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Chapter IV.1 Establishing and maintaining a multilingual family language policy

Abstract

As an increasingly established research field, Family Language Policy (FLP) provides a very useful lens to view how bi/multilingual home language-use patterns are influenced by socio-political ideologies and economic factors at macro level and by family members' language ideology at micro level. This chapter starts with an introduction to FLP and outlines the development phases of the field. It then provides a discussion of the major research contributions to the field. Following that, it provides a synthesis of the extant research on how FLP is established and maintained in a range of countries and contexts, focusing particularly on multilingual families. The synthesis focuses on internal factors, such as emotion, identity and cultural practices, and child agency in the negotiation of a family language policy. Lastly, insight gleaned from the more diverse range of social contexts are taken into consideration when making implications for parents, educators, and policy makers and a call for future research.

Keywords: Family Language Policy, language socialisation, language ideology, heritage language, language maintenance

1. Introduction

Globalisation and superdiversity (Vertovec, 2007) have led to transnationalism and bi- and multilingualism (King & Lanza, 2019; Zhu Hua and Li Wei, 2016). Determining which languages to learn, maintain and use is one of the key issues encountered by bi- and multilingual families on an ongoing basis (Hirsch & Lee, 2018). In response to these changes, Family Language Policy (FLP) as a relatively new research domain has received increasing attention as it focuses on how family members make sense of the multiple languages they use in their everyday lives and the decisions they have to make regarding which languages to keep and which ones to let go (Wang & Curdt-Christiansen, 2017). Drawing on two distinct fields of research, namely child language acquisition and language policy, FLP refers to explicit and overt, as well as implicit and covert, language planning by family members in relation to language choice and literacy practices within home domains and between family members (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009; King, Fogle & Logan-Terry, 2008; Spolsky, 2012).

Traditionally, language policy focuses on language planning and management at the macro level (i.e., state and education); however, little attention has been given to how decisions about language choice are made at the meso (i.e., family) or micro (i.e., individual) level (King et al., 2008). Consequently, answering intriguing questions posed by researchers (Curdt-Christiansen, 2013; De Houwer, 2007) as to why and how certain members of multilingual families maintain their language while others lose it, remains challenging. It has yet to be clarified why some children growing up in a largely monolingual society become bilingual, while others remain monolingual; why certain languages are prestigious; which policies and practices are implemented by parents to promote or discourage the use and practice of particular languages; how language policies and practices are negotiated in the private domain and, concomitantly, how they relate to broader language and language education policy ideologies.

In this chapter, we start with a brief introduction to FLP and outline its development in the past decades. In section 3, we provide a discussion of the major research contributions in the field. In discussing these major research contributions, we pay particular attention to the macro and micro factors influencing parental decisions. Following that, in section 4, we present a critical review of the recent FLP work with a focus on multilingual families and how factors, such as emotions, identity, cultural practices and child agency, shape family language decisions. In section 5, we outline the implications of FLP study and provide a few suggestions for future research.

2. Development of the Field

According to King (2016), FLP research is divided into four phases. The first phase of FLP research dates back more than 100 years; it consisted of classical diary studies where authors described their own children's language development in two languages (e.g. Leopold 1939–1949; Ronjat 1913). These studies recorded particularly the discourse strategies (such as One-Parent-One-Language) that parents used in child bilingual development. These initial studies suggested for the first time the association between bilingualism and metalinguistic awareness.

The second phase was featured by psycholinguistic approaches to examining the differences between bi- and monolingual language development trajectories. Studies in this phase were concerned about whether language input, linguistic environment and parental discourse strategy have effects on raising bilingual children (e.g. Caldas, 2006; De Houwer, 1990; King, Fogle & Logan-Terry, 2008; Lanza, 1997; Piller, 2002; Schüpbach, 2009). De Houwer's (1990) study of a bilingual Dutch-English child illustrated the importance of language input on achieving balanced child bilingualism. Piller's (2002) study showed different types of parental approach to raising élite bilingual children in German and English. Lanza's (1997/2004) research provided detailed discourse strategies in English-Norwegian families in which interactions between parent and children were analysed. She found five types of discourse strategy used by parents to socialise their children into a particular linguistic behaviour: *minimal grasp, expressed guess, repetition, move on,* and *code-switching*.

