Family Language Policy of Trilingual Families in Japan: How Parents Try to Raise Multilingual Children in a Monolingual Society

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Abstract

With increasing interest in early multilingual acquisition in the recent decades, Family Language Policy (FLP) has emerged as a fast-growing field of study exploring parents' and children's language-related ideologies, practices, and management within the family unit (Spolsky, 2004). However, a substantial part of the current body of FLP and early multilingual acquisition research is based on a) bilingual families b) living in Europe or Northern America c) with school-aged children and above. This study expands on current literature by investigating the parents' role in early multilingual acquisition in trilingual families in Japan with young children between one and four years of age. After completing online questionnaires on their families' demographic and language backgrounds, n=5 parents (n=4 mothers; n=1 father) participated in semi-structured online interviews to share their views on early multilingualism; their goals and expectations for their own children's language development; their strategies and use of resources; and the challenges they have experienced in trying to pass on multiple languages to their children. The qualitative analysis through inductive coding revealed that individual backgrounds and experiences seem to shape their FLPs. Most parents seemed determined to provide their children with a multilingual upbringing and were highly emotionally invested in their children's success. The parents worries and regrets for not supporting their children in the best way seemed to have been exacerbated by the limited access to FLP resources and support in the predominantly monolingual context of Japan.

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List of Abbreviations

FLP = Family Language Policy

NL = Native Language

CL = Community Language

HL = Heritage Language

MaL = Majority Language

MiL = Minority Language

LS = Language Strategy

DS = Discourse Strategy

OPOL = One Parent-One Language

Chapter 1: Introduction

More and more children worldwide grow up with more than one language. While percentages vary greatly from country to country and region to region, estimations suggest that half of the children worldwide may be bilingual (Tucker, 1998). As children acquire languages through regular and meaningful exposure over an extended period of time, which languages are learnt and to what degree greatly depends on a child's linguistic environment (Braun & Cline, 2014). A wider mono- or multilingual social context is created through language policies and practices on the macro and meso levels, such as government policies promoting mono- or multilingual public education (e.g. Feng & Adamson, 2018). However, children's language development in the first years is arguably influenced most directly by the linguistic environment of the home they grow up in. Often parents, through conscious planning and effort, are the driving force behind children acquiring multiple languages from a young age (Grosjean & Byers-Heinlein, 2018).

Family Language Policy (FLP) investigates the beliefs and deliberate choices shaping language use on the micro-level of a family unit (Spolsky, 2004; King et al., 2008; King & Fogle, 2006; 2013). Over the course of the last decades, the field has expanded in many directions and produced a sizeable body of literature. However, some scholars criticize its one-sidedness and lack of diversity (Paradis et al., 2021). While Hiratsuka & Pennycook (2020) claim that many FLP studies fail to portray the complex lived reality of multilingual families, Higgins & Wright (2022) lament that studies disproportionally have been investigating Western societies, falsely creating the impression that their cultural norms and practices of language in childrearing apply universally. Others have pointed out that school-aged bilingual children have been studied extensively, while thus far comparatively little attention has been paid to younger children acquiring three or more languages (Chevalier, 2015).

Through the lens of FLP, this paper explores why and how actively bi- and trilingual parents in Japan with young children between one and four years of age try and raise their children with two or more languages. Its aim is threefold: firstly, to shine a light on parents' views and experiences of raising their still very young children multilingually;

secondly, to explore multilingualism in a little-researched, highly monolingual context; and thirdly, to add to the still comparatively small body of research on early trilingual acquisition.

1.1 Early Language Acquisition and FLP: From Outcome-Based to Experience-Oriented

Language acquisition research in its beginnings failed to reflect that early multilingualism is not the exception, but a widespread linguistic reality. While researchers originally had focused predominantly on monolingual child development, prominent early studies such as Ronjat's (1913) on raising bilingual children, which sparked the still prevalent popularity of the one parent-one language (OPOL) strategy, inspired an increased interest over the last century in how parents can facilitate their children's multilingual acquisition through various strategies (Romaine, 1995; Grosjean, 2010). Noting the importance of language exposure, many studies have investigated the effects of quantity of input on children's language development over time. Most notably, Quay (2008) suggested a minimum input threshold of 20% for emerging active multilinguals, theoretically capping the number of languages a child may successfully acquire simultaneously at five. However, evidence also showed that the amount of exposure alone does not guarantee the desired outcome of active multilingualism (De Houwer, 2007). Fuelled by the desire to uncover what additional variables can help the children succeed in becoming active multilinguals, researchers have investigated many more contributing factors, such as quality of input (Döpke, 1992; Lanza, 2004), and age of first exposure and language status (Paradis et al., 2021).

While various stakeholders still show considerable interest in the outcome-oriented research from which FLP emerged, more recently the field has produced new, more experience-oriented perspectives (Higgins & Wright, 2022). A surge of studies has been adopting a postmodernist lens to examine the subjective, lived reality of multilingual families, emphasizing both the individual family members' experiences and the fluid and complex language dynamics of the family as a whole (King, 2016; Higgins & Wright, 2022; Hiratsuka & Pennycook, 2020). This branch of FLP research focuses less on the parents' transmitting languages to the children, but on a more reciprocal

relationship in which all family members contribute to negotiating the families' language practices agencies (Zhan, 2021; 2023).

However, as their children's language development and outcomes continue to be a daily concern for many multilingual parents, the parents' conscious efforts to plan and pursue language approaches to help their children become multilingual are a part of that complex linguistic reality (Mirvahedi & Hosseini, 2023). Thus, this study investigates how parents try to lay the foundation for multilingualism in their children's first years, why they make the effort, and where they experience difficulties. These accounts are not only relevant for parents in similar situations, but also for teachers and childcare professionals to foster understanding and better cooperation between multilingual homes and schools (Ballweg, 2022).

1.2 Japan as a Highly Monolingual Society

Many influential or large-scale studies on early multilingualism have been conducted in highly multilingual countries such as the Netherlands (e.g. De Houwer, 2004; 2007) and Canada (e.g. Quirk et al., 2023; Ahooja et al., 2022), and officially monolingual countries with substantial immigrant populations (e.g. Germany and the UK in Braun & Cline, 2010). Japan provides a stark contrast as an island nation in East Asia with a historically small foreign population. Of Japan's total population of 126 million in 2020, only 2.76 million (or 2.2%) were foreign residents, most of whom came from China, Vietnam and South Korea (Japan 2020 Population Census 44-1, 2021). Of the 28.8 million married couples living in Japan in 2020, only 0.5 million were foreign or Japanese-foreign couples (Japan 2020 Population Census 49-1, 2021). This is significant in that many multilingual families form around transnational couples or couples who have immigrated to another country (Grosjean, 2010).

While there are no official government statistics on multilingualism in Japan, one 2016 survey by Rakuten Research asked 1,000 participants between 20 and 69 about their opinions on English as a second language. 70% ranked their own English as 'poor' or 'very poor' compared to only 3.4% who ranked their skills as 'high' or 'very high,' and almost three out of four respondents rated the overall English ability of the Japanese

population as 'low' or 'very low' (Rakuten Research, 2016). More than a third of the respondents also felt learning English was "unimportant" for them personally or life in Japan in general (ibid.). While these results neither give any information on languages other than English, nor on the language abilities and attitudes of children, they illustrate that for most people, life in Japan happens exclusively in Japanese.

1.3 Bilingual and Trilingual Research

In such a highly monolingual environment, parents raising their children bilingually can already be assumed to be faced with a Herculean task. However, while research on bilingual acquisition has been invaluable for our current understanding of the processes and dynamics of early multilingual acquisition, trilingual acquisition offers a not yet thoroughly explored additional level of complexity. As Hoffmann (2001) explains, each additional language adds layers to the sociolinguistic context by exponentially increasing the number of potential language constellations and therefore choices for the parents. That is why it is not surprising that parents who have the diverse linguistic backgrounds to choose to raise their children with three or more languages, might not always do so (Braun & Cline, 2010; 2014; Arnaus Gil et al., 2021). The current study aims to investigate how parents navigate these manifold choices about language use in the home.

1.4 Research Questions

The present study is guided by the following research questions:

Research Question 1: In trilingual families with young children living in Japan, what are parents or guardians' views on early multilingualism? What are their goals and expectations in raising their own child(ren) multilingually?

Research Question 2: What language strategies and resources, if any, do these parents or guardians utilize to raise their child(ren) multilingually?

Research Question 3: What challenges, if any, have parents or guardians encountered and how have these difficulties affected their efforts to raise their child(ren) multilingually?

1.5 Dissertation Outline

Chapter 1 has introduced the research background of this study and presented the study's aims, rationale, and research questions. The literature review in Chapter 2 begins by defining early multilingual acquisition, FLP and their key concepts, showcasing Spolsky's (2004) influential FLP model and Braun & Cline's (2010) taxonomy of trilingual families. Then, after critically reviewing recent literature on FLP and early trilingual acquisition, I examine the research on FLP in Japan. Chapter 3 describes the research design and the methodology used for data collection and analysis. The results are presented and discussed in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 concludes this thesis by acknowledging its limitations and suggesting further areas of study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review aims to provide an overview of the most recent findings on how parents shape their children's early multilingual acquisition in trilingual families. After defining early multilingual acquisition and its key terminology, I introduce the framework for FLP following Spolsky (2004; 2009), highlighting his tripartite model of language ideology, management, and practice, as the most seminal in the field of FLP. Subsequently, I present Braun and Cline's (2010) typology of trilingual families and the definition of a trilingual family derived for the present study. The second half of this chapter is devoted to a thorough review and critique of recent peer-reviewed publications investigating FLP and early trilingual acquisition, followed by studies on FLP and early multilingual acquisition specifically in Japan.

2.1 Theoretical Background

This sub-chapter introduces the most important terms and definitions in the fields of early multilingual acquisition and FLP, highlighting the lack of uniformity in how they are used by researchers and across studies, and the resulting difficulty to compare findings comprehensively and accurately. While the discussion and critique of studies in Chapters 2 and 3 adhere to the authors' terminologies, the present study's definitions of terms are given in the relevant sections in Chapters 2 and 3.

2.1.1 Early Multilingual Acquisition

2.1.1.1 The Age Factor

While *language acquisition* can be defined as the natural process of children learning to understand and speak a language through exposure, e*arly* refers to initial years of development in infant-, toddler-, or early childhood (Chevalier, 2015). Depending on the definition, the children exposed to three languages from birth (De Houwer, 2009), before the onset of speech (Quay, 2008), before the age of three (Paradis et al., 2021), or before the age of five (Grosjean, 2010) are considered *simultaneous* emergent multilinguals. Children that start with one, most often the parents' native language, and are exposed to an additional language after the cut-off age, for example when entering

elementary school, are called *sequential* budding multilinguals (Paradis et al., 2021). While notions of a critical period for language acquisition with a hard age limit has mostly been refuted, evidence shows that age does matter on the continuum of a child's development in that an earlier start may be advantageous for the overall development and attainment of multiple languages (Paradis et al., 2021).

2.1.1.2 What does It mean to be Multilingual?

The term *multilingual* can be ascribed both on the individual and societal level to denote either the *ability* or *habit* of using more than one language. Proficiency-based definitions consider individuals multilingual if they *know* more than one language, while use-based definitions focus on whether individuals actively *use* multiple languages in their daily lives (Edwards, 2006). The terms *bilingual* and *trilingual* usually reference the exact number of languages in question. However, not all researchers follow these definitions. Lanza (2007) and Grosjean (2022), for example, use '*bi*lingual' in the sense of 'two or more languages' and 'multilingualism' either as a term for 'more than two languages' (Lanza, 2007), or exclusively to describe larger communities (Grosjean, 2022). In line with the movement away from treating languages as separate entities (Genesee, 2022), Marshall and Moore (2013) have proposed the term *plurilingual* as a holistic way of describing a person's overall language proficiency, but it is not yet widely used in the current FLP literature.

Earlier definitions of bilingualism included notions of equal proficiency and fluency in two languages, so-called *balanced* multilingualism, and native-like competency in both (Bloomfield, 1933). Today it is well-understood that most multilinguals have a *dominant language*, that language proficiencies can change over time depending on external circumstances and use, and that an individual's ability to speak and understand a language is *domain-specific* (Grosjean, 2015: 574). For example, a bilingual doctor, trained and practicing in the UK, and highly proficient in both English and her native language Mandarin, might find it difficult to explain technical details of her job to her monolingual parents. Multilinguals can be *passive* or *active*, depending on whether they possess receptive skills (listening and/or reading) or productive skills as well (speaking and/or writing). Active multilingualism is often the parents' declared goal for their

children, and the measure of FLP success (De Houwer, 2007; Arnaus Gil et al., 2021; Chevalier, 2015).

2.1.2 Spolsky's Theory of FLP (2004; 2009)

This sub-chapter follows Spolsky's (2004; 2009) theory of FLP and introduces his seminal model of language ideology, practices, and management. According to Spolsky (2009), there are four aspects of *language policy*.

2.1.2.1 Family

> Aspect 1: "Language policy operates within a speech community, of whatever size."
> (Spolsky, 2009: 40)

The 'speech community' in FLP is the family itself. Lanza (2007) defined *family* as a "*community of practice*, a social unit that has its own norms for language use" (p. 47). While most FLP studies have investigated traditional (mother-father-child) nuclear families, this definition also includes other family constellations, such as multi-generational, single-, adoptive-, and LGBTQI+-parent families (Higgins & Wright, 2022). FLP both examines the language beliefs and use of the family members themselves and explores the connection of the family sphere to relevant socio-linguistic contexts outside of the home, such as schools or the educational system (Spolsky, 2009: 46ff.).

