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Motivating Highly Capable Students Through Heritage Language Instruction:
An investigation into An After-School Program in Lake Washington School District, WA

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Abstract

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Language minority Students (LMS) constitute an indispensable component in the gifted education. Over the years, research has indicated that a culturally responsive (Gay, 2000) curriculum would benefit LMS in various aspects, where after-school programs, serve as the Community of Practice (COP) (Gutierrez et. al., 1995), places unique role on those highly capable LMS. LMS in the gifted education could be motivated through the heritage language instruction in the after-school program. This thesis reveals that highly capable elementary students who attended the community based after-school program are motivated in class performance, in curiosity, and in communication for knowledge when proper instruction of heritage language is given in the program. This study takes place in a suburban town within the greater Seattle area, in the State of Washington. A two-week observation was conducted as the author works there. This research provides implications for both educators and parents that heritage language instruction is better received if casual pedagogical approaches are implemented and more study time is allotted.

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Keywords: Gifted Education, Language Minority Student, After-school Program, Heritage Language Instruction

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Motivating Highly Capable Students Through Heritage Language Instruction:

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Introduction

Background of the Study

Gifted program: controversies. The advent of Gifted Education Program (also known as Gifted and Talented Education (GATE), Talented and Gifted (TAG), or G/T) in the United States has never ceased to provoke contentions. Over the years, people have released concern toward various facets of the Gifted Education Program, including the appropriateness of the term “gift/giftedness”, the identification process for the program, the pedagogical curriculum applied in the program, the funding opportunities and challenges, as well as the psychological impact toward children, etc.

One of the most evident disagreement lies within the alternation of its name. In the State of Washington, the name of “Gifted Program” has long been abandoned in the practical usage. People are concerned about the connotation implied under this term. Within the scope the semantic analysis, by identifying the “gifted”, it subconsciously indicates that children who are not enrolled in the “Gifted Program” are “ungifted” or “untalented”. While acknowledging that every child shines in his own way, this name certainly arouses the discomfort from both teachers and parents. As a consequence, instead of intensifying the discontentment, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) of the State of Washington has officially announced the program to be “the Highly Capable Program”. Although the debate over the program waned no less after the name-changing, people seem to reach a consensus that highly capable students do exist and requires specific instruction.

However, two great concerns still linger: who should be identified as “highly capable” students and how should highly capable students be instructed.

Regarding the first question, multiple issues have been addressed within the research fields. Heated arguments considering the definition of “giftedness” has persisted until recently. Retrieving to the 20th century, Terman (1926) defined giftedness as those who performed excellently as measured by the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale (Binet & Simon, 1905, as cited in Sternberg, 2007). Later in 1972, former U. S. Commissioner of Education Sidney P. Marland, Jr. reported to the U.S. Congress, and advocated high functioning skills to be added apart from the IQ test. Possibly, the most prevailing definition of the giftedness comes from the American educational psychologist Joseph Renzulli, who developed the three-ring model of giftedness: above-average ability, high-levels of task commitment, and high levels of creativity. Although Renzulli’s model de-emphasizes the general intelligence test and is well accepted theoretically, in practice, almost all states still rely on test scores—IQ and aptitude—to identify students for placement in special programs.

The heavy dependence upon the standardized tests incurs a serious consequence on the cultural diversity. Even a layman of education could have noticed the seemingly underrepresentation of Black, Hispanic and Native American students, accompanying with the overrepresentation of Asian American and White Students in the gifted program (Warne et.al., 2013). As HuongTran Nguyen (2012) put: “The notion of giftedness/talent does not exist in a vacuum” (P11). The way how intelligence is defined is highly relevant to cultural, therefore even the tests themselves are by no means culture neutral. For instance, Okagaki and Sternberg (1993) proposed that Asian Americans tended to emphasize cognitive competence whereas Latino Americans emphasize socio-emotional competence. Given the increasing pluralism in the United

States, people from different ethnic groups, with various cultural backgrounds, get involved into the public school system altogether. Consequentially, the fact that people emphasize diverse perspectives on intelligence causes unreconciled problem on the identification of giftedness. Admittedly, it is hard to define the giftedness without a set standard or rubric, yet it is even hazardous to defined giftedness merely through one culture scope, however mainstream it is.

Apart from the hottest issue on ethnicity, people were also concerned about the equal representation on children's socio-economic status (SES). It is believed that with lower-educated parents-as a proxy for lower SES, children tend to attain moderate scores on tests of academic achievement and cognitive ability (Curby et. al., 2008). Several documents have revealed the struggle in the educational field to identify and serve students from low socioeconomic status (SES) families (e.g., Ford, 1998). In 1988, the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act prioritized the students who are "economically disadvantaged" along with other underrepresented children like as Limited English Proficient (LEP), or in disable or handicapped condition, which vividly demonstrated the unbalanced population ratio for children from relatively low SES background. Nevertheless, students' SES is still intimately related with ethnicity, where non-White students are less likely to be labeled as gifted, even taking students' SES into account.

Another interesting phenomenon that triggers scholars' deep investigation is the gender controversy. According to Peterson (2013), who combined results from 130 studies published between 1975 and 2011, "boys were 1.19 times more likely than girls to be identified as gifted and included in gifted programs." Gottfredson (2003) even detail to discover that "Male students tend to outscore female students in tests of mathematical ability, and female students tend to outscore male students on tests of verbal proficiency." Therefore, it becomes critically important

to examine the identification process of schools for the gifted program, by which male and female students would be placed at an advantage or disadvantage. People are looking forward to a more equitable and comprehensive standard for the gifted program where children with diverse cultural backgrounds, linguistic abilities, socio-economic status, gender, etc. could be taken into equal consideration and evaluation.

For those children who have already been enrolled into the gifted program, the anxiety around them continues to surge instead of submerge. How should gifted children be educated? As questioned by Olszewski-Kubilius (2003) in his famous article “Do We Change Gifted Children to Fit Gifted Programs, or Do We Change Gifted Programs to Fit Gifted Children?”, she proposed a program that capitalizes on minority kids with potential talents, to develop the ability “that they need, but are currently undeveloped” (P312). Her proposal on the curriculum for the gifted education identifies one of the two mainstream approaches on Gifted Program, which are Enrichment and Acceleration. According to the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), enrichment is defined as “activities that add or go beyond the existing curriculum. They may occur in the classroom or in a separate setting such as a pull-out program” and acceleration as “a strategy of progressing through education at rates faster or ages younger than the norm”. In the actual practice, most of the school districts adopted the acceleration approach, no matter as the major one or as the only one. Another common approach for the gifted education is to Pull-out gifted students in a heterogeneous classroom where they spend partial or total of their school days for the gifted program. All of these approaches raise parents’ concern on the impact toward the students, both academically and emotionally.

Quest: high capable program in the Lake Washington School District. Concerning all the controversies around the name of gifted education, the gifted program in State of Washington

has altered its name into Highly Capable Program (HCP). According to the official announcement on its website,

“[T]he Highly Capable Program (HCP) can provide instruction, activities and services that accelerate learning, and offer a unique academic challenge for young learners identified as highly capable.”

As being one of the HCP in Seattle, the Quest program locates itself in the Lake Washington School District, which contains two distinct kinds of education mode: the full-time program and the enrichment pull-out program.

