore? The Story of a Juice Can.....	243
大時代小人物 Everyday people in a Big World.....	244
Mei's Choice: Taiwan is My Home.....	246
Jane's Ambivalence.....	247
Lily: Future Home? Perhaps China.....	248
My Reflections.....	250
 Chapter 8: 自相矛盾 (Impenetrable Shield and All-piercing Spear) Reshape Multi-Layer	
Identities.....	252
The Negotiation in the Borderlands.....	253
Sharon's 矛盾, Her Complex Attitudes toward the Home Language.....	255
Sharon: America is Better.....	255
Sharon: So, Who am I? American, Taiwanese, Chinese or Japanese?.....	257
Sharon: American Culture? No, Thanks.....	259
Sharon: 其實我對台灣大陸沒有什麼區別。In Fact, I have no Difference between Taiwan and Mainland China.....	260
Sharon: 我們還是中國人: We are Still Chinese.....	261
Kelly: The Complexity of Identity Negotiation of American and Chinese.....	262
Jane: I Have Educated Two Children Who Turned to Different Ethnic Identities.....	264
Mei: My Struggles of Teaching Two Languages.....	265
Mei: Children were more Important than Husband.....	266
Lily: America? Chinese? Taiwanese?.....	268
 Chapter 9: Epilogue, Their Story/My Story/Our Story: Insider versus Outsider.....	271
My Research Involvement: My Reflexivity.....	273
Jane.....	275
Mei.....	280
Kelly.....	282
The Interview Tidbits.....	284
The Consent Form with Sharon.....	287
Lily: a Powerful leader.....	291
Power Relations Shifted and My Personal Development Growth.....	292
Empowerment.....	295
Conclusion.....	297

Appendix A: China and Taiwan Map.....	303
Appendix B: IRB Approval 1.....	304
Appendix C: IRB Approval 2.....	306
Appendix D: Interview Questions Chinese Version.....	308
Appendix E: Interview Questions English Version.....	309
Appendix F: Data Analysis Sample 1.....	310
Appendix G: Data Analysis Sample 2.....	312
References.....	313

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Personal Information of Five Participants.....	63
Table 2	Personal Information and Background of Five Participants.....	227

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Chapter 1

Introduction

What is home? The place I was born? Where I grew up? Where my parents live? Where I live and work as an adult? Where I locate my community, my people? Who are “my people?” Is home a geographical space, a historical space, an emotional, sensory space? Home is always so crucial to immigrants and migrants...(Mohanty, 2003, p. 126)

This thesis relates the narratives of five Taiwanese, immigrant, middle-class women’s experiences regarding bordercrossing, resistance, and ambivalence as they acquire English language skills in the context of the U.S. I include myself as one with insider knowledge of this journey, and I spent a year sharing their joys, laughter, and tears. In the process of identity negotiation we (re)construct who we are and where we consider home in this new and different land, the United States of America.

As a researcher and as a Taiwanese woman living in the U.S., I am interested in how the English language affects Taiwanese immigrants and specifically Taiwanese immigrant women’s learning and life experiences while in the U.S. More specifically, this research investigates the power and influence of the English language in shaping immigrants’ identity development. In this research I used information and theoretical advances from the following disciplines: Education and Qualitative research; History of immigration into the U.S. from the late 18th centuries to the late twenty centuries; Applied Linguistics; and Women’s Studies.

To understand the relationship between English language learning and identity development, I focus on and study the life and learning experiences as these women share stories about their lives and, in particular, their struggles. They relate their experiences learning the English language and how this experience affected their final choice of which country they claim as their home (Ng, 1998). I, as the researcher, play a dual role in this research because throughout the data gathering and analysis process, I have myself been both an insider and an outsider. As an insider, I share the same ethnic groups with these Taiwanese women thus we have Chinese cultures in common. As an outsider, I was unlike those who were currently U.S. citizens and have resided in the U.S. more than ten years.

In order to fully understand and appreciate the historical context within which I conduct this study, in this chapter I first trace two trajectories of immigration, European immigration of the late 18th and early 19th centuries and Asian immigration of the late 20th century. Next, I provide an overview of the history of Taiwanese immigration to the United States. Third, I discuss how language acquisition provides unique challenges to immigrants and their identity formation. Finally, I conclude this chapter by outlining my research purpose, research questions, and chapter outlines.

A Brief History of Immigration: a Transforming Landscape

Immigration is regarded as one of the main issues in the U.S. and has become a major subject of study for scholars, many of whom have paid attention to the important role played

by immigrants in building the U.S. into a powerful country (Martin & Midgley, 1994; Wierzbicka, 1994; Olsen, 1997; Rong and Presissle, 1998; Ng, 1998; Espin, 1999; Carnevale, 2000; Daniels, 2002; Gerdes, 2005; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006;).

The First Waves: European Immigration to the United States

U.S. immigration began in the 1600s (Daniels, 2002). America was not the first choice for many Europeans who began to migrate to other countries even before Columbus began his journeys to The Americas. The mass migration took three routes: south across the narrow straits of the Mediterranean and the Strait of Gibraltar, south east across the Bosphorus, and straight eastward across Eastern Europe.

Competition between Islam and Christian religious fervor influenced Europeans to migrate overseas in order to colonize other countries. From 1607 to 1776, about one million people arrived in the U.S., including six hundred thousand (600,000) Europeans and, via slavery, three hundred thousand (300,000) Africans. Most Europeans were English, so that initially American language and culture became an extension of English language and culture.

Also, beginning in the 1820s, the so-called “great hunger” forced the Irish to leave their country and migrate to various locales, with many of them choosing to come to America. The attraction of America as a prosperous land caused approximately 4.5 million Irish to migrate to the U.S. Additionally, Germans, Swedes and Norwegians gradually migrated to the U.S.

In the 1920s, two out of three immigrants arriving in the U.S. were European males and most were youths.

The Second Waves: Asian Immigration to the United States

Historically, Chinese immigrants were regarded as inferior by European immigrants who had located in the U.S. earlier. In the eighteenth century, many Chinese people came to the U.S. specifically to build the railroad infrastructure. Most were men who were forced to leave their wives and children behind in China because of imposed restrictions (Chen, 1992; Song, 1992; Lowe, 1996; Tuan, 1999; Tung, 2000). In addition to railroad workers, an increasing number of Chinese immigrants came to the U.S. to work as cooks, servicemen, and restaurant owners, and, through their focused labor, helped spur economic growth in the U.S. Although Chinese immigrants were hard workers and had accomplished economic solvency, their social status cast them as second-class citizens and they could not attain equal rights with the European Americans (Chen, 1992; Ng, 1998; Tung, 2000).

The Immigration Act of 1965 was a significant breakthrough because it allowed Chinese people to immigrate with their families and to work and/or to receive access to higher education, which allowed Chinese immigrants to contribute their energies and professional and technological skills to the U.S. economy (Tung, 2000). As a result, more and more Chinese immigrants became employed by U.S. companies for their professional skills and thus were established as part of the elite class.

Starting in the 1980s, immigration sources shifted dramatically from European to Asian and third world countries, which caused a new trend. In the 1980s and 1990s, the top five countries of origin for immigrants were Mexico, the Philippines, China/Taiwan, South Korea, and Vietnam. More specifically, approximately 600,000 new immigrants from different countries arrived in the U.S. each year, with the total increasing each year (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). In 2000, the foreign-born population reached 37 million people or 12.5% of the total U.S. population. This total reflects legal immigrants only; if illegal immigrants are included, this number would be even higher.

By 2005, the Chinese became the second largest population of immigrants in the U.S., largely attracted to America because of the country's economic and political hegemony. It is important to clarify that, when referring to Chinese people, I include Taiwanese due to their shared culture and in spite of the complicated political situation between China and Taiwan. These new arrivals included both members of the working class, such as cooks, and professionals, like engineers or scientists who have been working hard in order to find a better and more secure living environment and to fulfill their American dreams. These Chinese immigrants have made as significant a contribution to U.S. economic and cultural success as did their predecessors who built the railroads and engaged in the dirty, heavy labor from the eighteenth century to contemporary times.

The Significance of Taiwanese Immigration

The Taiwanese specifically have immigrated as professionals with exceptionally high

labor skills - a new type of immigrant. In the 2000 U.S. Census, Taiwanese in the U.S. occupied 45.5% of the professional specialty occupations such as engineers or scientific researchers. In addition, 99% of Taiwanese who applied for the Temporary (H-1B workers) program in the U.S. are college-leveled (Office of Immigration Statistics, 2003). As a result, in the late 20th century Taiwanese immigrants began a new immigration wave to the U.S. These new “Chinese” immigrants from Taiwan differed from Mainland Chinese applicants in that they had typically achieved both a higher level of education and a higher level of fluency in the English language (Ng, 1998).

Motivation for these Taiwanese immigrants to migrate can be traced back to the history of relations between China and Taiwan in the 1940s. Continuous civil wars within China, coupled with Japan’s military invasion of China, changed the history of the Taiwanese people and their relationship to Mainland China. When Taiwan separated from China in 1949, but before it had claimed status as an independent country, the Taiwanese people still shared Chinese heritage¹ and roots. But the wars split the Taiwanese from the Mainland Chinese and caused Taiwan to become a separate political entity. As a direct result of unstable politics, increasing numbers of Taiwanese elite decided to study abroad and remain in the U.S. (Ng, 1998).

The Taiwanese immigrant population has received frequent scholarly attention (Chen,

¹ See the map of China and Taiwan in the appendix A.

1992; Ng, 1998; Fung, 2002); however, the majority of the research has concentrated on successful Taiwanese immigrant men and children, with only a few studies devoted to research concerning Taiwanese immigrant women. Their consistent absence from research focus can be attributed to the males being regarded as both main providers and decision makers for the household (Huang, 1997; Chee, 2003).

English Only? The Challenge of Language Acquisition

These new immigrants initially encounter language problems when they are required to adapt to the English-speaking environment immediately upon arrival in the U.S. Immigrants have been challenged by the English-dominant society because of linguistic barriers. The controversial debate of a recent Immigration Reform Bill especially reflects the white mainstream majority's conflicted opinions regarding allowing foreign immigrants into the United States. Many who are in favor of restricting immigrants believe that the most recent immigration wave may threaten the status of mainstream Americans. Williams, an American journalist who opposes immigration, claimed, "Today, the annual tidal wave of over a million immigrants...is endangering our American way of life" (Williams, 2004, p. 10). The white dominant majority hopes to secure their own job opportunities and therefore their futures.

In addition, many Americans who are in favor of requiring immigrants to speak English well believe that universal English capability could help secure the U.S. homelands. The perspective of U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt reflects the beliefs of many contemporary

Americans when he declared, “We have room for but one language here, and that is the English language; for we intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as Americans, and not as dwellers in a polyglot boardinghouse; and we have room for but one sole loyalty, and that is loyalty to the American people” (as cited in Olsen, 1997, p. 135).

The English-only belief has led many immigrants to believe that they not only need to “speak” English, but that they also need to speak it well in order to be accepted within an English language-dominant society. Immigrants encounter difficulties due to the restrictions placed on use of their native language and sometimes experience identity crises as they seek to define who they are (Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2000).

Purpose of This Research

In this research, I address the lack of emphasis on the experiences of Taiwanese women in the scholarship. I interview five Taiwanese, middle-class, immigrant women concerning their experiences in the U.S. I ask them to tell me their personal narratives, to focus on their experiences learning English in the U.S., and especially on how their identities developed and were negotiated within a multicultural context. My intention is to investigate any relationship between identity developments and language learning practices at home, in workplaces, and in communities.

This research is necessary for several reasons. First, this thesis aims to record the marginalized voices of Taiwanese, immigrant, middle-class women. While this research

examines the lives of Taiwanese women of Chinese descent, it differs from previous research concerning Chinese, immigrant women who have been depicted as unskilled and uneducated (Boyd, 1986; Chen, 1992; Zhou, 2000; Man, 2004). The Taiwanese, immigrant women in this research, when viewed through a positive lens, are found to be skilled and confident. Furthermore, I explore how these Taiwanese immigrant women maintain Chinese cultures and ideologies while residing in an English-speaking country.

Second, I utilize Mohanty's (2003) feminist conception of the significance of "home," in order to inform this examination of how Taiwanese immigrant women deal with their identities. Mohanty's (2003) idea of home choice focuses on immigrant women in the U.S. and their ambivalence towards their home choice. It encouraged me to explore these Taiwanese immigrants in the U.S. who were born in China or Taiwan, but are now living in the United States. In fact, for Taiwanese women, identifying their geographical home is further complicated by the fact that they may have been born in China, relocated to Taiwan temporarily, and finally immigrated to the U.S. Furthermore, some were born in Taiwan, but their parents escaped from China during the Civil War of 1949. These factors have tremendous effects on how they regard themselves and how their notion of "home" influences their motivation to learn English.

Third, in order to examine the notion of "empowerment," I explore the complex relationships between power, the English language, and identity development among

Taiwanese immigrant women now resident in the U.S. Women's Studies highlight the importance of the concept of empowerment, which encourages women's voices, and allows women to gain and assert their power. Thus, this research investigates how Taiwanese immigrant women display power in the context of family relations, workplaces, and public places. I examine how these women have been empowered through the process of acquiring self-awareness and a growing knowledge of their own oppression, and discuss where they still need to gain empowerment.

Lastly, this research involves connecting my personal experiences to these women's narratives. Throughout the ethnographic process that I employ in this dissertation, I trace my personal journey and I show how my own stories and feelings connect with the stories told by these women. In common with these women, I am also a mother with a son who is an American citizen, and sharing my experiences provided me with opportunities to reconstruct my "self." The juxtaposition of retelling their stories and my stories led to the presence of multiple voices and ultimately produces a polyvocal text (Glesne, 1999).

Research Questions

My three central questions were as follows:

1. How do Taiwanese, immigrant, women's different experiences in learning English, both prior to arriving and while resident in the U.S., affect their identity development and motivation to learn English?
2. How do Taiwanese, immigrant, women negotiate a multiplicity of identities while

building their lives in multilingual contexts? Were they empowered in the process of creating their identity? How does power benefit or discourage them in terms of employment, access to English-dominant communities, and their identity development?

3. Which country do Taiwanese, immigrant, women regard as their home? And how does “time” as a factor influence their choice of home? Which cultures most influence their home life?

In addition to these central questions, multiple sub central questions emerge. In central question 1, I investigate these women’s various learning experiences and how these different learning experiences affect their identity development. I further ask:

- (a) What motivated these five Taiwanese, immigrant, women to immigrate?
- (b) How do they have access to English-dominant communities in the U.S.?
- (c) What are their experiences learning English in the U.S. and prior to residing in Taiwan, and how were they influenced by these experiences?

Moreover, based on the central question 2, investigating the participants’ identity negotiation and the notion of empowerment, I explore:

- (a) How do these women negotiate their power within their relationships with their husbands and children during the process of learning English?
- (b) How do they negotiate their multiple identities including gender, race, ethnicity, religion and culture?

Finally, with central question 3, which investigates these women's home choice, I further explore:

- (a) How do their birthplaces at various times affect their home choice?
- (b) How do these Taiwanese women regard their home language, Mandarin maintenance, or shifting to American language?
- (c) Is a conscious decision made to pass on a predominantly Chinese or American culture to the next generation as the main culture?

Finally, regarding the three central questions and what connects the researcher, as an outsider and insider to these five Taiwanese women, I explore:

- (a) How do I, as the researcher, construct and (re)construct my identity development while both interpreting these Taiwanese immigrant women's experiences and reflecting on my own personal narratives?

Chapter Descriptions

In chapter II I briefly review the related literature including the literature from three fields of study: Applied linguistics, Women's Studies, and U.S. history. First, I look at the sociocultural theories advocated by Vygotsky (1978) who sought to address the importance of language to social relations. According to Vygotsky, second language learners' experiences also affect their identity negotiations. In addition, I adopt poststructuralist theories identifying the importance of power relationships among language practices, identities, and social

relations. Finally, I elaborate upon the history of immigration to the U.S. in modern times, particularly as it involves Taiwanese immigrants

Chapter III contains a brief description of the methodology for this thesis; I introduce how and why I adopted ethnographic feminist interviews as a data collection technique. I explain the process of selecting these particular five women and the research interactions with them. Finally, I present how I conduct the data analysis in order to have the material needed to discuss issues raised during my interviews with these five immigrant women.

Chapter IV contains profiles of these five participants wherein I introduce their backgrounds, how they came to the U.S., and catalogue their past and current roles in the context of family and employment.

Chapter V first describes these women's newly crafted lives in the U.S. I adopt the rapeseeds, the seeds which are carried by the wind to many places, as a metaphor to symbolize how these women find themselves in the U.S., either by choice or by following their husbands. I then examine their encounters, specifically cultural shock with the U.S. society, and how their lives changed by immigrating to the U.S.

Chapter VI is the analysis of identity development among these immigrant women whose identity crises stemmed from interactions with the white-mainstream American society. I review how they cope with difficulties. The intention is to understand how the complexity of power relations affects their identities within both community practices and their

relationships with husbands, children and parents.

Chapter VII contains a further discussion of the importance of past history on present life styles, the influence of different periods and reigns of governments, and how the Chinese civil war affected language practices in the U.S.

Chapter VIII, rather than “reporting” women’s perspectives and life experiences, goes deeper to analyze the contradictions in the conversations. I apply the Chinese fable of the Shield and the Spear as a metaphor and identify these women’s ambivalences and struggles as revealed in the women’s narratives.

Chapter IX, the final chapter, examines the power relations between myself, as the researcher, and the researched, as well as my interactions with the research and these women. I use the method of reflexivity as a framework to reflect and describe the ambivalence experienced by being both an insider and an outsider in the context of this research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The theoretical frame in this thesis includes research from the three academic fields of applied linguistics, history, and women's studies. From applied linguistics I draw on research that addresses the relationship between language acquisition and identity development. I utilize scholarship in history to fully understand immigrant history in modern times. Finally, from women's studies I focus on the notion of empowerment and home choice. This literature review, which provides the theoretical frame of my dissertation, encompasses the relevant literature from these three fields of study in order to fully ground my study's findings.

The Dynamic Relationship between Language and Identity: Sociocultural Theory

The theoretical framework I adopt in this research is situated at the nexus of Vygotsky's Sociocultural theory and poststructuralist perspectives, with the focus on the complexity of narrative identity construction. Sociocultural theory indicates the importance of language and how language influences language learners' identity development, as well as how these learners negotiate identities within powerful social contexts (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995). Poststructuralist perspectives provide us with ways to examine the identities situated and negotiated within larger sociohistoric, socioeconomic, and sociopolitical processes. In addition, poststructuralist theories reveal the relationship between power and society, and the role of language in power production and reproduction. Poststructuralist theories specifically

pay attention to oppressed groups, such as women, minorities, or the elderly (Pavlenko, 2001).

I begin by discussing the relationships between language and identity development in terms of Vygotsky's Sociocultural theories. Language, as argued by Vygotsky (1978), is a symbolic tool that humans use to create meaning. Language is a tool of thought, an instrument that humans use to reflect on the past and to think about the present and the future. Language makes words and dialogue possible and meaningful (Mitchell & Myles, 1998). In addition, language demonstrates the realities of society. Humans use language within activities, rendering them socially and culturally meaningful. These theories about language and culture provide a critical framework for the research conducted in this research.

In addition to illustrating the importance of language in human lives, the Sociocultural theory provides a unique perspective for the field of second language acquisition (SLA) by broadening SLA perspectives and highlighting understanding of the cultural and social factors existent within language teaching. Traditional SLA has been criticized for focusing solely on lexical, grammatical structures and practices. In fact, L2 (second language) students not only encounter difficulty in learning a new language, but also have a hard time being introduced to different cultures (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). Studies of second language acquisition evaluate and provide strategies that help students gain language proficiency, but may overlook social factors that might affect the variety of students' different experiences in

learning English.

Polanyi (1995) advocates the importance of individuals' varied language learning experiences. From the framework of feminist perspectives, she critiques the standardization of language learning experiences in the traditional field of SLA. These standardizations are based on "one standard learner's experience" (i.e., white, middle-class men). Polanyi points out that other factors, such as race, gender and class, need to be considered. There is no standard rule for each learner because, "every language learner is alone with a unique experience, an experience tailored to, by and for that individual" (Polanyi, 1995, p. 287).

Norton (2000), Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) both indicate the importance of the social factors advocated in Vygotsky's Sociocultural theory. In research concerning minorities who learn English as a second language, Norton (2000) criticizes traditional SLA for overlooking the social needs of those who speak limited English. She points out that, "language is not conceived of as a neutral medium of communication, but is understood with references to its social meaning" (Norton, 2000, p.5). Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) argue that the new SLA, in acknowledgement of the Sociocultural theory, should pay attention to the struggles of the second language learner which are socially constructed in another cultural world.

Sociocultural theory provides a way to improve weaknesses found in traditional SLA studies and calls attention to social and cultural factors in the process of second language teaching and learning.

Norton (2000), based her study on immigrant, women learners in Canada, and she articulates the relationships among identity development, language learning, and social factors. Opportunities to practice English in the home, workplace, or community determined whether these learners had access to the dominant English-speaking network. However, with limited English proficiency, these women were often excluded by English-speaking communities. They lacked confidence because they did not know how to communicate with those communities. Later, once they had acquired more vocabulary and speaking skills and could negotiate with English-speaking people, these immigrant women felt more comfortable using English and felt accepted by the social world for being able to communicate in English. As a result, they were motivated to practice and learn even more English. In addition, Norton (2000) describes the complex process of how these immigrant women's identity development had shifted and been negotiated within the English-dominant society. One example in Norton's (2000) research is Eva, one of the participants, who had little knowledge of English before immigrating to Canada, nevertheless, found a job and in that setting was the only person who did not have fluency in English. She reflected:

[Munchies] was the first place that I had to be able to communicate in English. I was having a hard time with understanding, speaking and making conversation with somebody...Sometimes I didn't understand the topic and many times if I did understand, I didn't know enough correct words to take part in conversation (Norton, 2000, p. 63).

In this case, as in many other similar immigrant situations, Eva felt accepted only at the time she changed her communication strategies, specifically by improving her speaking

participation while involved with her working community. Eva pushed herself to participate in activities held by her colleagues and that initiated a process of gradually understanding each other from interactions. As Norton states, the relationship between comfort/confidence levels and the use of English is an intricate one; Eva's reflections on that issue follow:

I feel more comfortable there when I speak. And I'm not that scared anymore to say something. Because before I wasn't sure if I say something the right way or they like understand me or not because sometimes I say something but they don't understand me. (Norton, 2000, p. 71)

Norton observes that the more Eva interacted with people in English, the more she felt confident and accepted. Eva's identity gradually shifted from being afraid to becoming confident within negotiations with her English-speaking colleagues and communities.

Norton (2000) concludes that learning English involves not only learning a new language; language proficiency is also a way to participate in the dominant English-speaking social network. The process of learning English is also a process of identity development in society. Identity is, "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (Norton, 2000, p. 5).

In conclusion, language learning is more than learning linguistic systems of signs and symbols, "it is also a complex social practice in which the value and meaning ascribed to an utterance are determined in part by the value and meaning ascribed to the person who speaks" (Norton & Toohey, 2001, p. 317).

If a second language learner queries, “Who am I? How do I connect to this target community?” he/she is looking for his/her identity and trying to understand the relationship between the second language and the sociocultural world. When individuals speak, they not only exchange information with target language speakers, but they gradually reorganize and reconstruct who they are and how they could relate to the social world (Norton, 2000).

Language and Identity Formation in Terms of Poststructuralist Theories

In this section, I begin by exploring the definitions of postmodernism and poststructuralism, and then discuss language and identity formation in terms of poststructuralist perspectives.

Postmodernism

It is that moment of modernism that defines itself against an immediate past (“post”) and that is skeptically inquisitive about all grounds of authority, assumption, or convention (“modernism”) (Jean-Francois Lyotard, 1993).

Postmodernism is a general philosophical movement that includes art, architecture, politics, and organizational behavior, as well as critical theory. The significance of postmodernism is that it, “refuses the consolation of correct forms, refuses the consensus of taste permitting a common experience of nostalgia for the impossible, and inquires into new presentations-not to take pleasure in them, but to better produce the feeling that there is something unrepresentable” (Lyotard, 1993, p. 15). In essence, postmodern artists or writers do

not abide by pre-established rules, and they refuse to be judged by a determinant judgment (Lyotard, p. 15).

More importantly, postmodernists break rules that modernists abide by and they are encouraged to, “celebrate the freedom of possibility...to make agency or concrete decision impossible” (Nealon & Giroux, 2003, p. 130). The meaning of “Truth” is revealed and “logo-phallo-Euro-Theo-centrism” is demystified (Nealon & Giroux, 2003, p. 131).

Postmodernists intend to raise consciousness to challenge the current system that follows modernist regulations.

In addition, postmodernists call into question totalizing, universalizing “metanarratives” (grand narratives) and the humanist view of the subject that underlies them. Humanists believe that a subject acts as a “stable self,” and that sex, class, race and sexual orientation are static. It is the enlightenment via education, reflexive rationality, and human agency. In conclusion, the postmodernist philosophical perspective questions the dualisms that dominate Western thought, because these dualisms ignore the world’s multiple causes and effects (Lather, 1991, p. 21).

Poststructuralism

Poststructuralism is not a school of thought or discipline; it is a combination of theoretical positions, such as those made famous by Derrida (1982) and Foucault (1984). In Lather’s (1999) definition, poststructuralism refers to, “a congeries of theoretical suppositions

about the nature of language, texts, and human subjects within the lens of the social” (p. 13).

The issue of language is central to poststructuralism. Language is the mediation of change in society. Poststructuralists admit that they are not able to change the state of power, so they intend to subvert the structures of language. Sentences and words are not universal; instead, they are “arbitrary” and they contain underlying meanings that needed to be revealed (Nealon & Giroux, 2003).

Poststructuralists break structuralists’ claims about “signifying” or “signified” systems and prove that language has more purposes and meanings, especially when examined within different contexts. Moreover, poststructuralists call into question the notions of truth and reality. For structuralists, truth and reality are stable and cannot change. However, Eagleton (1996) argues that meaning, a passing product of words, is not static. Rather, meanings are various and dynamic. We cannot view the world from one dimension to figure out reality and truth.

Poststructuralism share commonalities with postmodernism. Both seek to turn down scientific, rigid rules. They are both against modernists, who claim ethnocentric universalism. Both postmodernists and poststructuralists declare the significance of difference and otherness (Eagleton, 1998). The differences in race, class, and gender construct and (re)construct identities that are assumed to be fixed, according to structuralist attitudes. Differences appear and act based on the different contexts (Nealon & Giroux, 2003). Thus,

identities are unlikely fixed and remain in different contexts. Identities are not as universal, as the dominant society wishes us to believe.

Poststructuralists, though, particularly focus on the language issue as a mediation to offer change. Weedon's (1987) perspective about the connection between language and identity indicates that:

Language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of selves, our subjectivity is constructed...post-structuralism theorizes subjectivity as a site of disunity and conflict, central to the processes of political change and to preserving the status quo. (p. 21)

Thus, in poststructuralist theories, language plays a significant role in connecting people's identities to each other. Language is no longer solely a communication tool. Instead, it is, "a site of struggle where subjectivity and consciousness are produced" (Orner, 1992, p. 80). Weedon (1987) further explains that language is not transparent as in humanist discourse; it is not expressive and does not label a 'real' world. Meanings do not exist prior to their articulation in language and language is not an abstract system, but instead it is always socially and historically located in discourses. Discourses represent political interests and as a consequence discourses are vying for status and power.

Language, in terms of poststructuralism, is used to construct and reconstruct people's minds through interactions. Through language interactions and negotiations, more and more identities are produced to provide people with ways to self-reflect about who they are. There

is no longer one single identity defined by a dominant society's construction (Lather, 1999).

Moreover, poststructuralists argue against the emergence of one single identity; instead, identity development is perceived as a process of shifting rather than replacing identities.

Raissiguier's (1999) research builds upon this standpoint. Raissiguier's (1999) study of Algerian descent examined how immigrant girls developed their identity formation in a French school. She defines identity, "as the product of an individual or a group of individuals' interpretation and reconstruction of their personal history and particular social location, as mediated through the cultural and discursive context to which they have access" (p. 140).

Identity is a set of self-definitions and practices, and people keep modifying this construction.

Raissiguier argues that identity could not be eliminated. Rather the identity is the development for these girls of Algerian descent to work on self-(de)construction. They do not simply resist, nor do they accommodate already available scripts. Identity formation and development is, "a series of successive displacements from which each configuration of identity is examined in its construction and deconstructed but not simply discarded" (de Laureties, 1990, p. 136).

In conclusion, then in terms of the poststructuralist perspective, identity developments are not static, but shift through interactions with the social world. Poststructuralists respond to the reality that the general speech community framework omits the fact that identities are fluid, not frozen (Bocholtz, 1999). Individuals are not viewed as maintaining some particular

social identity throughout their whole lives. On the contrary, “individuals engage in multiple identity practices simultaneously, and they are able to move from one identity to another” (p. 209). Beyond the limiting dichotomies of resistance/accommodation and freedom/determination, identity development is, “multiple, varied and constituted through an ongoing struggle to re-invent selves within specific material and discursive boundaries” (Raissiguier, 1999, p. 148).

A General View of Immigration

In this section, I first define the term immigration and explain the difference between immigration and migration. Then, I explore the reasons that people move to another country. Finally, I discuss their process of becoming immigrants and their psychological transformation.

Immigration is a significant issue at the core of the United States. Scholars predict that immigration is and will be one of the most critical demographic factors in this country over the next 50 years. According to some statistics, the U.S. has experienced nearly one million arrivals per year since the late 1970s, and approximately 50% of the total U.S. foreign-born population which moved to the U.S in the 1980s and 1990s intended to remain (Rong & Pressissle, 1998). Increasingly, foreigners intend to come to the U.S. to achieve the American dream and will seek permission to stay.

Generally speaking, immigration refers to foreigners who are allowed to stay in a new

country legitimately. According to Rong and Pressissle's (1998) definition, immigration is, "a move of an alien who has voluntarily moved from one society to another" (p. 3). Officially, immigration as defined by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) refers to those who have legitimately obtained admission and permanent residence in the U.S. This thesis does not include people who have illegally moved to the U.S. Within this research, immigration refers only to those people who have followed regulations and received official admission from the U.S. government.

Although it is sometimes applied in the same way as immigration, the term "migration" has an entirely different meaning. According to Morrissey (1983), external migration refers to a process in which an individual or group stays away from their original physical and social environment and remains in a new place. Immigration, on the other hand, includes crossing national boundaries and settling in a new country (Cherunilam, 1987). Therefore, from a geographical perspective, migration refers to the move from one place to another. For instance, the term migration could apply to settlers who move across the same country. However, immigration has a more symbolic meaning relating to the movement from one country in which one was born, to another country, crossing national boundaries. Some scholars might regard immigration and migration as the same thing, but the notion of immigration has the more symbolic and political meaning of breaking boundaries. This definition of immigration is utilized in the context of this thesis.

The reasons for immigration vary, but globalization is regarded as a main factor that encourages people to settle in a new country. Li and Findlay (1999) discover in their study that globalization has greatly impacted people's lives and turned the world into a global village. Nowadays, immigration is no longer as difficult as in the past due to new technologies and modernization. According to Li and Findlay's statistics, between 80 million and 125 million people live outside their home countries. More importantly, this number has been increasing by two to four million people each year. Most major points of origin for U.S. immigrants are Asia and Latin America.

While globalization impacts people's willingness to move to a new country, it is also important to investigate the psychological states involved in the process of immigration. According to Espin's (1999) research, three states are gradually constructed in becoming an immigrant: (a) the initial decision concerning relocation, (b) the actual geographical move into another country, and (c) the adaptation to a new society and way of life.

Furthermore, the transformation process in immigration may be divided into three stages. Adapting to a new culture is not easy for immigrants because they have to go through three psychological states (Arendonando-Dowd, 1981). At the beginning of the immigration process, people feel joy and relief about coming to a new place. Later, disillusionment with the new country would appear when they are unable to accomplish their expectations. But eventually, people begin to accept both positive and negative aspects of their new lives

(Aarendonando-Dowd, 1981).

Women's Roles and Experiences in Immigration

The male-female power dynamic takes a central role in the immigration process. Espin (1999) illustrates that women are usually powerless, often passively following their husbands' decision to immigrate. Many times women prefer to stay with friends or relatives in the home country rather than move to a new country. But men typically make the main decision to immigrate, and women merely follow the men's decision. Women's opinions are received as only suggestions or even ignored.

In addition, Brettell and deBerjeois' (1992) study reveals that in earlier research, women were, "essentially...left out of theoretical thinking about migration" (p. 3). Boyd (1986) also proves that women became invisible in the earlier research, which paid attention exclusively to men's migration. That gender bias did not change until the beginning of the 1980s when researchers began to pay particular attention to immigrant women's experiences (Dion & Dion, 1993). Since then, they have been concerned with various issues such as women's employment, family, work, and childcare (Boyd, 1986; Brettell and deBerjeois, 1992). More and more narratives concerning women have been revealed and given audience.

Moreover, women-centered studies not only focus on immigrant women with lower levels of education and low-paid employment, but also have extended to the group of women who have higher education or greater income (Dion & Dion, 1993). Noh, Wu, Speechley and Kaspar (1992) conduct research on middle-class women and identify that these women have

a “double burden” that causes them stress. Middle-class women are caught in a dilemma, struggling to take care of household responsibilities, childcare, and employment all simultaneously. What makes the lives of these women even more stressful is that they often encounter difficulties with balancing the traditional values of the male hierarchy from their native societies and the new gender identities that appear in the host countries. Studies reveal two general problems confronted by immigrant women while staying in the host country, identity crisis and language choice. I discuss these two issues individually.

Research from Women’s Studies has especially illustrated that women encounter language problems and identity crisis in the host country. Schiller, Basch and Blacn-Szanton (1992) demonstrate that immigrant women suffer from a process of identity reconstruction and renegotiation in the formation and transformation of identity. Women do not want to abandon their identities in their home countries. Thus, they, “create fluid and multiple identities grounded both in their society of origin and in their host society” (Schiller et al., 1992, p. 11).

Identity negotiation is a long, complex process, particularly for women because of their need to confront the dilemma of maintaining home cultures while adapting to the host society at the same time. They must, “prioritize their multiple roles and identities along the cross-cutting dimensions of self, family, community, and nation on the one hand, and gender, ethnicity, religion, class, age, etc. on the other hand” (Huang, Teo & Yeoh, 2000, p. 396).

In addition, language, from a poststructuralist perspective, occupies an important role in shaping a person's self-esteem, which is particularly relevant for the plight of immigrant women. Specifically, immigrant women tend to face a dilemma between the host language and home language. Language, "transcends its purely instrumental value as a means of communication...In the United States, the acquisition of non-accented English and the dropping of foreign languages represent the litmus test of Americanization" (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006, p. 194). On the one hand, women realize that learning the host language is an efficient way to adapt to the mainstream society. On the other hand, they also sense that speaking another language in place of one's mother tongue is to imply, "learning one's place in the structures of social inequality" (Espin, 1999, p. 140).

As a result of these struggles and dilemmas, identity crises and language choice greatly affect immigrant women. Their identities are subject to transformation throughout the process of immigration. Additionally, they may have difficulty speaking English fluently, as well as maintaining their host language. They struggle to negotiate between their own culture based in the home country and new norms experienced in the host country. Consequently, female immigrants may be unable to find a balance, resulting in feelings of loss, grief, and stress.

New Immigrants—Taiwanese Immigrants

In this section I now turn to Taiwanese immigrant women and begin by exploring the topics of Taiwanese immigration history and who migrates from Taiwan. I focus on a

particular group of Taiwanese immigrant women, the transnational family, to investigate why they intend to immigrate as well as the advantages and disadvantages of being in this situation.

History of Taiwanese Immigration

In contrast to Chinese immigrants prior to 1965, Taiwanese immigrants demonstrate a significantly different image and are collectively referred to as “the New Immigrants” (Ng, 1998). They have attained a higher level of education and a higher level of fluency in English than those emigrating from China. These New Immigrants reside outside of the traditional communities known as old China Town, congregating mostly in California and the Queens-Flushing Area of New York. Indicative of their presence, more and more “Taiwanese” shopping centers and communities are being established, crowding the landscape (Ng, 1998).

Taiwanese immigration has three periods from an historical perspective. The first stage is recorded from after World War II to 1965. During this period, only a small number of students came to the United States in order to engage in higher education. In terms of political reasons, Taiwan was still under “Martial law”², restricting certain citizens from traveling abroad or studying in other countries. The other reason for the small number of Taiwanese immigrant students during this time period is that even though the

² Martial Law is a system of rules that provides military authority with more power than the normal administration of justice. Taiwan was under Martial law, or “The period of Mobilization for Suppression of Communist Rebellion”, from 1949 until 1987. Martial law in Taiwan reduced personal rights, such as freedom of speech and restrictions on traveling abroad.

McCarran-Walter Act of 1952 introduced a quota of one hundred Chinese, this quota was shared both by people from Mainland China and Taiwan (Huang, 1997; Ng, 1998). In addition to those policy-related reasons, economic difficulties usually restricted Taiwanese people from being able to afford to study abroad. As a result, only a few Taiwanese people were able to come to the U.S. to study. Those students who came usually preferred to reside along the West or East Coasts. They usually studied very hard and had a limited expenditure of money. Rather than repatriating to Taiwan, most chose to seek employment in the U.S. trying to improve their lives.

According to Ng (1998), the second stage of Taiwanese immigration to the U.S. occurred between 1965 and 1979, right before Taiwan reached the economic prosperity that began in the 1980s. The U.S. Immigration Act of 1965 was passed, increasing the quota of Chinese immigrants to 20,000. Family reunification was no longer restricted by quota, allowing more people to apply for permanent residence for their families in Taiwan, including wives, parents, and children. Furthermore, this bill also preferenced certain people who possessed vital and exceptional skills. Those people who owned important technical and scientific skills became the priority for entry and employment. Also, those who were in needed occupations such as restaurant chefs were welcome in the U.S.

Taiwanese immigration began to increase in the 1980s due to shifting political situations. It is estimated that 74% of Taiwanese people who immigrated to the U.S. settled in

California between 1983 and 1990 (Tseng, 1995). The turning point at this stage was the change in international politics between the U.S. and China. In 1979 the U.S. officially recognized Mainland China as the only “One China” and at that point, the U.S. no longer had official diplomatic relations with Taiwan. As a result, Taiwan and Mainland China had to share the quota of 20,000 immigrants per year established under the Immigration Act of 1965. At this point, people from Taiwan were not official “personas,” because the Republic of China, (Taiwan’s official name), was not recognized by other countries, including the U.S. During that time, people from Taiwan faced many difficulties and humiliations because they held passports from an “invisible country.” The U.S. did not change its policy until 1982 when it agreed to offer Taiwan its own quota of 20,000 persons and Taiwanese people no longer needed to share the quota with Chinese people (Ng, 1998). As a result, since 1982 the numbers of Taiwanese immigrants have increased.

Another factor that encouraged Taiwanese people to immigrate to the U.S. in the 1980s was Taiwan’s unstable political climate. Taiwan and Mainland China still regarded each other as enemies, so it was assumed that war might occur at any moment. On the other hand, Taiwan began to develop its economy, and with the efforts of both the Taiwanese government and the people, Taiwan achieved economic prosperity in the 1980s. It became one of the “Four Little Dragons in Asia”³, greatly improving the economic livelihood of the Taiwanese

³ Four Little Dragons in Asia means four countries: Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore. They are recognized for successes in economic and industrial growth.

people. People in Taiwan earned financial stability from doing business with the outside world. These situations increased the proportion of rich people immigrating to the U.S. in order to secure their wealth during a time of political instability in Taiwan.

Three Categories of Taiwanese Immigrants in the U.S

Given all of the reasons for immigration discussed in this section, Taiwanese immigrants who chose to stay in the U.S. may be divided into three categories of immigrants (Ng, 1998).

First category: Professionals. The largest proportion of Taiwanese people who intend to immigrate to the U.S. are professionals whose intentions have created a brain-drain situation within Taiwan. Increasingly, professionals were educated at the college level in Taiwan and sought higher education and employment opportunities in the U.S. out of concern for the unstable political and economic situation in Taiwan. This happened at the time when the tension between Mainland China and Taiwan was so intense that Mainland China threatened to take over Taiwan, especially after the U.S. officially recognized Mainland China as the “One China”. These professionals still chose to reside in the U.S.

Second category: Investors. Another group of immigrants who chose to remain in the U.S. are investors. In the mid-1980s, when Taiwan had achieved economic prominence as one of the Four Little Dragons in Asia, wealthy business people were welcomed and encouraged to apply as immigrants if they invested certain amounts of money and/or started a

business that provided job opportunities for the U.S. labor force. Many rich Taiwanese invested money as a way to obtain immigrant status in the U.S. In addition, the revision of the Immigration Act in 1990 helped these investors obtain permission to remain in the U.S. much more easily, because the revised rules gave preference to investors coming to the U.S. Therefore, since 1990, a large number of Taiwanese businessmen were part of the Taiwanese immigration wave.

The Third group: Transnational families. The third group comprises Taiwanese people who are concerned mostly with their children's education and futures. These Taiwanese want to find liberal environments and more opportunities to educate their children. It is important to clarify that due to the small proportion of existing high schools and universities available, Taiwan is well known for its highly competitive entrance exams which must be passed before engaging in higher education. Students have to study very hard to gain entrance. In the past, Taiwan's educational system had been criticized as rigid and was thought to stifle children's creativity. Therefore, in order to capitalize on diverse educational opportunities and liberal environments, parents wished to leave Taiwan in order that their children might access better educational opportunities. These Taiwanese believed that studying in the U.S. would provide children with a liberal environment and more opportunities to attend college, resulting in expanded employment opportunities and financial stability for their futures.

The trend involving parents who immigrated out of concern for their children's education has led to the evolution of a new family model, called the transnational family. Some parents moved to the U.S. together, but more frequently mothers began to choose to remain with their children in the U.S. while fathers often returned to Taiwan in order to earn money to support the family's residence in the U.S. Translated literally, fathers in transnational families are called "taikongren," or "astronauts," because they fly between Taiwan and the U.S. several times a year.

The male head of the transnational household returns to Taiwan to take advantage of Taiwan's economic growth. Compared to the lack of opportunities or slow economic growth recently in the U.S., Taiwanese economy has grown quickly since the 1980s. These fathers of transnational families decide to keep their children and wife in the U.S. in order to take advantage of educational opportunities while they return to Taiwan in order to earn money (Tung, 2003). A *San Jose Mercury News*' 1993 report estimated that 30% of Taiwanese immigrant engineers who used to work in Silicon Valley have currently returned to their homeland to seek better job opportunities (As cited at Tung, 2000).

In the next section, the transnational family is examined to ascertain how this trend appeared and how it repositioned women into a non-working group.

Women's stories in transnational families. Transnational families are a different mode of family, one that breaks the usual pattern of location. Family members, "build ties

that transcend geographical distance and political boundaries and develop multiple relationships that may be familial, economic, social, cultural, religious, and political” (Chee, 2003, p. 138). The research on the transnational family mainly focuses on families from Latin America or the Caribbean. In these cases, researchers discuss the role of immigrant husbands who come to the U.S. to earn money, leaving their wives and children in the place of origin. In addition, these studies also pay attention to females from the Philippines, who immigrate to earn money as productive laborers (Chee, 2003).

Chee (2003) made connections between the Taiwanese immigrant phenomena with the characteristics of transnational families. The differences are the roles played by spouses. In the Taiwanese immigrant cases, they have, “households split in two separate countries, with a spouse and children living in the United States and a spouse in Taiwan” (Chee, 2003, p. 137). Taiwanese transnational families consciously decide to leave mothers and children in the U.S. and the fathers/husbands repatriate to find better jobs after the fathers/husbands have difficulty finding economically satisfactory employment in the U.S.

This situation places the mothers who remain in the U.S. as heads of the family, but not the financial supporters of the family. They may go out to work or go to school, but most prefer to stay at home, overseeing the household and the children’s education. Although they do not have to worry about their financial stability, they need to be in charge of everything at home since they do not have the fathers’ presence or assistance. Chee (2003) finds that these

mothers usually come from middle-class backgrounds and had attained well-paid employment while in Taiwan. In order to give their children access to a better education, they sacrifice their careers in Taiwan and move to the U.S.

Most families are focused mainly on their children's educational needs, believing that their children could obtain a better education in the United States if they immigrated. One woman in Chee's (2003) study said, "If there were no children, there would be no need to make the move to here" (Chee, p. 141). In terms of occupation attainment and a bright future for their children, immigration is a strategy used by some parents who regard the U.S. educational system as superior to that in Taiwan. Most mothers approve of the U.S. educational system because it provides their children with much confidence and self-esteem. Their children are doing well and even better when compared to life in Taiwan.

Chapter 3

Methodology

For this qualitative research, ethnographic interviews were conducted for data gathering concerning the English-learning experiences of Taiwanese immigrant women in the United States. This research explores relationships among their experiences, life histories, and self-perceived strengths and weaknesses.

Data collection

Ethnographic Feminist Interviews: An Overview

The interviews are ethnographically feminist-oriented to promote better understanding of women's lives by means of sharing experiences. Ethnography research focuses on the relationships between the researched and the researcher who engages in the interactions with the researched, participates in daily life activities with them as well as interprets in the researchers' own way (Jackson, 1989). In particular, getting involved with these women not only helps the researcher gain insight into the meanings of these experiences for the participants' lives, but also encourages the researcher to understand the impact of the experience of uprootedness on concepts of "home" and identity development.

As the data-gathering method is ethnographic feminist interviews, I conducted sets of interviews and adopted a method of non-scheduled, non-standardized, but open-ended interview questions (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). I also prepared interview questions within

six clusters of questions, as Patten (1980) indicates: experience and behavior; opinion and value; feelings; knowledge; perceptions; and background and demographic questions.

Within the interviews, these Taiwanese women provide details about their thoughts, feelings, and activities (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002). Weiss (1994) said:

Interviewing gives us access to the observations of others...we can learn, through interviewing, about people's interior experiences. We can learn what people perceived and how they interpreted their perceptions. We can learn how events affect their thoughts and feeling. We can learn the meanings to them of their relationships, their families, their works, and their selves. We can learn about all the experiences, from joy through grief, that together constitute the human condition. (p. 1)

These five Taiwanese, immigrant women (selection described in the next section) have been involved in multiple interviews during the 2006–2007 academic year. Collectively they represent different and unique life experiences related to their ages which influence their identity negotiations. Since I had opportunities to ask additional questions and obtain correct answers on previously obtained information, multiple interviews are more accurate than just one single interview (Reinharz, 1992).

The Details of Each Meeting

Prior to conducting these multiple interviews, I prepared as much information as possible in advance. My first step was to prepare interview questions in Mandarin, translated into English. In September, 2005, I applied for the approval of the Social Science IRB (Institutional Review Board) which allowed me to interview participants. Thus, I was able to prepare the next step, the opportunity to meet potential participants from two different social

networks in two cities located in a northeastern state, Sartell Valley and Cape City.

