

Family Language Policy and Practice of Urban Families in China —A Case Study from the Perspective of Investment

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In the context of education anxiety and the double reduction policy, this article is a case study of the identification and investment in a Chinese urban family. Data is collected in ways of semi-structured interviews and artifact collection, and is analyzed according to grounded theories. Results show that parents invest differently in different languages. Parents tap into different capitals such as economic capital and cultural capital to invest in children's language learning and the different investment in different languages is motivated by parents' internal identification and external ideology. The study discusses the multi-dimensional influences of identification and individual agency at the micro level, community and school at the meso level, and governmental policy at the macro level on parents' investment in children's language learning. It is unveiled that education anxiety lies in parents' education investment in children's language learning, and such anxiety is mainly centred around social class. This study contributes to the improvement of the previous investment model by adding digital literacy, a new dimension of cultural capital. The ignorance of dialect suggested in this study serves as a caveat for future language protection program. The conflicts between the actual effects of the double reduction policy and its expectations provide valuable insights for policy-making in the future.

Keywords: China, investment, identity, the double reduction education policy, imagined community

Education anxiety is a sweeping psychology among Chinese parents. Generally, there were three sources of Chinese parents' worries: the inability of parents themselves to tutor children, the disparity between expectation and actuality, and the absence of support from family members in children's education (Geng, 2021). Driven by persisting anxiety, some parents enroll their children in manifold extracurricular classes in a way parallel to being invigorated by "chicken blood injection," in Chinese, "Dajixue." The counterpart of "Dajixue" is "Foxi," which means a relatively moderate way of education. Parents' choice of education is determined by multiple factors.

With an objective to relieve Chinese parents' education anxiety, on July 24, 2021, the General Office of the Communist

Party of China Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China issued *Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Homework and Off-Campus Training on Students in Compulsory Education* (hereafter *The Double-Reduction Policy* or *The Opinions*) (Yu et al., 2022). Due to the document, many off-campus educational institutions were outlawed, English educational institutions included. *The Opinions* aims to strengthen the role of formal school education and the governance of off-campus training institutions and tries to alleviate excessive homework burden and off-campus training burden on students, thus providing a healthy environment for their growth. Moreover, the policy wants to relieve parents' anxiety about children's education, especially the anxiety from family education. A few studies (Yang & Wen, 2022; Yu et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2022) have surveyed the effects of the double reduction education policy and they suggested that parents showed contradictory responses to this policy.

As an important domain of language policy research (Spolsky, 2012; Zhang et al., 2022), family was a site in which governmental policy at the macro level, schools and communities at the meso level, and parents and children at the micro level tended to overlap and interact with each

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other (Gu & Han, 2021). Many studies of family language policy and practice have taken an ethnographic view to address sociological issues such as multilingualism (Curdt-Christiansen, 2016) and language learner identity (Cui & Zheng, 2021).

Most researches on family language policy and practice in China focused on ethnic minority families, examining the way they balanced the symbolic values, functional values and cultural values of different languages (Brown, 2005). In ethnic minority families, the current situation was that Putonghua (Mandarin Chinese), heritage languages and English were in a hierarchy and heritage languages were at the brim of withering (Shen et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2022). The phenomenon went to the competition between Putonghua, English, foreign languages other than English, and regional dialects or dialect in urban families (Huang & Fang, 2021; Li et al., 2019). Previous studies also suggested that English was usually attributed with great values and invested with more capitals (Curdt-Christiansen & Wang, 2018; Zheng & Mei, 2021), reflecting an ideology that was English-dominated.

However, most previous studies examined family language policy and practice under the framework of language practice, language ideology and language management, with little investigation into the nuance of individual identification. Social identity plays a significant role in language acquisition (Han et al., 2019). Darwin and Norton (2015) proposed a model of investment in which social identity took a leading position. Compared with the construct of motivation in language learning, the notion of identity in language acquisition captured the intricacy between language learning, power and identification (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). It is notable that language learners have their own historical backgrounds, and their social recognition is complex and even contradictory. A comprehensive understanding of language learners' investment in language learning needs to take the multiple, dynamic and sometimes contradictory identities into full consideration. This study employs the model of investment to explore the relationship between parents' identity and investment in their children's language learning and the interaction between identification and external factors against the backdrop of the enforcement of the double reduction education policy, an important document influencing children's language learning. Through the lens of identification, the study aims to obtain a more nuanced insight into the problem of education anxiety in China.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Family Language Policy

A language policy is a political decision and a deliberate attempt to change/influence the various aspects of language practice and the status of one or more languages in a given society (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009). It is influenced by supra-national, institutional as well as linguistic and extralinguistic environmental factors (Dafouz & Smit, 2016). Family language policy is related to theories such as language policy, language socialization, literacy and language acquisition (Butler & Le, 2018; Curdt-Christiansen, 2013; Curdt-Christiansen & Morgia, 2018; Han et al., 2019; Liu & Lin, 2019; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984; Yin et al., 2021). Spolsky (2004) thought that family language policy includes three parts: language practice, language management and language ideology. Language practice is a language ecosystem in which languages are used for different purposes in different contexts. Language management refers to the explicit or implicit efforts made by language authorities in a family to intervene with or change family members' language practice (Curdt-Christiansen, 2013). Family ideology means ideologies reflected in the language policy and the social values attributed to specific languages and language characteristics, influencing the patterns of children's language acquisition and the identification of parents in the process (Extra & Verhoeven, 1999; Spolsky, 2004). Many scholars employed the family language policy to explore language learning practice in a family (Spolsky, 2004). As a dynamic system where micro, meso and macro factors interact with each other, family language policy and practice have been placed with more and more values in disentangling many complicated issues like multilingualism (Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Higgins, 2018; Zheng & Mei, 2021).

Some of these studies investigated language policy and practice in migrant families practicing multilingualism (Curdt-Christiansen, 2016), and others probed into the relationship between English, Putonghua and dialects in China's context (Huang & Fang, 2021; Li et al., 2019; Wang & King, 2022; Yang & Curdt-Christiansen, 2021; Zhang et al., 2022). There were also studies examining heritage language maintenance (Gu & Tong, 2020; Shen & Gao, 2019) and social economic status (Butler & Le, 2018; Yung, 2020; Zheng & Mei, 2021).

This study investigates family language policy and the practice of an urban family in China. Family language policy and practice in this study are explored under the investment

model, which refers to the investment behavior that parents commit to children's language learning. Different from Spolsky's perspective, family language policy and practice in this study are categorized by parents' agency and their participation. Besides, the study is integrated with the multifacet framework of L2 learning (Douglas Fir Group, 2016), where micro identity and capital, meso community and school, and macro ideology exert influences on family language policy and practice.

