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Multilingual Families Homeschooling: Reasons, Goals, and Challenges

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Multilingual Families Homeschooling: Reasons, Goals and Challenges

A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in International and Multicultural Education

by
Georgina Aubin
May 2018

Multilingual Families Homeschooling: Reasons, Goals and Challenges

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

in

INTERNATIONAL AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

by

Georgina Justice Aubin

May, 2018

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this thesis has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

Approved:


Instructor/Chairperson

Date

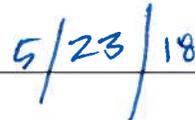


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Abstract

This study examines homeschooling among multilingual families by providing insight into multilingual parents' motivations, goals, and challenges in homeschooling, along with their perception of the role their diverse language background plays in their homeschooling experience. Through the LangCrit framework, this study explores the intersection of language and parental involvement in the identities multilingual parents live as they homeschool their children. Findings demonstrate that parents' goals and challenges center on academic and social concerns, rather than language issues. Rather, the influence of their language background emerges in descriptions directly focused on language and culture. The fluid dimensions of their identities are expressed according to the domain of the discussion. Their language background pervades their lived experience as they accompany their children in homeschooling.

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

I have been homeschooling my own children since 2003. Over the past 15 years, I have heard a wide range of opinions about homeschooling, from a dogmatic belief that it is the best option for a child, to the complete rejection of homeschooling as socially or educationally damaging to children. The reasons that people choose to homeschool cover a similarly broad range. Informal conversations I have had with other homeschooling parents reveal that some families homeschool for religious convictions, while others make the choice out of desperation to rescue a child who is not thriving in school. Often families also homeschool out of a desire to build a deeper bond with their children in this fast-paced, highly-competitive society. Reasons abound and their complexity is influenced by the particular circumstance of each individual family. Throughout the conversations, it is obvious to me that homeschooling is often a difficult choice to make and to persist with. There are personal, educational, social, and familial challenges that balance the corresponding joys and benefits that families experience in this educational choice.

My life experience has also brought me into contact with a great variety of multilingual people, within homeschooling and beyond. As we converse together about learning languages and living in other cultures, they describe how their language backgrounds affect many aspects of their lives. As immigrants who have moved from other countries to live in the United States, their lives are grounded in cultures, experiences, and languages that are different from my own. I consistently hear stories of how these differences affect and inform the choices they make both in life and in their choices as parents.

As a homeschooling parent in the San Francisco Bay Area, I interact with many homeschooling families who have multiple languages in the home, typically because at least one of the parents grew up in a different country, speaking a language other than English (LOTE) as their primary language. In friendly conversation, we discuss our language backgrounds, our homeschooling experiences, and how those factors interact. I have heard the stories of multilingual¹ homeschooling families who are fully dedicated to teaching their kids to be literate in the LOTE as a primary goal of their homeschooling choices. Other multilingual families describe how they maintain home conversation in the LOTE without making the language learning a focus of their homeschooling. I observe still other multilingual families who use the flexibility of homeschooling to spend extended time visiting relatives in their home country in order to increase their children's fluency in that language. While some multilingual parents express confidence in their English language skills as homeschooling educators, I have listened to other parents express their own lack of confidence in teaching English language arts and other subjects, especially as their children approach high school. Parents of the latter group tell me how they seek some sort of outside help to ensure that their kids succeed academically in English, despite the parents' own felt limitations. These varying experiences of multilingual parents as they homeschool their children peak my curiosity as a researcher of homeschooling trends.

¹Multilingual is the term chosen in this study to mean “more than one language”, rather than making a distinction between bilingual and multilingual. This avoids the assumption that parents who speak a language other than English are only bilingual, speaking two languages, i.e., English and one other non-English language.

Statement of the Problem

More than three percent of school-aged children in the United States engage in home education, where they conduct a portion of their weekly studies at home. In addition, multilingual families homeschool at a rate similar to the monolingual population (McQuiggan & Megra, 2017). In gathering statistics about these students in this variety of schooling, the U.S. Department of Education has investigated a range of questions, including total number of homeschooled students K-12, race/ethnicity, grade levels, education levels of the parents, subjects taught at home, socio-economic levels, learning context, and reasons parents choose to homeschool (Redford, Battle & Bielick, 2016). The question of what motivates parents to homeschool has been asked in many studies, with little analysis of how those motivations differ across the range of demographic characteristics, such as race, language background, socioeconomic status, household locale (rural, suburban, urban). Collom (2005) uniquely analyzed parent motivation according to 13 different variables. Three studies have explored the question of parental motivation to homeschool for African-American families. These studies conclude that some of the motivations align with the general homeschool population, while the African-American experience adds additional facets to their motivations (Fields-Smith & Williams, 2009; Mazama & Lundy, 2015; Ray, 2015). Very few comments are found in the literature about the motivations of other ethnic groups or demographics (McDowell, Sanchez & Jones, 2011).

Even less research dealing with homeschooling families from diverse language backgrounds exists. However, the most recent National Household Education Survey (NHES) indicates that families in which one or both parents speak a non-English

language in the home homeschool at a rate similar to monolingual families (McQuiggan & Megra, 2017). Does their language background inform their motivations and challenges in homeschooling? The question about language in the home was only added in the most recent administration of the NHES, so there is not yet any longitudinal data to understand the nationwide, multilingual population of homeschoolers. Others searching for research on this population found a complete gap in the literature (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013; Carlson, 2009; Fields-Smith, 2016). In the absence of scholarly literature about multilingual homeschoolers, research must explore the motivations and experiences of homeschooling within multilingual families. This study will explore the reasons, goals, and challenges of homeschooling that multilingual households experience in California, seeking to understand how their language background intersects with their homeschooling.

Background and Need for the Study

At least 2 million U.S. students homeschool (McQuiggan & Megra, 2017; Ray, 2016), through a growing range of options for pursuing their education (Saiger, 2016). What motivates parents to homeschool without ever enrolling their children in institutional schools? What motivates parents to leave institutional schooling and start to homeschool after any number of years in a full-time school? What do we know about parents who are homeschooling their children? These questions are beginning to be investigated. However, the research suffers a range of limitations and many questions remain unanswered (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013). In the midst of a sparse landscape of research about homeschooling in the general population, most studies and reports give little mention to racial, linguistic, and ethnic minority groups who homeschool (Kunzman

& Gaither, 2013). In particular, multilingual families are often assumed to not engage in homeschooling (Carlson, 2009).

With the emphasis and assumption that a primary focus of education in the United States is competency in English and preparation for college or post-secondary education, multilingual parents who possibly learned English after early childhood and who possibly did not participate in U.S. educational systems may find the task of navigating home education difficult, if not implausible. However, the reality that I experience in the San Francisco Bay Area is that a plethora of multilingual families do choose to homeschool, despite these challenges in navigating an unknown system. What inspires these families to pursue home education? What obstacles do they face and how do they overcome them? It is important to illuminate the mere existence this portion of the homeschool population, along with investigating their motivations and challenges. Their experience with homeschooling is an important voice in understanding the growing multilingual sector of the U.S. society. The practices they employ to educate their children toward success in English and the U.S. educational system may also shed light on positive practices that could be useful for full-time schools.

Purpose of the Study

This study provide insight into the experience of multilingual parents who are homeschooling in California. Specifically, this study adds to the literature regarding multilingual families' reasons for homeschooling and the unique challenges they face.

Research Questions

This study focuses on reasons for homeschooling and the challenges faced by multilingual parents who are homeschooling their children. Fields-Smith & Williams

(2009) investigated these issues for African-American homeschoolers. Modeling after that study, this work asks multilingual families from a variety of language backgrounds about their reasons for homeschooling, the goals they have in their homeschooling, and the intersection of their language background with their homeschooling experience. All data is self-reported from the parent's perspective.

The research questions of this study are:

1. What self-reported factors influenced multilingual families' decisions to homeschool their children?
2. What challenges do multilingual parents experience in implementing their homeschool practices?
3. How do multilingual parents perceive that their language background informs their homeschooling practices?

Theoretical Framework

This study explores the experiences of multilingual families who are homeschooling in California. These multilingual families have more than one language present in the home, primarily because at least one of the parents has immigrated to the United States from another country, where English is not the dominant language. In exploring the reasons multilingual families homeschool and the challenges they face, two theories inform both the questions asked and the analysis conducted: LangCrit and Parent Involvement. LangCrit offers a theory for the intersection of Critical Race Theory and language experience (Crump 2014). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model for parental involvement identifies factors that contribute to parent involvement in education (1995,

1997). LangCrit and parental involvement theories work together to guide this investigation.

LangCrit

Introduced by Crump (2014), LangCrit, or Critical Language and Race Theory, is an extension of Critical Race Theory (CRT) that encourages language studies scholars to “look for ways in which race, racism, and racialization intersect with issues of language, belonging, and identity” (p. 207-208). LangCrit builds on three tenets of CRT. The first holds that racism is a feature of American society that is ordinary and natural in American society (Delgado, 2000). The second asserts that multiple facets of a person’s identity intersect in their experience of social systems of subordination (Crenshaw, 1989). The third highlights that stories and counter-stories of an oppressed group serve to destroy the mindset of a dominant, oppressive group (Delgado, 1989).

LangCrit approaches language use by looking at how power relates to linguistic resources, how this affects activities of individuals, what values are connected with language use, and the resulting possible identities. The key constructs of Lang Crit are: identity, language and race. These constructs fit together to aid understanding how linguistic identities intersect with racialized identities as individuals negotiate and perform their identities (Crump, 2014). One example comes from Sarkar, Low and Winer (2007), in which they describe how in Quebec, policy defines people along linguistic lines, according to their language. In this case, the subject-as-heard, defined by their language spoken and foreign accent, is as saliently experienced as subject-as seen, defined by their visual appearance. In this case, language proficiency is used to define and evaluate people in society as much or more than the color of their skin or their

obvious nationality. LangCrit highlights how linguistic identity is intertwined with other social constructs. LangCrit offers a framework “for theorizing how the axes of seen and heard intersect to shape individual possibilities for becoming” (Crump, 2014, p. 220). Audible features such as a foreign accent affect people’s treatment as much visible features of their race or ethnicity.

In summary, LangCrit acknowledges the intersection of identity, language, and race in a person’s ecosocial experience. This framework enables the analysis of how local language practices and attitudes connect to broader social dynamics, through a multidimensional identity, and in the context of a society where racism is real. All of these factors affect an individual. LangCrit has been utilized to study various educational and sociological contexts. Lu and Catalano (2015) examined the relationship between language, identity, and race in online discussions about dual language education. Sudbeck (2016) explored the connections between visible and audible identities in the context of indigenous languages in Nebraska. Fitzpatrick (2016) used the LangCrit framework to analyze the use of Spanish in social settings where native and non-native speakers of Spanish interact. Each of these studies looked at a social situation with a lens that seeks to understand the role language plays. As an emerging theory, LangCrit is useful to recognize how language affects social interactions, identity, and cultural expression.