While these early phases of FLP studies changed the general perception of bilingualism from negative to positive, they tended to focus on Western middle-class families where children were learning two high-status European languages. In recent years, the field has moved away from Western middle class families to include diverse transnational and non-transnational families in multilingual societies and endangered linguistic communities (Curdt-Christiansen, 2013a; Curdt-Christiansen & Lanza, 2018; Lanza & Curdt-Christiansen, 2018; Lanza & Li Wei, 2016). The focus of the recent studies has also moved away from élite bilingualism to bilingual heritage language and mainstream language development as well as multilingualism. In the subsequent years, researchers began to pay more attention to transnational and immigrant families and issues beyond language outcomes to understand why some languages enjoyed privileges and were ascribed higher value (e.g. Canagarajah, 2008; Curdt-Christiansen, 2009; 2013a; Tuominen, 1999).

In the third phase, FLP scholars not only looked into non-traditional types of families, such as adoptive, extended, and single-parent families, they also studied families in endangered linguistic communities (Fogle, 2012; Óhlfearnáin, 2013, 2015; Smith-Christmas, 2016). The duality of minority vs. majority, heritage language vs. societal language, and monolingual vs. multilingual has become the focus of the field. Scholars have not only explored the underpinning driving forces for FLP decisions, but also examined the processes of language maintenance and language shift in multilingual families (e.g. Curdt-Christiansen, 2013a, 2016; Gafaranga, 2010; King, 2013). This phase of studies began to locate FLP as an emerging field of enquiry guided by Spolsky's tripartite language policy framework, which comprises of three interrelated components: language ideology, language practice, and language management (Spolsky, 2004, 2009). Language ideology refers to people's deeply ingrained beliefs regarding certain languages, language learning and language development. Language practice refers to the actual use of language(s) or what people do with it/them in their everyday life. Language management refers to the plans and approaches taken to support or suppress certain language(s) (i.e., what people try to do to language) (King & Fogle, 2017).

In the fourth phase, FLP research continues to build on Spolsky's language policy model to study families in transnational and non-transnational contexts. Research in this phase is characterised by the experiences of family members when making sense of the languages in their life. Scholars are now beginning to highlight the different factors that influence family language practices and decisions (e.g. Curdt-Christiansen, 2016; Curdt-Christiansen & Huang, 2019; Curdt-Christiansen & Wang, 2018; Li Wei & Zhu Hua, 2016; Said & Zhu, 2019). Because of the social nature of families, the study of FLP is expanding its domain from families to encompass other domains ‘related to family decisions, such as education, religion, and public linguistic space as well as many different aspects in individual family members’ everyday life, including emotions, identity, and cultural and political allegiances (Curdt-Christiansen, 2018:423). The influencing factors have been identified as external and internal forces (Curdt-Christiansen & Huang, 2019; Spolsky, 2012), and FLP has been recognised as dynamic sociocultural practices. Theoretically, the field has been established as an interdisciplinary study that bridges theories of language policy, language socialisation, literacy studies and child language development. Methodologically, this interdisciplinary field has generated diverse research approaches to the study of multilingualism, heritage language development and bilingual education. In the following section, we provide a discussion of the major contributions to the field.

3. Major Contributions

The family is a dynamic sociolinguistic and ecological unit, which reflects the complex interactions between families and the surrounding sociolinguistic and sociocultural contexts (Curdt-Christiansen, 2018). Although each family has its own norms and rules for language use and practice, decisions about which languages to practice and encourage, or to discourage and abandon, are largely shaped by the ideologies and attitudes held by family members (Curdt-Christiansen, 2013a; Lanza, 2007). In addition, decision-making is influenced by the parents’ socioeconomic background, their expectations of child bi/multilingual outcomes, their knowledge of multilingualism, and their language management through provisions of home language/literacy environment (Curdt-Christiansen, 2013b; De Houwer, 2009; Smith-Christmas, 2014). Given the social nature of families, studying FLP contributes uniquely to research in areas such as child language development and interactions between broader social contexts and FLP.

3.1 Child Language Acquisition

FLP studies contribute to the field of research on child language acquisition by elucidating the important role that FLP plays in predicting children's bilingual development (De Houwer, 1999; 2017; Dekeyser & Stevens, 2019; Eversteijn, 2011; Kang, 2015; Schwartz, 2008). For example, in a study of 70 second-generation Russian-Jewish immigrant children in Israel, Schwartz (2008) examined how parents' language ideology, management and practices (obtained from a parental survey) influenced the children's L1 (Russian) vocabulary and literacy knowledge. She found that there was a significant and positive relationship between parents' language management and the children's L1 vocabulary knowledge. Language management was measured by whether parents taught their children to read in L1. She also found that parental ideologies had weak and insignificant relationships to children's literacy skills in their L1. Interestingly, the study showed that parental language ideology was not correlated with their management and language practices, nor with children's attitudes towards L1. While the study provided important findings about children's L1 proficiency, it did not include how FLP influenced these children's bilingual development in Russian and Hebrew.

