



**Title of Project:**

Learning through English-Mandarin Immersion Education:  
A Comparative Ethnographic Case Study of Language  
Practices and Instructional Discourses in Two Schools

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**TIRF Research Topic Investigated:**

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



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**Project Summary:**

The dramatically increasing number of K-12 Mandarin-English immersion schools in the United States (see Weise, 2018) calls for research on plurilingualism in this learning context. My dissertation research, through a comparative ethnographic case study of two 4th-grade Mandarin immersion classes in two disparate communities and schools, investigates diverse students' plurilingual practices and learning experiences through immersion education. My dissertation is the first empirical study that examines and compares the discourses of bilingual learning in a one-way and a two-way Mandarin immersion classes, located respectively in the suburban Midwest and the urban Northeast regions of the United States. My dissertation aims to inform effective and appropriate plurilingual policy planning through a close examination of classroom discourses as well as perspectives from principals, teachers, parents, and students.

Drawing on language ecology theories (van Lier, 2004) and a "trans-"orientation toward languages (Hawkins & Mori, 2018), my dissertation seeks to investigate (1) the various ecological factors, from micro to macro, that shape students' plurilingual development and learning, and (2) classroom language policies that shape students' language practices for content learning and participation. Research questions include: (1) What is the social and physical organization of the Chinese and English classes? And how does it shape students' use of plurilingual resources and participation? (2) What are the language ideologies and policies in the classrooms, and how do they shape students' use of plurilingual resources and participation? (3) How do students from diverse linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds make sense of and participate in plurilingual learning?