Investment and Identity as Sociological Aspects of Language Learning

The notion of investment that Bonny Norton put forward in 1995 was conceptualized as a sociological complement to motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009; Murray et al., 2011), which paid more attention to individual complexity and the interaction between individuals and social power. The model of investment was proposed as an advancement in the theoretical aspect, which integrated identity, ideology and capital (Darvin & Norton, 2015). Inspired by Weedon's (1987) notion of subjectivity, Norton asserted that identity was fluid, multiple and a site of struggle (Darvin & Norton, 2015). In Norton's view, identity was defined as how a person understood the relationship between himself or herself and the world, how such relationship was structured across time and space, and how the person understood the possibilities for future (Norton, 2013, p. 45). Ideology is a normative set of ideas which constructs the modes of inclusion and exclusion (Darvin & Norton, 2015). Through the lens of ideology, researchers are able to dissect the dynamics of power and analyze the relation between communicative practice and systemic patterns of control at both micro and macro levels (Darvin & Norton, 2015). Drawing on Bourdieu's (1986) notion of capital, which refers to power and extends from the material/economic level to the cultural and social level, capitals in the model of investment encompass economic capital, cultural capital and social capital. Economic capital refers to wealth, property and income; cultural capital can be realized in cultural cultivation, cultural goods with materiality, and academic qualification (Bourdieu, 1986). Individual possession of cultural capital might tell one's status of being cultivated, one's appreciation of cultural works and one's obtaining of educational credentials (Darvin & Norton, 2015). Social capital refers to connections to networks of power. The value of certain capital forms in a particular social context

is decided by ideological structures. As this model proposes, language learners' investing in a certain language as an entry into an imagined community (Wenger, 1998) was expecting the acquisition of symbolic and material returns which would increase the value of their cultural capital and social power (Norton & Gao, 2008).

The investment model has not been popularized in family language policy or practice research, but the model fares well in exploring interplay between language learning practices and sociological factors from macro and micro perspectives. Moreover, it works well with the issue of ethnicity in the migrant context (Cui & Zheng, 2021; Ryan, 2020). Language investment might be influenced by micro ethnicity recognition which in turn might be influenced by macro language ideologies (Ryan, 2020). For example, Cui and Zheng (2021) investigated 30 Korean-Chinese bilingual families in Shanghai and they found that they perceived indirect relationship between language and ethnicity, which influenced their consequent investment in languages other than their ethnic languages. Some studies unveiled the different ideologies and the identification of different languages to address educational inequality (Ildegrada, 2018; Sung, 2019; Xu, 2019; Yung, 2020). For example, Sung (2019) dealt with English ideology and identity construction related to English and found that L2 learners' investment varied with English identities in different contexts. Yung (2020) examined the investment of an underprivileged L2 learner who constructed multiple desired identities about English learning by investing accordingly to overcome existing educational inequalities.

This kind of interaction between language learning practice and influencing factors at different levels discloses a language hierarchy. In multilingual contexts, English usually overrides other languages, as Ildegrada (2018) found that migrants held different views and identities towards English and their ethnic languages, which reflects an English-dominated ideology (Zheng & Mei, 2021). In non-English-speaking contexts, the regional lingua franca is the one that overtops other languages. For example, in Chinese minority families, Putonghua is the language that parents invest most in their children and usually functions as an "admission ticket" to linguistic market, without which the linguistic capitals from other languages cannot be allowed in nor exchanged (Xu, 2019).

According to the investment model, language learners, or parents in the context of family education, tend to tap into possessed economic, cultural and social capital to invest in

children's language learning. Cultural capital technically refers to individual cultivation, cultural goods and academic credentials. As technology is developing, digital resources become more and more prominent in education. In the context of family education, parents' access to digital resources depends on their technological skills, namely, their digital literacy. Digital literacy, a kind of productive social practices, refers to people's capacity to use Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) (Mutonyi & Norton, 2007). This study argues that digital literacy is not merely a skill bridging L2 learners and cultural capital but also a new form of cultural capital embodied in individual cultivation.

Multi-Facet Framework of L2 Learning

Language learning investment in the family domain is not just a type of familial activities but one entangled with external contextual forces (Zheng & Mei, 2021). Language investment is not only influenced by family members' past experiences and their identities, some factors at the micro level (Han et al., 2019), but also influenced by national and global ideologies (Ildegrada, 2018). In Douglas Fir Group's framework (2016), L2 learning starts at the micro level of social activity, with individuals recruiting their capacities and semiotic resources to engage in interactions with others and increasing the multilingual repertoires. The individual engagement is shaped at the meso level by sociocultural institutions and communities, such as family, school and neighborhood. These institutions provide or restrict access to particular types of social experiences. These institutions are shaped by society-wide ideological structures with certain orientation towards language use and learning, which in return are shaped by these institutions and individuals, more specifically, family members.

This study employs an investment model to elaborate on the influences of capital, identity, and ideology on family language policy and parents' practice. The study also employs a multi-facet framework of L2 learning in a more general language learning context. The combination of this framework with the model allows for a more meticulous analysis of the three elements in this model. Macro ideology informs parents of the language education process by permeating through meso school and community into the construction of individual identity at the micro level. Meso school and community decide a family's social capital and their shared cultural capital with other families or within a community. Figure 1 illustrates the interaction between the investment

model and the multi-facet framework of language learning.

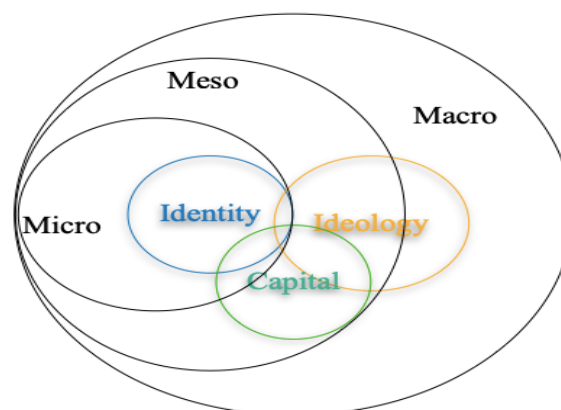


Figure 1. Investment Model Under the Multi-Facet Framework of Language Learning

Though many studies have dug into the sociological factors that influenced parents' investment in their children's language learning, few systemically examined the micro factors like identity and meso-level influences from communities or schools. Drawing on the model of investment in combination with the multi-facet framework of language learning, this study analyzes the investment of a Chinese urban family in children's language learning, and systemically dissects the dynamics of identities constructed by factors at the micro, meso and macro levels (Douglas Fir Group, 2016). The study tries to address three research questions:

1. What is the investment of parents in terms of children's different language learning?
2. What identities do parents construct with regard to children's language learning?
3. How do macro, meso and micro factors influence the investment and identification of parents in children's language learning?

Methodology

Participants

This study is part of a larger project in which four families in Hangzhou and Beijing were surveyed with regard to parents' investment into their children's language learning and parents' past language learning experiences. This study details one of the four families—Alice's family, since the trajectory of Alice's language learning and her mother's intricate perceptions are reflective of the influences of the double-reduction policy.