Using a similar design, Dekeyser & Stevens (2019) found that the heritage language (HL) proficiency of more than 300 children (10-12 years old) with a Moroccan HL in Belgium was strongly affected by whether or not their parents used and valued HL, whether the mother was proficient in the HL and by opportunities to use it outside of the household. The children's proficiency in Dutch was affected by their mother's proficiency in the language and by the languages used by other children in the household.

De Houwer's (2007) classic study of bilingual families showed that parental language input had strong influence on their children's bilingual development. Employing a questionnaire, she collected data from 1899 families in which at least one of the parents spoke a language other than Dutch, the dominant language in Flanders. Her study showed that although all children spoke Dutch, they did not necessarily speak the minority language. The children's ability to use their minority language varied according to the parental language input patterns used in those homes. One of the most interesting findings from this study was that 'one parent – one language' strategy did not necessarily provide sufficient input for children to develop their two languages. This phenomenon has been evidenced in many bilingual families (De Houwer, 1999; Yamamoto, 2001) and is, according to De Houwer, caused by insufficient engagement between parents and children in the minority language. While the study has made important contributions to our understanding of patterns of parental language input in relation to their children's bilingual development, the children's bilingual ability was not measured by their linguistic knowledge and outputs in the two languages.

While these studies have shed much light on the linguistic conditions that parents provide for their children's bi/multilingual development, scholars argue that there are non-linguistic forces that are simultaneously influencing family language decisions. The following section, thus, moves into the discussion of how various non-linguistic forces exert influence on language choices made by family members.

3.2 FLP and Social Forces

Because of the social nature of families, the ‘linguistic lives’ of family members are not isolated from the different social contexts in which families are situated (Curdt-Christiansen, 2018; Shohamy, 2006; Spolsky, 2009, 2012). According to Spolsky (2004), there are four broadly defined and interrelated forces at play: sociolinguistic, sociocultural, socioeconomic and sociopolitical forces. Sociolinguistic forces provide sources for beliefs about what language is (no) good or (non) useful; sociocultural forces provide references for the symbolic values associated with different languages; socioeconomic forces are linked to the instrumental values that a particular language can provide; and sociopolitical forces are related to the educational and political access provided by certain languages in a given society.

Among these forces, the sociopolitical forces via national language policy or language-in-education policy have been the most powerful. Studies have shown that macro-level language policy is perpetuated in family language decisions via implicit language socialisation and explicit language interventions (e.g. Curdt-Christiansen, 2014, 2016; Lane, 2010; Smith-Christmas, 2016; Stavans, 2015).

Lane (2010), for example, has studied a group of Kven (a Finnic language) speakers in northern Norway. Lasting eleven years, the longitudinal project explored how a massive language shift took place in this ethnic minority group under the official Norwegianisation Policy in the 1970s. Using sociolinguistic interviews, participant observation, and feedback discussion with participants as the tools of inquiry, the study shed important light on the macro-micro connections of family language policy. Lane showed that the government policy had ‘coerced’ the Kven speakers to cease using Kven with their children because of the Norwegian-only language policy in all schools. The process of Norwegianisation had led to a sense of inferiority and shame in the Kven speakers who expressed that ‘We did what we thought was best for our children’ (Lane, 2010: 63).

Situated in Singapore, Curdt-Christiansen (2014, 2016) has also demonstrated that state language policy and language-in-education policy have affected FLP. While the state language policy recognises four official languages – English, Mandarin, Malay and Tamil (designated as official mother tongues[1]) –, the language-in-education policy has established English as the medium of instruction in all schools at all levels. This political decision has resulted in much less curriculum time allocated to the teaching of mother tongue as a subject. Curdt-Christiansen (2014, 2016) studied a group of Singaporean multilingual families and found that there were competing and conflicting ideologies within the same family regarding how to develop the participating children’s mother tongues and English simultaneously. Concerned about ‘losing out to English in a competitive society and a meritocratic educational system’, the parents tended to place higher value on English than on other languages they used in their life, such as Mandarin, Malay and Tamil (Curdt-Christiansen, 2014: 48). The macro level policy caused conflicting language choices and led to contradicting practices between family members. While multilingualism with English is observed in Singapore, language shift to English has been increasing rapidly in the past decades.