Parental Involvement

Studies of parental involvement seek to describe, predict, and offer recommendations in the area of parents’ participation in their children’s education. Measures of parental involvement include resource investment, including supervision of school work and provision of school supplies; communication with child about school

work; and educational aspirations for their children (Green & Hoover-Dempsey, 2007).

Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler's (1995, 1997) model for parental involvement describes three factors that influence the level of parents' involvement in their children's education:

1. Parental role construction - What do parents believe about the role they should play in their children's education?
2. Efficacy - How competent do the parents perceive themselves to be to participate in their children's learning? Do they believe that their efforts will have a positive influence on their children's education?
3. Invitations - What do parents perceive as the invitations, demands and opportunities for involvement in their children's education?

Fields-Smith and Williams (2009) suggest that homeschooling is "possibly the most extreme form of parental involvement" (p. 370). Homeschooling is an educational option within which parental involvement can be examined, including the responsibility the parent feels toward participation in the child's education (role construction), the competence the parent feels to manage the child's education outside a full-time school setting (efficacy), and the ways in which parents feel that homeschooling is desired or welcoming of them (invitation). As an investigation of the parental involvement aspect of homeschooling, this study focuses on the parents' self-reports of their homeschooling experience. The reasons and goals they offer for homeschooling reveal their beliefs that they are responsible to make educational choices for their children's. The goals they state also reflect the aspirations they hold for their children and their levels of self-efficacy to direct and manage their children's education. The challenges they describe indicate their perceptions of their own levels of competence.

The factors of parental involvement reflected homeschooling form one dimension of the parental identity, in their role construction and sense of efficacy. LangCrit emphasizes the role that language plays in the formation of an individual's identity and embraces the intersectionality of different dimensions of that identity. Within the homeschooling context, multilingual parents experience intersecting identities as parents, immigrants, and multilingual individuals, among other dimensions. This study explores the intersection of their language background and their choices for involvement in their children's education, including how their language background relates to their perceived roles in their children's education and to their personal capacity to homeschool.

Methodology

This study explored the motivations, goals, and challenges of multilingual parents in California who are homeschooling their children. The survey gathered information about reasons for homeschooling, goals, challenges, and parental language background. For the interviews, I selected members from the two language groups that were most represented in the survey and I used semi-structured interviews to explore themes that arose from the survey responses. Through the interviews, gained a deeper understanding of the complexities that language background brings to the homeschooling experience. Semi-structured interviews gathered general information about the participants' experience and also elicited reaction to the themes the survey.

Instrumentation

This study has two primary research instruments: an electronic survey and individual interviews or focus groups. The electronic survey was created and distributed on the Qualtrics platform. It was distributed on social media groups whose members are

homeschoolers. Individual interviews and/or focus groups generally followed the questions outlined for this project (in appendix) and also presented some themes from the survey for further discussion.

The survey includes open-ended and multiple-choice questions about the reasons for homeschooling and the challenges faced, along with demographic information about the parent and the child, including grade level of the child and language background of the parent. The reasons for homeschooling are presented a matrix table which requires respondents to select yes or no for eight possible reasons they homeschool that particular child. An option is provided to write in other reasons. Following this list, they are asked to select one of the reasons for which they responded “yes” to as the most important reason they homeschool their child. Three open-ended questions ask the participants to describe their homeschooling goals and challenges. After these questions about homeschooling, the survey requests information about the language background of the parent completing the survey and one open-ended question about how their language background affects their schooling.

In order to be consistent with a widely used survey that has been tested for ambiguities and unclear wording, the demographics, reasons for homeschooling, and language background questions were adapted, with permission, from the 2016 Parent and Family Involvement in Education Survey of the NHES, from the National Center of Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. The use of questions directly from this survey aids the researcher to compare survey data to national information. One significant departure from the NHES survey was the language background questions. For the current study, language background questions were adapted to remove an emphasis

on speaking Spanish and instead treat multiple languages more equally. The modification allows respondents to select from a given list of languages or write in other languages. The languages on the given list in the survey were identified from the California Department of Education Language Group Data for 2016-17 (California Department of Education, 2017). Languages with the top representation on that list were selected for inclusion in the survey question.

At the end of the survey, participants can provide an email address if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview or would like to receive a report of the findings. The researcher's contact information is also provided for participants to ask further questions about the survey/study or to request findings without their email address being connected to their survey responses.

Participants

Survey and interview participants were parents who currently homeschool their children. By convenience sampling, the survey was delivered to various closed social media groups (i.e., via email and Facebook) whose members are homeschooling parents, and within which the researcher has personal contacts. Recipients of the survey were invited to forward the survey to other homeschool groups. Responses will be requested from both multilingual and monolingual parents.

The researcher set a goal of collecting 300 survey responses. With the hope that at least 10% of these responses would be from multilingual parents, the resulting sample size of 30 responses from multilingual parents would be adequate for identifying themes for multilingual parents, as modeled by the sample sizes of other similar studies (Van Galen, 1988; Fields-Smith & Williams, 2009). While homeschoolers have a reputation of

poor response rates, the targeted email groups totaled at least 600 families. Individuals readily offered to distribute the invitation to the groups they are members of, and thus the survey invitation reached over 2000 families from across the nation.

Potential interview participants of selected target language groups were contacted by email after the survey through personal connection to the researcher. The targeted language groups were determined by the language backgrounds represented by the survey responses. The two languages (other than English) with the highest response rate were selected for follow-up interviews.

Researcher's Background

My experience of 15 years as a homeschooling parent in the San Francisco Bay Area contributes to an understanding of the many and varied reasons and approaches homeschoolers pursue in their educational practices. As a member of the homeschooling community, I approach this study from a position of supporting the choice these parents have made to homeschool their children. This position should increase the trust level for interview and survey participants. In addition, my relationship with numerous groups and individuals will hopefully motivate high levels of participation in completing the survey.

Human Subjects Approval

This study was submitted to the USF IRB and approved before conducting interviews or distributing the survey. All participants were parents who are currently homeschooling one or more children. They provided consent to participate before completing the survey or proceeding with the interview. There is no anticipated risk to participants for their responses. Participants have the option provide their email address

at the end of the survey, for further contact regarding study findings or to be available for a follow-up interview. The researcher's contact email was supplied in case they want to provide their email address separate from the survey to increase anonymity, or ask additional questions.

Data Collection

The online survey was distributed to email and social media groups with a personal invitation from the researcher to consider completing the survey, along with stating the goal of receiving 300 responses in the course of ten days. The short timeframe for data collection served to motivate these typically busy parents to complete the survey before they forgot about it.

Interviews were conducted with individual participants in a location convenient to them. Each interview lasted 30-90 minutes. Children were present when necessary. Interviews were audio-recorded and applicable portions were transcribed. All interview and survey questions, and including the introduction email message, are included in the appendices to this study.

Data Analysis

The survey has a range of questions to be analyzed. The first analysis is the identification of participants with a language diverse background, a.k.a multilingual. Participants were coded as multilingual according to the responses to the language background questions. Participants who claimed to speak more than one language and who selected a language other than English in response to the question about the first language they learned to speak or in response to the question about the language spoken most in the home now were classified as multilingual. Participants claiming English as

first language learned and English spoken most now were classified as having a monolingual English background.

The reasons to homeschool questions yield information in two manners. These questions come directly from the NHES survey and require some interpretation. Together, these two questions give a numerical representation of the reasons parents homeschool, presenting a range of reasons and a most important reason for each participant. The question in which participants select yes or no for each of the reasons in a list results in data that tells what percentage of the participants responded 'yes' for each separate reason. The following question in which they select one 'most important' reasons yields an overall percentage of participants who selected that reason, where those percentages of 'most important' will add to 100. Both of these questions have a write-in option for having another reason to homeschool. Those written-in responses were categorized in a similar manner to the other open-ended questions of the survey, described below.

Short-answer, open-ended responses were read and categorized according to the themes that emerged. The three open-ended questions asked about goals, challenges, and the effect of language background in their homeschooling. The questions about reasons to homeschool also yielded an open-ended response if the option of 'another reason' was selected. Goals and reasons were initially be sorted into five categories: Religious values, Academic/pedagogical concerns, Dissatisfaction with public schools, Family lifestyle reasons, Culture/Language goals (Collom, 2005; Raguenaud, 2009). Challenges initially included three categories: Time commitment, Financial sacrifice, Teacher role (Murphy, 2014; Lois, 2006). Responses that did not clearly fit these categories were evaluated to

identify new themes to modify the list of categories. Effect of language was sorted into three categories: No effect, Moderate effect, Strong effect. Following the sorting process, the responses to these surveys were counted within each category. Direct quotes from these questions exemplify the categories and themes. The themes that emerged from the analysis of the survey data were presented in the interviews for further comment.

The multiple types of data gathered by this study serve to strengthen and enhance the picture gained by the investigation. The interviews allowed for pursuing the questions at greater depth than the survey, in a way that deepens comprehension of the implications of the data collected in the survey. Additionally, my background in homeschooling gave me particular insight to understand the responses from both survey and interviews, and allowed me to connect with the participants during the interviews.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study lie in the sampling method and my own position as a homeschooling parent. The snowball sampling through social media groups means that the survey reached a wide range of homeschoolers, with profiles and characteristics related to the associations I have in the homeschooling community. In addition, there was little option to follow up and encourage people to complete the survey. This follow-up could have increase responses from people who would be willing to complete the survey but who missed it because they were otherwise occupied in the moment that they first saw the survey.

My position as a fellow homeschooling parent stands as both a limitation and an asset in this study. It is a limitation because my experience homeschooling could introduce a bias into the interpretation of the data. It is an asset because I have trusted

connections with groups and individuals in the homeschooling community. Additionally, my position as a caucasian American and native English speaker limits my ability to relate to the multilingual immigrants I will interview.

In the interest of keeping the survey accessible to increase participation, many items of interest were excluded. While these items can be explored in the interviews, the sample size for the interviews was much smaller than the sample size of the surveys.

Significance of the Study

Homeschooling is a significant and growing educational option in the United States. A deeper understanding of all families who homeschool contributes to the legitimacy of this educational alternative. It also aids many stakeholders in the educational system of this country to comprehend this population of families who commit substantial family resources to a different educational approach.

