

Promoting language competence in bilingual children using their language repertoires:

A pilot carer-child reading intervention study

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This pilot study evaluates the implementation and effects of a carer-child reading intervention that supports both English and home language development in children with English as an additional language (EAL) aged 5 to 7 in the UK. Based on previous research and dialogic reading guidance, we will design a 12-week intervention which trains and supports carers to read with their children in their home language (Chinese) and English, and addresses some methodological challenges faced when engaging EAL carers.

Around 40 children will be pre-tested on measures of language and cognitive skills in both English and Chinese. Child-carer dyads will be assigned to one of the two conditions: Intervention and Waitlist Control conditions. The carers in the intervention group will be trained on shared reading techniques. They will then read with the children using the provided bilingual reading materials at home twice a week for approximately 15 minutes each time, over a 12-week period. After the 12-week reading period, around 5 carers in the intervention group will be invited to take part in a focus group to provide their feedback on the reading program. Also, children in both groups will be post-tested on measures of language and cognitive skills in both English and Chinese. Carers in both groups will complete rating scales covering carer-child reading habits and beliefs. For the Waitlist Control, no storybooks and reading materials will be provided to the carers initially, so carers will follow their ordinary literacy beliefs and habits with their children. They will receive the same training and reading materials given to the intervention group after the post-test.

Project outcomes will support EAL children's language learning in English and their home language, and will guide a larger-scale randomised controlled trial involving a broader community of EAL families. The findings will also contribute to advancing models for elucidating the significance of home literacy environment in EAL children's language development in English and their home languages.

Find out more about the Co-PI's through <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-and-centres/departments/psychology-and-human-development/research/multilanguage-and-cognition-lab> and <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ahpnm/people/human-communication-sciences/silke-fricke>

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