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Funds of knowledge relative to young children's literacy learning
in new-immigrant families in Taiwan

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Abstract

Immigrant mothers in *new immigrant families* (one spouse is a marriage immigrant) in Taiwan are popularly viewed as culturally deficient and as not having knowledge to teach children literacy. Multiple-case study methods were adopted. Thirteen Vietnamese mothers participated in this study. The lens of *funds of knowledge* was used to examine household knowledge and skills. Unique immigrant knowledge funds, including multilingual experiences, transnational experiences, and a cultural value—having good manners, are transmitted in these families. However, these funds of knowledge are often not recognized and valued by immigrant mothers and schools in helping their children to learn literacy. Hopefully this study would draw attention on the cultural resources of new immigrant families and shed light on the development of a culturally responsive literacy curriculum.

There are 130000 marriage immigrants in Taiwan who come from Southeast Asian countries. Most of marriage immigrants are women from poor families in their original countries.

Among them, Vietnamese immigrants have the biggest population. The family that is composed of an immigrant mother and a Taiwanese father is called a *new-immigrant family*. The rapid growth of children from new-immigrant families attracts researchers and educator's attention. Fathers, immigrant mothers, and children in these families are often depicted as a social burden; and they are popularly thought to impede the progress of Taiwanese society. Fathers are depicted as inferior persons because of their low social economic status, low education levels, or disabilities (Hsia, 2002). Mothers are especially stigmatized by researchers and media. Some researchers and media argued that those immigrant mothers have low education levels, do not speak fluent Mandarin Chinese, and do not have knowledge to teach their children. They believe that immigrant mothers should be blamed for their children's language delays, cognitive delays, and low achievements in school (e.g. Chang, 2005; Hsia, 2005; Tzeng, 2008).

A cultural-deficit model has been used to describe the lack of rich literacy learning environments of immigrant families. This model has also been used to explain low literacy achievements of children from immigrant families. Educators therefore have developed many family literacy programs, which attempt to improve literacy learning environments of families with diverse cultural backgrounds by teaching these families to conduct school-like literacy activities (Jordan, Snow, & Porche, 2000; Makin & Speeding, 2001). Consistent with previous researchers who adopt a cultural-deficit model, some educators and researchers in Taiwan viewed new-immigrant families as lacking resources and being inferior to Taiwanese families. They also think that these families need to be taught how to teach their children. However, researchers of sociocultural theories have found that cultural-deficit model is insufficient to explain why children of immigrant families may struggle in learning literacy and in developing their identities (Gee, 2003; Perez, 2004a, 2004b). Instead, they argued immigrant families possess

rich knowledge and resources to support children learning of literacy in homes and communities (Campano, 2007; Gregory, Long, & Volk, 2004). However, these knowledge and resources are often different from school-valued knowledge and resources. Children of immigrant families thus need to make more effort to adjust themselves to school literacy-learning discourse. Mismatches between home and school literacy-learning discourses cause these children's struggle in learning and in developing their identities (Gee, 2004). In addition, these knowledge and resources are often not recognized and used by schools. They are even marginalized and devalued by schools (Apple, 2000; Bernal, 2002; Compton-Lilly, 2004, 2007). The absence of home literacies in school literacy curricula makes these curricula unappealing to some of these children; and if undermines these children's self-esteem and motivation to learn literacy in school, which consequently puts them at risk of academic failure (Cook-Cotton, 2004; Gee, 2004; Hammerberg, 2004; Heath, 1988; Nowak-Fabrykowski & Shkandrij, 2004). In other words, the incorporation of these resources into school curricula would benefit children of immigrant families in literacy learning and in identity formation (Campano, 2007; Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez, Alvarez, & Chiu, 1999).

Although a literacy curriculum including immigrant household knowledge and cultural resources would benefit children, research has been rarely conducted to explore these resources of new-immigrant families in Taiwan. These knowledge funds generated and accumulated in homes and communities are potential resources for promoting young children's literacy. Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore new-immigrant families' household knowledge and resources that can be used to foster children's literacy. Hopefully, the findings of this research would help us add to the literature on cultural and familial resources in new-immigrant families and shed light on developing a culturally relevant literacy curriculum.