While little is known about homeschoolers in general, much less is known about the multilingual families who homeschool. This study addresses the gap in academic literature about multilingual parents who homeschool their children. The mere presence of these families within the homeschool population is remarkable, and their stories deserve to be heard. In addition, understanding this population is significant for an educational system that generally struggles with its multilingual population. Once there is recognition that multilingual families homeschool, their strategies, approaches, desires, and successes can all be studied.

Definition of Terms

Homeschool - This study uses the word homeschool as a verb, being the act of engaging in home education. It is often used in the present participle form: homeschooling,

as a verb or an adjective. Regarding parents, it refers to the act of managing their children's home education. Regarding students, it refers to the act of completing their schooling tasks away from a full-time institutional school. A student can also be 'homeschooled', thus receiving the action of homeschooling. The National Household Education Survey, administered by the US Census Bureau and analyzed by the National Center for Education Statistics uses the following definition:

“Homeschooled students are school-age children who receive instruction at home instead of at a public or private school either all or most of the time. Excludes students who were enrolled in public or private school more than 25 hours per week and students who were homeschooled only because of temporary illness.” (McQuiggan & Megra, 2017, p. 18)

Although many homeschooled students are technically enrolled in a public or private school through a variety of independent and supervised study arrangements, they self-classify as homeschooling because their education is centered on home instruction or home-management of the student's education.

Homeschooler - This is either a parent or a student who homeschools.

Institutional schooling - This is the model of pursuing education through enrollment in a school where students attend school in a physical building full time, typically five days a week for the duration of the school year.

Motivation - This is the rationale or reason why a parent chooses to homeschool one or more children. For the purposes of this discussion, motivation does not address the act of inspiring a child toward a particular behavior.

Multilingual - Multilingual refers to doing life in more than one language. While some constructs distinguish between bilingual (two languages) and multilingual (three

or more languages), this study refers to all non-monolingual individuals as multilingual. This avoids the assumption that individuals whose primary language is other than English only speak two languages, i.e., English and one other non-English language.

CHAPTER II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review will introduce the issues surrounding the study of multilingual families and homeschooling. First, an introduction to the context of homeschooling will describe the current circumstances of homeschooling in the United States. The second section will discuss parental involvement as applied to homeschooling. The final section will describe the theory of LangCrit as applied to parental involvement and homeschooling. The intersection of homeschooling, parental involvement, and language background lay the groundwork for this study of multilingual families homeschooling.

Background Information on Homeschooling in the United States

Homeschooling is a rapidly growing educational alternative in the United States (Ray, 2010). Recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau places the total number of homeschoolers nationwide at close to 2 million students (McQuiggan & Megra, 2017). One researcher compiled data to conclude that 5.7 million Americans are currently homeschooled or have been homeschooled at some point in their lives (Ray, 2016). A variety of questions can be asked about homeschoolers - How many students are homeschooled? Why do they choose this? What curricular options do they use? What are their levels of success? What happens to their social development? What are the costs, both financial and emotional, associated with this option? Kunzman and Gaither (2013) compiled a literature review summarizing the research that has addressed these questions.

Definitions

A first step in researching homeschooling is to establish a definition of the practice. This turns out to be a difficult prospect. Across the country, definitions of

homeschooling vary and continue to change. Part of this follows from the reality that each state has its own educational codes that relate to homeschooling (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013). In addition, families homeschool through a variety of structures, including independent study programs (both public and private), home-based autonomy, and school-related enrollment. Some states, for example, Minnesota, have a procedure for families to register as homeschoolers with their local public school, participate in some school programming, and take the standardized tests, along with having a measure of supervision from the school (Minnesota Department of Education, 2017). Other states, for example, California, have no specific codes for homeschooling. In the case of California, students must enroll in a school to comply with mandatory attendance laws. Enrolling in independent study programs connected to public or private schools fits the requirement, as does registering one's home as a small private school (California Homeschool Network, 2015). Some public and private schools offer part-time class and field trip options for students who enroll in their independent study programs. Others facilitate the participation of homeschoolers in their school athletic programs. These students thus live a hybrid of home education blended with participation with school groups.

The U.S. Department of Education, through the National Household Education Surveys (NHES) of the U.S. Census Bureau, currently uses the following definition:

Homeschooled students are school-age children who receive instruction at home instead of at a public or private school either all or most of the time. Excludes students who were enrolled in public or private school more than 25 hours per week and students who were homeschooled only because of temporary illness. (McQuiggan & Megra, 2017, p. 18)

This definition offers the count of hours enrolled in school per week as a measure of homeschooling. However, there are some challenges even within this clear description. For example, in California, every child must be enrolled in one of these options full time. Even if the program is home-based independent study, the enrollment is full time in a school. Thus the measure of enrollment does not easily identify homeschoolers in California. So, how then can we define homeschooling? Students who receive all of their instruction at home, taught by a parent, would seem to obviously fit the definition. However, so many other variations exist in the experience. These variations include groups of homeschooled students gathered together for classes and outings, participation in part-time schools with full-day programs that students attend fewer than five days a week, supervision by independent-study charter schools, online classes, and correspondence courses. How much of one option or another is necessary for a student to be identified as a homeschooler?

Regardless of these difficulties in defining homeschooling with outside measures, I have experienced that parents have a solid sense of their own identity as parents who homeschool. Thus, a reasonable starting point for identifying homeschoolers is to ask the parents how they identify their children's education. This initial identification can then be followed by an inquiry into the variety of structures their children utilize.

History of Homeschooling Research

Homeschooling is a social phenomenon that has a longstanding history in the story of education in the United States. Over the years, the dominant profile of homeschoolers has included a wide range of characteristics, from liberal, counter-cultural families in the 1960s and 1970s, to conservative Christians in the 1980s and 1990s

(Wilhelm & Firmin, 2009). Between 1999 and 2012, the homeschooling population grew rapidly, from about 850,000 students during the spring of 1999 to an estimated 1.8 million in 2012 (Bielick, Chandler, & Broughman, 2001; Redford, et al., 2016).

Even though homeschoolers are a small portion of the total student population, academic researchers have identified a variety of reasons to study these families. These reasons include commentary on the public school system, societal impact, and the study of sociological phenomena. Van Galen (1988) studied homeschooling to examine the consequences of “redefining learning apart from the institution of schooling” (p. 53). This study identified that parents tend toward ideological or pedagogical reasons for withdrawing from public schools. Nemer (2002) proposed that in the study of national education, the education of homeschooled children could yield understanding about cognitive development, teaching styles, individualized instruction, and policy for market-based reforms. Both the reasons for withdrawing and the choices made for homeschool practice reflect on the success of public schools and suggest possibilities for improvement.

Beyond commentary about the school system, Murphy (2014) analyzed homeschooling in terms of its positive and negative societal impact, identifying homeschooling as a social movement larger than schooling, a social phenomenon that comments on the moral fabric of the society. Affirming Nemer’s (2002) claim that the wave of school change in the form of homeschooling is not a passing trend, Murphy’s work calls for more rigorous research on the many impacts of this growing movement.

Also building on Van Galen’s (1998) identification of ideologues and pedagogues in the spectrum of types of homeschool parents, Nemer (2002) created a structure to

understand how high and low levels of both pedagogical and ideological motivations combine to describe the variety of choices parents make around their homeschooling. Along the lines of parental choice, Green & Hoover-Dempsey (2007) approached the study of homeschoolers through an analysis of parental role construction, studying homeschooling parents through the angles of investment of resources and a sense of efficacy toward helping their children. This study about the phenomenon of parental choice in schooling concluded that parental involvement beliefs intersect with personal value beliefs in the process of deciding to homeschool.

Further building on the study of homeschooling as a social phenomenon, Neuman and Guterman (2017) approached their research about home education with the framework of three primary objectives of education: socialization, acculturation, and individualization. This framework differs from the analysis of parental role construction, but still acknowledges that homeschooling reflects on society and aids us in deeper understanding.

Difficulties in Researching Homeschooling

These research angles offer a wide range of reasons to study this particular phenomenon of parents who opt out of the conventional schooling system and take over management of their children's education. However, studying the trends and characteristics of homeschooling families can be difficult because the paths to homeschooling are varied and often under the radar of the school system (Grady, 2017). Nevertheless, researchers do attempt to quantify and describe the homeschooling population in the United States. The most recent nationwide estimate of homeschoolers comes from the U.S. Department of Education. McQuiggan & Megra (2017) compiled

responses to the National Household Education Surveys (NHES), which included questions in which parents self-reported as homeschooling individual children in their home. The homeschool-specific survey questions included demographics, learning contexts, grade levels, parental preparation, reasons for homeschooling, and specific courses studied. This randomized survey offers a statistical estimate of the total number of students currently homeschooling, along with a description of a wide range of characteristics of homeschoolers. The most recent NHES distribution, in 2016, identified 552 homeschooled students in a total sample of 14,075 surveys collected. This data led to an estimate of a total school-aged population of 53.2 million students, of which an estimated 1,689,726 are homeschooled (McQuiggan & Megra, 2017). This is the largest study available that offers an estimate of the total number of homeschoolers in the nation.

Other studies attempt to quantify and describe the characteristics of homeschoolers. The largest scale studies have focused on the academic achievement of homeschoolers (Ray, 2010; Rudner, 1999). Smaller scale interview-based studies focused on the reasons and challenges of homeschooling parents (Collom, 2005; Fields-Smith & Williams, 2009; Green & Hoover-Dempsey, 2007; Mazama & Lundy, 2013; Van Galen, 1988). These studies about academic achievement and parental experience generally find positive outcomes from homeschooling. In a comprehensive review of the breadth of academic literature on homeschooling, Kunzman and Gaither (2013) identified over 1400 scholarly articles and books that describe the demographics, reasons for homeschooling, academic achievement of homeschoolers, socialization of homeschoolers, curricula and teaching practices, laws and policies, and the transition to college and adulthood. In the conclusion of this extensive review, Kunzman and Gaither recommended that scholarly

research move beyond convenience samples about parental motivation, toward rigorous large-scale data collection or longitudinal studies of the long-term impacts of homeschooling.

However, in the midst of calling small-scale studies about parental motivations redundant, Kunzman and Gaither also acknowledged that little is known about racial, linguistic, and ethnic minorities homeschooling. One known statistic is that White families homeschool at a disproportionately higher rate than any other ethnic group. In response to this statistic, McDowell et al. (2000) examined homeschooling by asking college students about their perception of homeschooled students and the likelihood that they may homeschool their own children in the future. This study about perceptions of homeschoolers specifically compared perceptions across different ethnicities in an effort to explain the disproportionate participation of White families in homeschooling. This survey found White students to be the most aware of homeschooling and also the most negative toward the idea of homeschooling. The conclusion from McDowell et al. pointed to a need for greater awareness about the homeschooling movement and the perceptions of public/private schools by different ethnic groups. This recommendation calls for a shift in research focus toward identifying the next steps needed to deepen our understanding and find useful applications for studying this particular educational movement.

