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INTRODUCTION

In cities like London, globalised networks of production, exchange and consumption are intertwined with the evolution of niche bilingual markets (Heller and Duchêne, 2016), including a market for bilingual domestic workers. This market relies on a unique set of complementary and contradictory ideologies concerning language and gender that straddle the public sphere (where the languages are normally valuable) and the home (the workplace of domestic workers) (Milani, 2012; cf. Ladegaard, 2012, 2013). These ideologies are by necessity private – part of the home culture – but also public, because they exist in an open market where domestic workers are advertised, sought, and hired. Domestic worker agencies play an important role at the interface between the public and private spheres and an examination of the skills discourses used in the marketing of domestic workers can reveal tensions between the language and gender ideologies underpinning this juncture.

This paper uses corpus linguistics to examine language and gender ideologies in the websites of London-based agencies specialising in multilingual and non-multilingual domestic workers. Also, multilingual and non-multilingual nanny pay is examined in order to determine if this particular niche market is remunerated in real terms (i.e. multilingual and non-multilingual nanny pay bands are compared). The next section provides an introduction to language and gender ideologies, with a particular focus on the arena of domestic work. Then, the data and methodology are introduced and findings are presented. The paper concludes by arguing that the agencies' contradictory language and gender ideologies underpin skills discourses that ultimately reflect and help to reconstitute linguistic and gender hierarchies in society.

IDEOLOGIES OF LANGUAGE AND GENDER IN THE GLOBALISED ECONOMY

Domestic work forms an important part of the international economy (Parreñas, 2000). Many countries, such as the United Kingdom, have opted to outsource domestic work by employing foreign domestic workers, the vast majority of whom are women (cf. Kilkey, 2010). The International Labour Organisation estimates that there are at least 67 million domestic workers worldwide, 83 percent of whom are women (ILO, 2017). The role of gender is significant not because of any supposedly inherent differences between men and women, but rather due to the intersection of gender with other factors such as class, ethnicity, culture, sexuality, age, economic status and (nation-based) citizenship (Cameron, 2005; Parreñas, 2000; Pavlenko, 2001; Kikley, 2010; Yeoh & Soco, 2014). These intersections form part of the structural relationships underpinning the division of labour and drive the separation between the divergent kinds of work that men and women tend to undertake in the globalised economy.

A core feature of the globalised economy is the selling of services, and communication is the primary mode through which most services are performed (Cameron, 2003; Heller & Duchêne, 2016). In the neoliberal turn where 'all possible forms of sociality and being are treated as market exchanges' (Urciuoli, 2008: 212), linguistic and communicative labour has become commodified and marketed; even in the arena of domestic work, multilingualism arguably helps to create a 'niche market' (Heller & Duchêne, 2016). Lorente (2010, 2018) has shown, for example, that Singaporean maid agencies market workers' English skills alongside their supposed 'personal qualities', which are often attributed to their nationality. Similarly, Gonçalves & Schluter (2017) have shown that in the context of a New Jersey-

based cleaning company, the covert language policy favours Portuguese because its speakers are presumed to be more honest and have better work ethics. England & Stiell (1997) have also highlighted that linguistic stereotypes related to nationality often result in some domestic workers (e.g. speakers of prestigious European languages) earning higher pay and better working conditions.¹ As a result, ideologies (i.e. socially-shared beliefs) about language, gender, and nationality start to intersect in the market for domestic workers.

Although language and communication skills might seem less essential for domestic work than for other types of work (Del Percio, Flubacher & Duchêne, 2017), these are generally constructed as ‘servile’ occupations and assigned to less powerful groups (Pavlenko, 2001). In the case of domestic work, the less powerful tends to mean women who are often minority language speakers, migrants, and at the opposite end of the socioeconomic scale from their employers. Despite being less powerful, female domestic workers might still be perceived as model language users: Cameron (2003: 457) notes that public discourses have shifted from a focus on female language deficit to one of ‘natural’ female abilities (e.g. an alleged ability to use language to maintain good interpersonal relationships). Also, women are traditionally seen as language guardians, responsible for language transmission and maintenance (for a review, see Pavlenko, 2001). Therefore, the hiring of domestic workers – normally female – in the globalised economy may involve assumptions and expectations not only about the so-called ‘natural’ female instinct for childcare and cleaning (England & Stiell, 1997; Lazar, 2000; Yeoh & Soco, 2014; cf. Hochschild, 2012), but also for language use and transmission.

Even though powerful discourses circulate about the value of language and communication in the globalised economy, the actual value remains context-dependent, contingent on the kinds of work where these skills are required (Bourdieu, 1991, 1997; Del Percio, Flubacher & Duchêne, 2017; Heller & Duchêne, 2016). If the work itself is seen to be largely unskilled, then there are critical tensions – and possible contradictions – between the value (discursively) attributed to the language and communication required, on the one hand, and the actual yield of the work, on the other. Language skills are sometimes prized but not recognised or remunerated, or it is the employer who ultimately benefits from the language, rather than the worker (Martin Rojo, 2017). In order to explore these tensions and contradictions, it is necessary to examine the ‘skills discourses’ (Urciuoli, 2008) that are used in the marketing of domestic workers.