2.1.2.2 Language

> Aspect 2: "Language policy is concerned not just with named varieties of language, but with all the individual elements at all levels that make up language." (Spolsky, 2009: 40)

In FLP studies, languages are described by their status in relation to the wider socio-linguistic context. Children get exposure to the *community language* (CL) or *majority language* (MaL) easily enough through being out and about in society and public childcare or schooling. Therefore, parents' FLP efforts usually aim at finding ways to ensure that their children acquire some level of competency in the parental *heritage language* (HL) or a *minority language* (MiL). This is often referred to as *HL maintenance* or *transmission* (Hollebeke, 2022). The terms CL and MaL, as well as HL and MiL, are often used interchangeably. However, HL connects more explicitly to the

parents' cultural and language backgrounds, whereas MiL allows that parents can (and do) also choose to include languages they are not native speakers in in their *home languages* or *family languages*.

In multilingual families, languages are not experienced as separate entities independent from each other. Original concerns regarding *language mixing and switching* (or *code mixing and switching*) seem to have largely been unfounded (Genesee, 2022), giving traction to the more holistic view of *translanguaging* as a natural part of multilingual acquisition and language practice (García & Li, 2014). Some researchers even advocate for abandoning the focus in FLP on family members' individual language proficiencies and practices in favour of the *family language repertoire* (Hiratsuka & Pennycook, 2020).

2.1.2.3 Policy

> Aspect 3: Language policy has three components: "language practices, language beliefs and ideology, and the explicit policies and plans resulting from language-management or planning activities that attempt to modify the practices and ideologies of a community" (Spolsky, 2009: 39).

The most salient part of Spolsky's (2004; 2009) theory are the three categories of language practices, ideology, and management. Language *practices* describe how language is used in a family's everyday life, whereas language *ideology* refers to family members' language beliefs and attitudes, such as their perceived cultural or utility value of languages, or how languages are connected to their identities and sense of self (Choi, 2021). For parents, this includes their hopes and expectations for their children's linguistic development.

Language *management* in multilingual families with very young children often revolves around parents' strategies to raise their children multilingually. These encompass both the selection of languages and finding ways to manipulate input quantity and quality in a way that best facilitates the children's language acquisition. Some of the most well-known bilingual input quantity regulating *language strategies* (LSs) include one parent-one language (OPOL), one place-one language, one-language-first, language-time, and language-mixing strategies (cf. Grosjean, 2010: 206f.). Both quality and quantity can also be managed by utilizing resources such as MiL schools or classes, media, toys, or

books (Ahooja et al., 2022). Some strategies also aim at directing children's output (Lumeu-Gomes, 2019). Parents use *discourse strategies* (DSs) to try and elicit responses in the desired language (Lanza, 2007; Döpke, 1992). While language management is often framed as something parents impose on children, recent studies increasingly highlight the active role children play in negotiating FLP (Zhan 2021; 2023).

Conflict has been observed between all the categories, for example, when language management decisions are not aligned with expressed language ideology, or planned LSs or DSs are not adhered to in practice (Mirvahedi & Hosseini, 2023; Lomeu Gomes, 2019). Individual family members' different ideologies and interests are also a potential cause for conflict, such as when parents disagree on the best approach or children reject their parents' attempts of management (Curdt-Christiansen, 2016; Mirvahedi & Hosseini, 2023).

2.1.2.4 Complexity

> Aspect 4: "Language policy functions in a complex ecological relationship among a wide range of linguistic and non-linguistic elements, variables and factors." (Spolsky, 2009: 41)

FLP investigates not only language and factors directly linked to language, but language in its immediate and wider context. The complex nature of FLP is evident in the breadth of research in the field. While some recent studies continue to explore the core FLP components (beliefs, practices, and management) and their effects on HL transmission (e,g. Hollebeke, 2022a; 2022b) and input and outcome (Cantone, 2022), others investigate emotional aspects of FLP (Sevinç & Mirvahedi, 2023); the influence of family members other than parents, such as siblings (Kwon & Martínez-Álvarez, 2022) and grandparents (Wenhan et al., 2022); external societal pressure or support, e.g. in the form of advice from childcare (Van Der Wildt et al., 2023) or medical professionals (Van Oss et al., 2022), or in connection with school (Ballweg, 2022) or official language policies and practices (Kambatyrova, 2022).

2.1.2.5 Criticism

Spolsky's model is not free of criticism. While Spolsky himself notes that policies can be implicit, his definition of language management focuses on conscious, explicit decision-making (2009: 39). Some scholars, however, argue that less deliberately planned, covert decisions made on the spot in daily situations should also be examined as an inherent part of management and practices (King & Fogle, 2017). Moreover, Hiratsuka & Pennycook (2020) and others approaching FLP through a post-modernist lens reject Spolsky's model completely as too rigid a framework to account for the fast-paced, highly dynamic lived reality of multilingual families.

However, as evidenced by the number of FLP studies with varying research approaches and methodologies, Spolsky's model is generally considered a "structural, flexible, and expandable framework" (Schwartz & Verschik, 2013: 4) that serves as a starting point for even highly qualitative, narrative, holistic explorations of FLP (e.g. in Mivarhedi & Hosseini, 2023), and is referenced in such a guiding function in the present study.

2.1.3 Types of Trilingual Families (Braun & Cline, 2010)

As demonstrated in the beginning of this chapter, there is great variation in the use of terms and definitions surrounding multilingualism. As the present study explicitly aims to investigate FLP in trilingual families, it is necessary to clearly define 'trilingual family' for the context of this study.

While trilingual families can be found everywhere, arguably the fewer CLs a family is surrounded by, the more difficult it is for parents to maintain multiple languages in the home. Braun and Cline (2010) provided a typology specifically for trilingual families living in monolingual societies. They defined trilingual families as families in which "parents have a language situation that can provide their children with two native home languages in addition to the community language, where between community and home three languages are available to use" (p. 114), and identified three family types according to the parents' linguistic backgrounds:

Type I: Both parents speak a native language (NL) each, neither of which is the CL.

Type II: One or both parents speak two NLs, one of which can be the CL.

Type III: One or both parents speak three NLs, one of which can be the CL. This category also includes "families with various other complex language constellations not covered within the other two 'types'" (Braun & Cline, 2010: 117).

Interviewing parents of n=70 trilingual families in Germany and England, they found that Type I families were more successful in passing on both NLs than Type II families. Results for the Type III families were less clear, potentially due to the 'catch-all' nature of the category. Braun and Cline (2010) based their categories on the parents' native languages (NLs) "acquired natively at a young age" (p. 114), ignoring that parents can be highly proficient in a second language and choose to use a non-NL with their children. Thus, for the purpose of this study, trilingual families living in monolingual societies are defined as 'families in which the parents either can speak three languages, or two languages other than the CL, between them, resulting in a language constellation that would enable them to raise their children trilingually.'

2.2 FLP in Trilingual Families

This section reviews the most recent FLP studies investigating parents' language beliefs, practices, and strategies in trilingual families with young children. An initial search on SCOPUS for peer-reviewed articles revealed a growing interest in parents' roles in FLP with the number of published studies quadrupling in the last five years (Appendix A.1). However, bilingual studies (92) by far outnumbered the studies that explicitly investigated trilingualism (5), which still can be counted on one hand.

Expanding the 'trilingual' search by adding 'multilingual' and 'plurilingual' as alternatives resulted in 77 peer-reviewed articles published in the last five years (Appendix A.2). Unlike Hirsch and Lee (2018) in their systematic review on transnational families' language policies, using more specific FLP terms (such as ideology, management, practice, plan, strategy, view, attitude, idea, belief, transmission, and maintenance) did not lead to a significant number of additional relevant results.

This could indicate that scholars in the last few years increasingly explicitly refer to FLP framework in their publications.

I surveyed all 77 studies and included the nine meeting the following criteria in my review:

- The focus lies mainly on parents, not on other family members.

- The focus lies mainly on family language policies in the home, not school, education, or government policies, or external parent support programmes and centres.

- At least half of the participants' children are between 0 and 6 years old.

- Most families are trilingual.

I excluded all studies that lacked crucial information, most often the ages of the children, and studies on non-typically developing children, as including them would exceed the scope of this paper. While much insight can and has been gained into general processes of early childhood multilingualism from bilingual studies, bilingual studies have been excluded to stay true to this literature review's aim to highlight the particularities of trilingual acquisition with its additional complexities (Braun & Cline, 2014). Some studies with a dual focus on, for example, early language acquisition at home *and* at preschool or parents' *and* grandparents' influence, have been included to allow for a greater variety of sources and to acknowledge that parents' decisions on FLP are not made completely independent from external influencing factors (Ballweg, 2022; Curdt-Christiansen, 2013).

Table 2.1 provides an overview of all the studies discussed in this section. True to the interdisciplinary field of FLP, they represent a variety of topics and range in methodology, but can generally be grouped according to whether they are outcome-oriented, i.e. try to discover how certain variables affect language acquisition processes and outcomes, or experience-oriented, i.e. try to provide insight into the real experiences of multilingual parents.

#	Authors (Year of Publication)	Research Designs	Data Collection Instruments	Participants & Contexts	Languages	Foci of Investigation
1	Arnaus Gil et al. (2021)	Mixed-methods, cross-sectional	Parental questionnaire & Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test	16 families/ children in Germany, 32 in Spain	MaL/MiL German, MiL French, MaL/MiL Spanish, MaL Catalan	Various factors contributing to active bi- and trilingualism
2	Cantone (2022)	Mixed-methods, longitudinal	Parental questionnaires every 9 months for 1.5 years	4 families with a total of 6 children in Germany	MaL German, various HLs	Input quantity & LSs, language choice, language-external factors
3	Ahooja et al. (2022)	Mixed-methods, cross-sectional	Questionnaire	819 parents in Canada	MaLs English & French, various HLs	Language management & resources
4	Ballinger et al. (2022)	Qualitative; cross-sectional	Questionnaire & focus groups or interviews	27 parents from 20 families in Canada	MaL English & French, various HLs	FLP & official language policy, HL & no-HL families
5	Tsushima & Guardado (2019)	Qualitative; cross-sectional	Semi-structured Interviews	9 mothers with HL Japanese in Canada	MaL English & French, HL Japanese	HL maintenance, metalinguistic discourse & ambiguity/uncertainty
6	Ragnarsdóttir (2023)	Qualitative, cross-sectional	Questionnaires & semi-structured interviews	7 parents from 6 families in Iceland	MaL Icelandic, MiL English, various HLs	FLP & education
7	Soler & Roberts (2019)	Qualitative; Cross-sectional	Questionnaire & semi-structured interviews	2 sets of parents in Sweden	HLs English, French, Spanish & various MiLs	Personal experience & language ideologies
8	Lomeu Gomes (2020)	Qualitative, longitudinal	10h of auto-recordings over 3 years	1 family (father, mother, child) in Norway	HL Portuguese, Norwegian	Discourse strategies, language ideologies
9	Mirvahedi & Hosseini (2023)	Qualitative, longitudinal	Audio-recordings, observation notes, autoethnographic narrative	1 family (father, mother, child)	HLs Hindi & Persian, MiL English	Long-term effects of FLP

Table 2.1: Recent FLP Studies with a Focus on the Parents of Trilingual Families

2.2.1 Outcome-oriented Studies

Only two of the nine studies can easily be outcome-oriented in that they pick variables to investigate as potentially contributing factors to the language development of multilingual children (Cantone,2022; Arnaus Gil et al.,2021).

2.2.1.1 Arnaus Gil et al. (2021)

Arnaus Gil et al. (2021) examined influencing factors in the family environment for early multilingual acquisition in n=48 bi-, tri- and multilingual children (German, French, and Spanish) with mean ages between three and five. Using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPTV) and a parental questionnaire, the authors found that neither the choice of LS nor the number of languages seemed to have made a difference in the children's' passive vocabulary knowledge. However, the results showed a positive effect of an input quantity of 20 percent or more; both parents having at least a basic knowledge of the MiL; and the absence of the MaL at home. Institutional exposure to a MiL only, on the other hand, correlated with a significantly lower vocabulary score.

Arnaus Gil et al.'s (2021) presentation of results is misleading in that they claim to have found that FLP does not seem to influence active early bi- and trilingualism (p. 1). However, they conflate 'FLP' with 'LSs,' which constitute only one aspect of FLP (Spolsky, 2004). Moreover, it is debatable whether their results allow claims about *active* multilingualism. That is because the PPVT is used as the sole determiner of whether a child is an active multilingual despite measuring only *receptive* vocabulary knowledge, and the authors do not explain the connection. While admittedly less economical, a test involving language production might have improved the validity of the results.

Arnaus Gil et al. (2021) chose to take an interactionist approach to conceptualizing quantity and quality of input, determining quantity of input "on the basis of the number of people and the different contexts to which the child is exposed in her/his respective L1s" (Arnaus Gil et al, 2021: 8) and qualitative input through 'interactional potential.' While the premise sounds promising, the categories appear fuzzy and how they are

weighed somewhat arbitrary, which is why an updated framework based on a critical analysis of the original might have been merited.

2.2.1.2 Cantone (2022)

Cantone (2022) investigated n=4 trilingual families in Germany, eliciting the n=6 children's language input and output between birth and three years of age at three intervals through parental questionnaires. The parents reported using mostly OPOL strategies with their children, but not necessarily using MiLs. By the age of three, four out of the six children produced almost exclusively German. Cantone stresses that siblings, grandparents and other relatives, language status and mode could be external factors influencing multilingual attainment.

Cantone operationalized quantitative input as the waking hours spent in a caregivers' presence but did not attempt to determine how much time per hour is spent on child-directed speech on average, which could have resulted in a more accurate approximation of MiL input. Especially considering that overheard conversations contribute to input and all parents spoke German to each other (Paradis et al., 2021), the amount of MaL exposure might have been higher than the results showed. Especially if media was consumed in German as well, these factors could have contributed to the increasing dominance of German output over time. Furthermore, all parents are native German mono- or bilinguals, and many grandparents German-speakers as well, which lowered the children's need to speak a MiL (Grosjean, 2013). In Cantone's (2022) discussion of potential influencing language-external factors, she mentions the specific language backgrounds of the parents as early bilinguals themselves. A further qualitative investigation into how these parents' language backgrounds might have shaped their views on early multilingualism, and in turn their FLP goals and strategies, could provide additional insight.

