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**Supporting Young Children’s Bilingual or Multilingual Development Through Storybook Reading:
Insights from Chinese Immigrant Families**

Investigator: Wei Mao, PhD Candidate, Concordia University, Canada

Supervisor: Diane Pesco, PhD, Concordia University, Canada

The research involves two interconnected studies investigating the interactions of parents and 3- to 6-year-old children in Chinese immigrant families during storybook reading and parents’ perspectives on those interactions. Thirty parent-preschooler dyads from families living in Montreal, Quebec, in which at least one parent had emigrated from China, participated. All of the families completed study 1, and 29 completed study 2. Data collection and data analysis are complete for study 1, and data collection for study 2 is complete with data analysis in progress. Progress has been excellent, and the dissemination of findings has begun, as outlined below.

Study 1: This completed study of parent-child interactions during storybook reading showed that dyads preferred to interact in Chinese (i.e., Mandarin), even when reading a French or an English book. Results also revealed that when reading either a French or an English book, parents used significantly more dialogic talk (i.e., interactive strategies to engage the child) than when reading the Chinese book. Specifically, parents asked more literal questions to assess whether their child understood the vocabulary and text or to teach vocabulary. However, a high level of individual variation in dialogic talk was observed in both conditions, with some parents rarely engaging their child in dialogic talk. The data serve as a point of comparison for data collected in study 2, aimed at introducing parents to strategies that may help their young children develop additional languages yet maintain their heritage language: an important factor in the well-being of immigrant families (Anderson, 2002; De Houwer, 2015; Tseng & Fuligni, 2000). We presented some of the findings from study 1 at the Child Language Symposium in July 2024 ([abstract](#)), and have also submitted a manuscript to an international journal.

Study 2: This ongoing study involved a workshop on dialogic reading strategies for parents; implementation of the strategies by the parent at home, in any language(s) they chose; a second round of observations of parent-child dyads; and focus group interviews with parents aimed at exploring their views on dialogic reading strategies. The data have been transcribed and coding of the observational and interview data is now in progress. Preliminary findings will be presented at the Hawaii International Conference on Education in 2025 and potentially at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting (abstract under review). We also plan to submit at least one manuscript based on study 2 to a peer-reviewed journal and to eventually disseminate results to a non-academic audience.

References

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