Skills discourses are ‘discourses that sell skills or skills-related products or that offer workers advice or exhortation about acquiring, assessing, and enhancing their own skills’ (Urciuoli, 2008: 212). Notably, although skills can refer to ‘any practice, form or knowledge, or way of being constituting productive labour’ (Urciuoli, 2008: 212), it is crucial to add the relevance of *reproductive labour*, i.e. the labour needed to sustain the productive labour force (Parreñas, 2000: 561; Cox, 2006, 2011). Skills discourses tend to be dominated by references to communication, which may contribute to the (perceived) role of domestic workers in family language planning, i.e. the decisions and actions taken by caretakers to influence the linguistic behaviours of family members (King, 2016).

In home spaces, parents’ ideologies tend to underpin the application, realisation and negotiation of family language planning (King, 2016); also, for middle class families, childcare is increasingly perceived as part of providing children maximal advantage in a competitive environment (Cox, 2011). Although there is ample research on ideologies about language use within families, this research has tended to look at traditional families and heteronormative gender roles; there is a dearth of research on non-traditional families and the

role of carers in language planning (Curdt-Christiansen & Morgia, 2018; King, 2016). Since linguistic and communicative knowledge is increasingly seen as the best means by which young people can achieve advantageous social and geographical mobility (Del Percio, Flubacher and Duchêne, 2017; Jacquemet 2005: 267), a crucial question pertains to how the domestic worker market (and the childcare market specifically) addresses and represents language (for a review, see Benz, 2018). The discourses that circulate in this market might contribute to parents' beliefs about, aspirations for, and expectations of bilingual development in children. This paper proposes that the niche market for multilingual domestic workers within the context of London might be premised on neoliberal understandings of language and gender in the globalised economy; in this context, a 'language-and-domestic-work' package might appeal to (and influence) ambitious and competitive parents (Cox, 2011) with specific language planning objectives while at the same time discriminating against specific groups, thereby reproducing language and gender hierarchies in society.

Thus, the aim of this paper is to explore how the commodification of language and communication (i.e. their discursive rendering as isolated and remunerable skills) might impact upon the discourses used in the marketing of domestic workers. Domestic workers may (need to) market their language and communication skills in order to gain access to the labour market (however financially rewarding or unrewarding this might beⁱⁱ) (Del Percio, Flubacher and Duchêne, 2017). Also, aspirational families may (begin to) see language and communication as crucial skills for children in the global marketplace (cf. Lorente, 2016: 496). Agencies, functioning at the interface between families and workers, may address and articulating these ideologies through skills discourses. To explore this, the following research question is addressed: *How and to what extent do London-based domestic worker agencies draw on ideologies of language and gender in skills discourses?* To address the broad scope of this question, the following sub-questions are also addressed: (1) Are language and communication represented as part of the domestic worker skillset? (2) Are language and communication represented as feminine skills? (3) How is multilingual childcare represented in terms of benefits to the child's future? (4) Are domestic workers' multilingual skills financially rewarded? Findings related to these questions are addressed in the discussion section.

DATA

Two datasets were collected, analysed and compared. The primary dataset was collected from 11 websites of London-based agencies specialising in bilingual domestic workers. Searches for 'bilingual nanny agency London' were undertaken using Google, Bing, and Yahoo, but the selected agencies represented a range of domestic work. The criteria for inclusion were: (1) London-based agency; (2) bilingual domestic workers (not only nanny work); and (3) French language. The focus on French was used as a way of harnessing discourses about prestige multilingualism in London, where French has a long history as an elite language and where an estimated 300,000 French speakers reside (Stephenson, 2014). The use of French to focus the dataset resulted in Russian-only agencies being excluded; all other multilingual agencies specialised in French alongside other languages. Table 1 lists the agency websites included in the study.

Table 1: LangDom corpus

French Nanny London
Little Ones London
Nanny&Butler
Nanny Chou
Nanny London Petitmonde
Oui Maman
Pebbles
Perfect Household Staff
Royal Nannies
St Pancras Recruitment
Wordsmith Nannies

After each website was mapped, all data relevant to bilingual childcare were harvested by a simple copy-and-paste procedure into a Word document (with complete hyperlinks and images) and into a text-only (.txt) file. The final corpus, called the LangDom corpus, consisted of 74,343 words.

The second dataset consists of website material collected in the same manner from London-based agencies without specific language provision. Searches for ‘nanny agency London’ were undertaken using Bing, Google, and Yahoo; the top 15 agencies were cross-listed from the search results. Excluding duplicates, agencies already included in the previous dataset, overly specialised nanny agencies (e.g. christiannannies.co.uk) and non-London-based agencies, the secondary dataset included 13 agencies representing a range of domestic workers. Table 2 lists the agencies that were included in the secondary dataset for this study. The final corpus (Dom corpus) consisted of 79,855 words.