Identification process. In order to be enrolled into the Quest Program, students at the Lake Washington School District should be first nominated by their guardian: either parents, staff or community members, by filling out the application form. Then they would be further screened with the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) Screening Form. Basically, the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) is a group test designed to measure students’ cognitive skills including learning and problem solving. Students who meet the screening criteria should have a score above or equal to Composite SAS 126-160 (95-99 Age Percentile Rank). Multiple objective criteria are applied afterwards to assess those qualified applicants, including standard tests like CogAT full test, Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), and measurements ranging from the class-level toward state-level.

The Full-time Quest program requires students to score equal to or above the 99 Percentile Rank in the CogAT, and acquire the 99% of either the Reading Score or the Math test score in the ITBS along with a no-less-than-95% score on the other subject. Generally, the Full-time Quest Program has a higher requirement than the Pull-out Quest service, where students

only need to score above the 98% in CogAT, and 98% in the ITBS (along with a no-less-than-95% score on the other subject as well).

Although students have to go through a set of objective criteria, the highly capable service is nevertheless determined by a Multidisciplinary Selection Committee, which consists of a school psychologist, a teacher and the Director of Accelerated Programs. Students who are to be admitted into the Quest Program should obtain the observable data “indicating a need for service beyond the scope of the general education classroom.”

Two different modes. Two kinds of different Quest programs are provided in the Lake Washington School District: The Full-time Program and The Pull-out Program.

The Full-time program places their “most highly capable” students into a Quest classroom five days a week, providing the students the opportunity to immerse into an accelerated as well as enriched district curriculum. Classes are heterogenous with a 2nd/3rd grade or 4th/5th grade grouping of students, where they are expected to perform work that exceeds grade level standards by at least one grade level. Advanced academic thinking skills, strong communication and collaboration skills, and a distinguished awareness of local and global citizenship are emphasized in this program.

The Pull-out Program engages highly capable students into a project-based learning environment with their academic peers by inviting students to attend the Pull-out classroom one day per week. Comparing to the acceleration-centered curriculum, the Pull-out service focus more on enriching the elementary curriculum, with an emphasis on integrated social studies and science themes such as higher level thinking skills, in-depth learning, collaboration and presentation skills.

Noticeably, there's no extra tuition for highly capable students to enjoy this educational service, since the Washington State Legislation stipulates that "for highly capable students, access to accelerated learning and enhanced instruction is access to a basic education". However, for the Pull-out program students, parents are responsible for arranging transportation to and from the neighborhood home school, though the fee-based transportation would also be prepared.

Bluesky Learning Center: the after-school program. This after-school program locates in a tranquil neighborhood in Sammamish, WA that provides enriched Math, English (Reading & Writing), Chinese and Art curriculum. After the school dismisses around 3 o'clock in the afternoon, students who attend the after-school program would be picked up at their school and walk to the learning center together. In this program, children are provided with nutritious snacks followed with quiet-reading time. Then they would be divided into three groups according to their grade level: the K-1 group (approximately 13 children), the grade 2-3 group (approximately 8 children) and the grade 4-5 group (approximately 4 children). Either a teacher or a teacher assistant would impart lesson to each group at that time, subjects range from English language, Math, Test preparation, or History, etc. The classes last around one hour, from 4:20 to 5:20. After the academic lessons, students would generally be set free, during which time, drawing, reading, quiet playing, or self-oriented activities are allowed until their parents come to pick them up. The learning center closes after the last child has been picked up by the parent, usually at 6:15pm.

By promising to provide stretched questions to help develop the children's intellectual curiosity, this learning center is renowned in the neighborhood to train students with comprehensive thinking and problem solving skills, along with the necessary academy foundations. Of all the twentyish students attend, most of them are from the two elementary

schools nearby, whose grades range from kindergarten to grade 5. The majority of them have been enrolled in the Full-time Elementary Quest Highly Capable Program in Lake Washington School District. Since this gifted program is self-claimed to “meet the needs of students who have been identified as having exceptional cognitive and academic ability by accelerating and enriching the district curriculum”, their parents have asked to receive a relatively rigid academic lesson in academic preparation instead of some casual afterschool activities.

Significance of the Study

Students whose first, home, or dominant language is other than English—Language Minority Students—are a rapidly growing segment of the school-aged population in many parts of the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). If we believe that gifted education should represent an equal ratio of students from various cultural/economic background, then the language minority students would constitute an indispensable component for the highly capable students. As a matter of fact, “culturally responsive” (Gay, 2000) curriculum which correspond to the previous living experience and background of minority students could increase the engagement of all students, especially the gifted underachievers prodigiously. Numerous research has indicated that obtaining a sufficient heritage language proficiency motivates highly capable students not only in self-esteem (Cummins, 1992) but also in teacher-student relations (Burnette, 1999; Dörnyei, 2001). The elevation of highly capable students’ motivation also resulted from a better cultural support. Given students’ fluency as well as affinity in their home culture, students would be more easily initiated into their learning passion, and inquisitiveness.

Apart from that, as many authorities have suggested that additive bilingualism reveals certain cognitive advantages over a monolingual brain in terms of linguistic flexibility and multitasking (e.g.. Wolf, 2008), the promotion of heritage language courses provides benefits

toward the highly capable students in multiple academic perspectives. For example, Krashen (1997), Cummins (1991) and Brisk & Harrington (2000) have all revealed that literacy skills, including vocabulary as well as reading habits, have a significantly positive impact on students' development of literacy in their second language. Bilingual students might also be capable for the acquisition of other languages. By pointing out and advocating the Universal Grammar, Chomsky (1980) and Cook (1985) further suggest that those who are bilingual are capable to transfer their metalinguistic awareness toward the third or additional languages. Valdés (2003) even specifically pointed out that bilingual students' abilities do represent a kind of giftedness. Therefore, promoting the heritage language by molding students into the additive bilinguals exerts optimal effect toward the highly capable students.

On the other hand, for the language minority students, after-school program provided a Community of Practice (COP) (Gutierrez et. al., 1995) for them to support their cultural identity. Children from bilingual backgrounds are, under almost all circumstances, being educated in the mainstream classroom where little heritage languages are permitted. With little opportunities to practice their heritage language as well as to establish the rapport with the heritage culture, students are supposed to learn sufficiently yet independently via English only, which is not often the optimal case. If there's no sufficient resources that could be provided in the formal school settings, then the after-school program supplements such a perspective for the comprehensive development of students. Research has shown that how useful the afterschool program is....

Having considered the significance of heritage language as well as the impact of after school, however, it is surprising to discover that there are few literacy discussing the heritage language instruction in the after-school program for the highly capable students. Plenty of rooms have remained to investigate into all the beforementioned variables simultaneously: how the

heritage language and the after-school environment inter-affect each other for the highly capable students. The most significant aspect of my study lies in that it probes into a small scope—the heritage language instruction in an after-school program settings—of a general problem—the motivation of highly capable students. My research examines the identity construction of those language minority highly capable students, and provides a new pedagogical approach in the gifted education, which might have shed some lights for parents and educators who work intimately with the highly capable students. In the following chapter, the literatures that is relevant to my study would be reviewed in various categories.