The notion of *funds of knowledge*, defined by Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992), suggests the value of household knowledge existed in families of diverse backgrounds. This notion is borrowed to re-examine the cultural resources in immigrant families. Past studies have shown that various funds of knowledge that can be used to promote children's literacy are possessed by immigrant families. Below, I will discuss these funds of knowledge in immigrant homes.

Funds of Knowledge Related to Promoting Literacy in Immigrant Homes

Children's funds of knowledge are much broader than the knowledge that they acquire in school. Funds of knowledge include knowledge that they acquire at homes and in communities. These knowledge funds are used to maintain families' functions and survival. These funds of knowledge that children acquire in homes and communities are potential resources for teachers to use when teaching literacy. Below, I will review literature on several funds of knowledge and discuss how these knowledge funds can support immigrant children's learning of literacy.

A Variety of Familial Life Experiences and Cultural Values

Immigrant families (wherein either both parents are immigrants or one parent is an immigrant) provide children with unique familial life experiences and cultural values that may be used to foster children's literacy. For example, Hmong immigrant families in the U.S. often provide children with knowledge about using scarce resources to manage households. They also teach children to live in a cooperative life style, which means each family member should automatically assume responsibility for taking care of immediate and extended family members (Koltyk, 1998). This kind of family life, which provides children with alternative cultural experiences, is a potential literacy resource for children to draw upon when they read and write.

However, mainstream textbooks and curricula often fail to draw upon these resources—thereby losing appeal and effectiveness.

As claimed above, families' and communities' contributions to children's funds of knowledge can serve as resources for teachers to use when teaching literacy. Campano (2007) demonstrated a literacy curriculum into which the immigrant children's life experiences are integrated. As a teacher and a researcher, he encouraged immigrant children to write about their life experiences. Immigrant children therefore had opportunities to learn and write about their parents' migration history and their parents' survival in the host country. They also explored and wrote about their neighborhood, where different languages, worldviews, and cultures existed. Through investigating and writing about their personal and familial life, children developed a cosmopolitan worldview. This process also reinforced children to identify with their parents' native cultures. This identification helped children to develop their bicultural identities, which help them to withstand the stereotypes and discrimination that they may face in school and the wider society. According to this study, immigrants' life experiences provide children rich resources to learn literacy and to develop identities.

Cultural values transmitted at home are also an important literacy resource. For instance, Latino immigrant mothers in the U.S. tend to value their children's development of some specific ethics. The knowledge of how to behave with good manners is an important social skill in these families because good manners are seen as helping to maintain social order and harmonic relationships. Immigrant mothers teach moral lessons through reading to their children at home. Cultural values, such as respect for elders, family unity, and obedience are transmitted at home (Reese & Gallimore, 2000). In my opinion, these experiences may make children more capable

of drawing upon a variety of words and personal experiences to comprehend and write about topics on ethics, virtues, and manners.

Summarizing the above discussion, family life experiences and cultural values of immigrant families can be utilized by schools to make literacy curricula appeal to immigrant children, and thereby engage children in learning literacy. These resources can also be used to help children to comprehend texts and write stories, articles, or books.

Transnational Experiences

Many immigrant children maintain their ties with parental communities in original countries and conduct various transnational activities. Transnational experiences of immigrant families include social, cultural, economic, religious, and political activities. Specifically, these experiences may involve doing activities in home countries, such as visiting families, communicating with relatives and friends, and attending to political activities. Transnational experiences may also involve doing activities in host countries, such as viewing media from home countries, using homeland languages, and sending remittances to home countries (Espiritu & Tran, 2002). Information, goods, people, and love are exchanged and circulated (Menjivar, 2002; Parrenas, 2005). Additionally, *social remittances* (i.e., values, beliefs, and cultural practices) are learned by children of immigrant families in transnational contexts (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007).