Table 2: Dom corpus

London Nanny Company
London Nanny Agency
Kensington Nannies
Kiwi Oz Nannies
Harmony at Home
Fulham Nannies
Imperial Nannies
Rock My Baby
Nannies Inc
Tinies
Eden Private Staff
Snuggles Childcare
Nanny Service

METHODOLOGY

Corpus linguistic methods were used to identify patterns in the skills discourse relating to language and gender, as evidenced in the datasets outlined above. Although the rich body of research on language and domestic work in the globalised economy has employed a diverse set of methodologies and approaches, corpus linguistics has not yet figured there and is not frequently used in research in gender and language (although see Baker, 2013; Johnson & Ensslin, 2007); this paper demonstrates how corpus linguistics can contribute to this area of research.

Corpus linguistic analysis was undertaken using AntConc Version 3.4.4 (Anthony, 2017). Word frequencies of the LangDom corpus were used to inform an overview of the general content of the corpus. Then, the LangDom corpus was compared against the combined wordlists of the BE06 and AmE06 reference corporaⁱⁱⁱ using the keyword procedure. This procedure establishes the extent to which a corpus contains unique lexical content by comparing the word frequencies of two corpora and determining if the differences between frequencies are statistically significant using Log Likelihood ($p < 0.01$). A keyword list does not highlight the most frequent words; rather, it highlights the most unusual words, which are often of low frequency, in comparison with the other corpus. The top-ranked 200 keywords were analysed in detail by examining collocates (i.e. words that tend to ‘co-locate’) within a span of five words to the left and right of the node word, a minimum frequency of five, and a Mutual Information (MI) score 3.0 or above^{iv}. Then, the keywords were categorised according to the themes that emerged from their meaning in use. This tended to require the use of concordance lines, which show how keywords are used in context by aligning node words (i.e., keywords) with their surrounding co-text (see Table 6 for an example).

Once this stage was complete, work began on the secondary dataset, the Dom corpus. Here again, a word list was compiled and then the corpus was compared against the same reference corpus as the LangDom corpus (BE06 and AmE06 combined). The top 200 keywords were compared against the top 200 keywords from the LangDom corpus to assess similarities and differences. The keywords unique to the Dom corpus (i.e. statistically more frequent in the Dom corpus than the BE06/AmE06) were categorised into emergent themes, which were then compared between the LangDom and the Dom corpora in order to assess what distinguished the bilingual domestic worker agencies from the non-bilingual. Once this stage was complete, the two corpora were compared directly against one another using the keyword procedure. The top 200 keywords emerging from this last step (i.e. those that differed from the comparison of LangDom vs. BE06 and AmE06) were analysed using collocate and concordance analysis.

The rationale for using these keyword procedures was threefold. First, the keyword procedure enables researchers to identify what is unique about a dataset in comparison with a ‘norm’ (i.e. a norm embodied by a reference corpus) (see Baker, 2006); this allowed for words unique to the marketing of multilingual and non-multilingual domestic workers to be identified. Second, although the keyword procedure ultimately highlights difference (i.e. in terms of what is unique to a dataset), using the same reference corpus to derive keywords from both the Dom and the LangDom corpora allowed for similarities between the two corpora to be identified (i.e. the extent to which the words ‘unique’ to the Dom corpus were similar to the words ‘unique’ to the LangDom corpus). Third, the direct comparison of the Dom corpus with the LangDom corpus also allowed for differences to be identified. This

meant that similarities *and* differences between the datasets were identified and findings were triangulated using the procedure.

A final step involved assessing the wages associated with bilingual vs non-bilingual domestic workers. To this end, each webpage from the LangDom and Dom corpora was consulted to assess the suggested wages for domestic staff as well as the agency fees. Nannies were a common denominator amongst the majority of agencies' specialisations, and therefore nanny salary guidelines were used as a baseline. Where available, the salary guidelines and agency fees of bilingual agencies were compared against those of non-bilingual agencies.

FINDINGS

The LangDom and the Dom corpora proved to have many keywords in common. Both multilingual and non-multilingual domestic worker agencies discussed the following subject areas (Table 3); notably, none of these pertain to gender or language.

Table 3: Shared keywords

Category of shared keywords	Shared keywords
Agency business	<i>agencies, agency, bespoke, client/s, consultant/s, placement/s, professional, recruitment, registration</i>
Employment and duties required	<i>duties, employment, help, job, meals, work</i>
Types of domestic workers	<i>governess/es, nanny, nannies, nurse/s, full [time], temporary, live [in]</i>
Childcare and the home	<i>baby, babysitting, care, child/ren, childcare, families, family, home, household, parents</i>
Qualities, qualifications, and skills	<i>caring, certificate, crb (Criminal Records Bureau), dbs (Disclosure and Barring Service), diploma, experience/d, ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills), qualification/s</i>
Payment of domestic workers and agency fees	<i>fee/s, net, per, salaries, salary</i>

Interestingly, though, the agencies *not* specialising in multilingual workers had a much wider range of keywords relating to agency business, employment and duties, and childcare and the home. Furthermore, the keywords relating to qualities, qualifications and skills were in many ways distinct from those of the multilingual domestic workers (Table 4). In all cases, these keyword findings were supported by collocation and concordance evidence.

