

Chinese Language Maintenance: A Study of Chinese-American Parental Perceptions and Activities

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Abstract

This study focuses on Chinese-American parents' perceptions of their children's Chinese language use and proficiency. The sites for this study were weekend Chinese schools in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York. A self-administered survey was conducted by using a random sample of 209 parents from different backgrounds. Results have indicated that these Chinese-American parents had high expectations of their children's Chinese language proficiency and tried to maintain their unique Chinese heritage and culture. When comparing parental perceptions of different groups, significant differences were found between parents of different income levels. Significant differences were also found in parental activities related to Chinese language proficiency between parents of gifted/talented students and those of average students. No significant differences were found in other groups. Bivariate Correlation analyses indicated that parental perceptions and activities were highly positively-correlated.