I began by scheduling the initial meeting with these women individually. The first meeting was designed to introduce the research and gather signatures on the essential human subject forms. During this introductory meeting, we conversed, sharing stories about and experiences with children or husbands and daily life. After getting acquainted, the participants were informed about the purposes of this research, how long they would be involved in this project, and the number of total sessions. Also, at this time, I asked that they complete their own profile.

The second meeting was the first actual interview session. After coordinating a time and place with all five women, I initiated the first in-depth interview with them.

The second and third interviews were conducted after analyzing the data collected in the first and second meetings in order to address the issues and questions that arose from the data. Data analysis caused more questions about these women to surface, requiring further interviews with them in order to clarify or elicit more detailed explanations about their previous responses.

I followed Mackey and Gass's (2005) suggestion of paying attention to those skills involved in the process of interviewing. Mackey & Gass (2005), two experienced second language researchers, provide pedagogical guidelines for conducting interviews, particularly to second language learners. They believe that without knowledge of multiple practices,

novices may have difficulty conducting semi or unstructured interviews. Thus, before this research began, I ran a pilot research session as Goetz and LeCompte (1984) recommend, in order to gain a comfort level with interview skills. For this exercise I utilized the same questions but involved different participants and interviewed five women who are Chinese mothers and Chinese students. I listened to tapes made during these practice sessions and found ways to improve my interview skills. With these practice interview experiences, I gained interview skills and learned to be a more experienced researcher, discovering that I sometimes talked too much and interrupted sometimes while participants were talking (Patton, 1980; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). In addition, I learned to provide cues and some topics at the beginning in order to make them feel more comfortable, which could result in more explicit and sufficient information (Patton, 1980). More importantly, I used the technique of the “ice-breaker”, which enabled these women to relax, adapt to various directions and talk more openly (Reinharz, 1992).

Selection of Study Participants

As mentioned, five Taiwanese immigrant women were selected from two cities located close to each other and in a northeastern state. The first city I chose is Sartell Valley, a city in which I used to reside, located in the center of this Northeastern State. Sartell Valley is a college town of 40,000 inhabitants with 7.9% of its population Asian (U.S. Census, 2000). Taiwanese students are attracted to this town to pursue higher education. The second city I

chose is Cape City, located in the south central area of the same northeastern state. Cape City has 48,000 inhabitants and Asians represent 2.8% of the whole population. Taiwanese women in Cape City represent more diverse backgrounds and working experiences than those who reside in Sartell Valley.

In order to answer my research questions, I created a list of specific criteria to guide the selection of my participants.

1. Taiwanese immigrant women currently resident in the U.S. for at least 10 years, with either past or present experience working in the context of the United States
2. Women who speak Mandarin as a native language and who now have attained English fluency.
3. Married women, aged 40–75, who are also middle class.
4. Women who are willing to participate in this research.

In order to select these women I adopted the “snowball, chain, or network sampling,” approach (Patten 1999). The snowball process refers to one person who fulfills the criteria and helps to locate other people through his/her social networks (Warren, 2002). Thus, the “gatekeeper” in this ethnographic research occupies an important role because she leads the researcher to other informants (Creswell, 1998; Robinson, 1991). The gatekeeper is, “the individual who the researcher must visit before entering a group or cultural site” (Creswell, 1998, p. 247). The gatekeeper provides access for researchers to resources and the potential

subjects of the study.

In order to locate the gatekeeper for my research, I approached Lisa, the person I identified as the most knowledgeable regarding Taiwanese persons in Sartell Valley. Lisa is the wife of the clergyman of a large Chinese church in Sartell Valley and she knew me well enough to always inquire about my family, graduate studies and research. When Lisa was asked if she could help me to identify Taiwanese women who might be interested in my research, she agreed to help me and ultimately provided the names of seven women whom she knew, and also made arrangements for me to conduct the initial interviews.

After making initial contact by phone with these seven individuals, I selected two of the seven to participate in my study because they were the only women who met all of the eligibility criteria. Among these original seven Taiwanese women, three shared similar characteristics in that they accompanied their husbands to study at Peterson University, but they resided in the U.S. less than ten years, so did not fit the eligibility profile. The fourth was a stay-at-home mother who helped out at the church sometimes but did not have any formal work experience within the U.S. and therefore did not fit criteria 1. The fifth candidate was 89 years old and so was eliminated for participation due to criteria 3.

From this set I located two women I was particularly interested in having participate in the research and who met all of the criteria. Lily had resided in the U.S. for fifteen years, her native language was Mandarin and she had fluent English proficiency. She married an

American husband and they have two daughters. Recently, she opened a financial company of her own in the U.S. Lily was 41 years old and we had worked together when I was teaching at the Chinese Language School three years prior but we had not been in contact since then.

The other participant, Sharon, resided in Sartell Valley more than thirty years after accompanying her husband who decided to study in the United States. Although Sharon could not speak English well initially, her English improved during her residency in the U.S. She was 71 years old and landlord of a house for students. Both Lily and Sharon were willing to share their personal stories with me.

In addition to searching for women in Sartell Valley, I wanted another gatekeeper in order to identify women from more diverse backgrounds to participate in the study and contacted Jane, a Taiwanese friend who lived in Cape City. We had met through a third person name Dolly, a Taiwanese woman who had once lived in my neighborhood. While visiting Dolly in Cape City a year ago, Dolly introduced me to Jane. After chatting with Jane several times, I realized that she knew many Taiwanese women in Cape City.

Jane was very willing to assist me and invited me to participate in an activity held by the Chinese church of Cape City so that I could meet more Taiwanese immigrant women. We all got acquainted and began to talk about my research in the context of a meeting Jane arranged for me at church where I also gained initial knowledge of eight women's

backgrounds. After this initial meeting I reviewed their backgrounds and decided to continue working with three of the eight women. Of these five who did not meet my criteria, two women did not fit criteria 1 which requires women to have working experiences in the U.S. Two elder women did not fit criteria 3 because they were over 75 year old. The fifth was too shy, stated that she had nothing to tell me about, and therefore did not meet criteria 4, (participants who are willing to share their stories).

Among the second set of possibilities, I was particularly interested in three candidates. The first was Jane who introduced me to this group and had two roles in this research, candidate participant in my research and gatekeeper to the second group. Jane had been living in Cape City for over twenty years and was familiar enough to introduce other Taiwanese women to this research, so made an excellent gatekeeper.

After talking to Jane more extensively I decided to invite her to be one of the participants in my research as she met all the criteria. Jane was 52 years old and had various working experiences in the U.S. She devoted at least ten years to focus on her family and postponed getting her degree; she had many English language experiences to talk about.

In addition, I was also interested in Mei, a mother of 55 who resided in the U.S. with her children while her husband remained in Taiwan and thus fit the concept for the transnational family. I was interested in interviewing her in order to know more about the couple's decision to live separately and also how she managed to take care of children on her

own. Mei indicated that she would be happy to assist me and be part of my research project.

The last candidate I selected to interview was Kelly, who had resided in the U.S. for over forty years and had various experiences learning English and working in the U.S. Kelly was 73 years old and now living a the middle class lifestyle (criteria 3). She was also willing to share her experiences for the purposes of my data gathering.

After reviewing the thirteen Taiwanese immigrant women's backgrounds, I chose five participants in order to purposefully make a case (Patton, 1990). I agree with Glesne's (1999) support for Patton (1990) that, "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research..." (as cited in Glesne, 1999 p.169). For this ethnographic qualitative research, I chose to conduct purposive sampling in order to produce meaningful results.

Rapport: Start to Build Trust with Participants

Building trust relationships with these women is the main issue of ethnographic and feminist interviews. In this research, after choosing five, Taiwanese, immigrant women, I began to make initial contacts with them, phoning them to set up the time and location for the first individual meeting when I introduced myself and my research topic. In seeking to build trust between these women and me I honestly explained that I had been sick and was still under treatment. I agree with Wax's (1971) point of view that the initial contacts with study

women are crucial. Building a reciprocal relationship immediately between the researcher (myself) and these five participants was important because it prevented improper or undesirable behaviors or statements in the interview sessions. Building a reciprocal relationship in the first meeting enhanced the understanding and acceptance of each other and positively impacted the data gathering process.

Not only did I set up meetings for the purpose of eliciting individuals' stories, but I listened to those stories and especially any needs expressed during the interviews. For example, Mei was confused about the technology of Skype and wanted to call her husband in Taiwan with Skype, a new telephone system with which she was not familiar. I volunteered to check on her computer and, although I was unable to locate the problems, I returned home and conferred with my husband who knew more about Skype technology. The following day I called her with information so that she could fix the problem. Mei was pleasantly surprised and really appreciated what I did for her. When she thanked me she stated that she would be willing to answer more questions in subsequent interviews.

As a result of building a good relationship between myself and Lily, she responded to my health situation. Lily introduced me to Chinese Chi-Kong, an exercise similar to Yoga and lent me an instructional book and video. We talked over phones frequently and when I realized that she needed an agent to buy cheaper airline tickets I shared my travel agent's telephone numbers. Lily was so pleased she decided to buy tickets from that travel agent in

the future. In addition, she called one day to let me know that she knew a famous doctor in Taiwan and recommended that I visit the doctor when visiting Taiwan in the future.

Thus, these women and I interacted as friends and covered more topics than the interview questions alone would have elicited. I did my best to understand their needs, their emotions, and to provide my support. The women in response provided not only their stories, but their knowledge, and any advice they believed would benefit my health situation.

Data Gathering

Language in Interview- Mandarin

Before agreeing to participate in the research each woman would ask me, “Do I need to speak English? Can I speak Mandarin?” They all anticipated that I would ask them to speak English. Lily, who was confident enough in her English proficiency, asked me, “What language I should use throughout interviews?” I realized that she still interjected many English expressions during the interviews. Juxtaposing English and Chinese was not a problem for her.

However, the other four women preferred to speak their native language, Mandarin, which gave them a comfort level as they narrated their personal stories. These respondents were able to best express their feelings and emotions in their mother tongue. It also became apparent that these five women had mixed feelings toward English language and Mandarin usages in daily conversations. On the one hand, they proudly demonstrated how much they

had already forgotten some expressions and words in Mandarin. They had gradually become used to inserting certain English expressions such as, “OK”, “You know”, or “provide service,” or other English fragments, into Mandarin sentences. On the other hand, these women’s linguistic deficiencies in Mandarin did not eliminate their appreciation for Chinese languages (Hekman, 1999).

Audiotaping

In the process of interviewing these participants, each section of the process was carefully audiotaped and transcribed by myself for future analysis. The individual interviews took place at each woman’s house.

I obtained every individual’s permission to audiotape our conversations for each interview. In order to keep the quality of the taping high, the hostesses very carefully chose a quiet place at their house for me to conduct the interview. I did not record right at the start of our conversations. Rather, we conversed on other topics until I noticed that they were ready to tell me more stories, and at that point, I began to record the interview.

Field Notes, Reflections

Notes recorded many circumstances. First, I recorded each meeting in writing immediately afterwards. Then, upon arriving home after each interview, I recorded both my feelings and detailed descriptions of the participants’ homes. Any interactions with these women in addition to the interviews were similarly recorded, and I described what I observed.

In addition, I recorded my feelings toward the interactions, and reflected upon why I responded in certain ways during the interviews.

While in the beginning it was my intention to record everything; this intention left me exhausted and I restructured my strategy for note taking. As Goetz and LeCompte (1984) indicated, I was unable to “get it all down” (p. 111) because interactions were too complex and too subtle. Gradually, I learned to record only salient data and was sensitive about what I included and what I excluded.

Data analysis

Important Concepts: Narrative Research

Narratives are stories, personal stories. As Minh-Ha identified:

Storytelling, the oldest form of building historical consciousness in community, constitutes a rich oral legacy, whose values have regained all importance recently, especially in the context of writings by women of color. (Minh-Ha, 1990, p.148)

Narrative analysis was used to analyze data throughout this research. Narrative analysis, according to Riessman (1993), involves not only individuals telling stories, but also interpretation regarding why the story was told in a certain way. This methodological approach allows the researchers to be responsible for organizing the interviewees’ flow of experiences, events, and actions into some sort of order. By discussing why the interviewees related the stories in different ways, the researcher may then interpret the data more deeply.

If we commit to following feminist and postmodern or poststructuralist approaches, narrative research has three goals (Bloom 2002). First, Bloom (2002) believes that narrative

research involves collecting information on personal lives as primary data. Second, narrative research uses respondents' descriptions of "Self" as a pivotal point of departure for the research and includes a discussion of the complexities of social power. Finally, narrative research is focused on "deconstructing" the self, which breaks the humanists' conception of the self as unitary. In terms of feminist perspectives, using personal narratives reveals women's experiences, which too frequently have been ignored.

Moreover, the self we research is not merely the self's stories. Rather, through the investigation of individual stories, we begin to observe a story about society. Narrative research positions individuals' experiences and interactions with people inside the context of society. Therefore, these insights, as a microview of society, illustrate how society influences the self and others. Through individuals' stories, we may examine society and the power relationships within society.

Personal narratives are not only studied in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) but also occupy a significant role in Women's Studies. As Lather (1991) indicates, "The overt ideological goal of feminist research in the human sciences is to correct both the invisibility and distortion of the female experience in ways relevant to ending women's unequal social position" (p. 71). These women retell stories against the hegemonic histories and subjectivities purported by the dominant society.

In addition, the narrative method provides not only an understanding of individuals, but

also offers an understanding of the connections between individuals and the complexity of social communities. Narratives obtained through interviews reveal social relations as created through daily interactions with others.

For this research, I adopted personal narratives to analyze the interview data. Pavlenko (2001) in her research regarding using personal narratives from several female English language learners, indicates that personal narratives, which may be biased, reveal individuals' struggles to develop and deconstruct their identities, resulting in giving their lives meanings as well. As Ellis and Bochner (1992) argue, by telling their personal stories participants reflect their social process, and aid the researcher to understand the meanings of their lived experiences.

In order to understand individual histories in learning language and interacting with people, for this research I collected personal narratives. Narratives help me to understand how sociohistoric circumstances influence people. Also, narratives are, "constructed or construed as statements about the identity of the speaker and perhaps about the community of which she or he is a member" (Green, 2001, p. 8). The construction of their narratives provides clues to understanding these participants' identity development and reveals the relationship between language learning experiences and identities.

Data Analysis Stages

As Goetz and LeCompte (1984) indicate, data analysis occurs in four stages: 1)

summarize the data, 2) interpret the data, 3) integrate the findings within broader areas, and 4) present the significance or the application of the findings. In this research, I complete these four stages.

The First Stage of Analysis-Transcription of the Audiotapes in Mandarin

There were three steps to transcribing the data. I was the single translator of the research. First, I transcribed data from audiotapes and from notes made following the recording interviews, and handwrote all transcriptions. My second step was to type all hand writing into the computer. The third step was to transcribe from Mandarin to English. As a Taiwanese woman in the U.S. myself, Mandarin is my native language and I was able to translate these women's Mandarin expressions into English.

The women usually liked to respond in Mandarin with some English expressions; their English sentences were not always accurate and did not always contain correct grammar. I translated these ungrammatical sentences and maintained their expressions without correcting the grammar. Some of these sentences were selected as quotations while analyzing data. Since the original sentences were retained and utilized as spoken, I entered notation at the end of each page with the corrected sentences or meanings.

My purpose was not only to collect data or to select some of it for analysis. Rather, I paid attention to the detailed linguistic transcription, including my conversations with each woman, and transcribed their English language usage (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Additionally, I

also detailed the overlapping conversations, noting pauses and laughter which I felt would be significant for future analysis. Lily interjected many English references throughout her spoken interviews. For example, she mentioned one word, “niche”, describing how she had positive relationships with American professors. I was not familiar with this word and was confused by this particular sentence while transcribing her words. Thus, I called her back and asked her what she meant. My explanation for her decision to speak English was that she wanted to demonstrate her English proficiency and assimilation into American-dominant society.

While transcribing the spoken data, I encountered some difficulties in understanding the linguistic or grammatical words. Due to their various backgrounds, these women were influenced by many other languages. For example, Sharon could speak Japanese well and sometimes confused me with her Mandarin. In addition, she sometimes spoke Taiwanese and this made the transcription even more complicated. As Sands (2004) indicated, I realized that nobody could do an entirely accurate transcription. In my transcription role, I did my best to write down every word she said, even though sometimes these words or sentences did not make grammatical sense.

However, during the interviews, I became confused by Sharon’s English. While she didn’t talk much in English, she did sometimes try to show me that she could speak English. As a result, I had to listen very closely and repeatedly. I had to try my best to understand what

she wanted to express, listening carefully to the pauses, and marking lowered or higher voices and any expressions of emotions.

In comparison with the transcription of Sharon's stories, I did not encounter much difficulty while transcribing Kelly's language usage. Kelly spoke standard Mandarin, so-called “北京話”, now called Putonghua. Mandarin originated in Beijing and is the official Chinese language. I had less difficulty in transcribing her Mandarin because I have been trained in this official Chinese language.

From Lily I have learned many English expressions. While translating her words, I needed to check my English dictionary frequently. She used many American expressions or terms that I had never heard before. I do not mean that these words are difficult. Rather, I just never had occasion to hear these expressions in daily life in the past. Therefore, I needed to check the English-Chinese dictionary for translation and called her to review my translations and to make certain I was capturing her meaning accurately. Thus, it was also a language learning process for me.

Second Stage of Data Analysis-Typed into Traditional Mandarin

I adopted many methods to secure the transcriptions. Typing transcriptions into traditional Mandarin into the computer, while listening to the words at the same time, was difficult for me. Thus, I listened to the tapes and wrote down what was said. Then I typed these transcriptions into a computer. I assigned numbers to each sentence and divided each

page into two parts, leaving the right side blank in order to write down the phrases or themes that emerged after reading transcriptions during the data analysis.

The Third Stage of Data Analysis-Summary Storylines

At this stage I made judgments about the meanings of the text. Armed with an overwhelming amount of data, the first step was to summarize each paragraph, detailing each sentence in these women's storylines. This helped me to understand perceptions expressed during the conversations. For example, with Mei, 70% of her conversations focused on describing her son's disease, his academic achievements, and his becoming a medical intern. The fact that a large percentage of her conversation was devoted to her son indicated that he was her first priority. However, she seldom talked about her younger child, a daughter, who, in my opinion, was a good student. Thus, in my notes, I kept on writing the question, "where is the daughter's story?" or "where are you, Mei?" As I coded the data, I noticed that her daughter was mentioned only a few times.

The Forth Stage of Analysis- Find Key Themes, Topics by Reading Transcriptions

In this stage of the data analysis I engaged the transcripts to identify the key themes. I read these detailed transcriptions repeatedly in order to integrate both commonalities and differences among the participants. I adopted Mauthner and Doucet's (1998) method of reiterating close readings of the interview transcripts:

1. Reading for the plot and the researcher's own response to the narrative.

2. Reading for the active “I” who is telling the story.
3. Reading for the respondent’s relationship with family and close friends.
4. Reading for the broader social and cultural context of the respondent.

Hollway and Jefferson (2000) also raise four questions to be queried:

1. What do we notice?
2. Why do we notice what we notice?
3. How can we interpret what we notice?
4. How can we know that our interpretation is the right one?

Furthermore, as a feminist researcher I carefully planned how these women’s stories were recorded and interpreted, not only paying attention to record each woman’s history of struggles or consciousness, but also exploring precisely how their stories were recorded. I went beyond the narratives to acknowledge how we read, receive, and interpret stories differently (Baxter, 2002; Lather, 1991; Orner, 1992).

Rather than questioning whether a story reflected the past accurately or not, I followed Ellis and Bochner’s (2003) advice to pay attention as a researcher in order to find answers by asking, What consequences stories produced? What kind of a person did it shape them into?

In addition, I followed Ryan’s and Bernard’s (2003) research method of creating “key-words-in-context” (KWIC), listing a particular word or phrase that emerged in a particular context. I carefully examined words, sentences, paragraphs, or any specific features

of the data. Then, I numbered the lines which helped me to select what fit into the categories. Next, I listed the topics and subtopics (Sands, 2004). If any key themes or patterns emerged, I noted them beside the columns and continued to read. These were the first words that immediately came to mind when I first read the conversations, sometimes in Mandarin and sometimes in English. With repeated reading of the transcriptions, more key themes emerged from the conversations. Next, sub themes emerged and clustered for further analysis.

The Fifth Stage of Analysis-Connection, Differences in Each Woman

In the fifth stage, I started to construct the conceptual relationships from the detailed transcription. After identifying a set of things, concepts or words, I connected these themes together and determined any relationships. At this stage, “a conceptual schema or organizational system” (Mackey & Gass, 2005) emerged from chunks of data and allowed me to rethink how these schemas contribute to this research.

As researcher, I already identified multiple themes, and described them in relation to each participant. I then compared these ideas among the five women. I began to realize multiple layers of the words, and sought to identify voices. In terms of feminist research, more questions emerged, Whose voice is it? What has been told, not been told, or what is missing in the data?

Particularly, new insights and contradictions were developed in this qualitative research at this stage (Brown, 2003). These insights did not derive from the research questions or

literature review at the previous stages. Many results contradicted statements that the women had made in other interviews. I noted them, wrote them down and returned to review my initial research questions. The experience at this stage gave me an opportunity to devise different categories and results that I had not anticipated or expected in the original design concept.

The Sixth Stage of Data Analysis-Conclusion

After deciding the themes, finding commonalities, and comparing the differences, I made various conclusions to demonstrate what these data represented. Next, I synthesized the different themes and considered how to fit these data into different categories (Mackey & Gass, 2005). I then chose certain salient Mandarin transcriptions, and translated them into English. I adopted English transcriptions as either quotations or data for further stage content.

Important Concept to This Thesis: Truth and Reflexivity

Truth

Significantly, there is not just one single truth in each person's stories. In poststructuralist perspective, truth and reality are met with skepticism. For structuralists, truth and reality are stable and cannot change. However, Eagleton (1996) argues that meaning, a passing product of words, is not static. These meanings are various and dynamic; in order to identify the reality and truth, we cannot view the world from only one dimension.

While telling their stories, these Taiwanese, immigrant women interpreted those stories differently and from their own perspectives, forgetting some things, or even exaggerating.

There were partial facts expressed that might reveal the past as it actually happened.

However, the method of narrative analysis did not seek to figure out how the events happened and put them in order. My attention was focused on extracting the interviewee's process and reformation. As Stivers (1993) indicates, "our analytic interpretations are partial, alternative truths that aim for, 'believability, not certitude, for enlargement of understanding rather than control'" (p. 424).

Reflexivity

In research methodology, Ladson-Billings (1997) claims that writing her own story, and her work as a whole, is not a form of narcissism. Rather, who she is and what she sees and experiences would affect how, what and why she does research and is more than analyzing self-awareness. The process involves a critical examination or reflection of both these Taiwanese, immigrant women and of myself, and then conducting the research and finally writing the data up analytically (Elliott, 2005). Ribbens & Edwards (1998) argue that reflexivity requires higher standards and openness about choices made during research. We need to consider the implications of why it is produced (Standing, 1998) and the emphasis should be on the power relations between the researched and the researcher (Elliott, 2005; Standing, 1998).

Juxtaposing my own experiences with those in the women's stories is a significant part of my analysis in this research. As a postmodern practice, this research raises different voices.

Not only are these women's experiences revealed, but the researcher's interpretations of the experiences, as well as the researcher's personal journey, are represented. I not only present their voices, but also include myself as part of this process of research and writing.

More importantly, the analysis does not reveal multiple voices only; on the contrary, it goes deeper to discuss power dynamics between these women and their social networks, and power dynamics between the researched and the researcher. Both the researcher and these women receive an opportunity to reconsider how power has influenced their lives.

In addition to these reflexive methodological practices allowing the voices of members of marginalized groups to be heard, these same practices empower me write from my own subjective stance in order to analyze these Taiwanese immigrant women and deconstruct my own experiences (Lal, 1999).

The power relationships between the researcher and researched are broken down with the reflexive approach. At the end, reflexivity practices reveal outsider and insider status. In this process of negotiation, the reflexivity practices emerge. I seek an understanding of power relations—sometimes I wield and sometimes I resist during the fieldwork. As Lather (1999) states, “the reflective practices we employ are, in turn, influenced by what we understand as a standpoint and how we assess our position in the field” (p. 48).

Chapter 4

Profiles of the Five Taiwanese Women

In this chapter, brief statements are offered concerning these five women, their age, language backgrounds, and work experiences.

Table 1

Name	Age	Residing U.S.	Languages	Birthplace	Professions Before US.	Professions In the U.S.
Lily	41 years	15 years	Mandarin, Taiwanese, English	Taiwan	High school Teacher	Financial company owner
Mei	55 years	20 years	Mandarin, Taiwanese, English	Taiwan	Teacher	Insurance agent
Jane	52 years	23 years	Mandarin, Taiwanese, English	Taiwan	Administrative at college	Programmer for state government
Sharon	71 years	35 years	Japanese, Mandarin, Taiwanese, English	Taiwan	Working	Housewife, Landlord for boardinghouse
Kelly	73 years	40 years	Mandarin, Taiwanese English	Born in China, Grow up in Taiwan	Teacher	Housewife

Personal Information

Jane: An Uneasy Journey to Get a Master's Degree

Jane was one of my two gatekeepers and she also agreed to participate in this research.

Tall and thin, she often appeared in casual clothes. She gave me hospitality and has been willing to provide me with her advice and experiences regarding daily life. She was fifty years old, arriving in the U.S. almost twenty-three years ago when she accompanied her husband for his Ph.D. degree.

Jane did not have time to get to know her husband following their marriage in Taiwan. She married very quickly after meeting her husband and one month after the marriage had to allow her husband to travel the U.S. to study. Jane planned to have him return after six months so he could escort her to the U.S.

Jane also planned a wedding banquet in Taiwan while she was waiting for her husband to return. She was frustrated that she did not have a wedding banquet when they got married, but she felt even more frustrated when told that her husband did not have enough money to buy his round trip ticket and also could not afford the celebratory feast. Organized traditionally, the expenses of a wedding banquet are usually paid by the family of the groom. Since he could not afford the wedding banquet, he had no reason to return to Taiwan. She thus gave up the banquet idea and flew alone to reunite with her husband who lived in a Midwestern state in the U.S. as the most practical plan under the circumstances.

The first and second years in the U.S. differed greatly. Jane enjoyed her first year in the U.S. because she did not have to do anything except take care of her husband. But after one year she became a mother and was busier and busier, not only taking care of her husband, but also looking after her little baby.

The life of being a mother and a housewife bored Jane so when the child was about two years old she decided to enroll in school part-time. She took some non-credit courses in computer science which were very popular when she took them twenty years ago. Her husband was a teaching assistant at the university and spouses were allowed to take free classes, so she took advantage of the free tuition.

After being a part-time student for about two years, she became pregnant again and discontinued the courses for two reasons. First, she needed time to take care of the child. Second, she had to follow her husband and move to Peterson University's Cape City Campus. Jane and her family relocated and the family of four needed time to adjust to this new environment.

Jane still wanted to be a full-time student and decided to continue courses in computer sciences at the Cape City Campus of Peterson University where she applied for admittance as an undergraduate. It took more than two years to finish all of the required credits and graduate.

Unfortunately, graduating from college did not bring many benefits to Jane's lifestyle.

She lacked work experiences because she had spent most of her time studying and taking care of children at the same time, which then made her unable to find employment as a programmer. Therefore, she continued studying to get a master's degree from the same department, hoping to gain better job prospects. While a graduate student, in order to gain practical work experience she also applied for an internship at a very famous computer company. But, Jane became exhausted by playing the multiple roles of mother, wife and working woman at the same time. She finally graduated with her master's degree after three years. However, due to her busy life, her health condition eventually deteriorated and she was diagnosed with hypertension. She will need to take medicine for the rest of her life.

In addition to dealing with the disease, Jane was also concerned about her ability to speak and write English. Even though she had earned both a B.A. and an M.A. in the United States, Jane did not feel much confidence in her English and believed that she had been refused employment at private companies due to her poor English. Therefore, she waited and waited until eventually finding employment in state government. There she felt secure because she worked for the government organization which did not require her to talk much in the working place.

Mei: Transnational Family, Living Separately from Her Husband

Mei was 55 years old and had been in the U.S. for about 20 years. She also followed her husband who came to the U.S. in order to earn his Ph.D. Prior to moving to the U.S. she

gave birth to two children and they were three years old and one year old when the family arrived stateside.

After living in the U.S. the three years while her husband studied, Mei encountered the difficulty of deciding whether to remain in the U.S. or not. Mei finally followed her husband's suggestion, staying in the U.S. for the sake of the children's education, but Mei had to release her husband to return to Taiwan as a professor. The low numbers of Ph.D.s in Taiwan twenty years ago led the Taiwanese university to offer Mei's husband a permanent professorship. She was persuaded to encourage her husband to accept the position which would allow him to go back and forth to visit Mei and the children during summer or winter vacations.

When Mei began to talk to me about her husband's decision to return to Taiwan following his studies, her eyes filled with tears. Clearly, she was still grappling with her tremendous grief over his decision to remain in Taiwan and not reside with her and the children in the U.S.

Although Mei returned to Taiwan with the whole family after about 4 years, she was forced to relocate in the U.S. once again. The whole family had reunited and resided in Taiwan for two years only when it became evident that her eldest son suffered from allergies and could not handle Taiwan's air pollution. Unfortunately, she had to leave her husband and bring her children back to the U.S. as soon as possible because her son's health was

threatened.

However, it evolved that Mei needed to separate from her husband longer than she had expected because of the demands from his position in Taiwan. The great opportunity for promotions at the Taiwanese University made Mei's husband hesitate to quit his job and move to the U.S. with Mei, so Mei still needed to remain in the U.S. as head of the family.

She imagined she would stay in the U.S. only until her children grew older and then she would move to Taiwan to reunite with her husband. However, her plan of returning to Taiwan was delayed indefinitely due to many unexpected changes. Mei was frustrated because her husband became the director of his university department and thus busier with a very demanding position. Mei's husband found himself in no position to think about finding a new job in order to reunite with her and children.

In addition, Mei had escalating obligations toward her children as they matured. The older the children became, the more problems emerged. Mei began to reconsider the need to remain in place due to economic burdens. Both children enrolled in medical schools, thus Mei needed a lot of money to support her children. Compared to Taiwan, the tuition fees at a U.S. university are much higher—almost ten times more. Mei could not afford such high tuition if receiving financial support solely from her husband's university salary. Thus, Mei decided to find employment as an insurance agent to mitigate the family's financial burdens.

In addition to financial problems, Mei wished to remain longer in order to be

geographically close to the children. She was afraid that the older they became, the greater the gap would become between her and the children. Her thinking was that if she stayed longer she might have the chance to bridge the distance.

Mei's U.S. life is dominated by responsibility towards her children and she functions as head of the family in the U.S. She does not expect to see her husband often, only two or three times a year due to his demanding workload in Taiwan. Thus, Mei became a stronger woman by assuming all family responsibilities.

Originally, finding a job was not her first choice, rather, she became employed as an agent at the Red Shield Insurance company simply as a response to boredom. However, the more she worked, the more she felt she needed to work outside the home where her self-esteem became stronger and she began making money of her own.

At the time of the interview, Mei lived alone. Her children both studied at medical schools that were two hours away and she could only see them on weekends or during vacations. Therefore, Mei devoted her time either to working or participating in Chinese church activities where she would help to take care of newcomers.

Lily: Intermarriage with an American

Lily and I had great times when she shared her experiences with me. She was a tall, elegantly dressed woman who spoke quickly and her eyes sparkled with excitement when she spoke. She was very personable, and I immediately felt comfortable interviewing her.

Lily was forty-one years old and she came to live in the U.S. fifteen years prior to this study. She met her American husband while enrolled in a master's program in the U.S. Lily was the typical "good student" whose focused studies resulted in good grades. She earned her bachelor's degree from one of Taiwan's top universities, majoring in Information Science and Management Systems. More than three jobs were available to her immediately after her graduation. Because she considered teaching a secure position, she became a high school teacher and taught both English and computer courses.

Gaining a scholarship to study abroad dramatically changed her life. After working in a high school for three years, Lily became tired of the routine and decided to look for something different. She no longer felt much joy and satisfaction as a teacher when she happened to read that the Rotary Foundation would provide an international scholarship to study abroad. She applied for it immediately and won the competition. The scholarship covered the tuition fee and even provided for room and board expenses.

America was not her first choice for a study venue. She was particularly interested in going to Switzerland due to its high reputation in the tourism management industry. But, she decided to give up on her plan to study in Switzerland when she realized the school would only acknowledge her studies with certification and not a degree. Therefore, eventually she decided to go the U.S. to enroll in an MBA program (masters in business administration) because she believed an MBA would bring her success.

Fortunately, Lily did not travel alone to the U.S., but was accompanied by an American Catholic priest whom she met at a Catholic University where she had studied. Lily liked to practice English and would engage in conversations with native English speakers, particular with this priest. Lily had converted to Catholicism after establishing a good relationship with this particular Catholic priest who worked at the university and he volunteered to escort Lily to the U.S. when he returned to America.

Many coincidences made Lily believe she was fated to meet her husband. Lily ran into her American husband the first week after she arrived at Peterson University. Coincidentally, she met him because they both were looking for a Mass celebration on Sunday mornings. Lily and her husband majored in different subjects, Lily studying for an MBA and her husband studying biology. They had some things in common as they were both newcomers to the school environment, both Catholics, and they lived in dorms located very close to each other. Those commonalities provided Lily with more opportunities to get to know him by chatting with him when she saw him and by their dining together.

However, Lily was at a crossroads when she neared graduation with an MBA degree while her husband's PhD was still in the future. She did not want to go back to Taiwan for two reasons. First, she felt she could do something greater if she remained in the U.S. Second, she intended to get married because she wanted to have her own home. Finally, Lily decided to marry this American man and remain in the U.S. After several years of marriage

she had given birth to their two daughters.

Lily actively began to seek employment in the neighborhood while waiting for her husband to graduate. Lacking citizenship made it difficult to find jobs and limited her choices because some employers did not want to hire her and Sartell Valley offered only limited job opportunities. Finally, she received an offer to work as a financial adviser in Amelia National Bank⁴ in Sartell Valley.

Working as a financial adviser at Amelia National Bank was not an easy task for a rookie MBA graduate. Lily realized what she had learned in school was not enough as the MBA only provided basic theories and not practical experiences. Therefore, Lily made a great effort to work hard, and absorbed all of the knowledge available from the bank training program.

However, the more Lily worked in the bank, the more insecure she felt. First, she felt discriminated against in the male-dominated company. Second, Amelia National bank was only concerned with its own profits, not employee benefits. One incident caused her to reflect and made her realize that she needed to leave. An elderly, experienced financial officer died as a result of working too hard at the bank, but, the bank never appreciated his hard work, and did not even acknowledge his death to his co-workers. Lily was shocked by this cold-blooded corporate culture and decided to leave this position.

⁴ Amelia National Bank is a pseudo name.

Opening her own company was not her first choice after leaving the bank position as she felt she was not ready to start her own financial consulting business yet. She applied to many other local banks in Sartell Valley, but had not been hired. Since she was not able to find another company to hire her, she decided to start her own company earlier than originally planned. Due to working hard and investing time in her individual company, the financial company venture turned out to be a success. She worked even harder, put a lot of effort into being a good financial consultant, and was proud to tell me that she no longer accepted new customers because she already had enough clientele.

Kelly: A Book of Chinese History

Listening to Kelly's stories made me feel like I was walking into the past 100 years of Chinese history. Her stories were interesting and motivated me to explore beyond the research questions I had established because her narrative spanned more than the past century and through various social settings. Her stories spanned three dynasties: the Manchu Dynasty, The Republic of China (Taiwan), and The Republic of the People's China (Mainland China).

In 1937, Kelly was born to a large, wealthy family in Beijing. Her family dated back to the Manchu Dynasty and engaged in train construction with the French. Kelly never had to worry about financial concerns and lived in a very huge house. Kelly even had twenty-one uncles and numerous aunties because her grandfather was rich enough to have two wives.

Kelly and her family, however, did not enjoy their happy life for long because civil war

started. Two parties—the Communists, led by Mao, and the Kuomintang, led by Chiang—wanted to take over the authority for Mainland China. Due to the war, Kelly’s family did not earn as much money as they had been previously accustomed to. Things became even worse for Kelly when Japan invaded China. When Kelly was five years old, she began her life of fleeing. The Japanese killed thousands of Chinese civilians, so Kelly and her family were forced to flee from the north to the south. As the family separated into small cohorts, Kelly fled with an uncle and aunt who brought her to Taiwan several later. Kelly and her aunts went to the south and stayed in a safe place before returning to Beijing after the situation improved.

However, when Kelly turned sixteen years, she had to move even farther away, this time from Beijing to Taiwan. After defeating the Japanese military, China and Taiwan won the war. It was assumed to be a time of peace. However, Mao’s Communists and Chiang’s Kuomintang’s started to fight again in order to win “authority.” This time Kelly was brought to Taiwan for her safety by her uncles and aunts. She separated from her parents and lived with one uncle who was working for the government-owned sugar companies. During this time she enrolled in high school in Taiwan.

Kelly was introduced to her husband by her uncle who had worked with him in the sugar company. With a background similar to Kelly’s, her husband was born in China, and had studied in one of the famous northern universities in China until he fled to Taiwan with

his friends and began to work for Chiang. His job was to maintain the construction of trains in Taiwan. When they married, Kelly had to follow her husband and, in order to maintain his construction work, they moved to many places. Moving became their routine; they eventually moved ten places over the course of ten years, from the south of Taiwan to the north.

After ten years of moving around for his train construction job, Kelly's husband moved again, this time in order to study abroad in the States. Kelly remained behind in Taiwan, taking care of their two children alone while she worked as a teacher in her neighborhood. After one and one-half years, Kelly could also move to the U.S. because her husband had completed his master's degree and found employment. Kelly took her 12 and 9 year-old children to the U.S. in order to reunite with her husband.

Once she was living in the U.S., Kelly was unable to find work due to her inadequate English skills. She did the housework while taking care of her children and babysitting the child of another family. She gave birth to her third child after two years in the U.S.

Things went well, and Kelly never expected that bad things would happen. The two oldest children were already in advanced studies, the son in a medical school and the elder daughter in college, when Kelly's husband was diagnosed with cancer. He passed away when he was only 57 years old.

Kelly was not defeated by his illness. On the contrary, she became an independent woman. She committed to learning English by enrolling in an English class at a community

college and simultaneously worked as a cashier in a Chinese restaurant. Her husband did not leave much money for her. Luckily, her elder children were old enough to take care of their own living expenses. Kelly only needed to support herself and the youngest, a daughter who was only 12 years old when her father died. She did not have to worry about her eldest son who joined the army, which paid his medical tuition fee, or the elder daughter who was funded by a scholarship. After Kelly worked hard to provide economic assistance for the younger daughter, that daughter graduated from college and became a teacher.

Currently, Kelly enjoys her life in Cape City. Her children all married Americans and still visit her occasionally. They provide her enough money to continue her lifestyle and reside not far away from her house in order to visit. In addition, she spends most of her time participating in both American and Chinese church activities and Chinese organizations. Recently, she was even elected to be President of a Chinese organization and she expresses satisfaction with her current life.

Sharon: Influenced by Japan Colonization and Taiwanese Independence

Sharon was 71 years old and had been living in Sartell Valley since she was 35. She is short, and enjoyed wearing sports clothes. Sharon speaks very rapidly with a mixture of English, Japanese and Mandarin together. She is a warm-hearted person and enjoys inviting Taiwanese students to come to her house on special occasions such as Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. She was born in Taiwan under Japanese colonization and received a

Japanese education up to the fourth grade that was discontinued when Japan withdrew from Taiwan. Sharon never had a chance to receive a formal Mandarin education.

Sharon witnessed the unfairness that her husband experienced at the hands of the government of Chiang Kai-Shek that resulted in his studying abroad in the U.S. Her husband was a high school physics teacher in Taiwan at that time and Sharon supported his wish to study abroad. America was not their first choice. Both of them intended to go to Japan because they could speak Japanese well. However, Sharon's dream of going to Japan was ruined because of her husband's support for Taiwan's independence. Sharon and her husband were skeptical about loyalty to Chiang because Chiang's government had intentionally given him a failing score on his Japanese comprehension test. Chiang's government workers feared that they would connect with some Taiwanese people who stayed in Japan and intended to take over Chiang's authority. Thus, Sharon and her husband were not allowed to go to Japan to study.

Coming to the U.S. was their last choice, but Sharon and the children were not allowed into the U.S. until two years after her husband's arrival. Without her husband's assistance, Sharon, who knew nothing about English, managed to take her three children on an airplane to America.

Sharon did not think about herself, but only of her husband and the children. Sharon was proud that her husband was the only international student at that time in the kinesiology

program at Peterson University. She was also proud of her three children's achievements: one son was president of his own company; another son a vice president in a famous computer company, and the daughter married a doctor. Most importantly, Sharon was proud to point out to me that the children, like their father, had all graduated from Peterson University.

Sharon reflected that for her children, learning English in the U.S. had been challenging. Initially, Sharon was not only worried about her own English ability but also about the abilities of her three children who struggled to learn English. Sharon believed that while her two elder children had learned English in Taiwan this proved to be not sufficient. The youngest one did not even know what English was. In order to teach the children English, Sharon and her husband adopted two strategies, lessons from school, supplemented by lessons from their father. The teachers at school drew pictures and used body language to help the children understand. And because Sharon's husband was the only one in the family who could then speak English, he took the responsibility of teaching them at night. Sharon joined them, sitting at the dining table learning basic English and other subjects in English. After helping the children with their homework, Sharon also needed to help her husband by typing his assignments for him.

The more Sharon stayed at home, the more she was aware that she needed to step out of the house, so she decided to learn English. Her first job was to take care of a very old American grandma. Her job was simple because she only needed to listen to what the

grandma said. This work only lasted about two months, stopping because Sharon had to go back home to take care of children again.

When moving to another state with her husband after about two years, Sharon took every opportunity to learn English well. She actively participated in English classes held at an American church and participated in the cake decorating class. Her English became fluent and she impressed friends when they returned to Peterson University.

Sharon eventually decided during her husband's last year of studies to obtain his Ph.D., that she wanted to stay in the U.S. Sharon knew with confidence that her husband would receive many offers from Taiwan where thirty years ago there were few PhDs. Many offers, such as becoming the director of a kinesiology department, even Minister of Physics, were refused in order to benefit their children. Sharon considered their children's education and decided to remain in America. Her husband eventually accepted her decision and found a teaching job in the States.

Currently, Sharon and her husband, who recently retired, live together at their own house alone. Although her English has greatly improved, Sharon still feels much more confident speaking in Japanese with her husband. Also, Sharon enjoys working as a housewife and as a landlord who owns a rental house that she rents to students.

Chapter 5

Creating a “New way of life:”

Lily, Sharon, Kelly, Mei and Jane as English Learners in the U.S.

This research explores the complex relationships among narrative, time, and memory (Riessman, 2000). Narratives are powerful windows through which to understand one’s life more fully. In this project, immigrant women tell their stories and this allows them to make sense of events and experiences from the past and allows them to connect their past selves to their current selves in meaningful ways (Mishler, 1999). Furthermore, in telling their stories, they may interpret events differently and the significance of these events may shift. They may connect disparate events in ways that even they might not be aware of and in the process reposition themselves and others into new relationships within their network. These narratives capture the complex identity negotiation process these women undergo as new immigrants in the United States.

In this chapter, I capture the voices of five Taiwanese women as they describe the difficult, challenging, and rewarding experiences of their new lives within the U.S. More specifically, I have divided this chapter into three primary sections. The first section focuses on the women’s new lives in the U.S. The second section details their first impressions of the U.S. Finally, the last section focuses extensively on how they learned English and examines the challenges and difficulties they encountered in educational settings and at work.

As a central and guiding metaphor for these five Taiwanese immigrant women, I use the rapeseed plant as inspired by the book “*The Rapeseed*” written by Huei-ing Liao. Like rapeseeds, these women fall on foreign soil, but still manage to bloom. In this case, in order to bloom they may first face the considerable challenges of effectively navigating through culture shock, mastering a new language, and learning to effectively assert and insert themselves within U.S. culture and society.



Rapeseed plant. Sources: mips2.gsf.de/proj/gabi/projects/raps.jpg



Rapeseed field. Sources: sparkle.photobug.org/.../among_the_rapeseed.jpg

油麻菜籽 *Rapeseed, the Metaphor of Rapeseeds*

妳計較什麼？查某囡仔⁵是油麻菜籽
命，落到那裡就長到那裡。

(Rapeseeds, p.35)

What are you complaining about? A
woman's life is the life of a rapeseed.

Wherever it falls, it grows ...

The Rapeseed is the title of a book written by Liao, a feminist Taiwanese writer. In this novel, Liao vividly describes the inequality of women's lives. The rapeseed is symbolized by Ah-Fei, the main character, whose life as a woman is too cheap to be noticed. A rapeseed, which is carried by the wind, floats without choice to a destination, falls, and grows. Liao uses the metaphor of a rapeseed to symbolize a traditional Taiwanese woman's fate, with its restrictions and need to follow a family, husband and son. The conversation between Ah-Fei and her mother illustrates that, as a traditional woman, she is doomed to be powerless.

In this novel, Ah-Fei was like a rapeseed in that no one really paid attention to her. Although she performed excellently in academics, her status was always lower than that of her brother. For example, every morning, she and her brother received different-sized breakfasts. Her brother always had two eggs, but she was only served one. When Ah-Fei complained, her mother repeated the following statement to her about despair. She said, "What are you complaining about? A woman's life is the life of a rapeseed. Wherever it falls, it grows ..." (Liao, p. 45)

In fact, the character of Ah-Fei's mother played an important role in this novel. Her

1 查某囡仔 is a Taiwanese way of describing the little girl. Liao borrows Mandarin characters to symbolize Taiwanese terms because the Taiwanese language has no official written forms.

mother's life was one with constant dilemmas. Ah-Fei's mother said:

『妳要像媽媽一世人這款生活嗎？』媽陡地把臉拉下來，狠狠地數說了我一頓：『沒半撇的查某，將來就要看查埔人吃飯。如果嫁到可靠的，那是伊好命沒話講，要是嫁個沒責沒任的，看妳將來要吃沙啊。媽媽也不是沒讀過冊的，說起來還去日本讀了幾年。少年敢沒好命過？但是，嫁厝生囡，拖累一生，沒去到社會做事，這半世人過得跟人沒比配……』

(The Rapeseed, p.33)

Do you want to be like Mom for your whole life?' Mom was so angry and said, 'If you have no skills, you have to depend on your man. If you marry someone who you can depend on, that is a good life. Then I have nothing to say. If you marry someone who is irresponsible, we'll see, you are going to eat sand! Mom is not the one who did not go to school. In fact, I went to study in Japan. Isn't it possible that I could not have a better life? But, marrying a man and giving birth to children destroyed my life. I never had the chance to go outside of my family. The half of my whole life cannot be compared with others....

Ah-Fei's mother experienced the dilemma of being a woman. On the one hand, she did not want her daughter to depend on men and not be without her own skills. In her deepest heart, she wanted Ah-Fei to be independent like her, who'd gone abroad to Japan. However, on the other hand, she still favored her son and ignored her daughter. Ultimately, Ah-Fei's mother felt that having a family had ruined her whole life and she felt incredible despair over the loss of her independence.