Table 4: Keywords distinct to the Dom corpus

Agency business	Employment	Childcare	Qualities, qualifications, and skills
advice (62)	contract (56)	babies (37)	aid (73)
advise (22)	cv (32)	childcarers (14)	btec (<i>Business and Technology Education Council; work-related qualifications</i>) (21)
arrange (26)	employed (34)	feeding (43)	cache (<i>Council for Awards in Care, Health and Education</i>) (32)
booked (30)	employee (38)	newborn (21)	certificates (33)
booking (74)	employers (55)	night (106)	disclosure (50)
bookings (36)	employing (29)	nursery (79)	enhanced (40)
call (86)	franchise (22)		flexible (28)
details (56)	hire (27)		level (105)
finding (57)	hiring (52)		nneb (<i>National Nursery Examination Board</i>) (27)
guide (39)	hrs (16)		nurturing (18)
looking (96)	insurance (64)		nvq (<i>National Vocational Qualifications</i>) (45)
match (47)	interviewing (29)		responsible (47)
meet (59)	interviews (52)		
send (41)	jobs (65)		
suitable (69)	positions (38)		
support (119)	professionals (35)		

Specifically, the findings from the Dom corpus suggest that non-multilingual domestic worker agencies are focused on professionalism and business-oriented aspects of childcare, for which workers can be well qualified with formal education. In contrast, the keywords specific to multilingual domestic workers fell into somewhat different categories (Table 5).

Table 5: Keywords distinct to the LangDom corpus

Agency business	French keywords	Language or nationality	Types of domestic workers	Qualities, qualifications, and skills
obligation (- <i>free; no obligation</i>) (27)	agence (16)	arabic (29)	butler (36)	afterschool (73)
selection (42)	de (71)	bilingual (237)	carers (27)	aid (42)
specialise (33)	nous (18)	czeck (16)	cook (40)	checked (42)
	que (27)	english (257)	holiday (42)	highest (<i>level, standard/s, caliber</i>) (43)
	qui (19)	finnish (18)	housekeeper (199)	highly (<i>recommend, experienced, educated</i>) (65)
	une (24)	french (281)	housekeepers (53)	homework (27)
	vos (19)	german (69)	manny (15)	preparing (26)
	votre (14)	italian (81)	pa (35)	skills (58)
	vous (45)	language (96)	pair (154)	teaching (44)
		languages (238)	pairs (54)	tutor (29)
		mandarin (23)	part (251)	tutors (19)
		mt (<i>mother tongue</i>) (22)	personal (68)	very (<i>professional, friendly, happy</i>) (162)
		portuguese (41)	type (174)	
		russian (54)	weekend (38)	
		sl (<i>second language</i>) (121)		
		spanish (89)		
		speaking (76)		
		spoken (41)		
		tagalog (15)		

Although the LangDom keywords also related to agency business, here the focus was more on the specialisation of the agency in high quality, experienced, educated, multilingual domestic workers. Also, despite French words emerging as statistically significant in the LangDom corpus, French-medium communication was very unusual. Apart from the Petitmonde agency, which has a single French-medium subpage concerning recruitment in Paris, webpage content (including the vast majority of testimonials) is predominantly in English. This suggests that the primary audience intended for these agencies is not monolingual French speakers (e.g. French expats) but rather one which orients towards the English language.

The third category unique to LangDom relates to language and nationality; here it is French *and* English that predominate. The number of references to French is unsurprising, given the corpus construction; however, of the 281 references to *French*, 45 (16%) of these collocate with *English* and the collocation is statistically significant (MI=5.5). Most of the collocations pertain to candidate profiles listed on the Little Ones website, with information generally listed as follows:

[Candidate name]: Languages: English SL, French * Type: [e.g. Live In Nanny]

Similarly, though, Little Ones’ agency consultants are also listed in a similar fashion:

[Consultant name] – [Agency role] Languages spoken: French, English Email:

Despite the focus on French, other major European languages dominate the list. Less widely-spoken European languages such as Finnish are mentioned and major international languages such as Arabic and Mandarin are also listed. As indicated above, it should not be ignored that English is also mentioned 257 times – the second most frequently discussed language. This reasserts not only the importance of the English language (certainly an asset in the London context) but also the agencies’ marketing of multilingualism as “English + another language” (not a combination of languages that excludes English). The importance of multilingualism is also salient through the keywords *bilingual* and *languages*, which in the plural form is notably more frequent than in the singular form *language* (238 vs. 96).

The next category shows the wide range of domestic workers listed in the LangDom corpus, suggesting the myriad of roles in which multilingualism might be a potential requirement. Finally, the last category pertains to the qualities, qualifications, and skills of multilingual domestic workers, which differed markedly from those specific to the Dom corpus. Here, we can see a focus on the domestic workers’ ability to help after school (afterschool nanny, 51, afterschool nannies, 21), supervise or assist with homework, act as a tutor, and teach the language to the children. Indeed, the ‘duties’ and ‘educational activities’ expected of a multilingual domestic worker are primarily ‘teaching a second language’ (10). Some employees have a specific ‘teaching background’ (4) or experience (2); teaching experience or qualifications are in some cases interchangeable with childcare experience (Table 6).