Organization of the thesis

Altogether five parts are discussed in this thesis. The first part provides essential background information of the study: including the controversial status of the gifted education program in the United States, the Quest program to be specific in the Lake Washington School District, WA and the after-school program as the host site of the study, as well as the significance of the study. Literature review follows as the second major part, where under the theories of Community of Practice (COP), Heteroglossia and “Underlife”, a great amount of literatures has been reviewed in accordance with three pre-established criteria. Eventually, 29 literatures that meet the criteria have been categorized according to the context, participants and instructional approaches. The third part of the thesis is the Methodology, describing how this small-scale research has been conducted. Except for the research purpose and the research question, fundamental information as the participants, the researcher, data collection as well as data analysis procedure are described here. Right after the Methodology goes the Findings and Discussion. Findings are described in two separate sections: the findings for the Questionnaire and for the interview, where both quantitative data analysis and the qualitative data analysis have

been applied. Discussions are generated within the findings as well. Last but not least, the conclusion part of the thesis, in which major findings have been addressed to answer the research questions. The author also reflected the discrepancy between the original expectation and the research reality, which might shed lights on the further investigation. Implications come from the suggestions for practical teaching and for potential educators who work with the highly capable language minority students in the after-school. Also, as one of the inevitable component, limitations are discussed from the author's point of view, aiming to shorten the information gap as well as to improve the not-so-mature work.

Literature Review

Theoretical Frameworks

Gutierrez: community of practice (COP). Language is nothing other than a distinct practice from a given social community. Gutierrez et. al. (1995) proposed the notion of Community of Practice (COP) based on Lave and Wenger's (1991) model of situated learning by emphasizing that "becoming a member of a community of practice is a process of developing a particular identity and mode of behavior; through participation in a community's sociocultural practices, members learn which discourses and forms of participation are valued and not valued by the community." When considering language as a subject content, language minority students are unexpectedly under the inherent social nature of this community of practice. To put more specifically, how LMS' identity is cultivated consciously or unconsciously within the classroom, is "not independent of sociocultural beliefs and the cultural practices of the larger community and society" (Gutierrez et. al., 1995). Notwithstanding the powerful imperial nature of language—especially English, the institutional nature of schooling also exerts dominant power to

the receptive participants, i.e. the learner. Luke (in press) suggests the construction of human subject through the regimes of practice “in which school knowledge and school competence become ‘a set of bodily practices and inscriptions which are internalized by the habitus’” in the school contexts (Gutierrez et. al., 1995). In such a perspective, the afterschool program provides the LMS a COP where students could negotiate with their home identity along with the mainstream cultural identity. It is the place where highly capable LMS explore the world as well as themselves.

Bakhtin: heteroglossia. However, regardless of the hierarchical conception of language undergirding current curricula, Bakhtin (1981) put forward the ideology of “heteroglossia” by illustrating how the classroom is inherently multi-voiced and that “people’s utterances are never autonomous, but rather are always dialogic, appropriating and revoicing the words of others” (Handsfield et. al., 2013). By stating that, Bakhtin implicated people’s striving for heteroglossia discourses as a manifestation of identity, which is especially true within the language learning process, regardless of the autocracy from both language and institution. Therefore, particular identities are articulated through the course of an extended narrative overtime (Handsfield et. al., 2013). In the Quest program in the Lake Washington School District (LWSD), highly capable students are instructed in a heterogeneous classroom according to their grade level as well as cognitive ability. Therefore, the state of multi-voice is inevitable in such an educational environment. However, considering the LMS’ linguistic background in the gifted program—a far more competitive context, it sheds greater significance to examine students’ multiple identities within their intra- and inter- personal identities.

These identities, in a broad view, take participation frameworks (Cazden, 2001), epistemic devices (Moore & Maton, 2001) and positioning (Ritchie, 2002) into consideration.

Cazden: participation frameworks. Participation frameworks are “the rights and obligations of participants with respect to who can say what, when, and to whom (Cazden, 2001).” During the Language Acquisition, the participation framework is largely decided by the overall social environment as well as the micro classroom atmosphere which is more or less inevitably affected by the hegemony of language’s internal power. By being dominated the participation frameworks all the way through, language learners are positioned in an oppressive status under the majority of circumstances.

Moore & Maton: epistemic devices. Moore and Maton (2001) define an epistemic device as the means whereby groups establish and negotiate what knowledge is legitimate, how that legitimacy is determined, and who can make knowledge claims (Enyedy & Goldberg, 2004). Obviously, the epistemic device in language instruction devaluates the power of learners while at the same time emphasizes the inclusion of empirical evidence of language. However, these epistemic devices call for the need as well as the value of different cognitive competencies and identities that ultimately influence what students learn (Morais and Neves, 2001).

Ritchie: positioning. Positioning refers to the assignment of roles to participants within the interaction that establish the relevance and meaning of the person’s actions within the activity (Ritchie, 2002). In the research field as well as the educational practice of bilinguality, the learner is invariably viewed as a defective communicator. As Firth and Wagner (2007) argued, “the imposition of an orthodox social psychological hegemony on SLA has had the effect of reducing social identities into ‘subjects,’ or at best to a binary distinction between natives and nonnatives/learners”. Bearing such a pre-established power relation, language learners are delimited the capacities as well as identities that should be elicited from the classroom settings and became detrimental to the epistemic reception.

Goffman: framework of “Underlife”. In order to dismantle the language hierarchy, this paper promotes the recognition as well the adaptation of the learners’ heritage language—their mother tongue gifted education program. By counteracting the dominant discourses with an alternative language media, students are supposed to be assisted in establishing the framework of “underlife” (Goffman, 1961) where the roles expected from the surrounding institution are undercut, thus highlighting students’ strategies of differentiation themselves from the classroom/ social norms (Gutierrez et. al., 1995). Still, as English has expanded into a global lingua franca, being remarked by all the users in their own images, the recognition of heritage language reshape the learner identity through the demolition of the standardized language norms as well as conventions of “native speakers” (Dyson, 1991), thus flourishing the “heteroglossia discourse” as promoted by Bakhtin (1981). To him, human beings are engaged into constant internal dialogues that are the result of multiple voices and how through these dialogues we are able to construct and reconstruct ourselves—the identities. By stating that, Bakhtin implicated people’s striving for heteroglossia discourses as a manifestation of identity, which is especially true within the language learning process, regardless of the autocracy from both language and institution. Therefore, particular identities are articulated through the course of an extended narrative overtime (Handsfield et. al., 2013).

Methods

First, a computer search of two databases, ERIC and Education Source, was conducted, to locate studies published in the field of education and gifted education to be specific, published between 1995-2015 by using the search terms like highly capable, bilingual, heritage language, after school program in various combinations. This electronic search resulted in a total of more than 100 abstracts of which 63 studies, whose abstract met the criteria for inclusion, were

selected for further review. The heritage language, dominant language, research focus, and the result section of these studies were then further examined to determine eligibility for this review. Among these 63 studies, only those meet the criteria of the following were included to be analyzed in detail, restricting to 29 qualified studies in total.

Criteria 1: language minority students as the sub population. This study has reviewed the literatures that focused on examining those language minority students (LMS) in the highly capable program, as opposed to other monolingual students who are identified into the gifted education. Language Minority Students are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as those “Students whose first, home, or dominant language is other than English”. With the increasing rate of immigrants in the United States, which leads to the second or third generation immigrants, as well as the diverse representation in the gifted program, it is quintessential to quest into this special population within the highly capable group. To be more specific, Valdés (2003) has put that bilingual students’ abilities do represent a kind of giftedness. Therefore, how the LMS adjust themselves into the gifted program and their acculturation process with the heritage language bring great interest to the research.

Criteria 2: English as the dominant language. As opposed to other languages, like Spanish, French, or Italian, this thesis spotlights the English as the dominant language, which restricted the literature reviewed to be taken place in the English-speaking countries. Given the hegemonic role of English as a world-wide dominant language and the powerful socioeconomic power in the English-speaking countries, it reveals far more significance than other languages of their effects on constructing learners’ motivation in the gifted education program. It is believed that by investigating the instruction of LMS’s heritage language, awareness could be extended to

establish a more equal as well as multicultural view toward other foreign language learning as multilingualism.