Multilingual Parents in Schools

LangCrit asserts that language intersects with other ways of being as people navigate the social constructs of their environment (Crump, 2014). When multilingual parents interact with schooling systems, their language background is one of the

dimensions that affects their behavior and choices. The literature has not yet addressed the population of multilingual parents homeschooling. Therefore, this discussion starts with the research on language background and the experience of immigrant parents relating to schools.

Beauregard, Patrakos, and Dupont (2014) found that immigrant parents' native language was one factor that related to the parents' involvement in their children's schooling, in terms of supporting their children's linguistic needs, communicating with the school, and difficulties related to accent that led the parents and students to feel excluded. García Coll et al. (2002) measured language comfort in the local dominant language as a significant contributor to parents' experiences of language barriers in the way of their involvement in their children's schooling. In a study of barriers to involvement for Latino parents, communication was named as a dominant theme (Ramirez, 2003). Each one of these studies points to the significant impact that language background has in how parents interact with schools.

Since language plays a significant role in parents' involvement in institutional schooling, what can we say about the intersection of language background and homeschooling? The 2016 NHES introduced a question about language background of the parents that did not appear in previous administrations of the survey. Preliminary reports indicate that linguistic minorities homeschool at a similar rate to English-dominant families (McQuiggan & Megra, 2017). Beyond that statistic, the homeschooling experience for multilingual parents remains unexamined beyond individual anecdotal stories in the news and on websites.

In academic literature, there have been a few mentions of language background related to homeschooling. Carlson (2009) explains that when he decided to pursue bilingual education for his children through home education, he found no research to guide him. His article describes how he homeschooled his children bilingually. In their review of homeschool research, Kunzman and Gaither (2013) described the attraction of homeschooling for cultural and linguistic instruction, but acknowledged the scarcity of research in this area. Fields-Smith (2016) asserts that there is no published research on homeschooling among Latino and Spanish-speaking families. With this practically non-existent research base, articles on websites and news sources can offer some suggestions about multilingual homeschooling. A blog entry in *Multilingual Living* describes the benefits and challenges of homeschooling in multiple languages, along with suggestions for success (Heller, 2010). An NPR Weekend Edition interview discussed the practice of some immigrant families who choose to homeschool in order to keep their children bilingual (Wastvedt, 2014). Monica Olivera, who maintains a website dedicated to Latino homeschooling resources, clearly describes her experience of living in a county with what she called a “failed school district” and her desire to raise her children bilingually and biculturally (Olivera, 2016). Also, one book about raising children bilingually presents homeschooling as an option for developing strong academic skill in multiple languages (Raguenaud, 2009). These sources all highlight homeschooling by multilingual parents as a platform for maintaining their non-English language in the education of their children. They do not reflect on the phenomenon of how language background otherwise affects the homeschool experience.

While studies of multilingual homeschooling parents are absent, some research addresses the experience of other racial or cultural subgroups. The findings from other groups may serve to guide the study of multilingual homeschoolers. Let's start with the research on African-American homeschoolers. African-American homeschooling families expressed motivations similar to other homeschoolers, but also expressed concern for the racial discrimination their children experienced or would potentially experience in full time schools (Fields-Smith & Williams, 2009; Ray, 2015). Other Black parents expressed concern for the academic quality of education available to their children as a motivator for their choice to homeschool (Mazama & Lundy, 2015). Fields-Smith (2016) summarized the research on African-American homeschooling experience as identifying a complex relationship with a desire for culturally relevant education, a desire for freedom from the oppressions of racism, and a tension with the historical background of seeking public education for freedom and empowerment. These studies reveal that this particular subgroup experiences distinct motivators in their educational choices related to their race. Even in the face of a culture that has depended on public education as the path toward freedom and success in the society, these families homeschool in order to provide the best they can for their children (Fields-Smith & Williams, 2009). The motivations that related to race coexisted with motivations related to general academic or social development. This complexity of reasons African-American families homeschool indicates the need to pursue the question of reasons that other subgroups homeschool, such as immigrant groups, other ethnic/racial groups, or other cultural groups.

However, the research on other subgroups in homeschooling is limited (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013; Fields-Smith, 2016). Most of this research can be found in doctoral dissertations and master's theses. Tsai (2008) investigated the experience of Taiwanese immigrants and their networking approaches to support their homeschooling practices. Zhang (2015) examined the way that homeschooling parents counteract stereotypes of Chinese immigrants, specifically that of authoritarian styles of parenting. Rather, these parents seek out cross-cultural assistance and work toward building positive relationship with their children in conflict settings. Fields-Smith (2016) reviewed the cultural and linguistic reasons Hispanic families that may be present in their homeschooling practices, but analyzed how the studies available about ethnic minorities homeschooling do not disaggregate the data to specifically report on Hispanic or Latino families. The one report she found that specifically focused on Hispanic families was the abstract of an undergraduate research project. Finally, Saghir (2011) described the possibilities available for Muslims to homeschool and how an analysis of Muslim parents' reasons to homeschool reflect their religious values. These studies all uncovered that despite how it may seem unusual for immigrants to homeschool due to a variety of perceived barriers, these families still pursue this educational option in order to build a positive education for their children.

In addition, families experience cultural and linguistic challenges in their homeschooling that are not as typically present for other homeschooling families. Immigrant families without experience in American compulsory education face some challenges navigating the educational journey with their children (Tsai, 2008). They also use their experience of homeschooling to actively promote learning of the parents'

mother tongue (Tsai, 2008; Zhang, 2015; Fields-Smith, 2016). These various sources point to the possibility that when immigrants homeschool their children, their experience has layers related to their immigrant background that are quite different from monolingual parents. A study of multilingual homeschoolers would expand the literature and deepen our understanding of the unique characteristics of this subgroup. Language identity, parental role, and immigrant background intersect to inform their choice to be involved in their children's education through homeschooling.

Homeschooling: An Expression of Parental Involvement

Parents make choices to be involved in their children's education based on many factors. Homeschooling is an expression of parental involvement that goes beyond supporting the teachers and programs of an institutional school. This section will explore the reasons parents homeschool and the strategies they employ to face their challenges.

Reasons for Homeschooling

Motivations for parental involvement have led homeschooling families to engage in their child's education at home, rather than inspiring engagement with the child's school. Why have they chosen to opt out of any dominant societal paradigm of institutional schooling? In homeschool research, many studies ask parents the reasons they choose or chose to homeschool. Each study yields its own range of reasons offered, ranked, or evaluated by homeschooling parents. Sometimes the mindset of parents choosing to homeschool is in opposition to institutional schooling, while for others, homeschooling expresses their desire to choose an educational alternative (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013).

Studies of homeschool parents have endeavored to categorize their reasons for choosing this path. Early work by Van Galen (1988), identified two categories of homeschool parents - Ideologues and Pedagogues, where the Ideologues homeschool for reasons related to moral and religious values and the Pedagogues homeschool for reasons related to style of education. While the original purpose of this study was to examine the consequences of this movement of education outside the institution of schooling, and even though the sample size is small and significantly biased, the Ideologue/Pedagogue framework proposed in the analysis became a standard that aided researchers to categorize the populations they were studying. However, others have expanded on this dichotomy. Nemer (2002) proposed that homeschooling parents exhibit high and low expressions of both ideological and pedagogical motivations. This analysis aids in understanding the multiple reasons parents describe for homeschooling. Collom (2005) scoured the literature and articulated 16 items to present to parents at an independent-study charter school. While some of the specific reasons used in this study are particular to that individual school setting, the categories they are divided into can be helpful for broadening the conversation. Collom grouped the reasons into four general categories: religious values; academic/pedagogical concerns; dissatisfaction with public schools; and family lifestyle reasons, including student special needs. Within the range of reasons to homeschool, Collom asked if the reasons vary according to a variety of demographics. As mentioned earlier in this review, Collom did not disaggregate the data beyond the general subgroup of ethnic minority. However, he did identify in that study that “homeschoolers of color are more likely to be motivated by their criticism of the public schools” (p. 326). In addition, older homeschooling parents were more likely to choose to homeschool

because of the particular independent study charter school. Ideological and religious motivations were dominant in traditional, conservative homes where the parent/teacher was not employed (Collom, 2005).

Collom's four categories expanded on the much-referred-to work of Van Galen, offering the field a new paradigm with the possibilities for understanding the choice for homeschooling. Another list of reasons for homeschooling appears in the NHES survey. This list addresses a more general audience than the list Collum used, but mirrors a similar range of categories. While Collum's study analyzed the data to understand how the motivations varied according to a variety of demographics, the NHES reports gave overall percentages for each reason (Redford et al., 2016; McQuiggan & Megra, 2017). First, the survey asked parents to select all applicable items from the list of possible reasons to homeschool, then asked them to select which one is most important. This survey structure identifies the range of reasons along with the primary motivators. In the 2012 administration of this survey, the reasons most selected as 'Important' were concern about school environment (91%), moral instruction (77%), dissatisfaction with academic instruction at other schools (74%), and religious instruction (64%). The reasons most selected as 'Most Important' were concern about school environment (25%), dissatisfaction with public schools (19%), and religious instruction (17%) (Redford et al., 2016). These statistics indicate that Collom's category of academic/pedagogical concerns and dissatisfaction with public schools are more selected than religious values.

The list from the NHES survey offers a standardized launching point for other studies to compare different groups and their reasons for homeschooling, whether they are different ethnic groups, from different regions, or any other demographic breakdown.

However, the homeschooling population is still diverse enough that their reasons for choosing this educational option cannot be fully quantified in this simplified list. Further investigation is necessary to understand the complexity of what drives these parents to invest so much personal resources into their children's homeschooling.

Each reason for opting out of schools in favor of homeschooling has the potential to offer commentary to the system that is left behind. A researcher seeking to understand the social or moral dynamics of the public school system may be interested in the moral or religious reasons parents give for choosing to homeschool. The desire to understand more about effectiveness of teaching and learning systems in public schools may be interested in the reasons for homeschooling that relate to a dissatisfaction with academic instruction or learning environments.

Even though Kunzman and Gaither (2013) concluded that the research field is saturated with studies about the reasons parents choose to homeschool, it would seem that deeper investigation into the application of this question still offers much potential for useful study. In a meta-analysis of 12 studies of parents' motives for homeschooling, Spiegler (2010) identified a need for paying attention to the social contexts that influence parental choice for homeschooling, along with the potential for studying homeschooling in the bigger frame of parental attitudes towards education. Beyond ideological or pedagogical values, parental beliefs of self-efficacy and responsibility for involvement in the education of their children also contribute to the decision to homeschool (Green & Hoover-Dempsey, 2007). Some parents are also influenced by the perceived quality of the full-time school options available in their area, as reported by the author of a national homeschooling website (Olivera, 2016).