Table 6: Selected concordance lines from LangDom with “teaching”

minimum of 5 years professional childcare or	teaching experience.
or 3 years experience with childcare or	teaching qualifications
rofessional childcare experience AND childcare or	teaching qualifications
vocational diplomas (qualifications such as	teaching, secretarial, flight attendant,

Where teaching qualifications are not listed, it is presumably the individual’s fluency in their mother tongue (i.e., their ‘talent’, cf. Heller, 2010) that is perceived as qualification enough to pass on the language to the children.

Most of these findings can be further supported by the top 200 keywords produced from the comparison of the LangDom corpus against the Dom corpus as a reference. While the use of the BE06 and AmE06 as reference corpora produced comparable keyword lists showing differences *and similarities* between the Dom and LangDom, the use of Dom as a reference corpus allowed for the identification of words unique to the LangDom corpus (i.e. used statistically significantly more frequently in this corpus). The keywords resulting from the comparison of the LangDom and Dom corpora largely fell into the same categories outlined in Table 5. However, new keywords were produced. For example, in the third category (Language or nationality) there is a greater range of linguistic and national vocabulary used, but as above it is the frequency of the prestigious European languages that stands out. The languages tend to be described as ‘native’ (11) or ‘foreign’ (27). Also, the LangDom vs. Dom comparison produced several keywords pertaining to culture: culture (25), cultures (7) and

cultural (19). This suggests that multilingual domestic work does not involve only speaking the language, but also practicing the culture. All multilingual agencies except one (Royal Nannies) cite the relevance of culture. Nannies are therefore not only childminders: they are also implied to act as cultural mediators as well as language teachers.

The Little Ones agency repeatedly cites their understanding of ‘the value of culture’, in particular its importance alongside language. Little Ones and the Petit Monde agency also stress their expertise in matching ‘personalities and cultural characteristics’. Other agencies emphasise the potential advantages of a bilingual domestic worker, which can provide children with ‘many cultural and cognitive advantages’ (Nanny&Butler). WordSmith Nannies touts the ‘obvious’ benefits of growing up bilingual: ‘Educational, Practical, Emotional, and Cultural’. Learning about French culture specifically is one of the benefits listed on the agency websites of Pebbles Au Pairs and French Nanny UK; note that in these cases the French language is associated with culture from France and not with other countries from la Francophonie.

Many agencies explain that their nannies will (also) have a good understanding of the host culture, although no detail is provided about what this might consist of. Nanny&Butler even offer cultural awareness training for the candidates so ‘you [clients] can rest assured that if you need a member of staff who requires specific training then they will achieve this through our training programme’. Similarly, ‘cultural understanding’ is a quality that families can expect from senior nannies listed on the Little Ones agency website.

Notably, the Little Ones agency stresses that it is not only their domestic workers who possess linguistic and cultural skills; also, their consultants (i.e. staff at the agency, rather than domestic workers) ‘value culture’ and ‘mak[e] it central to everything [they] do’. Consultants act as cultural brokers in their matchmaking role between domestic workers and families and are hired because of their own education, linguistic, cultural and communication skills, as we can see from the Little Ones website:

Our consultants are dedicated, vigilant, educated, dynamic. They are caring, excellent communicators and negotiators. They are bilingual and supportive of candidates and clients both from their own and others [sic] cultures and heritages.

In most cases it is not clear what educational or experience background affords this kind of linguistic and cultural expertise, but on the Perfect Household Staff website the expertise is drawn from the nativeness of the culture and language: ‘Pauline Mercier, our Recruitment Consultant, originates from France and so we are closely linked to the country, its culture and traditions’.

In addition to culture, another important keyword in the LangDom corpus is ‘educated’ (27); education is mentioned by all agencies apart from St Pancras Recruitment. For the purposes of exploring the relevance of education, all word forms are explored in the following discussion (*educate, educating, educated, education*). In most cases, domestic workers and agency consultants are described as ‘highly educated’ (11), holding a ‘high’ or ‘the highest level of education’ (5). WordSmith Nannies goes further, claiming to only select ‘the most educated and professional nannies’ for their clients. As noted above, despite this focus on education, there tend to be fewer specifics on the educational background of candidates.

In the LangDom corpus, domestic workers are not just educated; their role is also *educational*. The Perfect Household Staff website gives specifics on the educational tasks required of the nanny:

A critical part of a child's development comes through learning and stimulation. A nanny's key role in this comes through play [...]

Educating a child requires the nanny be aware of the stages of a child's educational development and their emerging talents and abilities, helping to develop those naturally and identifying particular weaknesses and helping improve upon those.

School age children require different needs, the nanny needs to support what a child has been learning.

The agency Nanny&Butler also explains that they 'actively promote French/English bilingualism in children' and are 'proud to promote bilingualism and intercultural understanding'. Similarly, the Little Ones agency describes their consultants as 'passionate about bilingual education'; here education seems to be taken as synonymous for childcare. Indeed, one of the duties listed for Little Ones nannies is 'Educational activities such as teaching a second language'. Likewise, Petit Monde explains that a nanny 'supplements their [children's] academic education, assisting them with homework, administering additional education assignments and quizzes as well as planning educational activities such as outings to cultural institutions including museums, theatres or symphony'.