2.2.2 Experience-Based Studies

The seven studies discussed here are presented in order from a large-scale survey (Ahooja et al., 2022) to a single case study (Mirvahedi & Hosseini (2023). The first

three studies were conducted in Canada, the following three in Europe, and the last one features Asian HLs, so the focus narrows down both in scope and in geographical location towards the present study.

2.2.2.1 Ahooja et al. (2022)

Ahooja et al. (2022) asked n=819 parents in Quebec with children up to four years of age what child- and parent-directed resources they knew of, used, or wished for to support them in raising their children multilingually. The authors collect data via a well-designed questionnaire including five-point Likert-scale items and open-ended questions to elicit both data for quantitative statistical analysis and qualitative corpus-based analysis. Comparing parents using only MaLs (French and/or English) with parents who also wanted to transmit HLs, the results showed that the latter found it harder to locate and were less satisfied with existing resources in their desired languages. However, all parents used parent-directed resources to a similar extent and were equally interested in multilingual resources.

Ahooja et al.'s study is part of a collaborative research project that has produced multiple studies looking at different aspects of FLP and early multilingualism in Quebec. While studies with hundreds of participants cannot give nuanced insight into individual families' circumstances, they can show larger trends in a population that can inform policymakers on how to support multilingual families. As most respondents were well-educated mothers (98.2%), the responses may not be representative of all Quebec parents. It would be interesting to see if there is a difference between resource knowledge and use compared to the fathers or less educated populations.

2.2.2.2 Ballinger et al. (2022)

Ballinger et al. (2022) investigated FLPs of 20 families (12 of which trilingual) with a first-born child under the age of three in Quebec and how the FLPs relate to the official language policy. N=27 parents participated in individual interviews and focus groups. The authors transcribed the interviews and used a combination of deductive and inductive analysis to extract salient themes for language ideologies, practices, and

management. They found a generally positive attitude towards multilingualism and preference for a 'natural,' not overly strict FLP among most parents. Many parents also described similar plans to expose their child to French through school and English through media. Despite the seemingly harmonious public and family language policies promoting the MaLs, some parents expressed concerns, insecurities, and pressure about raising their children multilingually. Especially parents wanting to transmit a HL on top of English and French felt there was room for improvement in the levels of structural support.

Ballinger et al. report their methodology and procedure in detail and provide rich descriptions of the qualitative results. While some questions remain unanswered, for example how the final participants were chosen out of everyone who met the inclusion criteria, the level of transparency in disclosing in what small ways the study carried out deviated from the original plans follows highest ethical standards. For example, the authors explain how due to scheduling problems, the distribution of participants became unequal, and that two individual interviews were conducted when only focus groups had been planned.

Semi-structured group interviews with only five open-ended questions allow participants to discuss topics that are relevant to both the research questions and to the participants themselves. While researchers gain valuable data from participants, few studies consider reciprocity, or how participants can benefit from the study. However, considering that especially parents who transmit HLs can feel isolated and unsupported, the participants in Ballinger et al.'s study may have benefitted immediately through the opportunity to exchange experiences and points of view with peers.

2.2.2.3 Tsushima & Guardado (2019)

Tsushima & Guardado (2019) investigated Japanese HL maintenance efforts of n=9 families with multilingual Japanese mothers and non-Japanese fathers in Canada. All nine mothers interviewed were at least trilingual, but only five's children were preschool age and below. In two of the families with young children the mothers reported that Japanese was the children's strongest language, while in all others the language spoken

at school or daycare was already dominant. Tsushima and Guardado found that while all mothers expressed positive attitudes towards HL maintenance, they varied in their approaches and levels of motivation and commitment. The participants saw frequent and productive conversations regarding FLP with their partners and children as conductive to the upkeep of HL maintenance efforts. However, many mothers expressed uncertainty regarding the best approach to both foster HL and MaL development, sometimes fueled by non-supportive family members, which led many to abandon or drastically reduce their efforts.

Tsushima and Guardado's participants all share a HL, in which the semi-structured interviews were conducted. The interview questions are more detailed than Ballinger et al.'s (2022) and were geared towards eliciting a detailed family and language background, for which a questionnaire may have been sufficient. However, Tsushima and Guardado's (2019) interviews were ideal to gain in-depth data on the participants' lived experiences of trying to transmit Japanese as HL in a multilingual society. The authors report having used a web-based application as part of their analysis, but its contribution remains unclear as it was not mentioned again in the subsequently described standard iterative process of coding and theme-finding.

2.2.2.4 Ragnarsdóttir (2023)

Ragnarsdóttir (2023) investigated the language policies of six immigrant families with different language backgrounds in Iceland and how they are connected to their children's preschools. N=7 parents reported to use strategies to actively support their children's acquisition of the HLs, the CL Icelandic, and English with varying priorities. Four parent couples reported following a HL OPOL strategy with their children, but spoke English with each other, which they claimed made their children pick up English without explicit parental effort. While not opposed to promoting Icelandic at home, most parents preferred to rely on the native Icelandic exposure at preschool.

Ragnarsdóttir's (2023) study succeeds in highlighting trends in the immigrant families' FLPs and how they connect to the school domain but does not provide nuanced insight into the differences between the families. The reporting lacks some detail, such as any

information on the children besides that they attend preschool, and summarizes the findings in rather broad strokes. Unfortunately, as the author explains, planned additional data collection involving the children and classroom observations had to be postponed due to the pandemic. However, working with the interview data that was collected, the study could be improved by a 'thicker' description and a multi-level analysis of the data on both the individual family and the group levels, and how they connect to the schools. Methodologically, a second researcher independently coding the transcripts would increase the validity of the emerging categories and themes.

2.2.2.5 Soler & Roberts (2019)

Soler and Roberts (2019) interviewed two couples in Sweden, a set of multilingual parents of a three-year-old daughter, and a set of unrelated grandparents, to investigate how their individual lived experiences have shaped their language ideologies. The couples displayed remarkable parallels in that the women seemed more invested in a strict FLP of language separation (OPOL or HL only at home) and HL maintenance, while the men took a more relaxed stance towards translanguaging and non-NL use. The younger couple's thinking seems to be deeply rooted in nativism and the monolingual mode, as the wife seems to perceive only L1 speakers to have the authority and competency to transmit their native language flawlessly. Both parents, however, agreed that not using their NL with children would be 'strange,' despite the father often switching to English himself and both translanguaging occasionally.

One of the strengths of Soler and Roberts' (2019) approach is that they interviewed both parents together. This not only generates more balanced accounts, as the participants share control of the narrative, but also gives unique insight into the couple dynamics that may play a role in FLP negotiation. The authors report clearly and openly their longstanding personal connection with the participants and how this may have impacted on the interviews, following the principles of maximum transparency and awareness of the issue of researcher positionality. Soler and Roberts's exploratory approach fits their choice of free-flowing semi-structured interviews as data generation method. They also followed best practice by coding the data independently and then working together, always going back to the data, to pinpoint emerging themes and succeed at writing up a

'thick' description of their findings. However, in a study conducted in the participants' homes, asking about their personal stories and opinions while being recorded, ethical considerations such as informed consent and privacy should be addressed in more detail than just mentioning pseudonymisation in passing.

2.2.2.6 Lomeu Gomes (2020)

Lomeu Gomes (2020) asked a Brazilian-Norwegian family to self-record interactions between the parents and their daughter Emma over the span of three years and analysed the transcribed recordings for the parents' use of discourse strategies. Multiple example dialogues illustrate situations in which the mother Adriana, born in Brazil and who speaks four languages, heavily encouraged Emma to reply to her in Portugese, often displaying her own beliefs of interconnectedness between language use and culture and identity ("One-person-one-language-one-nation (OPOLON) ideology"), and the daughter demonstrating her internalization of her mother's words. However, Lomeu Gomes found that for Adriana and Emma, implicit discourse strategies seemed more effective than overt requests and naming languages.

Lomeu Gomes did not only collect data through parental questionnaires, but also audio-recordings, which allowed him to show the discrepancy between what the parents said they did and what could be observed. Through examples of recorded interactions and rich description of the context, he illustrates the difficulty of strictly following OPOL as a multilingual parent in busy everyday situations. He argues that OPOL(ON) should be considered an ideology rather than a strategy, as it is rarely observed despite parents reporting following OPOL(ON). This he sees as evidence that it reflects parental beliefs more than the lived reality of dynamic language practices in a multilingual home.

2.2.2.7 Mirvahedi & Hosseini (2023)

Mirvahedi and Hosseini (2023), in an autoethnographic account of the second author's highly mobile family life, describe the parents' dynamic FLP and how it influenced their daughter's linguistic development from birth until the age of nine. The study illustrates multiple challenges in transmitting Hindi and Persian, the HLs, in addition to

English: 1) different ideologies of the parents due to their own upbringings preventing a concentrated effort to facilitate HL maintenance; 2) monolingual pressure experienced from speech specialists and teachers; 3) conflicting desires for HL preservation and prioritizing English in schooling; and 4) the daughter's developing aversion to HLs, which led to abandoning the original plan to raise her trilingually altogether.

While some scholars take issue with the nature of autobiographic or autoethnographic research due to the inherent risk of author bias, others welcome the increasing acceptance of highly qualitative narrative accounts as they provide unique insight into rich, otherwise inaccessible data (Mackey & Gass, 2015). Mirvahedi & Hosseini (2023) displayed the recommended extra care in planning and execution, as well as detail in the description of the methodology and procedure is warranted to achieve maximum transparency and validity, or *trustworthiness*. Where they fall short is their interpretation of the data. They strongly argue that unconsidered practicing of translanguaging and lack of boundaries between languages were the root cause of the daughter not becoming an active multilingual. However, other factors that might have contributed to the lack of sustained multilingual development of the daughter. Differing parental ideologies and lack of consistency in FLP practices over time, use of the MaL at home, and the comparatively lower status of the HLs compared to the globally dominant English have all been shown to correlate negatively with early multilingual attainment (Paradis et al., 2021). Additionally, the extremely high mobility of the family could have contributed to the daughter's weak connection to her heritage cultures despite the mother's efforts, lowering the child's perceived need for the languages (Grosjean, 2013).

2.3 FLP in Japan

Very little research on FLP has been conducted in Japan to date. On SCOPUS, only four studies published since 2019 were found with the key words "family language policy" and "Japan." One of the studies focused on grandparents and a child's FLP negotiation (Zhan, 2021) and one was Tsushima and Guardado (2019) on Japanese mothers in Canada, reviewed earlier in this chapter. While the two remaining studies do not focus on early trilingualism, they are discussed below to highlight findings on multilingual families' FLPs in the context of Japan.

2.3.1 Nakamura (2019)

Nakamura (2019) interviewed n=8 foreign parents raising bilingual children with a Japanese spouse in Japan to investigate the parents' impact belief, i.e. how strongly they believe that they can shape their children's language development (De Houwer, 1999), and how it affects language management. Nakamura (2019) found via carefully described grounded theory analysis that spousal support and strong connections with families in similar situations positively influenced impact belief, which she inferred from increased HL management activities at home.

Participants were acquaintances of the author through the children's weekend English school. Despite the regular exchanging and discussing of experiences as peers, the power dynamic and situation changes in interviews, which could have influenced some parents' accounts. Also, while describing other aspects of methodology and procedure in admirable detail, Nakamura failed to address important ethical considerations such as how participants were informed, and consent was obtained.

As the key construct of impact belief emerged through the authors' analysis of the data despite not being explicitly addressed in the unstructured interviews, an additional round of data collection might have made the results more reliable and valid. The researcher could have asked participants directly in follow-up interviews ("How much influence do you think you have over your child's language development?") or asked them to fill in a questionnaire with multiple 5-point Likert-scale items from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" ("I can provide my child the opportunity to grow up bilingually.") to triangulate data.

2.3.2 Capobianco (2022)

Capobianco (2022) explores FLP in a Nigerian family and two families with Igbo Nigerian fathers and Japanese mothers in Japan through formal and informal interviews and observations, or "ethnographic vignettes" (p. 145). He argues that some families struggled with HL transmission or even their children actively speaking English, while others did not, is linked to parental (language skills, economic resources, utilization of resources, identity ambitions) and societal factors (education and socialisation practices).

Capobianco, despite providing a compelling narrative and rich description, fails to provide a clear methodology. Most notably, he does not address researcher positionality in the context of this study. He also leaves out details of data collection, such as whether the 'formal interview' was structured or unstructured, in what language it was conducted, if and how it was transcribed, and how it was analysed. Likewise, the frequency and circumstances of the "informal conversations, and observations in various contexts" (p. 151), and the exact people present or participating, remain unknown. With a more rigorous research design and a clear methodology especially for data collection and analysis, Capobianco could improve the trustworthiness of his study.

2.4 Summary

The literature highlights multilingual parents' keen desire for their children to grow up multilingually on the one hand, and the struggles of HL maintenance especially in trilingual families on the other. Parents' language ideologies and management efforts seem to be influenced by their own experiences and the larger socio-cultural context. The parents employ a variety of LSs and DSs with varying degrees of success.

All in all, the literature review aligns with the criticisms on FLP research as lacking diversity (Paradis et al., 2021). The number of high-quality, peer-reviewed recent studies on trilingual families and their FLPs, and FLP in Japan, is extremely limited. Apart from Mirvahedi and Hosseini (2023) and the studies set in Japan, all the studies reviewed were conducted in Canada or Europe. Many are highly qualitative explorations, collecting data on a small group of traditional nuclear families through demographic questionnaires and ethnographic interviews. The highly context-specific nature of these studies calls for rigorously designed and transparently reported studies investigating FLP in other family and language constellations and socio-cultural environments.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This study aims to provide insight into multilingual parents' lived experiences of raising their children with two or more languages from an early age in Japan, a predominantly monolingual country. The study is one of many in the fast-growing, interdisciplinary field of FLP, which combines ethnographic and sociolinguistic approaches to investigate language policy on the micro-level of the family unit (King, 2008). As the literature review showed, FLP research employs a wide variety of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method study designs of different scales and approaches.