Table 1

Language Profiles of Three Members in Alice's Family

	Education Background	Profession	Chinese Learning	English Learning	Other Language Learning	Growing Language Environment	Daily Communication Language
AM	Master	Full-time Mum	Since primary school	From junior high school to master degree college	Japanese in college	Zhejiang Dialect	Putonghua
AF	Technical Secondary School	Freelance Designer	Since primary school	Three years in junior high school	Non	Anhui Dialect	Putonghua
Alice	—		Since she could talk	From two years old to five years old	Non	Putonghua	Putonghua

Alice's family members were all Han Chinese living in an urban district of Hangzhou, the capital of Zhejiang Province. Alice was a 6-year-old girl and was on the winter holiday before the second semester of the first grade when first surveyed. Alice's mother (hereinafter referred to as AM) was 36 years old and was a stay-at-home mom, who shouldered the responsibility for Alice's study. Alice's father (hereinafter referred to as AF) was 37 years old and was a freelance designer. Table 1 shows the language profiles of the three family members. Specifically, Alice's parents had been teaching her Chinese at home since she could talk. Alice had kept learning Chinese at home after she went to school. As for English learning, when Alice was two years old, her parents sent her to an early English learning program where she learned English for the first time. Later, when Alice went to kindergarten, her parents enrolled her in an extracurricular English class as a supplement to her kindergarten learning. The English class was suspended due to the issue of the double reduction education policy. When AM was interviewed for the third time in October, 2023, she told that Alice was enrolled in an extracurricular English class again.

The primary school which Alice now attends is a public primary school that starts teaching English at the third grade. For students at lower grades, English is taught as an interest class biweekly, but it is oftentimes appropriated by other classes such as Chinese and Maths. In the yearly parents' meeting, teachers emphasized the importance of the cultivation of study habits and advised parents to share the responsibilities of tutoring and monitoring their children. Although it was officially regulated that English could not be taught until the third grade in primary school, AM considered it too late if Alice started learning English at that time, given the fact that most other children started learning English much earlier than the age officially regulated. Therefore, in the follow-up interview, it was suggested that Alice resumed extracurricular

English classes when she was at the second grade. In AM's opinion, Alice's primary school teachers were dogmatic in teaching and made students cram for examinations, which might erode children's interests in learning things. So, in AM's words, compared to other parents who preferred to complain teachers about shirking their responsibilities, AM was readier to tutor Alice's study.

Data Collection

Data for this study was collected from two sessions of interviews in January and February, 2023, and a follow-up interview in October, 2023. Data was collected by multiple means, including semi-structured interviews and artifacts pictures collection, with the purpose of getting a nuanced and multi-faceted insight into parents' investment into children's language learning and the intricate relationship between investment and various factors. Interview transcriptions were the primary source of data for analysis and interpretation while other forms of data served as triangulation of what interviewees said during the interviews and researcher's interpretation.

This study conducts altogether five one-to-one interviews with either AM or AF and an interview with both of them present. Except for two one-to-one interviews conducted in Alice's aunt's house and an online interview, all other interviews were conducted at Alice's home. Her parents were interviewed for some basic information, such as their past language learning experiences and their related perceptions. Parents were also asked to share their investment in Alice's language learning and their motivations for such investment. For the convenience of idea expression and understanding, interviewer and interviewees all spoke in Putonghua. The interviews were audio-recorded by a recording pen with the consent of interviewees.

Pictures were taken for several kinds of artifacts or

activities related to Alice's language learning during the visit to Alice's home, the photos of which turned out to fall into three categories, language learning resources, language learning tools, and language learning scenes, indicating that language learning resources encompassed both physical and digital resources. In the process of data collection, especially during the multiple interviews, research log, reflective field notes and journals for salutary modifications were also made.

Data Analysis

The present study takes the grounded theory as the guide on data analysis (Charmaz, 2006). Before embarking on coding, all interviews were transcribed verbatim.

The initial coding was a line-by-line coding process. Line-by-line coding means naming each line of written data. The essence of this coding lies in breaking the data into components and defining the actions. This coding strategy works well with detailed data about fundamental empirical problems or processes consisting of interviews, observations, and other data types (Charmaz, 2006).

And then the study went on with focused coding, meaning using the most significant, the most frequent, or the earliest codes to sift through large amounts of data. One goal of this procedure is to determine the adequacy of selected codes. By means of focused coding, the study could test the adequacy of the codes and check the preconceptions about the topic.

The next step was axial coding, a coding that relates categories to subcategories. By bringing data back again in a coherent whole, this study specified the properties of a category and analyzed its relations with subcategories.

Finally, the study delved into the data by theoretical coding. This coding conceptualizes how the substantive codes may relate to each other, so as to form a hypothesis and then turn it into a theory. It helps specify possible relationship between different categories, which underlies the constructed theory of the present study.

It should be noted that these coding steps were not separate but interacting with each other. Every categorization was provisional and susceptible of changes.

Many memos had been written in advance of formal drafting, since the amount of data was large and the relationships between concepts were intricate and elusive. These memos were conducive to catching fleeting ideas about categories and digging the relationships between them.

In addition to interview data, this study examined the pictures to triangulate the analysis and corroborate the

results. Out of the analysis came the investment of AM and AF in Alice's language learning process, parents' identity construction of their own and for their child, and micro, meso and macro factors that influenced the identification and investment.

Results

Different Investment in Different Languages

Chinese, English and sporadic dialect were languages that Alice had been exposed to. Findings showed that besides the language used in the daily communication occurred in places such as home and school, Chinese was the one that Alice's parents invested the most. English followed and dialect was the least invested.

Varying with the participation of AM, her investment in Alice's language learning fell into two categories, the physical one and the digital one. Physical investment emphasized the personal investment such as AM's time and energy. Digital investment meant the use of digital tools such as E-book, computer, App on the mobile phone, tablet and other electronic devices. Digital resources on these devices make language teaching and learning more convenient for parents and more attractive to children (Curdt-Christansen & Wang, 2018). According to AM's individual agency, investment was divided into the shadowing of school teaching and the extension of knowledge at AM's discretion. The former was following the teaching content and the schedule of teachers at school or other private tutoring institutions; the latter suggested that AM made the learning plan by herself, capitalizing on her knowledge about language learning. Table 2 shows the activities Alice did together with AM or on her own. It could be seen that AM invested differential time and energy with varying agency in Chinese and English.