The WordSmith agency is arguably the most focused on education, even adopting the name 'Wordsmith Education' on its homepage. The following extract shows how multilingualism is represented as an isolated skill, but notably childcare is not discussed in detail; this suggests that it is taken for granted (or at least backgrounded) as self-explanatory:

A foreign language is a huge educational asset and offers a clear academic and practical advantage. Wordsmith Nannies is one of the only agencies which specialize in the placement of highly-educated, bilingual nannies. [...] Our bilingual nannies aim to enhance your child's enjoyment and understanding of foreign languages, whilst providing expert childcare.

The educational role of the nanny seems to be based on intrinsic talent (i.e. as a native speaker), which enables him/her to educate children simply through speaking (Heller, 2010). There is no mention of formal education, only informal lessons given 'where necessary'.

Notably, none of the top 200 LangDom keywords explicitly pertain to gender apart from gender specific or gender-implied labelling (cf. Lazar, 2000: 379): the term 'nanny' (1625, nannies, 675) tends to imply female candidates, which coexist with the less frequently discussed 'manny' (15; 'mannies', 11). Female gendered pronouns (she, 190, her, 148) also prove to be more frequent than the male equivalents (he, 12, him 6). The gender neutral term 'parents' predominates in LangDom, but the singular form *parent* is less frequent than the gendered term *mother*, which is again more frequent than the term *father* (Table 7). The female terms are also far more wide-ranging, with both formal (e.g. *mother*) and informal (e.g. *mummy*) terms coexisting; in contrast, there is, for example, no reference to 'dad' and no French-medium parental labels.

Table 7: Gendered terms in LangDom

	Female	Neutral	Male
Mother	63	Parents	106
Mothers	14	Parent	28
Mummy	4	Parenting	4
Mum	4	Parental	3
Mom	3		
Mummies	2		
Mumpreneur	1		
Mums	1		
Moms	1		
TOTAL	93		141

The most frequent term, ‘mother’, often refers to the founders of agencies and the ‘mother’ credential tends to precede all other qualifications (if listed) relevant to running a business. For example, the founder of Nanny&Butler is ‘a mother, entrepreneur, author and a committed advocate of women’s rights’. Similarly, the founder of Oui Maman is ‘a Parisian-born mother, who has been living and working in London for over a decade’. The ‘mum’ qualification is also central to agency consultants. Nanny&Butler explain that part of their ‘unique inside knowledge’ derives from ‘the fact all of our consultant [sic] are mothers and only allow candidates to join our agency that we trust’. Also, the slogan of the Petit Monde agency is ‘premium bilingual nanny agency run by mums’. This means that skills discourses about agency consultants foreground non-scientifically-based (and non-certifiable) maternal (and therefore female) instinct.

In fact, the most frequent use of the term ‘mother’ is in agency testimonials, where formulaic elements recur: location + name (optional) + mother [optional: + number of children] + profession (optional). Some examples include ‘Greenwich Mother’, ‘South Kensington Mother of 3 and Senior Banking Executive’, and ‘Emilie C., mother of two’. It is the ‘mother’ label that is consistent across testimonials. A mother’s endorsement of the business is presumably more valuable than the father’s; there are only six testimonials from self-described fathers.

The findings in the Dom corpus are very similar to the LangDom corpus, if perhaps more polarised. The terms *mother* (73), *mothers* (13), *mommy* (1), *mum* (19), *mummy* (1) and *mums* (5) are all statistically significant in comparison with the BE06 and the AmE06 reference corpora. There is only one mention of ‘father’, which is found in a sample interview question, where it is suggested that the (implied) mother should ask if the candidate will ‘include the father [in learning about the baby] and teach him too?’. London home spaces seem to be implied to be managed – if not run – exclusively by women.

The final step in the analysis was to ascertain if the language and communication skills associated with bilingual domestic work were in fact being remunerated, with nanny salaries used as a baseline (Table 8).

Table 8: Nanny salary guidelines and agency fees

	Agency	Nanny salary guidelines	Agency rates
Multilingual agencies	Nanny&Butler	Unavailable	18% of annual salary
	Nanny London Petitmonde	Unavailable	8 weeks' net salary
	Perfect Household Staff	£10-15 per hour £350-500 per week (live in)	Fee package
	Royal Nannies	Unavailable	6-7 week's net salary
	St Pancras Recruitment	£10-12 per hour £350+ per week (live in) £500-600 per week (live out)	Unavailable
Non-multilingual agencies	London Nanny Agency	£10 - 12/hour £350-£500/week (live in)	5-6 week's net salary
	Kensington Nannies	£400-550 per week (live in) £550-650 per week (live out)	Unavailable
	Kiwi Oz Nannies	£13 per hour £511 per week (live out)	5 week's gross salary
	Rock My Baby	Unavailable	4-5 week's net salary
	Nannies Inc	Unavailable	6 weeks' net salary
	Snuggles Childcare	Unavailable	5-6 week's net salary
	Nanny Service	£11-15 per hour £500-600 (live out) £350-450 per week (live in)	Unavailable

Table 8 shows that hourly rates for bilingual and non-bilingual nannies vary (£10-£15/hour) and weekly rates start at £350-£400. Although the numbers are not precise, there is no clear evidence to suggest that the multilingual nannies are paid any more than non-multilingual nannies. The agency rates, however, differ: while non-multilingual nanny agencies tend to charge a fee equivalent to 4-6 weeks' salary, the multilingual nanny agencies tend to charge much higher rates, between 6-9 weeks' salary. This suggests that it is not, in fact, the multilingual workers themselves who are being paid for the language and communication skills; instead, it is the agencies promoting and selling this multilingual work.