Criteria 3: Pedagogical approach as the focus of the study. In order to constrain and limit the amount of literature being reviewed, this thesis is dedicated to concentrated on the pedagogical impact on the motivation of language minority highly capable students of the usage of their heritage language, excluding other common focus in the gifted education, like the identification process, gender equity, the psychological development and financial course etc. of the highly capable students. The instruction method is more important here because that according the Bakhtin (1981), the phenomenon of heteroglossia is inevitable in a classroom where language takes place. Not to mention the pull-out of full time classes in the gifted education program, who are meant to be heteroglossia. Not only does one negotiate between his own inner language, but intrapersonal interaction also functions as a particular form to conduct different discourses, thus effecting learners' self-recognition, which could be an essential component for those highly capable students in their self-motivation in the learning process.

Review of Literature

Context. Among the 29 qualified studies, 21 of them were conducted in the United States (19) and Canada (2), where English is not only the dominant language but serve as the official language. Interestingly, there are several of the comparative studies that were carried out in the countries where the dominant language is not English (3), yet used to compare with the gifted education in the United States. Most of them were between European countries and America. The rest of the studies (5) remain unknown for the location of research. The research contexts matter for the reason of power relationship and social structure. Those studies that were conducted in the English dominant countries are supposed to experience more social pressure of

monolingualism and the Standard English. While those comparative studies that were researched outside of the English dominant countries revealed that, on the one hand, people are getting alerted awareness into the overall effect of the language development on the highly capable students, and on the other hand, it kept concerning on students' language ability which related to the English, the world-wide imperialistic language so far (Wilingsky, 2000).

Participant description.

Age. Since the gifted education program only occurs in the K-12 education, all of the literatures that have been reviewed are within this scale. However, to be more specific, the majority of the studies were participated by the people who were in their elementary school period (11). The remaining mount of studies were participated by children from kindergarten (6), middle or secondary school (3) and high school (3). Except for the 6 studies who participants are unknown age group, all the studies revealed the significance of instructing, either with or for, students' heritage languages toward the children in the gifted education program. The age/ grade range is critical because for the kindergarten to elementary highly capable students, because it is much more sensitive when bilingual children still are highly home-dependent, and when they are encountering the most obvious transition between home, where the heritage culture dominates, to school. Where the secondary discourse (Gee, 1991) dominates.

Heritage language. This review included the group of participants who obtain various heritage languages. Among the 29 criteria-met literatures, the majority of them are from the Latino/Latina heritage where Spanish serve as the heritage language (9). By acknowledging that the Latino/Latina population have long been considered as underrepresented in the gifted education, this concentrated focus urges us to pay more serious attention on the language impact, not only on the identification process, but also on the instructional model in the gifted education

program. The second large proportion of the heritage language is the Asian languages, where Chinese (5) and Korean (4) constitute almost all of them. Baring the myth of Asian-America's overrepresentation in the gifted education, it's not surprising to witness the high rates of literacy contributed to the Asian heritage languages education. Other heritage languages which have been focused in the studies are Turkish (1), French (3), German (1), Native African American Language (1) and other languages (5) that haven't been specifically mentioned, including at least one European language. From the various focus of the language, we may notice that apart from English, European languages consist of the major focus on the language education in the gifted program, with Asian languages and Native American language being the minor focus, which is highly possible to be related with the immigrant history of the United States, as well as the culture hierarchy persists in the contemporary era.

Pedagogical approaches. Throughout the whole review process, several pedagogical approaches have been advocated as regarding to addressing the LMS in the gifted education program, including the promoting of summer camp (2), heritage literacy appreciation (5), heritage language lesson (3), pull out instruction (2), peer mentoring (1), stage play (2), language immersion program (3), game-based learning (1), code-switching advocacy (2), and bilingual teacher/counselor preparation (3), etc. These pedagogical approaches could be basically divided into two categories, student-oriented and teacher-oriented.

It is delighted to notice that researchers in the gifted education field are gradually paying attention to the multilingual teacher preparation for the LMS, as one of the indispensable sub population in the highly capable program. However, it isn't paramount to argue that the teachers of the culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse gifted students must also be gifted, and culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse as well. According to Banks (1990), culturally

responsive teachers are those who “proactively and aggressively try to secure the resources and funding to improve their minoring students’ educational experiences— their primary goal being to close the gap between students’ potential and performance”, which being said , in order to create an optimal learning environment for the LMS, teachers in the gifted program should be better prepared to develop their cultural sensitivity, knowledge as well as skills.

Researches have also investigated numerous approaches where LMS are positioned in the center of the gifted instruction. Among them, the facilitation of summer camp, game-based learning and peer mentoring programs are quite innovative as being interdisciplinary. While the remaining being relatively traditional by focusing solely on the heritage language acquisition, they diverge in the degree upon which highly capable LMS are exposed in the language environment, from the code-switching advocacy toward the language immersion program. Researches have long being arguing the amount of L1 that a second language learner should be encountering. As a matter of fact, along with the achievement of linguistic theories, there has been a considerable body of literature that supports the fact that the use of a student's native language in the classroom can facilitate acquisition of the Target Language in recent years (e.g. Lightbrown et.al., 2006; Genesee et. al., 2004; Krashen, 2002). Hence, plenty of room is left to accommodate LMS with various language approaches, the highly capable ones in specific, where the additive bilingualism could be achieved to motivate them in the further academic path.

Conclusion

As an increasing amount of researchers as well as educators come to realize the hierarchical nature of schooling, especially considering the over/under representation phenomenon in the controversial gifted education program, and as the further fact that, among all the subject contents, language has long been universally regarded as a powerful manifestation of

the dominant society/ culture, it's urgent for us to adopt a counteraction to devalue the hegemony of English, and to motive the highly capable LMS learn under the culturally response environment. Under the framework of Gutierrez's Community of Practice, Bakhtin's Heteroglossia and Goffman's framework of "Underlife", this paper advocates the recognition of highly capable LMS' heritage language as a media to compete with the dominant culture, as well as shape/reshape learners' self-recognition, and motivation. Numerous approaches have been implemented in the contemporary gifted education field. However, much remains to be investigated into, taking students heritage culture into account. Admittedly, heritage language could affect students' language acquisition in both a positive and negative way. However, this paper emphasizes the conceptual influences on identity as well as motivation that effect the power relationship between learners and dominant culture. From such a perspective, the legitimation of heritage language serves as a little yet essential maneuver in the gifted education, and it is hoped that gradually, people would regard language learning as a more equitable environment where learners could be able to appropriate language knowledge with their own funds of capital.

Methodology

Participants and settings

Children who participate in this study have all been enrolled into the Bluesky afterschool program, 25 in total, amount which approximately 13 children are in the K-1 group, 8 are in the grade 2-3 group while grade 4-5 consists of approximately 4 children. They all live in the nearby neighborhood (Sammamish, WA) with parents (both or either) work as the software engineer in the great Seattle area.

Interestingly, while those students are unexceptionally live in the United States with Asian ethnicity background, more than 95% of them are Chinese and less than 5% of them Indian. 99% of the students live in a well-off family, whose parents work mainly in the IT field, coming from the mid-upper class. As born as the American citizens who have long been immersed into the English environment, whereas exposed to native languages mainly at home, those students display an interesting phenomenon in their conscious/ subconscious choice during language using. It reveals significance in exploring the usage of their heritage language at this afterschool program, especially students' self-identity recognition, where they share multiple identities as a learner, a cultural group member, and an individual person, which might underlie their translingual behavior.