These transnational experiences provide immigrant children with opportunities to learn not only their host country's culture and knowledge but also their immigrant parents' homeland culture and knowledge. They accumulate the cultural resources and knowledge of both cultures in homes and communities, which are potential resources for learning literacy. For example, Mexican immigrant children acquire funds of knowledge about crop fertilization, harvesting,

horse riding, religious ceremonies, traditional sports, and history of the community's gathering place when they live in their parents' home town. These transnational experiences provide children with knowledge funds, skills, and cultural flexibility that enrich their lives and provide potential resources for fostering literacy (Sanchez, 2007a). For example, Sanchez's (2007a) study illustrated that Latino children use their transnational experiences to create a storybook that describes their transnational life. In conclusion, immigrant children's transnational experiences provide rich cultural resources that can be drawn upon to foster their literacy.

Transnational cultural experiences may broaden immigrants' worldviews and reinforce their development of several abilities. These experiences can help immigrants develop their ability to think diversely and flexibly (Gutierrez & Sameroff, 1990). Levitt and Waters (2002) stated that "immigrants and their children combine incorporation and transnational strategies in different ways at different stages of their lives. They use these to construct their identities, pursue economic mobility, and make political claims in their home or host country or in both [countries]" (p. 12). Children who have had transnational experiences can identify themselves in different social contexts. They may switch their identities flexibly in communities of parents' home and host countries (Sanchez, 2007b). Moreover, the development of bicultural identities may enable them to develop a worldview of social justice and critical thinking. They realize how social disparities limit the educational and economic opportunities of relatives in their homeland. In this way, they start to become aware of their privileges in the host country. They develop sympathy toward disadvantaged people. They also cultivate critical thinking through personal participation and observation of two distinct local life styles (Sanchez, 2007b). According to the foregoing studies, by participating in transnational activities, children expand their worldviews, develop a sense of social justice, and develop the abilities of flexible and critical thinking.

Immigrant children also discover their emotions and empathy by visiting immigrant parents' home countries, sometimes writing articles about their feelings and the reactions of family members. In addition, the emotions of love and care as well as the desire for understanding others' lives are shown in immigrant children's writings (Campano, 2007).

To summarize this section about transnational experiences, the funds of knowledge gained from them include knowledge acquired from living in parent's home countries, flexible thinking, critical thinking, and the development of sympathy, empathy, and a sense of social justice. All of these are precious literacy resources that are often not recognized and valued by schools.

Multilingualism

Multilingualism can be a potential literacy-learning resource for immigrant children. Being multilingual gives children access to and experience with different cultures and worldviews. These multilingual experiences could enlarge children's vocabulary, help them acquire various communication styles, increase their knowledge of different life styles, and enhance their cognitive development (Gutierrez & Sameroff, 1990; Nowak-Fabrykowski & Shkandrij, 2004). Moreover, learning both their parents' native language and the society's mainstream language promotes children's development of metalinguistic awareness, which benefits their literacy learning (Gillanders & Jimenez, 2004). Immigrant children's multilingual experiences are important literacy resources because these experiences help broaden their worldviews and reinforce their language development.

A school plays a critical role in promoting children's learning of their immigrant parents' home language. Although a multilingual environment could benefit immigrant children, an immigrant parent's decision to teach a homeland language can be affected by the level of support

from school. In addition, learning parents' native language is related to children's formation of identity with parents' home countries (Hawkins, 2004). Only when schools have positive attitudes toward immigrants' native language and incorporate those resources into curricula are new-immigrant children likely to identify with their immigrant parents' language and use their unique cultural resources to learn literacy in school (Bernal, 2002; Cook-Cotton, 2004; Wasik, Dobbins, & Herrmann, 2001).