DISCUSSION

This paper has investigated the role of language and gender ideologies in London-based domestic worker agency websites. Results showed that language and communication skills are not explicitly represented as part of the domestic worker skillset for those who do not specifically market themselves as multilingual. However, language and communication are central to the skillset of multilingual domestic workers, alongside simplified, folkloric notions of culture and education. Discussions of culture tend to unproblematically refer to cultural capital, suggesting that all culture is positive and advantageous. However, because cultural knowledge comes without formal certification, its value relies on the commodification of its authenticity value (Heller & Duchêne, 2016). Furthermore, the specialisation of the agencies in French and other European languages suggests that some languages and cultures are valued more than others (Heller & Duchêne, 2016; Martin Rojo, 2017; cf. England & Stiell, 1997).

Languages, for which workers also did not seem to require any formal qualification or certification of skills, were listed as discrete, bounded, enumerable entities without context (apart from occasional indication of L1 status). The conservative nature of these representations might be strategic: it is arguably only when languages are neatly bounded, named, definable and oversimplified (Martin Rojo, 2017) that they take on their full value potential in the globalised market (Urciuoli, 2016). Finally, the ‘value’ of the multilingual skillset promoted by the agencies tends not to be manifest in the websites: apart from a small number of testimonials and one subpage, there is no *use* of languages apart from English. While this might be expected in the English-dominant context of London, it is perhaps surprising for agencies appealing to multilingual or at least an aspirationally multilingual clientele. As a result, while the agencies adopt celebratory discourses of multilingualism, these are underpinned by ideologies of language and culture that do not challenge the power structures associated with established hierarchies of languages and speakers; existing language (and gender) inequalities are thereby reproduced and even reiterated by the agency websites in idealised terms (Duchêne & Del Percio, 2014: 101; Martin Rojo, 2017).

Although themes relevant to language and communication in the LangDom corpus are unsurprising given its design, what *was* surprising was the extent to which language and communication skills were also represented as central to the skillset of agency consultants (i.e. staff at the agency, rather than domestic workers), the vast majority of whom tended to be female and mothers. Findings showed that not only are multilingual domestic workers expected to be female (with males being the marked case), but also the multilingual agency websites tended to stress the language and communication skills of consultants and agency founders alongside their female/motherhood expertise. The unique combination of language, culture, and motherhood seems to give multilingual agencies their purported edge over their non-multilingual competitors. Indeed, motherhood provides authority for the websites, both in terms of agency consultant expertise and client testimonial credibility. In this sense, gender ideologies underpin the intrinsic (cf. Lazar 2000; Piller & Pavlenko, 2007) authority of the ‘mother’ credential, thereby offering persuasive value to the websites and perhaps even commodifying of the notion of motherhood.

However, where motherhood was *not* commodified was in the profiles of the domestic workers, who might well be mothers as well as domestic workers. Although motherhood could have been used to indicate the childcare expertise of candidates, it was unstated, thus serving as a demarcating line between agency consultants and clients (i.e. the middle class, for whom motherhood is an asset and, importantly, domestic work is affordable), on the one hand, and workers (for whom motherhood is seemingly irrelevant or at least unvalued), on the other. The findings thus suggest that normative gender ideologies privilege the value of middle-class motherhood while undervaluing motherhood in other social classes in the British reproductive labour context (Cox, 2011).

Findings relating to the theme of education also suggested that multilingual childcare is represented as a way of maximising children’s competitiveness in a global marketplace. ‘Obvious’ childcare duties were backgrounded with relation to more advantageous skillsets, e.g. language proficiency and cultural mediation. Despite the emphasis on (children’s) language learning, domestic workers’ nativespeakerhood was key to their skillset, seemingly enabling them to educate children simply through the act of speaking (Pavlenko & Piller, 2007). There was no scientific evidence to support this or other arguments about the value of language or culture, which were presented as common sense. Similarly, the authority of the websites was derived from the (native) linguistic proficiency and cultural familiarity of

agency consultants ('legitimate owners' of the language, Del Percio, Flubacher & Duchêne, 2017: 66), alongside their motherhood.

Finally, the paper also examined the financial rewards for domestic workers' multilingual skills. Data showed no evidence to suggest that the multilingual nannies are paid any more than non-multilingual nannies but the agency rates differed, with multilingual agencies charging higher fees. As noted above, this suggests that it is not the multilingual workers who are being paid for the language and communication skills, but instead the intermediary agencies promoting and selling this multilingual work (Heller & Duchêne, 2016; Martin Rojo 2017). For these agencies to be successful businesses they rely on parents – and, it would seem, especially mothers – to subscribe to neoliberal ideologies about language providing a competitive advantage in the globalised market and also traditional ideologies of gender, which presuppose that language, communication and domestic work are all natural female abilities.

