

Researcher

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**Title of Project**

The Economics of Chinese as a Heritage Language
in Australia: A qualitative Case Study

Research Supervisor

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TIRF Research Topics Investigated

- (1) Language Planning & Policy
 - (2) Plurilingualism in Business, Industry, the Professions, and Educational Contexts
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Project Summary

While the economics of language or language economics has gained substantial research attention since the 1960s, much of this research has focused on dominant languages, leaving heritage languages (HLs) underexplored. Moreover, this research has grounded in econometric models based on rational choice theory, thus undermining the embeddedness of human agency and experiences in specific social contexts. Situated in Brisbane, Australia, my doctoral study uses a qualitative case-study approach to explore the economic significance of Chinese as a heritage language (CHL) in this English-speaking society. Bourdieusian model of practice, built on his key concepts of capital, habitus, and field, serves as the analytical framework to explain the ways in which immigrants who speak CHL capitalize on this language for economic goals and contribute to the social economy. I also draw insights from immigrant studies in economic sociology to better understand how CHL may relate to ethnic economy in migrant societies. Data will be collected through interview and site observation. The former will help document participants' subjective realities—i.e., discourses in their economic trajectories across domains of instrumental activity and their reflective perceptions of the economic value of CHL, while the latter will be used to record objective realities—how CHL plays its role in participants' work practices and/or transactional activities. This study is expected to make theoretical and empirical contributions to the existing literature by explicating the economics of HLs in a globalized world, with clear implications for policymakers in migrant as well as multilingual societies.