

## *Progress report*

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

by Chan Lü, Ph.D., University of Washington, Seattle, USA

This project proposes to identify the relationship between parenting styles, parents' beliefs and practices regarding home language use, and their children's language use and socioemotional wellbeing. Focusing on elementary school aged children in households where one or both parents recently immigrated from a Chinese-speaking area, the project aims to collect primary data sources including surveys, interviews, and audio recordings using Language Environment Analysis (LENA) devices. Additionally, this project 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 for reaching the goal of raising bilingual children in harmonious, sustainable, positive and enjoyable ways.

**Step 1:** The study completed the following in the summer of 2024. Over 100 Chinese immigrant families in the United States from different social economic backgrounds with children aged 5 to 14 were recruited locally as well as through social media. Parent participants filled out surveys asking them to self-report on their parenting styles, their home language and literacy practices in both English and/or Chinese (or other dialects/languages used), and their environment. At the same time, the children of the parent participants were asked to fill out a novel language use and attitudes survey asking about when, where and how much English and Chinese they use. Using the SDQ (Goodman, R. 1997. The strengths and difficulties questionnaire: A research note. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 38, 581–586), children 11 years and up also filled out a survey to self-report their behavioral and emotional strengths and difficulties. Information about behavioral and emotional strengths and difficulties for children under 11 years of age were reported by their parents (also through the SDQ). Dr. Lü and her research team are currently analyzing the survey data in preparation for Step 2 of the study.

In **Step 2** of the study, Dr. Lü and her team will be following up with the families for interviews, at-home observations and home language use recordings using the Language Environment Analysis (LENA) device. During the interviews, Dr. Lü plans to probe the parents further about their family language and literacy practices to try and understand the idiosyncratic choices different families may have made, and also to understand the different challenges families from different social economic backgrounds, educational levels and immigration background may face. Dr. Lü has identified a good number of families who are willing to further participate and is positive that this step of the project will be successfully completed in due course.

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

October 2024