In sum, the data have shown that London-based agencies specialising in multilingual domestic workers discursively represent language and communication as commodified (i.e. valuable, advantageous) skills but do not manifest commodification with relation to the fees listed for the work. As a result, multilingual domestic workers are framed within a competitive globalised marketplace wherein internationalised (or 'postnational', Heller & Duchêne, 2016) ideologies about language and communication should provide them unique and advantageous status, and yet these skills seem to not result in financial rewards. Despite the lack of financial rewards, the agencies appeal to clients (families) with the same frame of reference of languages as integral to the skillset necessary for their children in a globalised economy.

Thus, skills discourses used in the marketing of multilingual domestic workers in London emphasise elite forms of multilingualism that combine prestigious European languages with English, thereby indexing a cosmopolitan, competitive, globally mobile citizen (Lorente, 2016). The underpinning language and gender ideologies are highly normative, with nativespeakerhood and traditional female roles privileged. Findings also suggest that despite being 'liberated' from domestic work (cf. Parreñas, 2000: 562), middle-class women seem to remain responsible for unremunerated domestic management roles, which involve inherently communicative work (e.g. hiring, training, providing testimonials).

CONCLUSION

As Cameron (2003: 452) notes, ideologies of language and gender 'are specific to their time and place' and the language ideologies that circulate in the public arena might not in private contexts such as the family home (Milani, 2012). Families are an important sociolinguistic unit to consider in the globalised economy (Lorente, 2016: 496) since (public) government policy and economic pressures do not directly specify what families can do and what languages they can speak in their own homes (Curdt-Christiansen & Morgia, 2018; cf. 'private language planning', Piller 2001). Also, Johnson and Ensslin's (2007) research suggests that language and gender ideologies are linked to notions of public and private spheres that are constructed as the 'natural' domain of men and women, respectively. An examination of agencies' marketing of multilingual domestic workers allows us some insight into this complex public/private interface.

Findings presented here show that the skills discourses used to market multilingual domestic workers are replete with contradictory language and gender ideologies. Language proficiency is represented as a skill and yet not all languages count equally as ‘skills’. Language learning is highly prized, and yet domestic workers’ nativespeakerhood is coveted. Skills are what matter, and yet ‘language’ and ‘female’ are represented as innate talents or characteristics. Agencies purport to value multilingualism while at the same time not offering a premium for the language work. Multilingual domestic worker agencies walk a delicate line in convincing both the domestic worker candidates and the family clientele that language and communication are skills worthy of remuneration, albeit via agency fees rather than worker pay.

The issue of pay is, of course, a tricky one. Neither salary guidelines nor agency fees were consistently included on agency websites and these tended to be guidelines rather than strict rates. Other findings should also be considered with care; a reliance on website data and corpus linguistics methodology meant that some nuanced, interactive, and multimodal angles are overlooked. Perhaps most importantly, government regulations and political contexts might result in trends in childcare changing rather rapidly: it remains to be seen how the market for languages and cultures will play out post-Brexit.

Nevertheless, the folklinguistic and highly normative and conservative approaches to language and gender that abound in this dataset suggest that multilingualism as a commodified practice remains gendered (cf. Johnson & Ensslin, 2007: 245). As Piller and Pavlenko (2007: 27) explain, ‘Language work, language learning, and bilingual childrearing have all become sites that are implicated in the reproduction of hegemonic gender ideologies’. The failure of supposedly progressive cities to embrace more non-standard approaches to language, gender, and domestic work is arguably helping to reconstitute linguistic and gender hierarchies. Ideologies of language and gender therefore have implications for private, family-based language planning and beyond, with potential long-term effects not only on language transmission but also intergenerational language ideologies.

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NOTES

ⁱ Other research in the context of the United States (e.g. Divita, 2014; Gonçalves & Schluter, 2017; Schwartz, 2006) suggests that the maintenance of language barriers (and especially domestic workers' lack of fluency in English) underpins divisions of labour, hierarchizations of power, and economic domination. In some cases (e.g. Schwartz, 2006) it is used as a justification for the lower pay and less desirable working conditions (see also Piller & Pavlenko, 2007). Similarly, in the Hong Kong and Canadian contexts, Ladegaard (2015) and England and Stiell (1997), respectively, have argued that domestic workers' inability to speak the dominant language is used to construct them as allegedly incompetent, stupid and unlikeable.

ⁱⁱ Literature has shown that even when foreign domestic workers are financially rewarded for their work, they pay a high personal cost for example by leaving behind their own children in order to care for other children in their host country. Low language proficiency and uncertain immigration status also mean that those who migrate to a country to undertake domestic work do not necessarily earn the pay or status expected or equivalent to that of citizens of that country (e.g. Cox, 2006; Gonçalves & Schluter, 2017; Lorente, 2018; see review in Piller & Pavlenko, 2007).

ⁱⁱⁱ The BE06 and AmE06 are English language reference corpora, each consisting of one million words published in Britain and the United States, respectively, around 2006. Wordlists from both corpora are available on the AntConc website. Both were used in order to account for American and British spelling variations in London.

^{iv} Mutual Information scores help to establish the strength of collocation, i.e. the strength of the relationship between a word and its collocate (Baker, 2006).