Stavans (2015) has also studied the interconnections between meso-educational policy and micro-family language policy. Her study focused on language and literacy practices of Ethiopian immigrant families in Israel, a country whose official languages is Hebrew, but where Arabic and English are also used, at least to a degree. The families lived in a neighbourhood community, which was at least quadrilingual but were themselves bilingual and their children attended a monolingual educational system. By profiling 67 families and studying the home literacy provisions, she examined the language use and attitudes towards maintenance of their L1 (Amharic), bilingualism, and acquisition of L2 (Hebrew). The findings indicated that Ethiopian parents were actively engaged in their children's early educational and social life until grade one. When children moved into upper grades of their education, the parents placed more emphasis on L2 – the school language – by relinquishing the maintenance of L1. The findings showed that the more the parents used Amharic at home, the less they thought that bilingualism was positive, and the less they thought that the use of Amharic was of importance. Stavans (2015:193) argued that '[a] need for the institutionalised language education policy' should be made available for these families' language policy with regard to cultural and linguistic affordances so that resources could be drawn on when making informative decisions about their language practices at home.

The above cases clearly demonstrate that external forces are closely related to the internal forces that underpin the language ideologies of family members. De Houwer (2017) observed that parents might feel pressured to use a language that they do not know well, but value highly, at societal level, in an effort to increase their children's competency in it. Based on in-depth qualitative interviews with 14 Spanish-speaking mothers of pre-schoolers in the USA, Surrain (2018) found that the mothers viewed the ability to maintain Spanish alongside the acquisition of English as essential for economic opportunities and family communication, yet they differed in their perceptions of how bilingualism was best supported. Bezcioglu-Goktolga & Yagmur (2018) investigated the FLP of second-generation Turkish immigrant families in the Netherlands and found that even though maintaining the Turkish language was of paramount importance in the parents' linguistic ideologies, the language practices and management approaches to bilingual development varied drastically. Nonetheless, all the parents based their language planning activities around the educational achievements of their children, suggesting that educational institutions have an important role in shaping FLP.

In this section, we focus our discussion mainly on sociopolitical forces that influence FLP. The above-mentioned studies illustrate that the process of language practice and choice is not a simple family matter, but a dynamic process influenced by other forces and factors. The field has not only deepened our understanding of the complexity of FLP, but also enriched our understanding of the different types of family configurations in transnational and non-transnational contexts. In what follows, we provide a critical review of recent developments in FLP with a focus on multilingual families.

4. Family Language Policy in Multilingual Families

We define multilingual families as those who deal with more than one language in their everyday life. These include families in transnational and migration context in which dominant societal language/s and non-dominant home language/s coexist (Hirsch & Lee, 2018; Zhu Hua & Li Wei, 2016). They also include intermarriage families, which can be transnational or non-transnational, involving two dominant societal languages (such as French and Dutch in Belgium) or majority and minority language (Lanza, 2007: Van Mensel, 2016). In discussing recent development in FLP studies, Curdt-Christiansen & Hung (2019) summarised the factors influencing FLP. While there are both external and internal factors shaping FLP, we focus on the internal factors, especially on how languages are used and negotiated in the lives of families as critical elements in the process of family language decision.

In both transnational (migration) and non-transnational (endangered and intermarriage) families, different languages have different symbolic meanings for family members when they make sense of their life experiences in various contexts such as homeland and hostland. The symbolic meanings are reflected in different languages' emotional expressions, identity projection and cultural practices. In the following section, we illustrate these symbolic representations in FLP by reviewing empirical findings in recent studies.

4.1. Emotion and FLP

In multilingual families, it is often observed that communication is made through language choice, language play, language mixing, meshing and translanguaging (Pavlenko, 2004; Smith-Christmas, 2014; 2018). Although family members may have multiple languages at their disposal, they tend to use one of these languages to express specific emotions. For example, Luykx (2003) studied bilingual Aymara-Spanish households in Bolivia where she found that Spanish was used by parents for tender 'baby talk' and showing affection for family members, whereas Aymara was used for scolding, disciplining and issuing commands. As a result, children were socialised into the use of Spanish as a positive emotional experience. The use of Aymara, on the other hand, was related to a less pleasant experience, which affected the language development in Aymara. Similar studies have also been found by Curdt-Christiansen (2016) in Malay-English bilingual families in Singapore, where parents felt closer to their children when using Malay. In conversations between family members, parents were observed using 'sayang' (darling in Malay) to address their children while using English for other functions in home domains. When asking why Malay was used occasionally in their English dominated language practices, one of the parents stated that Malay provided an emotional attachment with the children allowing them to express endearment.