In addition to reasons changing according to social contexts and local availability, the reasons that people initially choose to homeschool often shift as they continue homeschool for extended years. For example, as parents who were initially concerned with moral value instruction interacted with available curriculum in their first few years of homeschooling, they formed opinions about the pedagogical approach they preferred (Van Galen, 1988). Parents originally motivated by one reason may discover that other aspects of homeschooling are also quite attractive, and those other benefits motivate them to continue through years of homeschooling. The benefits of homeschooling also serve as motivators (Murphy, 2014; Fields-Smith & Williams, 2009). This can help them get through the inevitable difficulties over the years.

Coping with the Challenges

What are the challenges homeschooling parents face? What do they invest? They must purchase supplies, supervise their children full time, take on the additional role of teacher, regularly explain and justify their choice to homeschool, and forego or flex employment in order to accomplish the goal of managing their own children's education. Murphy's meta-analysis of homeschooling outcomes summarized three themes that have surfaced in research about the impact that homeschooling has on families: 1) A major commitment of time and hard work, typically on the part of the mother; 2) Financial sacrifice in the form of income loss for one parent not employed; and 3) Limiting the career growth of that parent who works full-time with the homeschooling task (2014). The hard work includes determining the curricular path and implementing it.

The work of homeschooling causes stress for the parents. Lois (2006) described the stress involved in being both parent and teacher. One factor was the emotional impact

of primary homeschooling parent adjusts to the role of teaching in addition to the role of parent. Stress also comes from spending extended time with the child, without the breaks commonly experienced by classroom teachers or by parents whose children attend school away from home. Each homeschooling parent learns about being a teacher, progressing through similar stages of a new classroom teacher, but with the added weight of the child being their own. As the parents traverse the stages of burnout and adjust their parenting and teaching strategies to accommodate their needs and their children's needs, they move into new stages in their homeschool experience. Rathmell (2012) identified five primary stressors for homeschoolers: responsibility, behavior, finding curriculum, stereotypes, and distractions. These stressors were balanced by five primary flourishes: freedom, poignant moments, the right curriculum, supportive spouses, and homeschooling community. Murphy (2014) also identified the positive elements of seeing children develop, getting to spend time with children, deepening familial relations and invigoration of satisfaction in motherhood. Overall, homeschooling can be difficult, stressful work which is balanced by factors that make the effort worth it for the parent to continue.

Homeschooling is a dynamic learning process for both parent and child. The challenges parents encounter also lead to enjoyment (Fields-Smith, 2009). Research about the challenges parents face in homeschooling should take into account the wide range of outcomes and the complexity of how those challenges become opportunities and how difficulties are overcome as parents grow and develop.

Summary

While the population of homeschoolers is relatively small, it still offers significant information to the field of school choice and parental involvement. The reasons parents choose to homeschool ranges from the ideological motivations of school environment, moral instruction, and religious instruction, to the pedagogical motivations of customizing instruction or pursuing education in a non-traditional way. The implementation of homeschooling is also varied, with student enrolled in public, private, co-op, charter, online, and home programs. Through it all, parents report both joys and challenges. Various minority groups also stand out as having different reasons and experiences of homeschooling. Specifically, multilingual families bring a varied language background to their homeschooling efforts. How this background affects their motivations, their choices, and their overall experience merits further investigation.

The LangCrit framework provides a structure with which to investigate this intersection of language background and homeschooling experience. Through examining the layers of language, identity, and race, we can gain greater insight into the factors that come into play when multilingual parents choose to homeschool. On its own, homeschooling is an extreme form of parental involvement that requires deep motivation for parents to choose it and continue in it. Language background is an additional dimension in the profile of multilingual families who homeschool.

CHAPTER III RESULTS

This study was conducted through an electronic survey and in-person interviews. The results of the survey offer a broad picture of reasons, goals, and challenges experienced by parents while homeschooling their children, along with a report of the ways the parents' language background informs this experience. The narratives from the interviews serve to personalize and deepen the concepts addressed by the survey. The interviews also provided an opportunity for individuals to reflect on the ideas expressed in the survey.

The survey was distributed for a window of twelve days. In this time period, 251 homeschooling parents started the survey, and 203 completed it. Narrowing the sample to California residents who classify as multilingual yielded 57 useful responses. This study focuses on California families in order to keep the legal context similar across respondents. Participants classified as multilingual if they identified a language other than English either as the first language they learned or as the language they speak most at home now. Twenty-nine different languages were represented by the respondents, with the highest representation coming from Spanish (14 speakers) and Mandarin (15 speakers). Based on the number of responses from Spanish and Mandarin speakers, I selected interview candidates with backgrounds in these languages.

The first section in this chapter introduces each of the interview participants. The following sections present the responses from the survey and the interview participants according to the three research questions of this study: reasons for homeschooling, challenges in homeschooling, and influence of language background. In each section, a summary of the survey responses offers a broad picture of the range of experience of

multilingual families homeschooling in California. Summaries and selected excerpts from the interviews deepen and humanize the information from the survey data by providing personal examples and more in-depth explanations.

Survey Participants

Three Spanish-speaking and three Mandarin-speaking homeschooling mothers were contacted. All six mothers accepted the invitation to participate in an interview to support my research. For the sake of convenience and an already-established relationship, I chose parents with whom I interact in homeschooling activities. Their children participate in these activities with my children and we have become acquainted over the years. All six mothers are currently married and live in California.

For each interview, we met in person and I recorded the interview as a voice memo. I also took some notes during the interview to aid in the selection of appropriate portions of the interview to transcribe. Our conversations generally followed the interview questions, but due to the familiarity I have with each person, the discussions led in many directions, according to our shared activities. The profiles describe each mother's educational background, language background, and a brief description of their homeschooling practices.

Rocio. Rocio was born in Texas to parents who had moved from Mexico and worked in agriculture. She completed K-12 in the United States and some community college to be a paralegal. She currently works as a partner in her husband's business, along with co-pastoring a small religious community and homeschooling her daughter. She speaks English and Spanish. In her childhood, she spoke Spanish at home and learned English in school.

Rocio has two children: one daughter from the current marriage and one adult son from prior to this marriage. She homeschools her daughter in partnership with a homeschool academy that runs in-person classes two days per week and supports the parents by coordinating curriculum and deadlines for assignments.

Blanca. Blanca was born in California. She completed K-12 in California public schools. She is not currently employed, but works full time mothering and homeschooling her children. She speaks English and Spanish. In her childhood, she spoke Spanish at home, and attended a Spanish-bilingual elementary school, learning to read in Spanish in school, and learning English.

Blanca has 9 children, aged newborn to 13 at the time of the interview. She homeschools her school-aged children in partnership with the same homeschool academy where Rocio's daughter attends.

Lucinda. Lucinda was born in Puerto Rico. She completed K-12 and a bachelor's degree in Puerto Rico, followed by a master's degree in civil engineering in California. She has retired from her career in civil engineering and now works full time as mother and homeschool educator, including leadership in local homeschool organizations. She speaks English and Spanish. She learned Spanish at home and English in school, starting in kindergarten.

Lucinda has 4 children, aged 8-14 at the time of the interview. Her children homeschool through an independent study public charter school, utilizing curriculum at home, online courses, and community college courses for her eldest child. As part of her children's homeschool experience, she organizes classes in which groups of homeschoolers meet together for a particular subject with a hired teacher. In addition, she

coordinates a math club for a local homeschool association, where parents cooperatively teach problem-solving and competitive mathematics for their children.

Jun. Jun was born in Taiwan. She moved to the United States at 25 years old to attend graduate school. She studied to be a physical therapist. She is not currently employed, but works full time homeschooling her two children who are still at home. She speaks English, Mandarin, and Taiwanese. She learned Taiwanese in the home as a child. She learned Mandarin in school, and started English learning during elementary school.

Jun has three children: a son in college, a daughter in high school, and a son in middle school. In addition to homeschooling activities with curriculum at home, her high-school aged daughter attends some classes at community college, her son participates in a co-operative math club, and they both do some online coursework.

Sarah. Sarah was born in Tennessee to Taiwanese parents. She attended public K-12 schools. She completed a bachelor's and master's degree in mechanical engineering. She is not currently employed, but works full time homeschooling her two children. She speaks English, Mandarin, and Taiwanese. She learned Taiwanese and Mandarin in the home. Her parents spoke Taiwanese to each other, and Mandarin to her and her siblings. School was all in English. She also attended Saturday Chinese school, where she studied Mandarin.

Sara has three children, aged 6 to 11. They do their coursework mostly at home, with outside classes for sports, Chinese, drama, and science. Her children also participate in parent co-operative classes for homeschoolers. She has enrolled her children in the homeschool supervision program of a local private school.

Ichen. Ichen was born in Taiwan. She moved to the United States at age 22 for graduate school. She completed a master's degree in library and information science in the United States. She is not currently employed, but coordinates her home to support her family. The language in her childhood home was Taiwanese. She learned Mandarin in elementary school and started English classes in seventh grade.

She has three children, aged 11, 16, and 20 at the time of the interview. Two years prior to our interview, she transitioned her older two children out of homeschooling, into public high schools and college. Her younger son started public school a few years before that. When they homeschooled, they used a curriculum package that covered all of their subjects with DVD instruction, textbooks, and workbooks. She supplemented with a local homeschool competitive math club and occasional classes with homeschool groups.

Reasons to Homeschool

The survey and interview both asked parents why they chose to homeschool their children. The survey yielded an answer to this through three questions: (a) "What are the reasons you chose to homeschool your children?," (b) "Which reason is most important?," and (c) "What are your goals in homeschooling your children?" The interview asked participants what motivated them to homeschool their children and what benefits they perceive from homeschooling. The following sections will explain the responses to these questions in the survey and the interviews.

Survey: Why They Chose to Homeschool

The first survey question about reasons to homeschool asked participants to respond yes or no to each of eight reasons with a ninth option for writing in another reason. The most-selected reasons for homeschooling were:

- concern about the school environment;
- dissatisfaction with academic instruction at other schools;
- to provide moral instruction; and
- interest in a non-traditional approach.

All of these reasons were selected by over 65% of the participants. The reasons selected by fewer than 40% of the participants were: to provide religious instruction, to meet special needs, and to accommodate a physical or mental health problem. In addition, more than half of the participants identified and wrote in additional reasons for their homeschooling. For the sake of categorizing the responses, they have been sorted into categories. If a single written response included more than one category, it was counted for each category it fit.