The current chapter begins by explaining the considerations that shaped the development of the research design of the present study and continues to describe the choice and development of the data collection instruments and method of data analysis. After introducing the study's participants, the last sections of the chapter explain the research procedure and highlight the ethical considerations of planning and conducting the study.

3.1 Research Approach

After a thorough review of the recent literature on FLP and early multilingual acquisition, it became apparent that trilingual families overall, but especially outside of North America and Europe, have not been sufficiently studied yet. Therefore, this study set out to shine light on the experiences of trilingual families in a non-Western setting with children not yet in elementary school.

3.1.1 Practical Considerations

The study is set in Japan because of its status as a monolingual Asian country and the researcher's familiarity with Japan as her country of residence for over half a decade. However, the potential pool of participants is expected to be limited due to Japan's small foreign population, and since trilingual families in monolingual societies tend to form around a transnational couple with different linguistic backgrounds. Thus, a large-scale, quantitative study with robust statistical analysis like Ahooja et al. (2022) was not considered feasible. Similarly, a longitudinal study design of how FLP-related factors

correlate with children's language development over time (e.g. Arnaus Gil et al., 2021) would not meet the time constraints of this project.

Therefore, this study takes a decidedly qualitative approach by focusing holistically on parents' thoughts, strategies, and struggles of raising their children multilingually in a small-scale, cross-sectional study by collecting and analysing data on five families. As Rose et al. (2019) note, case studies' appeal lies in painting pictures of complex real-world situations that both are able to include potentially important details easily missed by large-scale studies and are easily understood by a wide audience. Unlike Mirvahedi and Hosseini (2023), this present study is not a full-fledged ethnographic case study that follows a family's experience over time. Rather, like Soler and Roberts (2019) and Tsushima and Guardado (2019), it provides a snapshot into the lived reality of the parents and how they recount and reflect on their experiences. As each family's situation is highly individual, multiple parents were invited to participate in order to gain deeper, multi-faceted insight into the lives of trilingual families in Japan through a collection of different perspectives.

3.1.2 Qualitative Research and the Role of the Researcher

Qualitative research differs from quantitative research not only in the distinction between dealing with data in the form of numbers or words, but also in their underlying research paradigms (Pakiti & Paltridge, 2019). Holliday (2019) states that through the recent postmodern shift in qualitative research, it is more widely acknowledged that researchers' own backgrounds and world views inevitably shape their research process from start to finish. He describes three principles that determine the validity, or *trustworthiness*, of qualitative research: *transparency*, *submission*, and *making appropriate claims* (Holliday, 2019: 51f). *Transparency* refers to the researcher's responsibility to provide an accurate, honest, and complete account of all stages of the research project. *Submission* means that the researcher needs to put aside her pre-conceived notions and let her research be data-driven to allow for unexpected findings. Lastly, *making appropriate claims* is important because often, findings cannot easily be generalised, and accuracy demands the researcher only reports how things "seem to be the case" (Holliday, 2019: 53) in their specific context. The current chapter, as well as

the following chapter presenting the results, have been written with these principles in mind.

In ethnographic research, Starfield (2019) stresses the importance of *reflexivity*, or the "researcher/writer's ability to reflect on their own positioning and subjectivity in the research and provide an explicit, situated account of their own role in the project and its influences over the findings" (p. 141). Especially in autoethnographic, or 'motherscholar' research (e.g. Choi, 2021), but also in studies like Soler and Roberts (2019), the authors clearly disclose their prior relationships to the participants and reflect on the ways these affect the research. In the present study, the researcher is in a similar situation to the participants, raising two young children in a trilingual family in Japan as a long-term foreign resident. However, the researcher did not know any of the participants before the study.

3.1.3 Research Questions

The research questions were formulated as guidance to address relevant concepts of FLP and early multilingualism in the study's specific context. The questions were deliberately kept open to allow room to explore any potentially interesting or unusual findings (Holliday, 2019). On the other hand, the questions allowed the focus of the study to remain on the parents and their views on and efforts towards their children's language development. Originally three research questions were formulated with Spolsky's (2004) framework in mind, but only the first on language ideology remained largely unchanged.

> *Research Question 1:* In trilingual families with young children living in Japan, what are parents or guardians' views on early multilingualism? What are their goals and expectations in raising their own child(ren) multilingually?

The second and third questions were eventually condensed into one to reflect the parents' experience of interconnectedness between language management, i.e. actively and consciously planning their language approach, and practice, i.e. how languages are

actually used in everyday life, and how they influence each other. This decision also better reflected the holistic approach of the research.

Research Question 2: What language strategies and resources, if any, do these parents or guardians utilize to raise their child(ren) multilingually?

To acknowledge and highlight the complexity of the parents' decision-making processes in the context of trilingualism in a monolingual society, a third question was dedicated especially to address any obstacles parents may face in the first years of raising children multilingually.

Research Question 3: What challenges, if any, have parents or guardians encountered and how have these difficulties affected their efforts to raise their child(ren) multilingually?

3.2 Data Collection Instruments and Data Analysis

Like Soler and Roberts (2022), data for this study is collected through a questionnaire and interviews. An online questionnaire was considered the best option to elicit participants' and their family members demographic and linguistic backgrounds. Interviews were chosen as the ideal instrument to "investigate phenomena that are not directly observable, such as learners' self-reported perceptions or attitudes" (Mackey & Gass, 2015: 225), and thus deemed well-suited for exploring parents' views and beliefs on early multilingualism, and to collect accounts of their experiences with their families.

3.2.1 Online Questionnaire

The online questionnaire collected information such as the participants' and their family members' age, gender, country of birth, nationality, education level, and language proficiencies. For children in the target age range between 0 and 6 years, participants additionally were asked to estimate percentages of daily input and output in each language and select the main sources of input on a multiple-choice item. The questionnaire was developed to be as inclusive as possible, as one main criticism of FLP

studies remarks on the lack of data on non-traditional families (Paradis et al., 2021), and offered in English or Japanese. The Japanese version was translated by the author and edited by a bilingual Japanese native speaker.

After careful consideration, the questionnaire was conceptualized purely to collect participants' and their families' demographic information and language profiles. Including items directly connected to the research questions, such as Likert-scale items gauging the participants' views on, for example, HL maintenance or translanguaging, might have sensitized the participants to these topics. As the individual interviews were held within ten days of the completion of the questionnaires, this priming might have inadvertently shifted the focus of the conversations to topics otherwise less salient or relevant to the participants and affected the responses (Matsumoto and Yoo, 2006).

3.2.2 Semi-Structured Online Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the 'Goldilocks' option for gathering rich and relevant data. Structured interviews would not have suited the exploratory nature of the study, as a following a rigid set of questions would not have allowed to explore topics introduced by the interviewees in further detail (Mackey & Gass, 2015). Completely unstructured interviews, on the other hand, might have been difficult to conduct effectively as a novice interviewer, and produced large volumes of only partially relevant data extremely difficult to compare in the analysis.

The interview guide was developed consulting Ballinger et al. (2022) and Tsushima & Guardado (2019). There were four parts to the interview (Appendix 2), each conceptualized to take ten to fifteen minutes, making the interview up to an hour long. First, interviewees were asked to expand on their questionnaire answers on how they acquired or learned each language, and how they became a parent in a multilingual family in Japan. The subsequent questions were divided into three sections to address each research question. Care was taken to keep the questions as balanced and open-ended as possible to avoid bias.

In the first section, participants were asked about their general views on early multilingualism and its advantages and disadvantages. Then, they were asked whether they raised their own children multilingually and the reasons why; which languages they chose and why; and what level of proficiency they hoped their children to reach eventually.

The second section revolved around language planning and asked for parents' strategies and use of resources. The initial question revolved around whether the parents had made a plan regarding language use with their children's language development in mind, and what it entailed. The participants were encouraged to freely describe their everyday language use and their child's language exposure, while the researcher asked relevant follow-up questions. Interviewees were also asked whether they ever asked for or received advice or read research on early multilingualism.

The last section contained questions about participants' memorable or noteworthy experiences that made them question or change their language approaches or encouraged them to continue following their plans. Participants were also asked how they evaluate their efforts and their children's progress so far and whether they are satisfied or, in hindsight, might have made different choices.

3.2.3 Data Analysis

The interview transcripts were analysed in an inductive, hermeneutic coding process to identify recurring themes as outlined in Holliday (2019:53f). Like Nakamura (2019), the researcher went through the transcripts line by line to identify 'chunks' of text and ascribed key words or phrases following Glaser (1978), all the while consulting and producing research notes . The researcher went back and forth between the data and codes to refine the 'initial coding' into more 'focused coding' (Nakamura, 2019: 145f.) to reach higher levels of abstraction. The most frequent focused codes were then grouped into the overarching themes discussed in Chapter 4.

3.3 Context and Participants

The study investigated tri- and multilingual families with young children living in Japan as an Asian country with an extremely small foreign population and thus highly dominant community language, Japanese. To ensure some level of meaningful comparability between the families and their approaches to languages, participants were invited to take part in the study based on the following criteria:

1) They needed to be parents or legal guardians who were raising at least one child between the ages 0 and 6 not yet attending elementary school,

2) had been living in Japan for at least the 12 months prior to the time of participating,

3) and the family members living in the same household combined can speak three or more languages.

Families	Participants	Spouses	Children	Languages
Family A	Mother (30-34) Germany	Father (35-39) Japan	Son (3) Germany-Japan	German, Japanese, (*English, French)
Family B	Father (30-34) Hong Kong	Mother (30-34) China	Son (4) Hong Kong	English, Mandarin, Japanese, (*Cantonese)
Family C	Mother (30-34) Indonesia	Father (30-34) Philippines	Daughter (1) Indonesia	English, Japanese, Indonesian, (*Tagalog)
Family D	Mother (35-39) Costa Rica	Father (35-39) Japan	Son (3) Japan	Japanese, Spanish, English
Family E	Mother (35-39) USA	Father (40-44) Peru	Daughter (11) USA Son (3) USA-Peru Daughter (2) USA-Peru	English, Spanish, Japanese, (*Portugese)

Table 3.1: Participant Families' Demographics
Note: Used/ (*Known) Languages.

Participants were recruited online through social media. N=4 mothers and n=1 father in their thirties and early forties participated in the study (Table 2 above). Four families were traditional families with two parents and one biological child between the ages of one and four. Family D was about to welcome a new daughter into their lives and Family E has three children, the oldest daughter from a previous marriage. Most of the parents are highly educated with at least one parent in each family having completed an undergraduate (n=5) or graduate degree (n=3). All couples are transnational couples who do not share their native languages except for Family C, in which both parents learnt English from an early age (0 and 3) in addition to Tagalog and Indonesian. Six parents are from Asian countries (Japan, Hong Kong, China, Indonesia, Philippines), and one each from North, Central, and South America (USA, Costa Rica, Peru) and Europe (Germany). Family B's father was born in Hong Kong, but moved to Canada as a child and considers English his native language.

3.4 Research Procedure

3.4.1 Pilot

After the study's approval by the ethics committee, the online questionnaire and interview were piloted with a personal acquaintance of the researcher who met all the inclusion criteria. The insights gained through piloting the study resulted in slight changes of the final questionnaire and interview guide, most notably rephrasing of questionnaire items to increase clarity, as well as formulating potential follow-up questions ahead of the interview. As a novice interviewer, the researcher also reviewed best interview practices again (Mackey & Gass, 2015: 226) and practiced before the actual interviews. The data generated during the pilot study was not included in the main study.

3.4.2 Main Study

For the main study, participants were recruited through postings in groups and forums targeted at foreigner communities living in Japan on the social media sites reddit and facebook. The posts outlined the study's topic, participant inclusion criteria, and that

participation entailed both completing the online questionnaire and interview. Participants were invited to click on a link to the questionnaire on the platform Jisc Online Survey. In accordance with the research proposal submitted to the ethics committee, the questionnaire was closed after ten participants had completed it. All participants chose to complete the questionnaire in English. The researcher contacted the participants via the provided email addresses to schedule an online meeting via Microsoft Teams. One participant notified the researcher that they were unable to participate in an online interview, while four others did not reply to the researcher's invitation. The remaining five participants completed their individual interviews in English. Many of the interviews flowed more organically than planned with participants freely sharing, expanding on, and introducing new topics. The researcher leaned into this more natural conversation when it happened rather than trying to strictly follow the research guide, as participants' revealing the topics they found relevant themselves was considered beneficial to the research. The interviews were recorded, and subsequently transcribed, including the pseudonymisation and redaction of proper names. The transcripts formed the basis of the qualitative analysis.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Researchers need to consider ethics at every step of designing and conducting this research project. After completing thorough ethical training, the researcher carefully planned her research under her supervisor's guidance, closely adhering to the best practice guides provided by the university. The research project was approved by the Central University Research Ethics Committee's (CUREC) before any part of the data collection (participant recruitment, online questionnaires, interviews) began.

Key considerations included obtaining informed consent and protecting the participants' and their families' privacy. Participants were presented with an information sheet before the start of the online questionnaire detailing the study's aims and planned procedure; their role and rights as participants, including how to withdraw from the study; and how the research data would be collected, processed and stored. Only after confirming that they had read and understood the information provided and consented to participating in the study, could they proceed to the questionnaire. At the start of each individual

interview, the researcher reiterated the participants' rights, from declining to answer a question to withdrawing from the study and having all their data permanently deleted. Interviewees were also asked for consent for the interview to be recorded and advised to turn off their cameras. Utmost care was taken to protect the participants' personal information and to safely collect, process, and store the data. Pseudonyms were assigned and used in all data records to minimize the identifiability of the participants, and names of people, institutions, and cities redacted in the interview transcripts.

Chapter 4: Results

After providing an overview of the five families' language constellations, LSs and practices based on the parents' questionnaire and interview responses, this chapter shows and discusses the results of the qualitative analysis of the interview transcripts. Through inductive coding, three themes emerged: 1. how parents' own backgrounds and experiences seem to influence their language ideologies, management, and practices; 2. how emotionally invested parents appear in FLP and their children's language development; 3. and how parents seem to struggle with limited support and resources in a largely monolingual societal context.

