

# Three Young Chinese Heritage Language Speakers' Transnational Experiences in Taiwan

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## Introduction

- Lack of research on critical role of translational experiences on heritage language learning and heritage language learners' self legitimization

## Research Participants

- Mary (8;5); Jack (7;1); Jason (5;10)
- Mom, originally from Taiwan
- Living in a peaceful suburban area in MN.

## Methodology & Data collection

- Qualitative case study
- 06/2016-08/2016, Taiwan
- 2-months of audio-diary of mother-child reflection
- Visiting families in Taipei
- children participating in extracurricular activities in Taiwan

## Research Question

- How do the three young Chinese heritage language speakers legitimize themselves as competent Chinese users during and after their transnational experiences in their parents' home country, Taiwan?

## Finding #1

Children participants took active roles to negotiate meanings of words/phrases in Chinese that were new to them.

Line	Interlocutors	Content
1	Jason	还有几天就是我的生日? <i>How many days from now is my birthday?</i>
2	Mom	还有14天啊! <i>There is another 14 days!</i>
3	Jason	14天, 你可以告诉我的英文吗? <i>14 days, could you please tell me how to say it in English?</i>
4	Mom	英文怎么讲你忘记啦? <i>You forgot how to say it in English?</i>
5	Jason	对啊。 <i>Yeah.</i>
6	Mom	好没有关系。 <i>Okay, it's fine.</i>
7	Jason	你可以告诉我怎么讲在英文吗? <i>Could you please tell me how to say it in English?</i>
8		我听不懂在中文, 可是我不记得怎么讲在英文。 <i>I don't understand Chinese, but I don't remember how to say it in English.</i>
9	Mom	这样子啊。 <i>I see.</i>
10	Jason	所以可以教我吗? <i>So could you please teach me?</i>

## Finding #2

Due to limited knowledge of the heritage culture, increasing Chinese language proficiency was not helpful for children participants' participation in cultural activities.

Line	Interlocutors	Content
1	Mary	那个, 那个one with glasses ( ) 他最坏。 <i>Well, that one with glasses ( ) he is the worse.</i>
2		最不喜欢他! <i>don't like him the most!</i>
3		他都说, 我那么烂。 <i>He said, I suck.</i>
4		因为他就说“我不要再跟他们玩, because he said “I don't want to play with them any more,
5		他们, 他们三个我都赢, 我都可以赢”, <i>they, I defeated all three, I can defeat all of them”.</i>
6		我就觉得, ( )真的不是在说( ), but ( ), but在他的心里, 他在说“他们弄得烂”。 <i>I feel, ( ) not really saying ( ), but ( ), but ( ) in his hear, he is saying “they suck”.</i>



## Finding #3

Children participants questioned whether Chinese language competence was critical in a multilingual (though Chinese language dominant) context.

Line	Interlocutors	Content
1	Mom	好那你不要打算学中文, 以后你就不能回来台湾了。 <i>Okay, since you don't plan to learn Chinese, you can't come back to Taiwan later.</i>
2	Jack	嗯, 我还可以回来= <i>En, I can still come back=</i>
3	Mom	=我不会啊, 因为你不会中文啊。 <i>= I can't let you come back, because you are not able to speak Chinese.</i>
4	Jack	我会上班, <i>I will go to work,</i>
5		我就会在这里小的STS去上班。哈哈! <i>I will work in the small STS company here. Haha!</i>
6	Mom	人家不会要你啊, <i>They will not recruit you,</i>
7		你不会中文= <i>you can't speak Chinese=</i>
8	Jack	=STS, 那个, 那个地方是英文地方。 <i>=STS, that, that place is an English space.</i>
9	Mom	谁说的? 那你不会讲= <i>=Who told you? if you can't speak=</i>
10	Jack	=阿姨, 阿姨说啊, ( ) 都是英文的, <i>=Aunt, aunt said ( ) all are English,</i>
11		=比较多人说英文在STS啊。 <i>=There are many people speaking English in STS.</i>



## Conclusion & Discussion

- Children participants take an active role to learn the heritage language in a transnational context.
- While heritage culture is emphasized in heritage language classroom and family, it is not enough for children participants to better perform in cultural activities.
- Children participants critically question the role heritage language plays in their lives.