

Researcher

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Title of Project

A Narrative Inquiry into Immigrant Parent
Knowledge in Heritage Language Education

Research Supervisor

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TIRF Research Topic Investigated

Plurilingualism in Business, Industry, the Professions, and Educational Contexts

Project Summary

The maintenance and sustainability of heritage language are essential to immigrant children's linguistic, cultural, and social development. While there is a large body of literature on heritage language, immigrant parents' role in their children's heritage language education remains largely unknown. The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of immigrant parents in order to: a) inquire into the daily language practices of immigrant families in their home and community contexts, and b) make visible how immigrant parents work formally and informally, consciously and unconsciously, with their bi/multilingual children to sustain heritage language in an English-dominated society. My research question is: How do immigrant parents enact their particular parent knowledge in their children's heritage language education? With narrative inquiry methodology, which focuses on personal lives and how they are lived, I work with parents from three Chinese immigrant families in Canada. I inquire into their journey of knowledge construction and enactment in regard to heritage language education in the home and community context. This study provides theoretical foundations for educators to re-position immigrant parents on and off the school landscape, acknowledge and learn from immigrant parents' pedagogical practices in heritage language teaching and learning, and develop immigrant parent engagement and leadership strategies. Conceptualizing and enacting immigrant parent knowledge also bring to the center the historically marginalized groups, enriching the education system with valuable and diverse knowledge, and working toward educational and linguistic equity for immigrant children