4.1 Families' Language Constellations, Strategies, and Practices

With parents from the Americas, Europe, and different Asian countries, the families vary greatly in their cultural heritage and language constellations. However, all parents have in common that they are active bi- and trilinguals and use two or three languages regularly in their everyday lives (see Appendix G). This posed some difficulties in determining where each family fits into Braun and Cline's (2010) typology. If following the authors' definitions and sorting by NLs, Families A and D with German-Japanese and Costa Rican-Japanese parent couples would not be considered trilingual, while the other families can be sorted into Type I or II. If, on the other hand, all languages at an intermediate level or above are included, many parents would be considered trilingual, and all families would fall into Type III. Either way, the insight provided by the typology seems to be limited in the context of this study.

Three families reported following a variation of the OPOL strategy: Family A in a CL-MiL pattern, Family B in a MiL-MiL pattern with school support for the MiL, and and Family E in a MiL-MiL pattern with school support for the CL. Only Families D and E deliberately chose trilingual LSs.

	Braun & Cline's (2010) Typology	Language Strategies
Family A	Type III (N/A)	OPOL Japanese & German, Japanese at daycare
Family B	Type III (Type I)	OPOL English & Mandarin, English at preschool
Family C	Type III (Type II)	English at home, Japanese outside & at daycare
Family D	Type III (N/A)	Mixed
Family E	Type III (Type I)	OPOL English & Spanish, parent – parent Spanish, Japanese at school/daycare

Table 4.1: Family Types and Language Strategies
Note: Types according to language proficiency of intermediate and above, and (Family Types according to NLs)

The families' reported language practices can be seen in the Table below. Note that the information is simplified and does not reflect that in reality, none of the multilingual parents seem to speak exclusively one language with their child at all times.

	Family A	**Family B**	**Family C**	**Family D**	**Family E**
Mother → child	German	Mandarin, (English)	(Indonesian), English	Spanish, English	English
Child → mother	Japanese	English	N/A	mixed	English
Father → child	Japanese	English	English	Japanese, Spanish	Spanish
Child → father	Japanese	English	English	mixed	Japanese
Mother ←→ father	Japanese	English	English	Spanish	Spanish
(Grandparents ←→ child)	Japanese	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Siblings	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	English
Childcare/preschool ←→ child	Japanese	English	Japanese	Japanese	Japanese

Table 4.2: Families' Language Practices

In Family A, the son (3) understood Japanese and German, but produced mainly Japanese. In Family B, the son (4) spoke mostly English and seemed to sometimes have difficulty understanding Mandarin with the mother. Family C's child (1) is not yet producing enough language to tell, but Family D's son (3) and Family E's daughter (2)

mix languages a lot, while Family E's son (3) already changes languages appropriately according to the addressee.

4.2 Parents' Backgrounds and Experiences

The parents' own backgrounds and experiences seem to influence their FLPs in multiple ways: the way they think about language and multilingualism, and the way they try to raise their children multilingually.

4.2.1 Multilingualism as the Obvious Choice

"I mean, obviously it's a good skill to have. It's a great skill to be bilingual." (Alisa)

All the parents in the study appear to find it the natural choice to raise their children multilingually. They seem convinced that raising their children multilingually is in the children's best interests. As a self-identified native bilingual in Cantonese and English who grew up in Hong Kong and moved to Canada at age nine, Brian seemed not to be able to think of any disadvantages:

> "I mean, yeah, we see benefits. In fact, right now, I mean, my wife and my son are in China in her hometown for some holidays and I'm sort of alone right now. But what I want to say with that is I think that spending two months there for summer holidays, that would not be possible if he didn't learn Mandarin. So, it's not perfect, but he can listen. He can listen very well. And he can also speak, although with a little bit of an accent, but generally he can basically handle himself in Mandarin. So yeah, we don't see any disadvantages at all. And also, even his English level at school, his teachers – the art teacher says that he's actually one of the more advanced ones at school as well, right? Yeah, not really seeing it holding him back, in that sense." (Brian)

Brian seems to value the fact that his four-year-old son has developed sufficient language skills to communicate and form connections with his extended relatives and heritage culture, while still excelling at school in English. Many parents echoed the sentiment of the importance of HL proficiency and cultural roots, but also stressed the way multilingualism is a skill that allows for much greater opportunities and freedom of choice later in life.

> "Well, it opens up opportunity. It opens up opportunity to a point, but it's just like a skill you use. It's like, for instance, someone is good at math and someone's good at language. I think it's just like a tool you can use in daily life." (Chayu)

"Well, no matter what a career they choose in their life, just having the extra languages will give them more options. So they don't have to be stuck in one place if they don't want, and they don't have to just be in Japan. They don't just have to be in a Spanish speaking country. Or English. So I guess being able to give them the freedom to, you know, go anywhere they want, is one [advantage]." (Dara)

Both Chayu and Dara view knowing multiple languages as useful. Chayu, having grown up with multiple languages from an early age in a multilingual environment, seems to consider multilingualism as a useful, but ordinary part of life. Dara, on the other hand, considers multilingualism special because she became bilingual later and was the exception among mostly monolingual people around her. She greatly benefitted from possessing a skill that made her a sought-after employee in her home country, and which allowed her to live where she wanted. Naturally, she wants her children to have the same opportunities.

Dara and other parents also talked about benefits such as increased awareness, empathy, and understanding of cultural differences:

"Also, life is so much richer when you have another language or understanding of another culture because language brings you also an opening to the culture of that language. […] I think my life is so much better because of that. Like, language in general has opened my life so much and I want that for my kids. I really do." (Dara)

"You know, I'm like, really, if you speak more than one language, you can understand the culture of another person more. And you can have a lot of empathy, and especially in Japan, I don't think there's a lot of empathy for people who are different. And one of the reasons I think that's because it's a very monolingual country, it's hard to put yourself in the position of another person if you don't know what it's like to be in another culture and language is culture, you know, so." (Ellie)

Ellie laments that the monolingual environment in Japan is not conductive for developing a deeper level of understanding and tolerance for things and people that are different. Dara focuses on the positive impact of multilingualism on her own life. She expresses the belief that multilingualism can go beyond promoting tolerance and even lead to appreciation of the differences, as it has enriched her life by broadening her horizons.

4.2.2 Management Decisions

Parents believe (or hope) that strategies that have worked for them will work for their children as well. Alisa explained that she succeeded at learning English as a second language, which is why she and her husband follow a bilingual OPOL strategy with only Japanese and HL German:

> "Like from my own experience, I think you can get to a pretty good level of English even if you don't start as a baby. And if you have German as a foundation, it's not as hard because obviously German is closer to English than Japanese, so he's going to be fine. I don't worry about him speaking English at all. Like, if he speaks German, then English is just another step further. It's not that hard. It's a lot easier, so that's why." (Alisa)

She seems convinced that her son will have no major disadvantages from learning English later, as she herself has become native-like fluent later and now uses English daily at her job without any problems. Her own experience is the template she appears to base her decisions on.

Many parents reported having improved their language abilities best through immersion by living in a country where the language was spoken by the community, and/or where they worked in that language. Three parents talked about the benefits of extended trips to their home countries and incorporated immersion strategies in their plans for their children, such as Alisa, who considers sending her son to school in Germany from middle school onwards, or Chayu and Brian, who are thinking about summers in their home countries:

> "We are planning to send her to Indonesia and the Philippines during summer holidays when she's older. I think the best exposure is definitely immersion." (Chayu)

Other management decisions directly repeat the parents' parents' management practices. Brian explains: "Every Sunday I would go to a Chinese school as well. That's like, I think, for three hours every week to learn Mandarin." And now, he is sending his own son as well and seems happy with the arrangement: "And he goes to Chinese school on Saturdays for a couple of hours here in Japan. And he speaks there, and also learns how to write." Chayu also explains her less strict and structured management approach with her own experience growing up:

> "So me and my husband, we are able to speak three languages rather fluently. Looking back to our childhood, we didn't have any particular method. Our parents also didn't force us to learn particular languages. Of course we had to learn our community language to do school work and stuff, but aside from that? We didn't do any special

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method to acquire language ability. Aside from an English course after school, but aside from that, we don't do any special method. So I think it's it will come natural that our child is also going to be picking up languages as she grows up." (Chayu)

4.2.3 Reactions to Advice

Parents accept information and advice if they align with their own ideologies or observations and reject them otherwise. Ellie, for example, is convinced that early multilingualism does affect the rate of speech development because she observed it with her son:

> "A lot of people say 'Ohh, it doesn't delay speech,' or whatever. I think it does and I can see that with my own child." (Ellie)

An example of when advice was accepted is Brian's family. They chose the OPOL approach because of a friend's advice, while Dara rejected similar advice that her husband had received:

> "I was talking to one of my friends. He is Mexican and he is also doing the same approach. He had his kids much earlier than I did, you know, and we were just talking one day, and he said 'oh yeah, that's we do at home' and I said 'oh, that sounds pretty good. We'll try it too' basically. That's basically it. We didn't really have a huge, like – we didn't do a lot of research on what to do with multilingual families or anything like that. You know, just from a friend's advice and it felt like it made sense." (Brian)

> "Some people that he knows have told him to do that. But these people that told him to do that have a different environment or a grew up in a different situation than us, and that's what I keep telling my husband. It's like yes, it works, but see, their situation is different than ours. It doesn't exactly apply to us." (Dara)

Dara's desire to raise her children trilingually did not match the suggestion, so she did not see the benefit of humouring it. Brian, on the other hand, found the approach appealing and implemented it. Many factors could have contributed to this outcome, including the fact that Dara as a language teacher is considered the authority on FLP decisions in the family, or that the source of the information was not her friend, but her husband's acquaintance. Alisa describes a similar reaction to comments she had received online ("You should speak English to your child!"), which she dismissed as advice from "probably native English speakers" that does not apply to her situation in a German-Japanese family. She stated that these negative comments did not deter her ("They're all stupid") and she remained "pretty secure" in her approach.

4.3 Emotions in FLP

FLP is a very emotional topic. This became apparent in the joy and pride the parents exuded when describing some of their children's successes and advancements in language and social development, but also in the many concerns they voiced about past, present, or potential future difficulties.

4.3.1 Comparisons

Comparisons to other families, children's monolingual or multilingual peers, siblings can be both source of great satisfaction and feelings of failure in the parents. Brian, for example, seems very proud of the fact that his son is doing well compared to his peers both in his regular international school, as well as in the school he attends during his long trip to the mother's hometown in China:

> "He's got a pretty good grasp of the English and Mandarin languages, I would say. English he is ahead of his peers, in fact, his teacher always says that all the other kids in school are not able to argue with him because he is just a lot more articulate. So that's not a problem. And even Mandarin, like, now that he's in China, it's evident that his Chinese has already gotten a lot better." (Brian)

> "The teachers were quite surprised that he was able to adapt so quickly because they have some other students from overseas that didn't know how to speak a word of Chinese, right, and that was a little bit tough." (Brian)

Brian mentions teacher's praises three times in the interview as proof that confirms his own observations, namely his son's language development progressing well. But often, comparisons go the other way, where even parents who claim to be happy overall with their children's development feel inadequate:

> "I know a family where the mum stays at home and they're Germany for like very long periods and obviously, her son speaks German. It's like fluent. He speaks fluent German and so, obviously, you know, I'm like, 'ohh, that would be nice.'" (Alisa)

Dara, as a teacher of young children herself, has many opportunities to compare her child to peers, which seems to heighten some of her concerns:

> "Most of my students at the age of three years can count in one or both languages, in English or English and Japanese. My son cannot do this yet, so this is one of those things where I get concerned about. Is this a language thing? Or if it's a development thing?" (Dara)

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"It's a complete mess because he is speaking all three languages at once. He's mixing and whenever he is with people who only speak one of the languages. People cannot understand everything, he says." (Dara)

4.3.2 Regrets

Almost all the parents in the study voiced some regrets about their FLPs up to now. Even Brian, who seemed so content in his assessment earlier, admitted:

"I mean, if you put Cantonese and Japanese in there, then there's always a feeling that we could've done more. If I'd known that he was so good at languages, maybe I should've used Cantonese with him. But it's kind of too late now." (Brian)

Such reports of feelings of failure reveal the deep sense of responsibility parents feel to help their children succeed in learning multiple languages. Two parents independently called themselves "lazy" for not trying harder:

"I'm a bit too lazy to look for books on Amazon." (Brian)

"So I wanted to actually raise my oldest with Spanish first. That's what I really wanted to do, but I just didn't. I was lazy and I regret it now. I was really just lazy about it and if I could go back in time, I would have spoken just Spanish to her and that my husband at the time would have spoken just English and she would have had, you know, English exposure, like knowing now." (Ellie)

While Brian's comment perhaps entails a little guilt at not prioritizing his son's literacy development and leaving the lion's share in that regard to his wife, Ellie's confession about her regrets raising her oldest daughter cuts more deeply as she failed to align her ideology with her management and practices that affects the daughter to this day.

4.3.3 Future Worries

Some parents are concerned about problems they are afraid of manifesting themselves in the future, such as difficulties with schoolwork or fitting in. One major concern mentioned by multiple parents is the possibility of the child rejecting a language at some point. Many of Alisa's current efforts centre around her worry that pushing the MiL too hard might lead to her son rejecting it:

"I don't want German to be like this chore, you know, or this annoying thing that his mum makes him do, you know?" (Alisa)

"But I don't want to like force him into anything like. My hope obviously, is that he naturally grasps how amazing it is [to be bilingual]" (Alisa)

Alisa worries that being too strict might lead her son to reject the HL, which is why she does not, for example, push him too hard to reply to her in German, or forbid Japanese TV or shows outright. She hopes to establish and maintain a positive disposition towards the German language and culture in her son while she still can:

"Because there's no resistance to German. I know that kids, they get to some stage where they're like: 'Mum, please.' I don't know when they go to school or something, and probably someone says then, 'Why does your Mum speak this weird language to you?' So definitely that's not there yet. But I hope that we can kind of pre-empt this by making it a fun language or, you know, not something to be too embarrassed about." (Alisa)

4.4 Limited Support and Resources

Books and TV seem the most easily accessible resources to bolster MiL exposure. All families reported owning books in multiple languages. Parents seemed not to stick to their 'assigned' LS languages when reading, but seemed happy to read in any language they were able to. Rules around TV time were usually stricter, with limited screen time policies and parents heavily encouraging HL programmes and shows.