Still, Ah-Fei's mother believed that a man's status was higher than a woman's. Since she believed that a growing boy needs more energy than a girl, she gave her son two eggs every day. However, she only gave Ah-Fei one egg and explained that she shouldn't ask for more because women's lives are like rapeseeds. It was considered that women's lives are less important than men's and women cannot control their own lives. Women were doomed to be

wives whose only choice was to follow their husbands' footsteps. Ah-Fei's mother believed that women should learn to adjust to their new lives without complaint and regardless of how difficult their lives were or how far they had to follow their husbands. She said:

妳阿兄將來要傳李家的香煙，妳和他計較什麼？將來妳還不知姓什麼呢？
(Huei-Ying Liao, p.50)

Your brother will inherit Lee's joss sticks and candles ⁶ and continue Lee's generation. What are you complaining about? You do not even know your future last name which will change to what?

Thus, I use the metaphor of rapeseeds in this research to symbolize this group of Taiwanese women who left Taiwan and, with one exception, followed their husbands to the U.S. Their voices reflect the dilemmas they continuously encounter as immigrants in the U.S. These five women did not give up; instead, they represent the spirit of the rapeseeds as they adjusted themselves and survived in a society that speaks another language. In the remainder of the chapter, I first establish the context of their arrivals in the United States by tracing the circumstances that caused them to relocate and relate their first impressions of the United States. Then, the majority of the chapter I extensively examine the challenges these women faced to learn English and examine the primary settings for English language education: school, church, cultural institutions, and the work place.

Rapeseeds Fall in the U.S.: Their New Environment in the U.S.

The following section chronicles these five Taiwanese immigrant women's stories,

⁶ The joss sticks and candles usually symbolize the inheritance of the family. As a traditional Chinese family who believes in Buddhism, it is required to have a place with joss sticks and candles at home to celebrate the names of ancestors. There are usually rituals performed on special occasions.

experiences and memories of living in the U.S. and Taiwan. First, I asked these Taiwanese immigrant women what their intentions or their purpose was for coming to the U.S.

Lily: I chose to leave Taiwan. Lily gave me a very simple, firm interpretation of her reason for being in the U.S. She was young when she came to the U.S. for graduate school.

As she said:

我出國只是爲了要離開台灣 (Lily, line 53)	I went abroad just because I wanted to get away from Taiwan.
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Lily's desire to study abroad was motivated by her desire to leave Taiwan. She told me:

I was so eager to go abroad. Not because of seeing classmates studying abroad; I just felt that I would like to go outside and take a look. My family was not so rich enough to support me. (Lily, line 89-91)

Lily's family's financial situation was not sufficient to support her. Although her father approved of her decision to immigrate overseas, he did not have enough money from his military salary to support her trip. She told this story with laughter, meaning that she had to make money on her own. In order to earn extra money, she worked as a teacher for several years. She reflected:

I taught English, computer classes. I stayed there about three years, taking care of one class of students until graduation. I felt proud of having [this] accomplishment. But because the school environment was too simple and a little bit boring...Right, because you just *repeat same thing*.⁷ (Lily, 112-115)

Lily was active and ambitious. In Taiwan, she had passed difficult entrance exams for high school and then college. She finally graduated from a university that had a very good reputation. However, she was not satisfied with life in Taiwan and was willing to go abroad.

⁷ Lily said, "repeat same thing," which is not grammatically correct. Repeating the same thing is correct.

Initially, she wanted to major in Leisure Studies. She said:

I was planning to study Leisure Study. I even wrote a letter to Mr. Mao, who was the Director of the Tourism Bureau in Taiwan. The title of my letter was ‘Using tourism as a way to save the country.’ (laughing). I could use tourism to save the country. (Lily, line 147-152)

Lily’s goal to save her country through tourism demonstrates her ambition and her desire to make an important contribution to society. She believed that she had the talents to develop herself more fully. Lily’s pride in herself was clearly reflected in the story she told about how the Director of the Tourism Bureau himself wrote a letter back to her.⁸

Unfortunately, in her opinion, Taiwan, at that moment did not provide many opportunities that would allow her to complete her goals. Therefore, going abroad was her only way to ensure that her dreams would come true.

Lily was young and single when she decided to study abroad. She believed that going abroad would provide more opportunities for her to develop her career. She worked hard to earn the scholarship provided by the International Rotary and migrated to the United States to earn her MBA.

Kelly.: Stay with husband after finding a job in the U.S. When Kelly came to the U.S. she was very dependent on her husband and she came to the U.S. solely to accompany him as

⁸ I feel something interesting when I hear Lily’s story about this letter. In fact, there might be some explanations. First, she was likely to devote herself to this country. But with tourism? Another explanation is that she was the perfect example of being influenced by Chiang’s government rule. In that moment of “White Terror,” every student was controlled by the government. Everyone, everything must be related to saving the country. In fact, I was influenced by this trend, too. For example, I remembered that once I participated in a composition contest. The title was “Go for an outing.” I won because I wrote an essay relating to saving the country. I wrote that even if we go outside, we still need to remember that people in China are still suffering. We cannot forget them and we need to think of how we can rescue them. Isn’t this funny? But, it was really a true story from my past. Thus, I am not surprised to hear this excerpt from Lily.

he pursued his educational and career goals. Kelly vividly remembered arriving in the U.S. with her children several days before Christmas in 1963. Kelly proudly told me how well her husband treated her by paying for her to fly while he himself had traveled to the United States by boat, a process which took about 40 days. She reflected:

My husband came to study in 1961. In 1961, he came here by boat. He was one of the earliest students who studied abroad in the U.S.He came here by boat, from Tokyo, through Tokyo to the U.S. It took him about 40 days. (Kelly, line 3-8).

Kelly let her husband come first to the U.S. to get a master's degree while she stayed in Taiwan to take care of the children. Kelly waited almost two years before joining him after her husband finished his degree and found employment. When Kelly described this incident, I sensed her pride in her husband's ability to earn a master's degree so quickly and find a job. Also, she felt her husband did treat her and the children well. The airfares were very expensive then, and the family had the chance to take airplanes to reach the U.S.

Jane: Coming to the U.S. without knowing why.

反正那時候就糊里糊塗的就出來了。
(Jane, line 28)

At that moment, I just went out without preparing everything well. I was muddleheaded.

Jane did not have a clear memory of the year or date she came to the U.S. When I asked what year when she came to the U.S., she gave the answer based on the year her daughter was born. She could not even remember exactly what her daughter's age was.

Jane could not come with her husband because of the laws in Taiwan which restricted

spouses from traveling abroad together. Usually, one spouse had to wait for one year before joining their spouse stateside. Fortunately for Jane, she only needed to wait about half of a year to go abroad.

Jane mentioned with regret how rushed her marriage was, and that her husband left immediately after the marriage. She did not even have time to get to know her husband well. She did not realize that her husband was a male chauvinist before they married and as a result her life in the U.S. was very restricted.

Jane spent a lot of time complaining to me that she did not have time to understand her husband who was not very considerate. She reflected:

We only went to the registrar for the marriage. I only met him and knew him for less than one year and then we got married. And he left after we were married for less than one month. OK, then we were so rushed for everything. We planned to have him come back and bring me here (to the United States). It turned out that students abroad were poor, then, well, how can you come to the U.S. about half a year, earning enough money to come back to Taiwan. Anyway, let's save some money. No matter what, I already got the legal documents. (Jane, line 18-29)

Jane's husband decided not to come back to pick her up and escort her as they had originally planned, instead he requested that she take the airplane by herself. Although her husband would be waiting for her at the airport, she was deathly afraid to travel alone and she would need to transfer planes by herself. Jane was a traditional Taiwanese woman in that she believed that she was doomed by fate. Still, although she was scared to travel alone, she encouraged herself to be independent in order to reunite with her husband. She told me,

“Anyway, I just went out without knowing why. I was muddleheaded” (Jane, line 28). On the surface, she did not understand why she came to the U.S. However, she knew from her deep heart that she came to the U.S. in order to accompany her husband and not for herself.

Mei’s reason for staying: Son’s allergy kept me stay.

那我就覺得不對，那忍痛，回來啦

(Mei, line 40-41)

Then, I felt something was not right. I endured the pain and we came back!

Immigrating to the U.S. was not Mei’s first choice. Mei and her husband decided to continue to stay in the U.S. because of her son’s allergy problem. At the beginning, Mei brought her two children to reunite with her husband when her husband pursued a Ph.D. degree. The two children were both born in Taiwan. They came to the U.S. when the elder was three years old and the younger was only one year old.

Everything went well until Mei and her husband needed to decide whether they should remain in the U.S. or return to Taiwan after her husband completed a Ph.D. In Mei’s mind, she wanted to go back because she was concerned about her mother’s health. However, she changed her mind when her husband told her that, because of the children, she had better stay in the U.S. Although Mei was so concerned about her mother, she had followed her husband to the U.S. Her husband had asked her to reside in the U.S. because their son has serious allergies and Taiwan’s air pollution would worsen their son’s disease.

Mei was very concerned about her son’s health and allergy problems. She spent a lot of time during the interview, trying to explain the nature of the allergies.

She described her son's serious allergy situation:

He [the son] was allergic to pollen. Yah, and other kinds, dust or even the carpet at my house...even mold, a lot of stuff. He was also allergic to cats and dogs. He would sneeze after coming from these places. Especially [after he visited] his violin teacher who had a cat, he could only stay here two hours maximum. Staying more than two hours, he would sneeze and sneeze. More than that, he also needed an inhaler. (Mei, line 18-25)

After staying in the U.S. for about seven years, Mei's whole family returned to Taiwan.

However, her son's disease worsened in Taiwan. She said, "When I went to Taiwan, because of air pollution, no...So, he had to get shots every week. He was so poor! He got fatter because of the shots which contained medicine" (Mei, line 37-39).

Therefore, for her son's health, Mei's husband asked her to reside in the U.S. She was unwilling to come back, but still she obeyed her husband. Her husband persuaded her to return, but was himself unwilling to stay in the U.S. because he had received a job offer to be a professor in Taiwan and he has been separated from his family since then. However, when Mei described this, she was a little bit of proud of her husband. She said:

People called him telling him that they would offer him a *permanent job*, *do you want it?* He said that if you do not want it, it would be taken by someone else. Yes, there was an offer of visiting professor, which one do you like? I told my husband; even a stupid would accept this. OK, then, he took this offer. We had been so struggling for the first two years, you know, only telephone...And things weren't going well for his job, you know, he probably would come back...(Mei, line 56-66)

When Mei reported this story, she said the phrase "permanent job, do you want it?" in English. She said it with pride that her husband was offered a permanent job, especially in the university as a professor. Therefore, even though she was struggling a little bit with the

implications of living separately long term, she still asked her husband to stay in Taiwan.

Sharon's story: America was not our first choice

放棄日本的留學，他就直接來了。
(Sharon, line 14-15)

He gave up going to study abroad to Japan
and he directly came here.

America was not Sharon's first choice for studying abroad. Rather, her husband, initially intended to go to Japan. For some political reasons, however, he was prevented from immigrating to Japan. She said:

He had intended to go to Japan, but because he had been identified with political ideologies problems. He had passed everything, except his Japanese language literacy Exam. Even his student got more than 70 points in grades, he only got 40 points. That means they [Chiang's government] did not want him to go abroad, on purpose. They did not want these people who could speak Japanese well going to Japan. (Sharon, line 3-8)

It was during Chiang Kai-Shek's reign when free speech was not allowed, nor were the ideologies of Taiwanese independence. When Chiang's governors got reports that some people who wanted Taiwan to be independent stayed in Japan, they began to do everything they could to prevent people from going to Japan to connect with these groups. In Sharon's mind, her husband was set up for failure. Otherwise, he would not have failed this simple test. They believed they were victims and hated Chiang's government.

Sharon disagreed with Chiang's government for many reasons. First, Sharon believed that her husband was not allowed to go to Japan to study by Chiang's governors. Second, Sharon complained that due to Chiang's rule, she had to wait more than two years to reunite with her husband. She did not accept the explanation made by governors that wives would

distract husbands from their studies. In her mind, this was a superficial excuse used to cover up the government's political motives. In fact, I have no information about these rules because I never heard about them until these interviews. These regulations were cancelled after Chiang's government had been dismantled, so I never personally suffered from these rules.

These women are rapeseeds, carried by the wind, to a new place to start new lives. Interestingly, I realized that none of these five Taiwanese immigrant women had intended to permanently immigrate to the U.S. Lily went to America to study for her master's degree. She chose to stay because she met and married her American husband. Jane, Kelly, Sharon and Mei all followed their husbands so immigrating to America was not their first intention. Ultimately, they decided to stay in the U.S. out of concern and support for their children and husbands.

Moreover, I found a commonality when each of these women, except Lily, described how they were motivated to come to the U.S, to support their husbands and children, and how ultimately a new relationship between themselves and their families emerged (Misshler, 1999). Sharon, Kelly, and Mei proudly explained how their husbands' academic achievements which brought them to the U.S. also caused them to remain. They immersed themselves into the stories, hiding themselves behind their husbands or children. As a result, their descriptions of husbands and children reflect the hierarchical relationships existent in

the families in which husbands and children controlled and defined these women's lives.

In the next section, I explore the cultural shock these women experienced upon arriving in the United States.

The Rapeseeds: Where am I?

Their First Impressions and First Lives in the U.S.

Sharon: Shocked by the U.S.

這裡是美國喔，這是到哪？

(Sharon, line 478)

Is this America? Where do we arrive at?

When I got off the plane, I was shocked. 'Is this America? Where do we arrive at?' My husband picked me up. I also needed to transfer....I got dizzy because of taking this small plane. I could not walk. The further we drove, the more I feel it was getting dark. It was like country. He said this is America! Are you mistaken? It is so remote and out-of-the-way. It is worse than Taiwan. My goodness! (Sharon, line 478-489)

Sharon was shocked to find that things in the U.S. were worse than she had expected.

The U.S., in her mind, should contain rich people, and big houses. She could not believe that she was going to begin her life in this small place. As she concluded:

那個時候來，那個時候來是相當相當的苦啊。(Sharon, line 62)

The life was so so hard when we came here at that moment.

Kelly: What a horrible life!

Similar to Sharon, Kelly also believed that she encountered difficulties in the U.S. On the airplane into her new "hometown," she began to realize that life in the U.S. would not be easy. Before coming to the U.S., Kelly assumed that her life in the U.S. would be the same as

the life she'd had in Taiwan. She was a little bit proud to be going abroad.

In the early 60s, no one was ever heard of studying abroad. Well, Americans would see how many properties you have, [such as] you must have houses. He (Americans) would not let you come to study because he is afraid that you do not want to come back. So a lot of Taiwanese who came to study needed deposits. (Kelly, line 129-139)

At that moment, it was not easy for a normal Taiwanese person to gain admission to a U.S. university, let alone go to other countries. Unfortunately, Taiwan was under a period of Martial Law, which restricted Taiwanese residents from going abroad. In Kelly's mind, she was a little bit proud of her husband. She could take airplane flights and enjoy life with her husband.

After the awful experience of flying alone to the U.S., Kelly faced more troubles. She commented:

想像中的美國，哎呀這個美國 太慘了。

(Kelly, line 198)

The imagination to the U.S.? Well, my goodness! This America, too miserable.

我到了美國來是倒了八百子楣，給你們搞的這樣子。還要洗地板，還要買菜，還要洗衣服。

(Kelly, line 203-205)

My fortune must be so bad lasting eight hundred years for coming here. Look what you did to me. I needed to clean the floor, and buy food. I also needed to do the laundry.

In this excerpt, 八百子楣 is the description of Kelly's bad fortune of about eight hundred years. In Taiwan, she never had to do household chores, so she wore Chi-Pao, a close-fitting outfit with a high neck and slit skirt everyday. Although it is nearly impossible to

wear Chi-Pao while doing household work, Kelly continued to wear Chi-Pao⁹ clothes entirely and perform housework in them because she wanted to save money to buy new clothes. In addition, in order to save more money, she even suffered while doing the laundry.

She recalled:

We carried a bunch of clothes, walking to the laundry room. In order to save one cent, we did not use the dryer. Instead, we carried those wet clothes; walked home and let them naturally dried. (Kelly, line 206-208)

Why did Kelly feel these differences? She actually had a good life in Taiwan. For her, wearing Chi-Pao every day symbolizes the good life she had had in Taiwan. In Taiwan, Kelly lived in the 眷村 Veterans' Village and her husband worked for a company controlled by the government of Chiang Kai-Shek. At that time, Taiwan made huge profits from exporting sugar to other countries under a government monopoly. Her husband earned a great deal of money and received substantial benefits.

When Kelly moved to the United States, she went through economic difficulties. She had imagined that the U.S. would provide her and her husband with more work opportunities and a better life. Like other immigrants who were from economically poor countries, she believed that they would attain the American Dream.

Lily: America is so great!

剛來的時候，會覺得美國好好喔！
(Lily, line 720)

When I first arrived, I had the feeling,"
America is so great!

⁹ Chi-Pao, also called Cheongsam, is the traditional Chinese women's dress. It is a one-piece dress, body-hugging, and accentuating women's figures.

The first impression of America for Lily was that America was the best. As she reflected, “When I first arrived, I had the feeling, America is so great!” (Lily, line 720)

She continued to say:

In my opinion, whatever I saw was so great, right? America is so clean, and America is so big! Basically, Americans, compared to Asians, are prettier. They are healthier and their skin is healthier, particularly their teeth.....Then, I felt America is a so free country. I felt I was liberated [laughing]. Americans at school, basically, treated nicely toward Asians. And my experiences of staying here were all very positive. I like it a lot, I felt that I *immediately embrace the new culture*. (Lily, line 721-732)

Lily felt like she had been “liberated” by breathing America’s fresh air. Americans were nice and pretty. Lily could not help but compare America’s cleanness to Taiwan’s dirt and air-pollution. In her mind, Lily just wanted to get rid of her Taiwanese past and start her new life in America.

Mei: Kids, kids, kids.

我大部分都是看有小孩的，因為那時候小孩天天都要拎著的。

(Mei, line 186-187)

I spent most of time taking care of children. At that moment, I needed to carry these two little ones every day.

After she arrived in the United States, Mei did not have time to figure out the differences between her perceptions and reality because her main purpose was to take care of her children and her husband. Wherever she went, she needed to take her two children along because they were too little to stay home alone. She did not have her own time.

Jane: Do I have choice?

那你知道留學生嘛，反正就是都是在陪

Then you know, the lives of students’

讀啊。

(Jane, line 13)

abroad. Anyway, we came here just for accompanying them...

Jane accepted it as her fate to accompany her husband while he pursued his Ph.D. Jane had not given birth yet when she came to the U.S. Therefore, the first year she “hung around” with her Asian neighbors, socialized with them, and they regularly went shopping together at thrift stores. Jane and her friends took great pleasure in hunting for treasures and bargains. She made fun of herself by saying that she bought used cups and plates everyday because these things were very cheap.

Kelly: Hardships just began.

我記得 61 年我們租的房子一房一廳的房子才 65 塊，1963 我們住一房一廳的房子。小孩子來，我們 4 個人住。

(Kelly, line 18-20)

When we came in 1961, we rented a one-bedroom apartment. It only cost us sixty-five dollars. In 1963, we lived one-bedroom apartment. Children came, four of us lived [together].

Compared to the good life in Taiwan, Kelly persuaded herself that in order to save money, she needed to be frugal in the U.S. To save money on rent, her whole family crammed into a small place.

Sharon: I was stuck at home.

那個時候，我只能說 *Hi how are you* ? 這樣子幾句而已，再問我，我就什麼都不曉得了，所以也不會講，講也不會講，看也看不懂，聽也聽不懂，也不會開車，整天都在家。

line 64-68)

(Sharon,

At that time, what I knew was “Hi, how are you?” These kinds of sentences only. If you asked me more, I knew nothing more than these. So, I did not know how to speak. I did not know how to read. I could not comprehend what people talked about. And I did not know how to drive. I stayed at home the whole day.

Sharon was discouraged from going outside because she did not know much English.

In fact, the only English sentence she knew was: “How are you?” She could not communicate with native speakers or even get her driver’s license. Thus, she did not dare to go out; remaining at home kept her secure.

In addition to the language difficulty, these five women encountered many differences or difficulties in daily life. For example, Sharon encountered the difficulty of making Chinese style food for her family.

Lacking Chinese Food Supply

Sharon: I made tofu by myself. Preparing food was one of Sharon’s main responsibilities after arriving in America. While in Taiwan, tofu had been a central staple of Sharon’s cooking. Tofu, which is made from fermented yellow beans and is very cheap, is the most ordinary, simple Chinese food. However, when Sharon lived in the U.S., she realized that she could not even find tofu in any supermarket. She said:

You have nothing for food. No place to shop, and there was not a grocery store. There were American supermarkets, but no Chinese store. If we would like to eat tofu, we need to go to New York. (Sharon, line 56-60)

Sharon, however, could not comprehend why she could not find tofu in her town. She needed to drive about five hours to New York if she had to buy tofu. Therefore, she had to be independent by saying:

就這樣子自己搞，什麼都自己來
(Sharon, line 262)

So, I did it by myself, like this. I did everything by myself.

Since she missed Chinese food so much, especially tofu, she decided to make tofu herself. As she told me:

Since I could not get food what I wanted...there were so many children in my family...five people in my family, the biggest family here, then I made tofu by myself and asked people to come to my house...I grinded the yellow beans by myself...I did it by myself, like this. I did everything by myself. (Sharon, line 248-262)

Lacking Family Support

Jane: I had no one to help me. Not only did these Taiwanese immigrant women have a problem with this lack of access to familiar Chinese foods, they also lacked labor support. These women were so far away from their parents and the support networks of Taiwanese society. Obviously, they could not get much support from their parents or relatives in Taiwan and had to do the housework and take care of children on their own. Even if these women gave birth to a child, they could not get much help from relatives. Traditionally, Chinese call the first month after giving birth 坐月子 (month of confinement after giving birth to a child). In Chinese traditions, there are so many restrictions for a woman who gives birth. For example, she is not allowed to wash her hair and body for a whole month, and sometimes even longer. She is not allowed to drink too much water and has to lie in bed most of the time. The restrictions are gone after one month. In Jane's experience, she could not follow these traditions and still had to take care of her family because her relatives were too far away to help her. She remembers:

Yes, I did on my own for the month of confinement after giving birth to a child.

No body came to help me. I could only depend on my husband. He could only cook two kinds of food...Anyway, everyone was living hard and frugally. But, you just could not lie down whole day. You still had to get out of the bed, making some food. (Jane, line 123-130)

She continued,

Because I did not have enough rest, so I still felt pains after two more months....What you need is to lie down and rest. But you also needed to hold the baby, and feed the baby. In fact, I had been feeling painful....Yah, I still passed this horrible live. (Jane, 133-136)

My Reflections

Jane's experience reminded me of my personal experience during the month of confinement after giving birth to my son. I asked my mother to fly to the U.S. to help me. My husband at that moment was too busy doing his graduate school research and could not offer much help. What he could do was the grocery shopping. Every time, my mother would write a shopping list in Mandarin. Then, my husband's responsibility was to complete the shopping.

I was not allowed to go outside, or wash my hair. My mother did most of the housekeeping, cooking, and taking care of me and the baby. Unfortunately, her help exasperated an already stressful period in our lives because she suffered from insomnia and could not sleep well. It was a disaster because she lost her temper if she could not get enough sleep. Sometimes, she lost control and raised her voice. We did not get along for sometime because we both were too tired and both of us ended up losing our tempers.

Compared to Jane, I was lucky because at least I had my mother to help. I wonder how

Jane could handle all of these chores on her own. The husband provided limited help only.

But, I realized that she was a traditional Chinese woman who held to the notion of devotion to the family. She endured her pains from childbirth and still did the housework, as well as taking care of the child. As she mentioned, “I just passed this period.”

Jane reminded me that her purpose in coming to the U.S. was to accompany her husband. Therefore, she had to take care of the household. She described it as follows:

他想說你是來陪讀的，你要負責我三餐，OK，三餐，就是早餐、中餐、晚餐。

(Jane, line 110-112)

He thought, you are coming to accompany me. Every day you are responsible for preparing three meals for me. OK [tone raised]. Three means, means breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Jane had to prepare three meals every day. After preparing lunch, she had to bring a meal box to her husband’s office. She took the bus and had to be at the office on time.

“Sometimes I was a little bit late, about fifteen minutes. He was so angry and refused to eat.

He even asked me to bring it home without eating” (Jane, line 114-116).

Although Jane did not get much help from relatives in Taiwan, she felt friendship from Asians in the community. For example, students or spouses often helped each other in passing drivers’ license tests. The senior graduate students shared many useful daily experiences with the newcomers. For example, passing the drivers’ license process is the very first priority when they arrive in the U.S. Obtaining a driver’s license is the easy way to travel and it can be used as daily identification. Therefore, most students received a license as soon as possible.

Jane told me that the seniors usually knew which drivers' testers were strict or lenient on the road tests and shared their experiences with newcomers. If there were three drivers' testers on duty, they could identify the easier one. If they figured out this tester was picky, they would not answer when they were called and would try their best to be tested by that easier tester.

In addition, Jane told me a funny story about how frugal the Taiwanese graduate students in the U.S. were at that time. They needed to car pool to the drivers' licensing center because it was a long way to get there. She was impressed by one graduate student who took a bottle of corn oil as a drinking bottle on the way to the center. That student was too frugal to throw away the plastic corn oil bottle, so he filled the bottle with drinking water. Jane was so curious about how he could clean the bottle because it was very oily and not easy to clean. When Jane finished this story, we were both laughing. For me, I could not imagine how these students intended to be frugal for just one penny. For Jane, these stories had comforted her through the economic and spiritual stresses of staying in a new country.

Although these five Taiwanese immigrant women told me their lives were difficult twenty years ago, they had very different attitudes and perspectives now. For example, in Sharon's stories she repeatedly emphasized how harsh her life was and that she had to take care of the household, husband, and children. However, someone like Jane or Kelly knew the difficulties, but they dealt with these difficulties by telling funny stories.

In the following section, I extensively explore how these women experienced learning

English both in Taiwan and in the U.S. These narratives reflect how they negotiated their various identities while interacting with native speakers in the U.S. and how their Taiwanese learning experiences affected their learning in the U.S.

One Person Two Cultures: English Language-Learning Experiences

“What do you call a person who speaks two languages?”

“Bilingual.”

“And one who knows only one?”

“American.”

Gorlach, “Comment” (as cited in Portes and Rumbaut, 2006)

Gorlach’s comment implies how some Americans limit their experiences to their own culture. Of course Gorlach’s comment is a joke and certainly does not refer to every American. In my personal experiences, I have encountered many American classmates who reached out to me and were nice to me. I remember one American who taught in a local high school whom I met when we took the same class. I was in my first year in the U.S. and had difficulty speaking English in class. She often encouraged me and told me that she would not be able to speak or even write another language, not to mention living in an unfamiliar country. Her words comforted me and did encourage me to resolve the language barriers.

I have encountered many immigrants in the U.S. who require their children and themselves to speak English at all occasions because they assume English is the only language accepted in the U.S. In fact, English is a “national language” and not yet

designated as an official language in the U.S. even though English is expected to become an official language. According to Olsen's (1997) opinion, keeping English as a national language rather than declaring it as an official language is due to the founders of the U.S. and the writers of the Constitution. The U.S. in reality is multilingual. However, for most immigrants, English language acquisition is needed to survive in this society where English language dominants. In order to be accepted in the United States and to be able to negotiate the culture successfully, learning the English language becomes many immigrants first priority upon arrival.

The Role Language Plays in Learning Theories

Investigating the process of language learning, particularly English language, occupied a significant part of my research. In order to more fully understand how participants in my study learned English and to understand their interactions with other people, both inside and outside of the classroom, I adopted Vygotsky's sociocultural theories. The central theorists of language acquisition, including Vygotsky, Bakhtin, Lave and Wenger, all emphasize that learning is a process that is socially constructed (Hanks, 1991). In the traditional teaching and learning relationship, the emphasis is on "input" and "output" relations. Teachers play roles in providing "input," importing knowledge that learners may use and that the learners regard as "passive output." In this model, there are rarely interactions between teachers and learners. In contrast, Vygotsky conceptualizes learning, "as an active and interactive process in which

learners or novices increasingly participate in a community of social practices” (Jacoby & Gonzales, 1991, p. 150). In this way, learning is an activity, “among co-participants, not a one-person act” (Jacoby & Gonzales, 1991, p. 151). Participants interact in learning contexts in the community, and learning is not just a process that occurs in individual minds.

Sociocultural theories reconceptualize the notion that learning is no longer an act that requires an individual to internalize knowledge from the outside world. The social relations between learners and the society influence learners to be motivated to learn. The more learners participate in activities with the outside world, the more they connect themselves with the outside world and are therefore motivated to learn more from others.

Therefore, language is not a neutral medium that passes information to speakers.

Language is the interaction with others, “expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one’s own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process” (Bakhtin, as cited in Tooney, 2000, p. 124). Language comes to us loaded with social structure and is considered a tool to “mediate” interactions.

Language-Learning for Second Language Learners

For language learners, particularly second language learners, language-learning is a complex process because words express particular predispositions and value systems as well as identity hierarchies (Tooney, 2000). Learners engage in daily activities, interacting with others in order to appropriate the words from them. Second language acquisition is more

difficult because words or utterances symbolize different perspectives and different voices, resulting in more challenges for the second language speaker because they may be unfamiliar with the words and their connotations. Second language learners might experience unexpected conflicts due to difficulties in expressing their words or due to misunderstanding other people's words. Tooney's (2000) observation of ESL children indicated these learners' struggle to appropriate others' voices. These practices lead children to create their identity positions in many communities, such as within or outside of classroom. Thus, if participants have access to these activities, their identities are powerful and alluring. They may develop fuller roles. On the other hand, if they are denied full participation, their identities are no longer powerful or desirable. They fail to appropriate school languages or other activities outside the school (Tooney, 2000).

Thus, in this section, I carefully investigate the relationship between identity and language learning, focusing on language-learning practices in the home, the workplace and at school. I examine these five women's English-learning experiences, including their experiences in Taiwan. Throughout this section, I show how tenaciously these women focus on acquiring English and I highlight the many creative skills they use to overcome the significant challenges they face, especially as novice language-learners. First, I focus on English learned in a variety of classroom contexts including schools and churches and then I examine learner's interactions in cultural settings and the workplace.

Language-Learning and Use within Schools

Schools are social sites that reproduce the values of society, reveal social relations, and reproduce ideologies (Giroux, 2001). Schooling reflects the realities of the society and imitates the social hierarchies of ethnicity, race, and gender apparent in the larger society (Davies, 1997a).

School is the place that reproduces social identities and demonstrates the unequal relations of power (Lin, 1999). In Lin's (1999) study of ESL classrooms, she points out that having access to English proficiency would affect students' social identities. ESL students become confident when they begin to speak in an English environment. Thus, in the following section, I start by investigating these five Taiwanese immigrant women's language-learning experiences in the context of schools both in Taiwan and the U.S.

Mei, Lily, Sharon, Kelly and Jane's Experiences Learning English in Taiwan

Mei learned English in college in Taiwan and had a basic knowledge of that language which gave her confidence about her English proficiency. However, she did not realize that she learned a different system of English in Taiwan and that this would result in difficulty comprehending native English speakers. She had difficulty comprehending what native speakers said because she could not understand their pronunciation. This was especially true for her when she was listening to speakers who were from northeastern states. She said:

I remembered that we had learned International Phonetics Alphabet system.

However, here, the accent is K.K system¹⁰. We learned British English, and it is a little bit different. Of course I have some basic knowledge, but when I came here, listening comprehension, especially in this college town, they, their accent “OH” something, was a little bit different. (Mei, 215-220)

From Lily’s perspective, English was not a difficult subject when she was in Taiwan.

She told me confidently that she paid a lot of attention to English.

When I was in Taiwan, I liked English a lot. My English has been pretty good, but not the top. Because there were few opportunities to speak. Then in Taiwan, I graduated from Kaohsiung [in the south of Taiwan] top one high school and got the admission to the University, and I had been paying attention to English. I would like to talk with people in English. If I met a foreigner and I would catch him...Then I met a priest who came from America, a Catholic father, and I learned English from him. (Lily, line 38-44)

Both Mei and Lily had learned English and felt they had enough English proficiency before arriving in the U.S. However, Mei specifically mentioned the pronunciation problem because she learned a different system of English. Lily was younger and had learned the same pronunciation system as American English. Also, she actively participated in any opportunities in Taiwan to learn English, so she was very proud of her English ability.

In the cases of these women, Sharon and Kelly were of the same generation. Kelly came from China and had the opportunity to go to high school. She was part of a wealthy family with high social status. While Sharon had opportunities to learn English, unfortunately, she did not receive a formal English education. She was educated by the Japanese up to the fourth grade. In 1945, Japan returned Taiwan to China. Chiang Kai-shek took control of

¹⁰ The K.K. system is adopted from John Samuel Kenyon 及 Thomas A. Knott whose last names both begin with K. They wrote a dictionary called *A Pronouncing Dictionary of American English*. In Taiwan, teachers had switched from teaching International Phonetics Alphabet system to the K.K. system.

Taiwan and the education system, and he changed the minimum requirements of mandatory education from six to nine years. As part of his educational reforms, Chiang instituted English language courses in the seventh grade. However, due to the war with Japan shortly after Chiang came to power, Sharon was forced to stop her education. Sadly, Sharon never returned to school to complete her education.

Lily was the youngest among these five women in this research, and had paid the most attention to learning English. Lily actively pursued her English education and she took every opportunity to chat with foreigners. English was not as difficult for her; she was able to pass the English test requirement for application for a graduate assistantship. Jane, even at the time of the study, felt that her English was not good enough and although she did graduate from college both in Taiwan and in the U.S. she still believed that her English was not very good. This was sometimes reflected in her talking when I invited her to participate in this research. She kept telling me that her English was not good enough and claiming that she would not be a “good example” in expressing her personal experiences.

With these previous experiences relating to learning English in Taiwan, the women, like the rapeseeds, were carried to live into a new English-dominant learning environment.

Experiences Learning English in U.S. Schools

Americanization

“If you do not speak the English right, you cannot be American.”

(Olsen, 1997, words from her observant students)

Formal school policy and school curriculum in the U.S. requires immigrant students to become Americans with fluent English abilities (Olsen, 1997). Each school's ultimate goal is to "Americanize" students to speak English and all five participants agreed that learning the English language was the only way to be accepted in an English-dominant society. They were so eager to learn English, speak English accurately, and become truly American. Also, according to Olsen's (1997) findings, these immigrants gradually lose their facility with their home language. The loss of their home language literacy often means that they are no longer able to speak with their grandparents and other extended family. Ultimately, the loss of their home language means that they lost connection to their homeland culture as well.

In this research, the five Taiwanese women had different English-learning experiences, which were influenced by the desire to become "Americanized". Even Lily, who came to the United States as a graduate student, still encountered some problems with English. She remembered:

我真的有那種感覺自己是聾子、瞎子、
啞巴。(Lily, line 706-707)

I did have the feeling that I was a deaf,
blind, and dumb.

Although Lily believed her English language ability was good enough, she still encountered language barriers in the first year. She could not speak fluently. The only explanation was that she had culture shock, which was normal for a Taiwanese student. She explained:

It was normal. On the one hand, our education educated us in passive way. We just sat there, listening and seldom asked questions. On the other hand, we do have the language barrier, it is true. (Lily, line 707-710)

My Reflections

I also experienced culture shock upon first coming to the U.S. and had the exact same feelings as Lily. I had graduated from the university in Taiwan as an English major and had studied the English language for about 15 years. Moreover, I had used my English skills professionally as an employee of an international airline. As a result of my extensive study and experience, I believed that speaking English was not a difficult task.

However, once I arrived in the U.S. I found myself in a totally different situation. When I went to my first undergraduate class I was overwhelmed and felt totally dumb in the group discussion because I could not understand the fast-talking American women in my group. Although I do not remember what the content was, I heard my voice in my mind asking, “What? What? What are they talking about?” I could not even nod my head because I had no clue about these students’ conversations. Then, at the end one of the girls finished talking and turned to me, “You know what I am saying?” I cannot believe what I did. I shook my head, No! The girl was shocked too. She could not believe that I had just shaken my head. So, she needed to start all over again, explaining what she had just said.

When I had been in the U.S. longer, I realized that the sentence, “You know what I am saying?” was a rhetorical question that was not meant to be answered. By taking the question literally, I was “too honest” and indicated that I could not understand her explanation.

Ultimately, I misunderstood both her content and the connotation of her words and I was doubly embarrassed.

The other classes were not much better. I disliked the group discussions because I still did not know how to “talk” in class. More specifically, because I did not know what I should talk about, I could only nod my head (at least, I was acting better). My inner voice repeatedly urged me, “Go! Go! Speak! You have read and know what they are talking about. Why can’t you say something?” I would chastise myself. The classroom culture in Taiwan is very fundamentally different because those teachers focus heavily on lecture and rote memorization and do not want students to “interrupt.” Taiwanese teachers never evaluated class participation because students were solely required to listen. Therefore, I had become deaf and dumb for about two months into the first semester of grad school during this transition. My husband often teased me, “Did not you graduate with an English major? How come you do not know how to speak?”

Kelly’s beginning school experiences: Learn with children from a superintendent.

Kelly’s school experiences learning English began with a school superintendent who taught her children in elementary school. Kelly did learn English little by little along with her children. Every day she walked her two children, then in 5th and 6th grade, to and from elementary school. Since at that time, about thirty years ago now, there were no ESL (English as a second language) programs, the superintendent taught these two children every day after

school for about one hour. Kelly grasped the opportunity to learn English and attended these sessions along with her children. I was surprised to hear that the superintendent himself taught the children English. According to Kelly, that elementary school was small and had few students. Hers were the only two children in school who needed to learn English. Therefore, the superintendent became a teacher to them. At the same time, Kelly also learned English along with her children, learning from the superintendent indirectly.

Kelly's college class experiences. The death of Kelly's husband was the turning point that pushed her to formally learn English. Initially, learning English was not her priority, because Kelly's main responsibility had been to accompany her husband to the United States and to take primary responsibility for taking care of their children. However, when her husband was diagnosed with colon cancer, her role changed significantly as she became more independent by necessity. When her husband died very young at the age of 57, she decided to take her first English class at a community college. She said:

我一個人帶著小孩，一定要把英文學好 啊! (Kelly, line 265-266)	I brought this little kid with me and I was alone. I must learn English well!
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Kelly did not lose her faith in herself due to her husband's death. While her husband had been alive, she only needed to do the household chores and take care of the family. She explained:

Because when my husband was alive, he was in charge of everything. When he was sick, he began to teach me how to write the bill. I never used American checks. Then he taught me how to write, my daughter, at this point, already

turned to a sophomore in college. She came back every month, writing checks for me, *all the bills have to pay*¹¹. (Kelly, line 257-261)

As Kelly explained, at the time of her husband's death, her youngest child still lived with her and her husband. Her eldest daughter, who was living away at college, could only help her write checks once every month. Kelly had never intended to learn English because she assumed that her husband would be in charge of their financial situation. Her husband's death prompted Kelly to become strong and independent. "I, myself, lived with this youngest one. I have to, I must learn English well" (Kelly, line 265-266). As a single mother, she felt she needed to be independent to survive in this English-dominant society.

Kelly decided to take a for-credit freshman English class at the local community college. In this class, which she attended for three semesters, she learned how to write and read. Usually, she went to school every morning at 8:30 after her littlest child went to elementary school. Unfortunately, she had to excuse herself early from class—before 11:00 am—so that she could be at work at a Chinese restaurant at noon.

My Reflections

My feelings about Kelley's experience are complicated. I simultaneously admire her courage to start to learn a new language even when she was over fifty, and yet I can also see that she had no other alternative. Since nobody would help her, learning English was her only way to survive. I wonder how this bravery encourages her to continue to live alone.

¹¹ This is the fragment from Kelly's excerpt. It is not grammatically correct. She spoke a little in English, but I could sense she tried very hard to speak some English words.

Jane's school learning: I don't want to be a mother and a servant only. In Jane's

case, she chose to go to an American college rather than take ESL classes. She told me in detail about her college experience and the reason why she wanted to go to school.

你好像只會做那些家事，沒唸書好像沒出息(笑)。
(Jane, 170-171)

It looks like the one thing you can do is to do the household only. You are useless if you do not go to school.

During her first year in the states, as Jane said, she had to, “adjust to the environment...” For most of her first year, she participated in ESL classes and shopped with the other Asian wives from her neighborhood.

Two major factors pushed her to study. First, she felt that her husband treated her as a servant. She had to do all of the housework and take care of the children, but she did not get much appreciation from her husband. On the other hand, she needed to do more.

Second, her neighbors who had gone back to school had a positive influence on her.

These factors encouraged her to rethink going back to school.

那你在家帶小孩的，你每天都覺得日子怎麼那麼無聊，然後就看人家去念書，也想說，哎!等小孩子大一點之後，我也要去念書。

(Jane, line 165-167)

You stayed at home, and you thought why my lives were so boring? Then when you see other people going to school, you would say, ‘well, after my children grow up, I would go to school, too.’

Jane gradually realized that she no longer wanted to stay at home to only take care of her children. She was influenced to go back to school because she began to realize she had other options. Fortunately, she did not have to spend a lot of money to register for coursework.

The school at which her husband worked as a graduate assistant provided free classes for spouses, so she could register without any expense. She was only required to take an exam and then she could take courses without applying for a degree.

Another question arose in Jane's mind: What classes interested her? In fact, Jane did not identify subjects she was interested in. Instead, she followed the trend set by other spouses in the program who all took computer sciences courses because this course of study would lead to employment. At that point she remembered:

There are too many courses, and you did not even know what course you wanted to take. As for myself, my major was Chinese literature. Generally speaking, people went here to study computer science. It was the most popular subject....No matter what majors you had in the past, such as chemistry or math, all transferred to the computer science. (Jane, line 54-61)

On the one hand, Jane did not make her own decision based on her own authentic desires. On the other hand, she chose computer science courses because they would offer her a secure future. She, however, did not realize she still encountered some language barriers. As she reflected:

It was true that I had a hard time. I did not comprehend what the teachers said in class. In fact, I did not understand what teachers said. So, I paid fully attention taking notes. I wrote down everything which teachers wrote on the blackboard. Then I went home and check with the dictionary. (Jane, line 273-276)

Jane survived in class by behaving like good student as required in a traditional Chinese classroom, where students are required to be quiet and to write down everything the teachers said. Chinese students are trained to not be concerned about digest or

comprehending information while in class, but to focus on that later. In Jane's case, she wrote down everything, behaving in the obedient student role. Fortunately, after going through difficulties with English comprehension, Jane figured out how to solve her class problems. The more she studied computer books, the more she discovered techniques for solving her English deficiency. She realized that computer language is not concerned with grammar or elegant sentences. She spent her time focusing on understanding the logic and comprehending how to solve problems. If she read the text several times, she was eventually able to understand the course readings.

Jane's horrible experiences with school exams.

不能說，啊，我是外國人，所以我讀的慢。
(Jane, line, 313)

Well, I cannot say because I am a foreigner, I read very slowly.

However, even though Jane gradually was familiar with the central terms in computer science, she still did not have enough English comprehension to fully finish answering questions while taking exams. She told me her personal story.

Because we wrote slower, because I needed to read a question, it took more time to understand this question. The teacher gave too many questions! For Americans, the time was enough, but for foreigners, the time was not enough. So, it happened that I hadn't enough time to finish all questions, and the teacher wanted to collect the answer sheets. I refused to give him (laughing). ...He taught very simple concepts but with a lot of questions for the exam. For Asians ourselves, we did not even have time to read the questions....Anyway; the teacher did take the paper away, and I BEGAN TO CRY!! (Jane, 300-309)

When I asked if she ever requested any assistance, she said that the teacher only asked

her to go to the office to ask for approval that would give her some extra time to finish the exam. However, Jane refused, she said:

I would not do that! [Because] if you want the school to give you an approval, you would not get it so easy. You cannot say, 'well, because I am a foreigner, so I read slowly ' (Jane, line 310-313).

Jane did not want to get approval because she did not want to be seen as different. She was not willing to be labeled as a foreigner even if it enabled her to qualify for benefits. Thus, as an obedient student, Jane chose to be quiet and to improve only by her own efforts. She considered that getting lower grades was her personal problem because of her lower English proficiency. Thus, she believed she should not complain, but instead she simply must accept the fact that she needed to improve her English.

My Reflections

I wonder if Jane really wanted to try to get approval from the school or she was just too afraid to try. In my situation, I did try to ask a professor to give me some extra time when I took an exam. This was during my third year as a graduate student. The class was an undergraduate course with forty students registered and I was the only Asian student. The teacher required quizzes every Tuesday and Thursday with only five multiple choice questions. For Americans, these multiple choices are easy. If students scanned the readings before the class, they got the answer easily. Also, these students were used to taking multiple choice quizzes and tests.

However, for me, taking multiple choice quizzes within such a short timeframe was a

disaster. We were given less than ten minutes to take the quiz, and so I did not have enough time to read the questions. After I failed the first quiz, I was very frustrated and asked my friends for advice. Although I was a little afraid, I still made an appointment with the teacher and asked her how we could solve this problem. Actually, she never had this experience before, but she was willing to give me extra time to finish. Therefore, before the quiz began, I checked out the exam paper and went to another room where I was allowed to read carefully and without time constraints. I could take extra time, carefully read each sentence, and write down the answer. This was a big relief for me because I did not have to worry about the time and, under these circumstances, was able to make choices that led to better test results.

Speaking of exams, Jane had also suffered from exams constructed for true or false answers. She was very afraid of deciding true or false, as she shared:

For Americans, True or False questions are very easy to get points. And it turned out, I answered totally wrong. If the correct answer was True, then I answered False. On the contrary, if I answer T, the correct answer was False. I got them all wrong. Totally wrong!! (Laughing) (Jane, line 329-333)

After these experiences, Jane was always afraid of True and False questions. She would reconsider and change her answer many times. Eventually, she realized what “rather than” means in the questions. Although she told me her stories about taking exams with humor, I could sense that she must have gone through a very painful process in order to pass.

Jane’s character is reflected in the handling of these language barriers. She blamed herself for being English-deficient. As she said:

因爲你英文不太好，聽不太懂，錯就錯了，又能怎樣

(Jane, 325-326)

Because your English is not good enough.
You cannot understand. You made a mistake, what can you do?"

Time constraints were not the only factor in Jane's encounter with comprehension barriers. She also had comprehension problems in class. The same teacher conducted an exam in her class. During the exam period, this teacher realized that he needed to make some changes to the questions. He did not write changes on the blackboard. Instead, he changed the questions by telling the class verbally. Jane either ignored what the teacher said about the changes or perhaps she did not understand what he said. She got the question sheet, paying full attention to the questions as written because there were many to consider. Therefore, she did not make any changes, and she got a low grade. Again, she repeated:

It is because of my English deficiency, I did not understand. I was just wrong.
What can I do? You could not finish questions on time, and it's your own fault.
It is just the way it goes. What can I do? He would not be patient with you. It is just the way it goes...It is the process. (Jane, line 324-328)

These women's narratives about school learning experiences demonstrate how, through interacting with native speakers, these Taiwanese immigrant women gradually have been Americanized. Since English is a necessity for living in the U.S., their school experiences emphasized to them that if they would like to survive in the U.S. society, they would need to master English. In addition to their school learning experiences in the U.S., I also explore these five women's English-learning experiences outside of school.