In conclusion, examining the funds of knowledge in immigrant families helps us appreciate the richness of bicultural knowledge and resources that can help children to learn literacy. These cultural resources include familial life experiences, cultural values, transnational experiences, and multilingual experiences. Funds of knowledge in immigrant families help children develop a cosmopolitan worldview, a sense of social justice, flexible thinking, cultural flexibility, and empathy. They also help children broaden their worldviews and foster their language abilities. All of these are important abilities for children. Although immigrant children draw upon the resources in homes and communities and develop their literacy abilities, schools often fail to incorporate these resources into literacy curricula.

Methods

Multiple-Case Study Methods

A multiple-case study approach was used in the design of this research. This approach involves exploring multiple bounded systems, in this case individuals, and gathering multiple data sources to investigate a particular research topic (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). A case study explores the phenomenon in depth and within the context of its daily life (Yin, 2003). Multiple cases enable a deeper understanding of the dynamics and patterns across cases (Eisenhardt, 2002; Yin, 2003).

Participants

A snowball sampling approach (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007) was used to identify participants. Kindergarten teachers and friends were asked to identify potential participants—Vietnamese mothers with children of kindergarten or preschool age. During interviews with the first few Vietnamese mothers, they were invited to ask their Vietnamese friends to participate in the research. Vietnamese mothers were focused on since they comprise the majority of marriage immigrants from Southeast Asia.

Thirteen Vietnamese mothers with children ranging in age from 4 to 6 years were recruited. The mothers themselves had attended school for an average of 9.8 years, their average age was 27.3 years, and they had been in Taiwan for an average of 7.2 years. Ten of them lived in an urban area of northern Taiwan, while the remaining three lived in a rural area of northern Taiwan. All had a low socioeconomic status. Most had low-paid jobs as factory workers; one mother ran a small restaurant with her husband and one was a manicurist in a salon. Only three of the mothers did not work. All names used here are pseudonyms.

Procedure

A semistructured interview protocol was used. Questions were asked in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the mothers' perceptions about children's literacy learning, their perceptions of teachers' roles in helping children, and how mothers support their children's literacy learning. Each mother was interviewed once. During the interviews, the mothers were allowed to lead the interview and discuss the topics that they felt relevant. Member checking was used as a validation strategy (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), whereby anything that was said by the mother but not understood by the interviewer was rephrased by the interviewer, and clarification and expansion were requested. The mothers were also asked to comment on the

opinions of the other participants. The average length of each interview was about 1.5 hours. The whole interview process was audiotaped and subsequently transcribed. All interviews were conducted in Mandarin Chinese. In contrast to common assumptions regarding immigrant mothers, all spoke fluent Mandarin Chinese. None took up the opportunity offered to them to have a translator during interviews.

Most of the interviews were conducted at the mothers' homes and their children were generally present. Thus in most cases it was possible to observe the literacy materials, children's literacy activities, and interactions among children, mothers, and other extended family members. The husband, parents-in-law, or relatives were also at home for two of the interviews. These family members were also interviewed in order to obtain more information and clarify issues raised by the mothers. If other family members started to dominate the conversation, they were requested to allow the mother to talk more. In one case the other family members left halfway through the interview, and in the other case the husband was present during the whole interview.

Field notes were taken to record important information that mothers shared. Notes were also taken regarding observations of the environment, adult-child interactions, and the children's literacy activities. Reflective journals were kept to record initial patterns, insights, and revision of interview questions (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2007; Heath & Street, 2008).

The mothers were asked to share samples of their children's writing, and pictures were taken of the children's drawings, writing, and homework assignments. These photos were collected and analyzed to address research questions and support the research findings

Informal interviews were conducted in order to gather background knowledge regarding the literacy learning of new-immigrant children. Two kindergarten teachers of the target families

and three other kindergarten teachers were interviewed, as were three professors with expertise in immigrant research and an executive officer of an association for Southeast Asian women in Taiwan. Notes were taken after these informal interviews.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was commenced by summarizing the field notes and reflective journals, recording patterns or themes from each interview. After transcribing all the 13 interviews, notes were made regarding the transcripts, and main ideas were identified from the transcripts in more detail (Creswell, 2007). NVivo software was used to develop the coding scheme and themes. A constant comparative analysis technique was used to develop the coding scheme (Charmaz, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transcripts were first divided into segmented analysis units, which were then coded and clustered by grouping relevant concepts into broader categories (Creswell, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Within-case and cross-case analyses were employed to identify themes and patterns across cases (Eisenhardt, 2002; Huberman & Miles, 1994).