My supervisor as well as my colleague is a mid-age Chinese immigrant, who has married and raised two school-age children. She is the owner of this learning center, and with her son and daughter taking part in the afterschool program, she obtains the 3-layer role in this program, the owner, the parent, along with the subject teacher. She has received graduate education in the United States, majoring in education, along with more than 5 years' experience in the public education system in Seattle, WA. In this after-school program, she mainly takes charge of the nonverbal subject, with focus mainly on math, math competition and cultural history.

Five distinct types of heritage language classes have been imparted in this after-school program: Chinese class taught in Chinese, Chinese class taught in English, Math class taught in Chinese, Chinese art/history appreciation, and the Chinese festival celebration. The first three are the regular lessons in the after-school while the Chinese art/history appreciation are only accessible for the grade 4-5 students who have a relatively high level of understanding and prior knowledge. The Bluesky Learning Center would celebrate various cultural festivals accordingly,

during the research period, the Chinese New Year has been observed and a grand party was hold all by the students, where performances are played, local handcraftsmanship is learnt, etc.

Role of the researcher

I have been working there as one of the two teachers for half a year, along with my supervisor, As a language teacher who is responsible for the verbal part of their academic lesson—both Chinese and English—I show great interests in students’ linguistic behavior, either within the class or outside of the classroom. Apart from my lesson period, I observe attentively how the students reacted with the usage of their heritage language.

As being currently a full-time graduate student in the University of Washington, I worked in this program as a part-time teacher. Positioning myself as the international student with the Chinese heritage background of an educator-to be, I conducted the research from a perspective of inside-out (Groves, 2003): considering myself as part of the community as reveal the story to the general public. By doing this, I might procure the relatively crystal view to present how the participants behavior normally in the minimum disrupted environment.

Research purpose and questions

Generally, this thesis is dedicated to examine the effective ways to motivate highly capable Language Minority Students in the after-school program by implementing the heritage language in the teaching process, so as to bridge a supportive connection between the children’s cultural identity as well as the academic identity, by stimulating their learning motivation. At the same time, this thesis steps out for a tentative maneuver to counter-act the hegemony of the dominant language—English, as well as its “power” in the gifted education program.

To be specific, my research question could be generated into the following overarching two, with the second one to be divided into more detailed sub-questions. There are:

1. Is heritage language effective in motivating highly capable students?
2. How should the heritage language be used to motivate highly capable students?

This research question could be further substantiated into 2 sub-questions, which are: 1) how much time should students be instructed in the after-school program to use their heritage language? 2) what kind of pedagogical approach(es) would be most effective to motivate highly capable students?

Research instruments

This paper is mainly carried out through the combination of quantitative data research and qualitative data research, where the two kinds of research methods have been implemented: questionnaire for the children and interviews both for children and the teacher.

Questionnaires. In February 2017, 25 questionnaires on the heritage language usage as well as their attitude have been given out to the four groups of highly capable students in this after-school program, after the end of class session within two days. Eventually, altogether 20 valid questionnaires were recollected, among which there are 9 boys and 11 girls. The questionnaire was designed according to the research objective, research questions, their teachers very pedagogical patterns and also has been referred to some relative questionnaires. The one used in this paper has been written in English given that those children has limited character-reading ability in Chinese, in order not to bring forth any possible misunderstanding or deviation in meaning (see Appendix A).

Interviews. This thesis recruited 5 children and the supervisor to participate in the further semi-structured interview study. Three of the children participants are randomly chosen within their grade groups (one in per group). While the other two were picked for their fervent interest in participating in this research, sharing the feelings. Both of them are in the group 2-3 (see

Appendix B). As another subject of this research, my supervisor has also been interviewed after the class observation has been conducted and after the questionnaires have been successfully recollected, which make the interview lie in the last phase of the whole research, playing the role of both conclusive and complimentary. In the process of this interview, Chinese has been used to address the question after inquiring of the language preference of the teacher. All the interviews have been dedicated to create the most relaxed atmosphere in order to ease the participants' anxiety level, gain as much more authentic opinion as possible (see Appendix C).

Data Analysis Procedures

The data is collected through the two research methods consequently, by primarily combing the quantitative research method with the qualitative research method. The quantitative research method is applied to the students' questionnaire results, and the qualitative research method, given its nature in probing into the underlying themes, is facilitated in investigating the oral interview results.

Analysis of questionnaire results. After recollecting the 20 valid questionnaires, these statistics are revealed through percentage, and some diagraphs have been made so as to illustrate these statistics vividly and clearly. Considering the age as well as the cognitive ability of those children, questions on the questionnaire are fairly easy, reader-friendly, and should be without the challenge in understanding. Participants are supposed to finish the questionnaire in less than 5 minutes, with only 8 questions on it. The purpose of the Questionnaire is to have an overall perception on how participants think about the heritage language teaching in this after school program, and most significantly, which way motivates them to continue learning.

Analysis of interview data. Qualitative data were composed of interviews with both children and the teacher. The interview data were audio recorded by cellphone and then

transferred, at the same time coded, to the personal computer for further analysis. These data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which “helps reveal underlying complexities as you seek to identify tensions and distinctions” (Glesne, 2015). Codes were applied to those answer materials based on my research questions. The purpose of the interview is to launch a further investigation on various perspective toward the heritage language instruction, either from the children’s or from the teacher’s. The questions for children were asked in plain English in order to eliminate any linguistic difficult and to elicit more spontaneous answers. On the contrary, the interview for the supervisor were carried out in Chinese, in accordance to her preference. As she regards Chinese as the “mother tongue”, such a language media should create a more authentic, and relaxing environment for the participant.

Findings and Discussion

Findings for the Questionnaire Results

Altogether 25 students participate in the questionnaire survey, of which 21 are with valid & legible information. Participants’ ages range from 6-11years old, being in grade K to grade 5, in the scale of elementary school within the public education system.

The first section of the questionnaire (question 1-3) focuses on the general usage of the heritage language of students. 100% of the participants speak Chinese at home according to the survey, however, 19 of them don’t speak Chinese at school (see Table 1). When asked when will they speak Chinese to be specific, among all the verbal answers, 100% of them have mention the occasion when they are with their family, including key words like: parents, dad, mom, brother, home, house and at China. Two of the students have also referred to their friends, indicating that they would speak Chinese if their friends do so.

Table 1. Basic Heritage Language Usage for the Highly Capable LMS Students in the After-school

| <u>No.</u> | <u>Questions</u> | <u>Yes</u> | | <u>No</u> | |
|------------|---------------------------------|------------|----------|-----------|----------|
| | | <u>N</u> | <u>%</u> | <u>N</u> | <u>%</u> |
| 1 | Do you speak Chinese at home? | 21 | 100% | 0 | 0% |
| 2 | Do you speak Chinese at school? | 2 | 9.5% | 19 | 90.5% |

Following are the questions about their learning opportunities of the heritage language in the educational setting (see Table 2). 61.9% of the participants declared that they would like to learn more Chinese in the Bluesky—the after-school learning center, while only 19% of them agree to learn more at school, the place that attains seemingly different function from the after-school program. As for the fundamental question—which types of class do you like most, on average, children ranked the Chinese Festival Celebration the highest among all the heritage language instruction type, with 4.3 stars out of 5 (see Figure 1). The Chinese history/art class ranked second, receiving 4.2 stars out of 5; the third is the Chinese class in Chinese, which receives 3.2 stars on average. Two types of classes that ranked below or equal to 3 stars are Chinese class in English and Math class in Chinese, which score at 3 and 2.2 separately. For detailed statistics, please refer to Figure 2.