Learning English: Experiences outside of School

With the exception of Sharon, each of these five women attended school in the U.S.

Unfortunately, Sharon could not even say many complete English sentences, and so she did not feel confident enough to pursue school. Therefore, all of her experiences learning English came from outside of the classroom.

Sharon's First Temporary Job: I Need to Go out to Learn English

我英文也不會，跟她怎麼講？你看看！
(Sharon, line 126)

English, I do not know anything at all.
How can I talk to her? You see!

Sharon's first English-learning experience was while working as a companion to a very old American woman. Her main responsibility was to talk with this elderly woman who stayed at home alone. Sharon described how her husband at first refused to let her go:

I talked to my husband [and told him] that I would like to go, to try. He said he did not want me to go. He said, 'if you go, within two days, they would ask you to go home.' I said that I do not care. They say no. I am not sold to her. If they want me, they will take me. If I am not good enough, it is because she doesn't want me, or maybe it's me I do not want to go, right? Anyway, you let me try. If not, where can I learn English?"¹² (Sharon, 127-133, literal translation)

Sharon's husband was worried about her English deficiency, but she still wanted to go.

As she kept saying, "At least, you should let me try. Otherwise, what can I learn English?"

(Sharon, line 132-133) Sharon was afraid to find a job outside the house, but she

encouraged herself to step out. She knew that if she gave up the opportunity this time, she

¹² Sharon's Mandarin sounded a little bit strange and I spent more time translating her sentences. There was little correct grammar in her speech. In this excerpt, I translated into more grammatical way. "I told my husband that I would like to go. I want to go and try a try....He did not want me to go because I would be asked to go home within two days. I don't care! If she needed me, she would ask me to have this job. It is possible that I don't want this job, right? At least, you could let me try. Otherwise, how can I learn English?"

might not have any chance to learn English. Her husband was worried about her limited English ability, but she still insisted on working.

講什麼都聽不懂（笑）！
(Sharon, line 134)

I do not understand at all what she was talking about. (Laughing).

When Sharon came to that elder woman's house and started her job, she really could not comprehend what that woman wanted. She said:

That old lady just talked, talked, and talked without stopping. She was already eighty years old. She had been talking after coming back from the hospital. I do not understand at all what she was talking about. (Sharon, 133-135)

I asked how Sharon learned any words or sentences given the circumstances. Out of necessity, she figured out a way to learn English from the old lady. She began to bring a Japanese/English dictionary with her to help facilitate her ability to learn English. For example, Sharon vividly remembered an instance in which the old lady used the phrase "children are obedient". Then, Sharon asked that old woman to find the word in the dictionary so that Sharon could read the Japanese translation and realize what "obedient" means. That was how Sharon began to learn English.

原先我什麼都不會講，真的是不會，聽也聽不懂，因為那個時候台灣的英文根本就不行嘛！因為他們講的又快，根本在台灣那個上課又連不起來。就這樣子開始了...

(Sharon, line 220)

At the beginning I did not even know how to speak. I really did not know. I could not understand at all, either. Because that time, English in Taiwan was so awful. They spoke so fast and you could not connect them with Taiwanese training. Then, it just began...¹³

¹³ What Sharon meant in this sentence was that she could not understand anything about English. She complained that English at that time was not popular in Taiwan. Also, these Americans spoke so fast and she could not even catch up. Sharon could not catch words and connect them together, but she was still forced to learn.

Even though this first temporary job only lasted about one month, Sharon's listening comprehension improved with the help of her dictionary. She used a Japanese and English dictionary because she was more familiar with Japanese. However, she had to give up this job because she needed to take care of her youngest son.

Learning English at an American Church: I Begin to Talk in English!

The other option for most immigrants is to learn English in classes held by American churches. In this research, all five women, with the exception of Lily, participated in English classes. ESL classes (English as a second language), on the other hand, were official classes conducted by the government. The Chinese social network usually would invite these women to go to American churches. As for Sharon, she was invited by a Japanese woman who lived next to her. She told me she did not learn much English at that time. Mostly, the Japanese woman spoke to her in Japanese because there were few people who could communicate in Japanese. Thus, her Japanese proficiency was improving, but not her English language skills.

However, because Sharon knew that she had to learn English as soon as possible, she started attending an American church. According to Sharon, this was not a formal English-learning class, but a crochet group of Americans in church.

然後就慢慢的聽她們，就開始聽，慢慢聽，慢慢的聽，用抓，抓抓意思，用猜！就這樣子慢慢學，開始就講了！開始亂來就講了。(Sharon, line 206-209)

Then I gradually listened to what they talked about. I began to listen, listen slowly, listen gradually. I caught, I caught the meaning. I guessed. I learned gradually, and I began to talk! I began to talk and was not afraid of the mistakes.

|

Sharon learned English by first listening to native speakers at church. Initially, she tried to guess what they meant and then she gradually understood the content of the conversations. Therefore, when she returned to visit friends after two years, her friends were amazed to notice the improvement in her English and then Sharon felt she could speak English fluently.

Jane's Learning Experiences in an American Church: I Went to Church for Fun

Jane went to church after being invited by her neighbors. The main purpose for her attending church was not to practice English. On the contrary, she went there for fun. She said:

I did not go there to learn English. These churches were so nice; they would prepare some snacks after the classes. We usually went to eat, chatting and playing as well. It became a time for chatting. (Jane, line 147-149)

他們教的英文也不會很難，就是太簡單的英文，所以你有時候就不會很放在心上。(笑) (Jane, line 149-151)

The English they taught was not so hard. Because it was too simple, and that made you care less about [learning English].

Jane had basic English knowledge and felt that these classes were too easy, so for her church became a purely social activity and an opportunity to play and chat with her friends. As she remembered, the class she attended focused on conversations. Also, the teachers were older American women who were less interested in how much students learned and only wished that the foreigners came everyday.

Because of these attitudes and the lack of pressure to learn English, Jane did not take

this learning opportunity too seriously. In fact, she attended infrequently and then when she had her first child, she stopped attending.

Mei's Story of Church Cooking Class: I Learned American Cultures

Mei was not interested in fine-tuning her understanding of American grammar, but instead was more interested in participating in cooking classes. She attended cooking classes held at an American church. There was also an international program on campus in which some female volunteers would invite them to learn how to cook American food. She recalled:

Learning how to make some deserts, I was interested in this....At the beginning, she (the volunteer) would talk to you in English. Because I had some basic knowledge of English and I had learned English in Taiwan. Then it was a good opportunity that we talked, right? Then, if I learned how to make food, I could also learn some words from making food...I gradually learn some of their cultures. (Mei, line 156-162)

Kelly's Feelings toward American Church Classes: Too Easy

Kelly also went to classes held by an American church during her first couple of years, and she chose to participate in classes organized by American church members. Due to her husband's overtime work, Kelly needed to bring her child with her while attending these classes. Fortunately, American churches provided child care services in order to free mothers to learn English. However, Kelly concluded:

那些都是很簡單的英文會話，不是很多能用。(Kelly, line 247-248)

These were all simple English conversations. There were not very useful in many perspectives.

Kelly: American Church Friends are My Teachers

他 [Chinese church people] 都好像是你
覺得英文講的不好，人家還笑你

(Kelly, line 300-301)

It looks like they [Chinese church people]
know you speak English not very well.
They even laughed at you.

Although Kelly felt American churches provided simple English, she still enjoyed interacting with American church friends. Contrarily, Kelly did not intend to spend much time interacting with Chinese people at the Chinese church where, as she said, there was always a lot of gossip. Kelly did not like that and preferred to go to the American church to learn English.

She kept on telling me:

They teach me a lot of English; I usually go to the American church. We still keep in touch most of the time. [There are] too many gossips in the Chinese church. It looks like they know you speak English not very well. They even laugh at your English. (Kelly, line 299-301)

The American church Kelly referred to was not the same as the one she attended for evening adult English classes. She went to two different American churches, one for evening adult English classes and one at which she actually made friends. In her mind, Kelly felt embarrassed to interact with the Chinese because of her poor English. Rather, she felt more confident in talking with native speakers in the American church.

Four of the five participants enjoyed participating in unofficial classes held by the American churches. They felt these American mothers who organized these classes were nice and they enjoyed the extremely casual and informal learning environment. Many churches

even provided snacks during the break time and it was a good time for the women to not only practice their English, but also to understand American culture.

Despite the benefits of these classes, a common problem emerged from excerpts regarding these experiences. Both Jane and Kelly pointed out that these church-based English conversation classes were too simple. They did not think these were useful or practical in their daily life. Therefore, when finding they could not learn much more, they decided to give up the classes. There was no requirement for them to attend, so they did not make learning English in the context of an American church a first priority.

In addition, it is clear that the American churches' agenda to have international students or spouses come to their church was very different from the students' reasons for coming. The American church's final goal is to make foreigners convert to believe in Christianity by familiarity gained from attending church activities. The first priority for most international students or their spouses is to practice their English skills, so they attend these classes conducted in American churches. Gradually, however, foreigners begin to become familiar with and to like the American church environment. Over time, some of them would be invited to participate in church activities. American churches provide assistance with solving language barriers or challenges in daily life. Churches play an important role in the social network of American's lives (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006).

Three of the subjects of this research, Jane, Sharon, and Mei, ultimately converted to

Christianity. It is hard to tell if the classes influenced their choices to convert, but it is likely that as these women began to learn about American cultures and interact with Americans, they became more interested in formally joining the church community. In the end, both the American church members and the international visitors have mutually beneficial purposes. International students or their spouses are willing to participate in these classes because they want to learn more about American culture and conversations. For volunteers in American churches, their ultimate goal is to let foreigners know more about Christianity and convert them into Christians.

My Reflections

It cannot be denied that these participants had good experiences interacting with Americans and being encouraged to attend church activities. I found this very interesting because I experienced a very similar process at the Chinese church I attend where the Chinese church cooperated with an American church and offered some basic English classes. Gradually, American church members would offer more advanced classes and the focus would shift from purely English instruction to a more structured and focused discussion of Christian beliefs.

In addition, I also found it interesting that many of the women did not continue to attend classes. My research participants all expressed that their need to take care for their children interfered with their ability to attend classes on a continuous basis. Moreover, the

informal instructional environment did not penalize them for not attending classes and so there was no pressure on them to continue.

Church was not the only avenue these five Taiwanese immigrant women explored as a means of learning English. They also experienced informal learning in various places including the work place, and sought a variety of methods including watching T.V. to learn English in the U.S.

The Other Activities for Learning English

TV programs. Watching TV was one of the core activities these women used to learn English while at home. Interestingly, both Jane and Mei learned English by watching children's television programs. Mei mentioned:

At that time, children would watch 'Sesame Street.' Now, Sesame Street is not so popular. But something like *Barney*¹⁴, also there was a host called George. That George, I believed he was dead now. These were pretty good TV programs. (Mei, line 223-233)

Jane agreed and talked about watching children's programs and how she also missed these programs. She reflected:

I know Mr. Roger. I like it because it was pretty good. Unfortunately, he is dead now. I also like to watch Barney. You know we had once gone to visit Universal Studio with children. I could not wait to watch 'Barney Show.' Watching Barney was one of my favorite memories. My children had grown up and were no longer interested in watching Barney. Only myself was so eager to see Barney and give him a big hug...(Jane, line 335-367)

Learning another culture during children's school activities. Mei mentioned that her

¹⁴ Barney is a childrens' program. Barney is a purple dinosaur and he teaches songs, dances and rules for children's behavior.

participation in school activities allowed her to not only learn basic English terms, but also she benefited from learning about American culture. She noted:

How do I learn these cultures? Actually, I learned with my children together. I feel it's pretty good. Step by step, they went to the Kindergarten, elementary school. They would say after school, 'mom, we need to make some cupcakes.' Or 'we need to make something in birthday party.' There were also some activities in school. Then you will watch and participate with them? Then, you would learn a lot. (Mei, line 163-169)

Public services: Libraries or dramas are fun. Taking advantage of free public facilities and services was another of Mei's strategies for learning English. Coincidentally, Mei's husband attended the university I attended and so she was familiar with my neighborhood. She told me that she usually brought her two children to the public library downtown where she and her children participated in activities.

At that time, especially my daughter was just one and half years old and hadn't gone to the daycare yet. My son, yes, but it was very expensive. So where did I bring them to? I went to the library, it's free! There were many activities held by the library, such as the story time. Or there were small activities for adults. Most of time, I chose activities for children because I had to bring them every day. (Mei, lines 179-187)

Mei would try to find activities and usually chose some plays or dramas for little children. She kept mentioning that it did not cost much money. For example, these dramas such as the Nutcracker, or Halloween, and some activities for different seasons provided her and her children a chance to learn more about American culture.

My Reflections

Mei's answers provided me with information beyond my interview questions. At the

beginning, I had only asked Mei if she ever went to English classes. Mei did not have time to go to these classes because she had to take care of the children. Instead, she figured out some way to learn English and then that provided more options. From Mei's point of view, going to ESL classes was not as practical as the activities in which she participated. She believed that she benefited by learning much more than English when learning about American culture.

Workplaces, New Identities

Jane: Americans Treated Me Different

跟美國人一起上班的時候，我是覺得，人還可以能夠這樣被尊重。(Jane, line 468-469)

Working with Americans together,
I had a feeling, 'look, as a human,
I could be respected in this way.'

All of my participants had worked in Taiwan. Kelly had worked as a teacher in a school. This school, as Kelly called “子弟小學,” (children elementary school) was especially for children who lived in mainlanders' villages or the “veterans' villages”. Mei was a substitute teacher; Sharon did work in Taiwan as a housewife; and Lily had been a teacher at a high school for about three years. Even so, they encountered challenging differences while working in the U.S.

Particularly, Jane felt a huge difference in starting her working career in the U.S. While in Taiwan, she was not a teacher but had work experiences in college. After graduating from a U.S. college, Jane worked as an intern at a large computer company and described her experience as follows:

This company (computer-based, very famous one) is my first job (here) to work to. OK. Working with Americans together, I just had the feeling, 'look, as a human, I could be respected in this way.' You know Americans are being nice while talking to you. They were all very nice. Unlike my husband, then, I gradually realized that, a person could have dignity at least. The less you have dignity, the less people respect you. So, this is one of the advantages of working outside. (Jane, line 468-475)

Jane was surprised to be treated with respect because she never had the opportunity to work with Americans before attending college. She did work in Taiwan, but it was short-lived because she needed to go to the U.S. as an F2¹⁵. Initially, she only stayed at home, and later she continued her computer science major. Although Jane made efforts in these subjects, she was unable to get a job because she did not have any work experience. Therefore, she pursued her master's degree in order to qualify for job opportunities.

Fortunately, at this time Jane received an offer to intern at a famous computer company. She was very excited because she had never worked with Americans in a large American company. She was also overwhelmed to be treated positively and with respect for her knowledge and abilities. Since her husband was a chauvinist who often disrespected her, this positive treatment in the workplace was invaluable. Americans always spoke in a friendly manner and treated her nicely. This treatment was a shock for her because she never felt treated nicely at home.

Unfortunately, the more she worked outside of the house, the more her job caused tensions and fights with her husband. She said:

¹⁵ F2 is the one of the visa types for U.S. entry. Students who come to study in the U.S. hold an F1 visa. The F2 visa is issued to the spouse of students.

However, even though working outside is good, because you need to fight with your husband at home, right? Then, if you work outside and meet good persons, it is good. You are likely to meet people who were not good. (Jane, lines 477-483)

During one of the interviews, Jane described her relationship with her boss, a woman who had also emigrated from Taiwan, and who worked with Jane at this large computer company. The woman, who had earned her Ph.D. degree and was a formal employee, very aggressively pursued her career and was dedicated only to her own career success. Jane, who had assumed that that woman would take care of her because they both came from Taiwan, was disappointed that she did not get along well with her Taiwanese boss. Jane was not overly aggressive and even though Jane was older than her co-worker, she was only an intern in the workplace hierarchy. Jane felt an incredible amount of pressure from her boss and tried in response to show how great her work ability was. Jane complained:

In this department, the working load was not so heavy. But for me, if the first job was easy, that is good. I enjoyed working in this way. But, she [Taiwanese woman] felt that it was too easy, and I became a target. She first went to my manager telling that they do not provide an intern with full time salary. (Jane, line 514-518)

As a result of her boss's interference, Jane only worked for three days a week.

According to Jane, her boss wanted to show off by saving some money for the company. As a result, Jane's work load was reduced from full to part-time and she was shocked by this drastic reduction in her hours and her salary.

I was really shocked indeed. You were not paying me, right? I was working for you. You do not have a lot of working, and blame me for not working hard. [Because], if she had a lot of work to do, she would keep me busy. In fact, she

did not keep me busy, but cutting my working days from five days to two days. ...When she told me, I was really shocked. (Jane, line 492-506)

都台灣來的 她還這樣算計我，就覺得有一點...

(Jane, line 517)

We all came from Taiwan, and she still set me up. I feel like [upset]....

Jane started to feel that working outside of the home was not as positive a situation as she had initially hoped it would be. As she reflected, “So, you feel that someone would set you up. Doesn’t she get along with you in daily interactions, right? We both came from Taiwan and she still set me up. I feel like [betrayed]...” (Jane, line 516-518).

Jane believed that as Taiwanese women they should have shared mutual interests and that she and her boss should help each other. In fact, due to her belief in helping a fellow Taiwanese woman, Jane had helped her boss by taking care of her child. As a result she felt even more frustrated when her boss did not appreciate her help. Jane informed me that her boss kept saying:

哎呀，你的先生那麼會賺錢，她說我先生很會賺錢啦，在當教授，那麼會賺錢，你根本不需要出來工作。

(Jane, line 544-546)

‘Well, your husband makes so much money’. She said that my husband makes a good fortune of being a professor. He makes so much money. ‘You do not even need to work outside.’ [That co-worker said]

Even worse, the lady made numerous cynical and sexist statements about Jane’s and her family’s financial situation. The boss insinuated that Jane should stay home and allow her husband to support her financially. Naturally, Jane disagreed with her boss’s opinion of how she should spend her time and continued to pursue an education and a career for herself.

Still, these unpleasant experiences at the computer company had an impact on Jane and led her to reevaluate her opinion about working outside of the home.

I found out that staying at home is not bad, then. Because, when I began to work outside at the beginning, I felt that people outside treated you with the respect. It is good. However, you do not know what they are thinking about in their minds. There is more than perspective of working outside. This one (means husband) is strict and arrogant, but at least he would not lay you off. (Jane, line 544-555)

啊出去做事，怎麼那麼好命。一天就只坐在 office 上面。很輕鬆。不像在家裡。一下要拖地板，很累。然後就覺得上班好幸福喔。(笑)上班可是遇到有些人跟你計算的時候，你會覺得，喔，在家裡好幸福喔! (笑)

(Jane, line 556-564)

Working outside is so great. You just need to sit in your office whole day, it is easy, not like at home. You need to clean the floor and it is so tiresome (at home). Then, I feel working is very very enjoyable (laughing). But, when you meet someone who sets you up, you would feel, well, working at home is much more enjoyable. (Laughing)

Jane's opinion of working outside of the home shifted over time. At first, she felt liberated because she did not have to do housework. As a working woman, she enjoyed the energizing atmosphere of her office. On the surface, her job as an intern was easy and she was treated nicely by her American co-workers. However, she gradually realized her work involved carefully negotiating complex personal relationships. As she concluded, even though her husband did not treat her well, she would not get laid off from her marriage.

Jane's Interview Experiences: This is What I am Afraid of

Jane's problems in the workplace as an intern did not deter her from trying to find employment once her internship ended. However, because she was still gaining confidence in

her English-speaking ability, the interview process scared her. In her mind, employers focused solely on whether or not you were a strong English speaker, and did not care about your work ability. In fact, despite her graduate education and proven skills in her field, Jane was often denied jobs based on her lack of ability to speak English well. Even though she knew how to work as a programmer, she was not able to sufficiently explain her skills, be persuasive or demonstrate her expertise in a way that would convince prospective employers. Unfortunately, she lost out on jobs to her American competitors who could eloquently explain computer programming and who could use a variety of sophisticated terms to impress the employer. Particularly, Jane disliked telephone interviews because she got so nervous that she stammered all of her answers to the interview questions. Unfortunately, these unpleasant interview experiences undermined her confidence in her ability to speak English in public and professional settings.

In Jane's mind, she was best able to handle easy work. She did not feel confident about herself. As she explained, she was older when she entered the workforce. In addition to her English proficiency not being good, she typed very slowly. As she concluded, "when people see me like this, they would ask me to go home" (Jane, 644-651).

Therefore, after working for one computer company, which did not turn out well, she decided to work for the state where the salary was not high but there was not too much pressure. She still felt frustrated because,

I did pass some written tests. Sometimes they would ask you to interview. But I could not get any offer after each interview. Because, if they come to interview you, they would see whether your English is good or not. (Jane, line 654-660).

It was not easy for her to get a state job; she failed again and again because she did not perform satisfactorily in the interviews. She explained that her English was not good enough and she usually ended up losing the work experiences.

Lily's Work Experiences: I could do Something Different

我覺得台灣局面太小了，好像覺得在那邊有志很難伸。(笑)

(Lily, line 189-200)

I feel the environment in Taiwan was too small. I feel that I could not do something different there. (Laughing)

After graduating with an MBA, Lily decided to find a job. She did not want to go back to Taiwan and hoped that by staying in the U.S. she would have an opportunity to make a genuine difference. She also did not want to separate from her husband. She said:

Well, I would like to find a job here. I was so eager to have a home. So, after I graduated, we got married. He hadn't graduated yet, and I did not want to leave him alone. I think, 'long distance marriage making no sense.' So, I tell myself, OK, let's find a local job. (Lily, line 194-197)

Lily was confident about herself because for her this was only a temporary job. She told me that she wanted to find a company which was famous enough. She expended a lot of effort applying to famous banks. She again wrote a letter, this time to the director of a bank, demonstrating her ambitions. In response she got an offer for employment as a financial advisor.

She was very confident and thought she could handle things well. However, she

encountered challenges. She reflected:

然後剛開始好苦喔，因為剛開始第一個
你是要用英文去 *persuade people*，對不
對？ (Lily, line 200-201)

It was so difficult at the beginning!
Because first, you needed to use English
to *persuade people* [to buy your
products], right?

我最討厭它 *make a call*，去打電話，你
要開導你的客戶群，*I hate that*！
(Lily, line 207-208)

What I hated most, was to *make a [phone]*
call. I needed to make many calls. You
need to expand your clientele. Oh, *I hate*
that!

As a financial advisor, she had to push herself to sell many products and to feel confident in her ability to do so in English. Particularly, what she hated most was that she had to make calls in order to develop her clientele. She strongly said, “I hate that!” She even had to spend a lot of her own money to buy clients’ information before calling them, a practice she was totally against. To make matters worse, she found that what she had learned at school was limited when she worked as a financial adviser. The MBA only provided her with entry-level skills. In order to expand her knowledge to effectively do the job she was hired to do, Lily actively participated in the training program that the bank provided.

Lily’s Work Environment: I was being Discriminated Against

他們 bank 蠻 *discriminating* 就是
minority，對，他們那是非常
male-dominant. (Lily, line 218-219)

The *bank* was very *discriminating* to the
minority. Yes, they were *male-dominant*.

Lily began to reflect on how she was not happy working at this bank because they discriminated against minorities. She had even been insulted by a manager who trained them.

There was a state present coming to train us. He told in front of people, *'well, there is another female financial adviser. She's just got pregnant, again. It's really a trouble.'*¹⁶..I did not agree with him. Giving birth is women's nature. It looks like, *'I need feel guilty to get pregnant.'*

(Lily, line 352-354)

Lily continued:

Also, when he saw me, he just said, *'I have to tell you, I read people successfully, in your case...I do not know how you're gonna make it. I am worried for you. I worry for you.'* When I heard this, [I thought] *this is insulting!*" (Lily, line 358-363)

Although Lily was very angry about this man's views, because she was a new employee she did not feel she could stand up for herself. However, she decided that this was a good time for her to push herself to work hard. She went to the office very early, and usually she was the last one to leave. During these three years, she studied and studied, learning everything she could.

Unfortunately, despite her hard work, she still experienced discrimination. The longer she worked at this bank, the more she felt it was in her best personal and professional interest to leave. She felt this bank did not value its employees, but instead only cared about profits. For example, she vividly remembered the death of a man who had devoted over thirty years to the bank as an employee. The bank never even mentioned his death to the company or his co-workers. This phenomenon made Lily reconsider her future. She began to wonder about her own future and thought, "It is the company! Should I work for it about thirty years and get reward like this?" (Lily, line 387-388)

¹⁶ This is not the exact translation, but Lily's actual sentences. I used italics to indicate what she said in English.

Lily left the bank and assumed she could find another job relatively quickly.

Unfortunately, she was not able to find a job at a local bank. She noted:

I had planned to find a job in the bank. So I went to ask each local bank. NO ONE WANTED ME. Right. It is possible that [because] I was the minority, so they rejected me directly. (Lily, line 438-440/447)

Although she recognized the banks' discrimination, she quickly explained that it was these banks lost because she had the talent and vision. She felt the banks devalued her and did not appreciate or acknowledge her talents or potential.

Lily's Turning Point: I could Open My Own Company

後來我說 OK , no no outlet , 然後我就說 , 那我就自己開吧 (笑)
(Lily, line 461-462)

Then I told my self, 'OK, no no outlet,'
Then I will open a company by myself."

Owning her own company opened a new, challenging chapter in Lily's life. First, she was concerned about the ethics of bringing her clientele from the previous situation to her new company. Then she decided to secretly bring her clientele's files home and she made copies. The bank's regulations prohibited the copying of client's files, but she broke these regulations in order to protect all her work and set up her own client files. She secretly took her clientele with her to her own company and did her best not to be discovered by her previous employers. Finally, her hard work paid off and she won the allegiance of most of her previous customers.

Initially, Lily could only afford a small office. Lily did not give up; on the contrary, she spent more time devoting herself to her clientele. She also went to many conferences in order

to learn how to be a successful company owner. In addition, she advertised her company at many expos, and even started to write financial advice columns for a local newspaper. As she recalled, writing columns was a very successful means for her to attract clients. Lily explained why she became successful by saying, “I figured out my *niche*. *I got along well with college professors. I get along great with professors, American professors*” (Lily, line 246-250).

She was confident about her ability and she tried to offer me an analysis of why she succeeded.

I have been pondering this question that why, why can I penetrate that market. Then, I found out that because I like to do the research. Well, then, I, I, it is the honesty! I feel like I own this characteristic. It is either Chinese’ characteristic or my family gave me...this kind of education. Because my grandfather, my father, my family, the honesty is very important. It is need to be ethical. I feel that I have it naturally, and people trust me because of it. Well, then, Chinese, to tell you the truth, general Asians provide better services. You would care more; understanding peoples’ needs, and would like to listen, right? Then, you would *go extra miles*, and would *deliver services*. I did not think about this at the beginning. I felt it was something I needed to do so. (Lily, line 251-264)

Mei’s Work: I am Lucky

In direct contrast to Lily, Mei was not ambitious and she was not seeking a successful career. Instead, she sought a job simply as a way to counteract boredom, and she was pleased to find employment at an insurance company. She said:

我是覺得說好像 *kill time ok?* ...因爲語言上的不足，我做這種工作，我覺得我要偷笑了。

It looked *like kill time*, OK? Because of lacking language proficiency, I feel I am lucky enough to have this job.

(Mei, line 621-622)

At the beginning, Mei just wanted to find a job that was relatively close to home and allowed her to still spend plenty of time with her children. Since she was not very confident about her ability speaking English, she believed that she was exceptionally lucky to be able to get a job. She said, “Because I did not go to school here, what can I do? Besides, I could also take care of my family. I could still take care of my family” (Mei, line 632).

Clearly, Mei regretted that she did not have a chance to pursue an education. Between her lack of formal education and her commitments to her children, she could not be overly selective about jobs. Although it was not an ideal job, she was satisfied enough with the work she did.

後來我發覺其實工作是很重要的
(Mei, line 623)

Then I realized that having a job was
pretty important.

Perhaps most importantly, through her job Mei gained confidence. Initially, she felt pressure from talking with her supervisor or her customers on the phone in English. Often, she felt embarrassed if she was unable to express her meanings well. She was afraid of talking, especially on the phone. So, she found some ways to solve this problem; for instance, she wrote down what she intended to say in advance. She noted, “Sometimes you would think about how you are going to say before you talk. Before I wrote an e-mail, I would write down on a paper” (Mei, line 562). Mei was not confident enough with her English-speaking skills and had to write down her speech first, making certain that her grammar was right.

However, something began to change after being familiar with talking to native speakers. She proudly expressed:

Now, I do not even have time to do it! PalaPala, I do not care! Sometimes you cannot do much better than I. Your grammar was not better than mine.
(Laughing) Sometimes you need to have guts. (Mei, line 563-565)

From these experiences, Mei began to show confidence, not only in her working ability but also in her language management. She was no longer afraid to write an e-mail or talk to people in English. She learned from other people how to write memos, and she also gradually became familiar with the necessary office forms. As she described it:

Oh, I might be sweating. I did not know later when my e-mails would be forwarded to so many people. But, now, my career is not big enough. I just realized that my e-mail is not only to a person. It would be CC to many people....It was all about the learning. (Mei, line 573-578)

Although Mei was not confident enough at first to pursue a job with a good salary, she ended up very satisfied with her job and her English proficiency.

Kelly's Working at the Chinese Restaurant: I Passed through it All

Kelly did not initially expect to work; her main responsibility was to take care of the family and her three children. However, when her husband died unexpectedly, she faced serious financial difficulties. Luckily, her two eldest children were self-sufficient and were able to find ways to pay for their advanced schooling. As a third-year medical student, her son decided to serve in the army as a doctor, an arrangement which then paid off his medical school tuition and expenses. The elder daughter was supported by an assistantship position in college. Kelly only had to worry about the little girl and herself.

To support herself and her daughter, she found a job at a Chinese restaurant as cashier.

She was hired to collect money at noon while her boss and his wife cooked in the kitchen.

She was paid with a few dollars everyday which she felt it was enough to support her

daughter and herself. She answered, “Do I earn enough money? Yes, enough, I only needed

more than ten dollars....So, I passed through...(走過來了) (Kelly, line 274-275/278)

我的英語還是在餐館裡頭學的比較好，
學的快一點。

(Kelly, line 280-282)

My English was learned much better at the
restaurant. I learned quicker here¹⁷.

I wondered how she had learned English at the restaurant. Interestingly, she found a
solution. She told me:

I memorized these menus of the restaurant. There were one hundred
items. Fried Rice, Big Fried Rice, you write F & B. That’s just so
simple. My English was learned much better at the restaurant. I
learned quicker here, *conversation all of them*....These clients were
weird, your English was awfully wrong but they could still guess
what you were trying to say. (Kelly, line 279-284)

According to Kelly, her English was so bad that she thought nobody would understand
her. However, she found out that these clients would guess at what she meant and she could
interact with them. They even made fun of her by saying, “*You’d better not learn English. We
like the way you talk*” (Kelly, line 288-289).

Kelly had an optimistic character and could get along with others easily. She even
made fun of herself when these friends said the word, “Otolaryngology”, referring to her
son’s medical specialty. She just said, “*forgot that word, too hard. I cannot remember, cannot*

¹⁷ This is a literal translation and not a grammatical sentence, but it means that her English improved a lot at the restaurant. She also learned a lot from working at the restaurant.

spell it right... Well, I already learned this about one hundred times and still cannot know how to spell it” (Kelly, line 290-295).

They all personify the spirit of the rapeseeds; they never gave up and always intended to survive in a new linguistic environment. They compared their English language-learning experiences in Taiwan and in the U.S. and concluded that their Taiwanese experiences did not improve their English knowledge. They experienced cultural shock in the U.S. and immersed themselves into an English-speaking environment as much as possible. Jane and Lily went through undergraduate and graduate student lives as well, which provided them new identities. Sharon, Mei and Kelly, on the other hand, forced themselves to learn English by having work experiences in the U.S. These various learning experiences provide for their identity negotiations and reconstruction of their identities as workers, mothers, or wives, as well as daughters.

Chapter 6

Complicated Power: English Language-Learning and Identity Negotiation

This chapter closely examines these women's roles as wives, mothers, students, and workers and their navigation through multiple identities, especially in regards to their learning English as their second language in the U.S. More specifically, this chapter analyzes how power, gained and lost in the process of learning English as well as maintaining Mandarin, becomes a central attribute for these women, defining their struggles to gain independence and confidence.

As Meri Nana-Am Danquah, an American writer from Ghana, has so eloquently stated, "Becoming American is about language" (2000, p. xiii). For these five Taiwanese women, all of whom immigrated to the United States with minimal English skills, improving those skills became very important. More specifically, learning English provided an avenue for them to not only effectively navigate daily interactions (shopping, talking with Americans), but also to access the possibility of successfully integrating into the American society.

The stories of these five women, all of whom entered the United States in their twenties and thirties, illustrate the way that immigrant identities can undergo significant changes over time. More significantly, although in very different ways, all of these women transformed from primarily dependent status to women characterized by their independence and empowerment. Perhaps most interestingly, these women developed their independence in

direct relationship to their mastery of English. As they learned English and thus interacted with English-speakers, they also began to assert more power within their homes.

In this chapter, I will trace the trajectories of these identity developments for each of these women by comparing and contrasting their development over time. Although I primarily focus on the similarities in their journeys, I will also point out important differences in order to show each woman's uniqueness. In this chapter, I first review the theoretical development of identity and how it connects to language and power. Then, I will move on to three major chapter sections: (1) Domestic relationships with husbands, (2) Relationships with children, (3) Relationships as daughters. Within each of these major sections, I will focus on an analysis of each woman's experiences. Finally, I integrate my own reflections and stories into each section in order to identify the similarities and differences experienced in all our journeys, and also to gain an opportunity to reflect upon my own identity struggles in the context of the U.S.

For these Taiwanese immigrants, learning English well was an essential part of the ultimate goal of remaining in the U.S. The American dream—the belief that if you work hard, you will be financially rewarded-- provides immigrants with a blueprint for economic success. Taiwanese students, who are highly skilled and well educated, are lured to the U.S. by the promise of better educational opportunities and jobs. An essential component of achieving academic success is possessing superior Standard English language skills in order to,

“obscure my foreignness, that combination of ethnicity and poverty” (Mar, 1999, p. 158).

However, the reality of assimilation into American society was more complex than these women could have predicted and they each experienced identity crises upon their arrival in the U.S. More specifically, they have reshaped their identities during the process of English language-learning. They encouraged themselves to step outside of their houses to learn English and interact with the outside world. Access determines whether certain individuals receive opportunities to engage in interactions with others. It is not just based on the learners’ intentions, but also on connections to others with whom they interact. These interactions with other people are crucial to the learners in reshaping their identities (Kingiger, 2004). During language practices they begin to ask, “Who am I? How can I connect myself to this society?” (Norton, 2000, p. 10) These women intend to learn English well because, “the acquisition of non-accented English and the dropping of foreign languages represent the litmus test of Americanization” (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006, p. 194). Their identities have been constructed and reconstructed based on how they are valued by other people. The power of the society and the power of languages influence their identities. English language, “is not conceived of as a medium of communication, but is understood with references to its social meaning” (Norton, 2000, p. 5). Therefore, these five Taiwanese immigrant L2 learners (Second language learners), through the challenges of learning a second language and by interacting with American culture, refashion their identities (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000).

The Development of Identity from the Perspective of Language Theories

New language learners' identities start to transform and develop when interacting with the new language-speaking society (Norton & Toohey, 2001). Learners rethink who they are and what they could do to become accepted within the society. In this study, these Taiwanese immigrant women seek to understand their positions and multiple identities within the context of the United States and the world. More specifically, they take into account and seek out the life opportunities available to them (i.e. for education and career). In part, their identity is impacted by their desire to affiliate with the society as well as to access the security and safety that successful integration promises (West, 1992, p.5). Through the process of their integration into the United States, their identities are constantly produced, reproduced and are ultimately transformed (Hedge, 2002).

New language learners' identities develop based on the interactions with English-speaking society. This is like the talking mirror belonging to Snow White's stepmother (Hedge, 2002) which forms the identities of the person looking into the mirror by providing feedback. In this context, society is a mirror that reflects who the immigrants are and how Americans see them. Once these five women identify themselves within a specific society, they have realized a connection with the society and feel secure. Therefore, identity developments in each individual are not solely those they choose, but rather mostly imposed by the society and influenced by the power of social dominance.

Identity Development from Feminist Perspectives

Feminist perspectives offer useful lenses through which to examine women's identities, particularly as related to gender and power. In Western culture, the dominant discourse, liberal humanism, claims that individuals' identities are unified and never changed. From a liberal humanist point of view, an individual is an "essential self" which is fixed and coherent. Unfortunately, women are excluded from liberal humanism concerns (Hekman, 1999).

Feminism has gradually emerged and the theorization of feminist identity has evolved significantly over the course of several waves of development. The first-wave feminists advocated "woman identity" as neutral, disembodied identity of Western liberalism and modernism. The second-wave feminists began to define a new category of "woman" as having many liabilities. However, this category has been criticized in that it only privileges a certain group of women, those who are white and middle-class. Significantly, the third-wave feminists challenged what they perceived as the racism and exclusion of people of color in the second-wave feminist movement. Third-wave feminism, which was influenced by postmodernism and post-structuralism, embraced the notion of identity as plural, fluid, and reconstructed (Sandoval, 1991). For example, Sharon perfectly illustrates the shifting and dynamic features of identity when she plays the roles of wife, mother and daughter which include multiple, shattered selves.

Identity Crisis

Particularly, third-wave feminism articulates the concept of the identity crisis and raises questions about how individuals cope with multiple identities and whether or not these identities can coexist. In this study, each of these women experienced a profound identity crisis upon their arrival in the U.S. As Curry-Johnson experienced, “each identity defines me; each is responsible for elements of my character; from each I devise some sustenance for my soul” (Curry-Johnson, 1995, p. 222). These five women encountered the same identity crises as Curry-Johnson, who views her multiple identities and realizes that in her inner self all possibly coexisted, but she intended to, “bring her full selves to the table.” As a result she felt desperate and overwhelmed. However, the five women intended to reconcile their crises and blend their identities together harmoniously (Hekman, 1999).

A poststructuralist framework provides an opportunity to examine the process of identity negotiation as situated within the larger socio-historic process that results in continuously shifting identities. It captures the complexity of identity development and highlights how language plays an important role, because languages are not only, “markers of identity, but also sites of resistance” (Kingiger, 2004, p. 223). In this study, these women often use Mandarin in their homes as a way to teach their children important aspects of their home culture. While they are appreciative of the opportunities available in the U.S., they do not want to simply forfeit their rich cultural heritage, so they find multiple ways to maintain

this heritage. These negotiation processes mean that their multiple identities are flexible and shifting, and not fixed (Weedon, 1990). Selves are believed to be, “precarious, contradictory and in process, constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak (Davies, 1997b, p.138). Each individual’s multiple identities are shaped and constructed by discourse in a society’s multiple ways (Cameron, 1992). The self oversees the procedure for each human being to recognize identities and whether he/she wants to maintain or transform themselves for different goals or purposes. A relationship exists between the second language and the socio-cultural world, between identity and transformation. The practices within society are sites of struggles, and linguistic communities are heterogeneous arenas characterized by conflicting claims to truth and power (Norton & Toohey, 2001, p.117).

Power Relations

In order to fully understand how these women negotiate their identities, it is essential to understand theories of power which challenge power as fixed and unitary. Foucault (1980), the French theorist, articulated the significance of the individual’s interactions relating to power. Power always exists, circulates, and weaves itself through social interactions (Cameron, 1992; Macey, 1993). Historically, Mao and Marx embraced the idea that power is fixed and based on economic value. In this concept, individuals who have the most money or who hold the guns, have the most power within a society. However, Foucault objects to this monolithic explanation of power. In his opinion, power is a process that always already exists

and is neither static nor monolithic. Giroux (2001) stresses that power is a phenomenon reproduced among discourse. Within discourse, people gradually make sense of the world. If power is explained as sovereignty, power could not change if divided into only two roles, that of the oppressor or the oppressed (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998). According to Foucault's point of view, power is not unitary. Power emerges, is exercised in social practices or multiple arenas, and is found in subtleties. Thus, in this study, these five Taiwanese immigrant women encounter the power of the society. In the process of learning English, their identities are shaped and reshaped by the social power which provides diverse interactions and results in changed relations. These relations towards husbands, children and mothers are changed moment-by-moment in a dynamic shift during the process of language learning (Jacoby and Gonzales, 1991). In the beginning, they were novices in regards to the English language and engaged in, "Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP)," as Lave and Wenger claimed (1991). Lave & Wenger conceptualize LPP as, "the process by which newcomers become part of a community of practice, i.e. move toward full participation in the community of practice with mastery of knowledge and skill of the community" (p. 29). These five Taiwanese immigrant women were novices who were in situations of "peripheral participation." With experts' assistance or peer help, novices gradually become experts within the interactions of social communities. Therefore, learning English is not just a mental event internal to an individual, but a social achievement within a complex framework of community,

goals, tools, and activities. With the negotiations between the learners and interactions with others, the power relations are no longer fixed (Jacoby and Gonzales, 1991).

In the following section, I explore the women's identities as wives, their relationships with their husbands, and how they transformed themselves and became powerful, independent women. Their narratives of their lived experiences demonstrate different selves in particular dimensions. Their narratives become a means to analyze how lived experiences are shaped and reproduced by themselves and the dominant society. The narratives reveal their negotiation of their identity crises.

Domestic Empowerment and Negotiations: Transforming the Woman's Role

嫁雞隨雞 嫁狗隨狗

If marry a chicken, you follow the chicken; if marry a dog, you follow the dog.

In this section, I trace the individual transformations that these women have experienced in the context of intimate relationships with their husbands. I investigate how the women's relationships with their husbands shift and transform over time. More specifically, I investigate how women's power relationships with their husbands shift. In this study, these women struggle to balance traditional gender expectations with the challenges of living in a new country. More specifically, these women feel deeply influenced by traditional gender expectations as reflected in this popular Confucian saying, "If you marry a chicken, you follow the chicken; if you marry a dog, you follow the dog. According to this saying, wives do not have many choices, but are expected to follow their husbands no matter where they go.

The saying: 丈夫是天, translated as “Husband is the sky” means that the husband is the primary decision maker and the leader of the home. The idea of male dominance and preference still prevails among these women and families (Song 1992). Jane, Kelly, Mei, and Sharon believed they were fated to follow their husbands, even to a new place requiring a new language with which they were not familiar.

Sharon’s Journey: Empowerment and Partnership

Sharon’s stories illustrate how her personal identity transformed by learning English well, ultimately enabling her to become confident and independent from her husband.

Although she originally immigrated to the U.S. to support her husband, and was especially proud of his accomplishment to become the first second-language graduate from Taiwan, she still struggled with her own role and often felt isolated and frustrated by her inability to make decisions within her relationship. However, this changed over time. As Sharon gained English skills, she became more assertive both within and outside the home.

Compared to her husband, her status initially was lower, especially due to her lack of English ability. In fact, Sharon did not know any English at all. As she said, “Thirty years ago, I knew nothing about English. I could not speak. I was unable to read. I was not able to drive. I stayed at home” (Sharon, line 63-64). She was not able to teach her children English because she, herself, did not know anything about English. She described the situation that every day her husband had to take the burden for financial responsibility alone, and also for

teaching their three children at night. After her husband oversaw the children's homework, Sharon also needed to help her husband type his assignments or papers because there was no computer thirty years ago, so Sharon became her husband's assistant.

Sharon: I Have to Stay Here for My Husband

妳回來就是大不孝，叫我不可以回去
(Sharon, line 403-404)

If you come back, you are big disobedient.
I was not allowed to go back

When her mother died, Sharon was not permitted by her husband to go back to Taiwan alone. He told her to stay in the United States to take care of the children and him, because he was still involved with school. He felt unable to attend to the three children by himself. Sharon was upset to hear her husband's decisions and, in addition, Sharon's brother did not think she should travel either. According to Sharon, she felt it was required that she should put herself aside in order to support her husband and children first. She recalled:

My brother called me and said, 'You definitely cannot come home! If you come home now, who are going to take care your three children? They do not know English, and have to study. Your husband was busy, too. How come he could take care of children? Who is going to cook for the children? If you come back, you are not obedient. He told me not to come back. Although you try to come back, you could not see her at all. She was buried. You could not see anything! Why do you bother to go back? (Sharon, line 398-406)

From Sharon's excerpt, I could sense that she was very willing to go home to attend her mother's funeral. In the traditional way, daughters or sons should be put aside in second place when parents pass away. I was surprised to hear that her husband and her brother asked her to not return to Taiwan for such a significant event. Therefore, she had to sacrifice herself and her own desires.

Sharon: Becoming a Major Decision Maker

The most significant impact on Sharon's development occurred when she insisted upon taking a job outside of the home. The power shifted from her husband to her by this experience which resulted in reshaping Sharon's identity from dependence into independence. Her husband at first refused because he did not believe that she would actually get that particular job. Through her own efforts she got a temporary job as an aide and caretaker for an elderly woman. Although the job was menial labor, way beneath the professional skills that Sharon had developed in Taiwan, it gave her an opportunity to earn her own money and to improve her English. As a result, she felt more confident and she decided to assert herself within her home. Several years into their time in the U.S. Sharon began to give her opinions on all major household decisions; she became an equal partner to her husband.

The story that best illustrates this transformation in their relationship is Sharon's decision to not follow her husband back to Taiwan. Thus, the role of head of the family shifted from the husband to Sharon. The longer she interacted with the outside world, the more confident she felt and she became the decision maker. She also became determined to remain in the U.S. For example, one year prior to her husband's graduation, he was asked to return to Taiwan to assume the position of director of the graduate program at the teachers' college in Taiwan. This offer was very attractive because he would have just graduated himself and then immediately after graduation become a director at the university. In Taiwan,

being a professor means higher social status as well as higher income status. However, Sharon still refused to return to Taiwan with her husband.

Sharon's identity gradually shifted from being dependent to independent after learning English and living in the U.S. In the past, she could not speak proficient English and was unable to interact with the outside world. But, the experiences of learning English made her independent and determined to not return to Taiwan even though the job offers her husband received were very attractive. More importantly, she was strong enough to go against her husband's desire to accept the offers for employment in Taiwan. Sharon was more concerned about her children's future. During the interviews, Sharon spent a lot of time explaining her wishes that her children would have the same benefits as overseas Taiwanese. She urged her husband to request that her children could receive extra school credits, as other overseas Chinese did. Under Chiang Kai-Shek's ruling, the government provided many advantages for overseas Chinese who intended to go back to Taiwan. For instance, these Chinese youth studying overseas usually did not have to take the entrance exam of the university, or they could receive extra credits for the exam. Sharon was very confident that the Education Ministry would agree since they needed her husband's professional expertise so much. Although the request was denied because her children were all born in Taiwan, this example demonstrates how powerful Sharon became as a decision maker within the home. Her experiences learning English and working outside the home impacted her identity and

transformed her from powerless to powerful.

