

Beliefs, Practices and Identity about Bilingualism: Korean-australian Immigrant Parents and Family Language Policies

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Abstract : This study explores the relationships between immigrant parents' beliefs about bilingualism, family literacy practices, and their children's identity development in Sydney, Australia. This project examines how these parents' ideological beliefs and knowledge are related to their provision of family literacy practices and management of the environment for their bilingual children based on family language policy (FLP). This is a follow-up study of the author's prior thesis that presented Korean immigrant mothers' beliefs and decision-making in support of their children's bilingualism. It includes fathers' perspectives within the participating families as a whole by foregrounding their perceptions of bilingual and identity development. It adopts a qualitative approach with twelve immigrant mothers and fathers living in a Korean-Australian community whose child attends one of the communities Korean language programs. This time, it includes introspective and self-evocative auto-ethnographic data. The initial data set collected from the first part of this study demonstrated the mothers provided rich, diverse, and specific family literacy activities for their children. These mothers selected specific practices to facilitate their child's bilingual development at home. The second part of data has been collected over a three month period: 1) a focus group interview with mothers; 2) a brief self-report of fathers; 3) the researcher's reflective diary. To analyze these multiple data, thematic analysis and coding were used to reveal the parents' ideologies surrounding bilingualism and bilingual identities. It will highlight the complexity of language and literacy practices in the family domain interrelated with sociocultural factors. This project makes an original contribution to the field of bilingualism and FLP and a methodological contribution by introducing auto-ethnographic input of this community's lived practices. This project will empower Korean-Australian immigrant families and other multilingual communities to reflect their beliefs and practices for their emerging bilingual children. It will also enable educators and policymakers to access authentic information about how bilingualism is practiced within these immigrant families in multiple ways and to help build the culturally appropriate partnership between home and school community.

Keywords : bilingualism, beliefs, identity, family language policy, Korean immigrant parents in Australia

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