Table 2. Students' Intention in Prolonging the Chinese Language Instruction

| <u>No.</u> | <u>Questions</u> | <u>Yes</u> | | <u>No</u> | |
|------------|---|------------|----------|-----------|----------|
| | | <u>N</u> | <u>%</u> | <u>N</u> | <u>%</u> |
| 4 | Do you want to learn more Chinese in the Bluesky? | 13 | 61.9% | 8 | 38.1% |
| 5 | Do you want to learn more Chinese at school? | 4 | 19.0% | 17 | 81.0% |

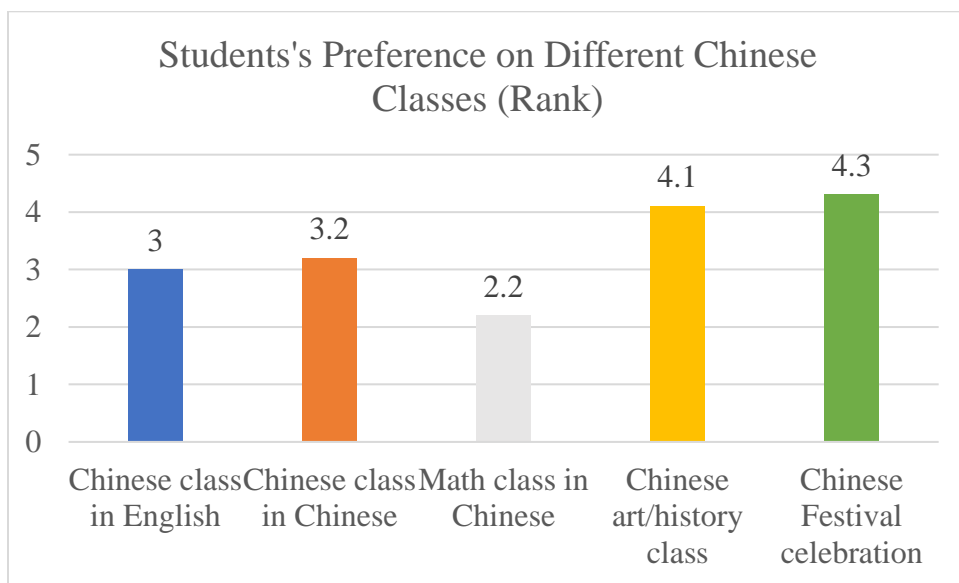


Figure 1. Students's Preference on Different Chinese Classes (Rank)

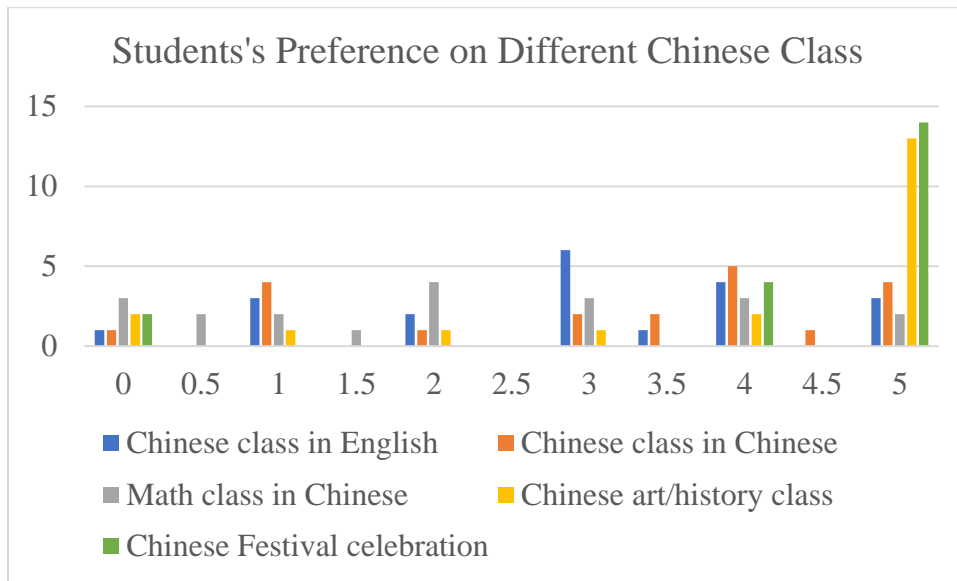


Figure 2. Students's Preference on Different Chinese Classes

The last section asks about their perception on the Chinese language learning. The majority of participants agree that learning Chinese is beneficial in understanding the knowledge, accounting for 76.2% of the statistics. Nevertheless, if to be asked more practical on whether Chinese is valuable in doing the homework, only 52.4% admitted such an advantage, slightly over the half.

Table 3. Students' Perception on the Chinese Language Learning

| <u>No.</u> | <u>Questions</u> | <u>Yes</u> | | <u>No</u> | |
|------------|---|------------|----------|-----------|----------|
| | | <u>N</u> | <u>%</u> | <u>N</u> | <u>%</u> |
| 7 | Is learning Chinese helpful in understanding the knowledge? | 16 | 76.2% | 5 | 23.8% |
| 8 | Is learning Chinese helpful in doing your homework? | 11 | 52.4% | 10 | 47.6% |

Findings for the Interview Data

Interview data from the students. Taking the short attention span of these kids into consideration, the interview for them has been curtailed into 20 minutes, and all the five students are interviewed together, forming a discussion group. Pre-assigned questions ask about their learning condition at school, their expectation in the Bluesky and their preference for the heritage language classes.

Basically, all the kids expressed their enjoyment of learning in the full-time Quest program. They described their experience as “happy”, “fun”, “challenging”, “interesting” and “curios” etc. Only one kid complained about the “heavy” reading task, by saying that he “would rather play instead of sitting still, and reading”. Besides from that, they nodded willingly when asked if they like to come to Bluesky. Reasons include: to play with friends, to learn Chinese, to have snacks, to do Math Challenge, and to see teachers. To them, come to the Bluesky is more like a relaxing place rather than the tutorial center.

We talked about the five types of heritage language classes in the Bluesky, which within the expectation, they voted the favorite one as the Chinese New Year celebration. They liked it because of the different cultural experience, like hand-making dumplings, red pocket money, exotic music genre etc. Only one child has mentioned the idiomatic expression of the language people use on that day. Other children argued that they all knew a bit of it at that while, but have totally forgotten now. The second one goes for the Chinese Art/History Class. Although some lower grade kids haven’t taken that lesson so far, the kids in the K-1 group and 2 kids in the 2-3 group all revealed yearning toward that kind of lesson. The upper level students voted this because again, “I know lots of unique thing than my friends after this lesson.” When asked about their preference on the language classes, they discussed fervently. Three of them are the

supporters of the Chinese class in Chinese while the other two were frustrated because their Chinese linguistic ability is relatively low. But they all agree that they would enjoy the Chinese class more if the character writing section could be omitted— it is “boring” and “torturing”. As for the Math class, they are quite accustomed to Chinese because my colleague usually speaks Chinese subconsciously during the class, and they feel it comfortable as if “my parent is talking”. Nevertheless, there are some specific expressions in Math that couldn’t be translated into Chinese and under such a circumstance, it sometimes hinders their understanding.