Other resources, however, seemed more difficult to come by, and many of the parents' worries seemed exacerbated by the perceived lack of support and resources. Dara lamented the lack of reliable information and guidance for parents of trilingual families:

"I really feel like I don't know what I'm doing. Like, I have an idea. But I'm also using trial and error. I don't know if what I'm doing is going to work. I can only know this in a few years." (Dara)

4.4.1 Time

All parents reported that they and their spouses worked full-time. Especially the parents mainly or solely responsible for transmitting HLs expressed concerns about not providing enough exposure to their children. Alisa explains why she chose to focus on only two languages instead of three:

"I read somewhere once that ideally if you want to raise your child bilingually, I think 20% of the day should be in the secondary language. I'm like, that's only realistic if he

dreams in German. Because he's in daycare and I work and I can't. I'm pretty much the only source. So I can't speak English to him as well because that's going to take away from the 20% of German I'm trying to ideally provide to him during the day because I would be the only source of German and English. Which like? It's not realistic." (Alisa)

Instead of giving up on a third language, Ellie is planning on making more time by reducing her hours so she can spend more time with her children:

"It's not good enough. I want it to be better. I know it's on me, but I want to have more time to be able to like, truly teach my kids and like, expose them a lot. Like the amount of Japanese exposure they get is way more than Spanish and English and I want to make the most of the time that I have at home with them." (Ellie)

Her comment shows her dedication to her children, as well as the guilt of not providing her children with what she seems to consider the best upbringing. These examples illustrate how parents are faced with difficult decisions about how much they want and realistically can prioritise their children's HL development.

4.4.2 School

Schools and activities in languages other than Japanese are often not accessible or available. Only Family B send their child to an international preschool, while all other parents chose local Japanese daycares and schools. The most often cited reasons were tuition, commuting distance, but also loss of opportunity to make local friends and be part of the local community.

"Too far away. It's also very expensive, and to me it's also more important that he's part of the community here, that he has friends here." (Alisa)

The quality of international schools also seemed to be a concern for some of the teacher parents:

"I don't feel confident that it will be the best option, to be honest. So even if I had the money, I as of right now, I think Japanese school will be better because a lot of the schools here hire, and this is very specific to Japan, they hire teachers that are not teachers." (Dara)

Some parents mentioned plans to enrol their children in supplementary classes, such as HL classes on the weekends, especially for literacy practice and cultural connection. Family B's four-year-old son already attended such a Saturday class for Mandarin, and

his father Brian expressed interest in finding a Japanese class for him as well. Alisa and her husband are planning to send their son to weekend classes for HL support when he is a little older, especially to practice writing, and have already done some research. However, Ellie expresses her dissatisfaction at the options offered in her area:

> "I really wish that there were more like much more communicative options available. I wish that they were much more like immersion style and just, you know, lots of projects and interesting things. And I send my daughter, I try to send her every break at least once to English camp. It's only like three or four days, but she goes and spends a night and like does a whole bunch of activities in English. And you know, I just wish that there were more fun things in English or Spanish for kids around here. There's nothing in Spanish. But I wish that there was at least something in English too." (Ellie)

4.4.3 Community Support

While parents expressed their relief and appreciation for the daycare staff as being generally friendly and supportive, they mostly shared stories about the struggle of feeling isolated due to distance from extended family, and the lack of local cultural or HL communities. Chayu is the exception with her family in Indonesia and the Philippines being the geographically closest and visiting multiple times a year:

> "Since she was born, we've been meeting them every three months. The other relatives probably every two months, I think. I feel like until May, we always have someone in the house, like some relative just come visit us. Especially because they want to see the baby." (Chayu)

Other children mostly see their foreign grandparents on video calls, with rarer visits and trips in person. While Alisa's son's grandparents live in a separate apartment in the same house and see each other multiple times a week, he sees the German grandparents in person only around once or twice a year. Alisa seemed excited about the planned upcoming trip:

> "I hope like there's a positive connection to Germany and then my parents and then just generally his time there." (Alisa)

Deterrents for not going more often are the costs, coordinating time off from work, and the inconvenience of the long flight. And while Alisa says she has friends who are also German mothers married to Japanese husbands, the positive effect on MiL exposure is

limited as her son and their children play in Japanese. Nevertheless, She still thinks play dates are beneficial to normalize her son's experience:

> "Yeah, but, but I hope he kind of sees, you know, I'm not the only weird mum speaking German." (Alisa)

4.5 Discussion

Like almost all parents in the studies reviewed in Chapter 3, all the parents in the present study aspire to raise their children at least bilingually and generally display a positive deposition towards multilingualism. Like in Tsushima and Guardado (2019), the main focus for most immigrant or mixed-couple parents seemed to lie on HL maintenance to nurture their children's connection to their cultural roots and ability to communicate with extended family. Additionally, parents believe knowledge of multiple languages to be advantageous for future academic and career opportunities.

Many parents claimed to follow a specific FLP strategy. Family A reported following OPOL, and Family B MiL at home plus CL outside of the home. However, they also spoke about the difficulties for some parents to stick to one language (e.g. Chayu and Brian's wife), similar to what Lomeu Gomez (2020) reported about the family he observed. Chayu expressed being content with an approach that feels 'natural' as a family, like the parents in Ballinger et al. (2022). Alisa, too, said she tried not too be too strict, partly out of worry that pushing HLs too much could lead to rejection of HL and culture, as happened with the daughter in Mirvahedi and Hosseini (2023). To increase quality and quantity of HL input, some parents also explicitly choose to expose their children to books or TV/internet videos in a particular language (Ahooja et al., 2022); and try to organize regular trips to visit or calls with extended family; or send them to HL schools on the weekend (Arnaus Gil et al., 2021).

Despite all the parents' efforts, the MaL becoming the dominant language can already be observed at this young age. This phenomenon is well-documented in the literature for children who start attending local daycare facilities and schools like in this study. The teacher parents in this study all mentioned translanguaging, although they differed in their attitudes, ranging from acceptance as a natural part of multilingual families

(Ragnarsdóttir, 2023) to worry about whether it might hinder language acquisition (Ballinger, 2022).

The parents in general reported feeling a great deal of pressure to enable their children to succeed. Parents were worried and stressed about their past and present FLP choices and how they would affect their children's language development, despite often not having the means to meet their own standards of perfect multilingual parenting. Despite expressing awareness that each family situation is different, the parents tend to compare themselves and their children to others. While some felt supported in their efforts by their community, others stressed the lack of resources for HL support. However, unlike in Tsushima & Guardado (2019), none of the parents have dropped their FLP goals and efforts yet.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This paper explored multilingual parents' thoughts and experiences of raising their children, between one to four years of age, with two or more languages in Japan.

6.1 Answering the Research Questions

To answer RQ 1, the parents interviewed in this study displayed an overall positive view on early multilingualism. The main reason for wanting their child to become at least bilingual was for them to have the freedom of choice of where they want to live, study, and work later in life, but also to establish a connection to the family and culture of their parents' home countries. Some parents voiced concerns about the rate of acquisition and ultimate attainment compared to monolinguals. Nevertheless, most parents hoped their children would not only be fluent and literate in two languages, but at a level that would enable them to complete tertiary education.

Regarding RQ 2, almost all parents said they had agreed on a language strategy with their spouse early on. Two families used three languages at home in their daily lives, while the others prioritized two languages. Three participants reported following the OPOL strategies, while the others used MiL in the home or mixed approaches. Parents put different amounts of thought into the choice of their language strategies with some taking a more natural, less structured approach. The parents reported using a variety of resources to help with language acquisition, such as books, TV, games, and weekend lessons. Four out of the five families decided on local childcare and schools in Japanese.

RQ 3 addressed challenges parents experienced. The parents seemed to be extremely emotionally invested in their children's language development. While they delighted in their children's successes, the parents felt responsible for each perceived failure and talked at length about their regrets of past decisions and present and future concerns. Parents also wished that some resources were more available and accessible, such as high quality affordable international schools.

6.2 Limitations of the Findings and Suggestions of Further Areas of Study

This study only provides a glimpse into the lived realities of a small number of trilingual families in Japan. It is not representative of the experiences of all, or even the majority of foreign or international couples raising young children in Japan. All participants were educated and fluent English speakers, and three are or were foreign language teachers. No participants were from China, Vietnam, or South Korea, who make up more than half of the foreign residents in Japan (2020 Population Census). One potential reason could be hesitance due to language barrier, as the initial questionnaire and interviews were only offered in English and Japanese. Another might be the primary recruitment of participants on English-speaking online communities that are not necessarily frequented by all foreign residents alike.

This research collected data solely through self-reporting methods. While written and spoken personal accounts through questionnaires and interviews constitute rich and valuable data, triangulating the personal accounts with data from observations or language tests would increase the validity of the findings. Additionally, in order to study the effect of FLP on multilingual acquisition, development, and outcome, longitudinal research over many years is needed.

The complex nature of FLP requires more in-depth investigation. Both more insights from qualitative studies with a holistic approach of investigating the language negotiations of a multilingual family and quantitative studies focusing on isolated influencing factors are needed especially in trilingual contexts. Parents' interest in the language outcome of their FLPs calls for studies documenting the dynamic language acquisition processes of individuals, with regressions and stagnations, and outcomes over time, in different contexts.

6.3 Concluding Remarks

This study provided insight into actively bi- and trilingual parents' views on multilingualism, and their efforts and struggles to raise their own children with two or more languages, in a monolingual country. The parents' own experiences of how they became multilingual seemed to influence their beliefs, strategies, practices for their own children's language acquisition (King & Fogle, 2006). The qualitative analysis revealed

the importance these parents placed on their children's language developments. The parents directly seemed to feel responsible for their children's successes and failures, and were quick to blame themselves despite the odds being stacked against them in a monolingual society with few opportunities for HL exposure other than the parents themselves (Capobianco, 2022). However, despite the stress and extra effort, none of the parents seemed willing to give up, believing they could make a difference in their children's lives (Nakamura, 2019), as all shared the goal to give their the freedom to choose where they want to go and what kind of life they want to lead. As Ellie put it, if she as a parent has the opportunity and the means to raise her children multilingually: "Why wouldn't I?"

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Appendix A: SCOPUS Search

Operator	Key terms	Number of results 2014-2018	Number of results 2019-2023
	"family language policy"	51	226
AND	parent* OR mother OR father OR caretaker OR caregiver	39	177
AND	bilingual*	22	92
OR	trilingual*	1	5

Table A.1: Initial SCOPUS search of peer-reviewed articles in English

Key Terms 1	Key Terms 2	Number of Results 2019-2023
"family language policy" AND parent* OR mother OR father OR caretaker OR caregiver	AND trilingual*	5
	AND multilingual*	72
	AND plurilingual*	4
	AND trilingual* OR multilingual* OR plurilingual*	77

Table A.2: Refined SCOPUS search of peer-reviewed articles in English

Appendix B: Information Sheet (Online Questionnaire Welcome Page)

Welcome & Information for Participants

Welcome and thank you for your interest in participating in my MSc dissertation study. My name is Isabella Mueller and I am a graduate student at the University of Oxford, Department of Education.

You have been invited to take part in this study because you

1) have been living in Japan for at least one year,

2) are a parent or legal guardian raising at least one young child between the ages 0 and 6, and

3) you live in a multilingual home where you and your family members combined can speak three or more languages.

Please read the following information before you decide whether you wish to take part.

What is the research about?

We have designed this study to investigate multilingual parents' views and experiences of raising children with more than one language in a mostly monolingual society like Japan. We are interested in what you think about early multilingualism, whether you are trying to raise your child(ren) multilingually, and if so, what language strategies you use in your family, what resources you rely on, and what your experience so far has been.

What do I have to do?

We are inviting you to complete an online questionnaire (ca. 10 min) about you and your family and what languages each of you speak, and to participate in an online interview (ca. 30-60min) on Microsoft Teams to talk about your experience as a multilingual family and raising children multilingually in Japan.

Do I have to take part? What are the risks and benefits of taking part?

It is your decision to take part in this study. You can decide to stop participating at any time and if you do your data will be withdrawn from the study. Please be aware that we will take all possible steps to ensure your privacy. Nevertheless, we cannot rule out the chance that you might be identified through the information you provide. Your participation would greatly benefit me as the researcher in writing my dissertation and help parents in situations like yours looking for research-based information on how to raise children with multiple languages.

Who is organizing the research?

The research is conducted as an independent master's dissertation project supervised by Dr Elizabeth Wonnacott at the Department of Education, University of Oxford. The study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Oxford's Central University Ethics Committee for research involving human participants.

What happens to the data collected?

The questionnaire data is collected via Jisc Online Surveys, an online platform on which upholds a high standard of data security (https://www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/security/). The interview on Microsoft Teams will be recorded and transcribed. To protect your privacy, we encourage you to turn off your camera during the interview and will delete the original recordings after transcripts are completed and pseudonymised.

Research data will be stored securely by Oxford University. It will be kept for a minimum of 3 years after publication of our research findings, or longer if you agree to participate in a follow-up study (optional). If you agree to be contacted for a follow-up study within the next 3 years, your contact information will be retained. Otherwise, names and email addresses will be deleted immediately after conclusion of this study. Responsible members of the University of Oxford and funders may be given access to data for monitoring and/or audit of the study to ensure we are complying with guidelines, or as otherwise required by law.

What will happen to the results of this research?

The results of this research will form the basis of an Oxford master's dissertation. Some results may be published in relevant academic journals and presented at conferences. Summaries of the results may also be shared with other interested parties such as multilingual parents. If you wish to obtain a copy of the published results, please inform the researcher.

