

## ABSTRACT

Title of Document:

MANDARIN-ENGLISH DUAL LANGUAGE  
EDUCATION: UNDERSTANDING PARENTAL  
IDEOLOGIES AND EXPECTATIONS

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Research on bilingual education presents clear advantages for children's linguistic, cognitive, and social development (Lindholm-Leary, 2011; Thomas, Collier, and Abbott, 1993). However, recent criticism of dual language education programs has led to claims of dual language education as a marker of "elite bilingualism" (de Costa, 2010) or that parents play their roles as socially accepted "good parents" by sending their child to a bilingual school (King & Fogle, 2006). This dissertation presents the linguistic ideologies, motivations, and practices of parents of students enrolled in a Mandarin-English dual language school (DLS) in the Mid-Atlantic U.S. Qualitative data were obtained from in-depth interviews with 21 parents, the majority of whom have no Chinese ethnic connection. In drawing from theories of Family Language Policy (FLP), parents addressed the connections between Mandarin and economic, political, sociolinguistic, or sociocultural factors (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009). This research adds insight into the ways parents uniquely shape their identities in how they both accept and reject aspects of Chinese culture and language. Despite their language proficiency in the target language, parents prove to be capable

language agents for their children. My study reveals a more nuanced portrait of the parents who choose Mandarin immersion for their children and explores the critical role that parents can play in informing bilingual policies and practices.