MA Education TEFL dissertation prize winner 2012

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'Vietnamese or no Chocolate'. Language choice and language learning in a Vietnamese-British family

'It came as a nice surprise to me when I learned of the results of both my dissertation and the prize. The course and the work were neither light nor easy, but the lecturers that I was working with encouraged me to aim beyond what I thought was the limit to my capability and discover potentials that I myself never expected. I am also grateful for my friends and the family who welcomed, opened up access to and supported me when I was doing research. Without their help this success and a clearer sense of direction for my research career would not have been possible.'

Abstract

There has been a large body of research on bilingualism and bilingual families, but few have sought to explain for language practices in families where the parents are in an intercultural and interracial marriage, and especially when there is a sudden change in their living environment. By looking at the language choices and language learning practice in a nuclear Vietnamese-British family, the current study seeks to uncover the underlying factors that govern the targeted family's language practices. Ethnographic data were collected from direct observations and qualitative unstructured and semi-structured interviews. Findings reveal that both personal and social causes have influence over the language choices between parents-children and between spouses, as well as the parents' attitudes and approaches to language teaching. Data also inform of the children's reactions to the teaching of the minority language in the family and conclude that there are certain patterns to the children's resistance, negotiation and willingness to take up the language.

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