Sharon: I Refused to Let My Husband Become a Governor

做老師，我願意跟你回家，做司長你自己回家

(Sharon, line 296-297)

To be a professor, I am willing to go home with you. To be an officer, you go home by yourself.

Sharon made a decision to stay in the U.S. over the long-term. Her first motivation was concern about her children's education. Sharon continued to not yield to the situation. She just said "no" and thereby risked her husband's future. However, Sharon regarded the position with the government as not good enough and rejected the offer. As she claimed, she did not want her husband to be a government officer by saying:

Then, I said, if you want to go home, you go home by yourself. Government office, I definitely would be unwilling to go home. That is the governor position! ...My husband's temper....How could he handle like you governor officers. He was not unable to do that....To be an officer, you must be hang out with those people, having social intercourse with...They would ask you to do and you cannot refuse.. I said, no, I do not want to. (Sharon, line 292-303)

In conclusion, the relationship between the husband and the wife shifted significantly. At the beginning, she was confined to doing the housework, and taking care of her children and husband. However, the longer they stayed in the U.S., the more power she assumed over their lives, becoming an important decision maker for her family.

Jane's Relationship with Her Husband Gradually Changed and Transformed

日子反正那個時候的日子就是爲了先生，爲了小孩兩個。(Jane, line 139-140)

The lives that I went through were just for my husband, for two kids. (Laughing).

Jane's story was in many ways similar to Sharon's. Initially, Jane's husband had much more power than she in their relationship. However, over time, through Jane's decision to enroll in school and to join the workforce, her identity shifted and she became more independent from her husband. Each story that Jane told about her first few years with her husband in the United States clearly highlighted her dependency on him and his control over her. For example, even though she had worked in Taiwan, once in the U.S. she felt intimidated, fragile, and often needed her husband's advice. Many incidents demonstrate how she depended on her husband. For example, as a dependent woman, she did not dare to take the airplane on her own. Instead, she asked her husband to fly back to Taiwan and accompany her to the U.S.

In addition, she was not allowed by her husband, to either study or work outside of the home during the first year in the U.S. because her main responsibility was to take care of him. Interestingly, while she made fun of herself, "the first year I came and staying at home to 'adjust to the environment'" (line 78), this comment has special meaning. On the surface, her husband asked her to stay at home in order to adjust to the new environment; yet, on a deeper level, she was not supposed to work outside because her husband looked down upon her limited English. She was expected by her husband to be a housewife and become a mother. In this she did not think her husband was wrong. She told me that because her husband came to study as a full-time student, she should support him by being a full time housewife.

Jane's husband was in charge of the family and she was strictly required to show her support of him while he was studying. As she noted:

He (Jane's husband) thinks that you are coming for accompanying him. You are responsible for preparing my three meals, OK, three meals means breakfast, lunch, and dinner. In the past, I hadn't chance to go to school, I was responsible for delivering meal box to school for him. Sometimes I delivered the lunch, too late, about 15 minutes. He was too angry to eat the lunch! He asked you to bring the meal box home. His refusal of eating, on the contrary, made you feel guilty. (Jane, line 109-116)

As a dependent wife, Jane became a voiceless woman at home. She spent most of her time and energy cooking, preparing three meals for her husband. Jane was limited by this new environment and her role as housewife. She was not appreciated by her husband; on the contrary, the relationship with her husband became increasingly difficult. If she were late delivering her husband's lunch, he scorned her and sent her back home. Interestingly, Jane believed that many women are fated to be underneath their husband's domination and she believed that many Taiwanese or Chinese males agree. She reflected:

中國台灣的男生都很大男人主義，你在家越幫他做家事，他就越大條，然後相對也對你也比較不客氣。(Jane, line 168-171)

I do not know, Chinese men, or Taiwanese men hold male chauvinism. The more you do the household at home, the more he cares less about you. Then, he disrespects you, respectively, looking down upon you.

Furthermore, when Jane gave birth to their first child that only further isolated her both within and without her own home. Within her home, her husband made it clear that the children were Jane's sole responsibility. For example, he often chastised Jane when the

children were crying. As Jane noted:

After giving birth to children, I was stuck by them everyday. My responsibility was to take care of children. But, kids, you know, they would cry a lot. He (my husband) would say, 'bring the child to the corner. Do not disturb me. I need to do school work for tomorrow,' something like this. We could not interrupt him. Then, if he is hungry, kids were hungry too. I needed to prepare food for him first. (laughing) (Jane, line 118-122)

Furthermore, this situation was further exasperated when Jane tried to apply to school and her husband completely refused to help with the children. For example, while Jane went to school to register, she was humiliated by her husband again. She had to locate a babysitter to look after her daughter if she went to school. It was difficult for Jane to step out of her home and the traditional roles expected of her. Her multiple identities were in crisis yet her multiple identities also co-existed. Although she felt trapped, she later learned to assert her own power. As she moved from dependence into independence, she learned how to look out for her self, and she found a new identity.

School experience changed Jane's relationship with her husband. Although Jane's husband did everything in his power to thwart her interest in school by creating obstacles for her attendance (i.e. refusing to help her enroll, not helping with the children when she needed to attend class, and not helping her with homework), she remained determined to pursue her coursework. In fact, it was through this experience that Jane began to see herself, not as dependent, but instead as an independent self. In fact, the shift in her self-identity also enabled her to assert more power in her home. For example, she had difficulty doing a math

assignment for the first time. Again, Jane's husband did not want to help.

這個都不會做？他就把報紙丟到牆角， '作業都不會做，你還修什麼課。不要修 了。' (Jane, line 224-226)	You do not know how to do this one? He [Jane's husband] threw newspapers to the corner and said, 'if you cannot do the assignment, why take the course? Do not take any course!'
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Jane knew that she had to be independent because her husband did not want to give her any assistance. If she asked him questions, he was not willing to help. She noted:

I remember when first time I got my math assignment. I did not comprehend the English questions, not to mention to finish the assignment. 'You do not know how to do this one?' He threw newspapers to the corner and said, 'If you cannot do the assignment, why take the course? Do not take any course! (Jane, line 224-226)

According to Jane, her husband believed that he had already given her enough privilege by allowing her to take courses. He did not want to care of the children, too. Ironically, he finally agreed to take care of the children for Jane, not out of consideration for her, but because he refused to pay for babysitting.

Therefore, Jane's stories about her husband's interactions with and care for the children, illustrate the ways in which he asserted his power passive-aggressively and exhibited his disapproval for her pursuit of school by refusing to be fully involved, even when he was watching the children. Jane noted:

She (the daughter) has still some memories that he had been sleeping even she said that she wanted to go potty. He took out some papers, asking her (the daughter) to draw pictures. My daughter still remembers. Once I went back from the class, and she was so proud to tell me, 'mom, I went to have a stool by myself (laughing). She had my company if she went to the bathroom or

with her. But, her dad was sleeping all the time [while babysitting the daughter]. (Laughing) (Jane, line 234-242)

Jane's husband held the belief that Jane should, "Do the household more, and take care children a little bit more. For him, this is none of his business." (Jane, line 460). Jane was a very pessimistic woman and yet she told me these stories in a humorous way. Although she believed her husband's treatment of her was unfair, she also felt like it was her fated life and therefore she had nothing to complain about. After telling me about these incidents, she included me as part of her narration by saying that I should feel lucky because she saw my husband taking care of my son while I interviewed her. She implied that my husband was kind and willing to share the household responsibility, not like her situation.

Her Reflections: I was So Stupid

那時候真是呆得到被先生整個控制你的
那個。你要做什麼都要他 approve.
(Jane, line 210-211)

I was so stupid for being completely
controlled by my husband. Whatever you
did was needed for his approval.

Upon reflection, Jane demonstrated to me that she began to understand after she started to go to school how she was treated unfairly by her husband. In fact, she illustrated her growing independence by saying:

I could go to register by myself. And register is like the enrollment; you just need to pay attention to the deadline. If you could not come today, you could come tomorrow, even the day after tomorrow. It is unnecessary for me to ask him to bring me that moment or that day. I was so stupid for being wholly controlled by my husband. Whatever you did was needed for his approval.
(Jane, line 205-211)

I believe going to school gave her perspective on her husband. She gradually realized that her husband did not treat her fairly. She did have some arguments with her husband

because his behavior was too much. She reflected:

Then, I thought in this way, I became more independent when I studied by myself. I do not have to depend on my husband to do assignments for me. Or, I work with a will to make myself strong. He did not allow me to take courses, then giving the opportunity to the studying is so precious. You know, I work hard to ask him to give me the permission. (Jane, line 227-232)

Her school life and her work outside the home reshaped her life and the power shifted within the home. As a result of this power shift, her husband began to contribute by assisting with the household tasks. For example, her husband began to do the dishes. Jane made fun of her husband, noting that he did try to help with the cleaning, but only because other friends' husbands did the dishes. Although she reported this change in a joking manner, she was still a little proud of her husband's slight changes in behavior.

My Reflections

我是爲你著想耶！不然你要忙什麼？

I am doing this for you! Otherwise, what are you going to be busy about?

Jane and I usually had a lot to talk about, even outside of the interviews. Jane, as my friend, once told me another story about how her husband looked down upon her. One day, when she was vacuuming the carpet, her husband observed her and, of course, did not assist her. Even worse, he threw a newspaper down to the ground. Jane was angry and confused at the same time because her husband justified his actions, and explained by saying, "I am doing this for you! Otherwise, what are you going to be busy about?" What her husband meant was

that he was being considerate to keep her busy! I could not believe a husband would act that way or talk to his wife in this manner. More interestingly, Jane did not say this with hatred, but instead made light of the situation and made fun of herself. I believe it's her personal belief in fate, or Karma, that allowed her to adjust to her husband in certain ways. Nevertheless, I believe that Jane regained power from her husband. According to her narratives, her husband started to change his behavior and began to assist her with domestic tasks.

Mei's Physical Separation from Her Husband: I am Very Strong Now

Mei's stories are the best illustration of how a woman's mixed and coexisted identities can shift the power within her relationship with her husband. The extended 15 year physical separation from her husband transformed not only Mei's identity, but also the distribution of power between her and her husband. She was moved from dependence on her husband to independence from him and his authority. Initially, Mei gave up the chance to go to school in the U.S. because she put her family first and her role as mother and wife were central to her identity. As a wife, she was supposed to take care of the children. After her husband's graduation, her husband asked her to remain in the U.S. with the children for the sake of the children's health and education, while he returned to Taiwan. She did not want to have a separate life from her husband.

Mei was a voiceless woman within the home when her husband made the decision to

have a life separate from hers. She accepted her husband's suggestion which meant that she had to give up her desire to return to her mother in Taiwan and instead remain behind in the U.S. because of her son's restrictive allergies. Mei was asked to stay in the U.S. in order to provide a healthy environment for their son. Thus, her husband still had much power over her and he planned everything for her. Her identity at that time was dependent and fragile. She could not resist her husband's will.

他一直都很忙，他一直都很忙。
(Mei, line 119-120)

He's been busy all the time; he has been
busy all the time.

However, Mei was not satisfied with his arrangement because she gradually realized that her husband would not come to visit her and the children very often. Mei did not have many chances for seeing her husband often because of his busy schedule working as a professor in Taiwan. Thus Mei usually saw him only three times a year. As Mei said:

He is been busy all the time.... Because he, besides the teaching, teaching is just part of his jobs. He conducts the research, costing him a lot of time. He has a lab, he organized a lab. Then he also did some consultant jobs, consultant job. He does those kinds of jobs! He is doing this job for kind of community service, and he does not get much paid. He feels like he should devote himself to the society. My husband has been holding this thought, yes, he does such kind of thing. (Mei, line 122-127)

Interestingly, Mei clearly has mixed, conflicting emotions about her domestic situation. She is clearly very proud of his work and accomplishments. At the same time, however, she has the feeling of 心疼. Literally, this term means your heart feels sorry for someone. She feels sorry that her husband has to work so hard and that she could not assist him. Still, she is

proud of his hard work, too.

Mei's Identity Develops: I Have to be Independent

Mei's extended physical separation from her husband has facilitated her ability and desire to more fully develop her own life in the United States, even though she has mixed feelings about this separation. Eventually, she gave up on the idea that when her husband retired they would be reunited as a family. Instead, Mei focused eagerly on building her own career and social network. She found a job as a caretaker of children. Moreover, her identity strengthened considerably due to the fact that she took charge of the family in the U.S.

Mei: I Want My Son to be a Doctor

Since her husband no longer lived with them and was not available to assist with daily decisions, Mei became the decision maker. She strongly preferred that her son study to become a doctor despite her son's desire to study physics. Although her son did major in physics in college, he ultimately went on to medical school. As Mei said, "At that time, they listened to my suggestions. We could only offer the suggestions" (Mei, line 277-278).

Although Mei indicated that she only offered suggestions, and that she had good children who took her advice, the more she talked, the more she revealed that she **DID** wish her son to be a doctor. Mei pressured him not only to go to medical school, but she even asked her son to choose the medical subjects she preferred.

In fact, he had wished to be a vet, to be a vet [veterinarian]. But I know that the chances were limited. [Veterinarian] medical schools were few...So, I said

No No No. He listened to me and forgot about it. (Mei, line 279-285)

Mei was a strong mother who took over major responsibilities at home, deciding what her son's career would be and proud that her children would listen to her advice.

The following excerpt also illustrates that Mei is strong enough to live alone in the U.S. She was shocked when I inquired whether she expected her husband to ever live again with her in the U.S. She raised her voice to say:

先生會來?他怎麼回來這裏?

(Mei, line 871)

My husband will come? How come he will come back here?

After living separately for 15 years, Mei did not expect her husband to return to the U.S. to live with her. She continued:

My husband will come? How come he will come back here? After he retires, why do you think he would like here? No, he won't. My husband won't. He feels that his career is there [Taiwan] now. What all the networks he establishes are all there. (Mei, line 871-874)

Mei's surprise when I asked whether her husband would choose to return to the U.S. reinforced that she did not expect he would ever come back to work in the U.S. Although she was proud that he loved his work and was willing to devote his time to the work, she felt sorry that she could not accompany him and support him in Taiwan. Their extended separation was clearly a dilemma for her and she struggled with it, but at the same time she knew that she was capable of supporting and leading the family on her own.

Mei: If Dad is Here....

如果我先生在家的话，可能電腦就會很喜歡。(Mei, line 250)

If my husband is at home, [son] might like to learn computer.

Mei's multiple identities successfully coexist and are not fixed. She lives separately from her husband and works outside the home. Her working experiences and interactions in English with other Americans have made her more confident. However, in some ways, Mei demonstrates that she is still dependent on her husband. For example, she told me that her son was excellent in academics, except for his computer science courses and she was not confident enough to support her children academically. She strongly expressed how sad she was that her husband was not present in the U.S. with her and children:

Especially his dad is not here. I could not help them in academic aspects. Sometimes I discussed with my husband that it is possible...If my husband is at home, [son] might like to learn computer....He was not willing to learn this. It was because there must be someone to teach you. If he [husband] was at home [the U.S.], probably he [son] would be give more input [by husband]. If he [son] was influenced more, he was likely to be better. (Mei, line 252-257)

My Reflections

Mei was not confident in her ability to support her son's academics. More than once, she mentioned that if her husband were here, her son would learn the computer. She stereotyped men as good with computers even though computers were not her husband's specialty. Although Mei assumed her son's problem would be solved if her husband were living with the whole family in the U.S., I did not agree that there was necessarily a connection between these two issues.

Mei: It is My Choice to Continue Staying Here

Although Mei sometimes showed her regrets that she and her husband lived separately, she identified herself as independent. She told me firmly that she made the decision to continue to reside in the U.S. Over time, she gradually gained power, and she now played a more significant role than her husband in the home.

嗯，是啦，兩個分開的生活是，是有點點不太健康。(Mei, line 882-883)

Well, that's right. The lives for two separating were, were a little bit unhealthy.

Mei, in fact, had intended to live under the general expectation that a wife and a husband live together as a complete home. So, what did she mean by “not healthy” if a wife lives separately from her husband? Gradually, I understood her reference; she had lived under the cultural pressure that a wife should not live alone because, if she does, it is not considered a home.

當然很多人 像我們這樣分開的，到最後也很多都是不太好的，真的分開 Yah，可是我說我們不是這樣的例子呀！(Mei, line 886-894)

Well, in fact, of course, a lot of people like us who separate, end up in no good. They do separate at the end. Yah, I said we are not one of these examples!

Mei stopped for a while, and explained her situation in more detail. She had been struggling because her son had questioned why she and her husband needed to separate. Mei just answered:

I thought that there was not a problem, right? *We have been doing fine.* But, one day, he (son) had said that because he felt upset. Then I explained to him why, when and where to go. I mentioned it again. Well, in fact, of course, a lot of people like us who separate, end up in no good. They do separate at the end.

Yah, I said we are not one of these examples! (Mei, line 886-894)

Mei: Life is Going on!

有，當然是有伴是很好啦，可是就像你說小孩子長大就必須到外面去唸書，就是這樣子啊，Life is going on 啊！

(Mei, 906-907)

Yes, it is good to have a companion. But, like you said, children grow up, they need to study outside. It is just like this. Life is going on...!

Mei continued:

When dad was available, he would come, then every weekend, we could either come to visit you or you can come back. We all try our best to cherish every opportunity to live together. My New Year was the time we gather together. It is how I celebrate our New Year. (Mei, line 894-898)

Definitely, Mei expressed her dilemmas and struggles. She finally reflected in the interviews on who she was and how she was equal with her husband. However, she still at times felt the absence of her husband, because she did not spend much time with him. She wondered if her husband made the right decision for her and the children to remain in the United States. Gradually, her narrative provided evidence of her growth and development. Seeing so many couples living in two different places and then divorcing, her heart did shake her mind sometimes. On the other hand, she evaluated herself in a very positive way so that she could find some way out by saying that, after all, “life is going on!”

Kelly: Dependent Wife to a Strong Mother

Kelly, similar to Mei and Sharon, illustrated how she was proud of her husband’s achievements and how she had depended upon him. However, different from other women in this study, Kelly’s identity as a strong mother emerged only by necessity after her husband’s

death in the 80s. Before her husband died, she was a dependent woman who completely relied on her husband. However, after his death Kelly learned to be a strong woman. She gained power, becoming the family's main breadwinner even though her English-speaking ability was poor. Her identity developed as an independent woman because she knew that, if she wanted to stay in the U.S., she had no choice. She learned how to survive in the U.S.

Interestingly, even though Kelly's transformation was significant and she became a different, independent person who owned her own power, her perception of her husband was overwhelmingly positive. She spent a lot of time explaining her husband's achievements and career history. For example, she explained to me how her husband had studied at a famous and prestigious university in China. After the Civil War, he decided to come to Taiwan where he worked for Chiang's government at the sugar company. At that time, sugar was the monolithic government-owned enterprise. Kelly did not have to do the housework because her husband earned a very good income, and hiring a Taiwanese maid to clean her house was affordable. Also, Kelly proudly emphasized that her husband was a determined man who demonstrated his determination to study abroad by earning the third highest score on the national exam. She was extremely proud that he had even been granted an interview with the Governor during Chiang's reign, 陳誠, who provided ten thousand Taiwanese dollars to him. Thirty years ago, that was a huge amount that a family could live on for at least several months.

Her husband's achievements, combined with his power over her, caused her to play the role of his dependent wife. Kelly had no choice but to follow her husband whenever he relocated due to his job. For example, while in Taiwan, his job as an engineer required that he move around that country. Thus, she followed her husband, moving to ten places. In addition, she gave up her job in Taiwan and followed her husband to the U.S.

Kelly's Turning Point: I Have to be Strong after He Died

他們叫我回去，我說她已經讀小學 5、6 年級了，再去學中文，她一個字都不認識，怎麼辦? (Kelly, line 278-280)

Yes, they [aunts, and uncles in Taiwan] asked me to come back. I said, she was already in the fifth grade or sixth grade. She needed to learn Chinese because she did not know any word. What should she [the daughter] do?

Kelly never thought her life would change as dramatically as it did after she realized that she had to be strong enough on her own. Her husband had been the breadwinner for the family and had supported her financially. After his death, her self as an independent woman emerged. She quickly made a decision to continue to reside in the U.S. after she lost her husband. She refused to go back to Taiwan because she was concerned about her youngest child. As she noted:

Yes, they [aunts, and uncles in Taiwan] asked me to come back. I said, she was already in the fifth grade or sixth grade. She needed to learn Chinese because she did not know any word. What should she [the daughter] do? (Kelly, line 278-280)

Kelly experienced a dilemma between whether she should go back to Taiwan or continue to stay in the U.S. She knew for certain her uncles and aunts would support her financially

and personally. Concerns about her daughter's education, however, stopped her from going back to Taiwan and she took the financial responsibilities on as her own. Kelly made a decision not only for herself, but also for the best interests of her children.

Kelly went through the hardest time on her own as she transitioned to take charge of the family and decided to be independent. She was a single mother with a very young daughter while the rest of children were away from her attending the university. Her English at that time was not good enough for her to find a regular job. Thus, she forced herself to get involved with the outside world even though it was an English-speaking environment. Working in a wage-paying roll was her only choice. Even so, Kelly still did not give up and took a job as a cashier in a small restaurant. Thus, she regained her independence and started to enroll in a college course to improve her English. All of what she did paid off; her customers enjoyed talking to her with her uniquely accented English, and she earned enough money to support her daughter through college.

Lily: My Changes Started after Getting Married

Lily's narrative is unique because her focus was first and foremost on establishing a successful career in the United States. Her narratives of marriage life reflect her multiple identities, completely different from her identities as a successful career woman. On the surface, Lily expressed her goals for developing her career. She spent most of the interview time telling me of her efforts to be a top financial advisor. It turned out that her efforts paid

off because she eventually owned her own company. She wants now to be a successful career woman and to invest financially in China. Interestingly, when she speaks about her career, her voice tone is higher and full of energy. She is very confident about herself and her work and even said, “I feel that I have a vision. I often see things happening at some points, but there are not people noticing this vision” (Lily, line 453-455). She is very organized and plans well ahead. And sometimes she makes me feel that she is too confident:

後來我來這邊第一個禮拜就碰到我先
生ㄋㄟ！(Lily, line 166)

The first week I went here [U.S.] and met
my husband.

The power relationship with her husband is similar to that of the other women in my research. While describing her husband, Lily practically turned into another person. Unlike the other four women who were married in Taiwan, Lily is the only one who met her husband in the U.S. He is a native English speaker and is unable to speak fluent Mandarin. They met while both were searching for the Catholic mass to be conducted on campus during the first week of classes. As she described how she met her husband, her tone became completely different and lowered, which indicated she had been under her husband’s power. In her narrative, he played the active role of intending to meet her to develop a closer relationship.

The power shifted to her husband at the beginning of their relationship. She described her husband by saying, “I shouldn’t have known him unless he came to ask me first.” (Lily, line 174) I sense that the woman who had many ambitious goals for her future was gone.

Instead, an image of a woman who needed love and family emerged. .

Lily: I Want a Family

我那時候是很想有個家啦，就是自己有
家。(Lily, line 192-193)

I, at that time, really wanted to have a
home. That is my own home.

Lily's identities began to be conflicted in her relationship with her husband. On the one hand, Lily was very self-aware and was conscious of her desire to be a wife and mother. She told me that she had wanted to establish a home, her own home with her husband. In fact, she had wanted to take an active role in deciding what kind of relationship she wanted to have with her future husband. Unlike Mei, she completely rejected the possibility of a long-distance marriage. On the other hand, her identities yielded to her husband's power when she married. She sacrificed her career goals by aligning herself with her husband who had much more power than she in their relationship. She explained that, because of her husband, she decided to find employment locally. At that point, her husband had not finished his studies, but Lily had already graduated. As she said, "At that moment, I really wanted to have a family. I wanted to have my own home." Here 家 Jia has more than one meaning; it is not just a house, but means she wanted to have a family. When she said that, she lowered her voice and took on a different persona. I felt that she wanted to settle down for a stable relationship because she indicated, 'long distance marriage making no sense' (Lily, line 196). She was willing to find a local job while waiting for her husband's PhD degree. At this point, she was relatively passive, completely different from when describing her career goals. Thus, her demeanor illustrated how she had been struggling to play her role as a wife.

My Reflections: Language Matters

The fact that language matters was very apparent in the interactions. While conducting the first interview with Lily, I observed interactions between Lily and her husband. Initially, her husband gave me the impression that he was not a friendly man. I was not able to identify the reason until I realized that he did not know how to interact with us because he was not able to speak or understand Mandarin. Lily and I had a wonderful conversation until we were interrupted by her husband's entry into the room. Unfortunately, Lily and I did not find a private place to speak. Instead, we sat at the dining table in the center of the kitchen. In the middle of the interview, we were having a lot of fun, talking and laughing. Abruptly, her husband came into the kitchen to get some food and he interrupted our interview to ask her several questions about the food. When Lily saw him she introduced him to me and spoke to him exclusively in English. Her husband looked remote and only nodded his head. He came and went, and sometimes Lily had to answer his questions, not too many times, but I felt interrupted and perhaps disrespected.

Interestingly, Lily began to regain power while using Mandarin with me and making fun of her husband's limited Chinese proficiency. Just as I asked Lily if she learned some English from her husband, her husband again came into the room. She told me in Chinese, "I do wish he could correct my English sometimes. But, he just did not want to. He is like this, and doesn't care about it. He doesn't understand now, so we could talk more about him" (Lily,

line 678-681). Those conversations made us laugh. Lily continued to say in Chinese, “He did not know anything about what we were laughing about. But, some words now he could understand, and he would pay attention to this” (Lily, line 687-689). At this point, Lily’s strong character emerged again, as though she regained the power within the relationship with her husband. She started to speak Mandarin and knew she could make fun of him because her husband understood very little Mandarin. All of a sudden, Lily turned to her husband and started to speak to him in English to engage him in a dialogue:

Lily: We are wondering how you understand, what percentage of our conversation you actually catch.

Lily’s husband: Not at all.

Lily: OK, we’ll keep it that way on purpose (laughing).

Me: Even we speak very slowly, you still cannot catch?

Lily’s husband: No, not at all

I turned to Lily and said it in Chinese, “Cannot he speak slowly down a little bit?”

(Lily just turned to her husband and said)

Lily: You purposely slow down English when you speak to me?

Lily’s husband: No.

Lily: (to me) If I do not understand, I just nod my head or just no response.

Lily’s husband: Her English is pretty good.

Lily: My English is pretty good?

Lily’s husband: Sometimes because I grew up in City, and people in City sometimes talk very fast and sometimes we talk together, only people in City can understand. Sometimes I talk too fast they did not hear, like I talk to my brothers, we use a lot of slang, and she cannot understand.

This conversation perfectly illustrated the power relationship between Lily and her husband. I could sense that Lily cared greatly about what her husband said about her. This represented Lily’s other aspect, besides her successful career woman identity. She was still a woman, a wife, and dependent on her husband in some domains. Her husband lost some

power because his limited Mandarin proficiency restricted him from the opportunity to engage in conversations with Lily's friends, like me. He was not unfriendly, just limited in the Mandarin-dominant context. Lily held the power position when the conversation was in Mandarin, but when speaking in English, her husband's power returned and I could sense that Lily resumed the dependent wife identity.

However, it could not be denied that Lily's English improved because of her husband's help and that her proficiency with English greatly contributed to her successful career. Although Lily said that there still were some words that she was unable to understand, she was a very fluent English speaker due to having daily practice speaking English with her husband. Thus, her fluent English strongly supported her immediate goal, which was to continue to develop her own career so she could reach future goals.

In conclusion, through these narratives, these five Taiwanese immigrant women's relationships with their husbands are revealed as not hierarchically constructed, but renegotiated to demonstrate sharing. The husbands do not always hold the power, asking wives to acknowledge this power and follow them. It is true that these women in certain aspects respect their husbands by following their decisions, as they followed their husbands' to come to the U.S. In other aspects, however, these women have been gradually empowered and encouraged to talk about their opinions as well as negotiate with their husbands.

In the following section, I start to explore the power plays between these five

Taiwanese women and their children, as observed in their multiple language practices.

Navigating Two Languages: The Relationships between Mothers and Children

In this next section, I explore the implications of power relationship between mothers and children. I describe how these women struggle to fit into the Chinese image of motherhood and how they make various sacrifices for the health and wellbeing of their children. For example, Mei described how she became a diligent housekeeper because she has to provide a very clean house in order to avoid aggravating her son's allergies. Each mother in my study fits into the Chinese culture's ideal that mothers sacrifice the most for their children.

However, these narratives indicate how attempts to meet the Chinese culture's ideal of the parents maintaining power over their children are complicated by the children's higher English proficiency. These women all explained to me their inability to provide more assistance to their children because of their own limited English skills. For example, Kelly needed her daughter's help in handling check writing in order to pay the monthly bills. Over time, the power shifted gradually to the children. The children particularly have much more power while speaking English and assisting their mothers to handle matters in an English environment. Mother had to yield and share the power with their children because they believed their English was not good enough to interact with the world outside their homes.

Significantly, these women gradually realized their power and intended to require that

their power be returned by insisting that Mandarin be spoken within the home as the home language. For example, Mei specifically taught her children Chinese, both the spoken and written format. It became notable that these women's relationship with their children shifted significantly because they maintained Chinese as the home language.

Home Language Struggles--Mandarin vs. English

These narratives concerning attitudes towards learning Chinese include these immigrants' reflections as to whether they made the right decision in maintaining Mandarin exclusively at home or whether they should have spoken English at home as well. Many factors affect whether individuals decide to maintain their language or not and these include, "birthplace, age, period of residence, gender, education/qualification, prior knowledge of English, and reason for migration" (Stoessel, 2002, p. 100). Also, all of these immigrant women have emotional attachments to their mother tongue. In my study, these five women's struggles over which language to maintain at home demonstrate that they are unable to fully recognize English within their homes due to their own lack of confidence in their English-speaking skills. Therefore, they hold onto the power of the home language which they had mastered well—their L1 (first) language.

These immigrant mothers struggle between the two languages in the family because they take on double responsibilities regarding both communication among the generations and perpetuation of the culture (Stoessel, 2002). Parents, especially mothers, may become a

mediator between two generations, the youth and grandparents. Most women would like to talk with and teach their children their L1 language, so that the children can communicate with the grandparents. They usually expend a lot of time and energy teaching children the mothers' L1 language. On the other hand, grandparents could speak only this L1 language. As a result, mothers take double responsibilities as mediators between two generations and also responsibility for maintaining cultural traditions (Stoessel, 2002).

In this research, the five Taiwanese immigrant women's relationships with their children shifted because of the impact of language acquisition on the family. Language has played a complicated role in either connecting or dividing family members (Fillmore, 1991; Bammer, 1994; Fase, Jaspaert & Kroon, 1992). If family members have different levels of proficiency in the different languages, the power between two groups emerges (Espin, 1999). To some extent, every language connects with a specific culture and brings out particular meanings within the concrete context. "Language determines one's knowledge of the world, of others, and of oneself. It provides a basis of support for one's identity" (Grinberg & Brinberg, 1984, p.109). Thus, if parents and children have different language proficiency, "they may, in fact, be guided by different cultural codes" (Espin, p. 135).

As a result, the authority of these five mothers was thwarted because of their lack of proficiency in a new language and by the children who lacked proficiency in their mother tongue (Espin, 1999). Children often hold the power to be cultural brokers in the culture of

the residence, while parents then lose power. These five mothers lost power when having to depend on their children's assistance in order to communicate within a new context. On one hand, learning a new language could create a new self. On the other hand, the learning process could result in fear among immigrant women who feel that their original identity is threatened. When immigrant women speak English, they also feel that they are in a less privileged position because they have a foreign accent when they speak (Espin, 1999). Thus, in the following section, I describe the process of the struggles created when power is switched from parent to child while speaking English. I also illustrate how these mothers sacrifice and defer to their children. Furthermore, I explore how the mothers intend to regain their power by requesting the children to speak their native language, Mandarin.

Mei's Story: I am a Busy, Sacrificed Mother

我是認為，我是覺得，其實我一直認為
我的責任是在這兒教養這兩個小孩

(Mei, line 619-621)

In my point of view, I feel that, I have
believed that my main responsibility is to
take care of my two children.

It is clear from her interview that Mei takes great pride in her role as a mother and that she sacrificed a great deal for her two children. Indeed, many of her life decisions were driven by the priority she placed on offering her children access to the best health care as well as the best social, cultural, and academic opportunities. Staying in the United States guaranteed that the children would learn English and receive a good education. Thus, from the beginning she played the mother role so fully that she did not work outside the home. In

fact, her son's excellent academic performances did not let her down and she feels proud of his accomplishments. Still, her pride is complicated by feelings of both joy and pain. On the one hand, she is proud of her son's performance, especially in an English-dominant society. On the other hand, she feels pain because her own lack of English proficiency could not support her son's academic goals. From her interviews, I could tell that she greatly cared about her two children, especially the elder, her son.

My Reflections: Where is the Daughter?

Significantly, Mei's power yields most to her son, not the daughter. She follows Confucian images of motherhood that place a higher value on sons than daughters. Although she includes the daughter in her narratives at times, most of the time, Mei spoke about her son. I believe she is a traditional Chinese woman who regards sons as more important than daughters. Everything she told me related to her son—his good grades in physics in high school, his admission to medical school, his skill at extracurricular activities such as playing tennis, as well as the violin. She continuously praised the son:

“Only top ten students at school were allowed to drive. He (the school) would give you the privilege. Of course, my son was one of these ten” (Mei, line 712-715).

“He is very good in Physics. He got an award of the Physics. He must be the top 1, top 2 among his classmate to win this award” (Mei, line 258-262).

Like my son, now he can speak Chinese. People were impressed friendlier toward him....Because he is good at Mandarin, he could write well! He could even write some...He got the Mayor award (the number 1) when he graduated from elementary school. (Mei, line 374-381)

When he was in Taiwan, he learned how to paint. And he has got a little bit talents. He also learned how to write the calligraphy...If you send your work to somewhere, you would be admitted to a club.. He did...Also, he wrote an article and was published in the newspaper...He also memorized Chinese poetry... (Mei, line 480-481)

He also applied for MIT, and he was admitted to the medical school. He did not prepare much because he did not care about it. Still, he got the admission of the medical school. (Mei, line 758-759)

“At that time, John Hopkins also gave him the offer, and it was a good scholarship...He did not go” (Mei, line 772-773).

Clearly Mei's conversation, which praised her son's accomplishments at great length, indicated that her regard for her son had more priority than her regard for the daughter. The more Mei praised her son, the more I thought, “Where is the daughter? Why did not she mention more about her daughter?” In fact, her daughter was just as successful as her brother, but Mei only talked a little bit about her daughter. The daughter also returned to Taiwan to intern. The daughter played lacrosse well and played tennis well enough to earn a position on the varsity team. She won four scholarships for college but decided to go to the same medical school as her brother. She chose a different subject - pharmacy school - and this school was as prestigious as where her brother attended.

Mei: Sacrifice for My Son as much as I could

As a traditional Chinese mother who always puts children as her first priority, particularly the son, she believed she had played her role well. Her regrets about her son suffering from allergies, and not being able to assist him more with his academics, motivated

her to do more to make it up to him. Because of his allergy to dust, she changed herself into a diligent housekeeper in order to provide a dust-free house. In describing her son's allergies, Mei demonstrated that it looked like the son's allergies were her fault and how sorry she felt when she looked at his suffering. She said:

He was so poor! He got shots and got fat. Actually, that was not the real fat, it is steroid. I felt something wrong. So, I suffered the pain, then we came back.
(Mei, line 38- 41)

In addition, Mei also felt sorry about her son's lowered GPA in high school because they had moved back to Taiwan for two years. Mei believed that his English suffered for lack of practicing often while in Taiwan. What Mei meant was that because the son had stayed in Taiwan for about two years, in her point of view his English proficiency was not as good as it had been while they were in the U.S. Thus, he received lower grades after coming back to the U.S. because he had already forgotten some English.

The longer Mei resided in the United States, the more she struggled because she was unable to offer the academic assistance she would have liked to personally provide to her children.

Mei's Progress of Having Her Power Back

Mei's strength and confidence in her relationship with her children emerged through her decision to provide a Chinese language environment for them. Mei continues to be an important cultural and language resource for her adult children. For example, she related that her son, who had a large set of Mandarin-speaking patients, often sought her out to explain a

phrase from a patient that he did not understand. Mei demonstrated that her son still needed her for her expertise in Mandarin even though he spoke Mandarin well. She said:

My son came back (from rotation) would tell me, ‘while I was diagnosing, they would say 畏寒 Wei Han¹⁸, My body is Wei Han’. He would say, ‘*what does that mean?*’ He would write down and ask me. I would then, tell him what our ways of speaking. (Mei, line 355-361)

In Chinese medicine, Wei Han is a term used to describe patients’ bodies as being cold and requiring cure by supplementary food or medicine. It is hard for the son to understand some of the subtler uses of Mandarin because he needs more specific cultural knowledge than he possesses. Thus, only Mei helps him by offering translations and explanations. At this point, Mei feels she is able to solve the Mandarin language problems for her son and this bolstered her confidence.

Mei’s confidence and experience with Mandarin, contrasts directly with what Mei considers as her lack of English proficiency. Again, the academic arenas become an important indicator for language. In some other ways, she loses power while dealing with her son in terms of English. She recalled:

Of course, when they turn to the middle school, or high school, you would feel like...you are unable to help them in some ways. But in some other ways, they still need to ask you how to do it. At least, our life experiences are still more than theirs. That means, we are unable [to help] in academics, but in some other ways, we are still good. (Mei, line 242-246)

Mei struggled with her inability to provide English assistance to her children. She believed that only her husband could help her children with academics. Particularly, when

¹⁸ Wei Han, literally translated means someone is afraid of the coldness. It is a Chinese medicine term that patients’ bodies are cold and need some food or Chinese medicine to cure.

they entered middle school and high school, she felt lost and helpless because she was unable to teach them more. What she could do was to provide her Mandarin knowledge.

爲了你們的國語啊，媽媽的英文都不能
進步啊！
(Mei, line 326-327)

It is all for your Mandarin. Mom's English
cannot be improved.

However, because she requested that the children speak Chinese at home she also felt that her poor English did not improve. Therefore, she lost opportunities to practice her English with her children who had much better English proficiency. She often complained to her son that, "it is all for your Mandarin. Mom's English cannot be improved" (line 326-327). Therefore, she sacrificed her own desire to learn English. Thus, even though she was in charge of everything at home, she still felt she was deprived of power (Kouritzin, 1999).

In addition to maintaining Chinese as a home language, she planned many actions to regain her power. For example, she became the person who picked up her children from activities when they participated in English-speaking environments. I could not imagine how much time she spent driving her children to and from their activities as they had very busy extracurricular activity schedules that included tennis, lacrosse, and violin classes. Interestingly, she actually enjoyed being a driver for her children and even though she suffered from spending too much time picking them up, she did enjoy those moments spent together with her children.

Mei: 甜蜜的負擔 *My Children are My Bittersweet Burden*

送來送去的他們畢業，我也畢業。

(Mei, line 660)

I pick them up there and pick them up
there until they graduate. And I graduate,
too!

Mei, in fact, told me this statement with joy, which demonstrates that her sacrifices were worth it to her. Although she celebrated the fact that she no longer had to drive her children, which was at times a pain, she also is proud of their academic accomplishments. Therefore, her children are a bittersweet burden.

Over the course of her time in the U.S, Mei began to define herself as a financial breadwinner. She began to share the power with her husband by earning money while working outside of the home. Moreover, she also regained power with her children because she took on the responsibility of providing financial assistance and paid her children's tuition.

As she explained:

I figured out that, after going to college, the economic problem. It is true. It would be very difficult to solve the problem if there were not two persons to share. It is because the tuition fee in the U.S. colleges were more than triple than those in Taiwan colleges....We chose this (medical) school because its reputation is the best. So, we decided to tolerate for a while. So now we had to endure, sometimes we were unable to bear. The tuition for two of them were almost 100,000 a year... If I stay here, I could make some more money. (Mei, line 832-835)

She pushed herself to participate in the outside world, learning working skills and English with the intention to improve herself. Her work experiences not only improved her English proficiency, but also brought about her confidence as a financial provider. Mei's

decision to stay in the U.S. was prolonged primarily because she assumed a significant financial responsibility for her adult children.

My Reflections

Mei's role as a strong mother occurred gradually, but not without complications. I could sense her growth development as she described how she began to share her power with her children. In fact, she would like to have more power over her children. Mei explained her decision to prolong her residency in the U.S. for two reasons: to earn money to support her children and to spend more time with her son. She said:

Our children are unlike American children. When they were teenagers, they would have some *trouble*, some *problem*.¹⁹ I feel it would happen to Chinese children after the college. It was because he goes to the college, and he would have something from the outside. Americans' thoughts and our minds were different, too many. You know, for example, they were more individual's thoughts, right? Then, how about us? We were more Confucianism, or they had to follow parents' ideas. It doesn't mean that they need to obey us. It is just that they have their ideas, we were not used to it. But in fact, we need to adjust, you know...(Mei, line 82-102)

Mei shares power with children but she definitely wants to also be a person who is in charge and has confidence. Currently, her children are living away from her house and they return to the house only on weekends. Although she could now actually join her husband in Taiwan, deep in her heart, she still prefers to live closer to the children. In her mind, her son is an obedient child who listens to her "suggestions." I believe, though, that her "suggestions" are not merely suggestions, but requests.

¹⁹ I kept the original version of Mei's words. It was only a fragment with Mandarin and English together. I highlight "trouble" and "problem" for emphasis.

Sharon: My English was not Improved Because of Children

我的小孩回來就是講中文，因為他們也不願來跟我講英文，所以我英文才不會進步。

(Sharon, line 586-588)

My children came back speaking Chinese, because they would not be willing to talk to me in English. So, my English has not been improved.

The relationship with her children is complicated for Sharon. Similar to Mei, Sharon believed that her English had not improved because of the lack of English practice at home. From Sharon's perspectives, teaching her children Chinese was the mother's responsibility. Dad, however, must be busy at work, and therefore he would not have time to get involved. So, as a mother, she thought that it was important to require her children to speak Mandarin at home. Otherwise, they would not know how to speak Mandarin in the future. She was proud to tell me that her children came home speaking Mandarin.

Therefore, Sharon prefers her children to talking to her in Mandarin. She told me about another family where the children could not speak any Chinese or Taiwanese. The mother of that family believed that because they stay in the U.S., it is unnecessary to learn Chinese or Taiwanese and English is enough for them to survive in the U.S. In Sharon's perspective, she believed that for the children, it was best to learn English at school, as well as learning Mandarin at home. Therefore, she sacrificed herself, giving up the opportunities for her to learn from the children. Thus, as shown in Espin's research, Sharon maintains Chinese as a home language in order to regain her power.

Lily: I was Teased by My Daughters

她說：媽媽妳的英文很差勁喔，應該是這樣講，不是那樣講。(Lily, line 668-669)		She [the daughter] said, ‘Mom, your English is so awful. You should say in this way, not in that way’.
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Lily’s example demonstrates how her children often used their advanced language skills to attempt to assert power over their mother. Lily had two cute daughters, about ten and eight years old at the time of the study. During the interviews, these two girls usually ran in and out, playing together. Sometimes Lily had to call them in to eat during the interviews. Interestingly, Lily asked her daughters some questions in Mandarin, and children usually answered in English. Lily made jokes about them and warned them to speak Mandarin. She said, “If you do not learn to speak Mandarin, you will be teased by the twins.” When hearing this sentence, I was a little confused and she asked her daughters to explain. The two girls were eager to explain to me by speaking in English. They told me that because their Mandarin was not good enough while they visited in Taiwan, the twin laughed at them. Their poor Mandarin, as a result, made them prefer to speak English with Lily.

Lily, in fact, intended for her two daughters to learn Mandarin and she told me many humorous stories about her daughter’s attempt to learn two languages at the same time. These two girls learned Mandarin at home and spoke English at school. When the girls were very young Lily hired a nanny. The nanny could only speak Mandarin—no English at all. Before they were three or four years old, their Mandarin was fairly good, but not their English. They

usually spoke Mandarin with English tones. For example, when Anna, the older girl, was about three years old, she saw an apple on the table. She looked at her father, and said “蘋果 (Ping Guo) (Apple).

Lily demonstrated how her daughter was confused and mixed Mandarin and English tones together. Mandarin has five tones: neutral, high, high rising, low-falling rising and high-falling. The tonal quality means the raising and lowering of pitch on syllables that results in different meanings even though they have the same pronunciation. For example, Ma (high tone) means “mother”; Ma (high rising tone) means “hemp”; Ma (low-falling rising tone) means “horse”; Ma (high-falling tone) is “scold”; and Ma (neutral tone) becomes a question maker.

As a result, mixing different tones --1, ↗ 2, ∨ 3, ↘ 4. as Anna did, creates different words. Therefore, Ping ↗ Guo ∨ is the correct pronunciation. However, foreigners usually confuse the tones as her daughter did when she pronounced Ping Guo using the first tone on both. Also, Lily told another funny story about her daughter.

I remembered one Christmas, and we went to visit the grandpa’s house. Her grandma was just talking and talking in English. Lili answered in Mandarin. Her grandma gave her a present, she just said, ‘wo ∨ bu ↗ yao ↘, wo ∨ bu ↗ yao ↘.’ [I do not want it, I do not want it.]” (Lily, line 15-20)

Although Lily wished her children to learn more Mandarin, these two daughters appeared to prefer English.

It is very usual within the Chinese cultural tradition that elders, especially parents and

grandparents, are given full respect by their children. However, in Lily's case, the children resist her complete authority by stressing that their English language skills are significantly superior to their mother's. In terms of speaking English, Lily loses some power while talking to her children. As she noted:

Of course, there are still some vocabularies that I do not know about. I figure out it happens in daily life, I still do not know little things. Right, my daughters have been keeping on correcting my English. She said, 'Mom, your English is so awful. You should say in this way, not in that way.' I felt uncomfortable and it was hard to adjust. (Lily, line 665-670)

In terms of power relationships between herself and the two girls, Lily did not want to admit the power shifted to her daughters. For example, Lily felt upset but tried to excuse her daughters by saying that native speakers' children also corrected their parents' English. She knew that Americans also misspelled, pronounced words wrong and made grammatical mistakes. For instance, she had heard, "you and me" or "me and my friend," which are both grammatically incorrect. For Lily these situations helped her feel less guilt about her own mistakes. In addition, Lily enrolled her daughters in Chinese language school, requiring them to speak Mandarin as much as possible and also exposing them to the Chinese-speaking environment. It was her way of taking back power or sharing it with her children.