The transcripts were reread several times and the initial themes gained from them were related to the literature, after which the coding scheme was revised appropriately (Eisenhardt, 2002). Themes and subsets were added, deleted, and merged throughout the coding process (Creswell, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Data gathered from multiple sources, such as interviews, children's writing samples, observations, and informal interviews, enabled triangulation of the findings, thus increasing their validity (Creswell, 2007; Eisenhardt, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985)

Three main themes emerged through the coding process: potential multilingual environments, transnational experiences, and having good manners.

Findings

Funds of knowledge, including multilingual experiences, transnational experiences, and good manners were transmitted in these new-immigrant families. These funds of knowledge have unique qualities of families that related to their experiences as immigrations and are intimate forms of knowledge. Those funds of knowledge provided children with knowledge and skills that could support them to learn literacy.

A Potential Multilingual Environment

The new-immigrant family provided children with a potentially rich environment for learning multiple languages. In addition to Mandarin Chinese, across the samples, children had opportunities to learn English, Taiwanese, Vietnamese, or Cantonese (some mothers were Chinese Vietnamese and Cantonese was their native language). However, most mothers only taught children simple Vietnamese or Cantonese phrases and did not insist that their children learn mothers' homeland language.

Yuchin: ...Sometimes, I taught him (her child) one or two sentences of Vietnamese. Or he didn't know [how to speak in] English and I also taught him some vocabularies. Sometimes he asked me [how to speak in] Taiwanese. But I cannot speak Taiwanese very well. When I knew [how to speak some words in Taiwanese], I told him. When I did not know [how to speak some words in Taiwanese], I asked him to ask his father or neighbors. Because we are running a business, we have many neighbors. He went to ask them.

Four mothers mentioned that they taught their children Vietnamese or Cantonese songs. Sometimes they sang to their children and sometimes when they listened to Vietnamese or Cantonese songs, their children would ask them the meaning of the song and try to follow the song. Chinghui said: "He (her son) followed [the singer] and sang. He sang but he did not sing

[the lyrics] very clearly.” Lemin said: “When I listened to Vietnamese songs, she (her daughter) would ask what what (the song) means.” Only one child in this study has the ability to communicate with others in Vietnamese.

Most mothers reported that they did not insist that their children speak mothers’ native language because (a) mothers did not think that their children had the opportunity to use the language, (b) their children were too young to learn the language, (c) their children did not want to learn the language, (d) learning other languages was more important than learning mothers’ native language (English and Taiwanese were given higher priority than Vietnamese and Cantonese), and (e) mothers worried learning two different languages at the same time may confuse children.

Mothers did teach their children Vietnamese or Cantonese phrases because they wanted to maintain the kinship ties between children and relatives in Vietnam.

Chinghui: My mother said that do not let him (her son) forget Vietnamese. Speak [Vietnamese] with him often. Otherwise, you (her son) go back again after a long time. You (her son) see grandma and grandpa. You (her son) don’t know how to speak [Vietnamese to them] and do not understand what is said. So every time I made a phone call [to Vietnam], if he (her son) was around, I said, “Yufang, do you want to talk to grandma?” He said yes. My mom talked to him and he said yes, yes. He used Vietnamese to talk [with my mom].

Chinghui: Can’t forget your own that.

Researcher: Your own root? Where mother comes from?

Chinghui: Right. Because our aunts all said , “Mother is from Vietnam. You bring your child back again after a long time. You (her son) do not speak Vietnamese. Don’t

understand whatever is said [in Vietnamese]. The emotional bond will weaken.” So my father and mother always said that speak Vietnamese with him (her son) often.

Another reason that mothers teach children their native language is that they considered language as a human resource that would bring advantages for their children’s future occupational opportunities but this was tempered by the reasons mentioned above.