Before the last minute, I asked about whether they want to prolong the Chinese instruction time. All the five kids shook their heads and said no to it. “No more class time!” as they said. Interestingly enough, when I paraphrased my question into “do you want to spend more time on the Chinese culture and custom?”, four of the kids nodded their heads and agreed to receive more relevant knowledge, because most of them have been informed by the prerequisite knowledge at home—“it’s easy to understand”. One of them were still concerned about the extra exposure as well as exercise on language. “I don’t feel like speaking Chinese. But the facts part are fun though” he said, by shrugging the shoulder.

Interview data from the teacher. The interview took place at a Friday evening when the after-school program had dismissed and all the children had been picked up by their parents. My supervisor and I sit in the empty classroom, with hot tea at hand. The interview took approximately half an hour. During which, my supervisor first expressed her opinion toward those after-school children, her perspective on the heritage language instruction and her further expectation at last.

Through the scope of my supervisor, those students in the after-school are highly effected by their heritage cultural background. She has mentioned several times in her answer that

“because the Chinese family...” To her, those children who have been enrolled into the Quest program are affected uniquely by their parents’ high expectation in education. When asking what makes students in the Bluesky different from the children who are not, she again expressed the cultural identity— “to those parents, children are expected to perform satisfactorily both in the academic facet but also in the extra-curricular activities”. She further took one child as the example whose parents urge her to weigh more challenge on their son, for they thought math in the current level is too easy, not paramount to the corresponding grade difficulty in China.

Due to her strong association with the heritage background with students’ academic identity, her perspective on the heritage language instruction also indicates that by learning Chinese, students are supposed to have a more intimate connection with where they belong to, spiritually. Her words lay special emphasis on the sense of belonging, rather than some cognitive benefits. As a matter of fact, when asked whether heritage language instruction is beneficial to the students’ in their identification process into the Quest program, she decisively shook her head and gave up thinking soon. “Not as I know”, she said. When investigating into how she uses the heritage language to teach, she admitted that it depends on the subject. She felt it strange to teach math by using Chinese and it’s more useless than being culturally responsive. She also pointed out the phenomenon that for those kids, Chinese is more a fun topic instead of a subject, and that it would receive great repellent if asking children to cram up characters or poems. To her, children’s motivation is the most fundamental thing here.

Speaking of the motivation, she does recognize how students’ classroom behavior improved when they are having Chinese art/history class, and their more relaxed activity during the Chinese New Year celebration. She mentioned that an apparent high rate of hand raising occurred when they are in the Chinese art/history class, where students engaged more and asked

more inquisitive questions. The same thing happened in the Chinese New Year celebration when children activated so lively that they oriented the whole schedule. However, she also stated that these influences only exert on the cultural level, instead of on the cognition level. Students are motivated to inquire more if they are connected to their home culture.

At the end of the interview, she expressed her expectation on deepening the sense of “root” for these students. Several suggestions have been put forward, including a Summer Camp in the home country, or a cultural immerse vacation lasts no less than one month, etc. Her suggestion all pointed to the prolonged exposure time in the heritage environment and intensify the degree under which students can contact with the local culture.

Discussion

From the qualitative findings and the quantitative findings, we notice that LMS in the after-school program are more interested in the Chinese culture than the heritage language itself. Some children have even expressed frustration in learning some difficult Chinese characters. To them, language is more a pathway of understanding the world rather than the academic subject that requires hard work. That explained the preference rate for five distinct types of classes, and children’s repellent when I suggested to prolong the Chinese instruction time.

This might due to the results of children’s multiple identity negotiation. To those second-generation immigrants, they are the American citizens with the Chinese heritage. Therefore, learning about the home culture is fun and substantial, while learning the academic content including language becomes the burden. Another supplemental explanation is students’ perception on what Bluesky is. Although self-claimed to be a learning center, Bluesky has been reckon as a community location where children could play, plus study, which was disclosed from the students’ interview. No wonder they felt more reluctant to learn and tended to entertain more.

Consequently, if the heritage language instruction is camouflaged under the culture appreciation class, students are more eager to learn, and ask questions, which might provide slight implication on how the heritage language instruction should be conducted. After all, heritage language does elevate highly capable students' motivation in several ways.

Heritage language motivates students in class performance. As is indicated in the teacher's interview, although children like the academic class conducted in Chinese least, among all 5 classes, when teaching class in Chinese they had better class performance, such as the prolonged attention span, frequent hand raising times, question qualities, etc. Heritage language instruction provides them a well-established prior knowledge, setting a better cognitive preparation for the contents that are going to be learnt. The quantitative result of the questionnaire also supports this as 76.2% of the participants agree that learning Chinese is beneficial to understand the knowledge.

Heritage language also motivates students to inquire more on what are unknown to them. In the questionnaire, all the kids who have attended the heritage art/history appreciation class ranked it five stars and later explained in the interview that in such a class, they have learnt more, have known more, and have been more curious to explore more, which justifies their motivation increasing. Such a motivation is constructive in overall perspectives. For example, the boy who felt it "boring" to read originally, had learned how to refer to book sources to find out why china (the fine dishes) share the same name as a country. By answering that question, he had dug into books and materials for at least half an hour, reading until he got an answer. Such a change resulting from the heritage language instruction is both favorable and undeniable.

By building a strong connection with the heritage language, children are motivated to turn other people for help, especially the people with the same heritage culture. One

questionnaire question on when do children use heritage language reveals that they use it when they are under the occasion with their family members or friends. During the interview with teacher, she strongly corresponded with this notion by repeating the “sense of belonging”. To her, the essence of learning Chinese, as well as Chinese culture is to build the connection, and remember who they are. Gifted students are special in that they show talent in cognitive abilities, hence, the more resources they could use, the more faster they may develop, both in school-scale learning and in extra-curricular actives.

Conclusions

Major Findings

Heritage language is an effective way in motivating students. However, instructional approaches should be taken into consideration. Students are motivated mostly in culture perspective, rather than on the academic sphere. Therefore, language would better be delivered through the appreciation of culture, rather than via the means of content instruction. Both through the interview and the questionnaire, both from the teacher and from the students themselves, messages are delivered that heritage language is beneficial in stimulating class performance, curiousness, and students’ initiative in communicating for knowledge. These motivation is helpful both in cognitive development and culture recognition.

Time for instruction should be considered associating with the pedagogical approach. Basically, the after-school should dedicate more time for the highly capable LMS onward the heritage language instruction. However, it depends on the format of the instruction. If prolonging the average time allotted for the heritage language, the after-school program should focus more on the casual way where communication and understanding should be prioritized instead of

reading and writing. Students are willing to receive more heritage culture propagation where language is the inevitable content to keep contact with.

One of the most effective way to instruct heritage language is to eliminate the academic pressure for those highly capable LMS in the after-school program, for example, learning the language through cultural activities. By reducing students' reluctance, it would be easier and much more welcomed by the students to absorb both the linguistic feature and the heritage cultural treasure. As a matter of fact, if the purpose of promoting heritage language instruction is to motivate students and benefits the in further academic setting or life-long excellence, then the mere concentration on the pronunciation or the sequence of strokes in the character no longer contain essential valuable meanings.

Researcher's Reflection

Though the investigation has been carried out in a relatively small scale, only one teacher (besides the researcher myself) in an atypical after-school program and 25 highly capable LMS with Asian American heritage have been observed, there are still some discrepancy between the expectation and the reality.