The predominant categories for the written responses were academic (18 descriptions) and family lifestyle (14 descriptions). The responses that fit the academic category ranged from a desire to focus on particular subjects, individualized instruction, promote a love of learning, and meet particular academic needs for moving slower or working at a more advanced level. The responses that fit the family lifestyle category included descriptions of schedule flexibility and relational bonding (parent-child, siblings). In addition, one description of a reason related to religious beliefs, three

descriptions related to dissatisfaction with public schools, three descriptions related to language, and two descriptions related to health.

The three language-related reasons that were written in the survey included the following excerpts.

- “We speak 8 languages :) there no school that can provide that per week. And we study 4 more.”
- “language - we wanted to go on the French curriculum also.”
- “to play music and learn other languages.”

Survey: Most Important Reason for Homeschooling

The second survey question about reasons to homeschool asked the participants to select the most important reason from the options they had previously marked as reasons for homeschooling. In order from most-selected to least, these most important reasons for homeschooling, with response count, were:

- dissatisfied with academic instruction at other schools (16);
- interested in a non-traditional approach (16);
- the other reason written-in on previous question (7);
- to provide religious instruction (6);
- concern about school environment (6);
- to accommodate special needs (4); and
- to provide moral instruction (2).

This question yielded the result that more than half of the participants identified either dissatisfaction with other schools or an interest in a non-traditional approach as their most important reason for homeschooling.

Survey: Primary Goals in Homeschooling

All 57 participants completed this open-ended question. I categorized their written responses according to the the themes defined in the original methodology, adding categories according to themes expressed that did not fit. Responses that described goals in more than one category were counted in every category that applied. In total, 73 goals were described in these responses. The categories, with response count, were: academic (46), religious/moral (14), social/emotional environment (6), family lifestyle (3), dissatisfaction with schools (2), language/culture (2). With almost two-thirds of the responses fitting the academic category, this goal for homeschooling bears some further examination to understand the range of responses that fit this category.

The specific responses within the academic category differed in their intent, while all describing goals pertaining to the academics. Generally, these goals included meeting specific academic needs of the child or pedagogical values of the parents. For example:

- “I want him to truly learn because he has been taught to think critically and not just memorize information for a test.”
- “Respect for her learning style. Encouraging independence, and a love of learning.”
- “Helping him catch up in academics and identifying his areas of strength.”
- “Grow according to her own pace.”
- “To provide support as he learns in every area of interest, and allow him to direct his own learning as possible, to develop his areas of passionate interest and provide a healthy, responsive environment to facilitate these goals.”

These responses all express an academic goal, but the application of that motivation differs according to the individual circumstances of the student, the parent, and the families. The other goals written in response to the question about goals followed a similar trend of seeking an experience informed by individual concerns of the student and the parent.

The two goals given that relate to language and culture were:

- “We have moved from Europe 6 months ago and we wanted to provide [son’s name] a year of transition, sliding gently to the English program - his primary language is French.”
- “I want her to know about other countries and cultures.”

Overall, the homeschooling goals of the survey participants reflect a focus on individualizing instruction according to child needs and parental interests.

Interview: Motivation and Benefits of Homeschooling

Through the three questions from the survey about reasons and goals, parents expressed concerns about school environment, academic instruction, and moral instruction as motivators for their homeschool. In the interviews, participants told of academic and spiritual goals for their children, along with perceptions or experiences with public schools that motivated their decision to homeschool. Both Jun and Sarah described how their choice to homeschool came in response to difficulties their children experienced in public school. For Jun, the primary difficulty was nightmares her son had related to Halloween-themed celebrations, along with other discomfort she had with the spiritual and cultural environment in the public school. Sarah encountered difficulties with bullying and loneliness for the older child and food allergies for the younger.

Not all of the motivations were a response to a negative experience. Blanca, Lucinda, and Rocio never enrolled their children in full-time school. Blanca's husband wanted her to homeschool the children from the beginning. She had always wanted to be a teacher, so she figured teaching her own children would be a good thing. She has enjoyed the sense of bonding her children can enjoy together. Through homeschooling, Lucinda has been able to raise her children multiliterate and academically advanced. Rocio has been able to encourage her daughter's development toward confidence and leadership.

Rocio's response about the benefits she sees in homeschooling reveals her hopes and motivations for homeschooling, along with the ways in which her own background as a migrant farm worker inform her experience:

Rocio: The benefits that I see is that she eventually will know how to lead. I want her to become a leader, not in the sense where arrogance will come in, but I want her to become a leader that she won't end up working the way we were raised. Because we were field workers and we had a hard life we were growing up, and school and working, back then it was legal. It was not easy. Not having a parent to help you. I think she will have something better to offer when she grows up and if she ever decides to have children. Now that she's an older age, I can already see the benefits. She can do some things on her own now. Now she's more responsible, doing things on her own. One of the reasons that I finally saw that my daughter's going to have an opportunity. It gets emotional for me, because my son is a good kid, but I didn't offer him what I could have. I know that my son could have been an excellent...could have had an excellent career, or a prosperous

career. My self esteem didn't allow me to get into the school district and be a home mom or a room mom, because 'Mom' [indicating herself] was not well. Me accomplishing what I do now with [my daughter] goes beyond my expectations. Her goals in homeschooling reflect the educational hopes she has for her child in developing leadership and for herself in terms of doing better for her second child than she did for her first.

Challenges in Homeschooling

When asked about challenges they face in homeschooling, participants described a range of experiences, from no challenges at all, to challenges with the needs of an individual child, to circumstantial difficulties that affected homeschooling, to the increased parenting responsibilities required when working as both parent and teacher. The survey asked about challenges through one open-ended question. The interviews also asked directly about challenges or obstacles experienced in homeschooling.

Survey: Greatest Challenges

From the 57 multilingual surveys completed, 60 challenges were described in response to the question, "What are the greatest challenges you face homeschooling this child?" I identified themes in the responses and sorted them into the following eight categories, listed with response count: time (18), role as teacher (15), child development (8), social/emotional needs (8), finding curricular resources or classes (4), money (3), integrating with society (2), and language (2). The most mentioned categories were time and role as teacher. These categories are best explained with some direct quotes. Some responses that fit the time category were:

- “There are not enough hours in the day to accomplish all that he would like to do. It’s always a challenge to strike a good balance between taking advantage of opportunities/classes and having time to process it all.”
- “Getting him up in the morning to start on my schedule. He would prefer to start later in the day.”

The next quotes exemplify the role as teacher category.

- “Meeting needs of children in different grade level, time management, and keeping them motivated in the home learning environment.”
- “Tradeoff with personal career aspirations.”

One response that coded for both time and role as teacher role was:

- “Honestly, just finding time for myself. I also work 25 hrs per week secularly, and between managing household responsibilities/work/homeschool there is very little down time.”

The two challenges in the language category are of particular interest:

- “Sometimes it’s hard for me to make a decision about future classes. We’re a Russian family and my child needs additional English classes. I’m not familiar with the USA system.”
- “English is not my primary language so it’s challenging to give him what he needs in that area.”

Within every category, some of the challenges expressed in the survey related to the parent’s own limitations. Others related to student needs and characteristics.

Interview: Challenges and Obstacles

When asked about challenges homeschooling, the some of the interview participants described personal challenges they encountered in homeschooling. Both Ichen and Min, who completed college in their home country of Taiwan, have struggled with feelings of inadequacy in regards to their level of English proficiency. They have found ways to accommodate this and ensure that their children's education was not compromised. Specifically, Ichen utilized curriculum that included DVD instruction for many of the topic that she did not feel competent to teach. Jun found online courses and community college classes for her children to attend. Ichen also emphasized the value of community members who came alongside her and taught group classes in co-operative settings or mentored her through particularly difficult phases, such as introducing her to the process of applying for college in the United States. Ichen's story relates an experience that she perceives as common among her Chinese-speaking homeschooling friends:

Ichen: I do have to say that I heard this so common from the Chinese families who choose to homeschool their kids. I think mostly of course from the first generation immigrants here, just like me. English is not my first language. And they always had the concern, they always had even the fear that 'oh I'm not adequate to homeschool my children because I do not speak English well enough to teach them' or they always fear that because of their accent or their English is not perfect, that would affect the language learning for their children. I've heard that for almost every family that is first generation. And I think that to some degree I probably have that concern too. I could not say that is a fear, but that is a

concern. But I think that, well, kids they are exposed to so many different venues of learning. Y'know they go to music, they go to sports, they go to ... All these are classes they are taught in English, so that was not as much a concern for me.

Ichen and Jun have found curricular resources and community support to help compensate for their challenges related to English language and lack of familiarity with the U.S. educational system. They have watched their children acquire English fluently and succeed in their academic pursuits.

Rocio and Blanca expressed challenges related to their own educational background. They both benefit from the support that the part-time school program offers them in terms of social development for their children and curriculum structure for them as parent educators. Lucinda and Sarah both expressed minimal challenges as they pursue homeschooling. Overall, it is a positive experience and they feel well-equipped to do it.

Language Background

This study addressed language background in a few different ways. In the survey, participants told what languages they speak at a conversational level, what language they learned first, and what language they speak most in the home now. The survey also asked an open-ended question about how their language background affects their homeschooling. In the interview, participants told about their childhood languages, language use within their family structures, and language use in their homeschooling.

Survey: Language Background Affect on Homeschooling

The survey questions about the languages spoken by the parent were used to identify the multilingual participants. These questions were followed by the open-ended question, "How do the languages you speak affect your homeschooling?" Their written

responses were categorized as no effect, moderate effect, and strong effect. Of the 57 multilingual participants, 52 responded to this question. The responses were fairly evenly spread among the categories with the following response counts: no effect (20), moderate effect (18), strong effect (14). Some no effect responses explained that their homeschooling is conducted in English because neither the spouse nor the child speaks the non-English language. Moderate effect included influence on the choice of foreign language instruction of the child, conversational interaction in the non-English language, and increased awareness of language and grammar concepts. Strong effect was described as enhanced family interaction, expanded communication possibilities through multiple languages, increased cultural awareness, and the child becoming bilingual. The responses that described strong effects were all framed as positive. Some of the moderate effect responses were negative, such as difficulty pronouncing English, not knowing some basic vocabulary in English, or the experience of English not coming as naturally as a first language. The responses to this open-ended question were generally more brief than the responses to the questions about goals and challenges. The interviews were therefore a critical piece in learning more about the intersection of language background and homeschooling.

Interview: Language Background as it Relates to Homeschooling

Each of the interview participants experienced early childhood home life in a language other than English. Their country of residence, educational profile, and language of spouse contributed to choices they make raising their children.