AM had been teaching Alice Chinese since she was able to talk and taught her additional knowledge and skills after she went to the primary school where Chinese was a subject. During the summer vacation before Alice entered the primary school, AM sent Alice to a pre-school class to learn Chinese Pinyin as a transition from kindergarten to primary school. Alice's immersion in English was relatively limited and it was when AM sent her to an extracurricular English class that Alice started to learn English. During this period, AM helped review what was taught in the English classes by initiating simple conversations in English and shoot homework videos

Table 2

Investments in Chinese and English Learning

	Chinese		English	
	Physical	Digital	Physical	Digital
Shadowing of School Teaching	Supervise and correct Alice's homework. Help review learned contents at school and address her weakness.		Send Alice to private English classes. Help review learned contents at English classes (simple English conversations). Help shoot homework videos (temporary).	Help watch English-teaching videos, read after digital voice picture books, repeat digital teacher's sentences and sing songs on Apps when in English classes. Search simple English songs played at private English classes and teach her at home.
Extension of Knowledge at AM's Discretion	Make extensions of the knowledge learned at school (do tasks of picture writing, reading comprehension and teaching new Chinese characters). Help read or let Alice read independently voice picture books before sleep. Send Alice to pre-school classes.	Watch videos about Chinese cultures and literature on Apps. Listen to children's stories on Apps.		Watch English cartoons— <i>Peppa Pig</i> on television or other devices.

as an inspection. Moreover, AM often downloaded Apps from the internet and purchased membership so that Alice could watch English letter videos, sing English songs, repeat the sentences and read after the picture books on these Apps.

What distinguished AM's investment in Chinese from that in English was that the majority of investment in Chinese learning was the extension of knowledge at AM's discretion while the most investment in English learning was the shadowing of school teaching. In further classification, AM committed more physical time and energy to learning activities of both extension at her discretion and the shadowing of school teaching in terms of Chinese learning. With regard to English learning, more digital resources were tapped to facilitate Alice's English learning. The proportion of digital investment in the shadowing of school teaching was same to that in the extension of knowledge at AM's discretion.

Dialect, in Alice's family, has received no investment. There have not been any intended activities about its learning. As many previous studies found, dialect was hardly used in the daily communication and less and less value was attributed to it (Huang & Fang, 2021; Li et al., 2019; Wang & King, 2022; Yang & Curdt-Christiansen, 2021; Zhang et al., 2022). Alice's parents have been speaking Putonghua for the sake of understanding since they came from geographical regions with different dialects. Thus, naturally, Alice was deprived of the potential space for acquiring any dialects.

The differences between investment in Chinese and English suggest that AM wields stronger agency in tutoring Alice's

Chinese learning than she does in tutoring Alice's English learning (Curdt-Christiansen, 2018), which indicates different motivations and restraints behind the investment.

Factors Motivating and Discouraging Investment in Language Learning Capitals

Investment in children's language learning entails affordances. In this study, AM or her family tapped into manifold capitals, including economic capital, cultural capital and physical capital to facilitate Alice's language learning, in expectation of some cultural capital returns.

Paying Membership for Digital Resources



Figure 2. Books Purchased for Alice

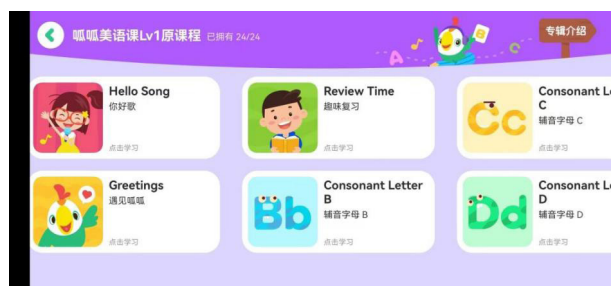


Figure 3. An English Learning App Where AM Purchased Membership

AM had tapped into family's economic capitals to purchase diverse picture books and stories books in Chinese to cultivate Alice's literacy and reading capacity. AM also purchased membership on a story-telling App so that she and Alice could access the rich digital resources. Figure 2 is the bookshelf where part of Alice's books were stored. Chinese story books and picture books were in the middle rack.

In terms of English learning, the enrollment of the extracurricular English class per semester as well as textbooks was an extra expenditure for Alice's family. Apart from that, there were two Apps on which Alice could learn English at home. One was "Jiligualaxueyingyu," and the other was developed by the English educational institution that she went to. All the resources on them such as videos about English letters, nursery rhymes and picture books with audio sources were only accessible for paying member subscribers. Figure 3 is a screenshot of Jiligualaxueyingyu.



Figure 4. AM's Inspection of Alice's Language Learning



Figure 5. Language Learning Environment of Chinese

Practicing Educational Ideas and Lay Theories

AM also invested much cultural capital in Alice's Chinese learning. AM had a master's degree and had been learning Chinese and English for many years, which laid the foundation for AM's commitment to tutoring Alice's language learning at home. Figure 4 is a scene when AM was inspecting Alice's homework of Chinese character writing, a work AM did every day. Figure 5 is about the Chinese character cards tacked into the door of Alice's bedroom, which is illustrative of the learning environment that AM tried to create.

AM had in her mind a succession of educational ideas and many lay theories about education (Curdt-Christansen, 2018; King et al., 2008). AM generated her lay theories about education when she was studying at college, dabbling into fields of education and psychology. After the birth of Alice, AM actively read education books about child rearing and searched for more information. She also learned about some methods of education on Xiaohongshu—a platform for shopping and sharing, which is now the major source of information for many Chinese youth and has profound influences on their life. In the selection of learning resources, AM believed that learning contents chosen for children should be appropriate for their ages and cognitive development:

Because those are Because I would let her listen to something simple to arise her interest. Listening was the basic way of learning when she was too young to read, you know. When she was older and could read, she would read something. And looking at electronic devices would do harm to her eyesight when she was very young. But it was OK to use it appropriately when she grew older. Looking at the screen for a short while was

OK. (A-2.1)

AM stated that at the early stage of children's English learning, interest inspiration was more important than other formal instructions or the acquisition of accent. In a similar vein, she foregrounded listening at the early childhood while stressed reading later, varying with child's cognitive competence. Children's eyesight was another concern, since too much close reading was not good for early eyesight development.

"Ebbinghaus forgetting curve" appeared in AM's interview, though she only described it without remarks:

Because learning something follows some kind of memory law, what is it? There is a curve. It is possible that you learned it today, review it the next day, review and check it several days later, and then you employ it. Finally, the thing you learned would be memorized in your mind for a long term. However, if you only learn it once in class, and you think it is done and don't review it after class, then you might forget it before long. (A-2.2)

AM believed that a child's memory followed the Ebbinghaus forgetting curve, so it was necessary to review the knowledge to cement the memory.

Like many people, AM believed in the remarkable function of environment in language learning, especially in foreign language learning (King et al., 2008). She conceived that providing an all-English environment of communication was the most effective way to learning languages:

... It may be because that she was not immersed in an all-English environment. There were many things distracting her and she would like to do what she wanted. But if she was in the English class, she was immersed in an all-English environment whatever activity she participated in, such as playing games and watching cartoons. On this occasion, the effects that she got were better for sure. (A-2.2)

I think the best way is creating an English communication environment to speak English at home in the daily communication, like "let's eat," "you should wash your hands," and "you should do that." All the conversations are communicated in English so she can understand and reply. (It was the best way.) (A-2.2)

In her explanations, children could be more focused on

language learning when immersed in the environment of target language. AM thought that Alice's learning experiences in the extracurricular English class was a good example and she also stressed the importance of English use in the daily communication if someone would like to master it.

