

## Introduction

In today's globalized society, understanding the link between language and cultural identity in immigrant children is crucial. Language transcends its function for communication; it encapsulates the essence of a culture, embodying its beliefs, values, and heritage. Immigrant families face significant decisions regarding the retention or loss of their native language.

How does the presence or absence of a parent's native language affect the cultural identity and upbringing of children of immigrants? This question delves into the complex dynamics that underpin the upbringing of immigrant children, exploring [the profound impact of linguistic heritage on their sense of self, belonging family, and cultural affiliation](#).

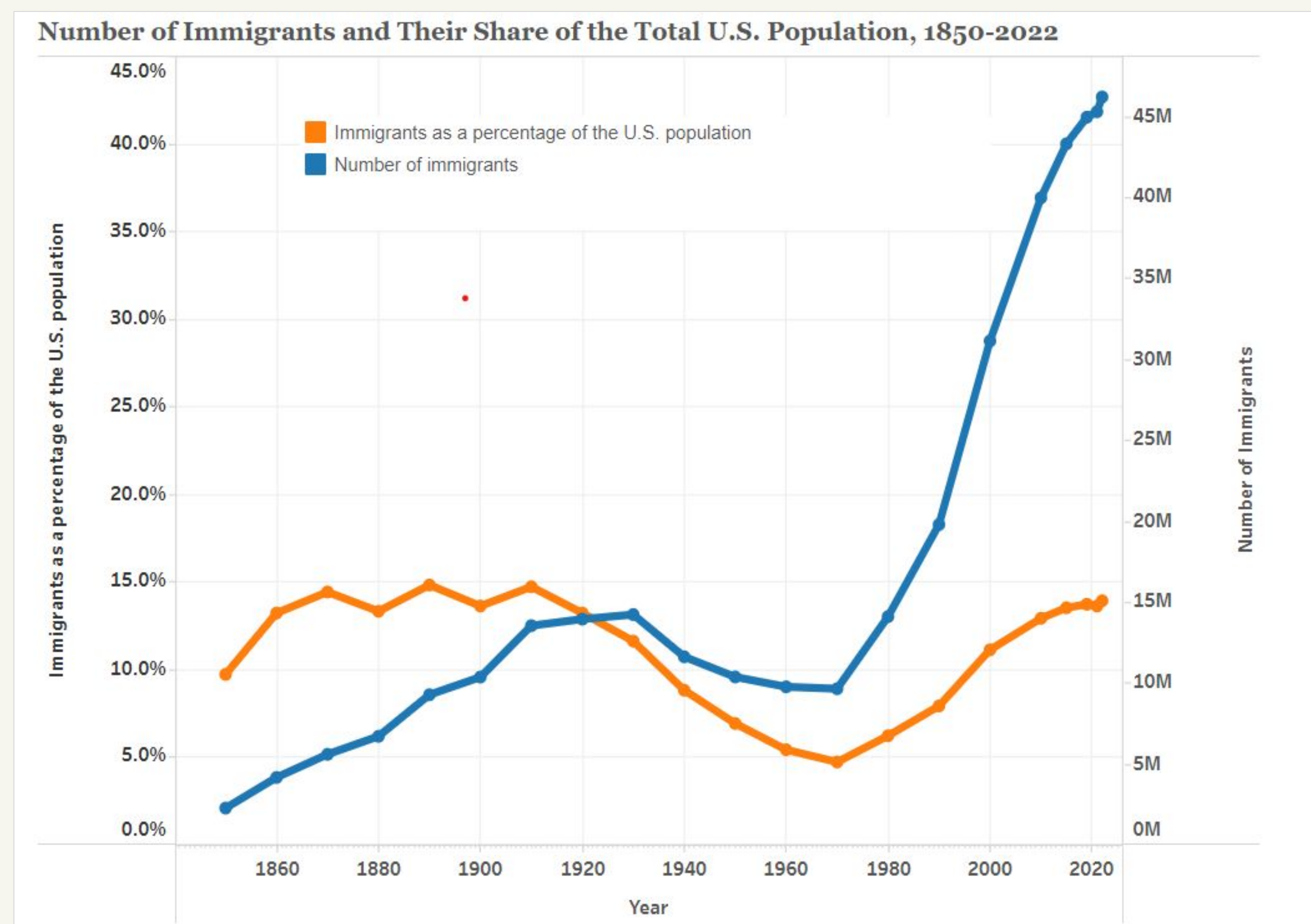


Chart showing rise in immigrant share of US population.  
Pew Research Center

## Methods

My research employed a [mixed-method approach](#), combining a literature review with interviews of college students with at least one immigrant parent. This method enabled a comprehensive understanding, merging existing research findings with firsthand perspectives.

I conducted [five interviews](#), each lasting 20 to 40 minutes, fostering personal and insightful discussions. Participants were encouraged to share openly in a safe environment. Guided by predefined questions, discussions maintained consistency. Transcription apps ensured accurate capture of responses for analysis.

This participant group was initially identified through close friends who inspired this study after I observed our cultural differences. These friends then referred me to other individuals who would be interested in participating. Every interviewee had some prior connection, ensuring a [natural and fluid conversation](#). I needed to establish an environment where participants felt at ease sharing their familial stories with me.

## Findings

- Language proficiency strengthens family bonds and cultural connections for immigrant children.
- Heritage language fluency enhances heritage appreciation and family relationships.
- Bilingualism boosts cognitive development in children
- Mastery of both languages improves cognitive skills, including language comprehension and creativity.
- Fluency in both languages provides social, linguistic, and mental health benefits.
- The heritage language is crucial for understanding emotions and family dynamics.
- Difficulty with the heritage language can impact emotional regulation and family communication.
- Challenges in language proficiency may affect family relationships and coping abilities.

## Discussion

The interviews I conducted corroborate the current literature. [The ability to speak a heritage language not only bolsters familial communication and respect for cultural traditions but also significantly impacts psychological well-being and social integration](#). These findings highlight the profound implications of linguistic choices immigrant families make, suggesting that language preservation can greatly enhance the multicultural fabric of our societies. By fostering deeper cultural connections and supporting identity formation, heritage languages serve as essential links to personal history and community belonging.

The study was constrained by the limited time and resources available to conduct interviews. Future research should encompass a broader range of participants, including diverse age groups, a wider spectrum of immigrant communities, and various host countries, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

“When parents are unable to talk to their children, they cannot easily convey to them their values, beliefs, understandings, or wisdom about how to cope with their experiences.”

- Lily Wong Fillmore, *American Linguist* at University of California-Berkeley, the child of immigrant Chinese parents



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