The new immigrant families provide children with potential multilingual learning environments. New-immigrant mothers teach children mothers’ native languages. Except for supporting their children to learn Mandarin Chinese, they also support their children to learn English and Taiwanese. Although some mothers thought that learning mother’s native languages is essential to maintain kinship ties and is beneficial for children’s future occupational opportunities, most mothers did not insist in teaching their children beyond simple Vietnamese or Cantonese phrases.

Transnational Experiences

Children’s transnational experiences also have the potential to enrich their literacy-related learning. Transnational and bicultural experiences provide children with a unique family literacy learning contexts and cultural resources.

Listing to Vietnamese stories and songs. As mentioned above, some mothers played or sang Vietnamese songs to their children. In addition, some mothers told children Vietnamese stories that they knew from their childhood. These story and songs describe Vietnamese life and values. However, storybooks written in Vietnamese could not be found and purchased in Taiwan. Only one mother mentioned that she had storybooks written in Vietnamese at home.

Visiting or living in Vietnam. Transnational experiences are common for children in the new-immigrant families. Most of the mothers brought children with them when they visit family

members in Vietnam. Some of them stayed in Vietnam as long as one or two months. They believed that children would learn Vietnamese and culture easily when they were in Vietnam interacting with relatives and friends in Vietnam. Chinghui stated: "...I bring him (my son) back once a year. My sister always told to him. She taught him some Vietnamese. When he was back [to Vietnam], he played with my sister's son. So he learns Vietnamese quickly." In addition, she would let her son sample a variety of Vietnamese food. One time she went back Vietnam during the Vietnamese New Year and her son experienced a Vietnamese New Year celebration. Maichi also said: "Every time I brought them back to Vietnam for a month, he played with local kids. Then he learned [how to speak Vietnamese]. My son speaks some Vietnamese that he learned there (in Vietnam). So I think it is better to provide an environment for him to learn."

Children's other transnational experiences are living in Vietnam and visited by Vietnamese grandparents. Chinghui mentioned that two of her friend's children were born in Vietnam and raised by their grandparents in Vietnam. They returned to Taiwan until one child was three years old. Both of the children spoke good Vietnamese. Chinghui's son was also born in Vietnam and she insisted that her son keep in contact with his Vietnamese relatives. In another case, one Vietnamese mother's parents stayed in Taiwan for a while and took care of their grandchild and taught him Vietnamese.

Making phone calls to relatives in Vietnam. Most of the mothers asked children to greet grandparents on the telephone. Simple Vietnamese greeting and phrases were taught. However, the conversations usually could not continue because of children's limited ability to speak Vietnamese.

Getting together with mothers' Vietnamese friends and relatives in Taiwan. Mothers always brought children with them when they got together with their Vietnamese friends or

siblings in Taiwan. Children had opportunities to interact with Vietnamese people and learned Vietnamese values and culture. For example, Manchi mentioned that her sister in Taiwan read Vietnamese stories to her children and taught them how to behave. She stated: "...My sister read [Vietnamese story books] to her (her daughter)." She also stated: "...My life is easier because of them (her sisters). When they do not go to work on Saturday and Sunday, they will help me teach [my son and daughter]."

New-immigrant children's transnational experiences include visiting or living in Vietnam, making phone calls to Vietnamese relatives, and getting together with mothers' Vietnamese friends and siblings. Through these transnational experiences, children learn Vietnamese language, food, cultural practices, values, and beliefs. These experiences broaden children's minds and are rich resources that can support their learning of literacy.

A Vietnamese Cultural Value: Having Good Manners

Vietnamese mothers taught their children manners in order to maintain good relationships with people in the family and beyond. All mothers stressed teaching their children to be polite. They used various literacy-related activities to teach children good manners. Yuchin and Lami mentioned the differences between Vietnamese and Chinese in using honorifics to display respect to others. In Vietnamese, there are many different ways to greet others. This insight is confirmed by researchers who recognize Vietnamese as having an intensive system of honorifics and personal pronouns to show social order and hierarchy (see Dien, 1998).