AM put her lay theories into practice through her careful choice of language learning materials for Alice and her commitment to the tutoring of Alice's homework, as she stated in the interview.

She (Alice) was more easily attracted by materials with rhythm like nursery rhymes when she was young and more by stories when she grew older. She usually listened to or read these stories. (A-2.2)

(So) when she was young, most of the books I bought for her were picture books. As she grew older, I bought more books about stories, history or other types. All those books were age appropriate for her. (A-2.1)

(Opinions about Ebbinghaus forgetting curve) So I think it is very important that parents should help consolidate what children have learned in class. I have much free time, so I would like to spend time on it. (A-2.2)

AM's selection of learning materials with rhythm or about stories is suitable for Alice's cognition development and catering to Alice's interests at her different learning stages. Actually, AM has spent most time in nurturing Alice since she was an infant. As the baby needed feeding, AM decided to quit her job at the beginning. When Alice grew older, as a mother, AM considered it necessary for her to accompany Alice in her growing-up and guarantee her all-round development. Therefore, AM did not reenter workplace. Several years' suspension made AM find it difficult for her to accommodate to work and feel less motivated to work. At home, AM spent much more time tutoring Alice's language learning and cementing Alice's memorization of the learned knowledge.

As regards providing an all-English environment, AM admitted that it was difficult to create it at home due to Alice's reluctance and resistance. Besides, parents' limited English proficiency and the high cost of entering a private English school restrained them from creating an all-English environment at home. This could explain AM's frequent utilization of digital resources in Alice's language learning, which was more convenient and had lower requirements for her English proficiency. However, such situation conflicts

with Curdt-Christiansen's study (2018) which suggested a positive relationship between parents' agency and the utilization of digital resources. In this study, parents' agency is positively related to parents' physical investment rather than digital one in their children's language learning due to AM's identification of social class and limited cultural capitals that AM could afford as mentioned above. AM positioned her family in class as a family with less demanding requirements for children, which made managing to create an all-English environment with her own efforts at home unnecessary. The study will discuss the dilemma in the following paragraphs. In this sense, this study contributes a more nuanced disclosure of parent's agency.

In her practices of lay theories about education and language learning, AM committed herself to Alice's learning process, a kind of physical capital referring to one's time and energy to the tutoring of Alice's language learning (Ryan, 2020).

Digital Literacy—A New Form of Cultural Capital

It is noticeable that as a new form of cultural capital embodied in personal culture, AM's digital literacy figured prominently in tutoring Alice's language learning. Much investment in Alice's language learning was on digital devices such as language learning Apps and music Apps on her mobile phone. Her will to utilize these Apps as tools for children's language learning tested her knowledge about how to access and use these digital devices. Only if she was capable of exploring the internet, could she find, use and transform the functions of these Apps into Alice's language learning resources through language socialization (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984).

In investing economic, cultural and physical capitals in Alice's language learning process, AM expected that her daughter could learn about linguistic knowledge. Specifically, AM hoped that Alice could acquire Chinese literacy with substantive reading and writing capacities. What's more, she hoped Alice could develop a "feeling" of English in a relatively ambiguous manner. To a certain extent, the relatively lower expectations for Alice's English learning and the possessed limited English proficiency of Alice's parents might account for their different investment in Chinese and English.

Identities

The investment difference is far more complicated than

affordances or expectations. Investment differences between Chinese and English as well as the inconsistency between what AM claimed and what she actually did about English learning unveil dynamic identities struggling and competing with each other.

Identification as Chinese

AM and AF prioritized Chinese learning over English learning. This priority of Chinese language was accompanied with the nationality of Chinese people. AM used "mother tongue" to describe Chinese, to be exact, Putonghua, but Putonghua was not the linguistic variety that AM growing up in. The universal speaking of Putonghua was the result of the governmental language planning. Influenced by governmental advocacy, AM constructed an ethnic identity of Chinese for Alice and her family. Motivated by this identification, AM invested much of the economic, cultural and physical capitals in Alice's Chinese learning, and meanwhile, less capital was invested in Alice's English learning. A fairly large proportion of books AM purchased for Alice were in Chinese and many of the videos AM played on the story-telling Apps were about Chinese history and traditional culture.

Moderate Supporter for Children's Future

As a mild person with an equable temper, AM positioned herself as a supporter rather than a decider of Alice's future. In the interviews, she spoke in a soft voice and answered questions in an articulate manner. She left an impression that she was a gentle mother who did not impose too much expectations on Alice and did not set demanding goals for her daughter to achieve.

To find playmates for Alice was AM's primary consideration when she decided to send Alice to interest-oriented classes such as dancing and drawing. The high-rise they live in was surrounded by commercial buildings and there was not much space for children to play or run. During the investigation at Alice's home, she completed her homework first and spent the rest time of the day in the house playing alone after coming back from school. On weekends, she would go to her aunt's house and play with her cousin. AM and AF were aware of that and they found it a way to send her to the interest-oriented classes where Alice could make new friends.

When talking about Alice's English learning, AM positioned her family at a social class with lower expectations of their child, compared with families investing much more capitals in children's English learning. She described those

family as “Juan,” a word in Chinese to depict the families that attached great importance to children’s academic development with great commitment to competing with others, usually to an irrational extent. AM deemed that parents of those families might orient their children towards a future prospect overseas and it was natural for them to expect highly of their children in terms of English learning.

They may be at a different social class from us. It’s possible that they have plans to send their children abroad for education or to facilitate their profession overseas or whatever. (A–2.1)

In AM’s narrative, parents of those families projected their children into a future where their children studied, worked or lived abroad. Specifically, they imagined an international elite community of people studying, working or living abroad where their children might belong in the future. From this imagined community, they derived an elite identity that someone was studying, working or living overseas. To fresh out this future identity, they invested a lot in their children’s English learning.

As for her family, AM said that she and AF were relatively “Fo,” indicating that they assumed a moderate attitude towards educational competition between children and that was why they did not invest as much as those “Juan” families. This positioning and identity, together with the Chinese identity justify the relatively less investment into Alice’s English learning by her parents.

Throughout history, Chinese people’s qualities of diligence, kindness, love for peace, and compassion still have universal value to this day. On this basis, they can supplement and absorb other excellent qualities learned from other cultures such as rationality, courage and innovation.

