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"Say it in Polish!": The Role of Heritage Language in preserving culture among families of Eastern European Origin

Beth Friedman-Romell
Cleveland State University

Taylor Darfus
Cleveland State University

WanCheng Tsai
Cleveland State University

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"Say it in Polish!"
The Role of Heritage Language in preserving culture among families of Eastern European Origin

College of Education and Human Services

Student Researchers: Beth Friedman-Romell, Taylor Darfus, and WanCheng Tsai

Faculty Advisors: Grace Hui-Chen Huang, Diane Kolosionek, and Mary Gove

Abstract

This project is part of a larger qualitative research study exploring the relationship between Eastern European American parenting styles and children's academic achievement. Seven mothers who were either first- or second-generation Eastern European American participated in semi-structured individual interviews. This project focuses on heritage language preservation. It revealed motivations, strategies, and outcomes of parents' desire to transmit their heritage language to the next generation. All participants had at least one child between ages five and eighteen. Based on our findings, four themes have emerged: 1) Motivations for heritage language preservation; 2) Resources and strategies to foster heritage language learning; 3) Family factors affecting heritage language transmission and fluency; and 4) Children's evolving attitudes to heritage language.