In a study conducted by Pavlenko (2004) on emotions and language choice, many parents pointed out that 'creat[ing] an emotional connection in a second language feels "fake" and ‘unnatural’, as if one were ‘acting” (p. 190). The study illustrates that language emotionality may affect the language choice in parent-child interactions. Although most parents in the study confirmed that they used L1 for emotional expressions, it might oversimplify the reality of multilingual existence. The study points out the critical engagement of L1 in migration context where a strong conviction of FLP may lead to an emotional connection between parents, grandparent and children. The emotional engagement through language choice can be regarded as unarticulated language management efforts that provide insight into the process of language maintenance and language shift in the everyday social life within families.

Smith-Christmas (2016; 2018) conducted a longitudinal (nine-year) ethnographic study, focusing on the role of *input management* in a Scottish family concerned with the maintenance of the Gaelic language. The study centres on how the grandmother, Nana, transforms everyday events into affective language engagement with child-centred interactions. Using recordings collected over the years, Smith-Christmas explored the detailed interactional patterns that lead to positive Gaelic learning experiences of the granddaughter, Maggie. The author’s analysis demonstrates that the ‘high involvement’ (*cf.* Chevalier, 2012; Tannen, 2006) and affective interactional style used by Nana created an active and stimulating learning environment for encouraging Gaelic development and maintenance, which is illustrated in the dialogue below. Nana was arranging flowers that Maggie had brought her. In the conversational exchanges, Nana incorporated Maggie’s Gaelic knowledge into an affective language game. Because the flowers had no stems, Nana played on the word *cas* meaning ‘stem’ and also ‘leg’ in the conversation.

…

Maggie	= they got they just got face and a
Nana	face. *aodannan, nach eil*?=
	faces, isn’t it?
Maggie	and two legs
Nana	face and two leg- face and one leg=

Maggie °no
Nana =*aon chas a th'orra, nach e*?=
one leg on them, isn't it?
Maggie =no
Nana /*'s e* (.) *siud an t-aodann* (.) *agus* (.) *aon chas* (.)
it is. here's the face and one leg
tha aodann 's dà chas ortsa
you have a face and two legs
Maggie one *cas* two *cas*
leg leg(s)
Nana *aon chas* (.) /*dà chas* (.) *aon chas air a' flùire*[3] (.) mmm-hmm (.)
one leg two legs one leg on the flower
sin facal math airson 'cas' (.) *cas na flùr* (.)
that's a good word for 'stem' leg of the flower
(data from Smith-Christmas, 2018: 141)

It is clear, in this excerpt, that Nana embedded affect and language learning into the task of putting the flowers in water. She was able to capitalise on Maggie's characterisation of the stem part of the flowers as having 'legs' into a creative way of learning Gaelic. While such an interactional style allows children to engage in affective, playful, and implicit language learning that not only encourages language development but also builds emotional attachments between two generations, not all children would react to the same style of interaction, which could be caused by different socialisation patterns employed by other caregivers in the same family.

4.2 FLP, Identity and Cultural Practices

Research into FLP in recent years has shown that migration experiences have a crucial effect on family members' identity and cultural allegiance. As migration trajectories and settlement patterns differ from generation to generation, family members have different encounters and experiences, which may lead to conflicts of identity and language practices (e.g. Chevalier, 2012; Meyer-Pitton, 2013; Pan, 1995; Zhu Hua & Li Wei, 2016).

Zhu Hua (2008) studied bilingual intergenerational trajectories of diasporic Chinese families in the UK with regard to identity and language practices. Using a detailed analysis of sequential movement in conversations, she demonstrated that “conflicts in values and identities are negotiated, mediated and managed” (p. 1799). FLP in these participating families is thus negotiated through intergenerational conflict talk as a result of different life experiences, sociocultural values and linguistic practices between members of different generations.

Also looking into how transnational families negotiate language practices, Zhu Hua and Li Wei (2016) studied bilingualism and multilingualism in different generations and individuals in three multilingual Chinese families in the UK. They revealed that family members’ experiences affected the way in which individual family members perceived social relations and structures, as well as the ways they constructed and presented their own identities.