... We are not “Juan,” we are more “Fo.” (A–2.1)

... We don’t let go of her study but we don’t engage in irrational competence neither. (A–2.2)

... As for work, if she works in the future, English might be a skill for her. (A–2.2)

AM professed that she and her husband did not expect too much from their child and they did not presume to plan for her future. As to study, AM said that it depended on Alice’s capacity. It made AM reluctant to add more work on Alice to

see the present burden on Alice and the prospect of heavier and heavier schoolwork pressure.

AF echoed AM’s attitude and in the process was the defender of Alice’s childhood. He also expressed his reluctance to send Alice to extracurricular classes by using the word “forced.” AM told me AF often felt it a pity that children of this generation did not have a happy childhood. It was he that alleviated AM’s budding anxiety every time when AM worried that Alice would lag behind since some parents invested much more than they did.

Their considerations resonate with the original intentions of *The Opinions*. However, the case is that though Alice quit her English class which was outlawed by the government, AM felt no relief of her anxiety and she decided to enroll Alice in the off-campus English class again in the coming future. One reason is the overwhelming influences of Gaokao and Zhongkao, and another reason is the peer pressure from the community, namely, influences of other families.

AM was in constant struggling between different identities and beliefs. In her own words, she had been in a “Jiu Jie” state for a long time. She had tried to make Alice’s childhood less stressful, but she could not be immune to behaviors of other parents. So, AM and AF enrolled Alice in extracurricular classes in the wake of other parents while restrained themselves from imposing too much activities and expectations on Alice. The investment that the parents conducted is a compromise between competing identities: one is a defender of the child’s happy childhood and a supporter of her future; the other is a competitive investor and a decider of her future.

Monitor of Education

AM has constructed herself into a monitor of Alice’s education in the process of homework tutoring and in the evaluation of the teaching effects of school and private educational institutions. AM supervised Alice to do her homework during the whole process, helping her review and extend the knowledge learned in the Chinese class at school or in the English class at educational institutions. The parental tutoring was, in her view, supplementary to public school teaching. AM expressed her lack of confidence in school teaching by a summary of the characteristics of classes in the public school, as shown in the following sections:

... If at school, you could not know her learning effects, and school teachers were only responsible for the instructions of textbooks. What they do was

just lecturing in front of the blackboard. They didn't know how much students actually absorbed or whether students understood, parents did not neither. What's more important, there was no English examinations to test her learning results. It was impossible to have enough communication opportunities in a class of more than 40 students. So, if you would like to master English well, (the private) educational institution was a better choice. (A-2.2)

Since educational institutions employed small class teaching, every student could receive teachers' attention and have equal opportunities to interact with teachers or classmates. With an interval in the middle, the course duration was one and a half hours, which was indeed long. And it's possible that ... the institution ... the teachers Because you paid, the teachers would surely be responsible for every student. In this sense, educational institutions did better than public schools. Besides, teachers at educational institutions would give feedback to our parents. (A-2.2)

She thought that her child in a school class would not be given enough opportunities to interact with others in English. On the one hand, such belief came from the incompatibility between limited teachers' energy and relatively short teaching time; on the other hand, the number of students in a class was extremely large. The teacher would skim through the textbooks and they would not pay enough attention to whether students grasped the knowledge or not. Given the fact that English courses in Alice's school and all other public primary schools were not that important, there would be no examinations to test the teaching and learning effects, which further invalidated school English teaching. To some extent, such dissatisfaction reflected some lay theories about language learning that AM tried to practice, such as her idea about the importance of speaking English and her belief in the use of Ebbinghaus forgetting curve which school teachers had not ever tried to put into practice.

As for educational institutions, AM considered it more effective than school teaching based on Alice's past English learning experiences at educational institutions when she was at kindergarten. Compared with school teaching, the number of students in one class at an educational institution is much smaller than that at school, meaning that the teacher can pay more attention to every individual student and that each student will get more opportunities to speak English. Teachers

at educational institutions can take students' learning effects into consideration and then play a positive role in giving in-time and constant feedback to their parents. The longer course duration at educational institutions also makes educational institution more effectively rewarding than normal schools. In this sense, AM told that she would send Alice to educational institutions again when Alice's primary school started teaching English. However, it is doubtful whether she could be able to send Alice to such an educational institution as the double reduction education policy banned any after-school curriculum. Since educational institutions were outlawed, private teachers might be the alternative.

AM monitored Alice's both Chinese and English learning in that she committed herself to knowledge consolidation and extension. Moreover, AM took a critical view on school teaching. Actually, AM's educational concepts and educational needs were buried under her identity, a monitor of child's education.

The importance of education that AM and AF placed on Alice's shoulder was related to their life experiences. When AM and AF were children, their parents did not pay much attention to their language learning, and that was why they both thought their English was not good. What's more, AF explicitly expressed his helplessness in tutoring Alice's language learning.

(Language learning) was definitely important. I knew little about both Chinese and English, so I did not speak them very well, which was the reason why I could not really help her in the process of language learning. The growing environment counted a lot. We only began to get to know about Putonghua after we entered the junior high school, right? Not to mention English. (A-1.2)

Although he knew little about the languages, he placed great importance on Alice's language learning. His insufficient language learning and his inability to tutor Alice's language learning convinced him that it's important to lay a solid foundation for language learning, which was similar to the idea that AM held.

The basics You should probably lay a solid foundation for language learning. The basics might be the most important. (A-1.2)

Ideologies

English as an Important Exam Subject

English has been a major subject in high-stake examinations

in China for years. This has ingrained in Chinese' minds that English is an important subject in examinations if one pursues educational advancement. Officially, students at public primary schools start English class at grade three.

Alice had been sent to the extracurricular English class by her parents since she was at kindergarten. After the implementation of the double reduction policy, Alice quit the English class. The primary school that Alice went to at that time was going to provide English courses in the second semester of grade one, the coming semester when this study conducted interviews. However, AM said that the English class would be a minor because it was announced that English would not be a subject in the junior school entrance examination. What struck AM most was that English teaching at school would be superficial and dispensable due to its low status. Therefore, AM decided to send Alice to extracurricular English classes again when the semester began.

It seems that the status of English as an important subject will maintain no matter which grade the children are at. In this case, Alice was in her first year of primary school, facing the prospect of an examination free of English. However, AM mentioned Zhongkao and Gaokao more than once to sustain her decision to send Alice to extracurricular English classes:

Given the exam-oriented examinations in China, English would be very important as the grade increased, indicating that English was still one of the most significant examination subjects. English proficiency would influence the performance in Zhongkao and Gaokao. (A-2.2)

For Alice, Zhongkao and Gaokao were a much farther future than the junior school entrance examination in five years. However, AM had already tried bracing Alice for Zhongkao and Gaokao by sending Alice to extracurricular English classes and helping her learn English through Apps on the smart phone. This would be a "protracted battle." The decisions and actions that AM made accorded with her views that English learning entailed a long-time accumulation:

... but if you spent more time in it, it (the effects of learning English) might be more obvious. (A-2.1)

English as a Universal Language

Against the backdrop of globalization, English has

established itself as a lingua franca for years, and it has also been a lassie-passer for international professional and academic advancement. AM envisioned the prospect of using English at work for Alice and stressed the communicative function of English, as illustrated above that AM once had imagined that Alice would own a membership of a community where people spoke English for communication at work.