Yuchin: How to say "you" in Vietnamese depends on whether you (the person who the speaker address to) are male or female, old or young.

Researcher: Sounds hard to learn.

Yuchin: So people can tell whether you are polite or not when you speak. If you are junior to a person but you speak to the person using the pronoun that is used to address a person of your age, he will know that you are impolite. So our way of politeness, we can tell a person is polite or not through speaking, but there is no difference in Chinese about personal pronouns.

Mothers took teaching children good manners seriously. They asked children to greet others when they meet people and leave a place, to show their appreciation when they receive something from others, to solve problems with words, to apologize rather than fight when they have conflicts with friends, to not interrupt adults' talking, and to show their respect when they address adults and elders. Yuchin even worried that children raised in Taiwan might have bad manners and be less ethical.

Yuchin: ...For example, when [children] come back from school, they should greet adults at home. When seeing guests or acquaintances, they should greet them. They should be polite. Having good manners is very important. If you are talented but you do not have good manners, that does not work. You will use your talent in wrong places. I emphasize good manners a lot. A person with good character is very important.

Reading storybooks and watching children's television programs. When choosing storybook to read to her children, Manchi chose storybooks that taught children how to perform good manners. For example, she chose a book to teach her children how to love and respect siblings because she thought her two children always had quarrels. Sharan mentioned that some children's television programs were good because they taught children how to be polite to others. She said, " He (her son) watches those (children's television programs) will learn some

manners...Learning [from television programs about how to] study and listen to adults are also very good.”

The following two examples also display mothers' efforts on teaching good manners by using different resources in hand.

Observing parents running small business. Yuchin and her husband owned a small restaurant. Her four-year-old son stayed at the restaurant after coming home from preschool. When staying at the restaurant, her son drew pictures, played with toys, talked to others, played with neighbors, and watched how their parents ran the restaurant. Yuchin said that her son liked to role-play running business with her.

Yuchin: Every time he plays role-playing, he wants to play the game about learning to do business. He is the owner and I am the customer. Or he wants to be a street vender of a pinball game (a kind of street vender selling grilled sausages. Pinball machine is used for customer to gamble with the vender in order to win sausages).

Researcher: Is that because there is that kind of street vender near your restaurant?

Yuchin: Right. He likes to play pinball game when he goes out. He likes to play that very much.

Researcher: What did he do when he pretended to be an owner?

Yuchin: When he pretended to be an owner, sometimes he forgot and called me mother. I said I was a customer. I said you should ask me: “May I ask you how I can help you? “. He said that he sold fruit. He did not sell the food that we ate. He sold fruit and toys.

Through watching parents running a business on a daily basis, Yuchin's son learned the knowledge about proper interactions between an owner and customers and became interested in different kinds of small business. He integrated the knowledge of doing small business into role-

playing. At the same time, his mother broadened his knowledge about how to be polite to customers. The household knowledge regarding running business in a polite way has the potential to provide rich content and resources for Yuchin's son to learn literacy.

Attending Religious Classes. Chinghui said that her son often liked to read Buddhist storybooks. Yufan would go with his grandmother to the temple to attend classes and read those books. Some Buddhist Sutras (texts that were written by Buddha's followers to explain the teaching of the Buddha) were hard to understand but her son would still try to memorize them. Chinghui agreed with her parents-in-law to let her son take religious courses. She thought that those Buddhist stories and Buddhist Sutras would teach her son to act properly and ethically. The Buddhist also taught her son how to maintain good relationship with peers.

In conclusion, these Vietnamese mothers emphasized their children's good manners and took opportunities to involve their children in various literacy-related activities that teach good manners. The knowledge of how to perform good manners is an important social skill in these families and intertwines into children's daily literacy-related learning activities at home, such as reading storybooks and religious texts, choosing appropriate words to communicate with others, watching television programs that teach good manners, and role-playing running business. These experiences may broaden children's life experiences and vocabulary and thus make them more capable to draw upon these resources to comprehend and write about topics on ethics, virtues and manners.