Contact for Further Information or Follow-up

Should you have any further questions about this research, please feel free to contact me, Isabella Mueller, isabella.mueller@ssho.ox.ac.uk. In the unlikely event you have a concern about any aspect of the project, please contact us via email: elizabeth.wonnacott@education.ox.ac.uk. We will do our best to acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how we intend to deal with it. If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the chair of the Central University Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford (using the contact details below) who will seek to resolve the matter as soon as possible.

Chair, Social Sciences and Humanities Inter-Divisional Research Ethics Committee;

Email: ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk; Address: Research Services, University of Oxford, Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2JD.

Appendix C: Consent Form (Online Questionnaire Page 1)

Page 1: Declaration of Consent

I confirm that I have read the information available in this information sheet. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	□
I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason during the experiment. I understand as well that my data can only be deleted upon request until 27 July 2023, after which point it may have been included in the dissertation.	□
I understand that relevant sections of the data collected during the study may be looked at by individuals from University of Oxford and from regulatory authorities, where it is relevant to taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my records.	□
(optional) I am interested in participating in a follow-up study within the next 3 years. I give permission for my data including my contact information to be retained after the conclusion of the present study and that my contact details can be used to send me an invitation to participate in a follow-up study. If I participate in a follow-up study, Oxford University may store the data collected in the present study for longer than 3 years. I can retract this permission at any time.	□ Yes, I am interested. □ No, I am NOT interested.

Appendix D: Online Questionnaire

Page 2: Please answer a few questions about yourself.

2) Relationship to the child(ren) in your family
- Mother
- Father
- Legal Guardian
- Other (Specify)

3) Gender
- Female
- Male
- Other (Specify)

4) Age
- under 20
- 20 - 24
- 25 - 29
- etc.

5) Country of Birth

6) Nationality
- Same as above
- Other (Specify)

7) What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?
- High School
- Trade/Technical/Vocational Training
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctorate
- Other (Specify)

8) Which languages do you know?

	Language	At what age did you start learning the language?	How well do you speak each language? (beginner/intermediate/advanced/native or native-like)
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

In case you speak more than five languages, please list your additional languages here.

Who are you raising your child(ren) with?

9) Are you raising your child(ren) together with your spouse or partner or another adult (e.g. a relative) in the same household?
  • Yes
  • No (Jump to p. 4)

Page 3: Please answer some questions about the other adult(s) living in your household.

Please answer some questions about the main person you are raising a child/children with in your home.

10) His/her/their relationship to you
  • Husband
  • Wife
  • Partner
  • Other (Specify)

11) Relationship to the child(ren) in your family
  • Mother
  • Father
  • Legal Guardian
  • Other (Specify)

12) Gender
  • Female
  • Male
  • Other (Specify)

13) Age
  • under 20
  • 20 - 24
  • 25- 29
  • etc.

14) Country of Birth

15) Nationality
  • Same as above
  • Other (Specify)

16) What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?
  • High School
  • Trade/Technical/Vocational Training

- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctorate
- Other (Specify)

17) Which languages does he/she/they know?

	Language	At what age did he/she/they start learning the language?	How well does he/she/they speak each language? (beginner/intermediate/advanced/native or native-like)
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

In case he/she/they speak more than five languages, please list the additional languages here.

Please answer whether any other adults live in your household.

18) Do any additional adults (e.g. grandparents) live in the same household?
- Yes
- No

If yes, please specify their relationship to the child(ren) and which languages they speak.

Page 4: Please answer some questions about your children.

1st Child between the ages 0 and 6

19) His/her/their relationship to you
- Daughter
- Son
- Other (Specify)

20) Age
- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6

21) Country of Birth
   • Japan
   • Other (Specify)

22) Nationality
   • Same as above
   • Other (Specify)

Languages

23) Language 1

24) At what age was your child first exposed to this language?
   • 0
   • 1
   • 2
   • 3
   • 4
   • 5
   • 6

25) In daily life, how much of what your child hears or listens to is in this language (out of 100%)?
   • 10% or less
   • 20%
   • 30%
   • etc.
   • 90% or more

26) In daily life, how much of what your child says is in this language (out of 100%)?
   • 10% or less
   • 20%
   • 30%
   • etc.
   • 90% or more

27) Please select all the opportunities your child has to experience and/or interact in this language.
   • With you
   • With the other parent/adult in your home
   • With sibling(s)
   • With other relative(s)
   • With friend(s)
   • In childcare/preschool etc.
   • Through media (books, TV, music, internet)

• Through travel
• Other (Please specify)

---

28) Language 2
  • None
  • Yes
If you selected Yes, please specify:

(SAME QUESTIONS AS WITH LANGUAGE 1 (24-27))

28.1) Language 3
  • None
  • Yes
If you selected Yes, please specify:

(SAME QUESTIONS AS WITH LANGUAGE 1 (24-27))

Please list any additional languages, if any.

Please answer whether any other children live in your household.

29) Do any additional children between 0 and 6 years of age live in your home?
  • Yes
  • No (Jump to p. 7)

Page 5: Please answer some questions about your children.

2nd Child between the ages 0 and 6

(SAME QUESTIONS AS WITH 1ST CHILD (19-29))

Page 6: Please answer some questions about your children.

3rd Child between the ages 0 and 6

(SAME QUESTIONS AS WITH 1ST CHILD (19-28))

51) Do any additional children between 0 and 6 years of age live in your home?
  • No
  • Yes

If you selected Yes, please specify: (For example: daughter, 3 years old, Japanese, English, Portugese)

Page 7: Please answer some questions about your children.

Please answer whether any other children live in your household.

52) Do any children above 6 years of age live in your home?
  • No
  • Yes
If you selected Yes, please specify: (For example: son, 7 years old, elementary school, Japanese, Cantonese, English)

Page 8: Contact Information for the online interview

After the completion of this survey, you will be invited to participate in an online interview to talk about how you manage and use languages in your multilingual family.

53) Please tell me the email address I can contact you with to set up the online interview.

54) Please re-enter your email address.

Page 9: Thank you

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete the survey!

I will contact you via the email address you provided to set up an online interview. If you do not receive an invitation within three days, please contact

isabella.mueller@ssho.ox.ac.uk.

I am looking forward to speaking with you!

Appendix E: Interview Guide

1) Introduction (5min):

1. Introduce myself and the project
2. Briefly explain procedure of the interview
3. Remind participants of their rights
4. Ask for oral consent to record the interview

2) Parents' backgrounds (5-10min)

Using the questionnaire answers as a starting point, the interviewer asks participants to expand on their answers to elicit narrative accounts of

1. How did the parents acquire or learn the languages they speak?
2. How did the participants become a parent in a multilingual family in Japan?

3) Views on early multilingualism (10-15min):

1. What do you think are the benefits of a child growing up multilingually?
2. What are the disadvantages?
3. Are you raising your own child(ren) multilingually? Why/why not?
4. Why the specific number and combination of languages?
5. How accomplished do you hope they will become in each language?

4) Strategies and resources (10-15min):

1. Did you (and your partner) make a plan to help your children acquire multiple languages? If yes, what does it entail and why did you make these choices?

   (Potential follow-up questions:

   1. Who uses what language at home? How do you encourage or enforce this?
   2. In which language is media consumed? (TV/videos, books, games, internet, etc.)
   3. Are you sending or planning to send your child(ren) to international school/local school/language school?

4. Do(es) your child(ren) have any opportunities to interact in languages other than Japanese outside of the immediate family (extended family, family friends, cultural community, etc.)?)

2. Have you ever asked/searched for advice or information on how to raise children multilingually?

3. If applicable, have you and your partner discussed your views on early multilingualism, what it means to both of you, and decided on your preferred approach?

5) Challenges (10-15min):

1. Have you ever experienced difficulties following the language strategy/ies you (and your partner) decided on?

2. How are your children responding to your language efforts so far?

3. Have you ever changed or thought about changing your plans or way of raising your child(ren) multilingually? If yes, why?

4. Have you (or family members) ever experienced a situation or interaction that made you feel the people around you support you in raising your children multilingually?

5. Have you ever felt discouraged by others?

6. Overall, are you satisfied with your efforts and your child(ren)fs language development thus far or are there some things you would have liked to have known earlier or had done differently?

6) Conclusion of the interview (5 min)

1. Ask participant if they have any questions

2. Thank you

Appendix F: CUREC Approval

Appendix G: Parents' Language Profiles

UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

Department of Education, Social Sciences Division
University of Oxford

12 June 2023

Research ethics approval

Research title: Family Language Policy of Trilingual Families in Japan: How Parents Try to Raise Multilingual Children in a Monolingual Society

Research ethics reference: EDUC_C1A_23_227

The above application has been considered on behalf of the Education Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) in accordance with the University's procedures for ethical approval of all research involving human participants.

I am pleased to confirm that, on the basis of the information provided to the DREC, ethics approval has now been granted for this study.

Please note the following:

- **Personal data**: It is the responsibility of the PI to ensure that all personal data collected during the project is managed in accordance with the University's guidance and legal requirements.
- **In-person activities**: Any data collection involving in-person interactions with participants must have an up-to-date fieldwork risk assessment in place; further guidance is available from the Safety Office's website.
- **Amendments**: Please notify the committee if you intend to make any amendments to the information in your ethics application as submitted at date of this approval, as all changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. The amendment form is available on the SSH IDREC webpage.

We welcome feedback on your experience of the ethical review process and suggestions for improvement. Please email any comments you might have to staff.curec@education.ox.ac.uk / student.curec@education.ox.ac.uk or ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Faidra Faitaki, AFHEA
Departmental Lecturer in Applied Linguistics
DREC Member

Family A Parents' Language Profiles

Alisa: active trilingual			Akito: passive bi/trilingual		
German from birth, native	First language acquisition	Used daily at home	Japanese from birth, native	First language acquisition	Used daily with wife & as CL
English from age 4, native-like	Formal education & media	Used daily at work	English from age 12, intermediate	Formal education	Not used daily
Japanese from age 14, native-like	Formal education & immersion	Used daily with husband & as CL	German from age 30, beginner	Self-study	Used minimally with child
French from age 12, beginner	Formal education	Not used			

Family B Parents' Language Profiles

Brian: active trilingual			Beth: active trilingual		
Cantonese from birth, native	First language acquisition	Occasionally	Mandarin from birth, native	First language acquisition	Used daily with son
English from age 6, native-like	Formal education & immersion from age 9 (international move)	Used daily at home	English from age 16, advanced	Formal Education & immersion (university abroad)	Used daily at home
Japanese from age 22, advanced	Formal education & immersion	Used daily at work	Japanese from age 24, intermediate	Formal education & immersion	Used daily as CL

Family C: Parents' Language Profiles

Chayu: active trilingual	Calvin: active bi/trilingual

Indonesian from birth, native	First language acquisition	Used occasionally with family	English from birth, native	First language acquisition	Used daily in the home
English from age 3, native	Formal education & immersion	Used daily in the home	Tagalog from birth, native	First language acquisition	No data
Japanese from age 12, advanced	Formal education & immersion	Used daily at work	Japanese from 21, advanced	Formal education & immersion	No data

Family D: Parents' Language Profiles

Dara: active bi/trilingual			Daisuke: active bi/trilingual		
Spanish from birth, native	First language acquisition		Japanese from birth, native	First language acquisition	
English from age 12, advanced	Formal education & immersion		Spanish from age 20, native-like	Formal education & immersion	
Japanese, intermediate	Formal education & immersion		English, intermediate	Formal education	

Family E: Parents' Language Profiles

Ellie: active bi/trilingual			Emilio: active bi/trilingual		
English from birth, native	First language acquisition	Used daily at work & with children	Spanish from birth, native	First language acquisition	Used daily at home
Spanish from age 15, advanced		Used daily with husband	Portuguese from age 30, advanced		No data
Japanese from age 27, beginner		Used minimally as CL	Japanese from age 30, intermediate		Used daily at work

Appendix H: Excerpt from Interview E Transcript

I= Interviewer; E= Participant (Ellie, American Mum)

[excerpt starts here]

I: What do you think are the benefits of a child growing up multilingually?

E: Umm, I think, you know, when I look at in the US, a lot of like Mexican families -. A lot of Mexican children, they grow up-. I lived in a neighbourhood where there were -. So, we lived near this university that had a crazy high like graduation rate and a crazy high like completion rate like more than other schools in the city and in the area. And it was a primarily Mexican school. And I was like, dang, these kids are so smart or, you know, like, they're so smart because they're speaking two languages from birth. And so, I did a lot of research into it and yeah, I mean kids who are bilingual, they do have higher-. You know, I don't wanna say they're smarter, but I think they do better because they can think more quickly because their brains are always thinking in two different languages. So, and then if you look at countries that have multiple languages like in Europe, always they have, you know, really good education systems and they're just really smart. And so, I don't know, just thinking about that. I'm like, why wouldn't I-? Why wouldn't I want my kid to be smarter? If you speak more than one language, you can understand the culture of another person more. And you can have a lot of empathy, and especially in Japan, I don't think there's a lot of empathy for people who are different. And one of the reasons I think that is because it's a very monolingual country. It's hard to put yourself in the position of another person if you don't know what it's like to be in another culture and language is culture, you know, so.

I: Do you think-. Those are some really great points, by the way. Do you think there's any disadvantages of growing up with more than one language, like from an early age?

E: I think in the beginning, yeah, because you know, a lot of people say 'Ohh, it doesn't delay speech' or whatever. I think it does and I can see that with my own child. My first, she was monolingual first. Umm, because her dad is American and so am I.

I: Yeah. So she was born in America?

E: And so, yeah, she was born in the US.

I: Ah, OK.