English as a Gatekeeper of the Learning of Other Foreign Languages

Since reform and opening up, English has dominated China's foreign language education. In recent years, it has however been the trend to advocate multilingualism in lieu of monolingualism of English (Zheng & Mei, 2021). Belt and Road Initiative might also nourish the learning of languages other than English in China in the future. The year of 2014 witnessed the start of a college entrance examination reform, with Shanghai and Zhejiang Province operating as pilots. More and more cities and provinces adopted the new Gaokao system in succession. Under the framework of new Gaokao, students could select from six foreign languages as their examination subjects rather than have no choice but to take the English examination.

Hangzhou adopts the new Gaokao system where students can select one from English, Japanese, Russian, German, French and Spanish. When asked about learning other foreign languages, AM said:

As for other foreign languages, she could learn them if she liked on condition that she could handle Chinese and English well, especially when she could learn English well. (A-2.2)

AM did not mention the new Gaokao. It is possible that she did not know about the details of the new Gaokao or that she thought it irrelevant to her investment into Alice's English learning as English was one of the choices anyhow. In her view, English overrode other foreign languages due to its status of global lingua franca and its significance in educational and professional advancement. She would respect Alice's choice to learn other foreign languages and support her on condition that Alice had learned English well. This scenario was set in the context that Alice was still at school. If Alice is economically independent, she will enjoy the right to learn whatever she wants. It could be seen that English mastery is the prerequisite for or the gatekeeper of learning

other languages. To a certain degree, it is a compromise between multilingualism and monolingualism.

Chinese as the Mother Tongue and the Most Important Subject

Chinese, in AM's words, was their "mother tongue" and an important subject. The word "Chinese" here refers to Putonghua instead of dialect, which was the real language that AM and AF spoke. As discussed above, the expression "mother tongue" in her view was connected with nationality. Children have been learning Chinese since the first grade and the proportion of Chinese in high-stake examinations is the largest. In light of these ideas, AM invested a great amount of capitals in Alice's Chinese learning.

AM and AF took a "let-it-go" attitude towards Alice's dialect acquisition. AM evaluated dialect as a useless tool because she thought that Alice would not go back to her grandparents' hometown and that there would be no communicative needs in dialect. Moreover, Putonghua was the medium for the daily communication in their family now. The only evaluation criterion that AM held for a language was whether it served the communicative needs or not. Obviously, dialect failed to satisfy AM's standards. However, Chinese and English were treated differently by AM, too. Admittedly, Chinese and English are important due to their universal use, but it is one of the reasons. In a broad sense, such languages have other praised values, namely, cultural value and internationalization symbolic value.

Discussion

This case study of a family in a Chinese first-tier city illustrates the intricacy of parental investment in the child's language learning. Parents invested more physical capital in child's Chinese learning in self-organized activities while tapped into more digital resources in terms of child's English learning. Parents did not invest in dialect education. Varying investment in different languages was either encouraged or restrained by possessed capital, competing identification and ideology. The findings foreground the role of digital literacy in parents' tutoring of children's language learning. Parents' language investment turns out to be a compromise between competing identities as a result of multi-level factors interaction. In the context of the double reduction education

policy, this study furthers the understanding of the effects of the policy as well as the essence of Chinese parents' education anxiety—social class anxiety.

A New Dimension of Cultural Capital

This study makes theoretical contributions to FLP studies by arguing that digital literacy is a new form of cultural capital. Digital literacy, the capability to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) figures incrementally important. With a large amount of education resources converted digitally and accessible to most of people in the current digital era, digital literacy plays a significant role in the resource acquisition, particularly those resources only with digital version. Some previous studies have addressed the unequal availability of digital resources to people in geographically different locations (Early & Norton, 2014; Mutonyi & Norton, 2007; Norton & Toohey, 2011). In regions where digital resources are widely available like China, researchers have attributed the disparate utility of digital resources to different social economic status and various educational backgrounds (Zheng & Mei, 2021).

This study advances the issue by adding digital literacy as a new dimension of cultural capital into the investment model. This kind of improved model makes the influence of digital literacy in parents' education investment more prominent. In this case, AM's adept skill of surfing the internet made possible the diversity of learning activities that Alice participated in. Different from Zheng and Mei's study (2021) that suggested the utility of digital resources was a kind of symbol of parents' high education background and strong motivation in children's education, this study, however, found that digital resources were used when parents felt less motivated to commit physically, despite of parents' high education background and qualified digital literacy. Digital resources in this case were considered more convenient yet less valuable than physical energy and time. The role of digital resources and digital literacy in parents' education investment and the relationship between the use of digital resources and the motivation are warranted for further research.

Multi-Facet Factors Influencing Language Investment and Identification

After the release of the double reduction policy, many off-campus educational institutions were outlawed, English educational institutions included. *The Opinions* aims to strengthen the role of the main school education and the

governance of off-campus training institutions. It also aims to alleviate the excessive homework and off-campus training burden on students, providing a healthy growing environment for them, as well as relieving parents' anxiety. The original intention of *The Opinions* was to change high-pressure social environment in terms of education, alter parents' attitude towards children's education and ultimately send children back to a childhood with less study burden. The conflicts between the actual burden on Chinese families and a will to create a healthy growing environment were unveiled in the narratives of AM and AF.

In the narratives of AM and AF, the double reduction education policy, the college entrance examination (Gaokao), the senior high school entrance examination (Zhongkao), and the perceived communicative values of the language varieties were a mirror of the macro governmental policies and ideologies that had wielded significant impacts on the couple's investment in Alice's language learning. Performances of Chinese students in Gaokao and Zhongkao are critical to their educational prospects and future development. The belief that English and Chinese are important subjects in Gaokao and Zhongkao has ingrained in AM, AF and other Chinese parents, informing their children that it is necessary to learn English and Chinese well. AM's investment in Alice's English learning was largely examination-oriented, even though Alice would not take any English examinations in the short run. However, as Chinese people have attached paramount value to education, it seems that even regulations such as "no English subject in junior high school entrance examination" were officially put forth by the schools, they just wielded little impacts on parents with children who were at the stage of compulsory education. This brings the effects of the double reduction education policy into question.

