

**Bilingual parents' parenting styles, family language use and children's well-being:  
A case study of Chinese immigrant families in the United States**

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"It's so hard every day, I just don't know if my effort will be worth it!" - a Chinese immigrant parent revealed this at the Q&A session of a workshop on promoting bilingual and biliteracy development that the researcher offered to a community of immigrant parents in Seattle, Washington. Such a sentiment, however, is not rare among Chinese-speaking immigrants in the United States. Though the U.S. has always been depicted as "the land of immigrants", its school systems and society in general remain stubbornly monolingual, leaving the task of minority language maintenance mostly in the hands of immigrant parents. To complicate matters further, the Chinese writing system presents the highest linguistic contrast to an alphabetic system such as English; this means that learning Chinese in a nonnative environment is difficult. Learning Chinese and English – the societal language – simultaneously presents a double challenge for many immigrant children in Chinese-speaking households. Another dimension of this complicated matter is that the typical Chinese parenting style may be different from, and at times opposite of, the one embraced by the mainstream culture. Harmonious Bilingualism may seem like a far-fetched goal for many Chinese immigrant families.

To understand the matter better, this project funded by the Harmonious Bilingualism Network HaBiNet (<https://www.habilnet.org/>) proposes to identify the relationship between parenting styles, parents' beliefs and practices regarding home language use, and their children's language use and socio-emotional wellbeing.

Focusing on elementary school aged children in households with one or both parents being a recent immigrant from a Chinese-speaking area, the project will collect primary data sources include surveys, interviews, and audio recordings using Language Environment Analysis (LENA) devices (<https://listenandtalk.org/lena/>). Additionally, this project also plans to use focus groups with parents to discuss and refine materials for larger scale workshops and print materials for the public. The primary goal for such engagement is to discuss what Harmonious Bilingualism means for Chinese immigrant families in the U.S. and to identify concrete ways to reach the goal of raising bilingual children in harmonious, sustainable, positive and enjoyable ways.

*Find out more about Dr. Lü here: <https://asian.washington.edu/people/chan-lu>*

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