E: We moved to Japan when she was five, and so she didn't have Japanese from birth. Now she's like native level because she's had it since she was five and she's fine in Japanese and English, but she talked really early. Like, she spoke early, she had a huge vocabulary. When I think back to when she was the same age that my son is now, she could talk circles around him, you know? And so, I think that one disadvantage is it can look like your child is behind because my son doesn't have as expansive of a vocabulary in English as my daughter did. But when I think about it, he knows one word in three different languages and he knows, like, so many. Maybe his vocabulary is shorter, but

across all of the languages, he knows that word, like, those words, and how to say it, you know, in three different languages. So, I think maybe that's one disadvantage and why people think that, you know, they should really focus more on one language. I think another disadvantage when they grow up is not necessarily like an identity crisis, but I think you know, umm, my daughter, she feels like she'll never be Japanese, right? But she speaks Japanese natively. So it's 'who-?' Like, 'Who am I? What's my, like? What's my culture?'

I: 'Where do I belong?' Yeah.

E: Yeah, exactly. So, I think that might be, you know, one disadvantage. I mean, you could mitigate that with other things, but you know, just like, you don't really belong in either one because maybe you're not as strong in either as you would be if you were just monolingual.

I: It's a big topic in multilingual language acquisition. Identity formation, yeah. Alright. And you, well, you first started monolingually, but then you came to Japan, and now you're raising your children multilingually, right? Because (on the questionnaire) you said like it was a fairly equally distributed among the input in English, Japanese and Spanish?

E: Yeah. So, I wanted to actually raise my oldest with Spanish first. That's what I really wanted to do, but I just didn't. I was lazy and I regret it now. I was really just lazy about it and if I could go back in time, I would have spoken just Spanish to her and my husband at the time would have spoken just English and she would have had, you know, English exposure, like knowing what I do now. But when she was born, I didn't. I in my beginning at university, like, I wasn't looking at all the research and everything. Then she was already like, you know, three to four years old. And by that time, I don't know why. I just felt like maybe it's too late and so I just kind of gave up on it. Umm, but then when we moved to Japan, I just kind of threw her into the deep end because it was, you know, the only choice and she struggled for a little bit. But then she picked up Japanese really relatively quickly. She joined the basketball club and she made friends. And then with my two youngest, we had no choice but to do one parent- one language, because I wanted them to learn English and that's how I wanted them to be able to communicate with their older sister. And then my husband, that was -. The only language he had was Spanish to use with them. So, with my with my two youngest, it was just kind of natural that happened that way. So, like I use English with them. So, I use a little bit of Spanish. Sometimes there's a teeny bit of Spanish, but mostly, like 99% of what I speak to them is English. And then my husband is just Spanish with them only. And then with my oldest, my husband speaks Spanish to her as well, and from us being together for five years, now her Spanish comprehension is like, amazing, but she responds Japanese to him.

I: So yeah, he speaks intermediate level-like Japanese, so it works right?

E: Yeah. So he can understand her when she speaks Japanese to him and she can understand him when he speaks Spanish to her, but they don't respond to the same language.

I: Yeah, that is so interesting.

E: Yeah. It's, it's-.

I: Yeah, but yeah, that's communication at work.

E: Yeah. Yeah, you gotta do what you gotta do. But my my son, he's the most interesting one because he truly has separated all three languages. My little one, she's two. She just turned two. She's still kind of like mixes them, you know, like if she knows a word and she doesn't know the word in another language, she'll just use that word. But in the sentence, you know, so she'll say: 'Mommy, I want 'suito'!' Because she doesn't know how to say water bottle. But my son, he knows, he knows. Like if he's at school, he'll say, 'Sensei, suito', or if he's with my husband, he'll say 'Papa, botella de agua,' or if he's with me? 'Mommy, I want water bottle.' So he knows how to separate all of them, like even the accent and everything. Everything is separate for him.

I: Wow, so he doesn't mix at all.

E: No, not anymore.

I: He used to, but not anymore?

E: He used to, yeah, he used to be just like the little one where he would just-. But now, yeah, he doesn't. So now he's pretty good about separating them, and I test him sometimes, too. I'll test him sometimes. I'll say something in Spanish, I'll say, 'si'. And he'll go 'no' (Spanish accent), like he'll change the accent. And I'm like, 'yes', and he'll go, 'no' (English accent), like, you know.

I: Yeah, that's clever. Do you use any or did you use any special techniques or strategies to get him to stop switching, or did it just happen on its own?

E: I think I would repeat it back in English.

I: In one language.

E: Yeah, and my husband would, too. Like, we would understand him. But I wouldn't say what he said. Like, if he said, like, he'll say like 'kore', I'll say: 'This. Ohh, you want this?'

I: You model for him.

E: I'll just, like, pass it back to him, and then eventually he kind of, you know. 'Ohh, that's not English. That's, you know. Ah, that's that's Japanese.' OK, I also use the word, so I'll say 'nihongo? Nu-uh. English? OK, English.' And then if he's talking to his dad, I'll be like 'Espanol? OK', so he knows. Like 'nihongo', 'English.'

I: He has the terms.

E: Umm yeah, so that because then, if he says a word to me, that-. He learns it, right, and maybe he doesn't quite understand which language it is. I'll tell him. So he'll say-. And I'll say -. Like, we were talking about animals. We have this book, and his dad will look at the book of the animals. But he'll say the Japanese or the Spanish word. And I think-, I forgot what word it was. Oh, it was a fox, and I'm showing him all the words and he was saying them in English, like 'elephant, there.' And then he got to fox. And he said 'zorro.' And I was like 'no, Espanol. Zorro Espanol. English fox, you know, say Fox,' and then he's like, 'ohh, OK,' that word is Spanish.

I: Wow, that's interesting. It would be interesting to see if it with your younger daughter if the development is the same, like if it follows the pattern.

E: I think she's smarter than him.

I: Or maybe just more language affinity.

E: Yeah, I think she picks up more with him, like, naturally. So I feel I feel bad for him because he just had to figure it out, you know? But she already has a model to look at. So she just copies it to her language. It's actually a lot quicker than his is. She's talking in longer sentences and she's kind of differentiating them a little bit easier than he did because she can just model him, you know, and she just looks at what he's doing, cuz they're only 18 months apart. Umm.

I: And you chose Japanese school for all of your kids, right? Or Japanese childcare?

E: Yeah.

I: Any particular reason?

E: Yeah, cause I thought about putting my kids in an English preschool cause I have a friend. My husband, actually he cleans, he cleans his school for him and I could put both of my kids there. It's like a English hoikuen. I could've put them there easily, but I remember my daughter. How much she really struggled because she just started right into first grade when we moved here. She had, like, a six-month period where I she would have been in kindergarten in the US, but here was like, they don't start school.

I: Because of the different school year start, yeah.

E: Yeah. So we just kept her home for that six months and looking back, I wish I would have put her in a preschool for, you know, those six months or whatever. But whatever. I didn't. But I remember how much she struggled. You know, she struggled so much and not as bad as like, you know, if the kid would enter in like third grade or fourth grade, right. Like first grade, at least everyone's like that. Nobody knows how to write. No one can read, so she just had to catch up with speaking. But I was like, no, I don't want her to deal with that, or I don't want my younger ones to deal with that. So I said if I put them in hoikuen, then they'll be good at speaking Japanese and they'll go into first grade a little bit behind, but not as much as she was.

I: Umm yeah, I see. And yeah, since you're planning to stay in Japan for the long term, it's also good for them to have solid Japanese skills, I guess.

E: Umm yeah.

I: And your husband also speaks Portuguese, right?

E: Yeah.

I: Did you ever consider including Portuguese into the mix or not really?

E: Umm, no, no, I think I mean, Spanish and Portuguese are so similar that you know, it wouldn't be hard for them to study it later on as a second language and then just pick it up pretty easily. I'd rather them really cement the three languages that are gonna be actually important to them, you know. Because with my oldest I was -. I'm worried about English because with my oldest, even though she was a native speaker, even though she, you know, was five when we moved here, she didn't know how to read, and she didn't learn to read till she was like maybe seven or eight, almost. She could only read in English, and I put her in some extra classes for almost, it was almost two years. And I put her in these extra classes and she took them like three days a week just to practice reading and writing in English because she just didn't get that in, you know, in school any more. Just everything was Japanese, so I'm like, worried about even just English and Spanish. Like their ability to read and write in those languages.

I: Are you hoping your children will all be like literate in each language?

E: Yeah, I'm hoping that right. My daughter. My oldest takes Spanish classes. She does Spanish classes so she's progressing in her speaking. But she's not at all ready to write, and even her English is-. Like, writing in English. It's the only thing I think that really helped her. Besides those classes she was playing games, like she would play blocks and Fortnite and stuff, so she be like typing and that's how she learned to really read and write, through video games and talking to people in other countries, yeah.

I: Yeah, that's good. That's great for motivation, yeah.

E: But my two younger kids, I'm worried. I'm worried that they won't be as strong in reading and writing as they will be in Japanese.

I: Yeah, probably Japanese will be the main thing. Did you like do you practice literacy with them at home? Do you try to support -?

E: No, not right now because I'm so busy. Like I said, it which is one of my biggest regrets is that I didn't spend as much time with my oldest as I should have. But I'm gonna be taking a break from working full time after March starting next April. I'm probably only gonna work part time and I want to be able to spend more time at home teaching my kids to read and working a lot more on literacy with them, cuz they're definitely going to need it. And my husband, he does a good job in Spanish, though. My husband really-. He is very hands on with, like, reading books to them, and showing

them different words. And we have a little etch-a-sketch thing, you know, where they draw?

I: Yeah, where they can practice. Fun. Yeah, do both of you work full time right now?

E: Yeah.

I: And the children are in school. And then after school care, I guess? Or daycare?

E: Yeah. My oldest one-. Well, she's on summer vacation right now. So she just stays home. But yeah, I work. We both work until around 5:00 and then I can pick up one baby because she's at one hoikuen and then my son's at another one. So I go for one, he goes for the other and then-.

I: You're one of the unlucky ones.

E: Well, I mean, I could have put them both in the same one. They were together in a hoikuen, but the hoikuen was only until 2 and I could have moved both to the new one. I could have, but I liked the old one, so I want my daughter staying there because the new one is like a giant school. It just looks like a big school with lots of classrooms and there's 100 plus children.

I: A bit overwhelming.

E: And so, yeah, and the old one, it's the one floor of, like, a little house. And it just has one tatami room and a living room. And there's only like 15 kids, so it's much more homey. And I think my daughter would feel so much more comfortable there. And so I just, yeah, I just drop one off in the morning and then run and drop the other one off. It takes some time, but.

[call interrupted because of poor internet connection]

I: Sorry about that. I think I think my Internet just disconnected for a bit.

E: No, that's OK, that's OK. I don't know if it was mine or yours cause I'm at work so our internet sometimes is not the greatest.

I: You were just going to tell me, or what I heard was, you're dropping your kids off in the morning and then picking them up. Later at 5pm, right?

E: Yeah, basically I just go drop one off and then drop the other one off. It's a little bit inconvenient, but it's not that bad.

I: It's worth it for the familiar atmosphere. The smaller hoikuen?

E: It's worth it. Yeah, yeah, I like that. It's like, you know, just small and feels more like a home, you know.

[excerpt ends here]

Appendix I: Example of Coding

Excerpt from Interview A Transcript

Narrative Data	Initial Coding
Alisa: "I really enjoy reading and I really like doing it and so, I mean, now I know he really likes books. He tries to read stuff as well.	Expressing personal affinity for reading Describing child's interest in books Describing child's interest in reading
We have a plant, and it has a nickname. It's called Jack. So, it's called Jack and he saw a similar plant in someone's garden, and he was like: "*Mama, mama, mite, Jack!*" (Mum, Mum, look, Jack!) And I'm like "No, no, that's not Jack." And he says: "*Kaite aru yo, 'Jack desu.'*" (It's written there, 'I'm Jack.') So hilarious.	Telling a story illustrating how child likes to pretend to be able to read
Like he'll look at letters and stuff. He'll make stuff up, obviously, because he can't read it, but he understands that letters make sounds. So, he gets that, and he'll also ask about what it says somewhere, so he's interested.	Describing child's interest in written words Describing extent of child's reading ability Describing child's interest in written words
So, I hope that I can also interest him in learning how to read in German.	Expressing hope to spark interest in HL reading
And how to write and everything? I mean, obviously it's a good skill to have. Like, it's a great skill to be bilingual.	Expressing positive view of bilingual literacy
But I don't want to force him into anything.	Showing reluctance to pressure child
My hope, obviously, is that he naturally grasps how amazing it is.	Hoping for natural interest to develop
And that he finds something in German. Like, even if he gets really into football, I don't care as long as it's a German team, just watching German football. He just needs a good reason to enjoy and have fun with it."	Hoping for child to find a hobby connected to the HL

Table I.1: Example of initial coding (Excerpt from Interview A Transcript)

Notes: Some details have been changed in the narrative data to reduce identifiability. The son's Japanese replies are in *italics*, followed by a translation.

Narrative Data	Refined Coding
Alisa: "I really enjoy reading and I really like doing it and so, I mean, now I know he really likes books. He tries to read stuff as well.	Comparing self to child
We have a plant, and it has a nickname. It's called Jack. So, it's called Jack and he saw a similar plant in someone's garden, and he was like: "*Mama, mama, mite, Jack!*" (Mum, Mum, look, Jack!) And I'm like "No, no, that's not Jack." And he says: "*Kaite aru yo, 'Jack desu.'*" (It's written there, 'I'm Jack.') So hilarious.	Describing child's curiosity for reading
Like he'll look at letters and stuff. He'll make stuff up, obviously, because he can't read it, but he understands that letters make sounds. So, he gets that, and he'll also ask about what it says somewhere, so he's interested.	
So, I hope that I can also interest him in learning how to read in German. And how to write and everything? I mean, obviously it's a good skill to have. Like, it's a great skill to be bilingual. But I don't want to force him into anything.	
My hope, obviously, is that he naturally grasps how amazing it is. And that he finds something in German. Like, even if he gets really into football, I don't care as long as it's a German team, just watching German football. He just needs a good reason to enjoy and have fun with it."	Hoping for positive connection to HL to develop naturally

Table I.2: Example of refined coding (Excerpt from Interview A Transcript)