My Reflections

Lily's stories about her daughters who corrected her English reminded me of my personal experiences with my son. I completely understand her feelings about being taught by her own children. My son, who already goes to an English-speaking daycare, always likes to

correct my English pronunciation, too. This doesn't mean that my English knowledge is not good enough, but my English pronunciation needs work. Obviously, as a non-native speaker, it is difficult for me to speak like a native. I have been speaking Mandarin my whole life and I have never paid attention to the pronunciation of "r." For example, I pointed to the "Wal-Mart" sign and asked my dear son to read it. He told me it was "Wal-Mart" with the emphasis of "l." and "r: I did not pay attention to him and said, "good, walma." My son said emphatically, "NO! NO! Mom, It's Wal---mar." He specifically asked me to pronounce "l." and "r". He corrected me so many times that I just gave up. The way he corrected me made me uncomfortable at times, too.

However, subconsciously, I felt I regained my power when I requested that my son learn Chinese. It was challenging for him to learn two languages simultaneously. For a long period, he even refused to talk and learn these two languages. Now, he has started to talk and speak to me in Mandarin. I felt my confidence return as I corrected his Chinese. More significantly, he does not know any Taiwanese and my husband and I both speak Taiwanese well. We sometimes speak Taiwanese in front of him when we do not want him to know what we are talking about. I wonder whether I am over-using my Mandarin and Taiwanese as a way of asserting power over my son.

In addition, I remembered how the power shifted between my mother and I. Since I was little, I have been correcting my mother. My mother was an elementary teacher and she

treated me as strictly as her students. All of her children had to listen to her words or instructions. Otherwise, my brothers and I would be punished for disobeying her. However, in terms of speaking Mandarin, I had power over her. My mom spoke Taiwanese her whole life and had difficulty with some pronunciations in Mandarin. As I was the one who received a Mandarin education, I could pronounce Mandarin correctly and beautifully. I was little and did not know that by correcting my mother I probably embarrassed her.

I also displayed my power over her while she stayed with me in the U.S. Her English proficiency was not good enough to speak with native speakers so she still needed to depend on me to act as translator for her. She could not go out for a walk alone or to the supermarket because she had difficulty communicating with others in English. Gradually, she chose to stay at home and wished to return to Taiwan as soon as possible.

Kelly's Power Relations with Children: I am Proud of My Son who is a Doctor

Doctor, doctor....Kelly believed she would receive power vicariously through her children's accomplishments. She praised their accomplishments repeatedly and focused many stories on her son, a doctor. However, they all have succeeded in life. All three graduated from college. The elder daughter married an air force pilot, the younger daughter was a teacher.

Yet, the eldest, her son was the one Kelly mentioned most of the time:

He [her son] became a doctor when he was only twenty-three years old. He became a residency when he was twenty-four years old. My husband, his dad

was dead in the hospital he served as a residency. (Kelly, line 223-226)

The great performances made her son become owner of two clinics. As she proudly said:

He had once had fifteen *nurse(s)*²⁰ helping him...” In addition, her son was described as treating patients kindly, especially Chinese ones. He often got calls from Chinese parents at midnight if their children were sick. He also donated a lot of money to the Chinese church which almost dependent on his donation. (Kelly, line-240)

For Kelly, it was not only important that her son clearly received respect from other medical staff, but that he used his power to not only heal patients, but also to give generously to his community. She was very proud of her son.

However, after he married, Kelly felt a little bit lost because as she described it, “the Navy gave him the full scholarship. It gave him the allowance. He got married, and he was rich. He bought a car and went away with his wife...” (Kelly, line 472-481).

Kelly’s husband’s sudden death, however, had increased her insecurity regarding her power in the household and over the children. She became lonely when he died. Her eldest child was away serving the army, so the older daughter went back home every month to help her write checks. At this point, she had to depend on her daughter because she only had limited English proficiency.

Kelly: I could Learn English from Children

因為我也學英文嘛，我跟她們學英文， | Because I could also learn English, too.

²⁰ Kelly usually talks to me with Mandarin. There were few words or sentences she used for English. However, these words have grammatical problems. She said “nurse” instead of “nurses” or “Navy provide” lacks “s” I guess Kelly was trying to use her limited words with me.

我就很少跟她們講中文。
(Kelly, line 379-380)

Since I learned English from them, I
seldom talked to them in Chinese.

The willingness of these mothers to learn English from their children demonstrates power shifted and shared. It is also indicative of their struggles involved with using two languages simultaneously. In this research, all these women desired to learn English from their children because they believed those children could speak English better than they. Also, they wished their children to be the best in academics in this English-speaking society. Thus, they sometimes endured losing power because of their children's higher English proficiency and their own wish to learn English from them (Fillmore, 1991; Fase, Jaspaert & Kroon, 1992; Heller, 1995). Immigrant parents often need their children's assistance to deal with occasions where linguistic understanding is crucial, such as at schools, in banks or with social institutions. These women's narratives are similar to Kouritzin's (1999) study in which she concludes that her participants' parents lost their self-confidence and ability to parent because the children's reality is, "I can speak English; it's something I have over my parents" (p. 12). Paradoxically, these five mothers also wished to teach their children about Chinese cultures and Mandarin. Thus, these women regained their power while maintaining Mandarin at home. However, they sometimes struggled with linguistic isolation when the children's proficiency surpassed theirs and they lost the chance to practice their English at home. This isolation and the resulting power shift can intensify the parent's lower English proficiency. Thus, how to balance two languages at the same time becomes one of the hardest choices for these women.

My Reflections

Kelly's English deficiency made her yield power to her children. In fact, Kelly did not express her feelings about having to depend on her daughter to write checks for her. Even though writing out a check is a simple task, I realized how hard it was for her to face this situation because it was an illustration of all the ways her power was diminished within the United States because she did not speak English well. It was not only a matter of writing a check. Rather, it was the loneliness and powerlessness she experienced when dealing with limited English proficiency.

Thus, I believe that mentioning her children frequently and particularly her doctor son was her way showing her vicarious gains in power; because they could survive in this English-speaking environment and perform well, she gained through their successes. In fact, all of the women with children in my study take pride in their children and the fact that they can raise children to have academic excellence even though the mother's English was limited.

Jane's Relationship with Her Children: They Felt My English was Strange

在家跟小孩子講中文，因為我英文比較
不好嘛！ (Jane, line 784)

I talk with children in Mandarin because
my English is not so good.

Jane's feelings about her limited English made her yield power to her children who speak English well. Two of her children still prefer to talk to her in Mandarin because the children believe that Jane's English is not good enough to effectively communicate. At home, Jane prefers to speak Mandarin with her children because she claims that her English is not so

good. She kept on saying:

I was all used to speak Mandarin, then they (children) speak Mandarin. But, after they grow up, they feel like they are used to talk to me in Mandarin, because talking to me made them feel strange....(Jane, line 440)

When eventually she mentioned that the children felt strange talking to her in English, she made fun of herself for it. However, this demonstrated another way that she felt inferior to her children because of her English deficiency.

Jane maintained her power by deciding to use Mandarin as a home language.

Interestingly, Jane did not strictly require that her children learn to write in Mandarin, but the daughter tried to recognize simple characters and guess the meanings. This daughter identifies herself as of Chinese or Taiwanese heritage. Unfortunately, she is not fully recognized by Taiwanese due to her limited Mandarin literacy. The daughter encountered discomfort at a Mongolian restaurant in Taiwan where she was unable to choose from the menu written on the board. When she asked a female servant to read the board to her, the servant replied impolitely, “Are you blind? Why do I need to read it to you?” Because she looked Chinese, and spoke fluently, the servant assumed she could also read.

Jane’s daughter was hurt because she was not recognized as Taiwanese by other Taiwanese people, even though she regarded herself as truly one. However, Jane’s son does not have this same identity problem because he believes himself to be completely American. He speaks English with friends and regards himself as a native English speaker. The power switches to Jane when talking to Jane is a necessity. I observed that when we went out for

lunch, these children spoke Mandarin with Jane, but I could hear that the son spoke with difficulty and a different tone he used when speaking Mandarin. On the other hand, when the children spoke with each other, they spoke fluently in English. This demonstrated that Jane still owned the power when talking to her children in Mandarin.

My Reflections

New Versions of Mencius' Mother: These five Taiwanese immigrant women

昔孟母，擇鄰處

(三字經)

Long time ago Mencius' mother chose living places.

These mothers' relationships with their children reminded me of a very famous Chinese story, called “孟母三遷” (Mencius' mother changed three places to live). There was a famous philosopher named Mencius whose father died when he was little. His mother was very careful concerning Mencius' education. The first place they lived was near the graveyard. Traditionally, when a member of a family dies, all of the relatives cry loudly on the way to the graveyard. So, Mencius learned this behavior and imitated the crying. His mother was worried and moved to another place. The second place was near to the market where Mencius observed vendors shouting every day and learned how to sell products. Mencius' mother believed this was the wrong environment, so they moved again. This third time, she chose to live near a school. Therefore, Mencius learned how to study and became a famous scholar.

Mencius' mother represents many characteristics of these five immigrant women in my research. Scholars usually explain this episode by focusing on the importance of the

environment or pointing out that children are very good at imitating what they see. However, I believe Mencius' mother represents the difficulties and struggles of being a Chinese mother. Similar to Kelly, she lost her husband, but still worked hard to take care of her children while surviving alone in a new environment. And similar to Mei, Mencius' mother decided to stay in a certain place because she wanted her child to have a better education and become successful with academics. They all are satisfied with the results.

However, I wonder what Mencius' mother would do if she were living now. No one version gives voice to her concerning the hardships she endured. Her story tells us that she cared about her child's education, moved for his sake, and, it turns out that her efforts paid off. But, no one has ever reported the mother's feelings. How could she handle the difficulties without her husband's assistance? I not only admire Mencius' mother, but also admire these mothers in my study who had the courage to move to a new place and learned to speak another language. They had to face the power shift that came as they realized their own English deficiency and their need for their children's assistance. This is a mixed and complicated feeling to describe. However, these women regained their power, moved towards independence and found their own unique identities.

My Story about Speaking Mandarin and Taiwanese

My mother, as in Mencius' story, relocated us to Taipei for our education. When I was in the sixth grade, my family, except for my father, decided to move to the large city of Taipei.

My father was superintendent of my hometown high school and mother an elementary school teacher. My father would not get the same level of position if he transferred to another school. Therefore, only my mother volunteered to transfer to new school in Taipei. The main motivation for relocating to Taipei was that my big brother was admitted to a prestigious high school. At that time, attending a good high school led to entrance into a good university. In order to take care of my brother and to give us both a good educational environment in a larger city, mother, my brother and I moved to Taipei while my father remained in our hometown.

I never had difficulty learning the Mandarin and Taiwanese languages and prior to the sixth grade I spoke both fluently. Of course, my Mandarin proficiency was good because of my parents' training and oversight. Everybody was required to speak Mandarin at school. In order to promote Mandarin usage at school, every child became a "little spy," monitoring others' language usage. If you spoke Taiwanese at school, you were fined one dollar per sentence. I was appointed to keep these fines. At school, our teacher even promoted an activity to enforce spoken Mandarin. Each child had ten honored vouchers each week. If you made a mistake, such as not doing your cleaning job at school or speaking Taiwanese at school, you were required to lose one voucher. The results were accumulated each week. The more vouchers you had, the bigger the prizes or the better the award letter given by the school. It was a great honor to go to the stage to receive an award letter from the superintendent.

Everyone was so eager to find out other's mistakes regardless of whether he or she was your friend.

It occurs to me now to reflect upon whether this school's policy was right or wrong. Did the school evaluate whether this activity might harm children even a little bit? Or, as my in-laws said, "kids are just kids, and they do not have bad moods" and the school considered that there was no harm? The school apparently never thought about children's emotions, thoughts or friendships. In fact, this policy made children the enemies of each other by setting them against each other.

When I transferred to Taipei, I felt different and excluded. In the first place, my uniforms were different, old-fashioned and dark. My new classmates wore bright shiny uniforms, and had various backpacks. Even my music teacher pointed out my old, out of date flute in front of the class. Childhood is the moment when you need to be the same as your friends. At that moment, children stared at me with my ugly uniforms and old flute, and most did not want to be friends with me.

Second, the language bothered me a lot while talking to my classmates. They were not used to speaking Taiwanese. At that point, city children were brainwashed into speaking Mandarin and being disrespectful of Taiwanese which was a dialect and therefore inessential to learn. Therefore, I always disguised that I could speak Taiwanese and instead kept on speaking Mandarin, trying to act like my classmates.

I gradually became immersed in the school environment due to my fluent Mandarin language skills. However, due to lack of practice, my Taiwanese became deficient. When my mother talked to me in Taiwanese, I chose to respond in Mandarin so that linguistic ability increased dramatically. However, I spoke too fluently and quickly and sometimes my mother had to say, “Wait, wait, too fast. Say it again.” In fact, I was kind of proud of speaking fast and confusing my parents. Of course, I would laugh at my parents for not being able to pronounce something correctly. It appears that the children of my respondents did the same thing when they were young.

My Dilemma of Teaching Two Languages

Just as the mothers in this research, I also encountered the dilemma of teaching two languages at the same time to a child. It was a constant battle to encourage my son to speak Mandarin with me. When my son returned from daycare, he always spoke English with me. I chose to pretend that I did not know any English at all. Otherwise, he would speak English all of the time.

There was also pressure from my mother worried about my son’s English proficiency. She did not think speaking Mandarin was a necessity. From her point of view, if I remained in the U.S., I needed to speak English in the context of both the school and the home. She assumed that this was the requirement because we were living in the U.S. She often asked me, “Do you speak to your son with English? You have to. Otherwise he could not speak English

and would get in trouble at school learning.”

My belief wasn't shaken until one day when my son's schoolteacher approached me, telling me she thought that my son had a problem with languages. Although I studied many language theories, and I knew it took more time to speak two languages as a bilingual child, I lost my confidence when this happened to me. The schoolteacher told me that my son needed a consultant to evaluate whether he did have a problem with languages. They could not comprehend him. Was it Mandarin that they did not understand, or was it something he just murmured? I agreed to involve the consultant, but the results turned out not to be not very satisfying. The consultant was a native speaker who did not understand Mandarin at all. She could not decipher what he was saying.

Therefore, I had to send my son to participate in English-learning classes. Although the school guaranteed that this was an ESL (English as a second language) class for children, I noticed something different. It was not ESL—they got funding from the language-learning disability department. At this point, I realized why one of my husband's professors said to me one day that he was impressed with our courage to admit that our son had a disability. “No, No, he is not disabled”, I kept telling my heart when I realized where this funding came from. And I wondered how many non-native speakers were still willing to send children to this class without understanding that their children had been labeled as “disabled”

Finally, it was proven that I worried too much. After several months, my son learned

how to speak English and Mandarin together. It took awhile, but he performed fairly well.

When he turned to his grandparents or me, he spoke Chinese. When he interacted with children, he spoke English as well as they were. He just needed time to catch up with the two languages. Mei's children also showed that they did not have a problem communicating with grandparents because they shifted languages when appropriate.

These women's narratives demonstrate that they developed their multiple identities while using two languages with their children. In this research, it is more difficult to define whether the women felt accepted by the L2 (English) society while working in the English-speaking environment. According to their interpretations, they sometimes showed their discomfort with American speakers and sometimes recognized themselves as part of the community. However, there is one thing for certain; their experiences working outside the home and learning English encouraged their identity development towards independence. Also, their improved English proficiency encouraged them to regain their power which they were beginning to lose as the children's proficiency with English surpassed theirs.

More importantly, maintaining Mandarin as the home language provides more power to these women and perhaps ensures their power base. They all feel proud being able to maintain it as their home language as well as traditional values and rituals that demonstrate their ethnic identities as Chinese. Even though some children do not have high Mandarin proficiency, at least the mothers try to maintain the culture at home. In summary, these

women's narratives reveal that they have more emotional attachments toward Mandarin, leading them to maintain their connection to the Chinese language. The English social network functions for them as practical help only. L1 language, on the other hand, provides them with emotional comforts. As first-generation immigrants, they need as much as English as they could learn in order to survive. They still emphasize that their home language is Chinese (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006).

In the last section, I explore these five Taiwanese immigrant women's relationships with their mothers while residing in Taiwan and how their identity shifted while in the U.S.

嫁出去的女兒潑出去的水

*A daughter who got married, became a
water which was poured*

These women's narratives exactly illustrate how their identities shift into independence regarding the relationships with their parents, particularly with their mothers. They no longer play the traditional roles embodied in the old saying above, which shows how traditional Chinese society values women's identities that are weak and voiceless. “嫁出去的女兒潑出去的水” A daughter who got married, became water which was poured. If a woman marries, she is like water that has been poured and it is impossible for her to come back. The married women have to take on the responsibilities of looking after children, husband, and the home. Similar to this old Chinese saying is 三從四德 (The Three Obediences and the Four Virtues). Those three obediences are to the father before marriage, to the husband after

marriage, and to the son after the death of husband. The four virtues refer to morality, proper speech, modest manner and diligent word. These are spiritual fetters imposed on women in feudal society. As a woman, their identities are restricted to following husbands, educating their children and exemplifying the four virtues. These five women, on the contrary, encountered the dilemmas of playing these roles as well as being “a good and obedient daughter,” after experiencing life in different contexts and shifting their identities.

The identities shifted gradually for these women, particularly in their relationships with their mothers. They were unable to adhere to the traditional roles and these eventually become lost. Over time their work and school experiences in the U.S. stimulated their power to be independent women who then wished to support their mothers financially. In the Chinese tradition, married women are only allowed to return to their parents’ home on the second day of the Chinese year. These five women all demonstrated to me that there were few opportunities to go home to honor these Chinese traditions. Twenty or thirty years ago airfares were extremely high and so they rarely were able to return to see their relatives in Taiwan.

Sharon: I could not even See My Mother after She Died

Sharon played a weak, obedient daughter with her mother. Although she knew her mother was dying, she could not do anything. Her husband, and even her brother, restricted her from returning to Taiwan to see her mother one last time. Besides the extremely high

airfares, the most important factor stopping Sharon was due to the power they held over her in the dynamics of the family hierarchy. Therefore, as she complained, “even when my mother passed away at the second year of coming here, I did not go back” (Sharon, line 387-398). As she spoke, Sharon’s eyes were full of tears and I could sense her regret for not being able to see her mother, and her feelings of powerlessness.

Interestingly, the working experience taking care of the old lady reshaped Sharon’s identity and made her realize that she had to learn to be independent in this new country. The old lady treated her well and thus reminded her of her mother. Sharon began engage beyond the relationship of helper and patient, such as doing massages on the old lady, just as she had done for her mother. Sharon’s actions reflected how she missed her mother and she used the old lady as her mother’s surrogate. Thus, after describing her regrets for being unable to return to Taiwan, she further changed her tone, telling me, “It is alright. I knew I could not even see her last sight because she was dying” (Sharon, line 401-422).

連我媽媽過來的第二年我媽去世，我都沒有回去。(Sharon, line 387-388)

Even when my mother passed away at the second year of coming here, I did not go back.

Sharon could only comfort herself in another way, “It is alright. Mother’s body was already buried and you could not see anything. What is it necessary to come back?” (Sharon, line 406-408). I feel that she had already turned towards independence, becoming strong enough to face the conflict in terms of the relationship with her violin.

Mei, Jane: I would like to Take Care of My Mother, but I couldn't

Mei and Jane have encountered the same dilemma that Sharon had. Giving up their wishes to live close to their Mothers was their only choice when immigrating to the U.S. While deciding to live physically separate from her husband, Mei meanwhile knew she had to put her children as her first priority, even over that of her mother. Indeed, she reached her goal by sending her children to medical schools. This was not an easy process, but she became stronger and stronger due to the outside worlds' help. Her learning experiences, interacting with the English-speaking environment, encouraged her to realize that it was still possible to keep a good relationship with her mother. Although she was unable to go back to Taiwan to take care of her mother very often, she encouraged her two children to visit their grandparents and even the great grandparents during the summer time. She still remains close to her mother.

I believe that Jane has gone through the same process and gradually improved her relationship with her parents, especially her mother. Jane is a typical Taiwanese woman who puts her husband and children as the first priority and she knows that she has to forfeit going back to Taiwan because of this. The only way she could make up to her mother was to visit her once a year; her dad passed away a couple of years ago. Jane, has turned stronger and more independent in the relationship with her husband, she even has taken the power to have her mother come to the U.S. to visit. Jane eventually had the opportunity to fulfill her wish to

take care of parents. This exhibits courage that she did not have at the beginning of her years as an immigrant, but which she gained in the context of her life in the U.S.

Kelly: Sending Money is My Only Way to Make Up to My Mother

濟急不濟窮

Help someone who is in emergency, not
help who is in poor.

Kelly made a significant shift towards independence. She told me that she sent money to her parents while they were alive. Her parents did not escape from China with her and therefore suffered many difficulties after the Communists ruled China. She has not seen them since she was eighteen years old because of the Chinese Civil War. Due to their identities as privileged people, they were regarded as enemies of society and therefore needed to be cleansed of their attitudes. This was the Communists' way of supporting the poor but fighting against the rich. The lands that Kelly's family owned were all confiscated by the Communist government and this resulted in their financial hardship.

Kelly spent great efforts to seek out her parents in China. As she recalled:

I did not contact them about twenty years. I wrote a letter. They were so poor that they did not even have a mailbox. I sent a letter and was transferred via Hong Kong. At that time, the Communists did not allow letters from America. I have to transfer via Hong Kong. I asked the uncle of that (Chinese) restaurant owner (where she worked for) who lived in Hong Kong. He got my letter and changed another envelope, then sending to my family. Finally, she got it (my letter). Since then, I started to send the money to my mother. (Kelly, line 440-445)

Eventually, Kelly located her parents, made contact and wanted to send them as much money as she could. During the first years after moving to the U.S. she was dependent on her

husband both physically and financially. Although she was permitted to send money to her mother who lived in China, her husband was cautious about her sending money. Thus, even though her husband was dying, he told her:

‘You want to help a person; you need to help him when he was needed. You cannot help him when he was poor. If a person was sick, and having a surgery, or having a fire, you save him, he would really appreciate you. You save that the poor one, you would need to save him forever. Now I am almost dying, and I do not have any money to give to you. You would not have money to send to her, then she would hate you... What he meant was that, ‘let’s wait and see.’ (Kelly, line 401-407)

What he meant was that he did not want to send more money to Kelly’s parents because he was worried that Kelly would have difficulty taking care of herself and the children, not to mention supporting her parents. “Let’s wait and see” refers to his cautious attitude and his concern that she might not make it on her own. But Kelly pushed herself to step out to work and willingly encountered the difficulties of working. I did not ask whether Kelly managed to continuously send money, but I do believe she desires to retain a close relationship with her family in China. The experiences working and learning English reshaped her into functioning independently without her husband’s help. Kelly now is no longer poor and she still supports the family in China financially. The only regret is that Kelly never got a chance to reunite with her mother because she died a couple of years ago. After the interviews Kelly told me excitedly that she would host her brother who had remained in Mainland China. She planned a tour with her brother that would take them many places. This is the first opportunity to see her brother since the Civil War, and also the first time her brother would gone abroad. From

my perspective, this is her only way to pay back her family for not having seen them as the obedient daughter role required.

In light of this analysis, we can conclude that power relations among these five Taiwanese women with their husbands, children and mothers are dynamic and must shift moment-by-moment. Within the poststructuralist perspective, these narratives provide us an opportunity to understand the complexity of relationships between power and society, and how the language affects their identity negotiations. In terms of their relationships with husbands, they gradually step out from dependence on their husbands while interacting with the world outside the home, and gain both independence and power. Learning a new language (English) and encountering the outside world encourages positive selves to develop.

Their stories illustrate in particular that the relationships with husbands is no longer hierarchical and static, but shifted and shared. The power coexists between their husbands and these women, and power can flow both ways. Experts can have more expertise than novices, but on the other hand, novices might affect the experts in the practices of the community (Jacoby & Gonzales, 1991). In the marriage relationships, husbands can be experts who are not always the ones holding the power. These novices, the Taiwanese women, hold power at certain points in the process of negotiation and interaction. When their English skills are improved, the hierarchical status no longer exists. Experts in some specialized areas, to some degree, become novices or less expert in other specialized areas. In the relationship

with children, the power of these women shifts over to their children when the children become experts in the English language, but, they regain that power when speaking Mandarin. In relationships with their mothers, these women's new identities cause the shift in power away from their mothers to themselves. While in Taiwan they played traditional Chinese daughters who were expected to put husbands as their priority after getting married. However, after learning a new language and interacting with the English-speaking environment, they moved towards being independent and renegotiated the daughter roles from the position of active women. In sum, these five women's identities have been reshaped by negotiations within their families as prompted by the powerful society they experienced outside their homes in the context of the U.S.

Chapter 7

Where is Our Home?:

The Importance of the Past in Reshaping the Final Choice of Home

Conversation 1 with J., 2001

J: Where are you from?

Me: Taiwan, do you know where Taiwan is?

J: Well, I am afraid not.

Me: (with excitement) Let me tell you where Taiwan is...

Conversation 2 with D., 2004

D: Where are you from?

Me: Pennsylvania

D: No, I mean, where do you come from? What is your nationality?

Me: Oh, Taiwan.

D: Taiwan? Oh... (Confused, does not know where it is).

(silence for a couple seconds)

Me: Hey, do you know where I could go to the mall?

Conversation 3 with Q., 2006

Q: Where are you from?

Me: Pennsylvania

Q: Well, I have been to Pennsylvania before, you know....How long have you lived there?

(conversation continued).

These conversations with native English speakers illustrate different stages of both my own identity development and negotiation of my ethnic identity. When I first arrived in the U.S in 2001 I was very willing to share about Taiwan. If an American asked me where I was from, I usually said, "Taiwan" with pride and I would ask them if they knew where it is geographically. At that time I was eager to tell Americans where Taiwan is located and about

Taiwanese history. Gradually, though, I started to question if Americans were even really interested in Taiwan.

After living a few years in Pennsylvania, I began by saying I was from Pennsylvania, and then, if pressed, I would identify myself as Taiwanese. My response shifted because Americans seemed to have little interest in Taiwan and so I lost my passion to share information about my country of origin. In addition, it had become hurtful when people did not see me as a native Pennsylvanian and instead continued to ask me about my nationality. Unfortunately, not many people know much about Taiwan and their lack of knowledge and interest frustrated me. In fact, the conversation often came to a grinding halt because most Americans I spoke to had no idea where Taiwan is located. Gradually, I realized that in order to let the conversation continue, I would have to start another topic of conversation.

Similar to my own story, these five Taiwanese immigrant women encounter difficulties with their identities as well as with deciding their home choices. More significantly, these women came from family backgrounds and birthplaces very different from each other. For all of us, immigration led to identity struggles. The Second World War and the Chinese Civil War in the 1940s dramatically changed the history of the Chinese and Taiwanese. For example, although Kelly and Sharon had lived in Taiwan twenty or thirty years, their family backgrounds are completely different. In fact, Kelly was born in China and fled to Taiwan

with her relatives, while Sharon's parents identified as Taiwanese. Thus, even though they both grew up during the Civil War, and had lived in Taiwan before, they have made different home choices.

This chapter is devoted to understanding the influence from their pasts over the identity struggles of these five Taiwanese immigrant women. There are three sections to this focus: (1) I start by tracing the importance of these women's pasts. More specifically, I show how their different experiences and their various languages have influenced their identity development. (2) I also trace the history of Taiwan from 1940s until the present in order to show the connections between the Taiwanese and the Chinese. (3) Finally, I reveal each woman's home choice and prove that their individual histories in Taiwan and China have a significant influence on their home choice.

The simultaneous presence of the past and the possibility of the future are tensions in the present - both united in that present and qualitatively differentiated by it. (Bergland, 1992, p.104, as cited from Stephen Crites, 1971)

Investigating the historical circumstances and their impact on these women is important because the past influenced their identities. In addition, this historical context is essential because it allows us to reevaluate how the ideologies of different language systems influenced these women, especially as they are situated in between their old worlds and their new worlds. Bergland (1992), a language researcher, illustrates this point by

drawing on an example in Bakhtin's *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981):

Thus an illiterate peasant, miles away from any urban center, natively immersed in an unmoving and for him unshakable everyday world, nevertheless lived in several language systems; he prayed to God in one language (Church Slavonic), sang songs in another, spoke to his family in a third and, when he began to dictate petitions to the local authorities through a scribe, he tried speaking yet a fourth language (the official-literate language, 'paper' language). All these are different languages, even from the point of view of abstract socio-dialectological markers. (Bakhtin, as cited in Bergland, p.104).

These five women's narratives of learning Chinese, Taiwanese, Japanese, and English at different points in their lives demonstrate how different languages represent different ideological systems and often result in contradictory worldviews. For example, Sharon received a Japanese education in Taiwan and therefore could speak Japanese very well. Yet, she struggles with how to identify her nationality, questioning if she is Chinese, Taiwanese or Japanese. In direct contrast, Kelly, who had received a Chinese education in both China and Taiwan, at times reveals her hatred toward the Japanese who took power in China and caused the Chinese Civil War.

In this study, each individual's narrative is not only unique, but also significant because they truly reflect both the complexity of Taiwan's history and the complexity of the relationship between China and Taiwan. Their personal narratives cannot be simply viewed as individual performances, but instead illustrate the complexity of history (Pavlenko, 2004).

Interestingly, this history has a long-term impact on these women and from the 1940s on to the present, influenced their experiences in Taiwan and in the U.S. For this reason, within this study, past experiences are defined both as the experiences of the participants in their place of origin (Taiwan or Mainland China) and also in the U.S. Thus, I trace Taiwan's history from the 1940s and the connection with China's history as experienced by these five women. The timeline explains history relating to Taiwan, China and Chinese/Taiwanese immigration histories.

Timeline

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 551-479 B.C. | Confucius lives and teaches. He becomes the most highly influential Chinese philosopher whose central beliefs influence Chinese people in terms of culture, politics and thoughts. |
| 1644 | Manchu rulers establish the Qing Dynasty in China; this regime ends in 1911 under Sun Yat-sen. |
| 1848 | Gold is discovered in California, and Chinese people begin to migrate to the U.S. |
| 1882 | The U.S. government passes the Chinese Exclusion Act. This action provides many restrictions regarding the immigration of Chinese people. |
| 1895-1945 | Taiwan cedes from China to Japan and remains under Japanese rule for 51 years. |
| 1911 | Sun Yat-sen, the father of the democratic revolution in Chinese modern history, overthrows China's Manchu rulers. The Republic of China is built under his leadership. |
| 1914-1918 | World War I is fought. |

1924	New laws limit immigration to the United States exclusively to Europeans
1937	Japan invades China and, after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, Chiang Kai-shek declares War on Japan.
1941	The United States enters World War II and helps China defeat Japan.
1945	World War II ends. Taiwan is handed over to China after Japan surrenders. Chen Yi is the first appointed governor of Taiwan.
1947	The Two-Two-Eight (228) Incident occurs in Taiwan. Many Chinese and Taiwanese fight and die in this incident. Martial Law is enforced which forbids Taiwanese human rights, such as right of speech or travel.
1949	Chinese Civil War, Chiang Kai-shek (Kuomintang) flees and Mao Zedong establishes the People's Republic of China.
1952	The McCarran-Walter Act is passed; this establishes a quota limiting Chinese immigrants in the U.S. to only 100 per year.
1965	U.S. immigration laws are revised to allow more Asian immigrants into the United States
1975	Chiang Kai-shek dies, and his son, Chiang Ching-kuo, becomes the President of The Republic of China (Taiwan).
1978	The Republic of China (Taiwan) breaks diplomatic relations with the U.S. The U.S. acknowledges only The People's Republic of China (China).
1980s	Taiwan achieves economic prosperity and becomes one of Four Little Dragons in Asia (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan).
1987	Martial Law is lifted and the White Terror Ends.
1990	Revision of the U.S. Immigration Act welcomes more Asian immigrants.
1992	Chiang Ching-kuo dies, and the Vice President, Lee Teng-wei, becomes the President of The Republic of China (Taiwan).

2000 Kuomintang Party (KMT) loses and Chen Su-bian from DPP (Democratic Progressive Party) becomes the new President of The ROC.

In order to illustrate how these women's backgrounds are influenced by the different governments or historical periods and how this led to their different identities, I look at Taiwan's history and language control practices from the 1890s to 2000. The periods (1895-2000) range from Japan's colonization of Taiwan, through the Civil War in China, to establishment of Mao's People's Republic of China and Chiang Kai-shek's Republic of China in Taiwan.

Japanese Colonization of Taiwan, 1895-1945

Colonization has played an important role in Taiwan's history and a significant role in Taiwanese identity. In fact, over the course of the 1600s to the 1940s, Taiwan had been occupied and colonized by the Netherlands (1625-1652) and China's Qing Dynasty (1652-1895). During the later, many Chinese from the coastal provinces, such as Kwangtung and Fujian, immigrated to Taiwan. In 1894, The Sino-Japanese War occurred and the Japanese defeated the Chinese Qing Dynasty. Taiwan was ceded to Japan in 1895, which initiated a 51-year period of Japanese colonial rule. In 1945, following Japan's defeat in World War II and its surrender, Japan returned Taiwan to China (Chiang Kai-shek's rule, The Republic of China).

Interestingly, there are two different perspectives on Japanese colonization. The positive

perspective highlights the achievements stemming from the colonial regime. The anti-imperialist orientation highlights the harshness of Japanese rule and the hardships suffered by the island's subject population (Lamley, 2006).

Japanese Rule and the Japanese National Language (1895-1945)

Under Japan's colonization, Japanese was declared the national language and was the only language permitted in Taiwan. The colonial government promoted so-called "imperial subject movement" in order to Japanize the Taiwanese people in terms of culture, customs and daily life activities. Japanese literacy classes were started in elementary schools (Shozo, 2006). The Japanese colonial government, with its policy of priority status for the Japanese language, sought to dominant Taiwanese people's thoughts and eventually to assimilate them into becoming Japanese imperial subjects (Huang, 2006).

KMT Rule (1949-2000)

Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang (KMT) party changed the language policy after they assumed rule over Taiwan. After Japan was defeated, China broke out into civil war with two parties, Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang Party and Mao Zedong's communists fighting for power over China. Chiang appointed Chen Yi 陳儀 as Taiwan's governor, however, he did not perform his job well. Chen Yi began to use Taiwan as a reclaimed Chinese province where the Taiwanese were regarded as a lowly and illiterate people. Corruption reined when Chen Yi hired mainlanders as officers to take over Japanese military establishments and to

ship commodities to Mainland China for greater profits. This prompted the 228 Incident (Two-Two-Eight Incident), a war between the Taiwanese people and Chen Yi's troops.

Two-Two-Eight Incident (1947)

The Two-Two-Eight Incident split the Taiwanese and Chinese people because thousands of people from each side died. The Taiwanese people had expected better lives under the Chinese government, so they lost hope when it became clear that Chen Yi's government was even more corrupt than the previous Japanese colonial government. The Taiwanese were already discontent and dissatisfied, and then the 228 Incident occurred and further exasperated the tension. Furthermore, on February 28, 1947, the killing of two Taiwanese by Chen Yi's soldiers caused a protest. In retaliation, the protesters caught two soldiers and beat them to death. In direct response, the government declared Martial Law.

Chiang Kai-shek was not fully aware of the crisis, but he coincidentally sent more troops from Mainland China to ease the tension. These troops began a search for the killers and gunned down people. Chiang's party, the Kuomintang, claimed that at least 28,000 people were killed, but it is estimated that the number is higher than that. Many Taiwanese were sent to political prisons. Moreover, thousands of Taiwanese businessmen, lawyers, and newspaper editors were sent to prison and tortured to death. The Taiwanese people responded by killing many of Chiang's troops and those whom they thought were Chinese. As a result, Chen Yi was executed by Chiang Kai-shek in 1950 because he was not loyal to Chiang. This

tragedy split the Taiwanese and Chinese people (Phillips, 2006, Manthorpe, 2005).

Chiang's Rule of Taiwan and Mandarin as the National Language

The KMT (Kuomintang Party) took power in Taiwan in 1949 and changed the language policy in Taiwan. The educational system was reconstructed and Mandarin became Taiwan's national language. Unlike colonial Japan, which promoted Japanese education in elementary school only, KMT promoted educating children to the secondary education level and made doing so mandatory in order to control the Taiwanese. In addition to the changes to the school system, mass communication - such as magazines, newspapers and broadcasting - were forced to shift from Japanese to Mandarin. This is the so-called "White Terror" period, which restricted people's free speech and attached strict rules to going abroad.

Japanese colonization and the Chinese Civil War changed the history and caused a rift in the relationship between the Taiwanese and Chinese. For example, Kelly fled to Taiwan from China, resided there for about twenty years and never returned to see her parents, so I regarded her as identifying as Taiwanese. Before discussing their identities, I first describe their family backgrounds, places of birth and languages, all influences that play important roles in determining their home choice.

Table 2

Name	Place of birth	Periods of birth	Language(s) influenced	Parents' backgrounds
Sharon	Taiwan	Japan, Chiang Kai-shek	Japanese, Taiwanese, Chinese	Benshengren (Taiwanese)
Kelly	Mainland China	Civil War between Chiang Kai-shek & Mao	Standard Mandarin, Taiwanese	Waishengren (Mainland Chinese)
Jane	Taiwan	Chiang Kai-shek	Taiwanese, Mandarin	Benshengren (Taiwanese)
Lily	Taiwan	Chiang Kai-shek	Mandarin,	Waishengren (Mainland Chinese)
Mei	Taiwan	Chiang Kai-shek	Taiwanese	Benshengren (Taiwanese)

Who are they? Benshengren or Waishengren

A crucial influence on the identities of my study's participants is whether their parents identified as Benshengren (本省人) or Waishengren (外省人). Benshengren means people who lived in Taiwan before Chiang's defeat. Literally translated, "Benshen" means someone original, "Sheng" means Taiwan Province, and "Ren" means people. The people who originated from China and moved to Taiwan as far back as 200 to 300 years ago are called "Benshengren" and are considered to be the insiders in Taiwan. However, the Chinese who were born in China, but who immigrated to Taiwan after 1949, are called "Waishengren." Literally translated, Wai (外) means outside. The "Waishengren" were soldiers and their

spouses, who had never visited Taiwan and believed that Taiwan was only a temporary base; they believed that they would return to China once the Chiang government defeated the Communists and took control of China.

In this research, my participants represent both the Waishengren and Benshengren. Kelly, for instance, is Waishengren, but with higher social status. She was born in Beijing, in the north of Mainland China. Her mothers' family was a large wealthy family and Kelly had twenty-one uncles. They had become wealthy by conducting business continually since the Manchu (Qing) Dynasty²¹. Unfortunately, in 1937, Japan invaded China and war ensued. When Kelly was only five years old her family fled to the south of China for safety. They were afraid they would lose their family fortune if the Communists came to power. Then, Kelly followed her uncles and aunts who immigrated to Taiwan and worked there for a sugar manufacturing company. Kelly never saw her parents again. Kelly became part of Taiwan's Waishengren, but with higher social status because her uncles served as Chiang's officials.

Contrarily, Lily, the youngest woman in my research, belongs to the Waishengren, but she has lower social status. Her father was a soldier who had no choice but to follow Chiang in 1949 and he did not have time to bring money or his family to Taiwan. Her father later married Lily's mother, who was Taiwanese. Lily's father's military salary supported seven

²¹ The period of the Manchu Dynasty was 1644-1911, totaling 268 years. It was the dynasty before The Republic of China was built by Sun Yat-sen in 1911.

family members, so they were not wealthy.

As for Jane and Mei, they are no doubt Taiwanese because their parents are Taiwanese and their ancestors lived in Taiwan for a long time. Sharon, however, differs from them in that she is older and experienced Japanese colonization when she learned Japanese for four years in elementary school. Later, she did not have the chance to go back to school because of the eight-year fight against Japan from 1937 to 1945. Therefore, she regards herself as speaking Japanese well, but not Mandarin.

Sharon's Identity: the Japanese are not Bad Guys

Sharon's identity is significantly influenced by the Japanese culture, customs, language, and educational system. In fact, she identifies herself as partly Japanese, and identifies so strongly with the culture and the language that she had intended to move to Japan with her husband. As she recalled:

I had learned Japanese to the fourth grade. My husband was better than me. He is good at reading and writing, and I have no problem of speaking (in Japanese). I could write, but not better than him....I had learned some Chinese, ㄅㄆㄇㄉ²². I talk with my parents in Taiwanese. Most of the time, my sisters and brothers talk in Japanese each other. And after I got married, I talked with my husband in Japanese. (Sharon, line 558-569)

Therefore, although Sharon could speak English, Mandarin, Taiwanese and Japanese, she prefers Japanese and talks almost exclusively in Japanese with her husband. In the U.S., her neighbor was Japanese and she usually spoke with him in Japanese, not English. As she

²² This is the phonetic system for learning traditional Chinese

claimed, “No problem, my Japanese has no problem at all” (Sharon, line 573). She praises Japanese culture for its strictness and for its well-behaved people. Sharon admires Japanese people, their education and language.

Although Sharon clearly prefers Japanese culture, she knows that she is Taiwanese because her parents are Taiwanese. Sharon’s feelings toward Taiwan are complicated and therefore reveal her identity struggles. In her view, Chiang’s government functioned from the position of outsider, depriving the Taiwanese of benefits. Sharon disagrees with Chiang’s government and she supports Taiwan’s independence from China. Furthermore, in her era, as a result of the Chinese Civil War, people were expected to chose a side in the conflict by identifying as either Taiwanese or Chinese. Moreover, Sharon vividly remembered that there was a deep conflict between Waishengren and Benshengren - so much so, that if she had married a Waishengren, she thought, “We would be killed” (Sharon, line 486). She was further alienated from Chiang’s government when she concluded that her husband was a victim of Chiang’s political persecution. Thus, she seldom identifies herself as Chinese, but instead identifies herself as a Taiwanese who prefers Japanese culture and language.

In fact, it is debatable who is a real or authentic Taiwanese because that is extremely difficult to define. Technically, even a Chinese person who left China three hundred years ago and moved to Taiwan could be called Taiwanese. However, Chinese who left China in 1949

are not considered legitimately Taiwanese and are instead called “Waishengren.” Yet both the former and the latter Chinese immigrants have significant cultural affiliation with China. Should who is Taiwanese be determined solely by basing that definition on who immigrated to Taiwan the earliest? This question remains contestable even within Taiwan today.

The problem of ethnic and national definition becomes even more complicated if the aboriginal people in Taiwan are considered. Despite the fact that they have lived in Taiwan for over 300 years, the aboriginal people, 原住民, or 山地人, “mountain people” have lived in the mountains and have not had as many benefits as the Taiwanese immigrants from China who grasped power by taking land, and building economic capital. Although the “authentic Taiwanese” fight for Taiwanese independence and hate the Waishengren for taking all the privileges from them, they never consider how they, themselves, had taken privileges away from the aboriginal people.

Of course, the complex story of Taiwanese history and identity is not unique. In the U.S. there is a similar logic that drives American immigration policy. Since the 1800s, Europeans have, for only a few dollars for an immigration permit, immigrated to the U.S. Now, those people with European ancestry who have since become Americans, have restricted the population of immigration (Daniels, 2002). Everyone desires to close the door behind themselves.

My Reflections: Whose History is it?

Sharon's struggles with her identity made me wonder which version of history is real. I began to investigate both my own and my parents' experiences of Japanese colonization. Although I was not born in the period of Japanese colonization (Chiang died in 1975 when I was only three years old), Chiang's restricted language policy of speaking Mandarin-only and his strict control of the textbooks influenced my identity. During his regime, he used school textbooks to express his hatred toward the Japanese. Chiang lost his authority over China during the China-Japan eight year war from 1937-1945 (Phillips, 2006, Manthorpe, 2005). As I recalled, Japanese colonization as described in Chiang's controlled textbooks, presented a terrifying picture of the Japanese mistreatment of the Taiwanese and of their seizing and benefiting from Taiwan's rich land. Within the textbooks, the Japanese were called 日本鬼子, Japanese ghosts, to indicate their evilness. In fact, Kelly used this term frequently throughout our interviews. These "ghost" soldiers killed thousands of Taiwanese for not obeying them. I was brainwashed to believe that not only were the Japanese evil for killing thousands of Taiwanese and Chinese people, but also that Japan should take responsibility for the split between Taiwan and China. On the other hand, from the textbooks I had also learned that China was both good and superior. The textbooks privileged Chinese history, praised Chiang's leadership, and advocated returning to China. Unfortunately, there was only a small focus on describing Taiwan's history. Taiwan was clearly considered as only a temporary base,

and it was therefore not necessary to include text concerning Taiwan's history and cultures.

Once I began to investigate history books and, in particular, their descriptions of Japanese colonization and Chiang's rule over Taiwan, I saw that they revealed different views toward Japan's colonization. For example, the textbooks that I had studied as a child were written under the supervision of Chiang's government. As a result, I was manipulated to believe that the Japanese tried to control and kill us. Moreover, Chiang used Mandarin and the media to creatively present himself as a super hero, who was simultaneously mysterious and in possession of exceptionally strong power. As I recall, he maintained this image of himself by never speaking or appearing in the media, instead, all of his actions were reported through the one newspaper and three television channels that he controlled. Furthermore, as the supreme leader who brought the Chinese/Taiwanese people home to China he was portrayed as deserving both protection and admiration.

As a result of Chiang's strict control of the media, and his creation of himself as a super hero, he cultivated a loyal following of people who truly believed in him, and who, upon his death in 1975, expressed tremendous anger and grief. In fact, there were reports that when faced with his death, many soldiers lost their direction for living. These soldiers had made tremendous sacrifices for their country, following Chiang to Taiwan from China, and often forfeiting their families in China. In return for their military service, Chiang had given them

戰士授田證, a “Certificate of Holding Lands for Soldiers,” which promised them land when they returned to their Chinese hometown. Unfortunately, upon his death these certificates became invalid and were worthless. Many people cried over Chiang’s body, not only because they were sad about his death, but also because they lost the leader to bring them “home” to China as promised, who would secure those promised benefits for them.

Although mainlanders show their strong support of Chiang’s leadership, this does not mean that every Taiwanese has the same belief. My parents, for example, do not believe in Chiang’s leadership because they were born at the last period of Japan’s colonization in the 1940s. Instead, because my parents’ ancestors were early immigrants to Taiwan two hundred years ago and had been influenced by Japanese culture, they frequently praise the Japanese. For instance, once they told me that the crime rate was low in their neighborhood because the Japanese regime enforced strict laws and punishments for criminal activity. If they caught a burglar, the Japanese police had the right to cut the criminal’s hands off. According to my parents, this brutality effectively prevented crimes. In addition, the Japanese constructed many of the famous buildings in Taiwan, including the building where the President currently lives which was built during the Japanese colonization period. Thus, in my parents’ minds, the Japanese made important contributions to Taiwan. This positive view of the Japanese was reflected in the fact that my aunts and uncles spoke to each other in Japanese and my mother was given a Japanese name.