First of all is the way how students perceive the heritage language. Before conducting the research, as a teacher, I'm always impressed by students' enjoyment for the heritage language, either with the class performance or through the daily conversation. However, it is during the research process that I realized that, to those highly capable LMS, language serves dual-function: a subject to be learnt, and a representative of identity. Apparently, they dislike the former role while enjoy the representation that language provides. It's understandable given their age as well as mental development. Nevertheless, this could be considered into our further improvement if further language instruction is going to be adopted.

Speaking of the representative of identity, the participants of this research is a quite unique group: they reserved the high expectation both from the parents and from the teacher by enrolling into the Quest program, they received the both the accelerated and the enrichment curriculum in the school which might be strenuous to them, they are the language minority students who negotiate with the identities constantly between the community and the mainstream culture. Such a complexity reveals itself on the students' paradoxical attitude toward the language learning. On the one hand, they are fascinated by the heritage culture and are eager to communicate, as well as to explore more. On the other hand, they refuse largely on the arduous learning process, which is the prerequisite of communication and deeply understand culture. As a United States citizen who are in the gifted program, they enjoy the privilege to learn more and foresee a brighter future, hence, for them, the acquisition of a foreign language is indeed optional, rather than compulsory requirement.

The teacher's perception on the heritage language is another real surprise. Quintessentially, what the teacher has thought could be partly perceived as how the parents' expectation for the highly capable LMS in this after-school program, since she is also the parent of two kids in this program. To her, the native language for their kids is English undoubtedly. Therefore, the linguistic ability that children should improve on is also English. While Chinese is just a casual way to bond their kids with the heritage culture and attains no obvious impulse for students' academic progress, no further stress should be placed on them, which coincides with the students' perception exactly. What makes them different is teacher's emphasis on the "sense of belonging", which may due to the crisis awareness for the first generation of immigration. They want to be intimately connected with the home culture, to know where the root is. Their

children should be academically excellent while share the same value, which forms their complex perception on the heritage language.

Implications

Since this is only a small-scale research, many findings may not be suitable to apply to all gifted LMS and all after-school settings, but they still can offer some implications for teachers on how to create an optimal learning environment for highly capable language minority students.

The following are some practical implications:

Promote a more casual as well as flexible curriculum in heritage language instruction. As could be perceived from the abovementioned, both children and teachers prefer the heritage language to serve as the bridge between the dominant culture and the home culture, instead of a rigid subject content. By alternating the pedagogical approaches, it elevates children's motivation in the further inquisition and may create a more optimal learning outcomes. Such approaches may include: heritage culture appreciation lesson, festival celebration, native costume day, etc. where language is the by-product of a cultural immersion environment.

Prolong the exposure time, under the prerequisite that heritage language instruction is no longer a rigid subject content. If language is simultaneously learnt within the casual ways, students have expressed eagerness to keep contact with the heritage language more. Since the more contact students have with the heritage language in a casual way, the more highly capable students are motivated, increasing the time causes students to be more familiar with the language, better for future development.

Prepare teacher to be bilingual. It is something that hasn't been mentioned in the research. However, during the study, I have been pondering on the idea repeatedly that how important it is for teachers to be bilingual, or at least belong to the community where students

come from. The after-school program is a specific educational setting where students regard it more as a community spot where they share the similar value as well as belief with friends and community members. Hence, recruiting teachers from the similar background of students not only strengthen the community bond, but also motivates students to further investigate into the heritage culture, thus radiating into all other facets.

Limitations

This paper is conducted in a relatively constrained time coupled with limited capability, therefore, some critical aspects of heritage language instruction in the gifted education, including children's unique learning style, gender difference and parents' engagement are omitted. Given the special setting of this after-school program, one of the major researchee also serve as the parent, the teacher, and the owner, some opinions might be identity-intertwined, increasing the complexity of the research condition. However, any further studies can still focus on these aspects, forming a more comprehensive vista of the heritage language instruction in the after-school program for the highly capable students.

Besides, this research may be not so representative for there is only one after-school program randomly chosen in the greater Seattle area as the major research site and there are only 29 participants in the research group. Therefore, the data collection is not sufficient enough. Although the demography of this after-school program may shed different lights on the Asian American heritage language in the Gifted Education, it might be the major shortcoming as well, some further studies are suggested to enlarge the survey scale to make the data more convincible.

Third, the questionnaire to children was conducted and designed by the author self, which makes its reliability as well as validity check-needed. Some of the items may not be expressed clear and scientific enough due to author's lack of related knowledge.

[Notes: For convenience, all statistics in the thesis have been rounded to one decimal place.]

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Appendix A

Questionnaire on the implementation of heritage language

Hi, thank you for answering these questions! Big Hug!

- How old are you? I'm _____ years old

1. Do you speak Chinese at home? YES ☺ No ☹

2. Do you speak Chinese at School? YES ☺ No ☹

3. When do you speak Chinese?

I use Chinese when _____

4. Do you want to learn Chinese more in the Bluesky? YES ☺ No ☹

5. Do you want to learn Chinese more in the school? YES ☺ No ☹

6. Please color the star on how you like the class:

Chinese class in English



Chinese class in Chinese



Math class in Chinese



Chinese history/art class



Chinese festival celebration



7. Is learning Chinese helpful in understanding the knowledge?

YES ☺

No ☹

8. Is learning Chinese helpful in doing your homework?

YES ☺

No ☹

Appendix B

Semi-structured interview to the children

1. Are you in the Quest program?
2. Do you like what you are learning in the school?
3. Do you like to come to Bluesky?
4. What do you like most about the Bluesky?
5. Do you like the Chinese Class taught every week?
 - How do you like it?
 - Do you prefer the Chinese class in all Chinese or basically in English?
6. Do you like the Math Class taught every week?
 - How do you like it?
 - Do you prefer the Chinese class in all Chinese or basically in English?
7. Do you like the Chinese New Year celebration? Which part do you like most?
8. (Optional: Do you like the Chinese history/art appreciation class?)
9. How do you feel like using Chinese to teach? What helps you and what hinders you?

Appendix C

Semi-structured interview to the teacher

1. 在 Bluesky 的孩子都是天才班的成员，且家庭背景都非常相似，您认为他们和普通学生的区别在哪里？

All the kids who attend the Bluesky are in the Quest program who have quite similar family backgrounds. What do you think differentiate them from the kids in the general education?

2. 您更偏好中文教学还是英文教学呢？

Which instructional language do you prefer? Chinese or English?

3. 在什么情况下您会使用中文教学呢？

Under what circumstances would you choose to use Chinese for teaching?

4. 您认为中文教学的意义在哪里？

What do you think is the significance of teaching in Chinese?

5. 您认为中文教学对于这些天才班的孩子有那些帮助？

What do you think is the significance of teaching in Chinese for those kids in the Quest Program?

6. 从学生的课堂反馈和日常行为来看，你看到了哪些可喜的效果？又有哪些不尽如人意的效果吗？

What effects have you observed after using Chinese as the instructional language, either on students' class behavior or on students' overall performance?

7. 通过中文教学，您发现孩子们的学习积极性有什么变化吗？

Have you discerned any changes on students' learning motivation?

8. 孩子们都很喜欢我们举办中国文化节日庆祝，您的看法是什么？您觉得它对学生的帮助是什么呢？

I'm told that children are so fervent on the Chinese festival celebration. What's your opinion on that? How do you think it helps out children?

9. 您对于增大学生对中文/中国文化的接触上，还有什么建议吗？

Do you have any suggestion on increasing the contact between highly capable students and their heritage culture?