In a similar vein, Curdt-Christiansen (2016) studied a bilingual Malay and English family in Singapore. She found that parents and children attached different values to English and Malay. In mundane family conversations, such symbolic attachments were displayed through language choice and use. The excerpt below shows the language exchanges between daughter (A), mother (M), and son (Mi) when A had a nosebleed.

A: There’s something in my nose.
M: Oh. Having nose problem?
M: (to domestic helper) **Bikkkk, kasi dia deir** purple medicine (give her the purple medicine).
Mi: **gasik deir** purple medicine. [mimicking his mother]
M: Full of nonsense ah.
Mi: Ah ah. Give **deir** purple medicine al.
A: er you Malay or what?
M: Why don’t you speak Malay? See whether she understands.
Mi: **saya ayam di katak** (my chicken at frog) [sounds out different words in Malay]
M: **ayam ayam gorent**! (fried chicken) [correcting Mikki].

(data from Curdt-Christiansen, 2016: 704)

In this conversation, it is noticeable that English is the preferred language of choice between the mother and her children, indicating a habitual and *de facto* language practice. In this translanguaging mode of communication (Garcia & Li Wei, 2014), Mrs M used Malay with the domestic helper and English with her children. For Mrs M, Malay had a social and cultural role in her upbringing as her generation went through the initial bilingual education phase where Malay was used in home domains and English was used only in schools. As the bilingual language policy evolved in Singapore, a forceful linguistic shift had taken place in recent decades. English has begun to not only dominate public/school domains, but also penetrate home and private domains. As a consequence, Mi did not view Malay as a language of identity and cultural allegiance. In line 4, Mi tried to mimic his mother, but failed to produce the correct words. Annoyed by her little brother's behaviour, A challenged Mi by saying 'er you Malay or what?' Subsequently, Mi produced a meaningless sentence by stringing some randomly chosen Malay words together - **saya ayam di katak (my chicken at frog)**. Although A associated speaking Malay with Malay identity, it was clear that Mi failed to make the association.

Language practices in FLP are not only reflected in identity projections. They are also instantiated in cultural practices through language socialisation (Canagrajah, 2008; Curdt-Christiansen, 2009; Garrett, 2011; Garrett & Baquedano-Lopez, 2002; Wang & Curdt-Christiansen, 2019). Such cultural related language practices are part of the implicit language planning in families (King et al., 2008; Mu & Dooley, 2015). Meyer-Pitton (2013), for example, studied Russian-French speaking families in Switzerland, observing dinner table talks between parents and children. The study showed that family members' negotiating talks in relation to language choice focused on cultural behaviour at the dinner table. Van Mensel's (2018) study of multilingual families in Belgium also illustrated that multilingual family repertoire denoted a joint cultural practice that was shared by all family members. Using *familylect* as a conceptual framework, Van Mensel demonstrated that family language practices in multiple languages, such as Dutch, French and Spanish or Dutch, Mandarin and Qingtian Hua, were not random linguistic reproduction but associated with shared cultural practices brought about by parents from their primary socialisation and children from culture outside of home.

These interactional studies provide evidence indicating that attitudes, identity, relationship and cultural practices can be revealed and negotiated, accepted and rejected, all in the process of interaction. It is particularly important to note that these family language practices are results of the agentive roles that parents and children play in the construction and implantation of language policy. To understand in what ways cultural and linguistic practices are transmitted, accepted or rejected by family members, we focus our discussion in the next section on child agency.

4.3 Child Agency in FLP

In most FLP studies, children are regarded as recipients of FLP although parents are not the only socialisation agents for child language development. Given the interactional nature of parent–child socialisation (Kuczynski, 2002), researchers are beginning to pay more attention to the fact that children are active socialising agents within families (Danjo, 2018; Luykx, 2005; Parada, 2013). At the same time, a growing body of literature is examining the active role of children in socialising their parents to adopt particular language practices (Fogle & King, 2013; Luykx, 2005).

It is vital to note that the agency of children is not a neutral phenomenon. On the contrary, it is entwined with broader political, educational, cultural and ideological factors (Curdt-Christiansen, 2013; Curdt-Christiansen & Lanza, 2018; Folge, 2012; Gyogi, 2015; King, 2013; Little, 2017). As societies are constantly changing, family dynamics and family values are also changing. Along with these changes, children often exercise their agency through investment in language learning strategies to overcome difficulties in their multiple language development (Flowerdew & Miller, 2008; King, 2013). They can also act on their agency to resist learning certain languages, which has been observed in migration contexts where parents insist on their children's learning the heritage language and children reject or challenge such socialisation (e.g. Folge, 2012; Kheirkhah & Cekaite, 2015).