Jun and Ichen both moved to the United States after college, and married spouses who speak Mandarin. Correspondingly, they speak Mandarin with their spouses and

raised their children speaking Mandarin during early childhood. They both worked to teach their children to read Mandarin, including some time at a Saturday Chinese school. Jun shared that her second child has some reading difficulties akin to dyslexia, and had better success learning to read Chinese characters than English words. Ichen shared that her youngest son started public school in third grade and has consequently had less Mandarin exposure than his older brothers who homeschooled longer. Despite fears that their own difficulties with English would hamper their children's English development, Jun and Ichen have watched their children thrive in all levels of academics in English. They also are glad that their children have proficiency in both English and Mandarin.

Even though Blanca spoke Spanish in her childhood, she told me that she and her husband speak English together and with the kids. She is the only one of her own siblings who reads in Spanish, perhaps due to being in a bilingual public school in the first few years of elementary school. She also told about going to a homeschool support group, where she felt that she was the only one there who spoke Spanish. She primarily lives an English-speaking life. She wants her kids to learn Spanish eventually, but she has not focused on that yet.

By contrast, language choices dominate Lucinda's instructional decisions in homeschooling her children. Her spouse is from Venezuela. Together, she and her spouse made the decision to maintain their home as a Spanish-speaking home. In addition, since her sister married a German, and with a desire to promote multilingualism and a sense of global citizenship, Lucinda chose German as a third language for the children's schooling. In their homeschooling, her children do a full language arts curriculum in

English and Spanish, plus Saturday German school. She chose math curriculum in Spanish for their elementary years, as well.

Lucinda described multilingualism as an essential and positive element in her homeschooling, but this is not the case for every family. Rocio related a different result. She described how she typically spoke Spanish with her spouse, but also intentionally spoke English with him so he could develop his English skills. Therefore their daughter was exposed to a mix of the two languages and had difficulty with the mechanics of learning to read English. As parents, they wonder if they have confused their daughter. Now that academics in English have been well established, Rocio hopes her daughter will study Spanish and improve so that she can speak well with her grandparents and be bilingual.

Finally, Sarah's language background has been an intentional element in her parenting and homeschooling. With her own fluency in Mandarin, she raised her children speaking Mandarin with them and English with her spouse. She acknowledged that homeschooling has served to enable her to continue speaking more Mandarin with her children than if they were in school all week long. Additionally, she said that this element of using Mandarin contributes to her desire to continue homeschooling, because she realized that if her children were in full-time school, it would be very difficult to maintain the Mandarin.

CHAPTER IV DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

This study explores the experience of multilingual parents who homeschool their children. The survey and interviews complement each other in this investigation. The motivations, goals, and challenges these parents express reveal how their diverse language backgrounds intersect with their homeschooling. Their opinions and narratives offer insight into an aspect of homeschooling that has not been widely examined.

Reasons to Homeschool

The three questions from the survey and the narratives from the interviews present motivations to homeschool that combine the educational and social needs of the children with the values and hopes of the parents. In addition, the reasons and the goals given work together to fill out the picture of why parents are choosing to homeschool. The most-expressed reasons are academic, or pedagogical, being described as dissatisfaction with academic instruction in public schools or as the desire for a non-traditional approach. However, within each category, the individualized expressions of these motivations uniquely address the range of circumstances in each family's experience.

Even though many of the additional reasons written in fit under the reasons of the original list, parents decided to write those reasons in as distinct from the general list of categories. This reflects a sense of their own individual circumstances and agency in their choice to homeschool. Homeschooling is an intense commitment of family resources (Fields-Smith & Williams, 2009), so it makes sense that the choice to pursue this educational path is personal and individualized in many cases.

Each interview participant described reasons for homeschooling that intersected with their personal values, their children's experience in public schools, and the educational needs of their children. Even though their narratives reveal homeschooling as a deeply personal and multi-faceted experience, the reality of their own language background did not emerge as a primary motivator at the beginning of the conversation.

The LangCrit framework considers how race, language, and identity intersect to inform a person's experiences. For most of the study participants, language was not the initial identity that they spoke from when considering the reasons they homeschool.

Challenges in Homeschooling

The survey responses and the six interviews serve to offer a picture of the deep complexity of the homeschooling experience, even within a particular demographic. The individual backgrounds of the parents and the particular needs of the children work together to create the challenges that each parent experiences. Parents experience challenges related to time and curriculum management, social and academic development, and their own skills as they strive to educate their children at home.

Ichen and Jun's challenges seem to be related to the age of their immigration to the United States. Their educational experience outside the country and their late immersion in an English-speaking country stand out in their perception of their difficulties in homeschooling. Even though Rocio and Blanca were born in the U.S. and do not express challenges related to their own English proficiency, they both describe challenges related to their own educational backgrounds. Rocio's childhood in migrant farm work left her with little space for thriving in school. Blanca's experience in public schools did not encourage her to pursue academic success in high school. Despite these

struggles, they each perceive a positive role they can play in their children's lives by encouraging them toward academic success. One key strategy has been to find teachers and programs to support their children's academic development. This support has helped them homeschool in the midst of circumstances that they perceive as obstacles to the possibility of homeschooling.

The challenges that Sarah and Lucinda described related less to their language background and more to the social and academic challenges experienced by most homeschoolers. This could be understood through an examination of their educational backgrounds. They both hold master's degrees from U.S. universities, and have learned English since kindergarten. This intersection of more familiarity with the U.S. educational system and increased English fluency could explain their increased confidence, as compared with the other interview participants.

Language Background

Nearly two-thirds of the survey participants and all of the interview participants described ways in which their language background intersects with their homeschool experience. For the participants who described effects of language on their homeschooling, language use is a conscious choice. Their multilingualism is mostly perceived as a benefit, though some participants also described challenges connected with their English proficiency. As with the other research topics, the intersection of language background and homeschooling is experienced uniquely by individuals, according to the specifics of their language and family situations.

LangCrit considers the societal power dynamics that accompany language resources. For these participants, their value of multiple languages as a benefit indicates

that they embrace a positive dimension of their identity. This affects the way they approach their homeschooling in terms of their language background. When they see their language background as a positive aspect for their familial and societal interactions, they use their homeschooling as a vehicle for encouraging their children to also engage with that language.

The participants who expressed negative elements related to their language background described ways in which their own English fluency may hinder their children's progress. Informed by this perception, they make choices to compensate for their own deficiencies in their attempt to support their children's success. An example of this was expressed by interview participant, Jun, who sought out classes and online coursework for her children to complete their English language arts work. However, this perceived weakness in her own English skill did not hinder her from maintaining Mandarin in her children's lives.

One final group in the survey responses expressed no effect for the parental language in the homeschooling experience. These participants explained that their home life is conducted primarily in English, so there is no effect. The few questions on the survey addressing this question did not reveal ways in which those parents' languages contribute to their identities in their families, in society, or as homeschoolers. An interview with them may elicit deeper understanding of this area.

Through an interpretation of multiple questions on the survey, this study affords additional analysis of the intersection of language with homeschooling. One question asked directly about language background. However, the questions about reasons, goals, and challenges also gave participants the opportunity to describe aspects of their

homeschooling that connect with language or culture. Examined together, there is a mismatch between the numbers of participants who described an effect of their language background on their homeschooling and the numbers who offered a language-related reason, goal, or challenge. Only three of the reasons, two of the goals, and two of the challenges described in the survey related to language or culture. However, thirty-two of the participants described a moderate or strong effect of their language background on their homeschooling. Why are there so many participants who did not choose to express a language or culture-related reason or goal in their homeschooling, but who did identify a way in which their language affects their homeschooling? LangCrit offers an analysis of this phenomenon. These participants considered their identity as speakers of languages other than English when asked directly about it. However, when they were asked about homeschooling motivations, they primarily considered their identities as homeschooling parents. Their identity as speakers of multiple languages integrates into their reality, without dominating. Other identities, such as being homeschooling parent, can present themselves more strongly when they are the focus. The multilingual identity is part of the parents' lived reality and does not necessarily stand out in every context.

Conclusions

The multilingual homeschool parents in California who participated in this study are diverse in their language background, their approach to education, and their experience of multilingualism. A dominant theme in the reasons and challenges of homeschooling was that each individual family or parent-child combination presents a unique set of circumstances in which a parent decides to homeschool and experiences particular challenges. Within the observation of deeply individualized responses, this

study found that multilingual parents' motivations, goals, and challenges in homeschooling are similar to those described in the literature about homeschooling. In particular, they are concerned about school environment, academic instruction, and moral instruction. They are also interested in a non-traditional approach to schooling for their children. The NHES survey tabulated similar motivations (McQuiggan & Megra, 2017). In addition, the challenges of time, money, and role as teacher that they articulate are similar to those described by Murphy (2014).

LangCrit highlights the need to pursue more deeply the intersection of language with the general experience of life. The only published material about multilingual families homeschooling describes the benefits and motivations to homeschool in multiple languages (Carlson, 2009; Raguenaud, 2009). This study offers a broader description of the lived experience of multilingual parents who homeschool their children. Inquiring about the intersection of homeschooling with parental language background reveals that language infuses many aspects of their lives. Diverse language background is a lived reality for these parents. The two-thirds of the participants in the survey who described a moderate or strong influence of their language background on their homeschooling are distinctly aware of the intersection. For the one-third of the participants who indicated there is no effect, further investigation may yield a deeper understanding of how they have integrated their language background into their daily lives or why their language identity is less dominant in their daily lives. Whether the desire to nurture their children's acquisition of the parental non-English language stands at the forefront of the homeschooling motivations, or whether the influence of their language background is more subtle, the children still pursue their education in a multilingual and multicultural

reality. These families raise their children speaking multiple languages and walking in multiple cultures. Homeschooling is one of the facets of this journey.

The first research question of this study asked what self-reported factors influenced multilingual families' decision to homeschool. The reasons described by the participants in this study primarily focused on academic and environmental motivations. These motivations are common to the general experience of homeschoolers, as reflected in responses on the NHES (McQuiggan & Megra, 2017). The survey responses about goals overwhelmingly communicated academic motivations in their homeschooling. In each way the question about reasons to homeschool was asked, only a small fraction of the respondents mentioned a reason related to their language background. This indicates that not all multilingual homeschooling parents perceive language as a dominant factor in their homeschooling decisions.

The second research question asked about the challenges faced in homeschooling. When survey participants mentioned challenges related to language and culture, they identified needs related to learning English and lack of understanding about the U.S. educational system. Otherwise, they described challenges that are common to other homeschoolers, (Lois, 2016; Murphy, 2014). The interview participants help us understand this phenomenon more deeply. Their narratives tell of the ways their language background and immigrant experience make aspects of their homeschooling more difficult. In general, every parents' background informs their experience raising children. For these multilingual parents, their background in non-English languages and as immigrants provides extra challenges that they cope with, embrace, and celebrate.