I am interested in how my parents, uncles, and their generation, who are inclined towards Japanese culture, struggled when they were forced believe in Chiang. Many of my relatives are teachers, and I begin to wonder how their internal struggles might affect what they teach children in schools. Although they do not believe in Chiang and have a preference for Japanese culture, in order to make a living they have to teach beliefs with which they personally disagree. I am confused myself by these two competing perspectives resulting from Japanese colonization and Chiang's government. At school, I behaved as a good student who had been brainwashed to believe in Chiang. So, I have been confused whenever my parents shared their perspective, which was clearly very different from that espoused in the school textbooks. I questioned their praise for Japan since my textbooks described vividly how the Japanese destroyed Taiwan's language, infrastructure, and manipulated citizen's minds. At the time, I firmly believed that the Japanese were evil, that Chiang and his regime were the best in the world, and that it was in Taiwan's best interest to be controlled by one political party, the Kuomintang. Unfortunately, I did not realize that as a democratic nation, the government should not strict people's freedom of speech or travel. I gradually realized that true democracy requires both of those freedoms of as well as the freedom of having more than one political party from which to choose the leaders.

The narratives of my research participants and their various historical perspectives have caused me to reshape my concept of my own identity. More specifically, I began to

clearly understand the role the textbooks, which I had studied as a child, played in shaping my identity. First, in order to demonstrate the legitimacy of Chiang's control of Taiwan, it was necessary for them to designate an enemy. Second, the Japanese were a convenient target because Chiang hated that he lost his fight against Mao's military when the Japanese intervened. Chiang had almost defeated Mao. However, when the Japanese suddenly spearheaded an invasion of China, the Chinese people united to fight Japan. Therefore, Mao had an opportunity to rest, gather strength, and to later defeat Chiang. As I reviewed this historical context, I understood why Sharon, who lived under Japanese colonization, praised the Japanese. Just like my parents, she did not realize how she had been influenced by the Japanese colonization. Ultimately, my parents did not realize how much their views influenced my identity development.

Interestingly, I did not realize the degree to which my personal identity would affect my future marriage until I married a Waishengren. Unfortunately, my mother did not agree to our marriage because, as she told me, "You know, Waishenren do not want to stay in Taiwan. They do not save much money because they expect to leave Taiwan and go back to China soon. They are unstable and do not want to save money for buying houses or lands. I am afraid that you would suffer from that." She wanted me to give up my connections to both my husband and his Waishengren family. She was afraid that my husband would not be able to buy land to secure our future in Taiwan because, as a Waishengren, he would be more

concerned about his current life and his immediate future, but not the distant future. My mother's negative perception of Waishengren stemmed directly from Taiwanese stereotypes. Actually, my husband is always confused by being labeled as Waishengren. He said, "I was born here, I can speak Taiwanese as well. Why do I have to be Waishengren?" Despite his efforts to assimilate, this label bars him from being an integrated participant in the Taiwanese community.

I have to admit that my mother's prediction is not completely untrue. In fact, my husband's parents do not want to invest in Taiwanese land because they want to return to China. Moreover, there are significant cultural differences between our two families. For example, both sides of our families have different traditions for conducting the banquet for a marriage. During our wedding preparations, they argued about the appropriate traditions and customs. In addition, I have had to adjust to the foods, eating habits, and beliefs held by my husband's family. Our married life represents a long process of negotiation for me with my husband's family.

Where is My Home?

In the next section, I discuss how these different identities result in different home choices for each of my participants. More specifically, I use both a poststructuralist and a third-world feminist lens to explore how these Taiwanese immigrant women's ethnic identity affects their home choice. Mohanty (2003), an influential feminist, criticizes Western

feminists for overlooking immigrant women of color in the U.S. She believes that Anglo-American's feminisms, or the white middle-class women's movements, have taken control of most of the resources in the feminist field, and they have often ignored the other women in the United States, who then are not represented (Mohanty, 1991). White feminist movements, unfortunately, pay little attention to immigration issues. The various immigration laws, such as the Exclusion Act, still illustrate the white, masculinist colonization that regards immigrants as second-class citizens and deserve feminists' attention (Mohanty, 1991).

Cherrie and Anzaldua (1983) advocate for the importance of colored women's voices being heard in the U.S. In their groundbreaking work, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (1983), they outline the following objectives:

- how visibility/invisibility as women of color forms our radicalism;
- the ways in which Third World women derive a feminist political theory specifically from our racial/cultural background and experience;
- the destructive and demoralizing effects of racism in the women's movement;
- the cultural, class, and sexuality differences that divide women of color;
- Third World women's writing as a tool for self-preservation and revolution; and
- the ways and means of a Third World feminist future (Cherrie and Anzaldua, 1983, xxiv).

These writings on feminisms by women of color reveal the simultaneity of oppression, social and political marginality, and the histories of racism and imperialism. Poststructuralists

intend to illustrate how the hegemonic state affects these women's daily life, including the differences, conflicts, and contradictions (Mohanty, 2003). Thus, feminisms regarding women of color allow women of color to explore their unique (his)stories and to speak on their own behalf. The feminist of color perspective pays attention to differences and is anti-universalism. Finally, because feminist research on female immigrants focuses on life-story oriented, written narratives including testimonials, life stories, and oral histories, they provide immigrant women with a voice.

Significantly, the feminisms of women of color reveal the struggles of immigrant women in the U.S., and the concept of home in this context. Mohanty (2003) explains the concept of home:

'Being home' refers to the place where one lives within familiar, safe, protected boundaries; 'not being home' is a matter of realizing that home was an illusion of coherence and safety based on the exclusion of specific histories of oppression and resistance, the repression of differences even within oneself. (p. 90)

From the perspective of immigrant women, home does not necessarily or only refer to geographical location. Instead, the concept of home identifies these women's personal and historical struggles, especially in terms of race and class discrimination, within their host country. From a geographical perspective, immigrant women regard their base in the host countries as a "home", a fulfillment of having a new life and a new locale for them. Homes are supposed to provide protection. But, isn't it possible that these women still encounter some obstacles, considering that they can hardly cross the boundaries of race, class and

language?

“Home”, in Mandarin, has a significantly deeper meaning. As translated into Mandarin, “home” means 家. Together, the two symbols that comprise the character of home mean house for protection and, Jia, the second symbol, refers to family and home. Liu (2005) conceptualizes Jia as, “a system of mutual obligations and a set of cultural values” (p.1). Members engage in the emotional affinity and long-term responsibilities, and devote themselves to each other in a family network. In Liu’s (2005) study of Chang’s family in the U.S., this family never had the sense of belonging in the U.S. and, as a result, they considered their cultural home to be China.

Kelly’s Americanization

我已經美國化了嘛，我的朋友都是美國人。 (Kelly, line 348-349)

I have been Americanized. All my friends are Americans.

Americanization process. Kelly’s narratives indicate how the U.S. society Americanizes immigrant women and thereby influenced Kelly’s home choice. Kelly regards herself an American and all of her friends are American. She neither wants to return to Taiwan nor China because she enjoys her social life in America. In order to indicate how she became involved with her Americans, she told me that she sold many tickets to Americans to encourage them to experience Chinese performances, such as Chinese operas, martial arts, etc. Kelly is proud to demonstrate that she actually can reach out to make many American friends.

The main reason that she believes she is Americanized, however, is because her children received an American education. Influenced by the cultural and historical information provided through American schooling, she and her family adopted American values. As she noted, “We are now almost living in American lives. Our thoughts are Americans because Chinese always regard children as their priority” (Kelly, line 453-455). She taught her children the American value of independence. As she said, “In America, when you turn to eighteen years old, you would need to be independent. Do not depend on us. After eighteen years, he would not ask money from you. Our three children had been independent since they were sixteen” (Kelly, line 478-480). In her interpretation, being American means being independent and she was proud that she educated her children for independence so successfully.

In fact, her children’s Americanization was reflected in their long-term choices in a myriad of ways. As she noted, “因為我的三個小孩都嫁老外，而且他們讀的美國書”. “My three children were all married to foreigners, and also they all studied American books” (Kelly, line 432-433). She was proud her children had married Americans and she had developed good relationships with her children’s spouses and their families. In fact, all of her experiences participating in American social activities are positive. Thus, Kelly never thought of leaving the United States because she felt fully melted into the pot and therefore fully American.

In my opinion, Americanization means that life in the United States, including American friendship, American cultures, and even American books, is valued more highly than Taiwanese friendship, culture, or books. Kelly thought the American educational system was better, so she refused to return to Taiwan because she was still concerned about her children's education. "I said, she was already in the fifth or sixth grade, going back to learn Chinese? She does not know any word of Mandarin. What can she do?" (Kelly, line 434-436) She did not want her children to start all over again in learning another language, Mandarin.

Kelly: China and Taiwan are not My Roots

Kelly's choice to stay in the United States is partially influenced by her dilemma of just where her cultural roots are located. Due to the Communist's rule in China, which made life hard and bitter, she did not chose to return there to live, even though her parents still resided there. Moreover, because she left China when she was only a teenager, she has little memory of or connection to China. Still, although she had lived for an extended period in Taiwan and had uncles and aunts there, she did not feel her roots were in Taiwan. As a result of these struggles, she decided that her home is in the United States.

Kelly's narrative reveals how exile and geographic displacement impact an individual's conception of identity. Kelly, who fled to Taiwan and then immigrated to the U.S., had difficulty identifying a "home community" (Fung, 2002). The first Taiwanese Chinese immigrants came to the U.S. in the 1960s and the largest wave immigrated in the 1980s. The

second wave of immigration occurred because of the tumultuous political environment in Taiwan as Taiwan started to claim independence in the 1980s. Kelly, one of these immigrants who chose to not return to Taiwan, is a good example that the past impacts both the present and the future home community.

Sharon: I am not a Taiwanese anymore? The Story of a Juice Can

到底這個是什麼人？(Sharon, line 469)		Who is this person anyway?
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Sharon demonstrated how when she returned to Taiwan after being in the U.S., she struggled because she was not always identified as Taiwanese by the Taiwanese society. As an example, she narrated an incident to illustrate how she had been misunderstood. While traveling on a bus to return to the place where she used to live, she saw someone selling juice cans. She said, “I did not want to drink it. I just wanted to know how much for this juice can” (Sharon, line 430-432). She did not dare ask until the bus left, then she encouraged herself to ask a lady who sat next to her about the price. The lady had been staring at her and finally asked Sharon where she came from. Sharon answered that she came back from the U.S. She described:

The lady said, ‘No wonder, I have been thinking, you do not look like the countryperson. You look like a city person. Why do not you know the price of a juice can?’She [the lady] has been thinking, you know, who is this person, anyway. I was really, really desperate. (Sharon, line 446-480)

As she told this story, Sharon burst into tears. Clearly, this story touched Sharon’s deepest memory and her heart. At first, I was confused by her tears. However, I gradually

understood Sharon's feelings and the emotional meaning of her story. I realized that this story illustrated her own feelings of isolation and the fact that she was no longer part of the Taiwanese community. If she did not even know the juice can's price in Taiwan, she was clearly an outsider and the woman's response reinforced her own sense that she was no longer welcome in the country she was so proud of, Taiwan.

我不是說不要回去，自己的故鄉哪有說不回去，總是老了的時候還要回去，對不對？ (Sharon, line 665-666)

I did not say I do not want to go back. How is it possible that I do not want to go back to my home country? I still want to go home when I am old, right?

In addition, the experience of being labeled as an outsider by the Taiwanese community makes Sharon struggle to decide the locale of her home. As Sharon said, "How is it possible that I do not want to go back to my home country? I still want to go home when I am old, right?" (Sharon, 665-666). In her mind, Taiwan is always her home even though she has lived in the United States more than thirty years. She never identifies the United States as her home country and she does not intend to spend the rest of her life there. Unfortunately, her negative experiences while visiting Taiwan make her hesitate to return to Taiwan permanently. She feels insecure towards both her home and her identity. Her narrations and her tears emphasize how she is still hesitating to make her home choice.

大時代小人物 Everyday People in a Big World

Kelly and Sharon's narrations illustrate the significantly different identity struggles that occur to the Taiwanese. The wars caused tragedies that influenced these people as

children when they were powerless to make their own choices. Yet the war between Taiwan and China had far-reaching consequences. Chinese mainlanders encountered difficulties when they intended to mingle with Taiwanese. Also, due to the political insecurity, many Mainlanders chose to immigrate to other places, such as the United States. So, for Kelly, her experiences of fleeing Taiwan and then feeling unrooted when she returned for a visit, made her believe that staying in the United States, a democratic country, could provide more security and better opportunities.

In the face of war and conflict, ordinary Taiwanese citizens were caught in the political crossfire that ultimately had a significant long-term impact on their lives. In the case of Kelly and Sharon, for example, although they are approximately the same age, they have entirely different life experiences. Kelly, who fled from China, lived in Taiwan many years and now resides in the U.S. permanently, considers herself an American. Sharon, however, who lived in Taiwan for an extended period of time, now intends to return to Taiwan. They are, in fact, victims of the Civil War and the war against Japan. Kelly was never able to return to reunite with her parents. She made it up to them by sending as much money as she could to her parents. She claims America as her home because she never locates her roots in either China or Taiwan. Yet, on the contrary, Sharon still desires to return to Taiwan even though she has been regarded as an outsider there. Kelly and Sharon live in the same age, both have Chinese heritage and are influenced by different language educations, yet they constructed

different ideologies.

Mei's Choice: Taiwan is My Home

Mei chooses Taiwan as her ideal home, based on both her husband and her family in Taiwan. She has not experienced war, only a period of unprecedented economic growth in Taiwan. The Taiwanese, under the leadership of Chiang's son, Chiang Ching-kuo, experienced economic development and an incredible economic transformation that started in the 1980s. Therefore, many people stayed in Taiwan to develop careers and recognize Taiwan as an independent nation. This new generation no longer had to grasp at every limited opportunity to study and remain abroad. Moreover, this new generation does not need to integrate into a new society or face the sacrifices that immigration often involves or have to make a difficult choice about which country to consider as home.

The rapid economic development in Taiwan improved people's lives dramatically and they no longer have to immigrate to other countries in order to secure their basic needs for food or safety. Now, they may immigrate simply because they are wealthy enough to do so, or because they want to take advantage of educational opportunities. Mei's husband, for example, chose to go abroad to earn his Ph.D. and returned to Taiwan to teach after completing his degree. As his spouse, Mei owned more choices and she could decide to either stay in the United States or return to Taiwan. Although she currently resides in the U.S. out of

concern for her two children, returning to Taiwan is still possible once she has completed her financial obligation to her children's higher education. Mei's devotion towards her children led her temporarily to give up the possibility of reuniting with her husband in Taiwan. However, eventually, she still chooses her home as Taiwan because her husband lives there. The United States, for her, is only a temporary place to live, but not a true home.

Jane's Ambivalence:

台灣已經不是我的根啊！ (Jane, line 780)	Taiwan is no longer my root!
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Jane's narration demonstrated her power to make a decision for herself about her home choice. Jane decided that she wants to remain in the U.S. even though her husband would retire in Taiwan in the future. Whether or not their family members still live in Taiwan are significant factors governing Mei and Jane's choices. Mei's goal is to return to Taiwan in order to reunite with her husband. For Jane, however, as she said, "The next generation members are all here. How is possible that I would like to come back to Taiwan?" (Jane, line 440-443) She, at this point, is concerned with living where her children are nearby.

In Jane's mind, Taiwan is not a place she longs for and she wants to stay in the United States for the rest of her life. Since her father passed away couple years ago, except for her mother still living there, Taiwan has nothing she is concerned about. As she said, "I still could visit my brothers and sisters on occasions. It does not mean that I have to move back" (Jane, 450-452). In addition, her strategy is to show filial piety to her parents by having her mother

visit the U.S. every couple of months. Jane even asked me, “Do you really want to go back? You want to stay with your son at the U.S. or stay with your parents in Taiwan? I believe you would like to see your son more, right?” (Jane, line 456-460). She believes that her decision to stay near her children is preferable than to live near her parent.

Lily: Future Home? Perhaps China

Interestingly, Lily, the youngest and the most ambitious for her career, demonstrates how the significance of time impacted her home choice. In her generation, the period of the 1990s, Taiwan’s economic development reached its peak. Moreover, women’s issues began to be important and many Taiwanese women walked away from housework in order to claim their rights. Honestly, her answer surprised me. When Lily was single, she had worked so hard to immigrate to the United States. Yet, as it turns out, she chooses China as her future home. She neither wants to remain in the U.S. nor return to Taiwan. However, after analyzing her transcriptions, I realize I am seeing Taiwan’s development into a more independent and confident nation reflected in Lily’s attitude about herself. Her career ambitions indicate that she envisions her future home without considering herself first. Instead, she requests of herself to be an international person because the world has turned into a global village. She predicts that China will become a powerful and competitive country. Therefore, living in China is her future plan.

In contrast to the other four participants in my study, Lily's stories represent a different generation; she is positive and ambitious. Unlike Mei, Jane, Kelly and Sharon, who once placed themselves as the last option, when Lily senses an opportunity, she focuses her time to reach her goal. For example, she believed that the U.S. offered a good opportunity to develop her career and she worked hard in order to live in the U.S. However, her goals are transitioning and based on her confidence in herself. The longer she lives in the United States, the more she wants to leave. This is a totally different viewpoint from when she initially came to the U.S. As she noted, "At that moment, I held a critical view and attitude. I felt there were a lot of places, that I could see the merits right away, and our demerits. This was just the feeling when I was still a student" (Lily, line 726-736). Originally, she felt that the U.S. was the best place for her and she did not want to go back Taiwan. However, Lily's faith was shaken the longer she lived in the U.S. and she did not want to force herself to continue to stay. On the contrary, she reflects upon herself and intends to relocate to another country that appears to fit her better. She gradually realized the uniqueness of Chinese cultures. She said:

I realize why Chinese cultures could last about five thousand years. I feel that we have the culture with broadness and profoundness. This erudite we have learned from the history or geography classes, I was unable to comprehend it. It did not make any sense, and I did not know what that meant....After coming to the U.S., I really feel that our culture is so strong and tough. Our Chinese have been influenced by the Confucianism and Mencius theories. That Confucius and Mencius influence us as the same as Jesus Christ influences them. But we inherit them systematically. Their believes are much more aggressive, but China is to accommodate or tolerate. Then it will help you to assimilate, I feel that China displays extraordinary

magnanimity toward other cultures. (Lily, line 733-757)

Being able to reflect upon herself, Lily plans that eventually she would immigrate to China.

Thus, identifying as Taiwanese or Chinese is no longer important for her; instead, her primary concern is to locate a place where she would have the power to develop her career.

My Reflections

These women's past experiences in both Taiwan and China result in their complicated multiple national identities as Taiwanese, Taiwanese/Japanese, Chinese or American. The narrations illustrate their struggles and their process of identity negotiation, which include doubting and then reshaping their identities over time. In addition, generational differences affect the development of independence and confidence for these Taiwanese women.

Studying these women makes me realize that because of their various and complicated identities, their home choices are likely to continue to be reshaped in the future. At different stages in time, they could be Chinese, Taiwanese or American. In fact, easier means of electronic communication and mobility between countries may lead immigrant women to maintain multiple identities simultaneously. As an example, Berger (2004), an Israeli-American, maintains a dual identity. She is rooted in the United States and integrated in its social and cultural life and she visits her home country, Israel, at least once a year.

Moreover, it's not as difficult to get Israeli products, food or books in the United States.

Luckily, economics are not main factor restricting these women from visiting Taiwan. Lily

visits twice a year and the other four women have visited Taiwan once a year.

In summary, this chapter analyzes these narratives as a central means of reconstructing identities and making meaning of their lives across time. Within the self-narrations gathered for this study, the meaning or significance of some scenes did not fully make sense to me. However, after reading about these immigrant women's lives multiple times, I realized the importance of the past, and I now understand how the stories and socio-political histories are interconnected. These women's stories provided me the opportunity to research the modern histories of Taiwan, China and The United States. To my surprise, I realized how the different historical perspectives toward Japan's colonization and Chiang's rule of Taiwan influence the narratives. In addition, I realized how the various social, political and historical backgrounds connected and impacted these women's complicated identity developments.

Chapter 8

自相矛盾 (Impenetrable Shield and All-piercing Spear) Reshape Multi-Layer Identities

楚人有鬻楯與矛者，譽之曰：「吾楯之堅，莫能陷也。」又譽其矛曰：「吾矛之利，於物無不陷也。」或曰：「以子之矛陷子之楯何如？」其人弗能應也。《韓非子·難一》

A long, long time ago, one armorer of Chu intended to sell his two tools, a shield and a spear. He claimed, 'My shield is the strongest shield in the world, and there is nothing that can penetrate it.' Then he continued to say, 'My spear is the sharpest spear in the world because it could pierce any kind of strong shield.' Then, the by passer asked, 'What happens if your spear pierces you shield?' This armorer was speechless. (Han Fei-zi²³, Nan Yi)

This chapter begins with a famous old Chinese fable called 自相矛盾. I adopt this fable as a way to describe these five women's narratives. The inconsistencies and contradictions in their narratives indicate multi-layered negotiations of their identities. This fable represents the discrepancies and inconsistencies in the negotiation of the "borderland."

The moral of the fable illustrates that these two tools, the impenetrable shield and the all-piercing spear, can not exist simultaneously, because their existence is self-contradictory. Ever since, the term of "矛盾" has been used to indicate the inconsistency of people in conversation or action. Similarly, these five women's narratives reflect discrepancies in their identity developments. Their narrative voices convey their identities as "multi-layered" when the, "complexity and contradiction, at times discernible in and across women's accounts, appear to be linked to their perceptions of 'acceptable' ways of voicing their experiences"

²³ Han Fei-zi, a book written by Han Fei. He was born around 280 B.C. and died 233 B.C.

(Miller, 1998, p. 67).

Significantly, while voicing their personal stories, these participants not only tell the stories but also connect with other people to determine their social positions and identity development. These five narrators choose various word choices and tones of voice in order to convey the characters in their life story and to connect themselves to the society and other characters. In addition, through these voices, they also position themselves, indicating who they are. Participants use double voicing, creating “ventriloquation” as Bakhtin indicated (1984). These double voices, however, sometimes illustrate their inconsistency and discrepancies in the borderlands.

The Negotiation in the Borderlands

The concept of the borderlands explains that identities often emerge from complex negotiations. The Chicana activist and writer, Gloria Anzaldua (1987) in her book *Borderlands-la Frontera: The New Mestiza*, illustrates that the U.S. is a borderland which created her identity as “mestiza.” Anzaldua’s “mestiza” or mixed identities stem from her Spanish, American, Indian, and Mexican ancestry. Lloyd (2005) conceptualizes the mestiza as a specific geographic place between the U.S. and the Mexican border. The concept of the borderlands embeds race, gender and ethnicity, and metaphorically it is deployed as a, “symbol of blended female subjectivity” (p. 3). It symbolizes, “ambivalence, contradiction

and plurality implicit in all border or marginal identities (Lloyd, p.4). In terms of feminist poststructuralist account, the mestiza represents multiple identities that are always shifting and incomplete.

In this study, these women's narratives are full of contradictions. Their stories span over several decades and include how they learned English, what their family life is like, and how they came to the United States. They also include inconsistencies and do not always cohere completely as narratives. Thus, via the interview process, I realized that these women often articulated contradictory feelings and sometimes left out aspects of their stories (Chase, 2003). When Chase, for example, analyzes the narration of successful, professional women, she discovers that while the women emphasize repeatedly their high confidence in themselves and their career success, they also often tell stories about their mistreatment within a male-dominant society. To Chase, this contradiction illustrates their lack of self-confidence.

Thus, in this chapter, I describe these women's feelings, allowing that, "the disjunction between her feelings of inadequacy and her descriptions of her strengths points to a narrative difficulty (Chase, p. 286). I discuss their feelings of inadequacy and any discrepancies or inconsistencies that appear within the narratives throughout this study. The fable of the shield and the spear represents the complexity of emotions and attitudes that these participants own.

Sharon's 矛盾, Her Complex Attitudes toward the Home Language

Sharon is the first one who inspired me to review the discrepancies between her feelings or actions in her narratives. What she said about her home language choice does not match with her actions towards her children. As a result, these examples illustrate her identity confusion towards herself and her children. For example, on the one hand, she repeatedly told me that she was proud that her children all spoke Mandarin at home and learned English at school. On the other hand, she told me in another narrative about how her son refused to continue learning Mandarin at home. These two different stories indicate to me that Sharon exhibits a dilemma and therefore had complex feelings towards her identity. While she wished to keep her children speaking Mandarin and exposed to Chinese culture, she had to yield to the reality of allowing her son to give up on proficiency with the Mandarin language and face her fears that the English language now dominates her family.

Sharon: America is Better

Sharon holds different attitudes towards English and Mandarin language-learning for her children and this illustrates both her lack of confidence in mastering English and her lack of confidence about herself. In her mind, America represents the best, so she trusted American schools to provide her children with excellent English educations. However, as a parent, she still worried about her children's level of English proficiency and initially even asked her husband to teach the children English every night. Sharon's husband could not

focus on his own studies until he finished advising his children in English language-learning.

Significantly, Sharon demonstrates her lack of confidence toward herself and her children in how she arranged the children's schooling. Since she believed that English yielded power, and since she did not feel confident in her children's English ability, she humbly asked the teachers to let her children repeat the school year in order to catch up. When this was not negotiable, she praised the Americans for not allowing her children to downgrade one year. In her narration, those teachers were very nice because they took care of her children.

However, she regained her power when she became a negotiator and asked the Taiwanese for many educational privileges for her children. When her husband had the opportunity to return to Taiwan for new employment, she was not only concerned about her husband's job, but also about how many privileges her children would have. Sharon found some explanations to make her concerns acceptable. For example, she said, "My three children would get retained in the same grade for another year if coming back, right?" (Sharon, line 281-282). Also, she told me that Chinese was very difficult, so she believed her children would have to restart their knowledge of Chinese literacy. She did not want her children to suffer, so she wanted her children to have the same privileges as the Overseas Chinese students had. For instance, the grading system for Overseas Chinese students was preferential and could guarantee a good school in their future. As she complained, "You

asked me to come back, but you do not give me the privilege...I just could not do it. My three children would get retained in the same grade for another year if coming back, right?"

(Sharon, line 279-282)

Her roles within these two educational systems demonstrate an inconsistency. While she requested privileges for her children from the Taiwanese government because they had not studied Chinese literature or history for a long time, she did not request similar privileges from the U.S. government. Instead, Sharon accepted what the teachers told her when they did not downgrade her children for another year. In fact, her children caught up in less than one year and began mastering English. This suggests that they might have been likely to accomplish the same academic mastery if they had returned to Taiwan. On the surface, Sharon made a comment that Chinese was so difficult and her children would suffer from that. However, what she chose to do demonstrated her inconsistencies and dilemmas.

Sharon: So, Who am I? American, Taiwanese, Chinese or Japanese?

Sharon's narratives demonstrate how confused she has been about her identities. She regards herself as partially Japanese in that she could speak Japanese fluently. In addition, she determines that America is preferable and she desires to be a part of American society. To illustrate her point, she narrated how lacking Taiwanese people are due to deficits in the Taiwanese educational system. She complained that the recent Taiwanese students who study

abroad have no sense of politeness, allow their children to run around, and do not teach them about polite behavior. The following story described how she was teased when she came back to Taiwan for the first time. Sharon, at that time, didn't recognize the Hilton building and asked one girl who was next to her where the Hilton was. The girl was rude to her by answering, "Don't you see it? Are you blind?" These harsh words hurt Sharon's feelings. She was hurt not because she did not see it, but because she was called "blind". She expressed her feelings in this situation:

I really wanted to cry out in my mind. I said, what happens to Taiwan? How come she just called you blind.....I was so upset that people became like this. No politeness at all. (Sharon, line 424-426)

The hurtful experience in Taiwan made Sharon believe that American education was successful because it taught Americans how to be polite. "That Americans are a little different", as she said. In her interpretation, Americans are polite and helpful, and these characteristics contributed to a successful American educational system and culture. For example, American parents educate their children well and so the children are all well behaved. She met many Chinese children who were running around in the restaurant where she worked, but the parents did not stop them. In her opinion American children were better, behaved, not making many noises, as well as saying, "Excuse me," all the time.

I believe she felt the American's kindness and friendliness began from the very

beginning of her experiences immigrating to the U.S. When she needed to bring three children to America on her own, the director of the Kinesiology Department from her husband's university sent her a letter and asked her bring it with her when she went through immigration. In Sharon's interpretation, this letter played an important key in ensuring that the immigration process would proceed smoothly. This letter, written by the director, guaranteed that Sharon's family would not have economic problems if they remained in the states longer. Thus, Sharon really appreciated the assistance from Americans. She formed a good impression of the U.S. even before coming to the U.S.

The more positive experiences she encountered, the more she believed Americans were better. American church members helped her learn English; her children received special English classes from American teachers when they first arrived, and even when she went to a cake decorating class, she felt that Americans and America were better.

Sharon: American Culture? No, Thanks

照美國文化我不會接受 他們我是不會接受。(Sharon, line 635-636)

If you want me to accept American cultures, I don't want to. I would not accept them.

Significantly, Sharon's criticism of American culture contrasts with her praise and this indicates her dilemma. At some point, she described how lacking Taiwanese education is and how successfully Americans educated and created well-behaved children. Ironically, in some conversations, she expressed that she would not accept American culture to educate her

children. For example, she believed that her youngest son was too influenced by American culture. He asked too many questions, such as why he can or why he cannot. The father disagreed with his attitude and replied, “We can not, because we are Chinese.” Unlike American children, Chinese children are just not allowed to ask too many questions.

These comments from Sharon illustrate how Sharon lives a paradoxical life. On the one hand, she praises Americans and complains a lot about the Taiwanese and even the Cantonese who cheated her once. On the other hand, at some point she does not accept American culture to teach her children, preferring to teach them in traditional Chinese ways which do not allow children to ask too many questions. In her opinion, she could not accept American culture because it is too unstructured. These points were in contrast to her previous talk concerning how wonderful American culture and educational systems are. As a result, she has the dilemma of deciding what principles to teach her children.

Sharon:

其實我對台灣大陸沒有什麼區別。

(Sharon, Line 577)

***In Fact, I Have no Difference between
Taiwan and Mainland China.***

Sharon also has the dilemmas of ethnic identities. For example, Sharon believes she has no bias towards people from Mainland China. Her two daughters-in-law and one son-in-law are all Waishengren whose parents are from China. Supposedly, Taiwanese and

Mainlanders mean the same to her. However, she unconsciously reveals her hatred toward Chinese people. For example, when I asked her if she wanted to buy a house in Shanghai in order live closer to her son who moved to Shanghai, she replied with anger:

Shanghai, now there were more and more restrictions [on house policies].
What can we do about it? The country of Communists can do whatever they
want. Today is this, and tomorrow is another. What can you do? (Sharon,
line 667-670)

It seems that she still does not trust Mainlanders. Chinese people and Communist ruling do not bring her any confidence because they even control house policies for their own benefits. Sharon is unable to accept this arbitrariness.

Sharon:

我們還是中國人 (*Sharon, line 480*)

We are Still Chinese

The excerpts above, however, do not mean that Sharon does not want to be Chinese; instead, she concludes that we are still ultimately Chinese people. Her narratives are full of inconsistencies which indicate her identity struggles. She told me many times that she and her family members are still Chinese. However, at some earlier points, she mentioned that she is Taiwanese. She sometimes does not want to accept the American way. She received a Japanese education and speaks Japanese. Throughout the narration, she never complained about Japan. I believe that she praises Japan most and that is the reason she still talks with her husband and her siblings in Japanese.

Kelly: the Complexity of Identity Negotiation of American and Chinese

我們現在差不多都是美國生活，思想也是美國人。(Kelly, line 453-454)	We are now almost living with American lives, and thoughts are Americans.
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我的兩個女婿一個媳婦都是美國人。因為我已經美國化了嘛，我的朋友都是美國人。(Kelly, line 347-349)	My two son-in-laws and one daughter-in-law are Americans. Because I has been Americanized
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Another obvious example of a woman with identity struggles is Kelly, who narrates inconsistent experiences. In the previous chapter, Kelly promoted the impression that she regarded herself as an American and was fully Americanized. She made me believe that she was no longer Chinese, but, instead, a proud American who lives an American life style. Her children were trained to be independent in the context of the U.S. As Kelly said, “Chinese parents always like to keep children as their own property” (line 335). Now she does not have to worry about any child because they all have good married lives. Her responsibility is finished and she attributed their success to American education and American culture.

However, I observed some hints in Kelly’s talks that she is not completely an American. For example, before the interview, when she introduced me to her granddaughter, she emphasized that the girl was born in the “year of the dragon”²⁴. She called her granddaughter, 小龍女, little dragon girl. In fact, she has six grandchildren and she particularly points out that this granddaughter was born in the year of the dragon, an auspicious year. In Chinese

²⁴ There are twelve animals associated in the Chinese Animal Zodiac. The Dragon is the fifth.

tradition, the dragon symbolizes strength, health, energy, and harmony. Children who are born in the year of the dragon are associated with good fortune and intelligence. Kelly celebrates having a grandchild connected with the dragon. Therefore, she still follows some Chinese traditions, but, perhaps subtly and she is unaware of it.

Most significantly, a Chinese term she used to describe Americans demonstrates that she does not regard herself as an American. I realized that she prefers to call Americans “老外” (Lao-Wai). Literally translated into Chinese, Lao Wai means foreigners. 外(Wai) means the “outsider.” She still keeps the tradition of calling Americans 老外, even when referring to her son-in-laws. This is the common term used to describe all foreigners, but especially Americans. However, if she believes herself to be a member of American society, she should have called them Americans and not foreigners, and they would then be insiders and not outsiders. Another vivid example illustrates that she unconsciously considers even herself an outsider in regards to the American community. She mentioned that she had encountered difficulties when she looked for an American church. She said, “There are many American churches who do not welcome foreigners” (Kelly, line 289-290). As a foreigner, she is aware that she could be isolated by Americans. She still has many Chinese friends and she had once been selected to be the president of a Chinese association. Paradoxically, she lives in two social networks, American and Chinese.

Two social networks put Kelly into confusion in terms of her identity development. The social network usually consists of relatives or friends who had already immigrated, serving as a link between the sending and the receiving countries. Networks are particularly important for international immigrants who come to the new countries and function away from their home countries (Brettel, et al, 1992). Organizations or networks serve to provide proper information for immigrants and provide channels to help reunite family members in the receiving countries. Moreover, the network is a community founded to support newcomers and assist them to adjust to the new environment. A previous study conducted by Pavlenko (2001), indicated that new immigrants' identities would be changed while interacting with new social networks across time. Kelly's connection with two social networks may appear to be harmonious, but eventually this dual connection caused her identity struggles.

Jane: I have Educated Two Children Who Turned to Different Ethnic Identities

Jane's inconsistencies not only confused her, but also turned her two children towards different ethnic identities. I believe her children's choices can be attributed to her behavior which then influenced her children. Jane, in fact, experienced the dilemma of how to educate her two children concerning ethnic identities. She told me:

You know, my daughter prefers to be Taiwanese. But, my son believes he is an American. The daughter likes to listen to Taiwan popular music, Taiwan series soap operas. She behaved like an oriental traditional

Taiwanese. On the contrary, the young son regarded her only of being an American. He never thought about going back to visit Taiwan relatives or making friends in Taiwan. (Jane, line 525-533)

The children's identity differences reflect Jane's identity struggles. Paradoxically, Jane does not believe that she is Taiwanese even though her parents are - she described herself as Chinese. Although she has resided in the U.S. for approximately twenty-two years, she still eats Chinese food and maintains a Chinese life style. She never intends to build relationships with Americans. Her difficulty adjusting to American society has in part contributed to her negative feelings in the work place. In addition, she feels the despair of not being accepted because she does not have proficiency in English. Therefore, she prefers to be "a Chinese in American society, living with two children with two different ideologies." (Jane, line 480-481)

Mei: My Struggles of Teaching Two Languages

In addition to the discussion of her identity struggles, I explored the discrepancies between Mei's language attitudes towards English and Mandarin, and her dilemma regarding remaining in the United States.

我來美國之前，我小孩子我沒有教他們英文，因為我覺得沒有必要。
(Mei, line 233-234)

Before coming to the U.S., I did not teach them English because I did not think it is necessary.

Mei had the dilemmas of teaching her children two languages. In her mind, children would be influenced by the language environment and therefore, as a parent, she did not have

to teach children in advance of their relocation. Also, she trusted that an American education would provide a perfect English environment to her children. In fact, the children's later academic accomplishments proved her right that the children's immersion into an English environment would serve them well.

之前，我教他一年的國語啊。(Mei, line 148)

I had been teaching him Mandarin about one year.

However, Mei has a different attitude toward Mandarin-learning that contrasts to her own theory of language-learning. She pushed her son to learn how to write Mandarin. Before deciding to move back to Taiwan, she taught her son how to read and write in Mandarin. Her son's homework each day consisted of not only his English assignments, but also Mandarin writing and reading. Thus, when he returned to Taiwan, he caught up quickly and became number one among his classmates. In these cases, Mei had a contradictory attitude toward English and Mandarin language-learning. If she believed that the environment is the most important factor, and therefore children should learn English in an English-dominant environment, why did she help her son learn Mandarin before returning to Taiwan? In my opinion she is unaware that she held different standards for language-learning in the two different contexts.

Mei: Children were more Important than Husband

In addition to contrasting attitudes towards language-learning, Mei also exhibited inconsistencies toward the children and her husband. In the previous conversation, she told

me that she remained in the states because of heavy economic burden, citing that college tuition stateside is much more expensive than tuition in Taiwan. It was possible that they could not afford the expenses of her children's tuition if she depended on her husband's salary in Taiwan. She also expressed that she desires to eventually reunite with her husband in Taiwan.

However, more inconsistencies emerged when I had more chances to interact with Mei. The more Mei talked, the more she demonstrated that she desires to live with her children. For example, she said, "I think I should stay here, then you would know what children are thinking about" (Mei, line 355). Seemingly, she understands that her children would grow up and leave home and she appears ready to adjust to her changed role and reunite with her husband. But, she also told me how much her son needed her, to explain Chinese terms, etc. These examples prove to her that she is still needed by her son, and the necessity she feels to remain in the United States. Therefore, I realize that even though she said she would leave the United States after her children graduated, it is possible that she would find additional excuses to stay closer to her children because she has many concerns about her son. Her son's drinking problem might cause her to stay in the U.S. longer and she does not let her children live too far away from her, so it is not likely that she would actually return to Taiwan permanently.

Mei, on the contrary, does not demonstrate a need for her husband's company. As she

said eventually, “Right, of course it is good to have a companion, but life is going on, right?”

It appears that she already accepted a life separate from her husband. Therefore, on the surface, she explains that she might go back to Taiwan after her children grow up, but on a deeper level, she still desires to remain in the same country as her children.

Lily: American? Chinese? Taiwanese?

In contrast to the other participants, Lily has been confident about herself from the beginning of her coming to the U.S. As she articulated, after getting the master’s degree, “I just did not want to go back to Taiwan. I felt the environment in Taiwan was too small [opportunities were limited]. It is likely that I could not do big business there” (Lily, line 190-191). Therefore, even though her classmates returned to their home countries because of recession and thus limited opportunities in the U.S., Lily still insisted on remaining. In her mind, the U.S. represents everything good. For example, she claims the environment is cleaner and Americans are friendlier.

Paradoxically, she did not mention Taiwan as one of her ethnic identities. She regards herself as and is proud of being Chinese with five thousand years of history behind the culture. She wants to develop her business in the U.S. with a Chinese identity. However, after the interview, she told me that she did not like living in the U.S. where the longer she lives there, the more she realizes she does not like it. Thus, she is ambivalent about where she wants to live in the future.

In summation, I find something very interesting; all of the participants share a Chinese identity, as defined below when Yang declared:

Chinese is more than an ethnic identity; it is also a system of belief, with its dogma, prejudice, and guilt-inducing credo... You will always be Chinese no matter what citizenship you take up. Chinese will always have a claim on you....In China there are Buddhists, Taoists, Muslims, Confucians, Christians among a host of religions, but each person, above all, is born spiritually, piously, religiously Chinese. There is no getting away from it. (Belle Yang, 2000, p. 212)

These five women have struggled with multiple identities. However, a Chinese ancestry defines their final preferences regarding identity and home choices. The spirit of China occupies them and influences their multiple identity struggles.

Finally, this research not only provides evidence of these women's multiple identities, but also illustrates the complexities, inconsistencies and ambivalences in their identity development. They have similar feelings to those Anzaldua expressed in her conception of "borderlands," which include a complexity of emotions towards the United States. Their narratives living in this borderland cause them to reflect upon their ambivalences and dilemmas. These struggles not only influence themselves, but also their families, and especially the next generation. However, experienced as immigrants who were marginal and outside of the center, the borderlands were still filled with joy and exhilaration (Anzaldua, 1987). The border does not confine the mestiza or their identities. On the other hand, these women with these ambivalences still attempted to cross this border, which is referred to as

the “new mestiza” consciousness. These identities are not unitary, or static. This identity is always in the process of becoming (Anzaldua, 1987).

Chapter 9

Epilogue

Their Story/My Story/Our Story: Insider versus Outsider

The story is not all mine nor told by me alone. Indeed, I am not sure whose story it is; you can judge better. But it is all one, and if at moments that facts seem to alter with an altered voice, why then you can choose the fact you like best; yet none of them is false, and it is all one story. (Le Guin, as cited in Bloom, 2002, p. 292)

The Final chapter reflects on the insider/outsider status between myself as the researcher, and the researched participants, these five Taiwanese immigrant women. I retell their stories and at the same time, from the perspective of a feminist researcher, I reveal both these women's struggles and my own in the United States. Moreover, I discuss how, over the long interview process, these interactions empowered both myself and the women, and helped us all discover and reshape our multiple identities in meaningful ways.

The role of researcher occupies an important role because the researcher must retell the stories in a trustworthy manner. Researchers do not find out the stories; we present stories by retelling our participants' perspectives through our lens and redescriptions (Mishler, 1995; Durrance, 1997). We create concepts, methods, and our own perspectives to interpret the participants' stories. Thus, this story is co-authored. It is both associated with the participants' perspectives directly and with the researcher's interpretations indirectly. These processes result in transformation into different texts and discourse. (Merriam, 2002)

This chapter demonstrates the process of the complexities of different roles and areas of knowledge between the participants and myself. As Mishler (1995) articulates, the researchers distinguish between types of knowledge within a storyline. These distinctions include: “public” (professional knowledges and practices), “private” (informal, lay knowledges) and “personal (a sense of self in a human account). Moreover, narrations of self in social context (Elliott, 2005) are a means to negotiate our “self” during an interaction with others. Throughout the narratives, I interweave my roles, so that I include my public (professional) researcher role as well as my private and personal life. This practice leads me to realize that research requires both collecting women’s stories and continually reflecting. In order for a researcher to conduct a successful process, these complex situations must be acknowledged.

I discuss my role as an outsider and an insider throughout. As an insider, I share characteristics with some of the participants. I am also a Taiwanese mother whose child was born in the U.S and therefore may have faced similar conditions. However, I am also an outsider who does not match all the criteria and therefore does not belong in this grouping. For example, I had not resided in the U.S. for the required 10 years. In contrast, these participants have been U.S. citizens for quite some time. The difference in status may affect their willingness to tell me their private stories. Nevertheless, interacting with them and struggling with myself as an insider /outsider provided me opportunity to reflect on the

process of my identity development negotiations throughout this study.

My Research Involvement: My Reflexivity

Thus, this study, inspired by poststructuralisms, openly considers my involvement as an author and therefore explores beyond the texts, against which one author/ity emerges. The author (i.e. researcher, i.e. myself) no longer functions as a guarantee of meaning or authenticity. Instead, interpretation is a process of negotiating among contexts. Different meanings emerge as a result of analyzing the different contexts. In addition, including the reflexivity of my own stories is not a new narcissism. Rather, who I am and what my experiences are directly affect how I produce this work. This work is the site of negotiation of contexts and the meanings of words.

These five women's narratives have refreshed my own memories and my thoughts. The more I became involved with the participants, the more I became a different person. I begin to trace back over my old memories, and describe my personal feelings. These experiences have helped me reflect upon my own self and interpret the feelings of my participants (Stivers, 1993; Ellis & Berger, 2001). I share their emotions and that allows me to represent their stories in a more powerful way. By participating in these interviews, I have been affected and even changed.

However, more research involvement results in changes to the power relationships during the process of the research. Naples (2003a), in referring to Williams' (1996) study,

elaborates that even though Williams shares the same racial-ethnic background with her participants, she loses power with her participants because she is perceived as the outsider of the group. This experience of losing power and reflecting upon herself redefines the researcher's identities. In addition, Lal (1999), a feminist researcher, also loses power when she returns to India, her home country, for research. Lal studied in the U.S. and had conducted research in that context. In her interactions with Americans, she identified herself as a "third world woman", the "outsider." When she decided to return to India for research, she assumed that she would return "home" as an insider to conduct the research. However, her story reveals that she was situated in the role as "the Other" among her subjects. She realized then that even though she is an Indian woman, she has class privileges that restrict her access to Indian women who are factory workers in Delhi. As a middle-class woman, she does not have access to the working class. Her process of negotiating between her insider and outsider identities gradually reshapes and reconstructs her identity. Her reflexive practices help her cross the boundaries between theory and methodology, and end up empowering her as a feminist researcher.

Instead of doing an objective analysis, feminist researchers highlight the importance of the power relations between researchers and participants, and they discuss how this power is woven and infused throughout the research process. Encouraging the researchers to reveal their personal selves, feminist researchers advocate sharing participants' experiences and also

developing a close relationship with participants by sharing their feelings. As Naples (2003a) concludes, “We are never fully outside or inside the community; our relationship to the community is never expressed....but is constantly being negotiated and renegotiated in particular, everyday interactions...” (p. 49)

In this section, I first reveal the power relations with these five women in my first interview and my subsequent interviews. Secondly, I illustrate how their interactions and experiences have reshaped and reconstructed my identities. Finally, I relate how they and I have all been empowered through the research process.

Jane

Jane was the first woman I contacted and she became a significant person in this study. She played two important roles, as the gatekeeper who introduced me to other two participants and as a participant in this study. When I met her for the first time, I realized immediately that she is a kind, warm-hearted person who likes to help people. She gave me a level of comfort and she looked motherly. She suggested that I go to the Chinese church to meet other women for my study.

When I entered the Chinese church network, I was inspired to review the functions of immigrants’ social networks, of which there are two kinds (Brett et.al (1992). First, chain immigration provides channels to help reunite other family members with the receiving countries. Second, the network is a community founded to support newcomers, assisting them

with adjustment to the new environments. These networks, not only provide opportunities for individuals' social needs, but also serve as channels for community information. More importantly, getting involved in these immigrant social networks in a new country influences immigrants' identities across time (Norton, 2000).

The Chinese church in Cape City services various social network functions. The Church attracts many Taiwanese and even more Chinese women who would like to meet new friends. Chinese churches provide important services to new immigrants, not only meeting spiritual needs, but provide crucial information about taxes, laws or insurance. Moreover, churches provide advice for locating housing or employment. Chinese churches also maintain traditional culture (Chen, 1992). When I arrived at the church the first time I visited, the members held a party to celebrate Chinese New Year. Many new people were brought to the church functions by friends to meet church members and to enjoy Chinese food. Jane warmly welcomed me; she grasped my hands, showed me around, and introduced me to people that she believed would be helpful to my study. I felt touched by her kindness and heart-warming actions.