In multilingual families, parents and their children have divergent access to linguistic resources in more than one language. Very often, their language proficiency, language ideology and language resources differ greatly, and having to negotiate such differences (often in their favour at the micro-social level) provides an avenue and opportunity for their children to establish their agency in shaping FLP. Negotiations over cultural norms, language practices and language policies between children and other family members are part of everyday interactions (Fogle & King, 2013). Revis (2019) identified five types of socialisation practices used by children, which include: 1) medium requests, 2) metalinguistic comments, 3) language brokering, 4) sociocultural socialisation, and 5) majority language teaching (Revis, 2019).

A '**medium request**' refers to children's opposition to their parents' language of choice through the use of resistance strategies as a means to use their own preferred language, especially if their parents are trying to shift them to use a different language. Children have been reported to repeatedly switch to the language used at school when discussing school assignments with their parents (Curdt-Christiansen, 2013b) or to resort to the use of code switching as a linguistic resource to take control of interactions with their parents (Zhu, 2008). In her case study of a bilingual Japanese-English family living in the UK, Danjo (2018) showed how the parents' strong monolingual ideology at the level of perception was creatively and strategically negotiated and exercised by the two bilingual children. For example, the children tried, through the use of translanguaging and bending the rules of English pronunciation, to avoid correction by the mother who insisted on speaking Japanese.

Gafaranga (2010) studied Rwandan migrant families in Belgium and observed how young members of the community initiated medium requests, which allowed them to speak French. As the children had greater access to French at school and through regular interactions with their siblings, they acquired French more effectively than their parents and, consequently, persisted in using French at home, even though their parents preferred otherwise. Eventually, this became the driving force for a 'talked into being' language shift from Kinyarwanda to French.

As shown in the study by Kheirkhah & Cekaite (2015) of a Persian and Kurdish family living in Sweden, when parents positioned themselves as 'experts' and insisted on the active participation in their child's heritage language learning, the child was frequently seen to blatantly refuse and resist their 'expertise'. When the refusals were affectively aggravated, the parents repeatedly accommodated their child by terminating the language instruction. Thus, the development of informal language instruction was dependent on the child's willingness to collaborate and participate. Children's agentive power to appropriate or resist their parents' language beliefs and practices can also be a driving force for language shifts (Gafaranga, 2010; Luykx, 2005; Said & Zhu, 2019).

The use of **'metalinguistic comments**' by children refers to their explicit evaluation of language choice at the metalinguistic level, for example, which language or words to use. Fogle and King (2013) provide examples of children who overtly set rules about which languages should be used for interactions and who correct one another in their preferred language. Smith-

Christmas (2016) provides an example of a four-year-old child insisting, in his requests to family members, that certain words should be in English rather than Gaelic.

In a recent study, Said and Zhu (2019) evaluated how children in Arabic speaking families in the UK creatively mobilised their developing linguistic repertoires to negotiate and take up their agency in language use and socialisation. Drawing on close qualitative analysis of mealtime conversations involving multiple family members over an eight-month period, Said & Zhu (2019) found evidence of a cultural attachment to Arabic by the parents. They also showed how the children were fully aware of this preference and were capable of manipulating that knowledge and asserting their agency through their linguistic choices to achieve interactional goals, as well as a shift in language.

Children in multilingual families tend to be more proficient than their parents in the majority language; hence, they often act as powerful '**linguistic brokers'** for their families, engaging in different types of language practices in various social domains, such as homes, schools and public spaces (Morales & Hanson, 2005; Orellana, 2009). A number of studies have documented the importance of the role of children in helping adult family members, usually migrants, in their daily undertakings, to negotiate interactions with dominant-language individuals, for example, by answering the phone, translating and interpreting official documents and carrying out bank-related business (Parada, 2013; Revis, 2019; Valdés, 2003). Such practices certainly help to hone children's language abilities; however, they simultaneously disempower their parents and reverse the usual parent-child authority in terms of linguistic capital (Revis, 2019).