The third research question asks about parents' perceptions of the effect of language background on their homeschooling practices. Although few of these participants identified their language as a primary reason they decided to homeschool, other responses in the survey and the interviews reveal that language and culture do play a role in their general homeschool experience. This points to a feature of language background described in LangCrit where language and identity are both fluid dimensions. The language diversity may not be readily seen in a person's physical reality or in their primary identities, but it is poignantly felt. These homeschool parents participate in a variety of activities for the education of their children, aware of their language differences, incorporating their language into the core of their homeschooling practices, and enjoying the richness that their multilingualism offers.

Ultimately, each individual lives with the reality of their own language background as one aspect of their lived experience. The reported experience of multilingual families who homeschool reveals how the intersection of language with their lives can be obvious or subtle. Language background must not be overlooked simply because the parent does not describe it as the primary motivation, goal, or challenge in homeschooling. The language experience resides just below the surface, participating in every facet of life.

Recommendations

The intersection of language background with homeschooling experience merits further investigation in multiple directions. Is parental language background a more dominant influence for homeschooling parents who immigrated to the U.S. as adults? Are homeschooling parents responding to negative opinions of their non-English language

background within the public schools or general society? How much effort are homeschooling parents putting into maintaining languages other than English in the lives of their children? The experience of homeschooling for multilingual families could also inform research about processes and stages of acculturation, examining the extent to which parents identify their language background or other societal factors as their reasons and practices in homeschooling.

In general, the question about motivation to homeschool deserves more research, especially in understanding the ways in which homeschooling families undertake the task of providing a non-traditional educational experience. Homeschooling parents devote time and energy into individually responding to their children's unique needs and their own hopes and values. Seeking to understand what parents really want for their children's education has the potential to enhance all educational alternatives, including public schools.

This thesis hopes to inspire research not only about the narratives of multilingual families who homeschool, but also about the many unique experiences of homeschooling. Research including a greater diversity of parents would increase understanding of this educational choice. The diversity could be expanded geographically, drawing from more states and regions; linguistically, including more languages; and experientially, incorporating a wider range of immigration timelines. For most homeschooling parents, this educational alternative is a deeply personal choice that affects every aspect of their lives. The many intersections of their backgrounds, values, and experiences fit together with their hope to raise their children successfully into the future. These parents' practices in homeschooling can inform other homeschoolers about their options; they can

also aid other educators in understanding what parents want for their children's education and what strategies have been successful in meeting the needs of both parents and children.

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Appendix A – Interview questions

Focus groups and interviews for this research were conducted to further understand themes that emerge from the survey data. Topics included the reasons these parents homeschool, the particular challenges they face, and what they do with their homeschooling practice to achieve their goals. The interviews for this research were guided by the responses of the participant, did not include all of the initial questions, and also included other questions that were relevant to the responses given along the way.

Initial interview questions were:

Would you tell me about your own experience with education?

What motivated you to homeschool?

What does homeschooling give your family?

What are the primary reasons you homeschool your children?

How does your language experience affect the choices you make in homeschooling?

What challenges or obstacles do you face in homeschooling?

What do you do to overcome or compensate for those challenges?

Appendix B – Survey Email Introduction

Hello!

My name is Georgina Aubin. I am a homeschooling mother and a student at the University of San Francisco. I am conducting research about homeschooling and multilingual families in California, collecting information about reasons and pathways for homeschooling. My advisor is supporting me to publish this research in academic journals. That means that by participating you can contribute to the field of academic research about homeschooling!

For my study, I need input from monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual families. Would you please complete my survey?

My goal is to receive 300 surveys by February 20. That's a big goal, but I think we can do it! I invite you to forward this survey request to other homeschooling groups.

Once I complete my research, I would be glad to send you a summary of my findings.

Please follow this link to the survey:

Thanks for your help,
Georgina Aubin

Appendix C – Qualtrics Survey

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Introduction and Consent

Dear Participant:

My name is Georgina Aubin and I am a graduate student in the School of Education at the University of San Francisco. For my final project, I am studying the reasons parents choose to homeschool and the challenges they face. Because you are a homeschooling parent, I am inviting you to participate in my research study by completing this survey. The following questionnaire will require approximately 15 minutes to complete.

There is no compensation for responding nor is there any known risk. If you choose to participate in this project, please answer all questions as honestly as possible. Participation is strictly voluntary and you may end the survey at any time, without submitting your responses.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors. The data collected will provide useful information regarding the reasons parents choose to homeschool their children. Some of the questions are adapted from the 2016 Parent and Family Involvement in Education Survey of the National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES) from the National Center of Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, but data collected in this study will not be shared in any way with that organization.

If you would like a summary of my conclusions or if you would be willing to participate in a follow-up focus group or interview, you may provide your email address at the conclusion of the survey.

Providing your email address is optional and is only necessary if you would be willing to participate in an interview or if you would like a report at the end of the study. Any data you provide in this study will be kept confidential unless disclosure is required by law. In any report I publish, I will not include information that will make it possible to identify you or any individual participant.

Completion of the survey will indicate your willingness to participate in this study. If you require additional information or have questions, please contact me at the email address listed below. If you

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have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the University of San Francisco Institutional Review Board at IRBPHS@usfca.edu.

Sincerely,
Georgina Aubin
gjaubin@usfca.edu

By checking below, you certify that you are currently homeschooling at least one child and that you are willing to participate in this study.

- Yes, I consent.
- No, I do not want to complete this survey.

Household Demographics

The first few questions are about you and your family.

How many people live in your household?

Include adults and children who are temporarily away from home (for example, living in college housing) if they have no other permanent home.

How many children do you have?

Include all children, whether they currently live with you or not.

How many of your children are you currently homeschooling?

How many of your children have you homeschooled, for any length of time?

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Homeschooled Child

To answer the next few questions, SELECT ONE of your children who is currently homeschooled.

- You may want to select the child who has been homeschooled the longest.
- If you want your survey response to reflect the experience you have had with more than one child, please complete the survey again, using the same family and parent information.

How old is this child?

How many years has this child been homeschooled?

Who is the person that mainly provides this child's home instruction?

For the sake of this survey, please consider all instruction by this person and other members of the family as "home instruction", whether it happens in the home or outside.

- Mother
- Father
- Grandparent
- Brother/sister
- Another person - Who is that?

HOME INSTRUCTION is provided in what subject areas?

Check all that apply.

- Science
- Language Arts
- Math

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- History
- Physical Education
- Art
- Computer Science/Programming
- Other

In addition to the home instruction provided by the person identified above, what **OTHER** classes, resources, or instruction is provided to this child?

Check all that apply.

- Instruction from an private tutor
- Online classes
- Homeschool co-ops (non-paid)
- Homeschool classes (tuition paid)
- Public school offerings
- Private school offerings
- College, Community college, or University
- Other
- None

Instruction **OTHER THAN HOME INSTRUCTION** is provided in what subject areas?

Check all that apply.

- Science
- Language Arts
- Math
- History
- Physical Education
- Art
- Computer Science/Programming
- Other

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How many hours each week does this child usually participate in these **OTHER** classes, resources, and instruction?

Reasons to Homeschool

There are many different reasons that parents choose to homeschool their children. Did your family choose to homeschool THIS CHILD because:

Mark YES or NO for each item below.

	Yes	No
You are concerned about the school environment, such as safety, drugs, or negative peer pressure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You are dissatisfied with the academic instruction at other schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You prefer to teach this child at home so that you can provide religious instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You prefer to teach this child at home so that you can provide moral instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This child has a physical or mental health problem that has lasted six months or more	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This child has a temporary illness that prevents him/her from going to school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This child has other special needs that you feel the school can't or won't meet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You are interested in a nontraditional approach to children's education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You have another reason for homeschooling your child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please specify your other reasons for homeschooling:

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Of the reasons your family chose to homeschool this child, which one would you say is the most important to you?

Select the most important reason you chose to homeschool your child.

- » You are concerned about the school environment, such as safety, drugs, or negative peer pressure
- » You are dissatisfied with the academic instruction at other schools
- » You prefer to teach this child at home so that you can provide religious instruction
- » You prefer to teach this child at home so that you can provide moral instruction
- » This child has a physical or mental health problem that has lasted six months or more
- » This child has a temporary illness that prevents him/her from going to school
- » This child has other special needs that you feel the school can't or won't meet
- » You are interested in a nontraditional approach to children's education
- » You have another reason for homeschooling your child

Short answer questions

Please describe your primary goals in homeschooling THIS CHILD.

What are the greatest challenges you face in homeschooling THIS CHILD?

Any other comments about your homeschooling experience IN GENERAL?

Parent Language

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The next few questions ask about YOU, the parent of a child who is being homeschooled.

Please answer these questions as they pertain to YOU.

What language(s) do you speak?

Include all languages that you speak at a conversational level of fluency or greater.

- English
- Spanish
- Cantonese
- Mandarin
- Vietnamese
- Arabic
- Filipino (Pilipino or Tagalog)
- Hindi
- French
- Korean
- Other
- Other
- Other

What was the first language you learned to speak?

Mark multiple languages if they were learned equally.

- » English
- » Spanish
- » Cantonese
- » Mandarin
- » Vietnamese
- » Arabic
- » Filipino (Pilipino or Tagalog)

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- » Hindi
- » French
- » Korean
- » Other
- » Other
- » Other

What language do you speak most at home now?

Mark multiple languages if they are spoken equally.

- » English
- » Spanish
- » Cantonese
- » Mandarin
- » Vietnamese
- » Arabic
- » Filipino (Pilipino or Tagalog)
- » Hindi
- » French
- » Korean
- » Other
- » Other
- » Other

How do the languages you speak affect your homeschooling?

Where were you born?

- One of the 50 United States or the District of Columbia
- One of the U.S. territories (Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, U.S. Virgin Islands, or Mariana Islands)

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Another country

How old were you when you first moved to the 50 United States or the District of Columbia?

Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

No

Yes

What is your race? You may mark one or more races.

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Black or African American

Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

White

Other

What is your zip code?

From which social media group or email did you receive the invitation to participate in this survey?

Block 6

You have reached the end of the survey. Thank you for your thoughtful answers. At this point you may still return to the survey to add or change your answers.

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Would you like to receive a report of the findings of this study, or are you willing to be contacted for a follow-up interview or focus group?

- I would like to receive a report of the findings of this study.
- I am willing to be contacted for a follow-up interview or focus group.

Please provide your email address.

If you want to provide your email address separately from your survey response, please contact Georgina Aubin at gjaubin@usfca.edu.

Please click the continue button on this page to complete and submit the survey.

Thank you so much!

Powered by Qualtrics