Conclusion and discussion

Funds of knowledge including multilingual experiences, transnational experiences, and having good manners transmitted accumulated in new-immigrant families. Children learn multiple languages, Vietnamese cultural practices, familial lives, and values through engaging in

various activities in homes and communities. These knowledge funds are often not recognized by schools. However, they are potential resources that can be used to promote children's literacy.

Expanding past studies on funds of knowledge in immigrant families, this study deepens the understanding of funds of knowledge in new-immigrant families in Taiwan. In contrast to viewing new-immigrant families as cultural deficiency, this study shows that these new-immigrant families possess rich knowledge and cultural resources that they use to support their children's learning. In addition, this study fills the research gap that few studies have examined funds of knowledge in homes and communities that can be used to foster children's literacy.

This study will shed light on how to incorporate knowledge and skills that children accumulate from home into school literacy curricula. In doing so, children will benefit from these culturally relevant curricula, which help them develop bicultural identities and motivate them to learn literacy. For example, kindergarten teachers can invite new-immigrant children to draw pictures of visiting families in Vietnam or invite new-immigrant children to tell a story and share their experiences of living in Vietnam with their classmates. New-immigrant children can thus draw upon their transnational experiences to draw or to tell a story. Through engaging in these literacy activities in schools that incorporating immigrant cultural resources, children can also identify with mothers' cultures and develop their bicultural identities.

Although this study shows that these families have rich knowledge and cultural resources that can be used to promote children's literacy, they often did not stress the use of these resources. Mothers' not encouragement of children's learning of mothers' native languages reflect how Taiwanese society view immigrant languages and cultures. Take learning Vietnamese language as an example, although mothers know that learning mothers' native languages will benefit their children in many ways, they still do not force their children to learn

mothers' native languages. For instance, they knew that children's learning of Vietnamese is a means to maintain kinship ties (in Vietnamese culture, people value that children maintain emotional bonds with parents and relatives (Fung, 2008)). In addition, learning mothers' languages can provide children with more job opportunities. Mothers explained why they did not want their children to learn mothers' native languages. Most of the reasons are related to children's personal factors, such as children did not want to learn and children may be confused by learning multiple languages. However, they also addressed a social-structure factor that limits them from promoting their children to learn mothers' native languages. They were aware of negative attitudes from the larger society: Vietnamese language is less important than English, an international language, and Taiwanese, a dialect that most people use. As Berry (2007) stated, negative social contexts, such as negative attitudes, policies, or school curricula would influence immigrants' adaptive strategies and impede the forming of multicultural environments. Mothers' not promoting their own native languages reflect the fact that most of people and educators in Taiwan do not value immigrant languages and cultures and do not encourage new-immigrant children to learn their mothers' languages and cultures, which could impede the development of multicultural learning environments that benefit children's learning and identity formation.

This study was subject to some limitations. First, snowball sampling was used (Gall et al., 2007), thus making it possible that the recruited participants were only from tightly networks, increasing the possibility of a homogeneous cohort. All the participants in this study were well adapted to life in Taiwan. Potential participants who were maladaptive and were subordinated in their families were not included in this study. Second, due to time constraints and resources limitations, each participant was interviewed only once. Third, although the mothers spoke fluent

Mandarin Chinese, the interviews may have yielded more accurate data if the mothers had used their native languages to answer the interview questions.

Researchers can conduct further studies and engage in family observations over a longer period of time and in more in-depth interviews in order to deepen the understanding of knowledge, skills, and cultural resources in new-immigrant families. Also, in addition to new-immigrant mothers, researchers can recruit other family members in order to gain a whole picture of the knowledge transmitted in the families and communities. Last, researchers can recruit Taiwanese families who have a low socioeconomic status and conduct a comparative study to compare funds of knowledge in Taiwanese families with those in new-immigrant families. In doing so, researcher may find more funds of knowledge that are unique to new-immigrant families.

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