In some cases, when children have greater access to a new language than their parents do, they socialise their parents into an increased understanding of the linguistic and sociocultural facets of their country of settlement through **sociocultural socialisation** (Guo, 2004; Luykx, 2005; Revis, 2019). They serve as cultural mediators who open numerous channels through which parents can connect with the majority of the population, and they help their parents to get to know the society into which they have just moved. In her study of young Chinese children in England, Guo (2014) noted the mediating efforts of children, on behalf of their parents, which included teaching them sociocultural concepts, such as ‘poppy day’ and the provision of pocket money, introducing them to English food terminology and usage, as well as providing them with factual knowledge.

‘**Majority language teaching**’ occurs when children act as language teachers and socialise their parents into learning the linguistic components of the language that is spoken by the majority of the population; they may, for example, teach their parents the correct use of vocabulary and sentence structure (Luykx, 2005; Revis, 2019). Children correct their parents’ choice of words and teach them how to use sentence structures appropriately (Guo, 2014; Kheirkhah & Cekaite, 2015; Parada, 2013; Revis, 2014, 2019), and parents seek their children’s expertise and ask for assistance (Luykx, 2005; Revis, 2019).

The ability of children to exercise their agency is inseparable from external socio-contextual factors, such as language ideology or exposure to the majority language at school, because broader language ideologies and language exposure shape the language practices of both parents and their children (Canagarajah, 2008; Zhu Hua, 2008; Kasanga, 2008; Revis, 2019). In a study of a group of Tamil diaspora families, Canagarajah (2008) demonstrated that parents’ efforts to maintain Tamil as the dominant language were appropriated and resisted by their children because of their positive perceptions of English. Elsewhere, it was shown that entry to the school system by children in New Zealand constituted a major turning point and resulted in the children questioning, resisting, mediating and transforming their parents' management and practices, constituting a marked deviation from their language use pattern during preschool years (Revis, 2019).

The family is not merely the source of language reproduction; it is also a milieu of language transformation and change. Members of multilingual families, both adults and children, influence one another's socialisation. Thus, they can both be considered agents (Garrett & Baquedano-López, 2002). Family members actively shape language management together (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007). In summary, children act as agents of change as they negotiate, challenge, resist or transform established language practices in the home domain (Danjo, 2018; Gyogi, 2015; Gafaranga, 2010; Fogle, 2012; Fogle & King, 2013).

5. Implications and Future Directions

The field of family language policy has enhanced our understanding of the processes of children's multilingual development, especially when it comes to how family language decisions are influenced and shaped by linguistic and non-linguistic forces. While the last decades of empirical research have enriched the field of FLP, we would like to point out a few areas, which have been given relatively less attention in the past.

Much research has focused on migrant/transnational families. Although some of the families may well be considered economically lower income families, many of the parents have, nonetheless, obtained higher education. Consequently, the parental impact beliefs (parent agency) are strong in that they provide linguistic and academic resources in their children's language development (Curdt-Christiansen & LaMorgia, 2018). However, global movement is not limited to highly educated, mobile professionals, there is also a need to understand how lower SES families engage in their children's multilingual development. FLP studies should not be confined to migrant families only; non-transnational families should also be included in the future of FLP research.

Secondly, there is over-reliance on qualitative studies in recent years. While qualitative research design may reveal how FLP is established in families and what decision processes are made, these research projects rely largely on parents' self-reported data. In order to understand what language policies are effective in raising multilingual children, quantitative studies are necessary to determine the children's attainments in multiple languages in relation to mechanisms, measures and patterns of practices in family language policy.

Thirdly, more studies are needed to examine how FLPs operate in response to policy changes, such as national language movement or community interventions. For example, in the US, Head Start programmes (Hines, 2017) have been initiated in communities and schools, but little is known about how parents make decisions regarding multiple languages and literacy environments at home, how parents engage in children's language activities at home, and what effects these programmes have on children's multiple language development.

Lastly, we would like to call for more attention to be given to longitudinal studies as it is critical to track down changes of FLP over time. This allows families as well as researchers to identify the factors that have influence on children's language behaviour and social development and during what period this influence is most important. These different strategies can over time become valuable resources for parents, educators, researchers and policy makers to make relevant decisions to facilitate children's multilingual development.

Research on family language policy is a fast-growing field. Researchers, educators, community leaders, family members, and policy makers have seen the need for transforming conditions and environments for developing multilingualism. In order to respond to the rapid changes in sociolinguistic, sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts across the globe, meaningful and rigorous studies should be continually developed. New studies should take into consideration the aforementioned points and attempt to meet the needs of multilingual families.

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