However, due to my own shy personality, I felt awkward entering this social network. I faced the difficulty of asking people to participate in my study. I am not one who engages actively and quickly when meeting someone for the first time. Therefore, after I was introduced, I was passive and did not know how to continue. It was hard for me to ask for

participation in the study because I would prefer to keep distant from new acquaintances and observe from that distance for awhile. Moreover, I would often not talk to people new to me unless I made certain they were willing to talk to me. I felt awkward and felt myself struggling; how should I open the conversation about my research to a group that is chatting? What and when should I ask to set up an interview session with me? Meanwhile, because many of the Taiwanese women were helping with the meal service or talking to newcomers, they could only talk with me briefly. I had to grasp the limited time to explain my study. During this initial process, I felt incredibly awkward and disempowered.

Fortunately, Jane noticed my awkwardness and helped me out. She took an active role, introducing me to her friends whom she thought would help me to conduct my study. She even talked persuasively to these friends and said, “Hey, she needs you to have interviews to talk about your immigration experiences. Yes, yes, you are one who suits this study. I am very interested in listening to your stories” etc. Her opening intervention eased the awkwardness between her friends and myself. More interestingly, she even called a friend whom she thought might be suitable for this study and persuaded her to participate in my research. I did not know that until one day, as I lunched with Jane, her friend also showed up and asked me, “When can I have the interviews? I have many stories to tell.” However, because I had already selected all of my participants, I had to be honest and politely reject her. Still, I realized how warm-hearted Jane was and that she liked to help people she knew.

In addition, Jane regarded me as a good friend even though we had just met a few times.

While calling her to set up the date for interviewing her, she began to talk about her family situation and how her son applied to the same university that I attended. Also, because my husband had experience as a counselor who helps undergraduate newcomers, we had new topics to talk about. I was no longer solely a researcher, instead, I could reach back and become her friend. The conversations were full of concern about her son, his major and minor choices, etc. She was a typical Taiwanese mother who was worried about where her son was going to live during the next semester because this is the first time he would no longer live with his parents.

With Jane, I played the roles of friend and consultant. For example, I provided my personal experiences about living at the university. When she and her son visited the campus, I became their tour guide, showing Jane and her son around. Interestingly, when I mentioned the entrance test her son was required to take before enrolling at the university, she became more nervous. This entrance test is unique to the university itself and required of every newcomer. She repeatedly asked me whether I could bring her more information about the test and I brought the documents when we next met.

In addition, I became a confidant who comforted her. Jane has high opinions of other women and has looked down upon herself. Every time we talked, she behaved modestly, saying her story was not as significant as other women's. She, more than once, told me, "Oh,

my story is nothing to talk about. You know, you should interview some people, like Mrs. A, or Mrs. B. I am not as important as they are.” In her interpretations, those women are successful women because they earn a lot of money. She was not confident enough to share her story. Since she expected me to write “successful women’s stories,” she felt ineligible because she was not as successful. Therefore, at some point, I acted as a counselor by supporting the validity and value of her story and affirmed that she was definitely qualified as one of my participants.

I believe her lack of confidence initiates in her belief that she is not a fluent English speaker. I had to support her by assuring her that her English proficiency was all right. During interviews and interactions, when I sensed her lack of confidence, I became a consultant, telling her not to worry about her English proficiency. In fact, her stories made me wonder how to judge people’s language proficiency. If her English was as limited as she claimed, how could she pass the English test and get a state job? It is hard for me to judge language proficiency from self-perceptions.

The relationship between Jane and I broke the boundary between the researcher and the researched. We became good friends and have much to share. For example, I moved to Minnesota where she had lived before. We still keep in touch and she provides much information about Minnesota because it is the first state she lived in after arriving in the U.S. With her assistance, my family and I receive help and support from her friends who still work

in Minnesota. Although the interviews are completed, I continue to build a good relationship with her.

Mei

Mei has a different character from Jane's and appears to prefer to keep her distance from me. Mei was the first woman Jane introduced me to. Jane had already given me some information about the fact that Mei's husband does not live with the family. Mei did not talk much, just nodded her head and said "Hi". When she turned away from me and started to talk with some of the other Chinese women, I assumed I might have difficulty asking Mei if I could interview her. Still, I encouraged myself to approach her. Unfortunately, I found that I was speechless in the face of Mei's coolness. Her reaction made me wonder whether I should ask her if she had time to talk to me at some other time. My husband encouraged me to get involved with these women and warned me that I could lose the opportunity because of the time limit. But, I felt too awkward as an outsider to interrupt these women's conversations.

Finally, the women stopped their conversation and I had the chance to talk to Mei alone. I began to introduce myself and asked if she agreed to participate in this study. She said, "Yes," immediately, but still with a cool face. When she wrote down her address and telephone number, I was elated. She was the first person I asked whom I barely knew and she was willing to interview with me. I had a good start and I felt then that everything would be perfect.

Unfortunately, the study had to be postponed for about one year due to my health condition. I was not able to contact her until improved health allowed me to continue the study. It had been a long time since our first contact and I wondered if she would still remember me when I dialed the telephone number she had given me. I was worried that she would not be at home or, worse, would reject me. When she answered the phone, I again introduced myself and eventually, she remembered me. She was a cautious person and began to check the date that we would meet. From the distance I experienced with her even on the phone, I felt that she would like being in charge of our first meeting date. She told me that we needed to delay for about three weeks because she and her husband had planned to visit their children in the city. I was astonished to hear that she also cordially invited me to stay over at her house if I needed to stay late. However, I suspected then that she was just being polite.

Interestingly, the dynamic changed after I described my illness. After we set up the interview date, we began to chat and I related to Mei that I had discontinued my study because I had been very seriously ill. In fact, I was absent from the U.S. about eight months in order to take care of myself and so I had discontinued the interview process. I could sense that she began to change her tone. She paid full attention and listened to the process of my surgery and treatments. I had no idea why I chose to share this information with a stranger. Was it because I wanted her to trust me? She began to comfort me and gave me some information about other women who had experienced the same illness. We had a wonderful

conversation by the end and, before hanging up, she invited me to stay at her house again and this time I did not feel any distance between us.

As I got to know Mei better, I realized that she and I both did not feel comfortable encountering new friends. However, I sensed her warmth after I got to know her. During several of our interviews, she became a consultant to me, providing me with useful information and sharing her experiences because she had lived in my university community before. Also, she introduced me to Chi-Kung, a Chinese exercise that can assist sick people with their healing. She even xeroxed the instructions for me and asked me to practice at home.

More importantly, she began to share her secrets with me. During the interviews, she opened up about herself, and spoke honestly about her marriage and her son. After the interviews, she shared that her son was not a perfect person because he had a drinking problem. Thus, I had to comfort her; I encouraged her to relax and listened to her complaints. In fact, I felt honored because it is hard to tell something from deep inside the heart, even to close friends.

Kelly

Kelly, unlike Jane and Mei who both resembled my mother, represents another generation away from mine, and resembled a grandmother. Jane had immediately in mind that Kelly must have many immigrant experiences to tell. She and Jane have known each

other for almost twenty years after meeting at the Chinese church. Jane regarded Kelly as the eldest, most respected Taiwanese immigrant woman in Cape City by relating that, “You must meet Kelly first because she is our leader.” Jane gave me the impression that Kelly was kind and warm-hearted as well.

妳住在那裡啊？… 那你應該認識于醫生
吧？于醫生你知道吧！于醫生是我兒
子。

Where do you live?....Then you must know
Dr. Yu. Do you know Dr. Yu? Dr. Yu is my
son.

The first time I met Kelly in church proved that Jane was correct in her appraisal that Kelly would be kind and nice to new friends. When she met me initially, she held my hand and started to ask me, “Where do you live?” She started to connect her son to me by telling me that my place was close to her son’s clinic. She spoke of him as “Dr. Yu instead of “my son” many times when I talked to her. In her mind, Dr. Yu is a famous doctor about whom everyone should know and she could not wait to introduce me to him. This was a clear indication that she favored her son. Also, she introduced herself to new acquaintances by announcing that she is the mother of Dr. Yu.

The second time I felt her kindness was when I called her to set the date for our first meeting. Again, I was worried in advance because it had been almost a year between the first time I met her and when I finally called her. She was pleased to hear from me and, to my surprise, she immediately recognized me, saying, “Didn’t you come back to Taiwan for a long time?” I was shocked because I had not even mentioned my illness yet. She actually had become concerned about me and had asked Jane why I disappeared for so long. Therefore,

she was not surprised when I contacted her and even asked me how I had been doing. Her conversation relieved any anxiety and provided me some comfort, and I looked forward to interview her and know her better.

帶回去，帶回去，試試看我自己做的豆腐。

Take it home, take it home. Try my homemade tofu.

I was overwhelmed by Kelly's kindness, particularly during our first meeting at her house. I felt it was not a formal meeting; instead, it seemed like an informal party. I went with Jane because I was not familiar with the location of Kelly's house. Upon entering the house, Kelly immediately took out her homemade tofu from the refrigerator and insisted Jane take some home. She also prepared a bag of tofu for me. In her mind, homemade tofu is very special, just like Sharon, who also likes to make tofu herself. This reflects their experience during the time of the difficulty when they had to make tofu or Chinese food on their own. At my age, I could not understand why these mothers would make tofu on their own since it has become readily available and I could even buy different kinds of tofu in American supermarkets. I guess it is nostalgia which brings back their memory of '家鄉味', the taste of **home**. This is a taste that we will never be able to buy in any store. Also, a gift of tofu was a way to demonstrate her kindness by sharing with friends.

The Interview Tidbits

Many incidents during my interviews with Kelly indicated to me how she intended to

relieve my uneasiness. She made a Taiwanese style tea called Pearl Bubble Tea for me because she knew that Pearl Bubble teas were popular the last time I lived in Taiwan. She even asked me what she could do to improve her bubble tea. Her actions made me feel that she treated me as a friend, instead an interviewer, or even a researcher.

In addition, Kelly did not start by answering my questions. Instead, she brought me into the living room and showed me many family photographs prominently displayed throughout the room. It was clear to me that showing me her photos was a way for her to share her happiness about her family. Particularly, I was attracted to an old, black and white picture of a very slender, young lady and a young man. I was unable to connect this woman who stood in front of me to the girl in the photo. I looked at Kelly again. She was a little fat, walked slowly, and wore a loose blouse and loose pants, whereas the young lady smiled broadly and apparently enjoyed standing beside her husband. It was a peaceful picture! Kelly noticed me looking and proudly said, “That’s me, when I was young, when I just moved to the U.S. This is my husband.” She still kept this old photo, hung it up in an obvious place to let people see her status as a married woman. She was willing to demonstrate her love for husband and family to me as someone who had just met her once.

My meeting with her daughter and granddaughter impressed me very much and proved to me that she was an open-minded and happy mother and grandma. Her eldest daughter and the granddaughter suddenly appeared at her front door. I heard a very loud voice calling,

“Grandma, Grandma.” It was a young girl’s voice. Then a teenage girl entered and gave Kelly a kiss and a hug. This teenager girl did not expect me there as a guest, but she looked calm and self assured, shook my hand, and introduced herself, “Hi, I am Sandy. Nice to see you. I am her granddaughter.”

Sandy was a typical American girl who could start conversation easily. She had long hair, tiny jeans and heavy eyebrows. From her facial appearance, I could tell that one of her parents was not Asian. I realized then she was the one Kelly talked about all of the time, her favorite grandchild, the girl who was born in the dragon year. Once Sandy understood the purpose of my visit, she began to shout, “Grandma has a lot of stories to tell. I interviewed her last time and her stories were fascinating.” Kelly’s daughter also joined our conversation and laughed a lot. Kelly’s open-minded heart and kindness clearly had influenced her family and I immediately felt a sense of belonging.

The narratives in these interviews demonstrate that she respects me by preparing very detailed stories. Her role in the interviews resembled a storyteller, describing the Chinese civil war and modern histories after 1911 when The Republic of China was built. Listening to her narratives usually refocused me on the history and her narratives were so dramatic they could have happened in the movies. She had a good memory for telling when these historical incidents happened. I was overwhelmed by her excellent memory and her ability to retell stories so vividly. Interestingly, she told me some stories that I had only read from history

textbooks and that she presented from a different point of view. For example, during the interviews, Kelly mentioned a man called 陳誠 Chen. Wasn't he the one who ordered the army to kill thousands of Taiwanese when Two-Two-Eight Event occurred in Taiwan? From Taiwanese perspectives, wasn't he the one who should be sent to prison? In Kelly's interpretation, to the contrary, it appeared that he was not the instigator and I became confused. Kelly's explanations, however, provided me with another perspective. Her historical descriptions prompted me to take the opportunity to research more histories from various perspectives.

I gained from Kelly's stories and interactions and learned from her about a positive approach to living. She told her stories from a positive perspective and she cherished what she has now. She attributed her positive attitude to her Christianity because it influenced her to face the difficulties and yet still enjoy her life. I admire her courage and her power to adjust to this new language environment. Without this unique characteristic, she would not have been able to survive as well in the U.S.

The Consent Form with Sharon

Unfortunately, Sharon was a bit difficult to become close to in this project. The first time I visited Sharon, I went with the gatekeeper, Lin, the wife of the pastor of the Chinese church. Sharon had a very close relationship with Lin and they began to chat with each other and even appeared to forget about me. Sharon took out some food, asking Lin to take it home.

I felt very much like the outsider, and did not know how to get involved with their conversations. Finally, Sharon acknowledged me, asking:

Sharon: 坐啊、坐啊、你要問什麼?

Sharon: Sit, sit, what do you want to ask?

[All of sudden, she turned to me and asked this question. I was stunned because Lin was still there and the interview protocol called for talk in private.]

Sharon: 沒關係，你盡量問，我都會說。

Sharon: That's OK. You could ask any kinds questions. I will say anything.

[The point is the wife of the pastor was still sitting there.]

Me: 張媽媽，可是這是私人的訪問...

Me: But, Chang Ma Ma, this is personal interview...

[I haven't time to explain, but Lin noticed. She began to leave.]

Lin: 張媽媽，你們說我先走了。

Lin: Chang Ma Ma, you talk, I am leaving.

Sharon: 爲什麼要走？留下來啊！一起講嘛！這又不是什麼見不的人的事情。你問啊！你要問什麼？

Sharon: Why do you want to leave? Stay stay, talk together. There is nothing shame or hide about. You ask, what do you want to ask?

[I believe Lin and I were embarrassed because she kept on asking me to begin the questions.

But, I needed to first let her know my research goals, about the purpose, and have her sign the consent form. I was too nervous to start these procedures. Unfortunately, things were getting worse.]

Me: 張媽媽，我的訪問是想說可不可以錄音？	Me: Chan Ma Ma, I am thinking if I could record the interviews...
Sharon: 什麼！要錄音喔！有這麼嚴重嗎？一定要錄音嗎？我不要、我不要。你就問嘛！我回答。為什麼要錄音呢？你問啊！你問啊！	Sharon: What? Recording? Is that so serious to record it? No, no, no, I don't want to do that. You ask, you ask, I will answer. Why is it necessary to record it? You ask, you ask...

[I was speechless and Lin began to comfort her.]

Lin:張媽媽 錄音沒有關係。她不會公佈出去的，只是她要留著怕忘記你的話啦。	Lin: Chang Ma Ma, recording is fine. She won't release it in public. She just keeps it in order not to forget your words.
Sharon: 喔，好吧，要錄音喔，我是想說，有這麼神秘，她又不在，又要錄音，好吧！	Sharon: Oh, fine, record, record. I just want to say that why it is so mysterious. Also, she could not be here. Alright....

Sharon's apparent refusal to sign the release form and allow the recording embarrassed me and made me feel like an outsider. Her actions indicated that she did not trust me. Moreover, her intention of talking to me while Lin was present was to keep me at a distance and diminish my work, and this also hurt me. I felt rejected and upset at her behavior and I did not know how to initiate the conversations with her. In addition, she never left the

telephone answering machine on during the interviews. Instead, she usually stopped our conversations and went to answer the phone where she spoke English very fast and fluently. I could still detect accents, but she spoke very fast. Most of these phone calls were requests for rental information. Sharon talked firmly and loudly, but impatiently. Due to the constant interruptions of the phones, we often needed to start over again in order to continue the conversation.

In addition, she still held back some secrets. I noticed, for example, that there was one incident that she chose to not talk about. She said, “I was cheated by a Cantonese but I don’t want to talk about this today” (Sharon, line 247). Of course, I did not want to pry into the participants’ privacy if they did not want to talk about something. They related only what they wanted to say.

Fortunately, our relationship improved over time and after more interactions, and this altered my first impression of her. In addition to the questions I had prepared, she began to talk more beyond my questions. I felt she began to trust me and treat me as a friend. When she talked about her mother and the feelings of missing home, she burst into tears. Prior to that she had demonstrated that she did not trust a stranger, and now she decided to relate what was inside her heart. We shared a special moment of silence (Orner, 1992). Her true feeling of how she felt talking to someone who was not familiar was very clear in the beginning of our relationship. But at the end she wanted to tell her stories so I was very moved and touched.

Lily: a Powerful Leader

I also encountered difficulty when I interacted with Lily, a young, ambitious leader, whom I met four years earlier when I taught Chinese language in the Chinese School and she had pressured me to get to know her. Lily was the vice principal at the school that year. We did not have many opportunities to talk because her two daughters were not in my class. She usually entered my classroom to give me the sticker prizes for those children who completed the assignments, or, she came to give me the paychecks, and we had seldom talked. However, I could identify her two daughters because they were Taiwanese and American and their appearance differed from the other Taiwanese children.

As a vice principal, Lily did more than usual in that role when she advocated changing the curriculum. This Chinese school was organized by a group of Taiwanese parents who wished for their children to learn Mandarin while in the U.S. The parents, who were first generation immigrants, required their second generation to attend the language school in order to recapture their native language (Fillmore, 1991). It was a small school with about 20 children enrolled every year. The classes were held on Saturdays from 1:00 pm to 4:00pm during spring and fall semesters. Parents usually did not expect the children to learn much Mandarin; instead, they wished for them to be around a Mandarin-rich environment. However, Lily intended to change that as she really wanted her daughters to learn. Instead of continuing the established informal aspects of the school, she insisted on hiring a new teacher

to teach one more class using the Pinyin system.

Lily's characteristic of being a strong leader emerged the next year during the fall semester when she was selected to be the principal. She convened the teachers during the summer, asking for their opinions. Since she could not reach me by phone, she began to recruit another teacher because she thought I was gone. When I finally returned her call, she said, "Oh, you will be very busy for taking care of the little one. Don't worry about it. I will find a teacher." I did not have a chance to explain to her that I still could teach these children and I believed that she already had made the decision to replace me.

Her characteristic of controlling everything happened again when I called to make an appointment with her. She replied to me immediately by setting up the next Saturday to meet. Before the study interview began, we spent some time chatting. She was very concerned about my health situation and asked me many questions. She then prepared a brunch for me with many traditional Chinese foods. It gave the appearance that she was the one in charge and I was simply a reporter to record what she said. Nevertheless, the interview meetings went well and we have remained in contact with each other.

Power Relations Shifted and My Personal Development Growth

The power relationship between the interviewees and myself shifted during our interactions. In terms of the poststructuralist perspective, the issue of insider and outsider emphasizes the subversion of authority. "De-centering the author" points to the importance of

multiple voices (Lather, 1999). The deconstructionist is not convinced of the author's right to serve as "The Great Interpreter" (Dreyfus, 1983). The authors no longer represent the authority and control the meanings when retelling participants' stories as well as interacting with them (Nealon and Giroux, 2003).

In this study, these women treated me as their friends. My role then was no longer as a researcher with a higher status. I finally became their friend as they talked even of their own trivial matters. Interestingly, I observed that in these narratives, the women were easily digressing, or being "digressed" (Reinharz, 1992). My participants seldom directly answered my questions. Instead, their narratives were significant information beyond my research questions. Once they began talking about something they were interested in, they talked and talked. For example, Lily focused on her career goals, and her future plans and family matters did not cause her to talk more. Sharon, spent most of her time praising her husband and mentioning the offers her husband could have if they returned to Taiwan. Mei was more interested in her son's matters. Her conversation always made me wonder, "Where is the daughter?" Similar to Mei, Kelly talked a lot about her doctor son. In the traditional way, having a doctor in the family is a great source for pride. Jane spoke to me about her educational journey, her jobs, and her unfair treatment in the working place. Their interactions with me actually made me feel as if I have been part of their communities and that they would like to continue to share with me.

Particularly, they treated me as one new to their communities and tried to provide me with examples of their lived experiences. They represented themselves as instructors and told me how to “survive” in the U.S. For example, Mei acted as if she were a counselor by saying, “You know, there are some activities you could participate in this university college town.” Or she would say, “Because you studied in Taiwan, and you do not understand the culture here...” What she intended to tell me was that she provided me with advice in order to help me adjust to this society. Another example was Lily, who specializes in the U.S.’s economic situation. She provided me many insights toward U.S. economic trends towards the future.

Their backgrounds also provided me with an opportunity to reflect upon who I have become and to recall my own past experiences. I begin to understand how I have been influenced by the ideologies that Chiang Kai-shek controlled. I found myself overwhelmed that these diverse backgrounds could bring about different language usage and even affect individual identities. This also initiated my personal journey for reflecting back over my past experiences and considering how they might influence my future thoughts, attitudes and constructed identities.

Significantly, the biggest challenge regarding interacting with my participants in this narrative research was feeling uncomfortable about revealing the respondents’ privacy (Bloom, 2002). On the one hand, I did not want superficial answers, so I wished to dig deeper under the superficial layers. On the other hand, I did not wish to pry into people’s wounds in

order to get “deeper data.” I struggled with this dilemma as I interviewed my participants.

In this study, I begin by sharing individuals’ experiences and how I developed close relationships between my subjects and myself. Instead of presenting an objective analysis, this study highlights the importance of the power relations existent between researchers and participants, and shows that power is woven and infused throughout the interview process. My role as an interpreter of women’s personal narratives was to rethink the subjectivity and the objectivity of retelling these stories. While feminist theory seeks the skepticism of objectivity, this study reevaluates the subjective positively.

The negotiation of the borderlands is an ongoing process. As researchers, “We are never fully outside or inside the community; our relationship to the community is never expressed....but is constantly being negotiated and renegotiated in particular, everyday interactions (Naples, 2003b, p. 49). This research has been illuminating for me, not only in regards to the academic research, but also in my personal growth as I have turned the lens on myself as well as my participants. “My research is a part of my life and my life is a part of my research” (Ladson-Billings, 1997, p. 268).

Empowerment

In the final section, I would like to discuss how empowerment affected these women while I interacted with them. Empowerment refers to people’s capability for controlling their

lives and their ability to make decisions of their own. From feminists' perspectives, empowerment includes not just the ability to provide oneself with economic support or cash support, but it also includes individual changes. It focuses in particular on the women who belong to the category of being oppressed and subordinated (Yong, 1997). Living in two or more worlds is difficult. It costs them a great deal of effort to interact with other people. These five women have been empowered by sharing and interacting with American society (Greene, 1997). Empowerment raises someone from a lower to a higher status. No researcher, or any other professional, can empower someone else. Empowerment implies a neutralized situation, one that reduces the differences between others and us. These women have been empowered through reflection and the decision-making process. The borderlands offer endless possibilities for us to break barriers. Women gain empowerment as women themselves, not as men (Young, 1997).

In this study women deal with the hardships of immigration and heavy burdens caused by both economic and family responsibilities. They demonstrate their ability to accomplish, to handle their children and families, and to cope with burdens. They have the resilience to become faster adapters (Berger, 2004).

These women play active roles in the process of negotiating the English-dominant society. America is usually referred to as a melting pot, a concept conceptualized by British playwright Israel Zangwill. All immigrants are believed to eventually assimilate into this pot

(Daniels, 2002). However, these Taiwanese immigrant women have demonstrated more by not being assimilated. They currently survive in the U.S. through their ability to be independent, encouraging themselves to work outside the home and to support themselves by learning another new language. They have been empowered and discouraged at the same time. Facing an unknown future, they are still confident and continue to tell their own stories. Each woman provides her own uniqueness and a different truth. Their own lived experiences reveal their own truths in the context of social relationships.

Through these stories, each self is constructed based on how they position themselves and how the conversations in each discourse position them. Through each conversation or interaction with the dominant society, they gradually understand their uniqueness and empowerment. Thus, the meanings are shaped based on different occasions and, as a result, the self is fluid and diverse as well as shifting (Davies, 1997b). Flexibility and adaptability are the source of their empowerment.

Conclusion

In this study, I chose five Taiwanese immigrant women in the U.S. to share their experiences of their immigrant lives characterized by the double burdens of balancing Mandarin and English at home, and I examined how they have negotiated their identities and transformations. I reveal the significance of social power, the complexity of power relations in the society and in the family, as well as with myself, as a researcher, with them as the

researched. This study provides a valuable perspective to ESL (English as Second Language) teachers or FFL (Foreign Language Learning) teachers - the perspective that language learners are likely influenced by the past which also influenced their identity development. In terms of Women's Studies, these women reveal not only their English-learning experiences, but also their identity negotiations as well as home choice. Their identity developments not only influence themselves, but also impact how they raise their children and impose their values on the children's futures.

I selected five out of 13 candidates, from two different social networks in two cities in a northeastern state, in order to represent different points of views and experiences based in different time periods. Although the number of participants is limited, these women of different ages provide a microview which demonstrates the immigrants' perceptions of building relationships within the English-dominant society. These five women's experiences and narratives revealed how American society caused shifts in their social power and attitudes throughout the time they have been resident in the U.S. In the early 60s, most immigrants who came to the U.S., like Sharon and Kelly, intended to become American by learning English and immersing themselves quickly into the American society. However, as time went by, the trend became to change that goal; with increased mobility and communications, the global village concept influenced these immigrant women to reconsider that they now have more options regarding their choice of where their home is located. For

example, Lily, the youngest participant who now intends to work outside of the U.S. Thus, these immigrant women's identities have gradually been transformed and renegotiated.

This study supports the concept that learning the English language was a major factor empowering these Taiwanese immigrant women, dramatically transforming them from dependence to independence. With the acquisition of English ability, they became confident and interacted with Americans without too much concern. Eventually, they could either work in the American society or do business with Americans. Most importantly, the experiences of acquiring English proficiency, at some point in time, influenced their relationships with their husbands, children and parents. These women began their residency in the U.S. with limited English which influenced them to construct unconfident self images. While their English language ability was improving, they engaged in looking for opportunities to step outside of the home, as well as to strengthen their selves. English proficiency assisted them to renegotiate their relationships with their husbands. As their children's proficiency in English increased and they lost some of their power in the family dynamic, their intent was to improve so they could achieve the same English abilities as their children. Also, they restored some of their power by becoming the source for Mandarin language and Chinese culture in their homes. Finally, in terms of relationships with their parents, even though they no longer lived with parents, English proficiency brought out their confidence to make decisions concerning how best they could take care of their parents.

This research reveals that the identities of these five immigrant women are fluid and probably changed based on experiences at different times and in varied situations. These women's narratives demonstrate the complexity of power relationships with husbands, children and parents, and also that power relations were dynamic and moment-by-moment. Crossing "the borderlands" does not mean that they gained the power and would hold the power all the time. On the contrary, the intent is to reveal that these women have shared the power within their families, and with other members of American society.

Additionally, during the research, I often asked myself whether these women would be different or the same if they had never immigrated to the U.S. but rather chose to remain in Taiwan. I do not mean to imply that these women attained some power only because they made the "correct" choice to reside in the U.S. In fact, Taiwanese women universally have been gradually transformed and have gained independence, jumping away from the stereotypes of the traditional women whose only role is within the home. More and more women have devoted themselves into work outside the home and have become successful. Thus, in this study, I believe that living at the U.S., as well as learning new language, opened a unique door, and provided opportunity to look for a new self identity. The significance of this study is to represent the site of their struggles and demonstrate how they transformed themselves into different, unique selves.

Finally, this study could be continued or strengthened in the following manner: First, I could have devoted myself to be more involved with my participants, such as by visiting their work places, their social networks, etc. Secondly, I could have interviewed the husbands and the children, thereby providing different perspectives to interpret these women's narratives. Thirdly, I could have developed more techniques for eliciting their stories; instead of interviewing them, I could have added a focus group, or conducted group interviews in order to encourage them to talk more

This research not only empowered me in the academic field, but it also assisted me to reflect on myself, tracking back to my personal past, as well as the construction of my new self. This study provided me an opportunity to experience different social networks with which I had not been completely familiar. Thus, this research experience helped me rethink how I could expand my view to discover more and different networks concerning Chinese women in the U.S. In addition, I am interested in the increasing numbers of Taiwanese and Chinese graduate students who came to the U.S. to access higher education. These different groups have been influenced by different ideologies due to the split between China and Taiwan. More broadly, I could expand my focus to Asian women in the U.S. in order to observe them participating in ESL classes or interacting with the English-dominant society. I believe this thesis and research is not the end, but a beginning to devote myself to two academic fields of study in the future: applied linguistics and women's issues.

I end with Greene's (1997) words, which represent the spirit of this study of borderland crossings.

Borderlands are not confined by time and space, nor are they a one-time synthesis that endures. The notion of borderlands defies borders, empowering us to experiment with our protean selves where we do not have to run from who we are or from our potential...All these identities are defined by borders needing to be crossed and reconciled in a given space to represent my totality, not as an "other." My particular borderland incorporates my personhood in the remaking of my ideas through cross-ethnic, cross-generational, cross-cultural, and cross-racial discourse. (p. 48)

Appendix A China and Taiwan Map



Source from: archives.cnn.com/2000/ASIANOW/east/03/16/chin.

Appendix B IRB Approval 1

Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research The Pennsylvania State University

This informed consent form (Doc. #1) was reviewed and approved by the Social Science Institutional Review Board (IRB#21743) at The Pennsylvania State University on 10/10/05. It will expire on 09/29/06. (JKG)

Title of Project: **Personal Narratives of Taiwanese Immigrant Women's Ambivalence, Struggles and Crossing Boundaries While Building Their U.S Lives.**

Principal Investigator: Hsing-I (Michelle) Chan, Graduate Student
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1. **Purpose of the Study:** The study aims to draw people's attention to Taiwanese middle-class immigrant women in the U.S. It seeks to share stories of these women about their lives, struggles, and how learning the English language affects their roles in the U.S. This research is part of the researcher, Hsing-I (Michelle)'s dissertation research for her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction in Penn State.
2. **Procedure:** You will be involved up to a maximum of 3.45 hours total, and there will be no than five interviews individually during the 2005-06 academic year.
3. **Discomforts and Risks:** There are no known risks in participating in this research. The questions in the interviews are personal in nature.
4. **Benefits:** After given an opportunity to reflect on personal experiences, you might learn about yourself, better understand the important of these experiences, reconsider the process of your multiple roles, and find alternatives for dealing with multiple roles in the future. Also, this study brings about societal benefits to provide a medium to hear more voices from the marginal

groups.

5. **Duration:** A maximum of 3.45 hours total within five interviews.
 - a. The first interview will be an introduction to the study. At this time, you will be asked to complete a participant profile. The interview will be about 10-15 minutes.
 - b. In the second interview, you will be asked to answer open-ended questions about your lives and learning experiences in the U.S. The duration will be up to 2 hours.
 - c. In the rest of three interviews, you will be asked to answer the short questions after the researcher, Hsing-I (Michelle) Chan, collects the data, but still has some questions about their previous responses. Each session will be about 30 minutes.
6. **Statement of Confidentiality:** The interviews will be audiotaped and will be kept in a locked drawer at the researcher, Hsing-I (Michelle) Chan's home office. The tapes will be destroyed in July 2007. If this study is published, no information that will identify you will be written. Direct quotes from the interviews will be used. However, no personal identifiers will be associated with the data. The Office for Research Protections and the Social Science Institutional Review Board may review records related to this project.
7. **Right to Ask questions:** You can ask questions about this study at any time. Please contact the researcher, Hsing-I (Michelle) Chan, at (814) 231-4864 or hxc220@psu.edu. If you prefer, you may also contact Ms. Chan's advisor, Dr. Miryam Espinosa-Dulanto, at mespinosa@psu.edu with questions. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact The Pennsylvania State University's Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775.
8. **Compensation:** Please notice that no compensation will be offered for your participation.
9. **Voluntary Participants:** You have no obligation to participate in this research. You have the right to end your participation at any time. You do not have to answer any questions which you do not want to answer.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to participate in this research study. If you agree to participate in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for you records.

Date

Participant

Date

Person Obtaining Consent

Appendix C IRB APPROVAL 2

Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: **Personal Narratives of Taiwanese Immigrant Women's
Ambivalence, Struggles and Crossing Boundaries While Building
Their U.S Lives.**

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ORP USE ONLY: IRB#21743 Doc.#1
The Pennsylvania State University
Office for Research Protections
Approval Date: 09/26/06 T. Kahler
Expiration Date: 09/25/07 T. Kahler
Social Science Institutional Review Board

4. **Purpose of the Study:** The study aims to draw people's attention to Taiwanese middle-class immigrant women in the U.S. It seeks to share stories of these women about their lives, struggles, and how learning the English language affects their roles in the U.S. This research is part of the researcher, Hsing-I (Michelle)'s dissertation research for her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction in Penn State.
5. **Procedure:** You will be involved up to a maximum of 3.45 hours total, and there will be no more than five interviews individually during the 2006-07 academic year.
6. **Discomforts and Risks:** There are no known risks in participating in this research. The questions in the interviews are personal in nature.
6. **Benefits:** After given an opportunity to reflect on personal experiences, you might learn about yourself, better understand the importance of these experiences, reconsider the process of your multiple roles, and find alternatives for dealing with multiple roles in the future. Also, this study brings about societal benefits to provide a medium to hear more voices from the marginal groups.
7. **Duration:** A maximum of 3.45 hours total within five interviews.

- a. The first interview will be an introduction to the study. At this time, you will be asked to complete a participant profile. The interview will be about 10-15 minutes.
 - b. In the second interview, you will be asked to answer open-ended questions about your lives and learning experiences in the U.S. The duration will be up to 2 hours.
 - c. In the rest of three interviews, you will be asked to answer the short questions after the researcher, Hsing-I (Michelle) Chan, collects the data, but still has some questions about their previous responses. Each session will be about 30 minutes.
7. **Statement of Confidentiality:** The interviews will be audiotaped and will be kept in a locked drawer at the researcher, Hsing-I (Michelle) Chan's home office. The tapes will be destroyed 3 years after the completion of the study. If this study is published, no information that will identify you will be written. Direct quotes from the interviews will be used. However, no personal identifiers will be associated with the data. The following may review and copy records related to this research: The Office of Human Research Protections in the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; The Penn State University Social Science Institutional Review Board; The Penn State University Office for Research Protections.
7. **Right to Ask questions:** You can ask questions about this study at any time. Please contact the researcher, Hsing-I (Michelle) Chan, at (814) 231-4864 or hxc220@psu.edu. If you prefer, you may also contact Ms. Chan's advisor, Dr. Miryam Espinosa-Dulanto, at mespinosa@psu.edu with questions. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact The Pennsylvania State University's Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775.
8. **Compensation:** Please notice that no compensation will be offered for your participation.
9. **Voluntary Participants:** You have no obligation to participate in this research. You have the right to end your participation at any time. You do not have to answer any questions which you do not want to answer.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to participate in this research study. If you agree to participate in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for you records.

Date

Participant

Date

Person Obtaining Consent

Appendix D Interview Questions Chinese Version

基本介紹自己、家人、先生、小孩、工作。

可不可以聊一下自己，興趣，有幾個小孩？先生的工作？自己現在的工作？父母、兄弟姊妹等等。

大概是哪一年來美國的？是什麼原因來的？一開始就住在這嗎？還是先住在別州？比較起來，感覺有什麼不同？

剛來的時候習慣嗎？有沒有發生什麼令妳印象深刻的事？

和以前在台灣時對美國的印象有沒有相同或相反？

當初住的地方中國人台灣人多？還是美國人多？

學習英文的經驗

大概是什麼時候開始學英文的呢？

印象最深刻的老師事哪位？內容或方法

有沒有影響妳日後學習英文？

來美國後是怎麼開始學習英文的？有上教會或 Community 社區辦的免費英文課嗎？內容為何？

居住在美國的經驗

可不可以再談點現在的工作？工作幾年？為什麼想要這份工作？

可不可以談談應徵的情形？需要英文很流利嗎？

你覺得英文流利會部會影響妳的工作？

同事之間相處和溝通的情形。會參加平時同事間的活動嗎？

先生平常的工作？會參加先生同事之間的聚會嗎？感覺如何？

孩子在這邊出生嗎？唸書有沒有什麼不習慣的地方？平時如何指導孩子的功課？

平常的活動為何？朋友是中國人？台灣人？或美國人？對朋友的感覺如何？

你覺得英文流利與否會不會影響認識朋友的機會？

希望怎樣教育小孩？是成為美國人還是中國人？

小孩學中文的態度？聽說讀寫的程度如何？

家的選擇

通常你都如何介紹自己從哪來？多久會回台灣一次？父母親都住在台灣嗎？之前他們從大陸來還是原本就住在台灣？

回台灣時、有沒有感覺有什麼不同？

如果當初選擇留在台灣，會不會和現在不同？

覺得美國還是台灣是妳的家？以後會想搬回台灣嗎？

如果可以的話，可不可以講一下妳自己的角色，現在和過去有什麼不同？

Appendix E Interview Questions English Version

I. Background and immigration experiences

1. Could you tell me about yourself, family members, family lives and your current work?
2. How many years have you moved to the U.S.? And what motivates you to immigrate to the U.S.?
3. What is your impressive memory or experience when you first arrived in the U.S.?
4. How do you feel the difference between the life in Taiwan and the life in the U.S.?

II. Experiences of learning English language prior to and in the U.S.

5. When did you begin to learn English in Taiwan? And how did you learn it, at home or at school? How were the teachers in Taiwan?
6. What are your experiences of learning English in the U.S.? Do you go to ESL classes or informal English classes, such as provided by church or community?
7. How is your impressive memory of learning English in the U.S.? And are your experiences different from those in Taiwan?

III. Living in the U.S.

8. Tell me more about your family life. Your husband's work and children.
9. What language do you use at home and at work? English or Mandarin?
10. How do you make friends? With Chinese people or English-speaking people?
11. Do you participate in English-speaking activities or Mandarin-speaking activities?
12. Do you feel difficult or easier to make friends with the English language or Mandarin?
13. What do you think the fluency of English language finding a job or at your current work?
14. How do you interact with people at work? What is the significant event happening at your work?

IV. Notion of "home"

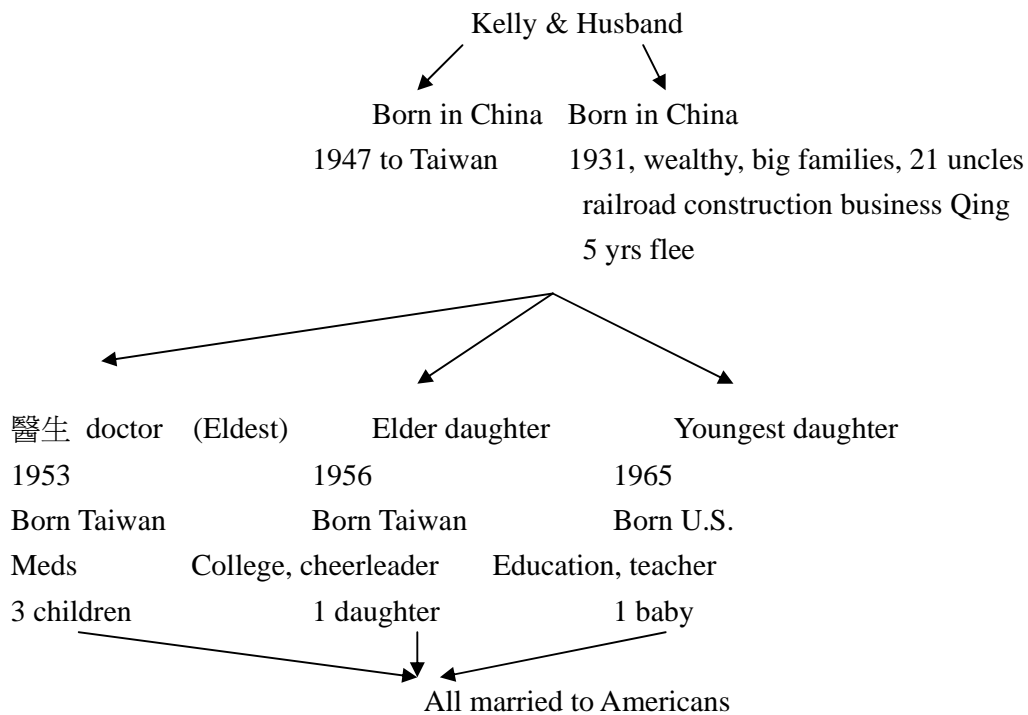
15. How do you say to people where you are from? (e.g, China or Taiwan or the U.S.?)
16. Tell me the roles about yourself (e.g, mother, wife etc.) and how you deal with these roles?
17. Are there any differences of roles prior to Taiwan and in the U.S.? How do these different roles affect you while staying in the U.S.?
18. How are you going to define "home?" Where is your home? In the U.S. Taiwan or China?
19. How do you tell your children whom they come from?
20. What do you think Chinese culture and American cultures? How are you going to deal with these two cultures?

Appendix F: Data Analysis Sample 1

<p>1 我的先生現在是在台灣，教書，他 1992 就去 2 台灣教書，一直到現在也差不多 15 年，他在 3 台灣 92 年回台灣教書，所以現在也差不多有 4 15 年，1990 年搬到這裡來的，我 1987 年來到 5 美國的，所以事實上現在有 20 年了。</p>	<p>Line 1-5, 20 years of staying Starting with husband 去,回 I: wife</p>
<p>6 對，可是有 2 年我是大部份是在台灣，在 1994 7 到 1996 年的時候有 2 年在台灣，當時是本 8 來想說看看小孩子能不能適應，如果能適應我 9 們就搬過去，結果…因為他這個呼吸系 10 統，他的 asthma 很厲害，他以前怎麼講，小 11 學，他五年級的時候就小學，不是小學，5 歲 12 6 歲的時候，在 state College，有一天他好像就 13 不能呼吸這樣子，後來呢，去看了醫生，才知 14 道他 allergy，然後 allergy 很多東西，他有一次 15 幾乎這樣…，有點，因為他後來就越來越嚴 16 重。Asthma，然後好像，他說，媽媽，我最近 17 頭暈都昏昏的，然後好像沒有氧氣不夠這樣， 18 後來他就說這是 allergy 的關係，所以他到現在 19 天天都要吃藥，天天吃藥。那後來人家說吃那 20 種藥會抑制生長，所以我就想說，哎呀 糟糕 21 可能就是因為這樣，他都長不高…(笑)，可是 22 已經來不及了，他已經天天吃那個藥。後來是 23 看過一篇報導才說那種會抑制你的生長，所 24 以，不過，至少 還不至於這麼頭都會昏昏的， 25 這樣頭昏呢 是很不好的。</p>	<p>Line 6-25, describing son's asthma. The main reason why they came back U.S. I: mom Immigrating for children.</p> <p>1994-1996 in Taiwan Asthma at 5-6 grade, allergic to everything. Still taking medicine nowadays.</p> <p>Blame not tall enough because of medicine.</p> <p>Glad no headache.</p>
<p>26 他對花粉，Ya，還有很多種，dust，或者是在 27 家裡面地毯什麼都會。所以，因為他，我就， 28 其實我本來並不是很勤快的人…(笑)，後來因 29 為他就不得家裡不弄得勤快點。不擦不行，因 30 為他 dust 也會，mold 也會，很多東西都會， 31 所以他只要去朋友家裡，裡面有養貓養狗的， 32 他然後回來就一直打噴嚏，尤其他他的 viola 33 teacher 家裡面有養貓，他頂多只能在那 2 個小 34 時，2 個小時以後他就遭殃了，他就遭殃了，</p>	<p>Line 26-40 describe son's situation of allergy. I: Mom Line 41-44 move back.</p> <p>Sacrifice to house-cleaning</p>

<p>35 你知道，回來一直打噴嚏，吃那個藥，還要用 36 inhaler，去台灣的時候，因為空氣污染，不行， 37 所以呢，他每個禮拜都要去打針，台灣空氣污 38 染也會有 dust，變得好可憐喔，他打針打得都 39 這樣胖胖的，其實那是虛胖，是類固醇，所以 40 就會這樣胖胖的，那我就覺得不對，那忍痛， 41 回來啦 (笑)。 那時候我房子沒有賣掉，我也 42 是在試試看而已，看他習慣不習慣 結果 還 43 是不行，結果我們就只好搬回來，那時候我們 44 就在這，我們 1992，1990 年八月份搬到這。</p>	<p>心疼 children's suffering</p> <p>They knew moving back was not a good idea.</p>
<p>45 我先生在唸書，這就是為什麼我先 46 生唸 PhD，不知道第幾年的時候我們就過來跟 47 他一起住，然後後來呢，因為我母親的關係， 48 我很想回去，我先生說你還是待在這，他，因 49 為小孩子嘛，那也還不是很確定，他說他先回 50 去，做那個什麼 visiting professor，有那種兩 51 年，三年的，聽說有這樣子的，那他就想說他 52 先回去，看看怎麼樣，結果呢，他是 apply 53 visiting professor 的職位，結果呢，他們答應的 54 也是說給他這個，因為他是回去兩三個禮拜， 55 很快的，人家給他 offer，結果我們才剛一回到 56 這裡呢，人家打電話說他是給他 permanent 57 job，do you want it? 他說你不要的話，就因為 58 這個缺就這麼一個，你不要的話，別人也要 59 啊，不然你，有啦，有一個 visiting professor 60 的職位，也有這個職位，你要哪一個? 我就 61 跟我先生講啊，笨的人都會想，用膝蓋去想， 62 都會。好，就先 take 這個，然後就 take 這個 63 job 之後，本來想那時候還蠻 struggle，兩三年 64 的時候，還不想，因為你知道電話什麼，也是 65 他回去也不是那麼的順利，你知道，也不想， 66 也可能說想回來。</p>	<p>Line 45-66, describing the uncertainty of staying U.S. or Taiwan.</p> <p>Obey to husband.</p> <p>I: wife, daughter, mom</p> <p>She wanted to go back because of Mom, but stayed for son's asthma.</p> <p>Husband's job as permanent professor.</p> <p>Really wanted going Taiwan.</p> <p>Consider husband's career development not going well.</p>

Appendix G Data Analysis Sample 2



1931--Born in Beijing

1937—Flee experience, 盧溝橋事變

1947—交大 graduate

Teaching for half-year

Came to the U.S.

1948—came to Taiwan

二二八事變

1951-1961, working for Taiwan company

1951-married,

1953-First child born

1956-second child born

1959-TOEFL pass

1961-husband came to the U.S. by boat, married for 10 years

1962-at the end 1962, graduated

1962-1963--working

1963- brought 2 own kids (elder son, younger daughter) and 1 baby (2 years)

Came to the U.S. by the plane

1977—husband's death

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