Communal influences are parts of meso factors impacting AM's investment in Alice's language learning. Schools are also meso influencers. On the one hand, some public primary schools in some cities have provided English classes since grade one while some private schools start English teaching at kindergarten and use English as an instruction language. Schools with English teaching distinguish themselves from others without English classes, thus creating a sense of superiority influencing those parents who are not able to send their children to schools with English teaching. On the other hand, teachers at school require parents to enroll their children in hard-tipped pen calligraphy class, and teachers in the extracurricular English classes request parents to help children read the digital picture books on Apps. Some of

AM's investment was catering to these teachers' requests. As is mentioned above, AM deemed that school teaching would not suffice to children's knowledge learning, compared with educational institutions. This reflects the deficiency of the compulsory education in public schools. In turn, some parents also distrust the current education, which constitutes one of the sources of their anxiety (Luo & Liu, 2022). Educational institutions serve as a compensation for such insufficiency in public schools. One goal of *The Opinions* is to increase the quality of compulsory education. Yet the compensation, namely the operation of educational institutions is outlawed before compulsory education achieves improvements. The empty window in practice leaves parents in unease and anxiety. This is contradictory to the previous large-sample empirical analysis of the double education policy suggesting that this policy was effective in alleviating parents' anxiety (Yu et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2022). This study is a case study, which digs into parents' true thoughts by means of close conversations, thus providing a more nuanced comprehension of the relationship between the purpose of the policy and social realities.

In some communities, despite of the high expense, some parents have turned to private tutors to teach their children English. Such actions may elicit anxiety of other parents whose children are lagging behind. Their anxiety emanates from the fact that the dominant status of English in high-stake examinations as well as in educational and professional advancement can not be easily changed by *The Opinions*, as the social discourse is too complicated to be altered by a document. With social discourse unchanged, it is possible that the outlaw of English educational institutions and some parents' looking for private English tutors will exacerbate educational inequality.

At the micro level, AF was the one who usually relieved AM's anxiety about lagging behind. Some of AM's friends also tried to make her less anxious. Besides, Alice exerted her agency by resisting additional learning activities like AM's attempts to conduct many English conversations.

In a word, some other parents' investment in their children's language learning constructed themselves into competitive investors in their children's study, an identity to which AM had some attachments. However, this identity was in conflict with AM's positioning of her family and her identity as a defender of Alice's happy childhood and a supporter rather than a decider of Alice's future. What's more, Alice's agency added fuel to the conflict. As requested by teachers, AM prepared many learning activities for Alice; guided by

Gaokao and Zhongkao, AM committed more than required to Alice's language learning and to thoughts of school's failure to satisfy children's learning requirements. In this process, the double reduction education policy, as a significant change for compulsory education in China, was enacted to relieve parents' anxiety and ensure educational equity. However, it is suggested that the implement effects of this policy were not as expected due to some premature measures. The competing identities of AM are metaphorically reflective of the gap between what the double reduction education policy aims to achieve and the realities.

The Social Class Anxiety Behind Competing Identities

AM has constructed herself into multiple and competing identities in monitoring Alice's education, a moderate supporter of Alice's future and a defender of Alice's happy childhood on the one side, and a competitive investor in education as well as a decider of Alice's future on the other side. These identities are embodiments of a series of internal and external factors. In essence, AM and AF are susceptible to these factors because of their status—a member of the middle class.

There are two major groups of the middle class in China at present. Some have striven their way up into the middle class despite the lack of a well-educated background while others have obtained their entry into the middle class thanks to their high-education background. Alice's father, who waded his way into the middle class, knew the importance of education based on his experience and that was why he ascribed great values to education on his offspring. AF's free and easy childhood seemed that a disciplined childhood might not be necessary and he hoped that Alice could follow her own heart to live an early life. However, AF never let go of Alice's study for he knew that the time had changed. The precarious status of the middle class in China is prone to move downwards while the prospect of moving upwards is tenuous (Xiong, 2020). He regretted that he could not offer much help in Alice's study. Although AM could compensate for AF's inability of teaching Alice, AF still found it irresistible to follow other parents to enroll Alice into extracurricular classes. Otherwise, Alice was likely to lag behind, a possible anticipation that Alice could fall out from the middle class in the future.

Nowadays, the precariousness of the Chinese middle class has been aggravating the anxiety of AM and AF, let alone other families. There is an increasing number of people vying for insufficient education resources (Xiong, 2020). High-

quality education resources are oftentimes centralized in several flagship schools in provincial cities, the entry of which are being chased by parents with great efforts. The desire for high-quality education resources has triggered a succession of competition behaviors, which sometimes are irrational. That is one of the reasons why the double reduction policy was born, aiming at alleviating the competition and accompanying anxiety. Nevertheless, the amount of high-quality public education resources has remained inadequate and the baton role of Zhongkao and Gaokao has not been eradicated, so that a high enrollment rate remains to be the objective of schools and teachers. In this sense, parents are left in suspense that other children take private tutoring courses, some of whom are concerned about the impacts of their children's absence from extracurricular classes—lagging behind and falling out. It is probable that finally they might all resort to private tutoring courses. Contrary to previous studies on the effects of the double reduction policy, the “reduction” ends up in “addition” of economic burden and education anxiety.

Language Hierarchy and Protection of Dialect

Chinese, English and dialect were ranked in different orders in AM's beliefs and should be invested accordingly. Dialect is at the bottom of this hierarchy, which can be explained by the different values attributed to different languages. For Chinese and English, they are both valued for their status in high-stake examinations. Chinese is attached with nationality and cultural symbolic values while English is recognized as a global language beneficial to education and profession against the backdrop of globalization. Dialect, however, is only evaluated in terms of its communicative function.

Dialect is out of whack in communication due to the wide use of Putonghua and the trend of urbanization. Although a chain of governmental policies have been enacted to protect dialect, a kind of linguistic resources, more and more children are growing in the environment surrounded by Putonghua and less and less people are speaking dialect once they leave their hometown. Owing to these facts, the vivosphere of dialect is contracting.

Conclusion

This study has examined the subject family's investment and identification in children's language learning. Findings shows that parents invest different capitals in different

languages, namely Putonghua, English and dialect. Parents' digital literacy, as a new form of cultural capital, is foregrounded in the cultural capitals invested in children's language learning. In the process of language investment, parents have constructed different and sometimes competing identities, which are shaped by the governmental policy and language ideologies at the macro level, school regulations and community at the meso level, and individual agency at the micro level. This study contributes to the FLP research field by adding a new dimension of cultural capital into the investment model. It unveils the fact that the education anxiety of parents in China is essentially anxiety about social class retaining. Sociologically, the study demonstrates that the double reduction policy in China may be related to educational inequality and the persisting anxiety of parents. Dialect is found to be marginalized in children's language education, which may cause language shifting and even extinction. Social discourse about a certain language actually plays a significant role in the language ideology and language learning. In a bid to change long-standing social consensus, those regulations at the governmental level are actually an ignorance of social complexities. In this sense, more supports on dialect learning and using in the society may arise acknowledged values of dialect. This can help supplement the governmental regulations.

In the future, more researches are warranted on family language policy and practice in families of different social status from the perspective of identity. Parents' past experiences are also a domain worthy of investigation.

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